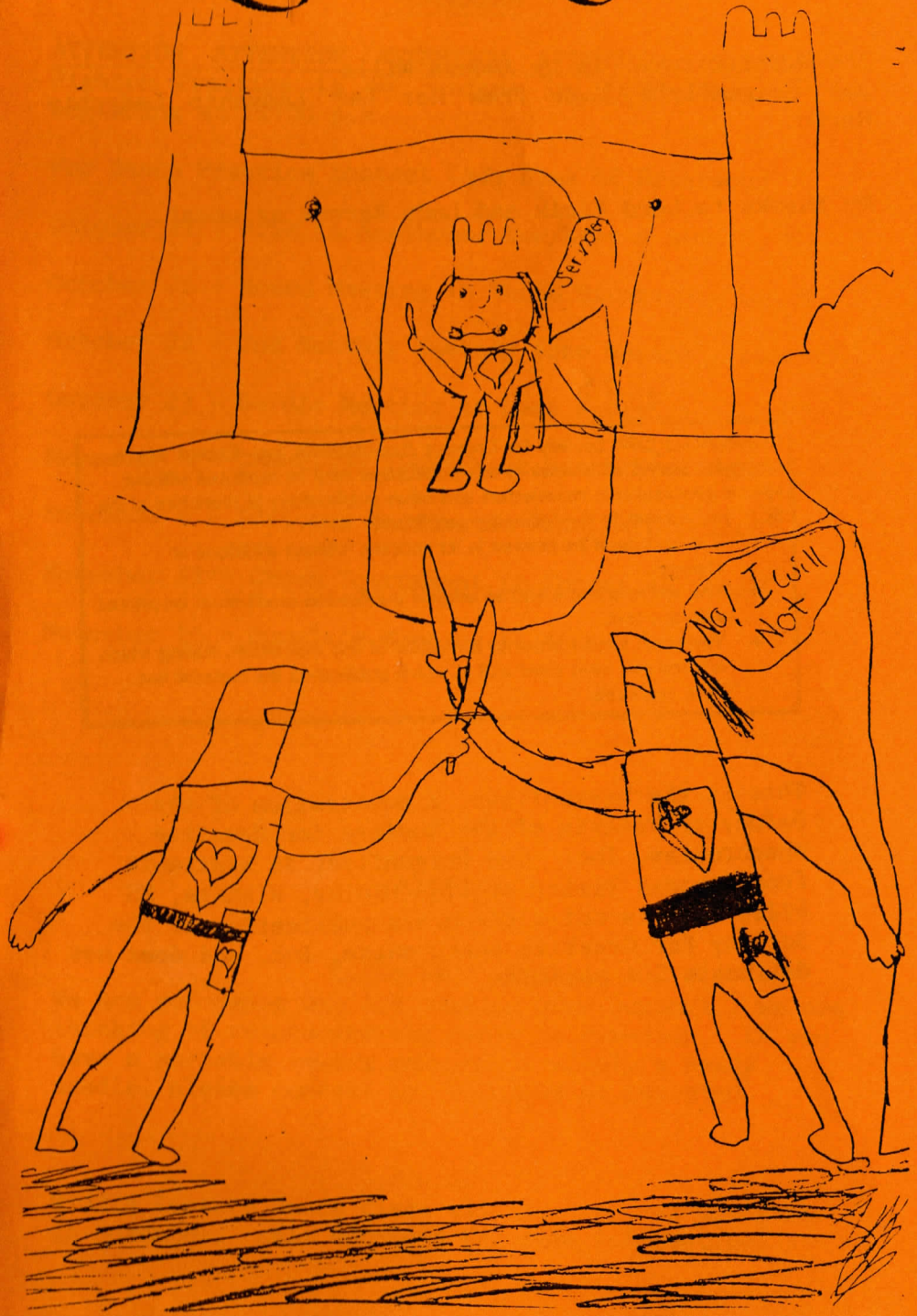


Oct 95

DRAGONFLYRE

The Dragonflyer c/o
Deborah Taylor
1137 Gidley
Wichita, KS 67216



The October cover is by Amanda Mills
The Dragonflyre logo from Her Her Ladyship Ladyship Marie

My thanks to Lord Dirik and Lady Marena as usual.

