

Aventurian Herald

Aventurian Herald 180

Help and Advice for the Duke

Elenvina. His Majesty Hagrobald Guntwin of the Great River, Duke of the Northmarches, prepares to reorganize his duchy to meet his specifications. The Oaken Chamber, the closest circle of ducal advisors, are vital to this process. This council of nine lords and ladies convenes in the chamber for which it was named.



Spectacular Exhibit and Professorial Chair for Uthuria Established!

Al'Anfa/Porto Velvenya. The *University of Al'Anfa* has announced plans to establish a fixed professorship for the Uthuria Department within its faculty, starting next semester. The new position's responsibilities include analyzing expedition reports and findings and making the results available to future Uthuria explorers from the Empire.

Price War in Grangor?

Grangor. Alricilian Sandfort answers our writer—and, it seems, everyone he meets these days—a bit indignantly. He says the conditions are downright outrageous, and he, as General-Director of the *Horus-Imperial Privileged North Sea Company*, personally guarantees to prosecute every merchant who harms his business “to the fullest extent of the law.”

Associates with the Wortheim merchant family commented, “That cur Sandfort, he shouldn’t make such a fuss.” In the meantime, quite a few shopkeepers are selling pelts!



Aventurian Herald, Efford 1040 FB

I Urge You to Remain Calm

The Master of the Domain's Comments about the Destiny of the Swords of the North

(NOTE: This and other articles in *Aventurian Herald* #180 contain spoilers for the adventure *Theater Knights III: The Green Procession*)

Friends, we must count ourselves lucky. The Thundering Lioness gave the Swords of the North to the champions of the Green Procession. The clergy have been expecting this revelation since the invasion of Bethanier. That this miracle finally took place two decades later suggests that future threats are far greater than ancient feuds between Sewerian noble houses, and of far greater significance to the Twelvegodly order than the military balance of power in Bornland. It seems the monster and other terrors the champions faced in the Battle at Graytooth are but a taste of things to come. Thus, while this divine sign brings us great hope, it also places a great responsibility on our shoulders.

Now, the Noble Marshal chooses to give the holy swords to those who distinguished themselves during the campaign and on the battlefield. While the second criterion is self-evident and beyond reproach, the question remains: what does she mean when she speaks of merit during the campaign? I was not there myself, as the news of the campaign reached me too late and the Domain had already sent a large part of its strike force against Helme Haffax the Unholy. Reliable eyewitnesses told me tales of heroic efforts to keep the troops provisioned and in good spirits. However, those who distinguished themselves in the Noble Marshal's eyes often were worldly-minded adventurers, wealthy burghers, or Kor-worshipping mercenaries.

Was this truly the will of the Thundering One? Did she bless us with her divine mercy only to circumvent centuries-old traditions? After all, these traditions gave responsibility to families who had initially proven themselves faithful and pleasing unto Rondra, and whose successors prepared for their task with proper and honorable education.

Is it possible the goddess intended that many of these “unconventional sword bearers” would be only temporary

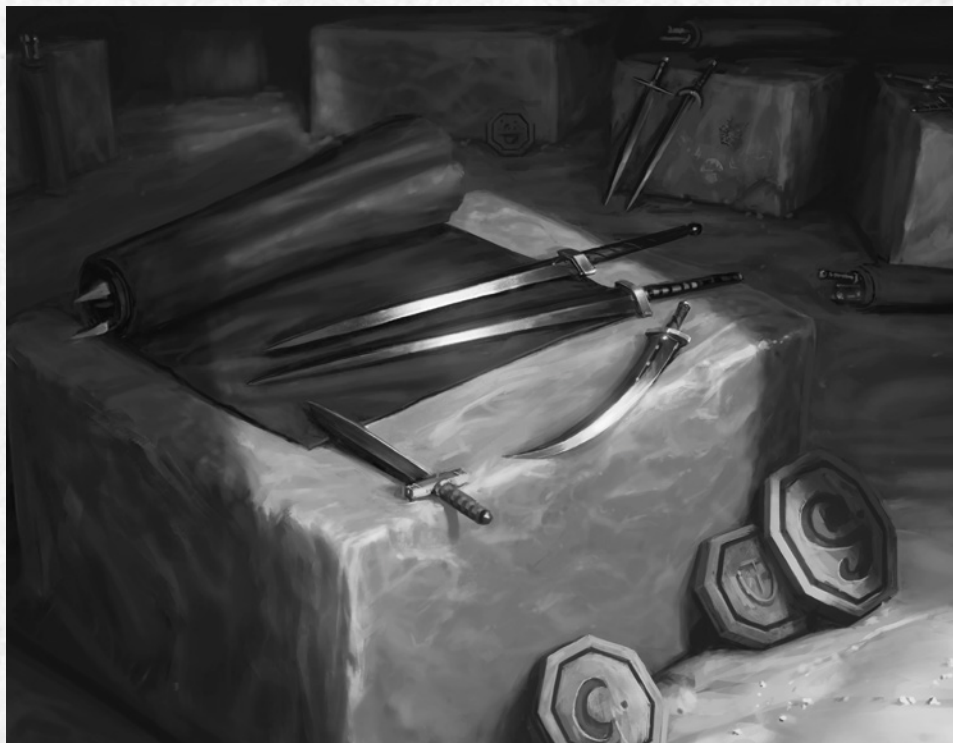
custodians who would then pass the swords to more worthy owners serving our country in Tobrien? It is no coincidence that, after Haffax was defeated, the victory celebration in Gareth ended on the first day of Rondra. It is no coincidence that Rondra's temple provost in the merchant town of Firunen erred in her interpretation of history and was misled by the shameful machinations of the Alliance of Kor's Sign. It is no coincidence that this questionable, so-called Alliance destroyed a virtuous order of knights, drove many citizens of Norbury—including a renowned sovereign—to their deaths, and forced the Noble Marshal to fight the largest civil war in two decades. And it is no coincidence that their malicious henchmen, with the help of dragons and demons, annihilated the town of Needmark. Under such circumstances, the expansion of Kor's shrine in Sirmgalvis is as worrisome as a sea mercenary establishing an altar to a krakennewt in Festum's port.

