



THE RUNESTONE



THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient Norse religion and is dedicated to the revival of that religion as epitomized during the Viking Age, and to the values of courage, freedom and individuality which are associated with it.

THE RUNESTONE is the official publication of the Ásatrú Free Assembly and is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$5.00 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$6.00 per year overseas (airmail). Write to the Ásatrú Free Assembly, 1766 East Avenue, Turlock, CA 95380. Please make checks payable to "Ásatrú Free Assembly."

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## CALENDAR



March-May 1979

March 9 - Day of Remembrance for the martyr Olvir. He was an adherent of Ásatrú who persisted in organizing underground sacrifices to the gods despite decrees by Olaf the Lawbreaker forbidding such activities. Betrayed by an informer, he was killed by Olaf's men while preparing for the spring sacrifice in the village of Maerin, Norway. Many other men whose names are lost to us were killed, mutilated, or exiled for taking part in these sacrifices.

March 21 - The High Feast Day of Ostara, called after the Germanic goddess of that name and celebrated at the Spring Equinox. See the article "Ostara" in this issue for more information. It is a festival of rebirth and resurgence--for Nature, for our people, for our faith.

March 28 - This is Ragnar Lodbrok Day, in honor of the semi-legendary Viking chieftain of that name. On this date in the year 845, which just happened to be Easter Sunday--this incorrigible heathen sacked Paris. Rather a nice sense of irony, we'd say!

April 5 - Alexander Nevsky wasn't exactly a Viking, but he was a descendent of the Swedes who settled Russia and he was a pagan. Most likely he followed a version of Ásatrú. On April 5, 1242, he defeated the Teutonic Knights sent to Christianize the region by luring them onto the ice of Lake Chud, which gave way beneath the heavily armored knights.

Cover courtesy Peter Seymour

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

In our last issue we reported the wedding of Shawn and Pat O'Riley in the rites of Ásatrú. We are pleased to announce another marriage in this issue. On November 11, Eiríkur Thorarinnsson and Barbara Ann Murray were wed in Thor's temple in Tucson, Arizona. The ritual was performed by a friend of the groom, a Freygothi from Flagstaff. Over 61 people attended the wedding and the reception which followed at the home of the bride. We wish them happiness and fruitfulness!

Eirík, as many of you know, is Allsherjargöbi of the Ásatrúarfolk, an Odinist group centered in Tucson.

One of the greatest Viking stories of all time has recently been reprinted! H. Rider Haggard's *Erik Brighteyes* is now available in paperback from Zebra Books. You'll be sorry if you miss it. Find it wherever paperbacks are sold. Classification - heroic fantasy.

If you are in the market for Viking weapons and armor, or for artifacts related to our religion from mead horns to a wooden shrine frieze, you need the catalog of theatrical and pageant properties put out by Peter Seymour. You'll be astounded by the selection of authentic Norse items available - and if you want Greco-Roman, Celtic, Mongol, or American Indian items, he has these, too. Peter can and will make equipment to order, and his prices are the lowest we've seen. Send him \$1.20 plus postage (something like \$3.00) for this huge catalog. His address is 95 Dartford Avenue, London N9, England.

Any of our readers who are into the bike scene should contact us, as several Odinists of biker persuasion are looking for correspondents and contacts along this line. Drop us a letter and we'll forward it to the appropriate people.

The Varangian Guard is an Odinist warrior society and a sub-group of the AFA. Definitely not an armchair organization, it is open only to combat veterans or men who desire to become combat veterans. Interested persons are invited to inquire.

Our group which specializes in devotion to the deities of fertility and fecundity--Frey, Freya, Njord--invites inquiry from those having a special interest in these gods and goddesses.

We've just received the first issue of an Odinist newsletter in French, published in Switzerland. *SKULD* (named after the Norn of the future) looks to be a very well-done publication, though it will be hard to comment further until we have it translated! A sample copy may be obtained by sending an international reply coupon, available at the post office, to Jean-Francois Mayer, Case Postale 83, CH-1700, Fribourg 5, Switzerland. We wish *SKULD* full success!

