



The Derneherald

The Seneschal's Aerie Podium Pit Letter

So, yeah, a letter from the Seneschal... Hmmmm, Seneschal's letter... What to write? *grin* Actually, I know what I want to say this time around.

Being an officer in the SCA can be a challenge. How you approach that challenge says a lot about the person you are and are constantly becoming. Being a Seneschal for our group in particular, is to me, quite rewarding and I try to have fun with the "job".

One of the joys of being "the Seneschal of Dernehealde" is that I get to work with a bunch of great people. Truly, I could not enjoy my time in this office if it weren't for the wonderful group of officers we have, and not just officers, but everyone.

So, THANK YOU to the officers, who make my life a little easier (especially when it comes to reporting). THANK YOU to all the new people, and new students, who decided to give this strange and delightful hobby a chance and stuck around. THANK YOU to all the returning students and those who had graduated and decided to stay with us. And a big THANK YOU to all the "townies" who help our group maintain its sense of continuity through the years.

So, what's it take to be a "Seneschal"? The biggest trait that has worked for me is a sense of humor. Having the ability to organize yourself and the priorities of the group also helps, but is not a real big deal. One of the things that I have started doing this time around, is my "Seneschal's Meeting Notes". I started doing them to help keep our less

active members (and “friends of the Shire”) more or less up to date with what is going on in Dernehealde. It also helps me to keep longer term projects in mind. Things like: Officers’ Regalia (not forgotten!) and Shire t-shirts (also not forgotten!). *smile*

So, if you have any questions about the office, or for me, do please feel free to ask me. Like all of you, I have a multitude of interests, but please let me know if you feel ignored or overlooked. In my enthusiasm, I can sometimes stumble over my own shadow.

Your servant,

Finche Odhinnsdottir
YOUR Seneschal

From the Pursuivant

Tavtai morilogtun!

The war drums have receded and it is now a peaceful time to focus on new pursuits. The office of pursuivant is here to assist those interested in creating heraldic device or name for their persona. For those who find the topic fascinating, I would like to invite others to please consider aiding myself and our shire as a herald. It requires no commitment other than the desire to learn.

Many wonderful events are on their way and there are many plots afoot to ensure that those who have been diligently working through service or through arts and sciences and combat. If you are unsure as to who has what awards already, you may check the online order of precedence on Dernehealde's website or contact me and I can help. If you are unsure as to what each of the awards are or how to suggest someone for an award, come find me and I will be more than happy to help!

Switching to my other hat as Autocrat, I would like to thank all those who have been helping or have agreed to help Dernehealde for the Haunted Tower event! I hope that everyone has a great time and I am working to ensure that we have lots of activities planned for the event including fighting, a bardic circle, an amazing feast, and classes. The event will be located at the Logan Conference Center (where the Ducal Silver Anniversary was located) and site fee will

be FREE! Feast fees to be decided soon! For up to date information, please stay tuned to our website for the event located at www.midrealm.org/dernehealde and click on The Haunted Tower tab.

If you are interested in teaching a class, please see Pompeia Furia, the A&S coordinator. To make this fun for everyone, even if it's just for an hour, please consider volunteering for goon (set up and tear down), serving feast, or helping out at troll. Please come and see me if you would be willing to help us make this possible!

Yours in Service,

Altani Unegen

From Your Friendly Neighborhood MoAS

Salvete omnes!

The air is cooling and the leaves will soon be changing. Fall is almost upon us! That means we're heading into A&S season. Those cooler months are the perfect time to cozy up with some hot tea and a project. If you're thinking about learning something new or want to share your passion with others, come talk to me and I'll make it happen. Remember, I'm your local enabler...er...cheerleader. Just don't ask me to do a back flip or wave pom poms around. I promise you that no one wants to see that.

Fall also means we have quite a few local-ish events coming up. Red Dragon will be on us in a few weeks and the Baronial Scroll Blank Challenge culminates at noon at Red Dragon. If you haven't yet worked on a scroll and would like to, come see me or my amazing boss Wilhelm. We'll set you up. I promise, it isn't difficult. I sat all day at the Ducal Silver Anniversary and did it with my eleven year old step-daughter and we both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, despite my lack of artistic ability. There is something everyone can do. Remember: tracing is period!

Speaking of the Silver Anniversary event, I wanted to personally thank all the scribes who spent the day working. These wonderful folks gave of their own time so that others

can receive beautiful scrolls later on. Kudos to Wilhelm, Edith, Dorian and Altani and all the others whose names have escaped me at the moment for their work. My day was quite busy so I apologize if I don't remember seeing you at the table. Thank you for your time and service.

Our event is also just a few weeks away and things are coming together nicely. The only thing missing is you! There are plenty of spaces left where you can volunteer to help. Remember, this event is being put on by our shire for others to come and enjoy themselves. If you've ever been to an event and had fun, it's because someone else raised their hand and said, "Yes. I'll help." The SCA is a volunteer run organization and its currency is time. I promise you, those helium hands do not go unnoticed. If you aren't sure how or where to help, just ask.