1995

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This is the Dragonflyer, a publication of the Barony of Vatavia of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. The Dragonflyer is available from Deborah Taylor at 1137 Gidley, Wichita, KS 67216. It is not a corporate publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and does not delineate SCA policies.

CALENDAR

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION
Fighter Practice is on Sundays in SOUTH Linwood Park beginning at 12:00 p.m.

For Dance Practice contact Lady Alex of Briarwood

October 21 - RUSH in Anathonor Tor/Lees's Summit, MO

October 21 - Board Meeting in Three Rivers/St. Louis

October 22 - 2nd Monthly Meeting (see Kerare's letter)

October 23 - Bardic Meeting at Lady Kasimira's, 7:00

November 4 - CHAMPIONS TOURNEY at Lake Afton Park

November 6 - Officers Meeting in Brialen's church

November 11 - Crown Tournament in Forgotten Sea/KC

November 15 - Populace Meeting at Minisa Park

TIDBITS

CLOTHIER'S GUILD

We are reforming and are seeking your support. We are thinking of reincarnating early in November. If you have a portable sewing machine or simply a ready needle, please contact Ly. Odindisa at 269-9354

Middle Eastern dance class will be starting up again in November. call 686-6893 for more information.

*Unto the Populace of Vatavia come these greetings warm and fair from Gabriel ap Morgan ap
Ziywel and Rhianwen ferch Bran ap Gruffydd, Baron and Baroness of these lands!*

We have just returned from a lovely event in the neighboring village of Thusand Feld. Many thanks to Conan for his autocrating such a nice event and to Rune for his moral support, and thanks also go to Barbarosa and Westumbria for sponsoring the event. Rune, the Seneschal of Thusand Feld, permitted us to hold Baronial Court on his lands, and so we had the opportunity to publicly thank the members of Thusand Feld and Westumbria for their work at Valor; many well-deserved green cords were given. Vatavia also presented each group with a portion of the proceeds of Valor; as the groups showed such support of the event, we felt it was fitting to allow them to reap some of the rewards.

The Vatavian Champions event is fast approaching. Please see the flyer in this month's newsletter. Even if you do not plan to compete for any of the Championships, this promises to be a very relaxed but well-organized event, and we would love to see you there. Some concern over having a theme for the Arts and Sciences Championship entries was raised at Officer's Meeting--since the competition itself (due to the unavoidable sudden switch of autocrats), we decided on the following compromise:

a) Having a Harvest Season theme for the entries is strongly encouraged, but is not required and will not affect the scoring of the A&S Championship.

b) Any entry with a Harvest Season theme will be automatically entered into a second competition to be held, which will be a prize competition.

c) The Harvest Season theme prize competition will be open to anyone, even if they do not choose to make any entries into the A&S Championship competition.

d) Standard Kingdom Criteria will be used to judge both competitions. Our thanks go to Lady Anne Lockwood, Bardic Champion, for agreeing to autocrat this event on such notice. Vivat! Also approaching rapidly is our Mongols Rule! event. The site is Camp Hiawatha. Many people are working hard to provide a Mongolian atmosphere for this event; there has been a flurry of costuming, armouring, and other arts and sciences directed toward the making of Mongol things. Even names are being changed.

As the season for war ends, the tourney season begins. Many pleasant events are on the Kingdom schedule for the fall and winter months, and we encourage you to travel to a few of these, and take along a few flyers for our Mongol event to give to your out-of-town friends.

In Service to Barony and Kingdom,

Gabriel Rhianwen

The Harvest

As the theme of the upcoming Champions Tourney is the harvest, I thought some might like to know just what the harvest season meant to the medieval peasant.

