

Aventurian Herald

Aventurian Herald 176

Is the Horas Well?

Kuslik. For several weeks now, conversations in nobles' lounges and modest taverns all over Horasia have always returned to one question: is the Horas well? The Horas' health has always been a concern, but it has never been this serious. Furthermore, the Horas' decline began around the same time as the strange changes in the starry sky. What is going on?

Cloversound Devastated by Starshower

Cloversound. Cloversound was struck by disaster! A mild starshower missed Gareth a few nights ago, but a small town south of Gareth was not so lucky. Where once there were willows and fields, there is now only devastation. Star fragments of all shapes and sizes punched holes and gouged furrows into the ground. Fruit trees were smashed, roofs shattered. Miraculously, there were no deaths other than some pets and livestock.

Woe Betide You, o Realm of Raul!

Gareth. "There will be no heir, at least not a legitimate one," says the man with the firm handshake and the nondescript face when we meet in the Black Raven tavern in Ashclearing. Then he utters the outrageous claim, "The bed of the Empress and her husband is cold, and will always be thus... for he does not enjoy the company of women."



Festumers' Flag, Tsa, 1039 FB

Noble Marshal Stung by Morningthorn!

Appeal to All Healers in the Country: "Come to Festum!"

FESTUM. Unsettling news reached us shortly before this edition went to print. According to several trustworthy sources, there is reason to believe that our brave and much-loved, yet sometimes larking Noble Marshal Nadjesha of Lionfords received a sting from a morningthorn bush during a recent ride in the country. Will beautiful Bornland soon be ruled by a swampreek?

Officials neither confirm nor deny this rumor, but every child in Festum and everyone outside its walls knows the danger that the Noble Marshal now faces. According to legend, the morningthorn plant comes from the fairy realms. It lures innocent travelers with its huge gold and purple blossoms, but those who dare approach are in grave danger. Its blossoms may be exquisitely beautiful, but just one sting from a jet black thorn incurs a dark and cruel curse. Victims supposedly turn into wild and beastly ape creatures. Inquiries with the local Temple of Hesinde confirmed these tales, but we also learned that this foul curse doesn't just transform victims' bodies, it also rips the soul from the body, and not even full restoration of health and physical form can recover a soul that has departed. For this reason, it is believed that the curse originates with the Nameless One.

The good servants of Peraine in the Therbûnite hospital in Festum were very surprised by our inquiry. They promised to do everything they could for the Noble Marshal, and will mention her in their daily prayers. You, our readers, may think it negligent that they failed to inform the servants of the Gracious right away and summon their most experienced healers. However, they assured us that they consulted with the mages and alchemists of the Hall of Mercury and the laboratories of the Red Salamander Society from the start. The members of these organizations declined to comment about this controversial news. Inquiries with Wing Master Linjan of Elenau, who is known to be a very close personal friend of Nadjesha of Lionfords, went unanswered.

The tragedy befell our pious marshal and her companions while trying to recover some pieces of silver armor discovered in the

Firuner. It is likely that Nadjesha of Lionfords stood bravely before a dangerous threat to her companions or took part in some other act of bravery when she stepped too close to the cursed plant's thorns. Her companions carried her back to Festum via the fastest route.

As is already known in certain circles, this was not the only piece of silver armor discovered during the past few years. We were not allowed to print reports of earlier finds, but with this discovery, we can probably expect a great deal of new speculation about the fate of the fabled Silver Horde. The blades of this band of knights (some of the most important relics of the Ordo Theatrum, the legendary Theater Knights) were forged during the heyday of swordsmithing in Lionfords and blessed by the Divine Lioness,

who led our ancestors to victory over the goblins. The Horde's silver armor was their pride and joy. It is said that some knights' souls were forged into their armor so they could continue their fight against the goblins throughout eternity. According to legend, the Silver Knights withdrew to the Iron Edge, leaving the Bornland open to invasion by the deluded Sun Legions. Even if this is true, the efforts of Nadjesha of Lionfords might yet be crowned with success, as the heirlooms of the Silver Horde could lead the Bornland and its knights to new splendor and glory.

However, this could also be a sign that a sinister conspiracy is taking hold of our country. Did the enemies of our country, our traditions, and the ideals of the glorious Theater Knights set a trap for Nadjesha? Was

the silver armor planted to lure our pious Noble Marshal to her doom? Are enemies trying once again to topple the Bornland, now that the demon-servants in the south have been routed once and for all? If so, they would do well to leave the country, because neither we nor the Noble Marshal will allow them to succeed!

We pray to the Twelve for Nadjesha of Lionfords, and beg for mercy and healing for the mother of our country and the future of our land.

Jannek Britzkow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

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Thinking weapons?

**Think Jenko, and survive to fight
another day!**

Aventurian Herald, Rahja, 1038 FB

Kuslik Courier, Rondra, 1039 FB

Of Lioness and Lion – Opponents or Opposites?



ANCHOPAL. In a time of upheaval for both faiths, the followers of the Church of Rondra and the cult of Rastullah almost went to war with each other near the Sacred Grove (as reported previously in the *Herald*). Seemingly as a reaction to these events, the Vizier of Anchopal, Maruban ben Hasrabal, invited his city's Novadi scholars and their Twelvogods-faithful colleagues to a theological debate at his palace. The scholars were guaranteed freedom of speech and protection from harm.