Yet, despite the depredations of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, the mercenary god's veneration increases. Some claim misunderstanding—saying that these bloodthirsty sectarians misappropriated Kor's name and thus follow a dubious new Alveranian who goes only by the name “G.” But how many of these protests, I wonder, simply arise from well-meaning naivete or are mere lip service? Their protests make matters worse when someone uses their belief in Kor as a pretext for avarice and cruelty, as so often happened these last few months. I am appalled at the thought that one of these butchers could someday demand satisfaction, and I would be forced to grant him a duel just because he carries a Sword of the North.

Therefore, I urge you to remain calm regarding the question of who should or should not bear the Swords of the North. Nobility and clergy have many obligations and—as witnessed in countless heroic deeds on the battlefield—the Church

of Rondra endures them with merit and pride. If any burghers feel weighed down by the burden of holiness bestowed on them by the goddess' mercy, we gladly offer the following advice: they can magnanimously donate their blades to a temple, confident they have not only done a good deed, but are brave enough to renounce a task for which they clearly were unsuited.

Gernot of Halsingen, Master of the Domain, Bornland (Niklas Forreiter, Daniel Heßler)



Someone stole a glass mask of a kobold's face from the Mask Museum in Havena! Museum officials are offering a reward of 50 silverthalers to anyone who catches the culprit and returns the mask.

Support Albernian culture by visiting the unparalleled *Mask Museum!*

**New Goods in Stock!
Today Only!**

Real Pelts from the North!

**Don't Buy Cheap Imitations!
Don't Trust the Merchants from
Sudertown!**

**Waarten General Store, in Geese
Square**

Golden Alliance Crisis Settled... for Now

Khefu. Kemi Corvikaner fanatics' assassination of an Horasian envoy led to thunderous outrage in the court of Vinsalt, where many hinted the Golden Alliance was in a state of chaos. The Corvikaner abbot, Boronfried Sá'kurat, openly praised the "martyrs who returned home" as examples of "the raven's loyalty, devotion, and heroic bravery" and announced: "We will attack the Horasian and Brabakan apostates wherever they besmirch the Holy Land with their presence." His proclamation was the final straw.

Many insisted the faithless Kemi receive strict punishment. Their demands varied from merciless punitive expeditions, to eradicating the Corvikaner and occupying their important trading towns, to implementing decrees placing the land under military occupation, and even arresting Nisut Ela to stand trial in

Vinsalt for "ignoring the barbaric and repeated crimes of a bloodthirsty band of cultists."

The Horasian Empire makes its accusations difficult to dismiss. While the Corvikaner grow bolder and more reckless, the Kemi Nisut seems unable to keep the fanatical sect on a short leash. The furtive fanatics contemptuously refuse any form of communication by hiding in the thick jungles between Khefu and Brabak.

To prevent further escalation, Nisut Ela XV sent a delegation to Vinsalt under her chancellor, Akiljá Algerín-de Cavazo, to beg forgiveness for the assassination and negotiate a peaceful settlement. The talks—during which the Kemi delegation showed visible strain—took nearly a week. The chancellor was unavailable to make a statement for three fateful days, and had to interrupt negotiations on more than one occasion to regain her strength.

In the end, the Kemi only managed to prevent direct Horasian intervention by making massive concessions. Both sides signed a document giving the Horasian ambassador rights to all information about affairs concerning the Kemi Realm in Nisut Ela's Crown Council, as well as a guaranteed audience with the Council. Furthermore, the Kemi agreed to pay severe reparations, albeit in installments, to the Horas-Emperor and the diplomats injured during the assassination. In addition, the Kemi arranged to lower the export prices for vanilla, cinnamon, and pepper to the Horasian Empire by 25 percent and accepted a Horasian trade monopoly on Kemi jewels. Also, Horasians living in Kemi are now exclusively under Horasian jurisdiction. They cannot face prosecution by Kemi courts, and Kemi guards and officials may not enter their houses or plantations without permission. Finally, the Kemi pledge to

take up arms against the Corvikaner in the sinister sect's next assault, using all necessary force to break their power once and for all.

Although the anger in the Vinsalt court seems somewhat diminished by the agreement, the Kemi people completely reject the "dictation of shame," and even the domineering Church of Boron refuses to give the agreement its blessing. The Nisut's guards increased their presence in the streets, cracking down on insurgents and unruly mobs, but the situation is like a barrel of Hylailian Fire. The only question is, how long is the fuse?

