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WüRM Walder™

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR WÜRM WALD



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WÜRM WALD

(Chambana Medievalists Association)

PO Box 17064, Urbana, IL 61803-7064

<http://www.wurmald.org>

The Prairienet mailing list will no longer be used

The WüRM Wald mailing list is now wurmwald@wurmwald.org and can be subscribed to by visiting <http://wurmwald.org/list.html> and following the instructions on that page or by sending a blank email to wurmwald-join@wurmwald.org

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To subscribe to the Village Green (Midlands business mail list), go to <http://www.yahoo.com/list/village-green>. To subscribe to Fraser's Oak (the Midlands informal list), send an e-mail message to LISTSERV@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM. The body of the message should read: SUBSCRIBE FRASERS-OAK <your name>.

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Dancers Guild

Lady Catalana di Neri (Erica Neely) 344-5943 (elneely@polymaths.com)

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LEGEND: ☉ = active; ☞ = resource

Armoring ☞

Lord Geoffrey of Würm Wald (Geoff Chilton) 367-3115

Bardic Circle ☉

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Brewers & Vintners ☞

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Calligraphy & Illumination ☞

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Hermetic Arts and Sciences

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Middle-Eastern Dance ☞

Athanasia di Lumini (Athán Chilton) 367-3115 (ayc@staff.uiuc.edu)

Wenches Guild ☉

Sydoc Lesly (Kate Dickson) 356-7916 (kedickso@uiuc.edu)

Upcoming Events

7–9 May; Military Arts Collegium, Shattered Crystal (Carlyle, IL)

8 May; Final Northshield Investiture & First Northshield Crown Tournament, Windhaven (Green Bay, WI)

15 May; Coronation, Grey Gargoyles (Chicago, IL)

29–30 May; Spring 2004 Crown Tournament of the Midrealm & Kingdom A&S, Roaring Wastes (Allen Park, MI)

4–6 June; Murder And Melee III, Dark River (Bluegrass, IA)

11–13 June; Peasants' Revolt II, (Big Rock, IL)

18–20 June; Jubilee Olde English Faire, Illiton (Brimfield, IL)

25–27 June; Border Raids XXXII, Dragonsmark (Ft. Knox, KY)

26–27 June; Ragnarok Rampage VIII: Attack of the Clans, Carraig Ban (DeKalb, IL)

17 July; Ethyl 22: Back to the Beach, Swordcliff (Taylorville, IL)

23–25 July; The Real McCoy, youth event, Ravenslake (Antioch, IL)

30 July–1 August; Simple Day, Sternfeld (Nineveh, IN)

7–22 August; Pennsic 33 (Coopers Lake, Pa)

25–26 September; EVENT, Aonach na Naoi n Duileach (Decatur, IL)

9 October; Midlands Regional Equestrian Championship, Shattered Crystal (Edwardsville, IL)

5–7 November; Crystal Ball XXI, Shattered Crystal (Cahokia, IL)

20 November; Fall Event, Baile na Scolairi (Bloomington, IL)

22 January; Festival of Maidens, Würm Wald

Resignation

As of 1 May, I will no longer be a baron and should be neither styled nor regarded as such. I have turned in my resignation as Baron Würm Wald effective on the first of May. I hope to use my free time in the service of Clio and the greater world of living history.

I want to thank everyone who has made this such a great experience. I apologize that I haven't been able to fulfill my vows as baron and hope for your forgiveness and for your help and support in future endeavors.

Fólki Rusli Þorgilsson

From the Kingdom Seneschal

Greetings all...

Well... as many of you (if not all...) probably know by now, last Saturday at Baile's "Armored Easter Egg Hunt", the good Baron Folo handed me his letter of resignation as Baron of Wurm Wald. The effective date of the letter is May 1st.

The Crown has appointed me as Vicar (... as Her Majesty put it (or words to that effect)... "... a barony should have a Baron... or somebody to stand in for them..." I was basically chosen because of being a 'neutral party', being known to the Crown... and... well... because it bought us time to consult with the population of Wurm Wald.

I will be candid as to what I see the potential options are at this point...

1: The group could decide to start a polling process for a new Baron. As the 'shell barony' thing is underway... it would probably be more to the point to resolve that issue first... as, if it fails... there would be no need for a Baronial Poll... and, if it succeeds a Baronial Poll that would open the doors to parties of interest from both groups would be needed...

2: The group may put forward one or more candidates from within Wurm Wald's population to stand as Vicar. The qualifications for standing as Vicar would be the same as for Baron... This is a good option and one that should be explored... Yana would be a good 'on the ground person' to coordinate this process...

3: The group may elect to leave me in place as Vicar until such time as the poll on the shell barony thing is resolved... and, once that question is answered... move forward as appropriate.

If anybody sees any other options that I'm missing let me know...

In any case, being on the Wurm Wald mailing list makes this a little easier to deal with... but, I'm ready and willing to jump in the truck and drive over (heck, yer' only 'just down the road' a bit and a LOT closer than Sternfeld or Cleftlands!!!)... if you'd like to call a meeting and would like me to show up to answer questions just let me know...