## SKEPPSLAG NEWS AND CONTACTS

The San Francisco Bay Area Skeppslag continued its calendar of activities with an informal Júl meeting in December. This was followed by an *Ódin-Blót* on January 20 and a *Thor-Blót* in February. Anyone in the Bay Area who would like to participate in these monthly gatherings, or perhaps simply to meet some of us and learn more about what we do, is invited to contact *The Runestone*.

In San Diego and southern California generally, Shawn O'Riley is the man to contact. Shawn's Skeppslag welcomes inquiries from interested people in his area. He can be contacted at 1808 - 3rd Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101.

Isaac Mell is the *gothi* for Washington and he's trying to organize a skeppslag in his area. His address is 607 North State St., Bellingham, WA 98225.

A good non-AFA group is Eiríkur Thorarínsson's group *Ásatrúarfolk*, located in Tucson. You people in the Southwest might want to reach him at 511 West Panorama, #F86, Tucson, AZ 85704. They publish a fine journal called *Vor Trú*.

People wanting contact with fellow Norse pagans are:

Greg Steiner  
443 South Courts  
U.N.I.  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

James Hampshire  
750 Carnation Drive  
Winter Park, FL 32789

Thomas L. Gunter  
2101 - 11th Ave.  
La Marque, TX 77568

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P.O. Box 92  
Orchard Park, NY 14127

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DK 2620  
Albertslund, Denmark

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569-82-4940  
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APO NY 09160

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A MAGICKAL GATHERING FOR MAGICKAL PEOPLE: PAN PAGAN FESTIVAL '79

Plans are already underway for the Third Annual Pan Pagan Festival, a National gathering of Witches, Wizards, Druids, Ceremonial Magickans, Neo-Pagans, Shamans, and other Magickal peoples.

The 1979 Pan Pagan Festival is tentatively set for July 12 - 15 at a Midwest site soon to be selected.

As with the previous Pan Pagan Festivals, the '79 happening will be a camp-out gathering with feasting, bonfires, music and dancing, ceremonies of different traditions, and workshops on various aspects of magickal and psychic development.

The '79 Pan Pagan Festival will also include workshops for young Pagans, plus rap sessions conducted by members of a variety of Wicca and Pagan traditions such as Celtic, Hellenic, Egyptian, Gardnerian, Nordic, African, Native American, Pagan Way, Kabbalistic, Church of all Worlds, Eclectic Wicca, Hereditary Craft, and others.

Want to receive a free brochure with more details about the Third Annual Pan Pagan Festival, happening in Summer 1979? Write CIRCLE, Box 9013, Madison, WI 53715, Attn: Festival, and ask to be placed on the Circle Network mailing list. Brochures will be mailed in the Spring.

# ostara

The great spring festival of the Germanic lands, Ostara, carries a dual nature that reflects the balance of our faith. On one hand it is the celebration of life and fertility, the rebirth of Nature as witnessed by the greening of the meadows and our increased awareness of the animals of the forest as they carry on their lives in the clement weather. On the other, it is the season in which, in days of yore, the Viking brought his dragon ship out of its winter storage, sacrificed to Ódin, and set sail for escapades of trading and conquest.

The festival bears the name of the Germanic goddess Ostara, later corrupted to Easter. But by whatever name, it remains a celebration of the eternal rebirth of life and the coming of the gentle weather of springtime. How our ancestors must have rejoiced! Their eyes, reddened by the smoky fires of the winter hearth and dazed by the glare of the stretching snowfields, must have longed for the restful green of the garnished glade. Although our circumstances are less harsh, we too can honor the evidenced resurgence of the life-force as it pulses through man, beast, and tree alike. Let us indeed hail that lovely goddess, Mother Nature, and hearken to her whisperings as did our forefathers.

Some would say that there is a contradiction in a festival which praises life-giving Ostara and death-bringing Ódin in the same breath. Yet is it so simple, so pat? They are complements on one level; apparent opposites which must strike a balance. On still another plane, even this seeming contradiction disappears, for the rising sap in the tree is like a rising desire in the warrior to ply his trade in far-off lands. The life-force has many manifestations, and it is amoral. Let us not feel that we must force it into clean and tidy molds acceptable to Christian morality. The life-affirming will and vigor of the warrior is an expression of this life-force as surely as the blooming flowers and the greening trees.