*Silinia of Bergen-Oberfels, Envoy of the Empress in Khefu
(Armin Abele)*

Northmarcher Griffon Mirror, Efferd, 1040 FB

A New Heir for the Northmarches

Elenvina. Rejoice, Northmarchers, friends, and contemporaries! Tsa's blessing is upon our beloved Duke, His Majesty Hagrobald Guntwin of the Great River, and his consort Concabella Blanca!

Their first child was born on the night of the 24th of Efferd in the 1040th gods' course, after Bosparan's Fall! The healthy baby boy bears the name Godehard Jast, in honor of his great-grandfather and his venerable ancestors.

The Duke arranged a truly grand celebration in Elenvina the following Praios day, so his subjects could rejoice. Instead of water, wine flowed freely from the fountains at the Ducal Promenade and on the Griffon Square. Celebrants roasted oxen on spits in the market square and shared them with everyone present. May the gods bless our generous Duke, always!

*Hesindiago Wagonserve
(Tina Hagner)*

Northmarcher Griffon Mirror, Peraine, 1039 FB

Help and Advice for the Duke

The Oaken Chamber as Advisory Council for the Duke of the Northmarches

Elenvina. His Majesty Hagrobald Guntwin of the Great River, Duke of the Northmarches, prepares to reorganize his duchy to meet his specifications. The Oaken Chamber, the inner circle of ducal advisors, are vital to this process. This council of nine lords and ladies convenes in the chamber for which it was named.

Provincial Governor Iseweine of Weiseprin continues to look after the duchy's interests. His Excellency Godefroy of Ibenburg-Luring, Illuminated of Elenvina, remains the Oaken Chamber's First Scribe. Lord Rondrian of the Mountain remains Herald, and Turam, son of Fanderash, a relative of the Isnatosh Mountain King, remains Marshal. Both the Steward and the All-Water Reeve are old, familiar courtiers.

The Duke's Consort, Lady Tsaja of Lion's Head Mountain, is the newly appointed treasurer. In Her Majesty's retinue is a new Cupbearer—Dom Savartin of Culming, an Almadan who is Lady Tsaja's pick from the Northmarcher court. In addition, His Majesty created a new seat in the Oaken Chamber for the Griffon Mistress, Highborn Nadane of Tandosh-Forestmarch. She is responsible for organizing ducal hunts and caring for the hunting birds in the aviary. The court and its guests can look forward to such pleasures soon.

*Alara Togelstein-Horning
(Tina Hagner)*

Havena Fanfare, Rondra, 1041 FB

Secret Talks in Windhag?

Harben. Despite being an outsider, recent years have shown Cusimo of Garlichgrötz, Margrave of Windhag and Duke of Grangoria, has an unusual understanding of Windhag's soul. He rarely interfered with the region's businesses, usually choosing to remain at Castle Windhag, near Grangor.

Recently, however, it appears change is on the horizon. At the end of Praios this year, the Equipage of the Margrave traveled to Harben. According to well-informed circles, he conducted numerous evening meetings with Vice-Admiral Hildgit of Grötz and Rianod of Aichgrove—Steward of the Lord in Windhag. Rumors about the meetings carried some weight as Malrizio ya

Duridanya—the Baron of Caspolet—was present, as were some unnamed Middenrealmer representatives.

One alleged topic of debate was the Golden Legion's expansion. Worried burghers speculate what possible dangers the Margrave foresees for Harben and Windhag to consider this measure necessary.

Rumors about the Duke circumventing Prince Finnian ui Bennain and engaging in secret negotiations with the Middenrealm and the Horasian Empire are beginning to take root, reigniting older rumors that the Duke intends to expand his estates into Albernian regions, despite lack of proof. Could he still be planning such a move? Only time will tell. The Margrave has not yet issued a statement.

After spending several days in Harben, the Duke went on to Kyndoch to join in the early festivities at the Robber's Hunt, which takes place every Rondra.

He then took a long hunting trip, accompanied by those he met with in Harben. Witnesses reported an impressive quarry—some even claimed the Margrave killed a harpy.

Shortly before this article's publication, a news update from Windhag reached our offices: allegedly, after he left, the duke sent a group of prospectors to the Windhag Mountains to obtain rock samples from several remote valleys. It remains uncertain what the duke hopes to gain from this investigation, especially since excavations could rouse the ire of the Windhag region's clan warriors. *The Fanfare* vows continued reports on this matter, as it develops.

*Aidan of Orbavalle
(Carolina Möbis)*



Aventurian Herald

Special Supplement

Aventurian Herald 180

Festumers' Flag, Travia, 1059 FB

Fly, O Green Banner, Lead Us to Victory!

: A Report About the Glorious Campaign of Our Noble Marshal Nadjesha of Lionsford and the Valiant Knights of Seweria Against the Sinister Cutthroats of the Alliance of Kor's Sign

We must avenge Count Wahnfried and the other victims! We must bring the heretics and cutthroats of the Alliance of Kor's Sign to justice. But how? Distrust and retribution stand in our way, and the valiant Sewerian knights still suffer from the wounds they sustained with Uriel's betrayal.