Both the Crown and I seek your council and ask you to support your Seneschal as we all work together to get this all sorted out...I remain, your most obdn't servant -

Chas. Oakley

Shell Barony

Deadline for voting was 30 April, and no decision has been announced.

As of 29 April, Lady Yana Groznaia, Würm Wald seneschal, notes that "We really need to get the returns above 50% for this vote to mean anything and Mistress Ellen has informed me that we aren't quite there yet. I will extend the postmark date if I need to, but it would be nice to have the results in for our two groups next business meetings."

Living History Guide—I

One learns by doing the thing: for although you think you know it, you can have no certainty until you try.—Sophocles

We Ain't No Stuff Academic!

Even if some of us are academics, we just aren't that stuffy or pretentious. We believe history should be fun, and we do have fun.

Just like that favorite teacher or professor made history more exciting for you, we try to make history exciting. It's not that we try to denigrate history or that we burlesque it. It is not that we do not care about facts, that we try to change medieval history into some kind of Tolkien fantasy or that we are just making up an excuse to wear fancy costumes, beat our friends over the heads with clubs or speak in a code that outsiders cannot understand. We are all serious about the history...but we aren't going to let that stand in the way of having a good time!

In living history, you can find friendship, camaraderie and much more. Many long-lasting relationships and marriages have started in living history. Living history is parties and drinking and arts and sports...and much more. And living history is—like it or not, believe it or not—educational.

We honestly feel that the best way to learn is through doing. We may make mistakes—all historians do—and there are certain areas in which we excel, and certain areas in which we fall short—but we try to resolve that. And we hope that if you are a serious student of history—or just interested in one portion of the big picture—that you will join us.

In fact, you might be disinterested in medieval history. A lot of new members are. They join for the excitement, for the thrill, for the color. But most members—if they stay—become more and more interested in history, both the facts but, more importantly, the anthropological aspects. They come to realize that living history is a way of learn that is totally unlike what had seemed so boring in school. And they want to learn more, either by doing their own research or by talking with others who have.

Explore the past with us. I'm willing to bet that you find it fun. And satisfying. And if you don't watch out, you might learn a thing or two along the way!

The Era

Although we speak of “medieval,” we are not, strictly speaking, speaking only of the medieval era. In fact, there have been so definitions of “medieval,” that the term is largely irrelevant. When we speak about “medieval,” we are generally referring to the “Dark Ages,” the “Gothic Middle Ages,” the “Renaissance” and, in some cases, even as late as the English Civil War.

For purposes of this article, we are speaking about Western Europe between the Fall of Rome (roughly 500 ce) and the execution of Charles I (roughly 1650 ce).

Philosophy of Living History

Living History is the recreation or reenactment of history. The most important part of this phrase is “history.” If you want to dress up in fancy dress for fun, that is perfectly acceptable, but it is not living history.

We all owe a debt to the people who lived before us. They created the world in which we

live, and we owe it to them to interpret the past respectfully and correctly. That does not necessarily mean that it is not fun. Most reenactors have fun, but they take the process very seriously. For a lot of them, researching and recreating the past is fun.

In addition, it is the process of teaching not only yourself but others. Reenactors should make certain that their interpretations are respectful, entertaining and, above all else, factual. Everything that reenactors do or wear should be based upon primary documentation. If they do this for no other reasons, they should do this for the sake of spectators. Reenactors have a very important responsibility not to mislead or misinform others. Their historical interpretations are often in a position to have an overwhelming effect upon the education of others.

Many reenactors take their position as educators seriously, whether they do original research or not. We hope that you will as well.

Accuracy Levels

When referring to authenticity in relation to living history, we are referring to the accurate of physical artifacts and behavior. This accuracy is determined by our knowledge and interpretation of historical facts of the period. The words “right” and “wrong” are inadequate to describe the various degrees of authenticity encountered at reenactments. Therefore, the following terms have been proposed:

Museum Quality: Design, materials and methods identical to those of the time and place one is attempting to represent.

Acceptable: Having one or more major variations from museum quality which does not significantly detract from its use in historic representation.

Marginal: Having one or more major variations from museum quality or subject to questionable interpretations of historic fact which significantly detracts from its use.

Unacceptable: Clearly and unquestionably wrong. Example: Tennis shoes, polyester blend clothing, modern shirts, wrist watches, eye glasses (modern), etc.

Our level of historical knowledge is constantly changing. Reenactors should accept that their authenticity levels are probably going to change as well. They should be willing to change details of their clothing and kit to fit the new standards of authenticity.

Costs to Participate

All living history is expensive. You have to obtain the equipment—in this case, historical clothing and other accessories for your kit—that are required to participate. But then any hobby is expensive. If you start skiing, you have to buy skis and other supplies, and for living history you have to buy historical clothing and other supplies.

