THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient, yet ever new, religion known as Odinism or Asatru. It is dedicated to that religion and to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality which are associated with it.

THE RUNESTONE is the official journal of the Asatru Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are $7.00 per year (U.S. and Canada) and $12.00 per year for overseas (aerial). Write to AFA, P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76024. Please make checks payable to the Asatru Free Assembly.

Editor: Stephen A. McNallen

May 15 is the deadline for the Summer Issue.

CALENDAR

March 20 - OSTARA. Today is the Spring Equinox, marking the end of winter and the start of its BITER successor. It is named after a Germanic goddess associated with the sunrise and the direction east.

Pour a libation to Ostara while facing the newly-risen Sun, for the rebirth of Nature, the rekindling of Asatru, and the resurgence of our Folk.

March 28 - RAGNAR LODBLOK DAY. We honor the semi-legendary Viking chieftain who sacked Paris on this date in the year 846. Coincidentally or not, it was Easter Sunday, and those who would steal our holy days for their own were punished.

Do a brave deed today, and drink a toast, in memory of Ragnar.

April 11 - SUMASDOAL/SIGRBLOT. "Summers Day" celebrates the first day of summer in the old Ice Tantric Calendar, and falls on the Thursday between April 9 and April 15. It is felt that it probably has strong agricultural overtones, but anywhere throughout the Nordic world mid-April was the sacrifice to Odin for victory, the sigrblot.

Select the aspect of this day that most appeals to you and honor the appropriate deity with a moment of reverent meditation and with some act done in service to him or her.

April 30 - WALBURG. This is better known as Walpurgisnacht or May Eve. Walburg is a goddess of GIF TELK combining the traits of various better-known goddesses.

Reflect this day on Freya's sinister side, on Hel, and on Frigg as repository of the glorious dead, and you will have an idea of Walburg's nature. Pour a horn upon the earth to heroes.
ALTHING 6

DATE: August 9, 10, 11

A.F.A. members and others true to the gods of the Northlands are invited to attend the annual celebration of Aatriu. The weekend event, held this year in Texas for the first time, will include rituals, workshops, feasts, fun and fellowship in a rural, wooded, lakeside setting.

If you want to be included in the work and wonder of our ancient religion, we urge you to complete the form below, so we can plan for another exceptional gathering.

NOTE: As usual members are admitted free of charge. Non-members are asked to donate $15.00

YES, I would like to participate in Althing Six! Please send me details on the program, location and facilities as they become available.

Name:

Address:

PLEASE CHECK:
- [ ] I am a member and claim admission as part of membership.
- [ ] I am not a member and enclose $15.00 (includes entrance, materials, and feasts)
- [ ] I am not a member but will either join the AFA or will pay my entrance fees later.

Please make checks payable to: AATRIU FREE ASSEMBLY
P.O. Box 7774,
Sauk Centre, TX 76028
ARE YOU LIVING ASATRU?

- People write the AFA from time to time asking what they can do to more effectively live our religion on a daily basis. Their concern is well placed. For ultimately the strength of Asatru depends on how well and how much we practice our beliefs as individuals. For those who would implement Asatru in their lives, we offer the following:

HONOR THE GODS DAILY with the Greeting to Sol and the Hammer Sign, perhaps supplemented with additional meditations. Time required: As little as one minute - but what an effective sixty seconds! We have instructions available; see our ad in this issue.

OBSERVE SPECIAL DAYS, which you can find listed in the front of each Runeestone. You can celebrate these days with acts as simple as a moment in meditation or a raised OPaping horn.

LIVE THE VALUES of Asatru every day, as best you can - courage, honor, vigor, and all the rest.

SUPPORT THE AFA by reading our material, joining a guild, writing an article, or whatever. Don't forget other fine organizations out there, either.

LEARN MORE about our religion, culture, and history. Study the Eddas and the scholarly disciplines which can shed light on them.

TELL OTHERS who are ready about Asatru. Send them "Why Asatru?" or a photocopy of some relevant article out of the Runeestone. Wear your Thor's hammer proudly and be prepared to answer questions about it, responding appropriately for the person's level of understanding.

HAVE CHILDREN if you are capable of bringing them up in a stable, healthy environment and if you are ready for this great privilege and responsibility. (NOTE: Don't get too hung up on "readiness"; there is nothing that can really prepare you for this experience, beyond a certain point; give your ancestors a chance to vindicate them for another generation.

FINALLY - A special urging. We are currently trying to get The Poetic Edda in the Hollander translation reprinted. This is a very important project, and YOU CAN HELP. See elsewhere in this issue for more information.

These points range from those taking moments a day to those taking a lifetime. They will enrich your life, serve the gods, and help fulfill your duties to kin. Make them a part of you, and you will be well rewarded!

WHAT'S ALL THIS SPACE STUFF, ANYWAY?

People are often surprised by the existence of the Aerospace Technology Guild as a part of the AFA. After all, the early Teutons didn't have aircraft or space flight! True, but we their descendents, have these things, and they are relevant to our religion and culture. The ATG is not made up of people who feel that flight to the suburbs should continue to the stars; it's composed of folks who are convinced that the aerospace developments of our age (from ultralights to Mars flights and more) are a part of our heritage that can help us meet our challenges on Earth, and fulfill our destiny. The Vikings were great innovators - we must be, too, to survive.

If you're interested in aviation, missiles, or space travel from this perspective, drop us a line care of the AFA.
EUNEMENUS AND EUNEMENISM

by Athanasius

It is important to understand that when we talk about the name of a God, we are discussing two entirely different things: (1) the name and (2) the God-entity we invoke under that name. Frey and Freya are, of course, Guardian spirits of fertility and related areas, but the "Frey" and "Freya" are merely titles of address denoting a free man and a free woman...a "Lord" and a "Lady", much as in Spanish, Christian prayers are addressed "Senor" Jesus and the "Señora" his mother (Mr. Jesus and Mrs. Mary).