It is both to Ódin and Ostara that we call, then, in the renaissance of Nature. May the dispelling of frosty winter link us with the flow of Nature, and quicken in our hearts an appreciation of these wonders even as we strive for a similar awakening of our people from the freezing pseudo-death of Christianity.

Hail Ostara! Hail Ódin!





## HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES



The Alamo, "Shrine of Texan Liberty," is under siege once more, 142 years after the last Mexican soldier clambered over the walls and the last defender met his death. The attackers in 1836 were members of Santa Anna's army. In 1979 it's the historical revisionists' turn.

Associated Press brought us news last April that a Texas history buff, whose name we will omit to save him from enraged citizens of the Lone Star State, claims that Davy Crockett surrendered at the historic battle. This is in direct conflict with orthodox history, which says that Davy Crockett, bear-hunter, frontiersman, and ex-Congressman from Tennessee, threw in his lot with the cause of Texas independence and died a hero's death at the fortress-mission in San Antonio.

Well, we know how easily history can be twisted in the telling. Our own ancestors, the Vikings, fell victim to that. The rather sensationalized articles crowing of Crockett's "cowardice," though, in no way alter the bare fact that the men of the Alamo, to include the wandering Tennessean, held a crumbling old mission for thirteen days against a force which outnumbered them conservatively by ten to one (and perhaps by much more). There was no surrender of the garrison, no compromise on either side. The Alamo was taken by storm. To attempt to smear a hero who fights against incredible odds for thirteen days, and then is captured or perhaps surrenders, is petty--to say the least. It is the poodle yapping at the Great Dane gored by a bull after a hard fight.

Perhaps our amateur historian would care to duplicate Crockett's feat? Not likely.

In all fairness to our revisionist, it may well be that rabid journalism put words in his mouth or distorted what he meant to say. But still, we should ask ourselves, why is there such a desire to downgrade the heroes of yesteryear, to tarnish their memories? Why this compulsion to cut the great down to size?

Nietzsche would have had an answer--and I think the right one. The weak, those lacking in the virtues that make for greatness, are natural-born levelers. They cannot emulate, so they must desecrate. The hero represents something forever beyond them, and in hatred born of envy and fear they will try to pull him down, to remove the threat to their pitifully frail egos. Yes, the priest of Zarathustra, the devotee of Wotan masquerading as Dionysius, may well have understood this tragic phenomenon.

Great poetry has been written about the siege of the Alamo--and some of it in skaldic meter, with kennings of great power. Imagine my delight and my surprise at finding an epic poem using Norse metaphor to describe the most dramatic moment of Texas history, in a science fiction book! Dates may change, the locale may change, but the archetypes remain the same. The Alamo, too, is a part of our tradition. When the ultimate book of courage is composed, it will be listed with the battle at Teutoberger Wald and the defense of Gunnar's Hall in *Njals Saga*.

And the revisionists? When one admires the statues of great men which stand in the park, one pays little attention to the pigeons, whose only act of audacity is conspicuous defecation.

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## REINCARNATION IN ASATRÚ

*This is Edred Thorsson's first article for us--the first of many, we hope. We urge all our readers to catch his excellent article on rune magic in Gnostic issue #53. Edred is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic Languages at the University of Texas at Austin, with a concentration in Old Norse and Old English Languages and Literature. His theme is certainly appropriate for Ostara.*  
-Editor

Certain modern commentators upon Ásatrú would have us believe that our forefathers held extremely confused ideas concerning the destiny of the human soul after death. This was never the case! Although our forefathers in Ásatrú were never bound by rigid dogma, they had formulated a general ideology based upon direct magico-mystical experience and astute observation of nature--of which they knew themselves to be an integral part. The formula which they developed was rather complex, but no more complex than the multiversal world itself. This complexity baffled the simple-minded monks, and even many later 19th century scholars. It seemed to them that our heathen ancestors only possessed a confused mass of mutually contradictory conceptions--it never occurred to them that all these ideas could have been held at the same time, in a *syncretic multiverse*.