The first speaker—a stranger whose white kaftan attracted attention for its red coat of arms, which sages identified as the paw print of a lion or lioness—told of a recent dream wherein he met a lioness with a bright red wound outlined in black above her heart. While traveling through the desert at night, she had encountered a lion whose mane and eyes were covered in thick spider webs. Neither wanted to leave their path, and they began to fight. Suddenly, bright yellow fog lit up behind the lioness, and bright red, glowing, liquid rock ran down the dune behind the lion. Thunder filled the air, and the dream ended. The stranger concluded by saying he hoped that now the lion and lioness could fight their real foes instead of each other.

This was followed by a lively discussion about the reasons why worshippers of Rondra and Rastullah had fought each other in the past, and whether they could fight as allies in the future. Mawdli Shalam ben Yerech praised Sultan Hasrabal's fight against the demon summoners of

Rashdul, and mentioned that the Blessed Ones of Peraine should acknowledge the protection given to pilgrims by the vizier's men. Peraine's priests, however, reminded the assembly that Rondrians once offered protection for free, and had even saved the worshippers of Rastullah from the Oronian threat. Those assembled could only agree on the importance of the Third Demon Battle.

The question of how these two gods could coexist remained unsolved in this dispute of faith. When the first speaker tried to mediate by drawing a connection between Rastullah and the lionheaded Famerlor, a Blessed One of Rondra named Shuray Liyomarsunni lost her temper. As punishment for challenging Novadi to duels during the Aranian siege, she could not carry weapons other than her ritual dagger outside Rondra's Temple. She now raised said dagger, invoked the goddess' name, and lunged at the stranger. However, her thrust hit nothing, for the magically-gifted vizier had touched the man in the white kaftan with his wand, and both of them vanished. Maruban reappeared shortly thereafter and ordered the Blessed One placed under house arrest in her temple. As he dismissed the assembly, he reaffirmed his intention to continue searching for a way to achieve lasting peace.

Chadim ben Gunthar
(Christian Gross)



KUSLIK. For several weeks now, conversations in nobles' lounges and modest taverns all over Horasia have always returned to one question: is the Horas well? The Horas' health has always been a concern, but it has never been this serious. Furthermore, the Horas' decline began around the same time as the strange changes in the starry sky. What is going on?

We have had only rumors so far, but we can now confirm that Khadan Firdayon set out with a small entourage for an official visit to Thegûn, to witness the ordination of novices alongside many Blessed Ones, mages, and other people of high rank and position, among them His Transcendence, the Keeper of the Circle Efferdan ui Bennain. Archmage Praiowine Westfar and Her Imperial Highness Yppolita of Gareth were seen in attendance, as well. In the month of Praios, the Horas left Thegûn through the Kabash-Gate and taveled into the vastness of the sandy Khôm Desert. Many prominent people from Tegûn accompanied the Imperial entourage on its journey.

According to rumors, the Horas visited his father's treasury just prior to setting out. Emperor-Dragon Shafir is said to have handed over several artefacts and arcane treasures, which until now had been kept locked away. No one knows what transpired in the desert, but weeks later, a group returned to Thegûn bearing the marks of their exertions in the desert and other, more serious, encounters. The Horas was not among them, and some of his companions have also been missing ever since. Various sources within the Imperial Palace reported the arrival of a heavily guarded coach, and Horasia's best healers have been summoned

to the Sangreal. The Horas himself has not been seen since then, and the palace has issued no statements. Rumors hint that he has fallen into an unnaturally deep sleep, but none of the other survivors would confirm this.

Mages, scholars, and priests discuss the matter in secrecy, if at all. I learned from the Institute of Arcane Analysis in Kuslik that these events might be linked to a lecture that was given at the much noted All-Aventurian Convocation for Magic in 1034 FB. The lecture's topic—methods to destroy the corrupted shards of the Demon Crown—was of much interest to the Horas and several members of his entourage. Furthermore, we know that the shard of Lord Efferd's adversary was won in heroic battle and with great sacrifice, after which it was hidden in a secret location. This might explain why His Transcendence was willing to travel to the driest place on Dere. Our gentle readership will be able to draw its own conclusions from this.

Beleno Uhric (David Luksaßen, with thanks to all participants of the All-Aventurian Convention 2015)

Nostrian Wartrumpet, Rondra, 1040 FB

Successful Adventure

“Recover Artefacts of the Heroic Deeds of Our Ancestors” —
The Queen Called, and Nostria's Heroes Answered!



NOSTRIA. The bravest of the brave went forth in search of Nostria's history, scouring not just the lands of the Crown but also those occupied provinces that suffer under the whips of Andergast. Our heroes returned to Nostria bearing a true treasure from our past, earning much royal praise. But before we launch into a description of their find, it is only fair to mention something about the deprivations that preceded their mission.

It began in Nostria's wild forests where, as Fate would have it, our heroes crossed paths with a Blessed One of Firun named Firinjev of Wosna. His name tells you that His Grace is no Nostrian, but his presence was a sign of divine favor shining upon our country and the reign of Queen Yolande. Firinjev had been following a white stag, the heraldic animal of our royal house. The noble beast led him to Nostria, where miraculous visions revealed the heroes' pending arrival and the tasks that awaited them. “Firun will test you,” the Blessed One told them, and not one hesitated.