Throughout the Middle Ages, agriculture occupied about ninety percent of the population. This was due to both poor yields and lack of long range bulk transportation. Each locality was largely dependent on food locally produced. Thus the local harvest was crucial to how well people would eat during the coming year. Even though a nearby region might have produced a surplus, there was no way to get the food where it was needed.

To illustrate how poor the yields were, consider that modern fields generate a tenfold return per seed and average fifty to sixty bushels an acre. During the early period, return rarely equaled three to one, though during the high Middle Ages returns got up to six to one. Even a good field would only yield fifteen bushels an acre.

Harvesting this meager an output was hard work. Wheat was cut near the top with a sickle. This was done so that the bottom section could be cut for straw. The wheat was then bound into sheaves, roughly twenty to a bushel. Four reapers would support one binder and would average two acres a day. Then the fields would be gleaned to collect fallen grain. And even after the wheat had been gathered, it still had to be threshed and winnowed.

Wheat was the most commonly grown grain, about three quarters of all grain grown, followed by barley then oats. Rye was grown on land that could not support wheat. As a side note, all forms of grain were also called corn which can cause confusion to the modern reader of medieval records.

Also harvested at the same time were peas and beans which helped balance the typical peasant diet.

Another task that took place at harvest was the slaughter and preserving of animals for the winter, typically at Michaelmas. In the past it had been assumed that this was done for lack of winter feed. More recent research indicates that the usual victim was pig, and that was because the pig was mainly used as food.

Michaelmas not only marked the end of the harvest season but was also the traditional date when rents were paid and leases fell due. Only then could the peasant celebrate. But only for a short while, then it was back to the plow for the winter crops.

Humbly done this day by the hand of Frier Thomas

"The History of Chess"

by Jovan Greyhawk

June MCMXCII

"If it is lawful to play games, here is one which you will rank first among delightful games. It is free from deceit, no stake is necessary, and it does not require dice." (12th cent. German poem)

The development of the game of chess, from its beginnings in Northern India to the emergence of the modern game during the High Renaissance, covers over a thousand years of history and touches upon every civilization in Asia, Europe, and North Africa. The whole of its development falls within the domain of our Society. And chess is intimately associated with Chivalry and all things medieval. Therefore, I humbly offer what little I know of the history of the game; as well as a glimpse of the character of each culture which took the game in turn, and made it their own.

In the Beginning

"The time of the rains played its game with frogs for chessman which, yellow and green in colour, as if mottled with lac, leapt up on the garden-bed squares."

Thus reads the oldest known literary reference to chess; an ancient Hindu romance dating from the early seventh century. Chess is believed to have been invented in Northern India no earlier than the year A.D. 500. As to how the game was originally played we know next to nothing, for the Hindus left no rules nor any description of the game. We do have a few clues from another seventh century poem which sings the virtues of a certain King Sriharsha of Kanuj:

"Under this monarch only bees quarrel in collecting dews (dews); the only feet cut off are those in metre; only ASHTAPADAS teach the position of the CHATURANGA."

The name itself is a source of confusion. Chaturanga literally meant 'the four arms'. But the poem indicates that, from the beginning, chess was played on a board of sixty-four squares. For that is what Ashtapadas means in Sanskrit: 'game board of eight (by eight)'. Chaturanga tells us the earliest name for chess. It also tells us that chess was conceived as an abstract representation of war. Chaturanga was the classical Sanskrit term for army.

Whether Ashtapadas referred to a specific game or a generic class of game boards is unknown. Traditional Indian chessboards display curious cross-markings in the corners, sides, and center squares. These have no known function in any of the Indian versions of the game. But they may have indicated special squares in some forgotten form of Backgammon or Pachisi. If Ashtapadas was in fact a prototype of chess, it may push the invention of the game back by a thousand years. Both Ashtapadas and Dasapadas (ten by ten boards) were known during the time of the Buddha.