It is incontrovertibly true that in our own tradition the Allfather Principle has variously been addressed as "Tyr", as "Odin" and, among many of our people, as in medieval (cidual, there seems to be a drift toward seeing the Allfather Principle in Thor. This is the history of the use of language, not changes in position of real God-entities.

There are, of course, real God-entities, and, where human beings practice religion in any real depth, they are contacted. It is my belief that when a toil in distress invokes the Spirit of Inspiration and attempts to generate Berserker level courage and steadfastness against enemies or seeks a blessing on his/her marriage or crops, the right God-entity is reached by the thrust of the prayer/spell. The Rig Veda (where we encounter our gods under even more ancient names) seems to bear me out on this when one of the Gods says, in effect, "no matter to whom you pray, it is I who answer".

Thus it is entirely possible (but not very significant) that some of the God-names (Ing and Odin are often mentioned) originally were applied to heroic chieftains. Remember that dead heroes' ghosts are also powerful entities to invoke in prayer and that as mythological poetry developed about these entities, their names gradually "became" those under which our folk addressed the Eternal and immortal god-entities.

The essence of our religion does not lie in the names we call our Gods. We could call Odin "Joe" and Freya "Susie" if there were a good reason to do so (a natural identification on the part of the Folk of Odin-qualities with the name "Joe" would be such a reason). What is essential in Paganism is (1) the openness with which we approach the Divine and do not clutter up our reception of the Divine impulse with preconceived "dogmas", (2) the religious-magical processes themselves which are so powerful that even the Christians have recognized the superior power of pagan prayer, and (3) the prosurvival effects of the previous two found in such Odinist "trademarks" as the warrior-ethnic and the kinship loyalty.

To say, if indeed it is true, that the name "Othin" was once that of a tribal chieftain which in time was applied to the Allfather is not to deny the existence of either the Allfather of the tribal chieftain any more than to say (God forbid) that Odin is the kinsman and friend of the spirit world meaning the chief executive. Dreadful as that might be, it is not an assertion that we worship Ronal Reagan.
Most articles in The Runestone deal with the gods, our relationship to them, and the various personal values of Asatru. It is time, though, to consider the concepts which would prevail in a community where we could live Asatru with relatively little influence from the outside culture. Someday we must have such sanctuaries for the "re-trivialization" of the Folk. Long before the first home is erected, the first barn raised, or the first well dug, we must think through just how we would live in a group situation. This article is a step toward achieving that essential analysis.

Germanic government revolved around several different social groups and their relations to each other. The chieftain, the council of "leading men", and the assembly of warriors have been noted by historians in this regard. Those of us who would re-create a mode of social interaction consistent with the principles of our forebears need to examine these different parts of the ancient Folk, study how they affected each other, and relate our findings to our situation today. Essentially, that is what we will be doing throughout this series of articles, beginning with the role of the assembly of warriors, the thing.

First of all, just who was eligible to participate? German tribes described by the Romans are said to have allowed all warriors, except those who had disgraced themselves by throwing away their shields in battle, to take part in the deliberations of the tribe. The Vikings used the ownership of land as their criterion for thingmen. Both these requirements were designed to demonstrate commitment to the group - by defending it with one's life in the one case, and by having sunk strong roots in the soil in the other. What does this mean to us today?

It goes without saying that any member of an Asatru community who wishes to have a say in its affairs must be willing to defend that community by whatever means are necessary in times of crisis. The demonstration of commitment by putting down roots, by investing in the community, will be harder for some. A successful modern-day precedent has been set for us in the system used by Ananda, a flourishing yoga community in the hills of California. Residence at Ananda is contingent upon payment of $1500, which serves as land rental. While an Odinist community would probably prefer ownership of the land to rental, the principle remains - the individual must buy into the community rather than having membership handed to him or her automatically.

Our ancestors do not seem to have explicitly demanded that participants in the assembly be followers of the group's religion. However, such a statement would not have been necessary when dealing with a homogeneous, tribal society. Things are different today. We will find, when we announce the formation of a community based on Asatru, that sympathizers may want to join us without actually embracing our faith. To allow these well-meaning people to have a say in how the group conducts its business would be an error, for ours will be, after all, a religious community. Circumstances will arise when non-Asatru are allowed residence in the community (for example, the elderly surviving parent of a coreligionist should probably be taken in, in honor of kinship obligations) but residence emphatically does not include the right to speak or vote in the assembly. Successful religious communities often require acceptance of their respective beliefs. One outstanding example is Ananda, mentioned earlier. This does not mean that an Asatru-based group would require strict adherence to minor points of doctrine. Because such conformity is not our heritage, it would mean, though, that an adherence to Asatru in general would be necessary.
Given, then, that the assembly will be made up of people who will defend the community, who will invest in roots there, and who share our religious beliefs. Just what will the assembly do?

In early times, the warrior's assembly dealt with the major matters which impinged on the life of the tribe. War and peace were decided by it, rather than by the chieftain or the council. Chiefs and judges were usually nominated by the council, but their ratification depended entirely upon the voting of the people. Typically the thing would pass judgment on crimes which merited the death sentence in Germanic society - the Niamn chronicler lists treachery, death sentence, cowardice, and homosexuality as examples.

Today, the thing can hardly declare war or call for its cessation, but it can still make decisions affecting the group's relations with external powers, thus in effect making "foreign policy," if the approval or reject chiefs or other officials. And while the Ascaru community is limited in the sentences it can impose on those who break its rules, it could vote to exile those who commit serious offenses. In carrying out those functions the assembly should strive to emulate our ancestors by going beyond the seeking of a mere majority vote: every attempt could be made to attain a more or less unanimous decision. In this, our Germanic heritage touches common ground with other tribal societies such as the American Indians, who reportedly arrive at a similar group consensus. Coercion is something to be avoided within the community framework, and persuasion toward unanimity reduces the extent to which a majority faction forces its will on a smaller one.