Firinjev wasn't lying, as their journey was filled with trials. The unending woods of the frontier were hit by a heavy hailstorm, and

territorial boars, giant spiders, and sly goblins caused much trouble for the heroes. As they neared their destination, even the trees



began to attack them. But strong branches and grappling roots proved unable to stop these brave adventurers. They soon came upon a hidden casket made of stone that had been broken apart by the roots of an oak. A knight lay within the shattered sarcophagus, his ancient tunic in ruins but his body as fresh as if Boron had just called him forth. Before they could prepare the casket for travel, bandits from Andergast appeared in overwhelming numbers, forcing the explorers to retreat.

At least the heroes managed to bring the unknown knight's green cloak back to Nostria. They also brought a sketch of the casket lid. The coat of arms painted on the stone had faded almost entirely, but experts at court recognized the antlers of the heraldic stag of House Kasmyrin, which indicated that this knight was an ancestor of Queen Yolande. Her Majesty lavished great praise upon the heroes and His Grace Firinjev. We should praise them as well.

Friedhelm Roachcreek
(Philipp Neitzel)

Classifieds

Rhyme of the Month!

And should the stars decline,
we all still love to rhyme.

From this issue on, the *Herald* once will once again accept submissions for Rhyme of the Month. Show off your lyrical side! Send your best poetry to the *Aventurian Herald*.

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Dschadir and Sons Auctions, Selem

Who is the best ranger north and south of the Salamander Stones? **Anakin Firmamentstrider**, of course! I need to win a chariot race, strangle an enemy with the force of ancient magic, and impress a princess. I heard you are the best ranger for this quest. And now I cannot find you. Where are you!

Contact me via the keyword: **Clueless in Gerasim**

This special edition includes spoilers for the HEROIC WORKS adventure *The Thorwal Drum*.

Special Edition Aventurian Herald 176

Salamander, Praios, 1039 FB

Book Review: Neither Sense Nor Reason (Or, How to Waste Two Decades)

I usually feel anticipation when I hold in my hands a new release from one of my honored colleagues. I feel a special anticipation when I know said colleague personally and can be sure that he or she has devoted decades of effort to solid research. However, if all these criteria are met and the published work is still far from satisfying, the sympathetic critic that I am can do nothing more than be honest and ask that my colleague not take the following personally, in the name of science. The latest—and for two decades, the only—work of my honored colleague Alatzter, Count of Hinterbruch, concerns (what else?) the four-headed monstrosity that hinders traffic on the coastal road near the author's home town and forces all travelers to go around it. I speak, of course, of the infamous statue, the *Fourhead of Hinterbruch*.

For years, a cornucopia made from the same material as the statue has been hanging in Alatzter's house. Ever unchanging, literally carved in stone, the Fourhead extends one arm in such a way that it almost begs for someone to place the horn of plenty in that exact spot. One could say that this is an ancient artifact. One could even say that analyzing goblinoid protospells is not easy, and the results are almost impossible to interpret. But was it really necessary to wait more than fifteen years before trying the obvious: namely, combining both artifacts in an experiment?!

But first things first. It should be noted that the book starts with a brief history of both artifacts that answers all of the reader's questions. Count Alatzter shows convincingly

that the statue was erected not by the goblins but by the Theater Knights, around 220 FB, as a way to taunt their goblin enemies. However, even though he researched the history thoroughly, the chapters that follow (the ones that discuss analysis and highly speculative interpretation of the experiment) have gone totally amiss. For example, the Count discovered signs of animistic magic, which is not really surprising for an obviously magical goblin idol. Alatzter also found traces of elemental magic. Now, who could have thought of that?! Finally, he even goes so far as to say that the Fourhead statue on the coastal road can be used to create magical roads or ways in the directions the statue looks. These pathways would protect a traveler from any elemental effects. Alatzter claims to have found "significant evidence of the presence of elementally stable ways within a radius of about half a mile from the statue," where paved roads have existed for several hundred years.

The most important result of the study, however, must be that the Count should have concentrated on the horn much earlier. This flash of genius was reportedly offered to him previously by no less than six colleagues from Festum and must have blinded him as well, since his analysis of the cornucopia revealed nothing that a mediocre adept of object magic could have learned with one glance.

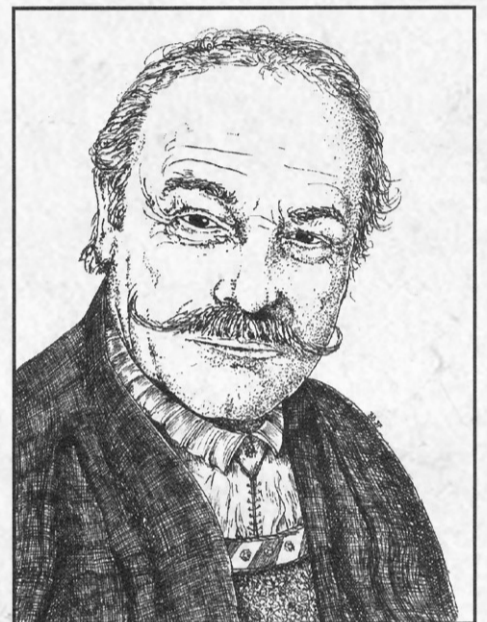
Bravo, my colleague! Perhaps this artifact enabled you to recreate the Marshal's Way that ran to the swamp ruin of Pilkamm! Perhaps you went there and learned the answer to the riddle of why someone defaced the statue's

head that looked towards Pilkamm. Your modest guess: "The missing face denotes the absence of elemental powers in a generally southern direction."

