

PEAKS' PROGRESS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN PEAKS REGION

Volume I, Issue I Winter, AS 42/2007

The Gauntlet: I am Stephen Grandchamp, a 20+ year resident of the far north of the Kingdom of the East. I am a Knight and a Master of the Order of the Pelican. These and other honors bestowed upon me over the course of my 31 years in the Society have come down to me from the East. I am in Fealty to the King and Queen of the East and ALWAYS will be. I make these statements at the outset of this letter to be clear on a single point: while I am a strong and long-time proponent of a Principality movement in the North, I am in no way [supporting] and never would support a step beyond that to break away from the East as a Kingdom. The North has changed and grown, we hold many events that uniquely address our regional tastes. The recent economy and most directly, the price of gas has kept many of us close to home of late, and yet we find plenty to do.

I feel that it is time again to start a frank discussion of benefits and potential costs that a Principality would bring to the North. I come to this with some dreams and personal goals, with many questions and some fears. I would guess you all do too. Let's share them. I have a basic outline in mind of how the discussion might flow here. I first will throw out this letter and an invitation to you to join in and introduce yourselves. I would ask even the most ardent supporter of the movement to bring to the table any nagging doubts or questions that they might have. I would also ask that any who are against this for any reason feel safe to post their thoughts here, knowing that all options [will be] respected. Lastly, I immediately want to dispel any thought that there is any connection between a Principality movement in the North and the Great Northern Army. The NA is, in my mind, a military organization that transcends regions and geography. Not all who consider themselves part of the NA would be included in the new principality geographically, but all in the principality would be free to claim their place in the Northern Army! So there... I throw down the Gauntlet and come out of the closet! Let's Rumble!

Baron Sir Stephen Grandchamp, Shire of Coldwood
(first post on the Nordvinland Yahooogroup, August 11, AS 42)

Northern Region Events That Need Hosting in 2008:

East Kingdom Crown Tourney is due to be held in the Peaks Region in Fall 2008! The preferred dates are Oct 27 or Nov 1. Please see EastKingdom.org for details on how to make a bid for a Kingdom level event.

Homes are still needed for Northern Peaks Region Championships in, Fencing, Archery, Bardic, and A&S. (Glenn Linn will be hosting the Peaks' Heavy Weapons Championships in July 2008!)

This is a completely unofficial newsletter of the Northern Region, sometimes called the Northern Peaks, 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@yahooogroups.com No experience is required, and we'd love to get reporters from across the Northern Peaks Region, all opinions welcome! Submissions for the Spring issue are due by February 1, 2008/42 YIS, Albrede Aylese

Events and News in the Northern Peaks Region:

- Smithwick: Feb 9 – Masqued Ball
June 27-29 Summer Gathering
Seneschal: Lord Antony Martin of Sheffield Ldantony@maine.rr.com
- Endewearde: Feb 23 – Tourney O'Love, Bangor, ME – compete for the Pink Baldric, at long last!
Late-April Jehan's Fencing and Fighting at the Fort
Mid October 21st Annual Bare Blade Brawl and Ball – oldest Eastern fencing event!
Discussing moving toward Baronial status in their newsletter, The Northern Front!
www.endewearde.eastkingdom.org
- Malagentia: Mid-July Great Northeastern War, Hebron, ME – GNEwar.org – War in the North!
Early October – Harvest Moon
www.malagentia.eastkingdom.org
- Stonemarche: Dec 15 Baronial Yule: the Search for Father Christmas, Hanover, NH
Jan 25-26 *RP* Market Day at Birka, Manchester, NH Birka.org *article this issue*
Mid-June Midsommers Faire, Contocook, NH
First weekend in September Harper's Retreat
First weekend in October Baronial Birthday
Early November Topaz Ball 2?
Barony-of-Stonemarche.org
- New Wyndhame: Officially a new shire in Southeastern Vermont!
- Ravenscraig: Possible new shire in South Central Vermont! RavenscraigShire@yahoo.com
- Panthervale: Dec 8 Pathervale Yule, Wheelock, Vermont
Jan 12 Kings and Queens Fencing Championships, White River Junction, VT
May 23-26 Pantheria XIII (Memorial Day Weekend) Hardwick, VT
Late-September Lost Tip Archer's Gathering – one more round before the snow flies!
Panthervale.com
- Mtn. Freehold: Jan 12 Freehold Yule, Burlington, Vermont
Late-September Birthday Bash – the Freehold turns 30 in 2008/AS 43!
Mid-October Mimir's Well 2 – classes and fighting and food galore!
MountainFreehold.org
- Coldwood: Late-June Opening of the Inne, Peru, NY
Early-October Closing of the Inne, Peru, NY
- Glenn Linn: Feb 16 Blades and Blarney XI, Glens Falls, NY
March 1, Northern Lights XVII, Glens Falls, NY NorthernLights.org
July 3-5 (4th of July weekend) Northern Region War Camp XV, Warrensburg, NY
Featuring the *Northern Region Heavy Weapons Champions Tourney!*GlennLinn.eastkingdom.org
- Northern Outpost: Feb 23 Winter War XI, Potsdam, NY (incl. Northern Principality meeting)
(always held on Saturday of the last full weekend in February)

Origin of Birka by Frigga, aka Lady Freygerdr in stórrada Halladóttir

The first EK Birka wasn't even called that; "A Viking's Homecoming" was held in October, 1987/AS 22, in the hall of Kessler Farms in Nashua, New Hampshire, and was the brainchild of Lord Olaf of Trollheimsfjord, at the time a gentle residing the Barony of Stonemarche. His original idea was for an event where one could shop for presents before Twelfth Night and Yule, but that year's small event was tiny compared to today's massive "Market Day at Birka," held now in January since increased attendance necessitated a larger site, unavailable during the holiday season. It was that first Viking-themed merchant event that gave Olaf the experience, desire and encouragement to successfully organize and found the shopping extravaganza that everyone now simply calls "Birka."

That first "A Viking's Homecoming" was a small intimate event, full of the relaxing camaraderie so common at Winter events here in the North. Olaf's initial brainstorm was to include lots of the things that he liked to do at an event, many of which continue to be part of Birka today. Unfortunately, late planning, and the fact that the SCA was less organized then, meant that the advertising was done not through newsletters, but at events, by word of mouth, and with fliers that had an event description and schedule all in one. The site for "A Viking Homecoming" was limited to sixty people and fifty participated. The feast of soups and stews (and a memorable onion 'sauce') was served buffet-style. Of the twenty-five pounds of turnips Olaf prepped in his kitchen, all but one was eaten. It was a very relaxing time, and cleared an entire five dollars after expenses.

The heavy fighting tournament was styled as an "Oxhyde Tourney", held in a ten by ten square; if someone stepped outside, they were dead. Wounds were sustained from one bout to the next. The appeal of this style of tourney was that it gave a novice a chance to beat a Duke, and many have tried over the years. To keep track, they created a complicated scale of points; a format that has remained pretty much the same, despite the larger numbers in the tournament held at Birka today.

After this successful first event, Olaf's interest in creating a grander event quickly developed into the idea for the first "Market Day at Birka." There was much discussion at the Baronial meeting, and while it was met with great enthusiasm, the general idea of a larger event meant factoring in 100 to 125 people, and needing use of a larger, and more expensive hall, which they were afraid would not break even in New Hampshire in January. In order to make the event more tempting, they decided to hold this larger event over a three-day weekend, so they chose to hold it over Martin Luther King Day weekend. They agreed to proceed only if they could get 200 prepaid reservations, and that minimum was met (and passed!) at Mountain Freehold's Yule just before the deadline. A fellow Stomemarchian suggested to Olaf that the event be based upon a Viking trading town, possibly Herbidy or Birka. After some research, Olaf decided that the visit from Anskar (later St. Anskar) was the right time-frame and type of market for what he was looking for, so he decided to name the event after the festivities held in Viking Birka.