But, I tell you: the gods do not wish Bornish knights to feud or their strength to lie fallow! They wish for us to stand together, with our swords and shields in hand, to fight off the calamity threatening Bornish soil. We cannot undo the past. We cannot remove guilt. But we can be merciful and forgive our brothers and sisters! In the name of Peraine the Merciful, I call you to arms! Let us move together against Needmark! Let us heal past wounds and free this country!"

Noble Marshal Nadjesha of Lionsford—the living image of our great heroine, Thesia of Ilmenstone—gave this rousing speech to the bronnjars assembled in front of the White Rondra of Norbury. She spoke of the cowardly attack committed by members of the sinister Alliance of Kor's Sign against our beloved and highly respected Count Wahnfried of Ask during Norbury's festive Bard Convention. The Noble Marshal expressed her intent to avenge his death and stop the heretics' rebellion against the Twelvegods and the sovereignty of our knights and lords, once and for all.

The Sewerian bronnjars followed the Green Procession's call, and the free burghers of Norbury and Festum—

guests at the Bard's Convention—took up lance and bow and joined their ranks. They even hired mercenaries to help them face the superior forces. This displeased quite a few Rondranian champions; but, as Nadjesha said, it was time to march side by side and leave strife and discord behind.

Twenty years ago, another valiant Noble Marshal moved against Needmark to try to defeat the villainous blasphemer, Count Uriel of Notmarch (the present Count Alderich's father). But, back then, demonic powers defeated Thesia of Ilmenstone, placing the region in terrible danger.

Though Bornish history weighed heavily on Nadjesha's shoulders, our young Marshal did not give up hope. Count Wahnfried bequeathed Sancta Rondragabund of Riedemer's legendary shield to the Bornish people before he fell victim to a dastardly ambush. Thus did Rondra deliver the Swords of the North—missing for centuries and which no dark power can withstand—to the heirs of the brave and pious Theater Knights.

The recovery of the Swords of the North re-opened old wounds inflicted upon the land by Uriel the Betrayer—wounds Nadjesha vowed to heal. Though the heirs' wrath threatened to foil her plan, the mother of the land remained undeterred. She proudly held her holy blade in her right hand, ready for combat, while also holding out her left, pleasing unto Peraine, for reconciliation.

When they arrived before the

gates of the formidable fortress of Graytooth, the often-divided nobility showed solidarity. Although many brave champions suspected Count Alderich colluded with the Alliance of Kor's Sign, he led a spectacular and utterly fearless sortie against the cultists, atoning for his father's crimes and demonstrating his loyalty to the country and the Noble Marshal.

Inspired by Rondra's glory, our knights, lords, and free burghers fought side by side in a great battle against dragons, demons, and the heretics and traitors who had walked among us for too long—whether as jealous lastborn (warriors without title or honor),

destitute esquires, or robber knights. Besides Rondra, fiery Ingerimm also struck the villains hard; molten rock poured from his sanctum below Needmark and struck at their positions. They went up in smoke, giving our side a decisive advantage.

In the end, the battle was a triumph for Good. Nadjesha's benevolent hand gave the holy swords to the most valiant and brave, charging them henceforth with the noble task of protecting the land from all dangers!

*Alriksej Gerberow
(Niklas Forreiter, Daniel Heßler)*



Aventurian Herald, Efford, 1040 FB

Grand Duke Jucho of Dallenthin-Persanzig Officially Declared Missing!

The Trail Leads to the Wild Transweal

Rivilauken. Grand Duke Jucho of Dallenthin-Persanzig, the former Noble Marshal and the Bornland's Envoy to the Horasian Empire, was officially declared missing. If he is not located within eight years, his estates pass to his rightful heir—if one exists and can be found.

The renowned statesman was last seen in a castle belonging to the Order of the Ram. During his term in office, he made diplomatic contacts to the

Caliphate and the Maharanyat Arania. He officially outlawed slavery and founded the gods-pleasing Order of the Ram, to protect the Bornland and explore the Weal Mountains. Perhaps he fell victim to his own scientific curiosity or even the many dangers of the Transweal. According to rumors, he was searching for the famous armor the Silver Horde wore during their exodus into the Weal Mountains. There may also be a connection between

his disappearance and the conflicts between the Order of the Ram and the Walsach river pirates, which reached a bloody climax last summer, affecting the Order's castles.

Other strange reports from the Walsach surfaced in the last few months—the river flowed more turbulently than usual, the headwaters turned a strange color, and many fish died. And during this same time, the beastingers—magical animal-like

beings of the Transweal—were quite active, playing more pranks than usual. We cannot rule out an abduction by these strange creatures. May the gods protect our good Grand Duke and deliver him back to us soon!

*Hilma Lettrov
(Niklas Forreiter,
Daniel Heßler)*

Salamander, Travia, 1040 F3

The Great Depths at the World's End

On the Possible Effects of the Elemental Eruption Beneath Needmark

Neersand. We must devote academic attention to the most recent events in Needmark, namely the volcano's eruption beneath the town. We must assume that, besides the surface architecture, substantial portions of the Needmarker caverns were severely damaged or destroyed. We should fully examine this eruption's effects. According to mages from Norbury and Festum present at the scene, the damage destroyed the dwarven seals at the archaic deity Ingra's temple and exposed deep areas in the catacombs.