Why did you not at least try your luck with other statues? As far as I know, two more such objects stand in Festenland. But no, due to the risk of "chaotic discharges" and "unpredictable elemental effects," you (perhaps for the first time in your life) downed a bottle of Kwassetz before the Sieben, and choked on it.

From the time I started reading these 300 wasted pages of highest-quality paper, I have been asking myself, "Why, Alatzter? Why in the name of Hesinde did you remove the cornucopia from the statue after your experiment?!" In the face of your thesis, as false as it may be, even you should have realized that the ongoing study of the arcane interaction between statue and horn would prove enlightening! No wonder you must resort to speculation. You miss obvious facts that could form the basis of truly productive research.

The lesson is clear: Indecision and laziness are bad habits of which shortsighted bronnjars sometimes accuse common researchers. And although I am far from joining this improper choir, Hesinde loves those who seek the truth without hesitation. But you, Alatzter, have hesitated for far too long! I mourn for the life you wasted as a researcher, the end result of which is the reiteration of nothing more than obvious and long-known facts.



Thezmar Alatzter: The Fourhead of Hinterbruch. Magical Analysis and Considerations On the Elemental Magic of the Suulak. Festum, author's edition. Quarto, 28 Batzen

Book Review by Alwin K. Wippwinger, Magister Emeritus Festumiensis

Alwin K. Wippflügler, (Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Festumers' Flag, Efferd, 1039 FB

The Drum is Missing! Long Live Captain Timpiski!

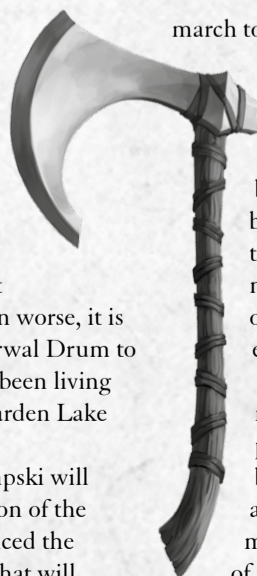
Thorwal Drum Stolen from Garrison. Guard Captain Elkman Timpiski Collects Donations for the *Drum Corps* to Recover the Drum

FESTUM. Until now, it had only been rumored, but Captain Timpiski has confirmed that the Thorwal Drum is no longer in Festum. After the riots during last year's Atmaskottjen procession, the captain was summoned before the Grand Council to testify regarding his security measures for the event. His impressive summation convinced each and every alderman and alderwoman that his preparations before the parade, and his decisions during the riots, were correct. In fact, even the Council did not foresee encountering more than a few drunken Thorwalers who intended ill towards the procession. No one would have thought that the guard would have to fight not only violent Norbards, but also red pelts agitated by disciples of Nandus and other groups

affected by discrimination and poverty. In the end, prudent decisions kept material damage to a minimum, and the Drum was taken to a safe location by the Guard.

However, cowardly thieves recently stole the important instrument and smuggled it out of the city. To make matters even worse, it is believed that they sold the Thorwal Drum to a bunch of Norbards who have been living illegally on the waters of the Harden Lake District for years.

Guard Captain Elkman Timpiski will not stand for this brazen violation of the law! A few days ago, he announced the formation of a volunteer corps that will



march to Harden and recover the Drum.

He is now collecting donations to equip the corps with high-quality equipment—perhaps even modern war machinery. It might be time to recall the words of those bald, mustached warriors known as the Theater Knights, namely, "dat no Nurbard may hav just un spot o' land." Houseboat trickery is no exception to this rule!

The corps will muster and march forth in just a few weeks, and plans to return the Drum to Festum before the first snow. If you cannot afford to donate to the effort, you may enlist and strengthen the ranks of the corps. With sufficient numbers,

the corps will instill plenty of respect in those thieving Norbards.

Honorable burghers of Festum will donate to the cause! This is not just about the Thorwal Drum. It is also about fighting against piracy and brigandage. This is about our principles and the promise our beautiful city made to its burghers: Justice must never tire!

To donate or enlist, visit the garrison in the Wall Gardens District or go to the new shrine of Kor near the Harbor Master's office. Sorry, we do not accept money printed by the Northland Bank.

Alriksej Gerberow (Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Festumers' Flag, Praios, 1039 FB

Down with Demonic Products!

Products from Vol-Ghurmak's Workshops Found in the Bornland!

FESTUM. In one of his rare sermons in Hesinde's Temple of Knowledge in Festum, Wulfhelm Tannhauser, the Arch Abbot of the Draconites, admonished congregants to exercise caution when handling mechanical household objects purchased from Tobrien. Smuggled goods intercepted recently in the north included several items with corrupt elemental properties. These items were most probably constructed in the demon forges of the unholy mechanikus known as Leonardo. Tannhauser emphasized that these items had reached the Bornland through various routes, but stressed that the danger could not be ascribed to merchants alone, and especially not to Norbardic clans.