How then was the original game played? By examining later Indian developments, and by looking at the versions borrowed by neighboring cultures, it is possible to reconstruct the game:

In the center of the first row, on the fourth square from the players right, stood the RAJA (or King). From the very beginning, his move has remained unchanged; a single step in any direction. In the beginning it is believed that the game was won simply by capturing the opponents king. This rule is still allowed in certain versions such as speed chess and four-handed chess. It was almost certainly the rule when the game was played with dice.

However, it often happened among skillful players that the only way to catch the king was to attack with several pieces and cut off all routes of escape. Thus, the convention arose that the king was never captured. And from this we obtained the modern rule for Checkmate. It was also possible to obtain victory (in the early game) by wiping out the king's forces (the Bared-King rule). This rule would persist for nearly a thousand years. Next to the king, standing on his left, was the MANTRI (the Counselor or Minister). Unlike the modern Queen, the minister could only move diagonally, and only one square at a time. His original role seems to be to act as a body guard for the king. Whether the minister stood on the king's left or to his right seems to have been a matter of local preference. Several different arrangements were tried. [But for more on this see the Arabic rules for Shatranj.]

On either side of these nobles stood the HASTI or GAJA (the Elephants). Like the modern Bishops, the elephants had a diagonal move. But they were limited to moving two squares exactly, no more and no less. [Davidson believes that in some early versions of the game, the elephant had the option of moving one or two squares.] Regardless, the elephant's two-square leap further limited it to only eight squares on the entire board. The Hindus were never satisfied with this arrangement. And by the year 1000, no less than three different moves had been tried.

The next move to be tried allowed the elephant to move along any rank or file (like a Rook), but with the same two-square leap as before. This allowed the elephant to reach sixteen squares on the board. But the same laws of geometry still dictated that no two elephants from either side could ever meet on the same square. This rather obscure move was never passed on to any other country, and it eventually died out. [Later this move was revived as the Camel's move in various forms of Decimal Chess.] Finally, in Eastern India, a completely different move was adopted. This restricted the elephant to moving one square ahead, like a Pawn (the Fivefold move). This move is said to represent the five limbs of the elephant; four legs plus a trunk. This was the move adopted in Southeast Asia, and later in Japan as well. But what about the elephant's ability to jump over an intervening piece? See next the Horse!

Continued next month...

FALL CHAMPIONS IN VATAVIA
Saturday November 4th, 1995

Site: Lake Afton Park - Shelter #2, Rt.1 Goddard, KS 67052

Directions: Take Highway 54 west through Goddard to 263rd W (also called Lake Afton Rd.- look for small Lake Afton sign). Take 263rd 3½ miles south to MacArthur. Go ½ mile east on MacArthur to the Lake Afton Park office and store. Follow entrance road south into the park past the boat ramp and boat dock to the #2 Shelter (look for SCA signs). The shelter is on the west side of the lake by the West Swimming Area.

Site Opens 10 am and closes at 11 pm Site Fee: \$4.00 (\$3.00 non member fee applies)

EVENTS: FIGHTING: Champion's Tournament (Traditional Style) - 12:00 noon

ARCHERY: Parties interested in shooting for the Archer Champion Tournament should contact Michael van Bergen at 721-1955.

A & S: Entry sign-in closes at 1 pm - entries should be picked up before feast
- Champion's competition: Need to have either 2 arts and a science or 2 sciences and an art.

- Tri level single piece competition will be held for those who do not wish to try for champion.

*The theme for both competitions is the Harvest Season. If you are concerned that your project may not fit the theme- bring it anyway and challenge the bard to make it fit (large logic stretches are permitted)

BARDIC: To be held during feast: Need 3 pieces with at least 2 different performance types (ie story, poem, song)

*The theme is The Bard - at least one piece must be about the/a bard and his/her life, deeds, ect. or have something to do with the bardic arts (eg. how a particular instrument came into being)
- there will also be a surprise bardic competition during the afternoon so bring your thinking caps.