One important limitation of the thing in our earlier history was that it could not initiate new measures. The council or the chieftain would set forth a proposition which could then be accepted or rejected by the warriors. The Romans used this system to their advantage in their efforts to subvert the free tribes. Once a leader had been imposed on the people by the Romans, or once he had been bought through bribery or promises to help extend his power, he was very hard to depose. Later, as we shall see in a future installment, Germanic society demanded safeguards against the misuse of royal might and even made revolution a duty in some cases. These guarantees of freedom are not unknown in our traditions today. For we have our own "Roman" - forces which might feel threatened by the development of our community, and which could seek to control it by influencing its leadership. One solution would be to empower the assembly to directly or indirectly choose leaders and to recall them at any time. We will discuss this at length in a future article.

Things met at intervals which varied depending upon the situation. Local assemblies generally met more frequently than regional ones or the still larger ones encompassing an entire tribe. The Saxons of the 6th century met only once a year, though smaller gatherings, those more like a re-created bloodstream community would be, might have met much more often. Times of war or emergency would be characterized by more meetings, of course. In Viking times the herald-thing or local as- sembly, met often and could be summoned at the initiative of any individual thingman, or assembly member. Without setting hard and fast rules, one can imagine a 21st century folk community maintaining this sort of access by the citizenry, and meeting fairly frequently. Full and new moons seem to have been traditional in the old days.

So far we have examined eligibility for membership in the assembly, the powers that assembly would have, and how often it might meet. In addition to these broad outlines there are several customs associated with the thing which can be instructive to us today. The thing was sacred to the gods and bloodshed was strictly forbidden. To break the peace of the assembly was blasphemy and violators were liable to severe punishment by law. Not only was the thing session protected, but so was the journey to and from it. Weapons were put aside until the end of the gathering when they were formally taken up again and shaken to signify the thing's completion. Besides the obvious religious significance of these practices, they served the social function of removing coercion from the conduct of public debate, allowing free expression of opinion. We would do well to copy our forebears in this regard.

In summary, we have proposed that membership in the assembly be open to residents of a community who declare their willingness to defend the group, who commit themselves by buying into the...
and who follow Asatru. We have examined the role of the assembly in the 20th century community and shown how it might attempt to arrive at decisions by consensus. Drawbacks in the historical role of the thing have been pointed out (namely, the inability to initiate measures) and a remedy has been outlined, and customs have been described which remove coercion from the arena of public ongoings.

Let us never forget that the natural principles which determined how our ancestors governed themselves are related to our religion. Our attitudes on freedom, duty, and individual rights mirror the way we look at our gods. In seeking a healthy social order, one ideally suited for our kind, we are engaging in a quest that is ultimately religious.

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**The AFA Symbol**

Those who have seen the *raido* rune on some of our material may have wondered what it was, or why we chose this particular emblem. Certainly, an explanation is appropriate.

This sign was chosen by a vote of members attending Altston Torver as the official symbol to represent the AFA. Like all such emblems - quite apart from the fact that it is a rune - it has power which can benefit us all. Let us be proud of it, use it often, and harness the spiritual might it can bestow on us as we strive to advance the cause of the gods.

From the meanings of the runes *anuz* (R), *wunjo* (P), and finally, *raido* (R), in which the first two AFA graphically superimposed, you can see why we selected such a potent symbol!

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*F* - *Feh* - Esoteric of divine power and representation as religious god

*P* - *Pder* - Fellowship, bonding

*R* - *Raido* - Harmony, balance between these descendants into common ancestor

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1. The meaning of *raido* is:
   - Skill
   - Right action, good advice, and just action
   - Journey
NEW PUBLICATIONS

We've been busy and the AFA now has several new items on its publications list. See below and separate ads for our own "business cards" and bumper stickers.

THE RITES OF ASATRU Volume I - Major Blots

Here at last for individual and groups who wish to practice the religious rites of Asatru is a detailed guide to rituals in honor of the gods and goddesses of our ancestors. With an attractive, easy-to-read layout, ceremonies to Odin, Thor, Frey, Frigga, Tyr, Freya, Balder and the Aelfar are introduced, explained and presented in full. The book is spiral bound to lie flat, and will form a set with succeeding volumes covering seasonal festivals and rites of passage.

Heavy stock cover; high quality, textured paper; 8½"x11"; 28pp; $6.00

THE VALUES OF ASATRU

and

THE LESSONS OF ASBARD

Two booklets outlining the fundamentals of Asatru. In matching compact format, these basic documents reprint the Asatru Values and How to Live series presented in past Runestones many of which are no longer available. Excellent for quick reference or for introducing Asatru to others.

Special start-up price: $2.50 each; $4.00 both

AVAILABLE NOW FROM THE ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY, P.O.BOX 1754, BRECKENRIDGE, TX 76024.
Gudfrædi, Brian Regan’s fine series, will be continuing. We had so much material for this issue of The RuneStone we were forced to cut back, but look for Brian’s name on the book review below.

Membership. For a long time, the AFA has not pushed for members. We have felt that those who were interested would seek us out and that has been the case. However, in recent months much work has been done to improve the benefits of membership and we feel we have more to offer the committed asurmanir than in the past. Not only do members now receive a packet of information which includes individual ritual guidance, and also have voting rights in AFA business, but they have access to a special members-only networking directory, a monthly ‘insiders’ newsletter, free admission to the Allining, the chance to be connected up with other Kinfolk in the AFA, special discounts, and a chance to be in at the beginning of the gradual bringing together of the Folk—our long-term project for awakening our people to Asatru. If you would like information on how you can join our ever-growing tribe, write to us today.

Save the Eddas! A good many of you responded to our call for the last couple of issues for letters to the University of Texas Press requesting a reprinting of Lee Hollander’s translation of the Poetic Edda. Since the issue of reprinting is still in doubt, any of you who have not yet written to indicate your wish to see this precious, hard-to-locate volume back in circulation, should do so immediately, write to John Kyle, Director, University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78712.