It is critical to act immediately when tools or other goods appear to be possessed of demonic influences. Citizens are urged

to bring all suspicious items to the Temple of Hesinde or the Draconite Hoard for inspection.

A spokesperson from the Free League, an alliance of honest merchants, reiterated that member states should refuse all trade with the Shadowlands. The Free League was founded to prevent such dishonest and dangerous machinations. Much remains to be done if we are to contain smuggling, which is the primary source of corrupted goods in the Bornland. At the same time, the Festum City Guard indicated that there is no need to be concerned, as their tireless efforts have almost eliminated smuggling in Festum.

Hilma Lettrow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Festumers' Flag, Tsa, 1035 FB

Fire in Silling!

Arsonist On the Run

SILLING. Only the valiant effort of volunteers prevented the loss of the beautiful Silling on the Brinna to an out-of-control fire. Fortunately, a beadle in service to the Dame of Silling was on patrol near the forge when the fire broke out and was able to ring the fire bell immediately. The villagers who came running were able to contain the fire quickly, and the smith's family escaped unharmed.

The door to the forge had been broken down with great force, and the tools and mechanisms inside were jumbled up. Most tellingly, the oil trough had been overturned into the glowing embers of the forge. It is suspected that this started the fire. The smith will, of course, face questioning from the Blessed Ones of Ingerimm as to whether she closed up her shop in the evening according to the rules of Church and Guild.

A six foot length of garden fence was discovered among the damaged items in

the forge. This was immensely puzzling to the beadle, as a fence like this is unfamiliar in the vicinity of Silling. Additionally, the fence's singed wood gave off a strange yet pleasant smell. However, the damage suffered by the fence indicates that it was used as a battering ram to knock down the door. It is almost certain that the thief resorted to arson to cover his or her tracks. But what kind of thief would carry a fence for miles just to break down a door? And what kind of thief breaks in, makes a mess, and then flees without stealing anything?

We trust in Rondra and Praios that the Dame of Silling will soon find the perpetrator and shed some light on this strange affair.

Hilma Lettrow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Festumers' Flag, Travia, 1039 FB

A Dashing Wing Master, the New Husband for the Noble Marshal?

Linjan of Elenau Given Command of Bornish Draft Units in the Imperial Army. Recruitment Has Begun.

SALDERKEIM. In a festive official ceremony held in the "Town of Saint Anshag," Noble Marshal Nadjescha of Leufurten swore Festenlandic Count Linjan of Elenau into office as commander of the Bornish Draft, a unit of volunteers that will serve with the Imperial Army. The Weidenan-Tobrienan troupes of Empress Rohaja, led by Duke Bernfried of Ehrenstein, no longer need worry about their campaign against Helme Haffax. "We are proud of our Theater Knight heritage, and just as we did on the Vallusan Fields, we will ride with the Imperial forces to battle," said the Noble Marshal.

Unlike the Empress, the Noble Marshal may not call for a levy. Instead, she must rely on the abilities of her recruitment officers. And who better to rally new troops than the winner of her Rondra-pleasing *Pilgrimage of Saints*, held in 1035 FB? Linjan is a courageous bronnjar—and he has looks, too, as even the Noble Marshal had to admit

behind closed doors.

The new Wing Master was granted the seat to the right of our Sovereign at the splendid and substantial feast held to celebrate the event in the Prince's residence. And even though neither of them seemed much affected by the quantity of Meskinnes consumed, a kind observer might have thought their conversations very intimate and noticed that their cheeks sometimes seemed to glow.

It was in Swordbergen that Count Linjan first referred to himself as a Wing Master, something that only his followers would do before now. During the year it took to make the appointment a reality, several Sewerian bronnjars spoke out against the title, and the Noble Marshal had to work hard to overcome their doubts. The title of Wing Master, which actually originated in Seweria, is normally reserved for the commander of the unit known as the Winged Knights, some members of which very clearly opposed

Linjan's appointment. However, time eased their concerns, and almost a dozen Winged Knights and their entourages from western Seweria joined the Count in celebrating. Even Domain Master Gernot of Halsingen wished "all the best to the young, valiant man" and bestowed him with Rondra's blessings when last he was in Festum. This little breach of tradition should really pose no problem. Even the Church of Rondra in Bornland and the Ardarites have announced that they will commit several banners' worth of troops to the Draft.

The recruitment effort is in full swing, and Linjan may rejoice at its positive reception. Tobrienan bronnjars have been coming forward to pledge their allegiance for months now, and it is certain that many more brave and honest heirs of the Theater Knights will soon follow in their footsteps.

Jannek Britzkow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Aventurian Herald, Phex, 1038 FB

Riots in Festum

Traditional Atmaskottjen Parade Out of Control, Domain Master Appears Upset, Famous Thorwal Drum Missing

FESTUM. After protesting in the streets of the city during the recently-expanded Atmaskottjen parade, many Festum minorities launched bloody attacks against the City Guard. The rioters were apparently upset about the parade's symbolic executions of straw puppets that depicted Thorwal pirates. Fighting increased after Domain Master Gernot of Halsingen gave his allocution at the conclusion of the procession, and the guards and their freelance security enforcers were barely able to bring the riots under control.