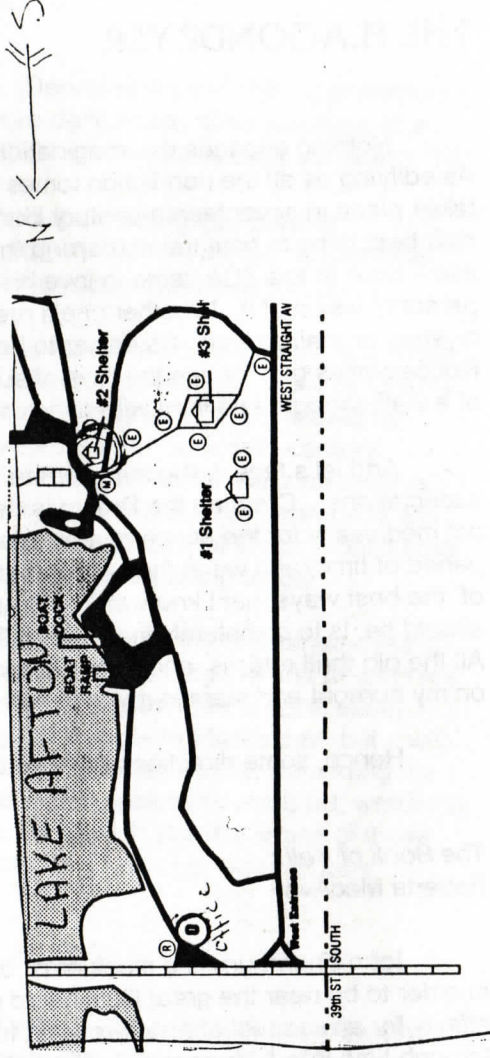
FEAST: begins at 6pm. It is potluck with meat dishes (Salmon and Roast Beef) to be prepared by Ly. Kasimira.

A-E = vegetables / fruit
F-L = Cheese
M-S = desserts
T-Z = bread

*2 competitions for the best period dish

1. Dessert, 2. Vegetable dish

Court to be held after feast at the Baron and Baroness' discretion.



THE FLAGONDRYER

Nothing engages the imagination quite like a work of historical fiction. As edifying as all the non-fiction tomes are, reading a good novel—whether it takes place in seventeenth-century Hungary or tenth-century Ireland—is the next best thing to time travel (barring the SCA, of course.) I'm willing to wager many of us in the SCA came to love history through reading someone's personal vision of it. Whether one's preference is for fantasy or romance, mystery or mainstream, it's easier to hear the clash of battle at the Roncesvalles gap, or see the rays of sunset gild Chateau Gaillard with the aid of a well-wrought tale than with a lecturer's footnotes.

And let's face it: the atmosphere in the SCA doesn't always fulfill our expectations. Creating the Dream is demanding work. It's hard to think and act mediievally for the space of a populace meeting, let alone for a sustained period of time, and we in the twentieth century have a distinct handicap. One of the best ways that I know of to refresh my vision of the Middle Ages *as they should be*, is to completely lose myself for a few days in a well-written book. All the old thrill returns, and I can charge once more into the breach with balm on my burnout and stars in my eyes, convinced that 'I was just there.'

Hence, some directions on how to get lost.

The Book of Kells
Roberta MacAvoy

John Thornburn is a meek artist on the shy side of thirty, living in Ireland in order to be near the great illuminated manuscript, the book of Kells. With no affinity for any aspect of history except for its art, he is sucked backwards through time into 10th century Ireland. Never mind how, it's the usual squint-and-it-works method of time travel (but to do her credit, MacAvoy makes sure that the method is by no means fool-proof). John and his occasional lover, a prickly Irish professor who leaps at the chance to see the Eire of the distant past, become involved in the turmoil of the Gaels and the Norsemen almost to the exclusion of their own dilemma. Unlike Dorothy, they're not convinced that there's no place like home. In contrast to many modern characters in time travel books, MacAvoy's character's actually appreciate the chance to experience history in the flesh:

"...The Gaill aren't leaving, [Derval said,] and this neighborhood is going to get more and more dangerous. Can you think of a safer place to be than Dublin?" Her raptorial eyes softened. "I'd love to see the place."

