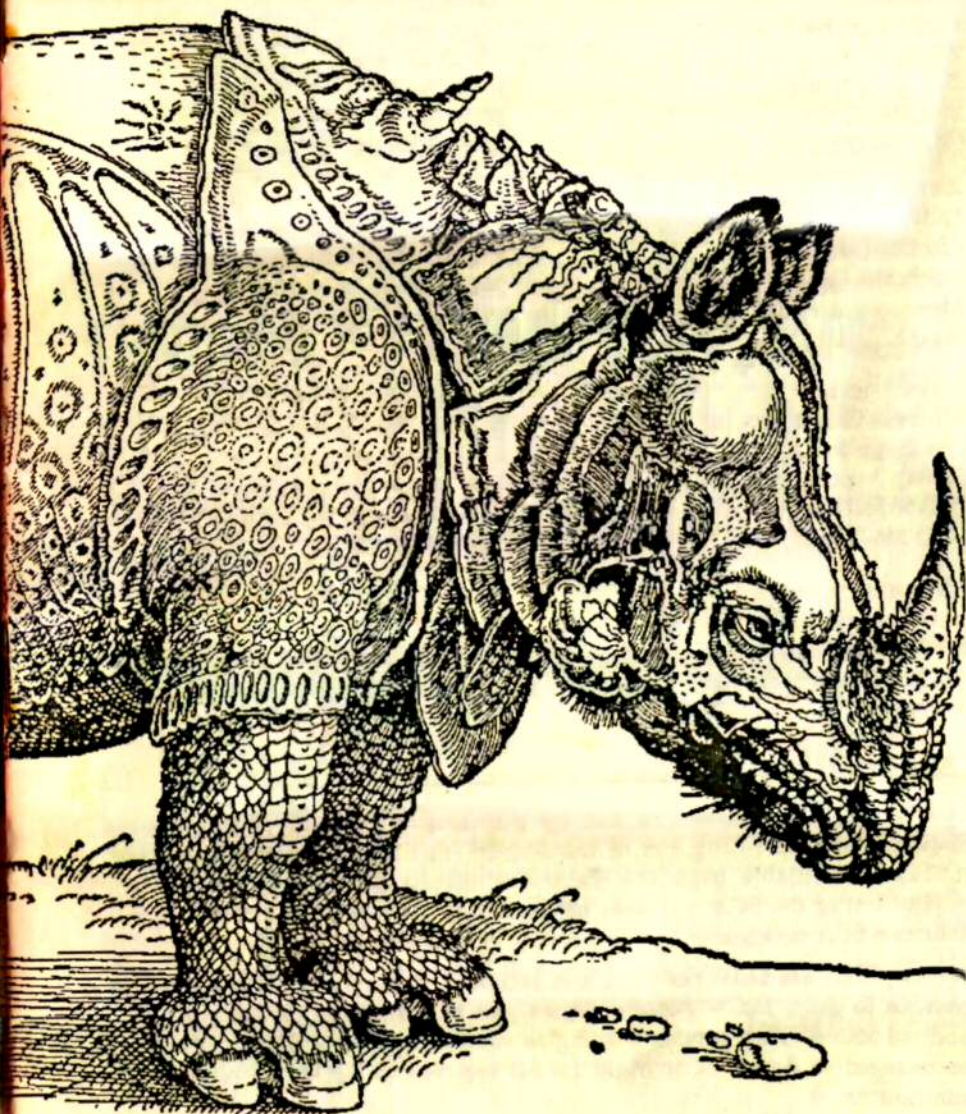


AESTEL

Western
Region
Newsletter

APRIL, A.S. XXII

Volume 1, Number 6







Western Regional Officers

**SENESCHAL:**

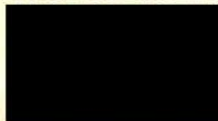
Syr Andreas Hak

**SYCAMORE HERALD:**


Lord Friedrich Tomasson

**MARSHAL:**

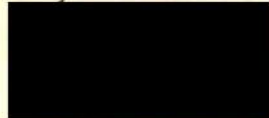
Lord Bear the Wallsbane

**EXCHEQUER:**


Lady Mebh

**ARTS & SCIENCES:**

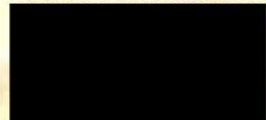
Lady Estrid Svendsdottir

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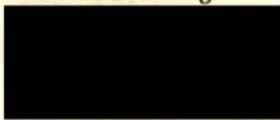
Lady Ellisif Flakkingskvinne

**LIST OFFICE:**


Mistress Cassadoria Finealla

**CHIRURGEON:**


Mistress Rannveigr

**MARSHAL OF FENCE:**

Lord Roderic of Basing

**ÆSTEL ÆDITOR:**

Mistress Arianna of Wythrope



This is ÆSTEL, published by and for members and friends of the Western Region of the East Kingdom of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. ÆSTEL is available from the Æditor at the address above. It is *not* a publication of the SCA and does *not* in any way, shape, or form presume to delineate SCA policies.