Apart from the straw puppets, the target of the riot seems to have been the Thorwal Drum, which is covered in pirate skin. According to the City Guard and several eyewitnesses, the drum was saved at the last second. However, some people report that insurgents grabbed the instrument and fled with it.

The Domain Master was very upset at the level to which long-held principles of courage and honor had been violated. He also denied any connection between this and his recent praise for Linjan of Elenaus, who is at the moment rallying troops for the war against Helme Haffax. Alderwoman Firnski, who first proposed expanding the procession, declined to comment.

Representatives for the Free League and of the Council of Arts referred to the

dire warnings they had issued beforehand. According to them, the images of the Atmaskottjen and their symbolic executions are linked very closely to Festum minorities, such as Norbards, Maraskani, goblins, and Thorwalers, and thus the uprisings are completely understandable. At the same time, these spokespeople condemned the riots utterly, saying that deeds like this are simply grist for the mills of those who desire to disrupt communication and understanding between different peoples and seek to harden prejudices and reinforce stereotypes.

The parade is held every year on the 8th of Phex in honor of the victory of Festum's City Guard over the pirate Atmaskot Blood-drinker. For decades, the procession was held only on Warehouse Island, but its route was expanded to include all parts of the city this year. The Grand Council had argued the subject for months, and announced its decision to expand the parade route only days before the festival began. Guard Captain Elkman Timpiski, who was responsible for security during the festival, now faces serious allegations. His hearing before the Grand Council is expected to take place in mid-Peraine.

Jegowin Raskow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Festumers' Flag, Firun, 1039 FB

The Gathering of Aventurian Bards

To be Held Peraine 7th to 12th, 1039 FB, in Norburgaine 1039 BF in Norburg.

NORBURG. It's happening again! Bards, minstrels, singers, and jugglers are gathering in rustic Norburg, just as they do every four years, to praise the beauty of music and perform traditional and new songs alike. Countless artists will be on hand to delight audiences with Minnesang, ballads, and folk lyrics, some simple, others elaborate. We can already report that the following spectacular musicians will perform in Norburg:

From the court of Horas Khadan, the flamboyant harper
Filyina Calleano

Adored in every corner of the land, creator of Ode to our Native Land
Hannik von Hundehufen

Musicians from all across Aventuria in one energetic Performance
The Rolling Thunder

We will also welcome several bards from the Bornland, like Milljane from Flutes, and crowd-pleasing Ullick Jessoff from Blossomfield. Furthermore, we expect aspiring knights of courtly love from Weiden, and the great Horasian opera master Tyrael ya Trequona will present his elven-inspired Antaraleon Cycle. And last but not least, we look forward to the bard's singing duel held according to courtly rules. This year's competition pits Aldifreid the Garethan Mastersinger against the satiric Troveres and Troveras of Torbenia's School of Bards from Almada.

Jannek Britzkow
(Daniel Heßler, Niklas Forreiter)

Garethan Messenger, Travia, 1039 F3

Cloversound Devastated by Starshower

CLOVERSOUND Cloversound was struck by disaster! A mild starshower missed Gareth a few nights ago, but a small town south of Gareth was not so lucky. Where once there were willows and fields, there is now only devastation. Star fragments of all shapes and sizes punched holes and gouged furrows into the ground. Fruit trees were smashed, and roofs were shattered. Miraculously, there were no deaths other than some pets and livestock.

Only the Temple of Praios remained untouched. It stands in the midst of the destruction like a beacon of faith and hope, giving people the will to continue the reconstruction and repair of their homes. They receive much-needed help from pilgrims who were in town to attend services in the temple and hear the famous gong of Saint Owilmar.

Also lending a helping hand are various Blessed Ones of the Temple, such as

young Bosper Cloverhome, whose calm determination is a shining example for all. As soon as I set foot in the ruins of Cloversound, he asked me to join in the repairs. He was so friendly that I found him impossible to resist (this is why it took two days longer to get this report to you, the loyal readers of the *Garethan Messenger*). Be assured, Cloversound may have been damaged by the starshower, but it is far from lost.

*Firunjan Isberger
(Marie Mönkemeyer)*

Aventurian Herald, Efford, 1040 F3

Woe Betide You, O Realm of Raul! Still No Heir—The Prince Consort's Lover Deigns to Talk!

GARETH. The battle is fought, and Helme Haffax, the Shadow Marshal, is history. Yet still the Middenrealm is shaken to its foundations because the Throne has no heir. "You can see the strain of the war etched into the features of the Empress," reports a confidante from the palace. This leads one to think that the lack of a child may have more to do with stress than anything else.

However, a seasoned and highly decorated veteran, who of course wishes to remain anonymous, told me an entirely different story about the Imperial Court. The gentle readers of the Herald may draw their own conclusions.

"There will be no heir, at least not a legitimate one," says the man with the firm handshake and the nondescript face when we meet in the Black Raven tavern in Ashclearing. Then he utters the outrageous

claim, "The bed of the Empress and her husband is cold, and will always be thus... for he does not enjoy the company of women."