"I'll bet you would!" replied John, stung into playing personalities. "I bet you'd glory in it, every rotting middenheap and every croak of incomprehensible, dead Gaelic!" (BK/77)

Though MacAvoy's book is obviously researched, she hasn't sacrificed character for scholarship. Her Ireland is no fairy-land retreat of Darby O'Gill's little people or horned-helmed Vikings, but a tangible place, populated by intelligent, proud, pious people. She makes sure that twentieth-century readers can relate to the 10th-century characters without trivializing them or sacrificing their remoteness. The pervading tone of religious awareness she likewise handles with an authentic voice. For instance, her Celtic monks have apparently never heard of the clerical ban against shedding blood:

[The monk] stood up to look about him at the frightened eyes of his companions. "My ancestors were among the first to embrace the snow-white Hero, but we didn't shrink from a fight, either. This is the day I will give myself bravely to Mary's son, but it will be because I stand before his house steadfastly, defending the sacred things here. Will the words spoken by our Lord, written in scarlet in the Gospel books, be used to line the shoes of these Danish dogs? Not while I can lift a hoe or a reaping hook." (BK/296)

Would all monks spoke so!

The Book of Kells is technically a fantasy—yet a fantasy more deeply rooted in history than many a purported historical. If your persona is Irish or Norse, or if you simply enjoy the 900s in all its forms, please devote a weekend to this book. It can be found in the library, in used bookstores, or, if you're lucky, at the retail bookstores.

Odindisa the Grim

Greetings form Ly. Kerare your Minister of Arts and Sciences.

The winter and fall seasons are a good time to work on art and science projects since the weather gets colder and travel more difficult. I would like to remind everyone interested that the Queen's Prize Tourney will be January 13 in Lost Moor/St. Joseph, MO). You will need to find a sponsor for this. Only a member of the Laurel, Calon Lily or Silver Hammer Orders may be sponsors. On the other hand only someone not in these orders may enter. Watch your Mews for entry forms or contact me for assistance. I will also be more than happy to help you find a sponsor.

There will be a judges workshop Jan. 20 in Calaish Nuadh (Rolla, MO). The arts and science are not just for those who enter competitions, but for everyone. Viewing the entries and talking to the artisans will allow you a greater appreciation and understanding of the wonderful work these gentles do.

We are beginning our second meeting a month in October with a costuming class on how to draft a pattern. If you have an idea for a class or would like to teach one, please speak with me about it. After all, I am here to serve you and can do this best when I know what you want and like.

My past two quarterly reports have been great, and very full. It's great to know you all are so busy. Now let's see it, bring it out and share your work with the barony.

Last but not the least: The Mongols are coming, prepare armor, garb and A&S. Let me help help if you're stuck and don't know what to do. Get the idea? I want to help!

I remain in service,

Ly. Kerare

LINDESFARME RAIDED !

PADRES MAUL VIKINGS

We really warped history this weekend. A Saxon fleet rowed out from Lindesfarme to meet the viking fleet. After a long bloody struggle, the Vikings drove off the Saxons and tried to land on the beach. After fierce fighting, only six Vikings made it in to the town, however, they did manage to sack the village. In sacking the village, the Viking destroyed the Knights Templars sent to defend the village. In attacking the monastery at Lindesfarme, the Vikings were destroyed to the last man by the peaceful monks of the St. Cuthbert order. Thus was northern Europe saved from the wrath of the Norsemen and centuries of rape and pillage. A fractured fairy tale if I have ever heard one.

Greetings to all from the traveling reporter.

Coronations are always times of mixed feelings, saying good-by to the King and Queen you have come to know and appreciate and saying hello to all the promise the Society has to offer, the new King and Queen, as yet untried. This coronation was no different. The weather was beautiful, and the area quickly took on the aspect of a country fair. The merchants were calling out to the passing crowds, children were laughing and skipping, fighters were fighting, retinues were running to and fro, autocrats and cooks were working, (there were also meetings, but nothing's perfect). The day was happily passed visiting with friends and enjoying whatever activities one might wish.