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Regional Calendar

APRIL

- 9 Crusader Touney and Feast Nithgaard
 April ÆSTEL State College, PA
 15 ÆSTEL Deadline Mail

MAY

- 13-15 New Year on the Frontier Riversmeet
 April ÆSTEL Putnam/Kanawha Cos., WV
 14 A Quest Nemoralis Noctua
 April ÆSTEL Greensburg, PA
 15 ÆSTEL Deadline Mail

JUNE

- 3-5 Sergeants & Yeoman's Two Thescore
 May ÆSTEL Rochester, NY
 4-5 4th Annual Mountain King Tourney Nithgaard
 May ÆSTEL State College, PA
 11 Weapons Proficiency BMDL
 May ÆSTEL Pittsburgh, PA

Please send event flyers to the Æditor so that I can include accurate information about your event in the Announcements Section.

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Coming Events



Crusader Tourney and Feast

April 9

In keeping with a long and glorious tradition, sundry gentles of our shire are putting down their quills and going off to join the Crusades. To bid them farewell, the Shire of Nithgaard will hold a Crusader Tourney and Feast.

The fighting will include a tourney, a round robin melee, and a grand melee of Crusaders versus Saracens. The site opens at 11 am; armor inspection starts at 11:30 and the tourney at 1 pm. A feast of both European and Middle Eastern fare will follow at 6:30, including dancing, music, tales of past crusades, and other amusements.

Cost is \$6 on-board until April 4 and \$8 after, or a \$2 site fee (off-board is limited). Send checks payable to SCA, Inc. - Shire of Nithgaard to the autocrat, [REDACTED]

The site is the State College Lions' Club. This site is **DAMP** (beer and wine only). Directions:

From I-80: Take Exit 24, and take PA 26 through town to Pine Grove Mills. ** PA 45 joins PA 26; stay on 45 West. The site is on the left about 3/4 mile down the road.

From the Southeast: Take 322 to Boalsburg and take PA 45 west to Pine Grove Mills. Proceed 3/4 mile past the intersection with 26 and the site is on the left.

From Other Points: Take your best route to State College and follow PA 26 South to Pine Grove Mills. Proceed from ** above.

New Year on the Frontier

May 13-15

Join our shire members for a wonderful fun filled frolic in celebration of the Society's XXIIIrd New Year! Events will occur on Saturday, including fighting, questing, and a surprise event! There will be arts and sciences displays, board games, a heraldry consultation table, and more. The day will climax with a feast.

The cost is \$10 before April 15, or \$15 after. Send reservations payable to SCA, Inc. - Shire of Riversmeet to the autocrat, [REDACTED]

The site is Camp Mad Anthony Wayne, on the EK-MK border near Huntington, WV. The site is **WET**.

continued on next page



More Coming Events



Directions: Take your best route to I-64. Travel towards Huntingdon and take the 5th Street exit. Follow the signs to the Veterans Administration Hospital. Go past the Hospital, staying on Spring Valley Drive for approximately 2.5 miles to the camp entrance on the left.

Quest for the Mythical Beast

May 14

The Shire of Nemoralis Noctua has been infested by mythical beasts and monsters. Sir Tyracke of Tryndlyr has issued a call to all valiant fighting men to aid us in our time of need. Combat will take the form of 6-man teams, randomly chosen, each team being a different monster. For those not inclined to rattan, there will be a single-elimination fencing tournament. The site opens at 9:30 am and combat will commence at 1 pm. Other contests include best original representation of a mythical beast; most creatively cloved fruit (no vegetables!); and a song and storytelling competition with the theme of glorifying the day's fighting. There is NO FEAST at this event - bring a picnic supper and join in the evening's revelry.

The cost is \$3 before April 30, or \$4 after. Discount of \$1 with proof of SCA membership. No checks accepted at the door. Halflings, half price, under 3 free. Send reservations payable to SCA, Inc. - Shire of Nemoralis Noctua to the autocrat, Tyracke of Tryndlyr, [REDACTED]

The site is Hempfield Municipal Park near Greensburg, PA. The site is **DAMP**, but no glass containers allowed. Directions:

From East or West: Take your best way to route 22. Follow 22 to 66S (watch for a small sign). Turn right at bottom of ramp. Pass King's and 66 Auto Supply on right, watch for second Clelian Heights sign (marked with SCA sign) and turn left. Turn right at stop sign, pass Allwine Civic Center. Go straight about two miles to Hempfield Park. Note - sign is on right; turn left, at next park sign turn right. Pass tennis courts and turn right into parking lot.

From North: Take I-79 to PA Turnpike; take turnpike to Exit 6 and follow Route 22 to Murrys ville. Follow East/West directions above.

From the South: Follow route 119N into Greensburg until you pass a Harmarville Rehabilitation sign on right at light. Do NOT follow 119N when it makes a right at top of hill - stay straight. Say on Main Street as it turns into 66N. Go through several lights. Pass a funeral home and a Shop n Save, then watch for a Hempfield Park sign on the right, and turn right after it. Turn right at next park sign. Pass tennis courts and turn right into parking lot.