...
The work which Saxo wrote is actually sixteen books (each book being in fact a chapter of the whole) in length. Two world-renowned English scholars, Peter Fisher and Hilda Ellis Davidson, have translated and commented on the first nine of these books. The last seven (ten through sixteen) treat the Nordic past from about 1000 C.E. on, the last two centuries before Saxo’s writing. Since they deal with the historical data and politics of post-Heathen times, these last seven books are not translated or otherwise handled by Fisher or Davidson. It is the first nine, which contain so much lore, poetry and mythology and so many narratives and reminiscences of the ancient past, to which these experts have devoted their labors. Among other things, the story of Hamlet (spelled Amlethus) is first found in books II and III of Saxo, and Shakespeare may have gotten the idea for his play, “Hamlet,” directly from reading the Gesta Danorum in Latin if not through indirect means.

The most notable stories of the individual books are listed briefly by Mrs. Davidson in the Introduction to the Commentary (p. 9):

Book I has the adventures of Heting with his giant bride and his journey to Odin’s hall; Book II, King Wolfr’s expedition to Upsala and his adventures there; Book III, the pursuit of vengeance on his usurping uncle by young Amleth and his success in Face of new odds; Book IV, the victory of Ulf against the Saxons in the celebrated sword contest; Book V, the long account of the trickster Erik and his defeat of the bullies and corrupt advisors of the young King Frothi; Book VI, the exploits of the unconquering hero Starkather; Book VII, the heroic tale of the death of the young lovers, Magurth and Signe; Book VIII, the journey to the realm of Utgard-Loki; and Book IX, the tale of young Regner’s successful fight with serpents.

The amazing thing which comes through again and again in these echoes of yore is the unbreakable spirit of our ancestors. Even when foolhardy, they displayed tremendous vigor and bravery. The organized, military and seafaring feats showed an incredibly wide range of intelligence and an unquenchable will. Saxo revealed the innate energy of our people as none other before him.

The traditions of our Northern past which were presented for us by the cultured and highly literate Saxo Grammaticus have now been made smoothly available to us by Asatr through the fine English translation and enlightening commentary by Hilda Ellis Davidson and Peter Fisher. I feel their efforts have made these books well worth their price.

IF THEY’VE NEVER HEARD OF US, THEY CAN’T SUBSCRIBE!

Wyatt Kaldenberg’s organized attempts to advertise Odinism through Woten are gradually bearing fruit. A number of new subscribers have joined us directly as a result of his efforts. Here at Home-kindred we have been trying to find ways of reducing the number of subscribers who lapse, and a recent special offer Haller has been quite successful. Both of these subscriptions drives are necessary but expensive. What else can we do? Ideas have included distribution through book stores, discounts to current readers who generate additional subscriptions and word-of-mouth advertising. The APA is ready to grow - we need your suggestions and help.

Write to us with your comments.

TEXAS!

The transition to Texas has gone well. In spite of TWO house changes in the few months we have been here, things have settled and we’ve been extremely productive. With domestic challenges laid to rest for a while, we’ve been able to produce a number of new publications, link up with Texas kinsfolk, and get started on important projects for the future. We have great plans and there are signs that more will be accomplished in the coming year than in several of those past. Watch out for ACTION and GROWTH!

NOTICE OUR NEW ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1754, BRECKENRIDGE, TEXAS 76024
NOW available from the AFA!

PUBLICATIONS

ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY, P.O. BOX 1756, BRECKENRIDGE, TX 76224

THE RUNESTONE
A journal of the ancient, yet ever new religion known as Odinism or Asatru. Dedicated to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality. Published quarterly. Subscriptions are $7.00 per year (U.S. and Canada), and $12.00 per year overseas airmail.

AN ODINIST ANTHOLOGY
Seminal selections from ten years of the Runestone, plus material never before published. $6.00

1985 ASATRU CALENDAR
Twenty four poems interpreting the Runes; illustrations; moons; seasonal festivals; days of remembrance. $6.00

AFA SONGBOOK
Rousing Asatru themes set to old folk melodies. Six songs. $2.50

FREYA'S FOLK
A short introduction to Freya and the role of goddesses (and women) in Asatru. $1.00

TAPES

INTRODUCTION TO RITUAL/INVOCATIONS $7.50
Side Two: Invocations to seven deities, with a commentary on each. Suitable for use with the ritual format on side one.

STORIES FROM SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY $7.50
Six well-loved tales of the North recorded for children, newcomers to Asatru, and all of those who share a reverence for the legends that reveal so clearly the spirit of our people.
Side One: Odin Visits Mimir’s Well
Side Two: Thor Loses His Magic Hammer

LEAFLETS ETC.
The following attractively presented single sheets are available for 25¢ each or five for $1.00.

WHY ASATRU?
Our introductory leaflet, just right, for handing to a friend.

INVOCATION TO FREYA
Caligraphed and bordered, a moving summons to The Lady, goddess of love and fertility.

GREETING TO SOL
A brief daily religious observance to tune you into the continuity of nature and kinship.

THE HAMMERION
An energizing reminder of the power of our principal deities using the ancient symbol of the hammer of Thor.

RUNCIC CORRESPONDENCES
A basic reference offering shape, name, translation, and keywords for the runes of the elder futhark.
JOY IS BETTER THAN GUilt

We live in an age which is, in many ways, overly introspective. Where our ace-swinging ancestors wrought results with bold action, we often find ourselves paralyzed by excessive analysis, and fail to define and to do the deeds required of us. Many things can produce this spiritual sickness, but one of the surest will-wasters is that old enemy, guilt.

Our forbears before the Christian imp- portion do not seem to have been contaminat- ed with this virus. While they might have regretted something they had done, they simply tried to put things right and resolved not to place themselves in that situation again. The ghastly, esteem-devouring feeling we call guilt, on the other hand, they would have considered not only masochistic but just plain silly, take action! Solve your problem, or fly to, and get on with life! Leave the men- tal miasma and the breast beating for those who have nothing else to do!

