

PEAKS' PROGRESS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN PEAKS REGION

My Two Cents on ... the new Background Checks.

By Lord Alaxandar an Chobhlaigh mac Lochloinn

So the SCA is all gung-ho on background checks for everyone who has anything to do with children. "Youth activities officers at all levels, adults acting as youth marshals for any martial activity, persons organizing/in charge of youth activities for an event," is the way the Kingdom Seneschal's Office puts it. It seems so reasonable, doesn't it? If you ask this writer, no, it isn't.

There are many issues with this new policy, some based on the practicality of implementation and others based on the principles involved. Let's examine the practical issues first:

To start with, it won't work to prevent what we want them to prevent. In the cases that I know about, the "alleged" or actual criminal would have passed a check, having no prior record of abuse. Checks won't prevent abuse by parents because parents and relatives aren't required to get checked, though this is far and away the most likely group to abuse a kid. Checks won't prevent abuse by random adults, because no one is suggesting that every adult and teenager get a check before attending an event. Predators DO plan things, they'll spend weeks in Internet chat rooms grooming their victims - I can't imagine it would take much to scam this system.

The money will become an issue. Kingdom exchequers will scream. Background checks are expensive. In Vermont, a background check through the state is \$24 dollars, paid by the applicant. As a teacher, I paid for myself because I'm applying for a well-paid job. In the SCA, on the other hand, I am volunteering and so others will take the burden. [Ed Note: The BOD estimates \$14 per check, half to be paid by Society, half by Kingdom.]

How much money? Each shire will need three or four Children's Activities folks per event, with three or four others who can serve as backups. Factor in the two-deep rule, the youth combat marshalate and all of the cookie-making and juggling classes, multiply by three events per year, and you have need for eight to ten people per Shire. Then expand to 73 shires, cantons, and baronies and you are well over \$10,000.

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This is a completely unofficial newsletter of the Northern Region, sometimes called the Northern Peaks Region, of the East Kingdom of the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Anyone interested in working on future issues of Peaks' Progress should join the list NRNewsletter@yahoo.com or email Lady Albreda Aylese at AlbredaA@aol.com. No experience is required, and we'd love to get reporters from across the Northern Peaks Region. All opinions welcome! Submissions for the Summer issue are due by May 1, AS 43/2008 - AA

Northern Region Championships:

5/3 Northern Region
Rapier Acadmey and
Champion's Tourney –
Malagentia

7/3 - 7/6 Northern Region
War Camp and Rattan
Championships – Glen
Linn

(Background Checks, cont. from page 1)

There are problems with implementation, beginning with the long wait for returns. The ones for us teachers took seven to nine weeks. Confidentiality is a major issue for me. I have absolutely zero confidence that any late returns or failures will be kept confidential, instead becoming instant fodder on the local grapevine. False negatives are rampant in this industry. US Senators have been denied access to airports because of terrorist watch lists, and some three-year-olds are listed as dangerous fugitives. Can we expect that errors will be kept quiet until a second check is made? I wouldn't bet your reputation on it.

I'm not certain that I care about background checks. I would pass (and have passed) easily but I find that I have no desire to bother. I am not going to jump through the paperwork just to satisfy arbitrary silliness. I feel, however, that the SCA is taking on a responsibility and role it is terribly unsuited for and is opening itself up to more liability than if we all took care of our own.

If someone I know asks for a hand, I will help them out. Compounds will band together as they should. Kids will gather around the campfire just as they always have and the adults will entertain them in the old fashion, telling stories, singing songs, teaching them skills like using a carving knife, and trying to rekindle the old ways.

Children's activities will be unofficial again and will be back in the hands of the parents. Children's Activities will be canceled every time one volunteer wants to participate in the event he/she is attending. Soon, Children's Activities won't be scheduled. The table covered with crayons and games will be in the middle of it all or nowhere. More and more events will be saying "Bring your kids if you want but you have the responsibility to keep them busy and out of trouble" and that's as it should be. Children's Activities will disappear, buried under the weight of expectation and regulation.

So much for the next generation, hoist on the petard of false security. Let's hope we don't come to regret this rashness. [Ed Note: This policy went into effect on Feb 15, 2007/AS 42.]

Northern Region Storyteller Wins K&Q's Bardic!

By Master Liam St. Liam

Dominus Tiberius Iulius Rufus of Panthervale will spend the next year as King's Bardic Champion after triumphing over Master Toki Redbeard of Concordia of the Snows in the finals of King's and Queen's Bardic Champions, hosted in late February by the Shire of Anglespur.