The "soul" is made up of several entities, each with its own special function. These may be conceived of as "levels of consciousness," or "states of being." Some of these entities which are important to the rebirth process will now be discussed. The *hugr* is the mental faculty, consciousness, seat of the will, etc. The *hamr* is the plastic, image forming material which the *hugr* may use to form new "bodies" for itself--a process much in evidence in the saqas. These concepts are certainly important, but not central to the teaching of reincarnation, or *aptrburðr* (literally translated: "back-birth"). Two entities are most involved in this process, the *hamingja* and the *fylgja*. The *hamingja* is a mobile form of magical power, it is the agent by which the *hugr* may create a *hamr*, and it may also be passed from one person to another, either in part or in its entirety. This may constitute either an initiation, or a type of reincarnation respectively. However, it is with the *fylgja* that we enter into the realm of true *aptrburðr*. The *hamingja* is a dynamic force which may be divided and projected for various purposes, but the *fylgja*, or fetch, is attached to the vicinity of its owner for the duration of that individual's life.

Moreover, these various soul-conceptions are considered to have a variety of destinations after death. The *hugr* may go to Valhöll or to Hel, while the *hamr* may remain with the corpse in the burial mound (in certain historical periods) animating the *draugr*, or walking dead. As far as the other two entities are concerned, they may be reborn, within the clan structure, from generation to generation. The recently dead ancestor would be reborn in the newly born descendants. These diverse beliefs did not come into conflict with one another due to the special way in which the human soul, and the world, were understood. This multiplicity of souls and variety of functions and destinations of these entities after death were concepts which were vigorously attacked by the christian clergy, and are therefore concepts which must be vigorously pursued and renewed by the folk of Ásatrú, in order that we might again fully know their power.

cont. →





It must be stressed that, in ancient times, it was not believed that the personal consciousness was reborn, but only certain innate transpersonal powers and abilities--and also certain obligations. The *hamingja-fylgja* complex (these two concepts are often regarded as one during this process) departs from a person's body upon death. In the sagas it is often said that a man who is about to die will be confronted by his *fylgja*. It most often appears as a female being, and furthermore it often has the appearance of a *valkyrja*. (The *valkyrjur* and *fylgjur* seem to be related in many respects.) In any event, once the *fylgja* has departed from the body it may fare with one of the other soul-entities to the barrow, or to either Valhöll or Hel. It may also be passed from a dying man to his son, or beloved kinsman. This latter possibility is especially common with respect to the *aettar-* or *kynfylgja* (clan-fetch) which is usually attached to the head of the clan, and which embodies all the collective power of the clan. However, when the *kynfylgja* or *mannsfylgja* (individuals-fetch) takes up abode in one of the other-worlds, it remains there awaiting the birth of the right child to whom it will come and attach itself at the point of *vatni ausa* (sprinkling with water) and *nafn gefa* (name-giving). The *vatni ausa* rite is pre-Christian in origin. These rites are performed by the head of the clan nine days after birth, after the child has shown itself to be worthy of integration into the clan by its physical strength and spiritual power. Both of these rites have a magical intention of aiding the re-integrating process of the *hamingja-fylgja* into the newborn child, and at the same time they serve as ceremonial confirmation of the re-integration which may have taken place over the foregoing nine days of life.

The name which is given to the child is that of a recently dead ancestor. This name is chosen either because the ancestor appeared to the mother, father, or chieftain in a dream during the pregnancy period, or the father, chieftain, or *goði* ascertains the proper name by magical means. The child is then considered to be the ancestor reborn into the clan structure. That is, the namesake is the bearer of the innate powers, abilities, and obligations of the forebear, but the namesake possesses an original "personality," that is, *hugr*, inspiration (*óðr*), and spirit (*önd*). It is now the task of this new individual, a perfect blend of the powers and obligations of the past and the hopes and responsibilities of the future, to go forth, and by deeds of honor, add to the force of the *hamingja-fylgja*. In this way the "syncretic clan," made up of both the living and the dead, may be viewed as a tree, with the ancestral roots providing the continuing nourishment from the realm of the dead, and the branches providing unending energy from the realm of the living.