Ice Dragon Pentathlon Results

Here are the results of the Twelfth Ice Dragon Pentathlon of the Arts and Sciences. Each category is listed with the first place winner next to it and the second and third place winners on the next line. For Example:

0. AUTOCRATTING

Morian - 2nd

Cori Ghora - 1st

Dagonell & Cigfran - 3rd

1. NEEDLEWORK

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Embroidery - counted thread | Isabelle Elaine of Salisbury |
| Isabelle Elaine of Salisbury | Deonora Ridenow |
| b. Embroidery - other | Phillipia Cupbreaker |
| Anthea Maecenas | Evonne la Doucette |
| c. Beadwork | Celine de Hermain |
| Ivanor Bryony of Sighy Crag | Arden MacIlhatton |
| d. Lace and Tatting | combined with next category |
| e. Knitting and Crocheting | Isabelle Elaine of Salisbury |
| Siobhan ni Filidheach | Elizabeth Idlewine |
| f. Spinning and Weaving | Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers |
| Henry MacQueen of Longhouse | Elspeth y Gweledydd |
| g. Dying | Elaine Courtenay |
| Serena Lucia of t Peacemakers | Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers |

2. SEWING

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Costume - Pre 1400 Male | Lyanna of Kerneough |
| Anthea Maecenas | Marian Celebrian |
| b. Costume - Pre 1400 Female | Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers |
| Arden MacIlhatton | Nan Neilillian |
| c. Costume- Post 1400 Male | Deonora Ridenow |
| Arden MacIlhatton | Celine de Hermain |
| d. Costume - Post 1400 Female | Celine de Hermain |
| Elaine Courtenay | Arden MacIlhatton |
| e. Costume - Under age 10 | Isabelle Elaine of Salisbury |
| Marian Celebrian | Nan Neilillian |
| f. Accessories | Elaine Courtenay |
| Siobhan ni Filidheacht | Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers |
| g. Banners | Elaine Kerr |
| Aleksandra/Robin Argyll | Celine de Hermain |

3. GRAPHICS

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. Calligraphy | Sarra Graeham |
| Dorren of Ashwell | Arden MacIlhatton |
| b. Illumination | Dorren of Ashwell |
| Sarra Graeham | Caitrin Gordon |

❖ More Ice Dragon Results ❖

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| c. Painting and Drawing | combined with next category | |
| d. Print-making | Evonne la Doucette | |
| Seabhac aigh na Scail | Nan Neilillian | |
| 4. PERFORMING ARTS | | |
| a. Dance | no entries | |
| b. Drama/Puppetry/Storytelling | Esperanza Halevi | |
| Gabrielle of Auburn | | |
| c. Juggling | no entries | |
| d. Instrumental Music | Ellisif Flakkingskvinne | |
| Althea & Remus | Remus Fletcher | |
| e. Vocal Music | The Debateable Quartet | |
| Remus Fletcher | Rising Water/Ben Dunfrith | |
| 5. WRITTEN WORD AND MUSIC | | |
| a. Poetry | Esperanza Halevi | |
| Esperanza Halevi | Henry MacQueen of Longhouse | |
| b. Plays/Novel/Short Stories | combined with next category | |
| c. Songwriting/Music Comp. | Esperanza Halevi | |
| Esperanza Halevi | Henry MacQueen of Longhouse | |
| d. Research Papers and Essays | Arden MacIlhatten | |
| Rhiannon the Curious | Robert of Ferness | |
| 6. ARMOR | | |
| a. Metal | b. Leather | c. Chainmail |
| | categories combined | |
| William MacKeown | Haakon Oaktall | Ivan Myrddin |
| 7. METALWORK | | |
| a. Jewelry | b. Weaponry | c. Other |
| | categories combined | |
| Sendra of Falconshield | Elisabeth Idlewine | Rhiannon the Curious |
| 8. LEATHERWORK | | |
| a. Any | Ricard of Sable Tree | |
| Morgan Silverlocke | Ricard of Sable Tree | |
| 9. WOODWORK | | |
| a. Any | *Geldemar von Schonfloss | |
| *Henry MacQueen of Longhouse Ozwald von dem Grumwald | | |
| * tie for first place | | |
| 10. COOKERY | | |
| a. Main Dish | Mathilde des Pyrenees | |
| Lyanna of Kerneough | Arianwen ferch Gawaine | |