It seemed as if time flew by and it was time for the ceremony we had all come to witness. As Their Majesties Valens and Elspeth presented a few last awards and released their retinues, we had one last look at the Crown that had led us in two wars and countless events. We wished them well. It was time for His Highness Sir Gilligan to ascend the Falcon throne. Valens placed the Crown of State on Gilligan's head and swore to uphold Calontir and populace, and a cheer was sent up from the populace. We had a new King. He called his Lady into court and asked here if she was willing to share the burdens of the Crown. She promised to serve Calontir to the populace, and His Majesty asked if she would seal the promise with a kiss. She agreed, they exchanged a kiss, and he placed the Crown on her head. Everyone later agreed that it was a touching moment. As fealty was sworn to Their Majesties by first the Royal Peers, then Knights, Laurels, Pelicans, those who hold the Crown's lands for Their Majesties, the Barons and Baronesses, then the populace of Calontir. It's at moments such as these, that Calontir feels most like a family. The first Peerage of Their rein was announced to elevate Countess Lile to a Pelican. Her Lord husband was most excited. Most excited.

See you at the next event!

The Reporter

Greetings to Vatavia!

I think you will like the articles in this issue. I got so interested in the subjects, I had a hard time typing. I know I learned many new things about harvests, and I think I may even take up chess. You will have to wait until next month to find out "the rest of the story", as Paul Harvey says. Keep those submissions coming in!

The Barony of Forgotten Sea
presents
The All-hallows Masked Ball
and Newcomers' Tiding
Sunday, October 29, a.s. XXX

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATES FROM THE
FLIER PRINTED IN YOUR CLARION

Come join Their Excellencies as they welcome the Barony's new citizens into the S.C.A. and help them enjoy their first event! In the evening, enjoy the feasting and camaraderie of the Barony and a masked ball to celebrate the season! And most importantly, get to know the future of Forgotten Sea!

Members, Bring your projects for an A/S display, and your armor for hands-on fighting demonstrations. Bring your sewing machine and help someone build their first garb, and don't forget a costume for the masked ball that night! New members, bring yourself and your creativity and get ready for an exciting new experience!

The site is the Earnest Shepherd Youth Center in Liberty, Mo. To get there, take your best route to I-35 North of the River. Take the 69 Highway Exit in Liberty (Not the first one in Claycomo, but the second one for Excelsior Springs). Once off the highway take a right turn and then immediately take the first left turn onto Earnest Shepherd Drive. The site will be on the left about 1/4 of a mile. This a dry site, and firearms are prohibited. Site will open at 10 a.m. and close at 9 p.m.

Autocrat:
Lord Mellitus of Rounclvale
Tim Mercer
4942 North Winchester
Kansas City, Mo, 64119
452-7915

BARON

Gabriel ap Morgan ap Hywel
David Cooper

Boy Duke

BARONESS

Rhianwen ferch Bran ap Gruffydd
Joan Struer

269-3853

SENESCHAL

Eckerich Rothvalken von Stromberg
John Platz
Chatelaine
Odindisa

684-1953

269-9354

CALTROP

Leonhard Von Lowenstrum
Jim Purkey

682-1669

TREASURER

Maeve Kelley De Navarre
Terry Thorndyke

636-5606

CHRONICLER

Brialen Ulfsdottir Vikings
Deb Taylor

524-0917

KNIGHT MARSHAL

Niall Mac a Ghobhainn
Don't know now-will find out

262-8141

MINISTER OF ARTS and SCIENCES

Kerare de Joreses
Carolyn Haddaway
Minister of Children
Ann Bromere
Gail Martin

686-6893

267-7639

ARCHER MARSHAL

Vacant

SERF LINE

Bog Serf
264-7373