This ideology perhaps goes back as far as Indo-European times. Similar beliefs were held by the ancient Greeks, in a form of pre-Pythagorean metempsychosis, and in fact the Pythagorean doctrine was probably for the most part drawn from the indigenous religion, and not "from Egypt," or "from the East." Also, the Thracians and Kelts maintained strong rebirth cults. The Rig Vedic Indian culture probably also possessed a doctrine of rebirth similar to that of the other Indo-European cultures.

Old Norse literature is rich in sagas and myths which involve a theme of *aptrburðr*. One of the lesser known, yet most explicit of these is *Þorðar saga hræðu*. In this saga Þorðr goes to battle against a berserkr by the name of Bärekr, and during a sword fight, Þorðr is wounded on the arm by Bärekr's poisoned blade. Þorðr returns home and dies. At his funeral feast a son is born to his wife, Helga, and the child is seen to have a scar in the identical place where his father was wounded. The boy was sprinkled with water and given the name Þorðr, after his

father. When the boy came into his twelfth winter he set out and avenged his father by killing Bärekr in single combat. It is said, that it seemed to Þorðr that he had grown great by his deed. The mythic hero, Helgi, is reborn in three successive generations, each time bearing the same holy name. Starkaðr (in *Gautreks saga*) is said to be his grandfather, also named Starkaðr, reborn. And of course the greatest of all heroes, Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, is most certainly the rebirth of his father, Sigmundur. (Another, perhaps more ancient mode of naming involved the variation of a portion of the name.) Ragnarök provides us with extremely important examples of *aptrburðr*. Along with the other Gods who are reborn, or live past the dissolution of the world, there are two figures known as the Gods of Vengeance--*Víðarr* and *Váli*. *Víðarr* avenges the death of his father, *Óðinn*, while *Váli* avenges the death of *Baldr*. These two Gods of Vengeance may be considered to be *aptrburðir* of *Óðinn* and *Baldr* respectively. However, this constitutes one of the greatest mysteries (*rúnar*) of *Ásatrú*, and is much too complex to fully discuss here--but the relevant texts in both *Eddas* can become fruit-bearing branches for religious meditation.

Two elements played important roles in the heathen ideology of *aptrburðr*, 1) ritual action: the *vatni ausa*-naming rite, and 2) the responsibilities of the "reborn" to the "dead" to perform deeds of honor, and to avenge their deaths if necessary. The verb "to avenge" in Old Norse is "*hefna*." This word actually contains the root meaning: "to release," that is, to release the soul(s) of the dead in order that they might proceed to their proper destinations already mentioned above. This includes the release of the *hamingja-fylgja* so that it/they may more completely be reborn within the clan. A third important element which aids in this interlace between the worlds of the dead and the living is made up of various initiatory rites, which have a transmission of power or wisdom from the realm of the dead to that of the living as their principle function--thereby more completely integrating the two into a syncretic one.

Now, it must be said that these beliefs are still viable today! These answers to age-old questions are based upon millenia of observation of, and experience in, the natural order of the multiverse by our own forebears--and not the "answers" foisted upon us by unnatural and unwholesome monks. We may still follow the ways of our forefathers by, 1) naming our children right, in accordance with both the ancient naming ritual and customs of name choosing, and 2) fulfilling all our responsibilities to our ancestors.

#### VATNI AUSA RITUAL

- 1) The Mother lays the child in the lap of the Father (or the head of the clan, or *goði*). The terms "Mother" and "Father" may be understood symbolically here.
- 2) The Father sprinkles pure spring water upon the child using either a ladle, or a sprig of evergreen, saying:  
*"Ek verp vatni þetta barn á, ok gef honum nafnit \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
 (eptir afa/ammu sínum.)"*

(English translation: "I throw water on this child and give it the name \_\_\_\_\_ (name) (after its grandfather/grandmother) (or some other ancestor).")

This may be incorporated into other *blótar*, but in any case it should be a joyous occasion--for the forefathers are again among us!