❖ More Ice Dragon Results ❖

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Side Dish
Shahira abdul Samad c. Bread
Celine de Hermain d. Sweet e. Sotelties
Shahira abdul Samad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katrina of Silverbrooke Robin Argyle du Coeur Aile Atai Ikyoto Arden MacIlhatten combined with next category Mathilde des Pyrenees Shahira abdul Samad |
|--|--|
11. BREWING
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mead, Beer, and Ale
Gwydion Emrys b. Other Alcoholic/Fermented
Lyanna of Kerneogh c. Non-Alcoholic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul of Two Brookes Morguhn Sheridan Paul of Two Brookes Gwydion Emrys no entries |
|---|---|
12. MISCELLANEOUS
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ceramics/Bone/Horn/Glass c. Herbology
Rhiannon the Curious b. Instrument Construction d. Toys and Games
Marian Celebrian e. All Other
Shahira abdul Samad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> combined with next category Rhiannon the Curious Wulfgar O'Woods combined with next category Henry MacQueen of Longhouse Ozward von dem Grumwald Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers Evonne la Doucette |
|--|--|

❖ Ice Dragon Grand Pentathlon ❖

Here follows a list of the top three finishers, with a listing of what five categories contributed to their point scores. Note the variety of skills represented ...

Lyanna of Kerneough	First Place	Point Total: 19.875
Sewing - Male Pre-1400	Cookery - Main Dish	Performing Arts - Vocal
Graphics - Calligraphy		Brewing - Other Alcoholic

Rhiannon the Curious	Second Place	Point Total: 19.3167
Needlework - Beadwork	Metalwork - All	Sewing - Male Post-1400
Miscellaneous - Herbology		Written Word - Research Papers

Arden MacIlhatten	Third Place	Point Total: 18.675
Needlework - Beadwork	Cookery - Sweets	Graphics - Calligraphy
Sewing - Post-1400 Female		Written Word - Research Papers



Æditorially Speaking



Six issues and we're quitting already. Well, not exactly quitting. We just think it would be sort of inappropriate to produce the Western Region Newsletter of the East Kingdom from the Barony of Lonely Tower in Calontir.

If this sounds like the rumors you've been hearing about us moving, it's true. Effective April 1, Bertram and I will take up residence in Omaha, Nebraska in order to pursue our mundane careers. (If you need to reach us, our temporary address will be [REDACTED])

We are going to miss all of you, especially the cantankerous, opinionated and literate contributors to this newsletter.

But have no fear — we leave you in good hands. Mistress Arianna of Winthrope has consented to take over this publication, effective the May issue. We are delighted to have such a superbly qualified replacement available (for anyone who doesn't remember or wasn't around then, Arianna was East Kingdom Chronicler for the two and a half years before Hawkwind and Nan Neilillian).

Arianna's address appears under Æditor on the inside front cover. Send your problems, complaints, praise, anonymous letters, submissions and subscriptions to her. We're going to continue to subscribe, if only to see what changes Arianna makes in Æstel. And, of course, so that we can keep in touch a little — we hope that we will be back some day.

It is very difficult to give up a project like this newsletter before we're tired of it, or burned out, or the idea well has run dry. In only six months we haven't had a chance to use up all of our ideas yet, or to get all the bugs out of this newsletter. For example, this cover is one we have been saving for months to run in May; we're printing it now because it's too good not to and we don't know if Arianna would be able to (or willing to, for that matter).

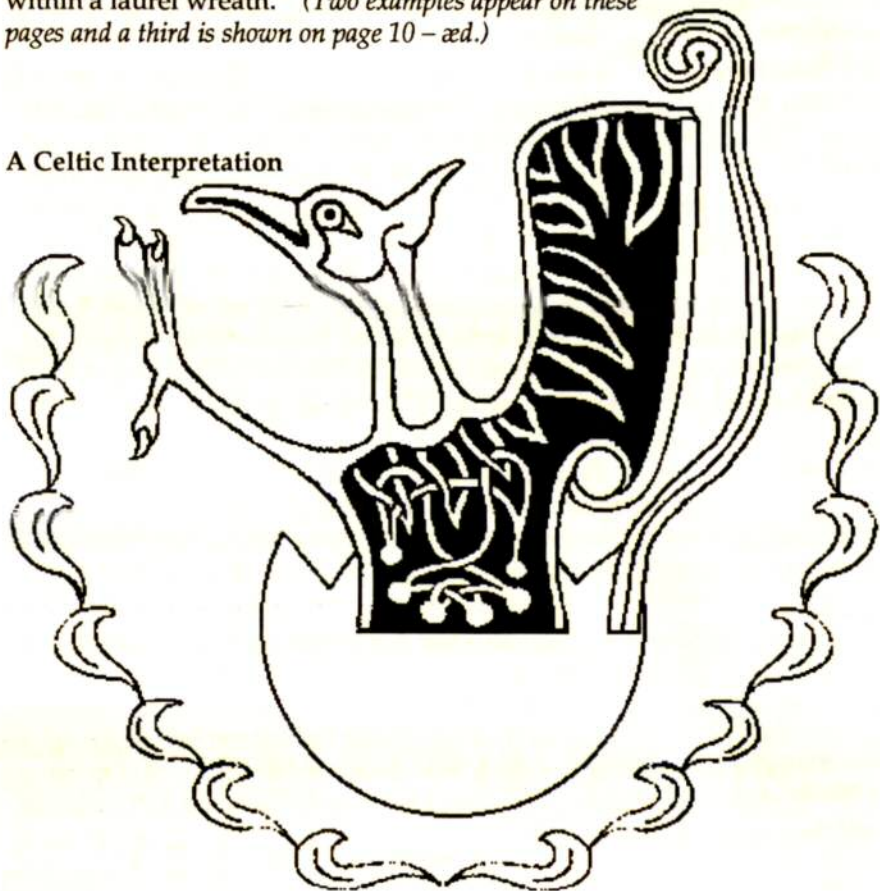
Fools rush in where angels fear to tread; but the proverb does not say that the angels are always right. How many of us rationally consider every decision; or invariably regret our impulses? The more we consider Principality, the more we will find side paths to contemplate, leading us nowhere and limiting our horizons. Which would be worse — to skip being a Principality and wonder if we should have; or to try being a Principality and then decide if we like it?↑