The aftermaths of such elemental eruptions are manifold. Do not forget the creation, interaction, and transformation of numerous elemental beings—

particularly relating to the phenomenon commonly known as "The Awakening." Even before we consider the expected karmic dynamics, the analytical effort required to investigate the matter is tremendous.

Furthermore, the region's countless legends about cursed dwarven mines and goblin sacrifices could lead to an increase in ghosts and the need to prepare corresponding banishing runes. Even more dangerous is the potential release of power from the Seventh Sphere. According to goblin legend, the evil was bound into statues and buried beneath the Iron Edge long ago. A crude legend, certainly; still, it may possess a kernel of truth, as the Twelvegods' creed also

tells the allegorical tale of the Demon Tree, which the three Masters of Vanity planted to cross all Spheres and break into the seventh.

In the past, scientists were barred from accessing the catacombs; therefore, its layout, as well as the creatures that dwell there, are entirely unknown. We must remedy this! Thus, I propose that we station several mages in Needmark and grant them support from the Order of the Ram, the Ordo Defensores Lecturia, and the Draconites.

*Archmagister Gritten Raudups Magistra
oridnaria controllaria et spectabilita
neersandiensis
(Niklas Forreiter, Daniel Heßler)*



Festumers' Flag, Travia, 1040 F3

"O Land of Our Fathers"—Hope for Friendship between the Races Wheelwright's Goblin Choir to Perform a New Opera at the Noble Marshal's Election

Festum. The composer Reijkad Wheelwright plans to perform his heroic-romantic opera "O Land of Our Fathers" with his Red Choir on the Festumer City Stage during the Congregation of the Nobility. Kalinda of Swordhills, Mistress of Discipline, made the announcement in the third week of Efferd via heralds and postings. Director Ilumja Peshkov confirmed, saying "We are excited to see this opera bring some peace to our city and increase our home's glory."

For two years now, Master Wheelwright has instructed approximately two dozen goblins in the art of choral singing as part of his collaborative singing method. They have already performed on Hesinde Village's smaller stages (as previously reported in the Flag), to great applause from audiences. The Council of Arts particularly supports the project's motto: "Don't hit goblins on the head, don't swing at them with your fists, instead sing a cheerful song!" Their support may have played a role in the approval of Wheelwright's new project.

Wheelwright based his new work of art on a narrative by the well-known prince of poets, Hannik of Houndshoof, in which he sings of "the true Theater Knights' heroic deeds"—a subject on which there

are differing opinions, particularly considering recent political events. Trying to appease those on both sides of the issue, Wheelwright said, "We want to demonstrate the ways in which the goblins of Festum contribute to the order of the city and the country. The libretto primarily draws upon beautiful and tragic legends, most of which have little to do with recent events. I don't think anyone could complain about that."

And indeed, most Festumers welcome Wheelwright's plan, though it has prompted many jokes about singing fur coats and heroic tribal dances. Tempers grew heated after the Atmaskot Parade during spring two years ago, and the riots that broke out between the different races deeply shocked the populace. The events leading to the Thorwal Drum's reacquisition the following autumn barely managed to salvage a mutual understanding between the various factions. Today, Festumers seem to place a higher value on being good neighbors, giving peace-loving people hope that reason is on the rise in our city and kingdom. With this goal in mind, we greatly look forward to seeing this opera.

*Hilma Lettron
(Niklas Forreiter,
Daniel Heßler)*

Festumers' Flag, Boron, 1040 F3

The Country Elects a Ruler!

Festum. This Firun, it is once again time for the Bornish knights and lords to gather in the Congregation of Nobility to elect their Marshal for the next five years. After her triumph over the Alliance of Kor's Sign heretics, it's safe to assume Nadjesha of Lionsford stands a good chance at re-election. Not only did she defeat the enemy in battle, she also settled the Sewerian noble's decades-old feud.

Some have their doubts as to whether Nadjesha will choose to be a candidate in the race. Luckily, initial fears following her severe injury by a morningthorn bush proved unfounded, though the long-term repercussions to her health may yet prevent her from continuing in office. There may be more substance to the rumor Nadjesha plans to renounce her candidacy in favor of Linjan of Elenau, as people have speculated for some time that their intimacy supersedes office and class. It seems many believe Linjan's heroic deeds in the battle against Helme Haffax more than validate his candidacy for Noble Marshal.



Alderich of Needmark also seems a promising candidate—despite his family's questionable reputation—especially after his bold and courageous acts in the Battle at Graytooth. Gewinja of Ilmenstone also reportedly seeks candidacy to try to continue her famous aunt Thesia's legacy. The sophisticated

Prince Joost of Saldersseed already officially confirmed his candidacy. His marriage to Alin Storrebrandt made him quite popular among the Bornland's merchants. Rumors concerning Count Hanning Alatzer's candidacy are likely erroneous, as he is a direct descendant of a member of the Order of the Theater of Arivor. Similarly, reports that a goblin—awarded a noble title by Provincial Steward Jucho of Elkinen—may declare candidacy are probably little more than gossip and wishful thinking.

*Janneke Britzkeon
(Niklas Forreiter,
Daniel Heßler)*

Festumers' Flag, Travia, 1040 F3

Welcome Home, Heroes!