While we worry about our Empress' fertility, are we to believe that her husband searches for pleasure in the beds of strangers? Is it possible that he cannot even perform his matrimonial duty? After recovering from this shock, I gulp down three drinks and continue listening silently to his story. He knows names, and apparently was able to get in and out of the Tobrienan Yard (Editor's note: council of crime bosses). He has contacts in the IGIA, and knows all of the important people at Court along with all their intimate details. He also knows how to reveal just enough to establish his credibility. I for one no longer believe that the Prince Consort will father an heir. However, Rohaja will have to produce a successor to

the Throne sooner or later if the Throne hopes to thwart the greedy ambitions of certain noble families of the Realm. In the Year of Fire, when the Empress was believed dead, we will never forget how Answin of Ravenmouth unilaterally declared himself ruler of the Realm for the second and—thank the gods—final time.

There is perhaps one last glimmer of hope—the Imperial sister, Yppolita. However, she has been cursed. An heir from her might be our salvation, but it could also mean our doom. Everyone knows that a mage may never sit on the Throne of the Middenrealm. Then again, they said the same thing about women until 10 years ago. Realm of Raul, we are worried!

*Itsadora Alrikshuber
(Axel Spor)*

Tobrienan Wolf's Horn, Phex, 1040 F3

An Amazon on the Hunt

MENDENA. The Pirate's Coast has been liberated, Mendena is once again part of the Realm, and the Prince's hold has been shattered. However, it will take great effort to repair the damage done by of years of occupation and combat and restore the region's economy.

Skilled tradespeople—females, especially—are looking at a bright and golden future. All through the month of Tsa, an amazon rode through the villages of Tobrien recruiting craftswomen exclusively, to help rebuild and expand Lionstone Castle. All female masons, stonemasons, and carpenters are welcome to report to the lady of the castle, *Bernischa Rondriana of Schosko*, to find work, wages, and victuals.

This is why one meets so many journeywomen and craftswomen from Tobrien, Weiden, and the Bornland on the roads these days, traveling to Lionstone. Here and there in certain villages you can hear peasants grumbling that carpenters no longer repair the houses of common folk and instead work only for the amazons. It is said that even if every carpenter, male and female, were to arrive in Mendena and start today, they would still not be finished working

several years from now, a fact that seems to make them very happy.

Now it seems the amazons seek more than craftswomen. One with whom I spoke was also searching for courageous fighters, heroes of the battles of Mendena and the Tesral Loop. Her reasons for seeking male heroes kindled my curiosity, so I asked her why. She just looked at me pitifully and said that it was none of my business. A maimed veteran who lost an ear, an eye, and an arm to a zant in the Battle of Mendena told me that the amazon had been asking specifically

for Middenrealmish war heroes who had achieved the greatest glory.

She must have good cause to search for men whose actions are already being praised by the Tobrienan bards. This obvious champion of Rondra would not reveal her motives to either me or the maimed veteran, but one obvious reason presented itself: to locate fighters who were almost certainly blessed by the goddess. I hope Rahja favors the amazon's task, as the goddess of honorable combat surely does.

I met the amazon again by the start of Phex, this time in the company of a group of craftswomen travelling to Lionstone. Whether she found the heroes she sought, only time will tell. Whether this was her wish, or that of the new Bloodlioness *Palinai of Kurkum*, or even of Her Majesty, High Queen *Thesia Gilia of Kurkum*, will most probably remain a secret of the amazons.

*Egidius Torfner
(Anni Dürr)*



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Fantholi, Boron, 1038 F3

The Heir to the Bearforest Title Rails Against the Bailiff of Pallingen

BEARWOOD. The discovery of a slain messenger (as reported previously in the *Aventurian Herald*) did nothing to alleviate feelings of unrest in Olat's Keep. Griseldis of Pallingen, the heir to the count's title of Bearforest, is said to have ranted infernally at various times. Calling a spade a spade, she accused her dreaded adversary, Geiserich of Haffstein, of committing the murder. How much longer will the countess retain him as Bailiff of Pallingen with so many clues pointing to his true, evil nature? Once again, Walderia of Lionhead attempted to mediate by reminding the court that the renowned bailiff has managed her interests prudently for years. As long as no hard evidence against him comes to light, he should continue to have her trust.

We have since learned that the messenger's body was found in a derelict barn near the village of Leinhaus. Strangulation marks and various stab wounds clearly indicated murder. The murderer is thought to be a brawny, bearded man wearing a dark cloak and carrying a conspicuous weapon who nearly rode down some peasants last winter. They remember him well, as he continued on without even turning around to see if he had injured anyone.

Well-informed sources within the Count's court report that Griseldis sent out several trusted heroes to find evidence against the bailiff and his horrible deeds.

*Thuronia Copperstich
(Axel Riegert)*

Baltram of Liepenberg undertakes an educational journey. The Editor-in-Chief of the *Aventurian Herald* may currently be found in the beautiful valley of the Yaquir, researching recipes for a culinary travel guide. Tips regarding local and especially worthy restaurants are welcome. We ask that you please abstain from seeking autographs.