## MOOT POINT

Dear Stephen McWallen,

*This is a long and uncomfortable letter to write....*

*As a subscriber to The Runestone, an applicant for associate membership in the A.F.A., and one interested in and being instructed in Asatru to become a gothi, I must take exception to the formation of the "warrior's cult" with some of the views and values of the Berserkere Cult. I know at one time in the past these were necessary. With the singular human allegiance as called for of old I feel these would do us of Asatru more harm than good.*

*I commend the AFA in their condemnation of the Nazis in using our religion as a cover (Issue #25). In Issue #26 you seem to be starting your own army. I, like many people, disapprove of the Nazis all aspects economic, political and religious, since they only used part and not all, and (I disapprove of) military fanaticism. It seems to me and to some friends who are interested in AFA that you only disapprove of all but the military fanaticism. I and others here in Colorado by all means don't know all things (but we) think that AFA should hold an Althing as of old. Such a decision to form the warrior's cult will either directly or indirectly involve all AFA members. Especially when they are independent with their secret rituals it sounds like the S.S. of Hitler. I certainly hope not.*

*It seems to me in the light of Guyana and Jim Jones' hit list (that) such a splinter cult would come under rapid investigation. Please remember our country is not as free as we may think. The public outcry from our ancient enemy will or could be great--possibly enough so as to remove us from recognized religious status and the Feds could do this.*

*I implore you and the AFA to think twice, and to answer this letter publicly in The Runestone and/or to me. And by all means hold an Althing to make such a major and all involved sort of decision.*

ODIN LIVES!

-M. H.

16 February 1979

Dear Mr. Hunter,

I understand your concern for the reputation and future of Asatru, and your sincerity. And I appreciate your honesty in speaking your mind. But it seems that somehow I have failed to explain what the warrior fraternity--since named the Varangian Guard--is all about.

A workable organization for warriors is more necessary today than it was during the Viking Age. Why? Simply because the ancient warrior was supported by his culture and its values in such a way that there was no danger whatsoever of the Way of the Warrior becoming extinct. It would have been unthinkable. Today, our ancestral values have become so battered under the assaults of Christianity that the warrior is no longer nourished in this manner. He has become isolated and despised by those who cannot understand him or his ways. There are those who openly advocate his extermination.

If the warrior dies, we all die. The virtues of courage and combativeness are essential to our traditional culture. The basic impulse that drives the warrior is the same one that has prompted all great explorations and all great endeavors--it is part and parcel of the human spirit, and to abandon it by the wayside would result first in the loss of our humanity and secondly in our extermination, for those who default in the struggle of life are ruthlessly cast aside by Nature.

One chief function--perhaps even the overriding function--of the Varangian Guard is to see that the warrior spirit is not bred out of us. We want to do that by encouraging the combat survivability of men who lay their lives on the line, and by instilling in them a sense of responsibility to the future. We want them to know that their lives do not have to be lived in a spiritual vacuum just because the precepts of the established religions run contrary to their own common sense and instincts.

The comparison with the berserker on my part was perhaps unfortunate, but the Varangian Guard will be using some of the outward signs and symbols of that group, because they are so well known. But I don't mean to make too much of that because there are other sources of our inspiration, as well--such as the original Varangian Guard and some modern military units.

"Military Fanaticism"? I am always amazed how, when the "good guys" demonstrate great courage they are lauded by poets and by the man in the street, but if the "bad guys" perform in an identical manner they are dismissed as fanatics. That's hardly fair! Credit for great bravery must be given where it is due, even if we disagree with the motivations that produced it. The very fact that we so often forget this is in itself a sign of the degeneracy of our times.

Still, the Varangian Guard is in no way an imitation S.S. A better comparison would be with the male warrior-hunter lodge which goes all the way back through history almost to the dawn of human origins. Such fraternities have always served a very real human need, and the fact that such exclusive lodges have always had secret rites doesn't mean that they're hatching SS-men on the sly. Actually, Hitler (and the Jesuits, whom he and Himmler copied), were using perfectly sound psychological and sociological techniques in setting up the structure of the SS as they did. We don't have to abandon those techniques just because the Nazis used them any more than we have to quit riding in automobiles because Nazis used them, too.

You are one hundred percent right when you say that we are not as free as we might think. But let the Feds investigate us, if they wish. They won't find a private army, because there isn't one. The VG is a religious and military fraternity, not a commando group. What they will find is a small (very small, at this writing) body of like-minded men who offer family assistance, personal and family counseling, legal aid, and moral support to warriors. They will find that our first project involves, not gun smuggling or the hiring of a mercenary army, but an effort to get the release of a veteran who we feel has been confined to a State hospital for totally spurious reasons.