— Mistress Eromene Aspasia

👑 A Naissant Principality? 👑

I recently came across the term *naissant* in an heraldic dictionary. It is used to describe a demi-beast that is rising from the middle of a charge (as opposed to *issant*, which means rising from the top). Like *nascent* and *Renaissance*, *naissant* is derived from a Latin word meaning "being born." This strikes me as appropriate for describing the peerage territory that is now being born in the Western Region, so I suggest a device for it which uses *naissant* in a way which conjures up an image of a gryphon hatching from an egg. It would be blazoned as follows (except that some indication of colors should be added): "A demi-gryphon naissant from a roundel rompu within a laurel wreath." (Two examples appear on these pages and a third is shown on page 10 - æd.)

A Celtic Interpretation





An Heraldic Interpretation

Of course, some may say that this device would continue long after the Principality (or whatever) had been born, and would no longer be appropriate. But I maintain that there is a certain sense of promise associated with birth, and a certain *bon ami* associated with hatching, that we will wish to keep forever fresh.↑

— Alfredo el Bufón

👑 Maybe a Margravate 👑

In the First Middle Ages, a march was a large border territory governed by a peer. For instance, Scotland and England each had an Earl of the March in charge of its side of the Scottish Marches.

The Western Region of the Eastern Kingdom is a large border territory for which many people want a peer. Why not call it the March of So-and-so, and hold Coronet Tournaments for the next Earl of the March?

There are two reasons why not: **March** is already used in these Current Middle Ages to refer to a small border territory without a peer, and **earl** is used as a court title for a man who was once King.

But let us return to the First Middle Ages. In the Frankish and German empires, where a march was a Mark and an earl was a Graf, and borderlands were more numerous than in Great Britain, a Markgraf had more problems and strategic importance than the Graf of an interior county, and gained a separate dignity, leading to the title Margrave, for the prefect of a Margravate. Likewise in the Romance countries, where the Latin *marchensis comes* yielded *marchese*, *marquis*, etc., in charge of a *marquisate*. [Later, as borders changed, the connection with *march* was forgotten, and when *marquess* was introduced in England in the fourteenth century, it did not replace *earl of the march* (but it should have)]. These terms are not currently used in the Current Middle Ages.

I propose that the Western Region be made a Margravate rather than a Principality.↑

—Alfredo el Bufón





De H-Verbo



(Concerning the P-word)

As the time draws nigh for the presumed polling concerning the formation of a Principality out of the Western Region, I feel I need to put in my 20 sesterces' worth. By way of introduction for those of you who do not know me, I have lived in Myrkfaelinn for almost 13 years, and have been Guild-master (or as I prefer to term it, Head Turkey) of the East Kingdom Music Guild since Pennsic XV.

In the March Æstel, Lady Caterina praises Baron Svidrir's letter of February for its common sense. With all due respect, I must say that in what I have heard and read of the debate these past months, the most common sense was expressed by people such as Sir Alric and Lady Ellisif. Sir Alric's arguments especially are eloquent and succinct, and bear reading by all the populace of the Western Region. I shall try not to repeat him but argue similar things from a somewhat different perspective.

In particular, let me state up front something which will run through several of my arguments and which has severe implications for the Principality idea:

In general, people in the East Kingdom, due to lack of time, money, or whatever other reason, are not willing to drive more than four hours to an SCA event unless it is something special.

(By "something special" I refer to Crown, Coronation, Kingdom Twelfth Night, King's and Queen's Champions, and Pennsic; one hopes the East Kingdom University will soon also make it on this list.) This limit is not an arbitrary number, but something that I've heard people throughout the East say.

Let us consider a number of the arguments raised in favor of the idea:

Arguments from "geographic unity" of the region.

These are clearly the least in touch with reality. As many have already pointed out, the Western Region is 14 hours drive across. If you circle the locations of the groups on a map, you will note that with the exception of Stormsport, there is a four hour gap between BMDL plus suburbs and anywhere in New York. That magic number: this means that while one sees Haelies in BMDL on occasion and vice versa and Stormsporters in both, the southern and northern parts of the region are in effect two separate geo-social entities (this observation is borne out by experience.)

