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

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The opinions in 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:

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Cover art: Thanks to Keven Knight

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**CALENDAR**

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

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

**DECEMBER 31** - If Mother’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.

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.
UP FRONT

About two and a half years ago, with RUNESTONE #1, we revived the journal which, in many ways, "started it all" for Asatru in this country. Now, with the issue you hold in your hand, we are embarking on a much more ambitious quest. In these pages I am calling for the birth of an organization similar, but not identical, to the legendary Asatru Free Assembly. For reasons I detail elsewhere, I believe this is a necessity if the balance of modern Asatru is to be preserved. I hope you will read this article carefully, and respond as you must — hopefully, with agreement and collaboration!

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. 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 Lee gives 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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THE RUNESTONE
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 Asatrú 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 Ásatrúfolk who feel that there’s an inherent connection between their biological heritage - 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 Asatrú,” 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.

Asatrú Alliance, formerly the folkish bastion in the field. (3) There is no reliable stronghold for scattered kindreds across the country. The movement is out of balance.

The time has come for a group which must misleadingly advocate the folkish viewpoint. That’s Assembly, because we can’t relieve the past. But it can be an Asatrú 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:

* Asatrú is the indigenous religion of such, it is one expression of a common European heritage: all the far-flung sons and daughters of the Celtic, whatever their nation of origin.

* Asatrú springs from our nature as it is not just what we believe, it is what we are as part of shared evolution in a similar environment. The physical, mental, and spiritual pattern, and association. Thus, Asatrú is intimately connected with our people.

* As a logical consequence of the above, we recognize the validity of other nations and the right of other peoples to advance their own form of diversity, one with a mosaic of peoples in their own fate. We are not “anti” anyone against us!

* Asatrú honors the past while making room for living in the tenth century. The traditional values of our Teutonic ancestors have great cultural value which must not be imprisoned by them. Asatrú...

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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 a 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 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?
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 Fria as a God, whose name means something like "giver of freedom." But just how free are we, these days? Is Fria 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 where we want and can vote for the storage 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 thirty 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 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 just 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. Even 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 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!**
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 COS I 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 truer 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 in the night so that our people may see it and return home. We are all knights of order, and we 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 all in the saddle!

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

Who is this figure bound in darkness?

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

LOKI AS LIFEGIVER

When the Three walked over the unblemished Midgard, Loki was among them, known by another name: Lodur. He was warmed and tended to the very new thing that the Gods had made of love and beauty called Mankind. He gave and gave. He was the giver of humor and lightheartedness. Enthusiastic, he turns inside the breast of the warrior laughingly, a mind that tells a jest even as hunger gnaws. A woman trapped in a place she never wanted to be, the sweetest and cruellest of gifts: hope.

LOKI THE COMPANION

He is the traveler, the one who holds the road and the fellows venture deep into the cold lands men...
You are bound to a razor-sharp stone by fetters of blood and sinew. Above you a great serpentine 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 Wyrd 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 - Asafolk are lucky enough to have found the best kind of belonging! Not only do we have a bond with other Asatrue, 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, Asatrue 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 waterproof 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
enough of a problem in an ordinary famil-
y photograph album - Is that Uncle Bob, or his daughter when she was just a
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Your time capsule should be wa-
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OLD ANCESTORS

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It's occurred to me that this ex-
ercise 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
possible to be "possessed" by a forebear,
or even by one's own previous incarn-
ation? 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 Eu-
ropes, they might well establish their cred-
entials 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 formu-
laic finish is permissible, once you have
gone back to the limits of your knowl-
edge.

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?)

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.

Don’t despair! A limited supply of back issues of THE RUNESTONE are now available for $3.00 each. Choose from:

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #8 #9

Feed your soul with Back issues of THE RUNESTONE!
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 

**THE RUNESTONE**
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 Fergus 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 “Asatu norm” no more than do, for example, a priestess of Freya in Iceland and a warrior pledged to Wotan in Germany 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 fine bottle of Guiness into my mead horn, and toast all things Celtic/Nordic. Slainte, and Slainte, to you!
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 Friggas
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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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.
Loki. Continued from page 9

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

angered scream. He leads the other Ones in the destruction of all that is beautiful and true, he destroys with a crazed smile and a shout. What is the Norns laid down for him... the beginning.

What is Loki? Companion, life’s tales, all these things...and much, much more?

Yule

It’s so easy to describe the Yule. After all, this is a holiday that got cluttered up with manger scenery tales imported from the Middle East, like celebrating Christmas! The tree is ours, the evergreen and candles are who acts a lot like Thor in disguise—part of our traditional religion. The times change very little at this time of year, these roots of this holy season, and you’ll find... It’s the feeling of Yule that is beautiful, you can almost hear the music of themes of stillness...the way time seems to beat in moments of your life in a balance from that first Christmas you remembered most recent. Sure, we could predict all we know about the symbolism that you feel it in your bones is another thing, but no book to tell you what every atom of your

Well, the best of Yuletide joy to you, the 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 Norns 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!
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 (Norse shamanism), 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 Hemslöjd, 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 Anderson, 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 berserkers. 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 swordsmission, 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, 38611N.E. Amboy Road, Yacolt, WA 98675.

Dear Steve,

...I’d be very interested in subscribing, but not sure if subscriptions from non-White areas are being a former “trained professional killer” and also have a PhD. in ethnology and archaeology for various megalithic sites. I’m afraid this will turn me into “the Pagan myth” of a “genteel, non-aggressive, matrarchal Never Never Land [as contrasted with Europeans].” I think that one came about because a writer] was scared by a pony as a child...

Greetings, Bill!

Thanks for your letter! As you correctly point out, ethnicity reading our humble little magazine is increasing.

I guess the whole thing requires some discussion on race - the politically correct “non-aggressive, Nazi, genocide-contemplating” dogma on the Western left. There are dozens (hundreds?) of shadings in between. Ethnology helps shape both personality and culture but they’re superior but because they’re MINE, not mine.

To hell with the whole thing. We should all live in peace and prosperity with the attitude of “What can I do to hurt somebody today?”

Also, I support the right of other peoples to be allowed to work alongside some rain forest-felling international corporation trying to pour us all onto a malaria-ridden Amazon. We should all be free, and he’s my enemy.

The Runestone
Dear Steve,

...I'd be very interested in subscribing to RUNESTONE. However, I'm not sure if subscriptions from non-White, non-Asatron 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

Hailsa!

Of course I'll stay with you and THE RUNESTONE! Are there any other real Odinist 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 Odinist/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 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-weilding 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? Nor 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)