Linjan of Elenau Returns Home
Victorious: Day of Jubilation in the Capital

Festum. Count Linjan of Elenau, along with his brave champions, returns home at the Empress of the Middenrealm's side after a formidable victory over Helme Haffax. There are, unfortunately, losses we mourn among the more than three hundred who followed our universally popular "Winged Lord" into battle. The editorial team expresses their heartfelt sympathies by including a list of those who fell in battle in this issue of the Flag. You were honorable and brave, and we humbly and proudly honor you!

The returning champions' reception in Festum was downright euphoric. Several fishermen hurried ahead to announce their arrival, so they walked through the harbor gate to deafening applause, despite their injuries and exhaustion. Lovely maidens and lads adorned the champions with colorful bands and paper flowers, then followed them to the Old Market in a true, triumphal procession. Here, the Noble Marshal and her entire staff and guard received them with military honors.

The veterans had many stories to tell, about the battles themselves as well as their adventurous journey to Peraineffords. They told tales about the battles for Perricum, Mendena, and Gareth, to name just a few; and, finally, about their victory over the Traitor of the Realm. The heroes' caravan had to travel more than nine-hundred Middenmiles to return home from Gareth, across liberated Warunk and steadfast Vallusa. The *Flag*, upstanding and patriotic as always, promises to supply its readers with numerous war reports, presenting a vivid depiction of the heroes' adventures and praising the brave champions' heroism in upcoming issues.

*Alriksj Gerberon
(Niklas Forreiter,
Daniel Heßler)*

Temple Caller, Travia, 1040 FB

Spectacular Exhibit and New Professorial Chair for Uthuria Established

Al'Anfa/Porto Velvenya.
The University of Al'Anfa has announced plans to establish a fixed professorship for the Uthuria Department within its faculty, starting next semester. The new position's responsibilities include analyzing expedition reports and findings and making the results available to future Uthuria explorers from the Empire. The university accompanied this announcement with the unveiling of a new, sensational exhibition piece, which the most recently returned Uthuria sailing ship brought home as cargo. The object consists of a gigantic, apparently intelligent arachnid's remains. Because of their size, these remains dominate the room and will become the new Uthuria-focused exhibition hall's centerpiece.

Sylvana Duridanya Hyzanides-Karinor, Magistra for the newly established professorial chair and former Uthuria explorer, explained the creature was killed

in the catacombs beneath Porto Velvenya, and many factors suggest this creature was responsible for haunting the colony with an eerie spider curse. Naturally, the museum is only displaying the chitin shell and other remains of the creature, which the Magistra called "Gigantula." According to Lady Hyzanides-Karinor, the university preserved its internal organs, so they could examine them separately. The discovery of this Gigantula is particularly valuable to academic study; not only for researching the southern continent, but as a milestone in the research of the historic "insectoid age," for which Aventurian relics, like the Spider City of Shan'R'Trak, the Emerald City, and the Valley of Kun-Kau-Peh are largely inaccessible to science.

Manila Lirran, Honorary Member of the Imperial Deroographical Society, Hôt-Alem (René Littek)

Aventurian Herald, Phex 1040 FB

Call to the Realm's Champions— A Commentary

If the Albernian *Havena Fanfare* is just blowing smoke, this may not be newsworthy for *Aventurian Herald* readers. For now, we wish to report an unusual announcement from the province's nobility. They posted the following notice in the *Abagund* and around Albernia, and town criers are also announcing it:

Hear ye, Hear ye!
His Excellency, Count Arlan Stepahan of Bredengrove, calls all champions of this and all other Twelvegodly lands to his side. Who dares venture into the ruins of castle "Archstone" and break the fairy queen Farindel's enchantment? She hid the castle behind a magical hedge, which is so overgrown with thorns no one has entered it for nigh on a decade. But, beware all ye who enter: they say the castle is a gate into the otherworld, which can make or mar a mortal. Indeed, they say the nefarious and cruel Jast Irian Crumold, the Butcher of Honington, once misused this very gate to betray the people of Albernia! So, come if you dare—but only if you're brave enough to take up this quest with all your heart. His Excellency the Count asks for brave champions to enter his lands, Comital Bredengrove, and travel north to "Fairyheights" at the edge of the Farindel Forest. Come hither, no matter your birth, and try to accomplish the Count's task! Whomever proves successful will be appointed Champion of the Forest and join Bredengroves' table of knights with Count Stepahan himself. I say this as truly as I stand before ye!

Who is Count Arlan Stepahan of Bredengrove?

The ancient Stepahan family's honorable history—once decent, upstanding, and adhering closely to Rondranian tradition—recently met with tragedy when Arlan's mother, Maelwyn, took the traitor Invher ni Bennain's side in the conflict between Albernia and the Northmarches. This decision had serious repercussions: although her betrayal initially secured her rank of countess, she quickly lost her title when Empress Rohaja appointed Jast Irian Crumold as count, instead. After Crumold's death, and Maelwyn's apparent repentance, she regained her title—only to perish gloriously in battle before the gates of Mendena at the end of 1039 FB. The office then passed to her son, Arlan. Now, His Excellency Arlan Stepahan enters the Middenrealmish aristocracy arena as a mere fledgling count.

Why Must Farindel's Enchantment Be Broken?