As an aside to geography, I would ask all those in the Hael who favor the Principality and who have just bought wigs to replace the hair they've torn out because of Ice Dragon to think about the advantages of being near the geographic center of the Principality, so that all sorts of fun major events will be proposed for the Hael to minimize driving for the most number of people — and of course no one would be such a cad as to suggest that you stop holding Ice Dragon just because of this...

The region is too big for officers to work effectively.

I agree completely. So why saddle everyone with yet another layer of paperwork by adding in Principality officers on top of the semi-Principality officers whose existence will immediately be demanded to assist them? Just go for straight decentralization now: two administrative areas, upstate NY and WV/BMDL plus suburbs, each of which report to Kingdom. The area officers will be more responsive to local needs while allowing us to maintain the level of informality in problem-solving we have now. (This response probably applies equally to the other regions of the Kingdom.)

More people will have a chance to be Royalty.

A total of four more per year, yes; how does that help the rest of us? People who advance this argument also make the implicit assumption that the pool of fighters in a Coronet list will be of uniform quality. Be realistic, folks: for the foreseeable future, Morguhn Sheridan would walk in and win any Coronet list he wanted to. If Morguhn wasn't in a particular List, then I could name you a set of five or six fighters such that the odds would be overwhelming that one of them would win. The rest of us would get bored and or frustrated faster because the same sets of faces would always be wearing the tin hats (see below on "increasing regional unity" ...)

We need local Royalty to see that local people get the awards they deserve.

Before anything else: are you all writing, every reign, to the Royalty about how X,Y & Z have deserved awards I, J & K for the past six years but haven't gotten them yet? If not, stop complaining and go right this minute to your typewriters or PCs. Maintaining continuous pressure on Royalty, who in general do not read the award recommendation letters to their predecessors, is the first step. Telling members of the polling orders about X, Y & Z's achievements, in detail, is the second thing, because the polling order members will not be able to make informed decisions in an informational vacuum; I've just gotten on the receiving end of this since last May, and it is impossible to vote intelligently on a name I've never heard of when the accompanying achievement list is one word long.

What is really needed to rectify this situation, beyond the above, is to reactivate an award-giving mechanism that already exists but has fallen

into disuse in recent years: the Landed Baronage. The landed barons are the representatives of the Crown when the Crown isn't there, remember? If the Crown wishes to give out awards but can't make it to an event, they have the option of having a nearby Baron give the award in Their Name; this is how John the Pell and I got our Awards of Arms: Aelfwine and Arastorm had to be at another event that day, and Alric, then Baron Thescorre, held Court in their name. Royalty could declare a day of parallel processing Courts wherein the King is one place, the Queen another, the Crown Prince a third, the Crown Princess a fourth, six Barons are spread around, and 70 awards get handed out in one swell foop. (Randall and Marieke started in this direction and the Midrealm, which stretches from Ottawa to Saskatoon, does it regularly out of necessity, but not on the scale envisioned here.) The real bottleneck in getting awards to the gentles who deserve them should be the ability of the College of Scribes to crank them out.

We'll have Principality awards.

I urge you to reread Alric's words on this matter. Let me add that it is already the case that it is harder to get a Manche for music or dance than in other fields because of the existence of the Troubadour and Terpsichore. A Principality award would extend this to the rest of the arts and sciences, and similar lines of reasoning apply to the sporting and service awards.

The fighters need a Prince to speak for them in War Council.

Sorry guys. If the region's fighters haven't gotten good Pennsic assignments in the past, then blame past regional warlords for not having had any assertiveness training (see below on interpersonal conflicts and think, "ego of commanders"). My experience as a fighter in upstate NY over the last four years is that we've built a nice informal structure that works well together and is based on local autonomy and mutual respect. As with the administrative end, there's no need to add another layer onto something that works now (can you say "AT&T breakup," boys and girls?).

"The pond will be smaller" argument.

First, the pond won't be smaller. The big pond, i.e., the East Kingdom as a whole, and the big fish will still be there, with the small fish just as answerable to them as now. What will simply happen is that, as Alric pointed out, various currently medium-sized fish will also get bigger, a couple of somewhat small fish will become medium-sized, and all the rest will have that many more bigger fish to watch out for. Go read about fractals and self-similarity of scaling.

In a different way of looking at the issue, the drawing of a psychological boundary by a Principality (and don't try to say that a Principality doesn't create a psychological boundary) will invariably intensify the interpersonal conflicts that will crop up within the area over time (and don't even think

about trying to say that conflicts won't happen). There is a saying that "academic politics are so dirty because the stakes are so small." The same will be true for politics that accrue due to the existence of a Principality.