Certainly one does not have to be a warrior to follow Asatru! Our religion is one with many aspects, and the VG will always be a relatively small group of specialists. But our religion is one to be lived, not talked about, and we feel that the veteran, the professional serving in the armed forces, and yes, even the handful of genuine soldiers of fortune to be found in the world deserve proper religious expression--and the religion of the Viking warrior is ideally suited for them.

We must realize the broad area--namely, every facet of human experience!--covered by Asatru, and learn to tolerate those who choose to emphasize a different portion of it than our own. Although these sub-groups have their own special ways of worship, they are an integral part of the AFA, not something apart or something in competition, or independent, as you say in your letter. This applies to the emerging group which will specialize in devotion to Frey and Freya, as well.

Personally, of course, I do not feel that an Althing is justified to discuss this issue. But if our membership wants one for this purpose--if they agree with you that the Varangian Guard is wrong, and if they plan on actually attending such an Althing--all they have to do is let me know.

I hope this clarifies my position and fully explains any misunderstanding.

ODIN LIVES!

-Stephen A. McAllen

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Mr. McAllen,

Thank you for the info on the correspondence course. Now I'll have to consider the state of my finances, and the time I have available for additional studying. There is one aspect of Norse culture that I've been quite curious about, but have found very little information; perhaps it would be a good topic for a future article in *The Runestone*. The Norse apparently followed a lunar calendar prior to the introduction of Christianity. I've found a few scattered references to it, for instance in Sigrid Undset's *Master of Hestviken*, which imply that the names of the months, and their relation to the Christian calendar, are known, but none of my available sources goes into detail. I imagine complete information on this would help in setting the dates and times of particular rituals and holidays. Have you ever found any research on this topic?

WORD LIVES!

-G.C.L.

Dear G.C.L.,

I know from my reading that the months were known, but I no longer have that list--and if I recall, it differed from the names of the months now commonly used by our English brethren. Can any of our readers help us out on this one?

-S.A.M.

Dear Mr. McAllen:

I have received your letter, and the copy of *The Runestone* you sent, and was thoroughly pleased with it. It was one of the first publications I have received that has made any sense, or even remotely touched on what my life has been about. Myself and several other men here have been into the Viking-warrior lifestyle for several years now, without really identifying ourselves outwardly with it, because identity trips have always turned out to be hang-ups in one way or another. We have never really expressed a belief in the Nordic Gods, but we have always been inspired by those Gods, and the values and lifestyle which they represent. We are definitely into the clan and family lifestyle, with each head of a family as the leader and protector of his own family; but with each leader having no more authority than another in deciding for the benefit of the clan as a whole. We are also interested in contacting any pagan Nordics out there who are interested in our way of life, and who wish in the future to fully develop their way of life into a deeper reality along with us. We sincerely welcome all "non-armchair" pagan women in this request. Anyone interested in this offer should write to either: Donald A. Morgan, #36247-136; or, Carl C. Bowles, both at: P.O. Box 1000, Marion, Illinois, 62959. A prompt and sincere answer can be expected. Again, our thanks for your publication and work.

-Donald A. Morgan

## Sweden

Dear Steve!

It is true that I haven't been able to get any information or even confirmation of what your friend tells about building a replica of an ancient temple--neither from the central authority or that in Uppsala concerning the care of ancient monuments. Not to mention the others I have spoken with.

But the Norwegian Embassy could tell about Dagfinn Ekkhof, former leader of NORSK HEDNINGASAMFUND. Some years ago I heard about someone having caused amusement in Oslo walking up some street selling HEDNINGABLADET, but I didn't know how to get in touch with him until I heard from you about the publicity--which I haven't seen anything of in Sweden, typically enough!

Having this organization and fame they seem to have come much longer than we here in Stockholm, where "the movement", if you can talk about any, is very heterogeneous. And unorganized. And "vulgar". Very narrow-minded people only concerned with "saving Sweden" or something the like. I tried to phone Dagfinn but he wasn't there, so I'll write him instead and ask him to forward the post, if he is not with the organization anymore.