The Count's summons spawned many rumors. Perhaps the count wants to erase whatever legacy remains from the hated Jast Irian Crumold's rule? Still, others point out Arlan's sister married the new Crumold family head after the Stepahans regained their rank, so, it's assumed the families reconciled. It is also said house Crumold's ties to fairy beings are similar to those of the noble house Fenwasian, which is friendly with the Stepahans. Does this mean rumors about ancient Albernian alliances with fairies have something to do with the Count's request? Only time will tell.

Aelfwin B. Limaech (Dominic Hladek)

Grangoran News, Praios 1041 FB

Price War in Grangor?

Grangor. Alricilian Sandfort answers our writer—and, it seems, everyone he meets these days—a bit indignantly. He says the conditions are "downright outrageous" and he, as Director of the Horas-Imperial Privileged North Sea Company, personally guarantees to prosecute every merchant who harms his business "to the fullest extent of the law."

Associates with the Wortheim merchant family commented, "That cur Sandfort shouldn't make such a fuss." In the meantime, quite a few shopkeepers are selling pelts!

This could all be part of a small, commercial dispute. But, according to rumors, the merchant houses are responsible for the brawls in the streets haunting Grangor these days. Apparently, each wants to implicate the other for the smuggling, or at least take out the supplier.

Business Disputes!

But why is this? Why should members of Grangor's most respected families treat each other with hostility in council meetings and in the streets, insulting and even sending thugs after each other? As is so often the case in Grangor, the answer is: "business."

The Sandfort and Liegerfeld families have shares and executive positions in the *Horas-Imperial Privileged Northsea Company*, a trading company with far-reaching privileges in Northland trade

providing generous profits to both merchant houses. Other families, like the Wortheims, still try to trade with Thorwal, though they do not have the HPNC's advantages.

Now, however, it seems the market is becoming unbalanced. Previously, the HPNC dictated prices in the Horasian Empire. But, recently, someone started offering typical Northland goods—such as pelts, ivory, and even exotic alcoholic products—at far below their usual prices.

Our writer was able to secure samples for us, and although we could not determine their exact origin, we can say with certainty they are quality products and not "dyed rat pelts," as Alricilian Sandfort claims. When asked to comment, Two-Lilies guards and customs officers all gave the same answer: they are certain the goods are smuggled, but they have no suspects at this time.

Trade with the south is becoming increasingly important, causing some Northland trade representatives' power and profits to falter. The current price collapse is no doubt hitting them even harder, which may explain their drastic reactions.

We can only hope these goods sell quickly, so peace and quiet can return once more to Grangor.

Tassilo Zarasti (Marie Mönkemeyer with thanks to Carolina Möbis)

Black Magic Mirror, Tsa, 1039 FB

A Word on Our Behalf

Due to recent, unexpected firmament changes—the most prominent of which was the disappearance of the Dragon's Eye—we must correct our constellation forecast for the winter of 1039 FB. Thus, the following holds true: 17th Tsa: TGT (Thargunitoth) instead of BLH (Belhahar); 21st Tsa: avoid horned ones but AMZ (Amazeroth) affinity. 6th Phex: affinity BLL (Belkelel) and LGM (Lolgramoth) strengthened instead of weakened. Avoid Aphasmayra entirely until the month of Peraine.

Moreover, we do not advise making any astronomical observations yourself before presenting an offering; even then, we refuse to be held responsible for the outcome. In this context, we bid our dear colleagues, Dergelried and Amorata, farewell. Unfortunately, they were not available for comment via Nekrophia, so we cannot make any further determination as to the nature of failure during their invocation. You may say your farewells to the colleagues at a small ceremony on the 14th of Tsa at Brabak's Southern Cape.

Deimirion Ophenos, for the editorial team (Philipp Neitzel)

Aventurian Herald, Efferd, 1039 FB

Mysterious Incident at Golgarites' Fortified Farmstead

In mid-Efferd, locals reported a commotion at a fortified farmstead close to Hagen's Farm, not far from Oldtoll. Our sources even mentioned a demon that haunted the inhabitants' dreams. However, Wing Leader Marbion Boronstrue, stationed in that region by the Church of Boron to protect the locals, gave the official all-clear: "The situation is under control. This region's population has nothing to fear." Perhaps so many strangers coincidentally arriving at once led to a misunderstanding among the fortified farmstead's inhabitants? In any case, it seems timely intervention and a strong local belief in the Twelvegods led to a quick solution.

Fredo Fuxfell, Traveling Cartographer (Julian Hürtel)

My good Lord Roachbrook, I heard an Andergutter challenged you, and I just want you to know we simple folk support you against this oakhead.

And just so this acorn eater doesn't give you no trouble, I'll be your Second! That is, if you want me, Lord Roachbrook. And as for you, Fireroot, beware! One dirty trick at the duel and I'll knock you on the head with my dike fork!

Dette Paling, free Nostrian yeowoman

A New Non-sport

It is a quandary, dear readers. For ages, I petitioned to write articles about the world of sports on a regular basis, but my pleas fell on deaf ears. The editors told me the words *imman team* were neither readable nor printable. So, I admit I was thrilled to learn I would finally be given the chance. *Sport*, as they say, is the struggle of competition without the danger of battle, and somehow it remains just as fascinating and interesting to the people. Cheerfully, I prepared to write about the Garethian City Championships. Instead, the editorial team sent my disinterested colleague—Gorm Beetfarmer—to report on the most significant sporting event in years.