Let me remind people of what interpersonal conflicts can do for you. The echoes of the breakup of House Elandris still affect the interpersonal dynamics of the Hael, and it is those dynamics that were a cause of the Hael needing almost two years to resolve this last vicarage (Sir Andreas Hak's statement that "the Hael's difficulties in choosing a titular head come from a position of strength" is a line of reasoning of interest primarily for its pathology). A personal feud two years ago essentially destroyed Delftwood and almost took Thescore out with it. Delftwood is only now beginning to recover, and the damage to the remainder of the upstate NY groups was minimized only by everyone staying as out of sight of the Kingdom-level players as possible, an option that won't be available when the referees in the conflict are also the players and they're all within the region.

Please don't try to tell me that "well, it won't happen again because we've all seen the damage that results and we'll be reasonable"; even with a 4-lane highway paved with the best intentions of everyone now present, in two to three years membership influx/turnover will guarantee that people who haven't learned that lesson will be around to start their own conflicts. I've watched this happen within Risley College (aka Myrkfaelinn Castle), Cornell University, Tompkins County, New York State, and at the Federal level; it has happened and will happen again in the SCA and in our region. We may be pretend kings and princes, but that doesn't prevent the nastiness from spilling over into our real lives and ruining the pleasure we take in our hobby; you don't need armies to make life hell for others.

There will be more events close by to go to, so regional unity will increase.

This is actually the most dangerous argument of all, and the one where the four-hour driving limit poses the most problems. Having lots of nearby events means that you'll go to them instead of perhaps travelling elsewhere, and stagnation results.

Consider a group that puts on six or more events a year (e.g., the Hael, BMDL, Thescore). Now, add in groups within say a two hour drive who start doing the same. Well, out of politeness' sake, you'll go to most if not all of their events too, just because you're most likely to know people there and consequently will know how to behave to have a fun time, and because you'd like them to reciprocate for your events. It is not inconceivable that you could use up to 16 or 17 weekends a year on this. Now do some arithmetic about how many weekends are available for you to do SCA: 52

weeks minus say 8 for holidays or family, etc., minus 3-4 taken up with Pennsic and recovery therefrom minus say 24 to leave time for schoolwork or taking care of the house or job or what-ever — how about that? You only have 16-17 weekends a year left for SCA. If you are very polite and stay with the people you know, you'll never have time to try going to a different group other than the usual circle of three or four.

The above may sound artificial, but I speak from experience: five years ago I was bored with the SCA and thinking of finding something else to waste weekends on, because the Myrkies would only go to the same few groups. Two years later, having said the hell with it and gone on my own to places off the beaten track, SCA was suddenly much more interesting and enjoyable.

Staying within the same group of people is boring. You all exhaust your behavioral repertory quickly because you've all seen it before, and you wonder why this event seems dull and suspiciously like the last ten you've been to. At the last Summer's End in Beau Fleuve for example, the tournament ended early, nobody knew how to fill up the time once they'd gone through the usual topics of conversation, and people were leaving by 8:30 pm.

The only way to meet new people, get new ideas, and have new and interesting experiences, is to go elsewhere, even if this means driving more than usual at least once in a while. We in the East are spoiled by the population density: when over dinner with some people in Cynnabar(Ann Arbor, Michigan) this past Christmas I mentioned this four hour drive limit, they were all shocked: a six hour drive to an event is nothing in the Midwest, and there are groups whose nearest neighbors are over eight hours away.

If anything, we need fewer local events: instead of a group holding 8-12 generic events a year, hold 2-3 quality ones and use the extra weekends to visit other groups, maybe some of which aren't in the region. [This has the added benefit of reducing the amount of burnout by locals (and if you tell me that your group as enough members to sustain 12 events a year without burnout, then you should go Principality by yourselves already.)] So the East Coasters are snobs and don't come out here; so what? We can go out there ~~once~~ in a while anyway. Maybe they'll begin to feel guilty and come out ~~our way~~ on occasion as well, but I'm not worried about it even if they don't: ~~we're~~ we're the ones who will be having the richer experience.

Conclusions

It is my belief that the above strongly argues against the Principality idea as it is currently being pushed, and I hope that I may have helped persuade some gentles to vote against the idea. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the

concept of a Principality is a priori a bad idea: I would, e.g., be all in favor if someone tried to form a principality consisting of upstate New York and eastern Ontario, which would be an interesting and innovative approach to the problem of geographic isolation. (I can just imagine what several Powers That Be will say when they hear that one...). Unfortunately, we are only going to be given a Yes/No choice on the question "Does the entire Western Region go Principality?" (this is according to Hak at the Western Regional Twelfth Night Principality Meeting) In this situation, I will only vote No.