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Upcoming Events in the Northern Region:

Smithwick:

Late June - Summer

Gathering

Early Feb – Masqued Ball

Endewearde:

4/9 Jehan's Fencing and

Fighting at the Fort

Mid October - Bare Blade

Brawl and Ball

Late Feb – Tourney

O'Love

Malagentia:

4/26 Spring's Inspiration 7

5/3 Northern Region

Rapier Academy and

Champion's Tourney

7/11 - 7/13 Great

Northeastern War XXII

GNEwar.org

Early October – Harvest

Moon

Stonemarche:

4/5 Where did Madoc ab

Owain Geyned go?

5/3 St Cuthbert's Archery

Tourne II

6/6 - 6/8 Midsummer's

Faire

1st wknd Sept Harper's

Retreat

1st wknd Oct Baronial

Birthday

Early Nov Topaz Ball 2?

Mid Dec - Baronial Yule

Late Jan - Market Day at

Birka Birka.org

New Wyndhame: N/A

Ravenscraig (possible new shire): N/A

(Storyteller, cont. from page 2)

Mistress Ana R. de Guzman was chosen Queen's Champion after a final competition against Lady Judith. Lord Tiberius and Mistress Ana will serve for the rest of the reign of King Andreas and Queen Gabriella, as well as for the full reign of King Konrad and Queen Brenwen. Lord Tiberius will be responsible for coordinating next year's King's and Queen's Bardic Champions.

A teacher in modern life, Lord Tiberius portrays a persona that is a Roman noble of the Equites class from around the year 165 CE. He is a member of the Iulian clan who has walked the *cursus honorum*, serving in Macedonia, Syria, and Gaul. His interests included fighting, bardic arts, youth combat and silk painting. Tiberius, who has been in the SCA three years, has an Award of Arms from King Brion and Queen Anna, and King Gryffith awarded him the King's Order of Excellence, a once-a-year award for outstanding period accomplishments. King Andreas and Queen Gabrielle made him a companion of the Order of the Troubadour at their Rapier Championships in Panthervale this year. He is a Squire to Sir Gareth Grey de Wilton, the commander of the Boreal Army.

Lord Tiberius performed four pieces for Their Majesties and Her Highness. He described his pieces this way:

"In the first round, I presented a Chanson de Geste describing the battle of the woods, Pennsic XXXV. There, I witnessed Sir Gareth defend a ridge against the Midrealm horde. His skill with spear was intense enough that he was able to hold the ridge against far superior numbers, while Boreal and Northern soldiers (hastened in) to defend him.

"For the second round, I told an Anglo-Saxon styled tale of "How the Duchess Marieke Tamed the North." In it, her Grace settles a sizable estate in wild lands and teaches the native barbarian tribes the concepts of honor and chivalry through her kindness, generosity and wisdom. The tale features a series of warrior vignettes that teach lessons.

"In the third round, I gave Their Majesties a sestina in honor of His Majesty's grandfather, King Brion. The puns and wordplay seemed to function well."

The competition was very close, and Their Majesties requested a fourth round. "I gave a ballade to the Society, speaking of the power of creation and shared dreaming for a world more honorable and just as a heroic act." Lord Tiberius said.

That ballade was the deciding factor in his victory.

Writer's note: While I refer to him as "Lord Tiberius," he styles himself in the Roman manner as Dominvs Tiberivs Ivliivs Rvfvs.

(Upcoming Events Continued)

Panthervale:

May 23-26 Pantheria XIII
Late-Sept Lost Tip
Archer's Gathering
Early Dec Pathervale Yule

Mtn. Freehold:

5/3 Fledgeling's Fancy
Late-September 30th
Birthday Bash
Mid-Oct Mimir's Well II
Mid Jan - Freehold Yule
2009 – Northern Lights

Coldwood:

Late-June Opening of the
Inne
Early-October Closing of
the Inne
Early Feb - Parentalia

Glenn Linn:

3/1 Northern Lights XVII
NorthernLights.org
July 3-6 Northern Region
War Camp and Rattan
Championships
Mid Feb - Blades and
Blarney

Northern Outpost:

last wknd Feb - Winter
War

Northern Region Championships Still Needing Hosts!

Arts and Sciences
Bardic
Archery

(Ask Master Liam if your groupwants help planning one of these events!)