Guilt, however, has its uses - not to the guilt-ridden party, certainly, but to the church and state and the special interest groups who would power in our present society. It is a very effective way to control people. By making us feel bad about ourselves, by mak- ing us believe that we are evil or fallen or sinful, the various powers-that-be can manip- ulate our behavior in accordance with their wills.

What are some of the things for which we are made to feel guilty? Television act- resses make us feel guilty for our wealth so we will give that wealth away for the bene- fit of people on the other side of the globe. "Docu-drama" producers and writers of a par- ticular ilk so all they can to make us feel guilty because of our Northern European heri- tage. All our natural drives and instincts come under assault. Anger? Bad because we're all supposed to be "mellow". Ambition? Dan- gerous - it makes the inadequate aware of their failings. Sexuality? Nasty; God's gonna get you for that! Prosperity, ancestry and instincts are all to be forbidden us by the guilt-monsters. What can be more catastro- phic in the long term than breeding these qualities out of a formerly free folk?

Our present thrilldom has turned values on their heads; instead of condemning that which is strong and good, we should shun that which our inner selves know to be bad - cowardice, dishonor, and the favoring of strangers over kin.

Make no mistake, guilt is a necessary tool for forging the brave new world, a world spanning society where we are all to be an- drogenous, docile, and interchangeable econom units designed only to produce and con- sume and serve. No room there for joy in sexuality or passion of any kind or pride in our identity as a people.

So how do we fight back? With all the usual ways of devotion to our gods and our folk - but amended with a joy that consumes guilt and frees the spirit for action just as the severing of the "peace-strings" allows the sleek sword to fly to its owner's hand! The best warrior is the joyous one who claps his face to his heart, whose merriment in the battle's strife confuses the foe and strikes panic in their ranks. Let that joy flow into all the parts of your life, so that it suffuses work and battle and play and makes all these diverse things one. Joy is better than guilt - and a sure antidote to its manipulative pipes.

Hard words to heed, easy ones to write! Holding onto joy isn't easy because we seem to have so little to celebrate. But is it the things outside ourselves which ought to give joy and grief, or is it the things within us? If nothing else, we can revel in our freedom from guilt, in our will-to-action, and in our adherence to the truth of our heroic ancestors. These are no small reasons for joy!

We have the gods to inspire us. Odin, pragmatically breaking the rules to safe- guard the worlds of gods and men. Thor, in- dulging his appetites without shame or fear; Frey and Freyja, reveling in healthy sexuality; these are powerful, liberating models casting the chains of restraint. By invoking them into our lives we can experience the joy of existence in a world where strength, ambition, competence, and pleasures are not fettered with alien, life-denying bonds.
A PILGRIMAGE TO THE MISTY ISLES

By

Fjörgyn

Having a child is the most spiritual experience a pagan couple can have.

My husband and I were wed in a quiet, family-attended ceremony. We knew then that we would eventually have children. Five years after our marriage we felt satisfied that our house was in order and that the time had arrived for us to truly settle down. We wanted to share our love, happiness, and knowledge with another being, and to perpetuate our kind.

Neither of us believe in the Oriental concept of reincarnation, but we do believe in the transmigration of the soul within the family, tribe, and kindred. We concluded that in conceiving our soul (it was sure it would be a boy) on ground sacred to our ancestors, we might facilitate some distant forebear to return.

We studied and made our plans carefully. We read and discussed everything we could find that had been written on the stone circles of Britain. Finally, we decided the goal of our journey would be the Callanish standing stones on the Isle of Lewis, off the northwest coast of Scotland in the Outer Hebrides. Callanish is believed to have been erected sometime between 3500 and 2100 B.C.E. The standing stones there are generally considered to have been employed as a temple for the worship of the sun and the moon. Its avenues of stones are in alignment with the sun at the spring and fall equinoxes. We felt that such timing was of central importance. Our decision was that the autumn equinox would be best for what we intended.

Finally the much-anticipated day for travelling arrived. We started on our journey back to our true beginnings, to our ancestral motherland, Britain. Following visits to Edinburgh, Sterling, Inverness, and the Loch Ness region, we set out on our pilgrimage to the Misty Isle.

Our four-hour train ride from Inverness to the west coast at Kyle of Lochalsh twisted through craggy bluffs and dark, dense pine forests. It began to rain and grew cold. The stone cottages of crofters began to appear more primitive in construction. Steep mountains began to rise on either side of the rail line till I felt as though we were travelling through an endless tunnel of stone. Visions of tattooed Picts, kilted Gaelic warriors, and as wielding Vikings assumed a reality as I watched the rugged countryside roll by. It was exciting for a romantic like myself.
Arriving on the coast at Kyle of Lochalsh, we boarded a ferry for the brief ride across the sound to the Isle of Skye. Our trip across Skye was less than enjoyable and the weather contributed little to sight-seeing. Two more hours of gazing out on sun-drenched hills, peat bogs, cottages and sheep! It wasn’t difficult to imagine what winters were like in such a strange, cold land as this.

Our bus arrived in Uig at the harbor, where a large ocean cruiser waited with bread gangs-plans reaching down to the dock. It was only minutes away from departure for the Isle of Harris. Despite fatigue, cold and hunger, we quickly decided to continue on our journey rather than halt and seek lodging in Uig. We arrived at the port of Tarbert, Isle of Harris at midnight. Not daring to cross the hillside dwellings above the harbor for available lodging, we checked in at a hotel that was dockside for the night.