My No vote should however be viewed, to use polling order terminology, not as "Over My Dead Body", but rather as "Wait." Above all, we must not rush into this Principality idea, but continue to carry out dialogue aimed at clarifying in everyone's minds what it should be. Perhaps the end result two or three years down the road will be zero or two principalities instead of one. We can still dare to have fun as Svidrir urges us to without a Principality (just ask me sometime how much territory Myrkfaelinn lays claims to...). The point is, what we need now is additional discussion, not railroading. If the Principality is a good idea, then ultimately it will come about; but forcing the issue now will only lead to increased factionalism, frustration, and divisiveness, the last things that the SCA, the East Kingdom, or a fledgling Principality need.↑

— Lord Vlad the Purple

About the Cover

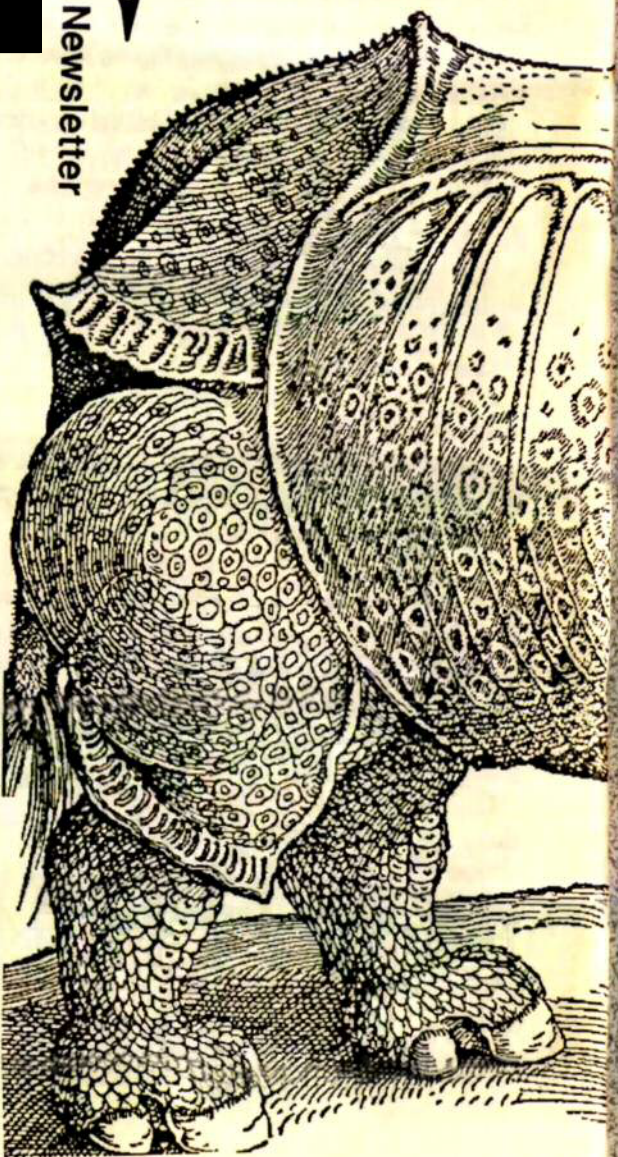
This month's cover is a reproduction of a woodcut by Albrecht Durer. Durer had never seen a rhinoceros, but based his picture on contemporary drawings and accounts. We found this picture as an example on a program which manipulates scanned images for the Macintosh. We would like to thank Master Durer for his contributions to Æstel during our tenure - we are fortunate to have work of such high quality to print.

We were going to save this cover for the May issue, in honor of Crown Tourney, but we could not resist printing it now, as our farewell. (Bye!)

The Western Region

Shire of Northern Outpost (Potsdam, NY)	Phelan MacDermott
Shire of Coppertree (Rome & Utica, NY)	Eleanor of Waldren
Canton of Orion's Gate (Jefferson Co., NY)	Céline de Hermain
Shire of Sterlynge Vayle (Binghamton, NY)	Michelaccio il Matto
Barony of Delftwood (Syracuse, NY)	Owen of Harfleur
Dominion of Myrkfaelinn (Ithaca, NY)	Robert of Ferness
Barony of Thescorre (Rochester, NY)	Gwendolyn of Basing
Barony of the Rhydderich Hael (Niagara Frontier, NY)	Cori Ghora
Canton of Beau Fleuve (Buffalo, NY)	Thorgrim Ulfson
Shire of Stormsport (Erie, PA)	Alexander Caithnes of Wyk
Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands (SW PA)	Marian Greenleaf
College of Cour d'Or (Pgh. Colleges/Univs.)	Seabhac na Scail
Shire of Nemoralis Noctua (Greensburg, PA)	Morgan of Caer Graeme
Shire of St. Swithin's Bog (Johnstown, PA)	Morghod Strongarm
Shire of Dachkehle (Wheeling, WV)	Ormhflaith ni Darragh
Incip. Shr. of Gaidhealach Dorchadh (Morgantown, WV)	Kristin Amber
Shire of Riversmeet (Kanawha, Putnam Co., WV)	Stephen Red Cloak

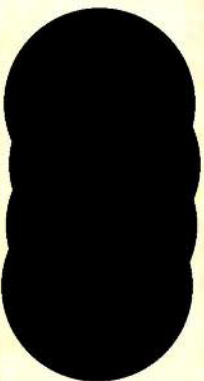
*This list is unofficial. For the official listing, please consult Pikestaff.
Please send corrections to the Kingdom and Regional Seneschals.*



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