Keyword:
Taverntester

Stag Goulash, Dragon's Inn Style

Exclusively for the Aventurian Herald, Kelle Pottkerson, chef of the Thorwalian 4-Axes Restaurant in Gareth, presents his favorite meal for all occasions.

For 2-3 people with hearty appetites.

Ingredients

300 g to 1/2 kg bacon, depending on the number of true friends invited

2 onions (diced)

1 kg stag goulash (alternatively: deer, boar, or beef)

1 or 2 tablespoons white flour

1 bottle of a strong red (should you prefer a fine vinegar instead, use Engasaler; mix wine with water, if your tastes run to the mild end)

2 bay leaves

1 level teaspoon dried thyme (or 3 to 4 fresh sprigs)

2 cloves

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Render the bacon fully.
2. Fry the stag goulash in the rendered fat. Add salt and pepper, and watch for hot steam.
3. Reduce the heat. (As you learned sirs should know, Caldofrigo (a heating spell –Editor) is not recommended! Also, elementals are not welcome in the galley. Our shipmage tried this once; he will never try it again!)
4. Add the diced onions and fry everything until the onions are as deliciously tanned as the people in Almada.
5. Add the flour and spread it out well (but only in the pot).
6. Finally, drown the meat in your chosen wine.
7. Add the spices. Then find something to do for the one-and-a-half to two hours that the goulash must be left to stew. Do not forget to tell the goulash to ponder the meaning of life while it cooks.
8. In the meantime, try not to drool too much. If you can get away with it, down that leftover open bottle of Horasian Broth. Top it off with beer, if you run low. This is very important, since it helps give you the ideal momentum for cooking. To keep the guests happy, fish some greens out of the vegetable barrel. You could also throw something made from potatoes, or dough (or even from potato dough) into the boiling water.
9. Check the goulash now and then. Keep an eye on the liquid level in your pot. If needed, add more wine (or water, you boozehounds!)
10. Salt to taste.

Care For a Little Romance?

Should there be someone very special alongside your ship, you must go the extra mile and prepare an appetizer or do something salad-y. Do not ask me why, but some people just are not happy unless they can nibble the decorations. So, we must get through this. Fuel your courage with liquor, if needed, and it won't be that difficult. Never forget, if Fate smiles on you, you just might commandeer that ship later!

Place **one beetroot per person** (depending on the size) in the oven for **a little more than one hour**. Equal distribution of heat is the secret to fine cuisine, and the oven should be calm but quite hot (200° C). Do not use more heat. Beetroot already looks dried out—we do not need to make it worse.

Shortly before the goulash is ready, take the beetroot out of the oven and cut it into half-inch thick slices. Aye, it will be hot. Are you men or mice?

First cut off the root-filled underside. The slices should resemble the stumps of trees with fine decorative rings on them.

Spread the slices on two plates and drizzle some expensive olive oil over them. People love that. Or, argan oil tastes far better, but it will cost you some ducats! And remember, mates—drip, don't pour! Oil is expensive (and it's not bacon!).

Add salt and pepper and a pinch of green rabbit food, just for decoration. I believe the stuff is called parsley, but you can use any fresh herb.

Serve hot. That is it. Aside from adding olive oil, that did not hurt, did it?

11. Serve beer with the meal. Use lots of beer, since you must drown the stag in it. And serve it well chilled, at least as cold as a spring night in Olport. I recommend Preman Dark Bock.

12. Finally, never forget the cordial. Preman Fire will do best.

*Yours, Kelle Pottkerson
(Carolina Möbis)*

Red Pelts, Dark Powers, and a False Heir

DONJECREEK DEEP, FESTENLAND. In Boron, 1038 FB, Freecountess of Beereskow and the Prince of Hinzk called for brave heroes to join in a hunt for goblins, since the young Bronnjar Maksim of Donjetzk was no longer able to protect his village and his subjects against the red pelts. Many fighters answered the call, along with courageous burghers, learned ladies and gentlemen, Blessed Ones, and celebrities from among the nobility.

The goblins had conducted a raid near the settlement, where it was reported that they had killed the daughter of Gudwinja, the old healer. Shortly thereafter, the aged woman herself fell victim to a red pelt attack, at least according to her young assistant, who was the only witness. However, the adventurers quickly realized that Gudwinja was a dark druid who only appeared to die so she could steal her assistant's young body and live on. It was she who sent the goblins to attack the village, and once she was unmasked, she ordered various creatures of the woods to attack Donjecreek Deep. Even though many villagers suffered painful losses, the village withstood the attacks. The druid was

destroyed, and with Boron's help the soul of the assistant was recovered and restored to her body.

Thanks to the cunning of Phex, the heroes discovered that the man everyone thought was the Bronnjar, Maksim of Donjetzk, was in fact an impostor instead.

Some years ago, Maksim fell in a battle in Tobrien. The impostor (Dimitri, a friend Maxim's) had recovered the sword and shield of the dead Bronnjar. His remarkable physical resemblance to Maksim fooled the messenger who had been sent to learn the fate of the Bronnjar. The messenger mistook him for Maksim, and Dimitri took Maksim's place when he returned home. After being convicted, Dimitri was ordered to return to the battlefield to recover Maksim's body.

*Jette Alessa Rabengaard
(Janina Robben)*

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