All of Olaf's favorite activities were held that first Birka: heavy fighting, an A&S contest, archery, thrown weapons, feasting and, of course, merchanting. Fencing, Morris dancing and a Quest rounded out the day, despite the event's behind-the-scenes problems; food prep was not completed, ovens didn't work as advertised, and Katarina, the Feastocrat, apparently credited the Carolingian Cooks Guild joining the Stonemarche cooks in the kitchen with saving the feast. Few guests noticed the problems though, as the merchants remained set up late while the dancing started, and the feast was ready by the time Court ended.

Despite the hiccups inherent in running an event of this size, the success of Birka has grown over the years. A large event in New Hampshire held in January? Thank goodness for the cooperation and

can-do attitude of the good gentles of Stonemarche, and their friends, since “A Market Day at Birka” is definitely an event to behold and enjoy, year after year.

Thank you Lord Olaf of Trollheimsfjord for granting me an interview, and to and THL Stefan li Rous’s effort in maintaining his Florilegium, and thereby recording our history.

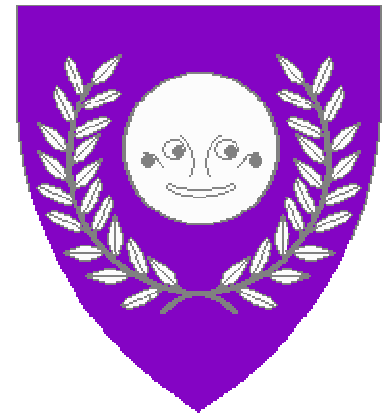
All Things Blazoned by Pomestnik Iustin Branov, Pursuivant of Mountain Freehold

When asked to start a heraldic column for Peaks' Progress, I decided to start on the eastern side of the region, so this month, I’ll start with the Province of Malagentia, located in Southern Maine.

*“Purpure, a moon in her complement
within a laurel wreath argent”*

Province of Malagentia

The field (background) is purple, and the charges (objects) consist of a full moon with a face encircled by a white/silver laurel wreath (indicating the device of a geographic group).



The use of a moon is a nod toward the period reference that gives Malagentia its name; when Giovanni de Verrazzano explored the coast of Maine in 1524, he makes a note in his journal about the greeting of the natives as he came ashore; they mooned him. In his journal he thus named them the 'malagentes' or 'bad people'. The local group SCA, with their classic sense of humor, chose this as the name of their Province; the decision to use this device came naturally after and was registered with the College of Heralds in May of 1983/AS 18.

My thanks to Lord Iain Odlin, a former Provincial herald of Malagentia, for his help with this article.

Humor in... Armor? Lord Asgar Roulfson

I woke up early, eager to fight in the Crown tourney, held in Concordia of the Snows, on November 3rd. I wanted to impress everyone with my fighting skill, and I was already mentally practicing my blows as I did my part of getting the kids ready for the weekend before I skipped out of town.

My lovely wife, Frigga, knowing me as she does, asked "do you have your gorget?" "Yes," I replied. "Helmet?" "Yes." "Shield?" "Yes." "Cup?" "Yes, I got everything! Don't worry!" I snapped, thinking she was questioning my competence a little *too* much. When I got there, (on time I might add,) everyone kept yelling at me to "go sign up!" a not so subtle reminder of my having waited until the last minute at Crown last Spring.

So, I signed in and started to armor up. I got my leg armor on, and started to pull everything else out, when I noticed my torso armor was missing; despite all of Frigga’s prompting, I had left it hanging in the closet at home. So there I was, partially armored, and running around begging people for spare torso armor. I finally got a kid’s pair of shoulder pads, and mixed them with another person’s leather torso. Unfortunately, my ribs were left wide open, but I still fought well; in fact, I had a blast, even though I *looked* like a horrible Noob.