Rising next morning rested and dry, we departed early. Today was the equinox - the day for which we had waited so long. Despite a sharp wind, it was not raining and there seemed a promise of sunshine later in the day. On the bus ride between Tarbert on the Isle of Harris and Stornaway on the northeast coast of the Isle of Lewis (the two islands are separated by a narrow river), we were able to view heather-strown plains surrounded by jagged-peaked mountains that somehow reminded me of the "Misty Mountains" of J.R.R. Tolkien’s "Lord of the Rings." Observing this scenery, it was not difficult to fathom the impulse which had led the ancient inhabitants to worship and honor as their chief deity the Celtic god Taranis or Taran, which in the Welsh as well as the Highland language signified thunder and the thunderer.

Arriving in Stornaway, we quickly located the local tourism office and made the necessary arrangements for transit out to the Callanish circle. The tour guide (who also doubled as the bus driver) agreed to drop us off at the site for that day and to pick us up the following afternoon when he would return with his daily tour group.

Along the final back roads leading up to our destination, we observed isolated standing stones, apparently marking the route to the main site. Finally, as we approached, I could see the stones of the much-sought ring standing proudly along the ridge, sternly silhouetted against the bleak windswept sky. Even the scattering of crofters’ cottages in the vicinity did not intrude upon the scene; the hill and its monument reigned aloof and silent as they have for countless centuries.

As we got closer, I could feel the energy flow into my body. Suddenly the sun began to shine as we made our way up the hillside leading to the circle. There we stood looking out over the rocky hills that stretch as far as the eye can see. Hazy in the distance we could see other single upright stones on the adjoining hilltops. The shallow waters of the loch appeared cold and grey beyond the loch lay the blue waters of the North Sea, dark and menacing.

My first impression of Callanish was one of awe and reverence. The main circle of stones is joined by approaches also lined with stones, so that the overall design or plan resembles a huge Celtic cross. It’s most striking feature is the inner circle measuring 37 feet in diameter, and its alignments or avenues radius north, south, east and west.

Inside the circle a low mound containing a passage and burial chamber represents the remains of a neolithic tomb (circa 2500 - 2000 B.C.E.). Fragments of human bones were found within.

The tour guide began to sound the horn of the bus and the others quickly walked back down the hill to depart. We waved goodbye as the bus pulled away down the road.

It was late afternoon. The shadows began to lengthen as the dark stones captured the last rays of the sun, as though gleaning some secret power from it. The twilight hung long on the horizon, vanishing surreptitiously as the first stars of evening made their appearance scattered among the partly clouded sky.
The moon rose in all its full beauty and cast a cold illumination on the stones. Shortly after midnight we concluded a simple ritual and crawled off to our sleeping bags.

The following morning we were greeted by a faint mist. We ate a simple breakfast of bread and cheese washed down with a splendid red wine. Then we spent the remaining time waiting for the return of the tour bus on its daily round.

Back in Stornaway the sun came out briefly and we saw a double rainbow over the rooftops of the houses. The bus ride back across the islands to the port of Tarbert was at night, in a downpour of rain. Huge thunderclaps and a magnificent show of lightning bolts entertained us on the entire trip. We happened to be the only passengers that evening, which made it even nicer.

Our return voyage to the Isle of Skye was in sharp contrast to our previous trip. It was a rare sunny day. We spent the entire time out on deck looking out at the choppy waters sparkling like sequins in the sun. One could well admire the stalwart Horsemen whose dragon-prowed ships had coursed these rough waters nearly a thousand years ago. A hardy breed of people they undoubtedly were.

Epilogue

The result of our journey to Callanish was the birth of our son Robert Thor, born Freya's day, June 13, 1980, both parents being in attendance and calling his name to him even as he drew his first breath of life.

Postscript

We were to learn on our return to the States that there is a proposal among the local residents to demolish Callanish and clear the site for construction! The North Sea oil boom has affected nearby Stornaway, and its once quaint cobblestone streets are filled with people whose eyes are dazzled by the gleam of money. Unfortunately, there is little regard for the monument among the local residents many of whom favor the proposal. It was not so very long ago that scholarly impulses justified their archeological acquisitions from Greece, pointing to the fact that the local people were breaking up ancient temples for the foundations of their cottages. Perhaps this is the fate of people who have passed beyond their stage of greatness, understanding only the mean materialism of the moment.

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BOLD THOR WAS FISHING

bold Thor was fishing
for the meanest of sea beasts,
the Midgard serpent.
the giant, Ymir, gave him
an ox-head to bait his hook.

bold Thor was fishing
in a sturdy, wooden boat
along the Norse coast.
he threw out his line and sat
with his hammer at his side.

bold Thor was fishing
when the Serpent bit the hook
and lashed at the boat
making it spin all about
as the sea grew terrible.

bold Thor was fishing
with all his godly knowledge,
yet the great Serpent
managed to break the anchor
and drag the boat behind him.

bold Thor was fishing
for a monster no one had
ever hooked before.
his red beard was tasting salt,
wind, and the fury of waves.

bold Thor was fishing
when he gathered all his strength
and shoved his own leg
thru the bottom of the boat
and held it on the sea bed.

bold Thor was fishing
when he took his stout hammer,
the mighty Mjölnir,
and struck the Midgard Serpent
as it raised its ugly head.

bold Thor was fishing
in the dawn of the Norse world,
a time most forget,
but his legend still lingers
in the hearts of true vikings.
THE RELIGION OF ODIN
— by Fausan —

The story of the ancient faith of northern Europe and its rebirth in modern times. This book details the beliefs, customs and attitudes of the worshipers of Thor and Odin from ancient times to the present. Many of the topics were written by Odinists who are experts on the history and customs of their religion including some who played important roles in its re-awakening. The old Teutonic values of life are discussed as well as the concepts of the Sky God and the life force in the context of the religion. Thoroughly researched and documented, it takes up where 'The Power of the North! by Magnusson, or 'Vigman Samhainna' by Barisas, leaves off. 150 pages, 17 illustrations, 4½ x 11", Out Print-

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GUILDS

Here’s a listing of the guilds currently active in the AFA. While for more information:

THE WARRIOR GUILD
John Pammater, P.O. Box 332586, Norwood, CA 90253

THE COMPUTER/SHAMANISM GUILD
Richard Simmons, N.O. Box AFA, P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76424

THE AMERICAN FOLK ORNAMENT GROUP
Deirdre Flessner, P.O. Box 2209, Ventura, CA 93002

THE BRENNING GUILD
Jeri Couch, 797 E. Dummer, Akron, OH 44301

THE AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY GUILD
Stephen McAllister, P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76424

THE ARTISTS GUILD
Shiela Shults, c/o S. Bernard, 21 North St., Burlington, VT 05401

THE ESPIC GUILD
Molly Metka, P.O. Box 1754, Breckenridge, TX 76424

POSTER ART CONTEST

We’re looking for some good poster art to help spread the word about Astar. To sweeten the deal, we’re offering prizes:

1st PLACE - Tough Torvald, a non-so-serious Viking created by Peter Seymour to wear around your neck (with T.T. who needs an albatross?).