When I objected, they agreed to give me a worthy assignment this month, but then promptly sent me to rural Andergast to report on a strange example of what counts as sports nowadays! Call me old-fashioned, but in my eyes, a sport requires some form of physical activity beyond occasionally getting up from one's chair. Nevertheless, I shall endeavor to familiarize our readers with this new recreational activity that is gaining popularity among many young nobles in the north.

When I arrived, signs directed me to the great ballroom in the Imperial Maison de Plaisance in Tropse, the site of the event. Outside the palace,

I saw an impressive number of tents. Countless nobles had arrived with their retinues, and servants had decorated their colorful tents with shields bearing coats of arms. It looked like a great tournament was underway, but I saw no tournament weapons, and it seemed to me that many of the young nobles were afraid to stand next to a horse, let alone sit on top of one. Indeed, I almost began to doubt the kingdom's defensive readiness.

The tournament hall contained about two dozen tables lined with comfortable-looking chairs, on which the noble youths perched in thoughtful poses. The so-called sporting contest seems related to Garadan, a popular abstract game about combat that originated in the Lands of the Tulamydes. The event being played here, however, is much more complicated. Play consists of moving painted pewter miniatures of noble armies and demonic monster hordes back and forth across the table, rolling dice, consulting charts, and periodically removing figures from the tiny battlefield. Each game ended when someone from each pairing was declared the winner of this unusual back-and-forth of toy soldiers.

I must admit that contestants' fascination with miniature statues of demons and undead creatures seemed blasphemous to me, but I met several veterans of real combat in the viewing stands, and they noted that there might be some value in using this game as a teaching tool for young soldiers. By the end of the tournament, I was convinced of the benefit of using these games in classrooms at military academies.

I still won't call this game a sport, but overall, I saw many examples of

sporting behavior, for the contestants eagerly resolved their matches in a competitive yet civilized manner—at least until the final duel. The last two contestants played so passively that, by the time the sand had almost run out in the hourglass, not one miniature had been removed. Both players had maneuvered their armies twice around the middle of the table in a clockwise direction, until most now stood very near their starting positions.

When the last grain of sand fell, the participants agreed to call it a draw, and both uttered a sigh of relief. At this, a frail, old woman rose from her seat and began shouting something. As it turned out, the sixty-year-old was an unmarried minor noble from some unimportant branch of the House of Gareth, and her hand in marriage was part of a secret Grand Prize. The event organizers announced that the final game would continue until a winner was determined, but the attendees would have none of it. They quickly filed out of the ballroom, as did I. "When in Bosparan, do as the Bosparanians do," as the old saying goes.

Before I headed home, I purchased two miniatures as souvenirs for my children. Specifically, I bought two exquisite figures of mounted knights painted in the colors of an imaginary noble house. My children now beg me day and night to purchase more of these unusual little toys, and they clamor to learn more about the rules of the game. I hope to attend next year's tournament, but I wonder if my editors will send Gorm Beetfarmer, instead?

*Atrik Fassbinder
(Sebastian Thuran,
Kevin MacGregor)*

*Alchemica at Bargain Prices.
Great Effects for the Small Coin
Pouch.*

*Drusiban the Grolm,
Small Man; Small Prices.*



Letter to the Editor

My dear friends on the *Herald's* editorial team: I want to thank you again from the bottom of my heart for printing my letter to the editor. You bravely gave us Andergastans a voice in this matter, and I salute you!

As for the scribbling by that Nostrian moorhen, Roachbrook, I have nothing good to say. Just when he appears willing to fight a duel like a man, he imposes a bizarre condition! "When Joborn is Nostrian again!" What exactly is that supposed to mean?

Of all the bad excuses I've ever heard, that's worse than, "The dog ate the last sausage," "The plates weren't broken when I put them away," and "I only had *one* beer, darling, I swear."

Friedhelm, let's be honest; do you really want to defend your honor, or do you just want to cry like someone cutting onions?

More than enough Seconds have come forward. My fellow lumberjacks and I are ready to settle this affair!

Since you obviously won't travel to Joborn, and I'm not in the mood to lead my boys into a Nostrian trap, we've thought of a solution. You can't weasel out of this without everyone knowing you're a cowardly runt!

We will meet in neutral territory, at Angasal, on the Ingvall River. Yes, you read that correctly, old cod: *on* the Ingvall. We'll meet on a raft and settle this once and for all, unless you are too afraid to take a bath. You should be able to swim; all Nostrian rats know how to swim.

As for the date, let me be clear: the 15th of Peraine! And—before you ask—yes, I mean *this year*!

One more thing you can look forward to: a quill-driver from the *Herald* agreed to come to Angasal to report on this matter. Provided, of course, good old Friedhelm doesn't find another excuse. Well, I am sure the Roach is impressed!

I repeat, so you can't weasel out of it again: Friedhelm Roachbrook—and anyone else who wants to attend—meet us in Angasal, at the spot where the river narrows slightly. We'll be waiting on a raft there on the 15th of Peraine, and we'll see once and for all who is the coward.

*Eberhardt Fireroot,
Burgher of Andergast
(Carolina Möbis)*

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Credits

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