To go to Norway as kind of foreign reporter for *The Runestone* would be fun, if I only manage to complete the collection of song texts I am working with now. But you never know with someone like me. Trying the best you can isn't always enough, but what else can you do? Anyway I am pleased to hear that all continues well for you.

In the Name of the Betrayed,

-Gudrik

\*--This refers to reports that the Swedes are building a replica of a heathen temple near Uppsala. We hope to learn more later.

-Ed.



## Denmark

...National oriented folk-festivals are rare nowadays, in the sense I imagine or remember from my childhood in the country. Today you will always find the leftist/progressive or the Christian involved, well camouflaged of course, always arranging, directing, neutralising or speaking, and it's all over. The same story in TV/radio which is a state monopoly (like in Russia), the news media, the press, the pop music and entertainment, the culture and education sector, the foreign aid--what a mess! Anything not exactly on their line, anybody being skeptical or critical and they yell reactionary-fascist-racist. But these things may be familiar to you from your country?.....

-Helge Møller  
Blokland 2, 1 tr.  
DK 2820  
Albertslund, Denmark

Editor's Note: Helge welcomes contacts from any sincere Norse pagan females.

Y Y Y Y Y Y Y

## England

These verses, and the drawing on our cover, are Peter's contribution to this issue. A real mood setter.....

Sword Hazard As a firefly Humming softly In the night sky	Ravens ravage Sightless perches Wait on final Deathly lurches	But in parting Flies a death dart Anger guided To the braggart	Yet defiant Though retreated Spy their birthright Whence unseated
Ringmail byrnies Split asunder Risks unworthy Of the plunder	Beaten host Wisely scatters As the dream Of winning shatters	Smitten sags he Slowly sinking With the banner Eyes unblinking	Swarming boldly From their hiding Cautious Swords From scabbards sliding
Leader's standard Flapping tangled Bearer fallen Limply dangled	Men hunted Leaf hidden Surrender not As victor bidden	Gone the gilding With such Omen Waxing baleful For the foemen	Through the fightfield Come the warworn Free of foe now Save the bird torn
'Til downstricken Foe yet vengeful Making hearts--yet Faithful, woeful	But disappear In smoke and mist Yet defiant Sword in fist	Part they swiftly In the dimness All their glory Turned to grimness	-Peter Seymour -95 Dartford Avenue London N 9 England
Battle bygone Flee the field! ...Flows the whisper -Run--not yield...	Gods not with them Go the losers All for coming Were they choosers	Dawn as witness In the greylight Sees the victors Make their seafight	
Crows hopping Dodging arrows Busy tearing -Feeding carrows	Raising up The conquered banner Stands the foeman Proud in manner	Hidden waiting Undefeated Lurk the watchful Sore depleted	

## update

- - - Being mostly passing thoughts and last-minute items that came up after sending this issue to Hal for typing- - -

On the old names for the months, as mentioned in "Moot Point": the old Anglo-Saxon months are listed in an obscure volume by the Venerable Bede. Thanks to interlibrary loan, I should have my hands on a copy within a few days. We'll publish these in the next issue.

Copies of the Elder Edda are still on order. We have been having an incredibly difficult time getting these books but we are still trying. So don't give up - if we don't get them, those who have ordered them will get their money back!

I should make an additional note concerning the wedding in Tucson mentioned earlier in this issue. In keeping with the custom of the Asatruarfolk, Barbara changed her name and is now Inga Verðandi Páladóttir. I talked to both Inga and Erik on the phone recently; they are doing fine.

Look for lots of new developments with this Vanir group. We're getting into a serious re-examination of the pagan calendar and a much deeper realization of the roles played by Frey and Freya. The result can only be a perspective that will enrich the religious lives of us all. We hope to have a short handbook on the Vanir group (as well as one on the warrior fraternity, the Varangian Guard) ready by the time the next Runestone is out.

In praise to Ostera and to all the female deities of Asatru, I leave you with this thought-

A RELIGION WITHOUT A GODDESS IS HALFWAY TO ATHEISM!



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THRU CLASS