2nd PLACE - A copy of The Vikings by Johannes Brønsted, a classic survey of the culture and history of some of our favorite people.

3rd PLACE - Rites of Astar, vol. 1 - our latest release. Get right with the gods and maybe you’ll get first or second place next time!

Here are some suggestions:
Remember your audience - passers-by who may see this poster on a bulletin board or other public place. What will catch their eye and have meaning to them? What style will give best visibility?

Rules:
1. Deadline is April 15th.
2. Only drawings - suitable for reproduction on 8½" x 11" posters are needed to win; you do not have to compose written copy.
3. All submissions become property of the AFA.
4. Winners will be announced in the Summer issue of The Runestone.

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Phone (002) 34 1197
For a long time, hammer-wearers have answered the question “What’s that thing around your neck?” and surprised, shocked or maybe intrigued their questioners. We’ve often wondered if that predictable situation couldn’t be better handled and the “business card” pictured above is the result!

We’ve used the card in conversations as suggested, but we’ve also left a few lying around - small statements of our existence. Let’s get the word out about Asatru! Order your set now. 16 for $1.00, 50 for $3.00.

BUMPER STICKERS!

Every organization has its bumper stickers and though we’ve had them in the past our supplies had dried up. Now, Thomas White, a member from Michigan, is helping us out. We have three messages listed so far. The style is simple but eye-catching. $1.75 per sticker.

#1 ODIN LIVES! -- 1" orange letters on black background
#2 GOD RIDES AN EIGHT LEGGED HORSE -- 3/4" black letter on orange background
#3 THOR WORSHIPPERS HAVE MORE FUN -- 3/4" black letters on orange background

NOTE: Thomas White will make bumper stickers to order - any message for $2.00. Write to him at 237 W. Houghton Lake Dr., Frudenville, MI 48651

ALL THE ABOVE MATERIALS MAY BE ORDERED FROM THE ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY, P.O. BOX 1754, BRECKENRIDGE, TX 76224. PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE ASATRU FREE ASSEMBLY.
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR TO MAKE ADVANCE RESERVATIONS PLEASE CONTACT THE ODINIST FELLOWSHIP OF ARIZONA, POST OFFICE BOX 161 PAYSON, AZ, 85541

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE ODINIST FELLOWSHIP OF ARIZONA.
A SUNWHEEL AND A CRUCIFIX

by George Saunders

Last week an incident occurred to me that I feel other Odinists should know about. At a recent workshop sponsored by the State Department of Human Services and held at a Catholic pastoral center in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle, I had an experience Odinists might find informative if not alarming. Arriving in the morning, I proceeded to check in and awaited the beginning of the workshop following lunch. I was allowed to choose my room and unpacked my luggage.

It was then that I observed a large plastic Crucifix on the wall between the two beds in the room. Unwilling to spend the night sleeping beneath a symbol which has so little meaning for me, I cut out a paper sunwheel and placed the sunwheel where the crucifix had been. I carefully placed the crucifix in a nightstand drawer.

Not expecting any maid service before I left, I entered my room on the second day of the workshop during a break to find my sunwheel missing, the bed made up and the windows open. I assumed my sunwheel had been blown off the wall by the wind coming in through the open window. After the workshop concluded, I unpacked my things, shut the window and carefully replaced the crucifix in its original location and departed for the long drive home.

Three days later, I was called at home by my supervisor in Charleston to report that he had just received a 'disturbing' phone call from the Department functionary who had attended the same workshop as I had. She reported to him that a person or persons unknown had removed a religious object in the room in which I had stayed, and had replaced it with an "anti-religious" symbol. Did I know anything about it?

As a guest at the pastoral center, I assumed my room and the items within (no keys were permitted) was secured by the same goodwill that kept currency donations lying in an open basket in the center's lobby. How wrong I was! What had happened was that my room had been entered (without my permission) and an object that belonged to me had been removed (stolen) and been turned in to whoever the maid reported to. The crucifix was reported missing and it had taken three days for the complaint to reach me. The maid (whomever she was) chose not to speak to me directly, nor even to give the room a rudimentary search which would have revealed the object of her quest. There was also a Bible on a desk top which I did not disturb.

In my work I am constantly confronted with Christian bigotry and extremism. I try my best to realize it is one of the inevitable consequences of living in a rural area. In my work with youth in crisis, I neither applaud nor condemn Christianity. I don't push Asatru on others, and expect elementary courtesy in return. Evidently, courtesy toward invited guests is not a Christian trait.

I expect that this will not be the last I'll hear of this, and perhaps that is how it should be. Perhaps my supervisor is an exceptional individual who will accept my explanation; that I replaced the crucifix with a symbol I considered more meaningful and furthermore, was careful to return it to its original appearance before I left. Perhaps this is a price I must willingly pay, in exchange for my fortitude in previous life tragedies. I do know one thing for certain - I'll never abandon Asatru. I also feel as if my privacy was violated.
and my rights trampled. I feel angry too that the whole issue had gotten so out of hand that
my boss had to call me about it. The issue of my religious choice bears no relation to my
capacity as a human being or my capabilities as a social worker.