A lot of latitude is shown toward newcomers, and no one expects their kit to be either elaborate or extensive. Simple clothing ought to be accurate, of course, made of natural fabrics, and a simple peasant clothing is inexpensive; a serviceable tunic and braies can be sewn from about six yards of fabric.

Established reenactors are usually happy to share their knowledge. They have access to patterns, to research and to expertise. All of them once stood in the same position as you do now and are prepared to help you make the transition from a beginning to an experienced reenactor. They do not want any of their fellows to be farbs, and you will find them well equipped to help you improve your impression. A newcomer who wears incorrect clothing out of ignorance might be farbish but is hardly a farb. If the newcomer heeds the advice, does the work and strives to improve his impression, he is certainly not a farb. An experienced reenactor who still makes no effort to make accurate kit is most definitely a farb.

Historical Questionnaire

Here is a project that I've started to work on. I have a few responses so far, but people at events are usually too busy doing other things or want to think about the questions before answering them. I am publishing them here so that people can find the time to answer the questions and mail the responses to me: folo@advancenet.net.

Answers will be placed into a database, and we will identify respondents only by initials if so desired. We hope to make this database available to any serious endeavor.

Please note that this is not in any way affiliated with or associated with any sort of official historical program. Send responses, questions, comments and complaints to me.

Anyone is welcome to answer. It doesn't matter if you aren't "important" enough; we want to hear from people with opinions, and the more opinions the better. I'll try to bring recording equipment to events as well. Please, pass this around. Try to get it to folks who aren't on this forum!

Try to be as complete as possible. For example, saying that your favorite SCA story is "The one about the Duke and bunny fur bikini..." is useless if we don't know that particular anecdote. Please tell the story in your own words.

Answers will be freely disseminated. We are currently looking into the possibility of hosting it on the SCA historians web page.

Thanks to Master Alexander de Seton for commenting on questions and giving me some suggestions!

Fólki Rusli Þorgilsson

TEN QUESTIONS

Please answer the first five and at least six of the others:

1. What is your SCA Name?
2. What are your titles?
3. When did you join the SCA?
4. What SCA branches have you belonged to?
5. What questions about SCA history that you'd like to have answered?
6. What is your favorite SCA folktale (true or apocryphal)?
7. Who in the Society has influenced you the most and why?
8. Who was your favorite king? (What kingdom)
9. How do you think you most influenced the SCA?
10. What is your most vivid SCA memory?
11. What about the SCA has changed the most since you joined?
12. What do you miss the most about the SCA since you joined?
13. If you left the SCA, what was the reason?
14. If you ever left the SCA and returned, why did you return?
15. What is your worst SCA memory?
16. What is your favorite SCA song?
17. If you could talk to anyone from SCA history, who would it be?
18. What were the authenticity standards when you joined?
19. What did you wear to your first event?
20. What do you think is the best development in the SCA since you joined?
21. What do you think is the worst development in the SCA since you joined?

Vorlin Has Heart Attack

Master Vorlin O'r Gwig had a heart attack on Monday, 26 April. He is currently recuperating and contemplating changes to his lifestyle. Vorlin is Meadows Herald.

We wish him a rapid and complete recovery and send him the best thoughts!

Dance Practice

All the practices are on Wednesday at 6 pm.

5/5—405 5/12—405

Dance practices should resume in the fall.

Business Meetings

Business meetings take place at 7 pm in the Illini Union, unless specified otherwise. Historical clothing is not required. Second meetings of the month have tentatively been cancelled, but rooms will not be cancelled until the last moment. If anyone has urgent business, please let the seneschal know so that arrangements may be made. Contact her in any case with any item to be placed on the agenda.

5/5—406 reserved: 5/19—405

No schedule for summer or fall meetings has yet been announced.

Final Word

Free time. Ah.

Well, that obviously has to be filled.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an historical questionnaire that I have distributed across the Known World. Please take a few minutes to answer it and help guide historians in their efforts as well as providing data that they can mine. Thanks a lot!

Over the past few years, the question of historical authenticity in the SCA has become dominant for me. Unfortunately, that was crippled by conflicting requirements which put the quantity of members before the quality.

Several people have asked if my resignation from the coronet means that I am going to withdraw from the SCA. Not on your life! I still have many friends in the SCA and still believe that it and its members have a great potential. However, I no longer have any requirement to be hypocritical, and content with business as it usually is.

I have joined the Regia Anglorum North America and beginning to work on a midwest branch of the organization. Regia authenticity standards are as exacting as any other top-notch living history group, and I would love to hear from anyone else who has an interest in serious living history, centering in Norse and British history between 950 and 1066 CE. For further information on Regia, please see their web pages at <http://home.insight.rr.com/cains/regia/> and at <http://www.mathomhouse.com/regia/>. Many of RANA's members are Scadians who continue to play in the SCA but who are dissatisfied with the SCA's level historical accuracy and requirements. Remember that there is nothing to prevent a higher level of authenticity in the SCA than is required by the SCA rules!