Odin lives!

Editor's Note: George did hear more about this incident and we were asked to provide him with
a statement regarding the legitimacy of Asatru. We were glad to be able to
help a loyal kinman, but we disagree with him on one note; we feel that re-
ligious choice bears a great deal of relation to human capacity and achievement.

THE WINDY TREE

Time dries the windy tree
where self-hanged Woden bleeds
to feed the roots' green thirst
with his willed living wounds.

He hears along the bark
the pent Wolf's gnawing shock
as Yggdrasil's life tree
cycles to Ragnarok

A god he can climb down:
a god he must resume
his Wyrd-defying perch
and wear this flesh of doom.

--Ray Smith
Dear Mr. McMillan,

I came across your name and address in the introduction to a book of runes which a friend of mine recently purchased. Your name sounds familiar. Didn't you at one time publish a magazine by the name of Runestones?

I would like some information on your Asatru Free Assembly organization and lists of any of your publications. I am interested in Germanic antiquities, particularly those of my homeland. I was born in the farming hamlet of Wende, deep in the Northwestphalian Moor. My village at the time of my childhood was so far removed from contact with the world at large, that the centuries seem to have had little effect on life there. Most of the houses were thatched and built in the Fachwerk style. Our barns all had carved carved horseheads at their peaks. Old Saxon long houses were still to be found in our area with earth floors, the people living in one end, the animals in the other. Some of these houses supposedly dated back to pagan days. Most of the older houses had runic symbols carved into the doorways.

I didn't really appreciate the uniqueness of my homeland while I lived there. It was all I knew as a child and didn't seem particularly unique. Having left it, I have come to realize what I have lost, and would like to learn more about the ancient roots of our local culture. The search for information is difficult from this country, but I am always hopeful. I really don't know what your organization has to offer, but I would appreciate your sending me any information you may have.

Thank you,
Thomas B.

Dear Thomas,

We at the AFA believe in preserving the cultural heritage of which you write. Traditional cultures are hard-pressed to survive the encroachments of so-called civilization. Here gives way to plastic, parking lots replace meadows, and TV antennas spring up where the village may poles fell down. The pedestal to "Pilgrimage to the Misty Isles" in this issue gives another example. Each of us must fight for our inheritance. To save the folk, we must first save the folkways!

Steve

Brother and Sister;

We received your letters and were pleased to finally have a proof of others like us. We have tried to uphold our heart's belief in Odin and a strong and courageous outlook. We've been called "unusual" and "weird" and "insane," and told that we expect too much out of each other and out of humans who are too weak to be what we expect them to be. It is a relief and a joy to know there are not only other people, but actual clans of fellow Odinists. We no longer feel out in the cold.

Please send us information about the "Runestone" which we very much want to receive. Until we converse again, let us say well Met! and be of stout heart.

John and Agnes K.
Steve,

Just received the new AFA Calendar. Really love it! Great job. Look forward to using it.

Returned an hour or so ago from the "Christmas" party held by the company for which I work. They actually sung Christmas carols during the affair, the seriously Christian kind for the most part. The only ones not offensive to non-Christians were Jingle Bells and one verse of Deck the Halls. Of course there aren't a lot of non-Christians working there either! So they can get away with it, eh? But before going into the banquet hall I at least put a "Rule" underneath the "Christmas" on the "Christmas Party This Way" sign outside to give directions. Small victories will up sometimes. Guess they figure if the Jewish folks there (and probably some Moslems and Buddhists, I suspect, since it's an international company) don't complain, it's okay. Living in an occupied country, religion-wise -- it becomes so obvious this time of year, even if most of the customs they're observing are pagan ones!

GOD!

Dean

Dear Dean,

That's the "holiday spirit"!

Keep up the [ine work! The whole country seems about ready to slip over the deep edge into a totalitarian never-never land - let's not let them get away with it.

Steve

Dear Steve:

Thank you for answering my last letter so promptly. The information that you provided was wonderful.

Enclosed you will find a check ($24). This is to put myself, and my roommate, Camm, on your membership list.

Camm and I are writers, and would be interested in seeing a Writer's Guild form. We will be moving to Connecticut in June; I am leaving the Air Force, and we are interested in finding out if there are any Odinists there.

The next part I will throw open for the readers of Runestones: I am looking for anyone who plans to, or would like to make a Viking voyage to Greenland, Iceland, and beyond. This would require a ship, so we may need to contact someone who could build one. Oh, may already have one. The second possibility is slim, but maybe someone out there is waiting for a crew.

I would be interested in any responses.

Hail Odin!

Matt

Dear Matt,

Welcome to the Austrian Free Assembly! I'm printing your letter, so all those writers, occupants of Connecticut, and would-be Vikings out there can write you. Good luck on all these points. Respondents, send 'em to "Matt", c/o AFA, at our address.

Steve
Pagan Only News Magazine is a publication devoted to Paganism as the Old Religion and recognition of the Divinity in One. Its purpose is to notify pagan individuals and groups of all traditions by publishing a "common ground" for all interested members and friends of the Pagan community to share information, ideas, techniques and traditional lore, as well as to indicate resources of Pagan contacts, goods and services available. Published quarterly. Subscription rates: U.S. bulk mail $7.00; outside U.S. and Canada surface mail $8.00; airmail $10.00; sample copy or single issue, $1.00. Write to: P.O. Box 42, Wrentham, MA 02093 USA

The Band, a hereditary Welsh journal of Celtic Music, is published quarterly, coinciding with Celtic Festivals, by the Cymru Esgobion. Subscription rates to £5/year (first class postage) for U.S. and Canada; £1/year (foreign airmail). Single issues/samples are £3.50. Foreign payments must be made in U.S. funds or by international money order. Make any check/money order payable to: E.A. Dehove. Write to: Anchor Temple of Gwynedd, 560 N. 16th St., Lot #5, Phoenix, AZ 85015 USA

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