Going with that painless idea, I have a report coming up and, while I've heard from a handful of you, I know there is more awesome stuff going on out there. It will cost you absolutely nothing to let me know what kind of awesome fun you had at Pennsic or any other events you've attended. Send me an e-mail, PM me on Facebook, whatever. Look. You're all awesome. I've seen your garb. I've seen what you do but I can't stand over your shoulder and watch you do it. This is your chance to exercise your bragging rights and tell me what you've been up to! Don't let it pass you by.

Next, very special shout out to Edith de Brereton, the Known World Poetry Champion! Out of all the poets in the known world, her poem was selected as the best at Pennsic this year. It was a last minute entry with sources scribbled on notebook paper, researched the night before on a cell phone,

as I understand it. Think you don't have time for A&S? Think again. Sometimes, those last minute projects are the most amazing ones.

Finally, I am issuing a challenge to the members of our shire. Since I've been MoAS, I've had the amazing opportunity to try all kinds of new things I never thought I would or could do. New experiences and pushing the limits of my own skills has been the best SCA experience for me and I want to share it with you. Therefore, I challenge each and every one of you to learn about and/or try five new things in the SCA between now and my next report on January 1st. If you do, please get some evidence, whether that's the finished project or a picture of you doing said thing. Whether that's trying out heavy fighting when you've never attempted it before, shooting at archery, thrown weapons, scribal, cooking...anything! Bring me proof. Those of you who complete the challenge, present evidence *AND* report it to me for my report in January will get a prize.

GO FORTH AND COMMENCE AWESOMENESS!

YIS,

Pompeia Furia

From your Chronicler

Hello again! I have another newsletter for you, *filled* with member submissions, most of which center around the war. Herr Wilhelm has been kind enough to let us use his drawing for the cover of this issue, for which I am grateful, seeing as he also gave me his Pennsic journal to bring to you. This issue of the Derneherald will likely run 30+ pages, but I encourage you to read it all!

Thank you to those of you who submitted content for the first time – I assure you that it is appreciated. Thanks also to those who are re-submitting. Thanks to you, we can crank out another newsletter with tons of things written by you.

Some of you know that I have won a couple awards lately. It has felt amazing, though I still have a long way to go before I am where I want to be in the SCA. I admit that it wasn't my intention to enter the latest one, so I hope to put the prize to good use. Still, thanks to Duke Talymar and Mistress Melisande for the recognition!

YIS,
Edith

Medieval Math!

An indispensable tool for any merchant was a set of scales. Anytime you adjust anything on the scales it takes time for it to balance, so it could be quite detrimental to be slow or inefficient. I present to you three classic problems to test your skills!

1) You have 8 coins, 1 of which is a counterfeit and slightly heavier than than the others. So slight that you can't tell on your own. How can you find the counterfeit coin if you only have time for the scales to balance twice?

2) Again, you have 8 coins of which 1 is counterfeit but you do not know if it is heavier or lighter than the others. How can you find the counterfeit coin if you only have time for the scales to balance three times?

3) You regularly need to weight objects between 1 lb and 40 lbs, in 1 lb increments. You could buy a set of 40 weights (a 1 lb weight, a 2 lb weight, etc.) but you could get away with fewer. Why buy an 8 lb weight when you have a 5 lb and a 3 lb, for example. For a bronze sticker find a way to reduce this to 7 weights. For a silver reduce to 5 or 6 weights. For a gold reduce to 4 weights.

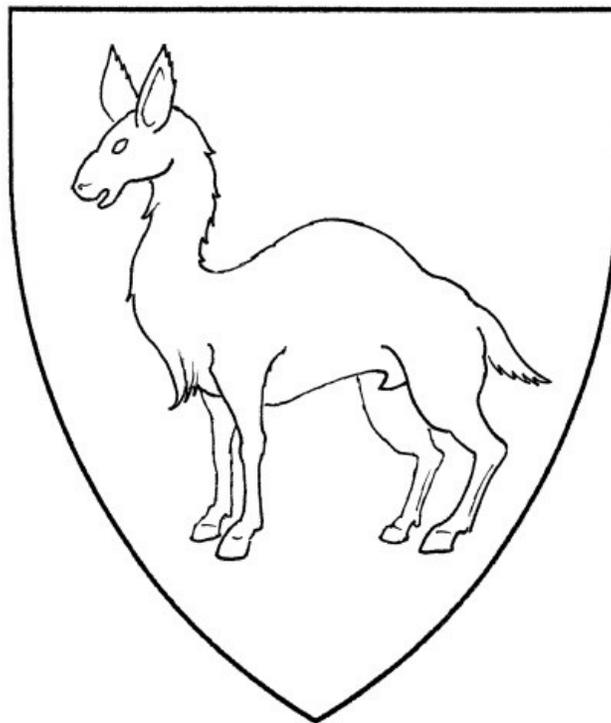
-Mikael ibn Mehlem al Uqlidsi

Heraldry

Snapshot of the Month!

Greetings unto the readers of this fine publication! In an effort to increase information and interest in the art of heraldry, I will attempt to include in the Derneheerald from henceforth a section that focuses on something of heraldic nature.

One thing that I have noted during my time in the SCA and the study of heraldry is that certain beasts get more love than others. Usually they are animals that fill our everyday world. For this publication, I would like to focus on one of the lesser known fantastical creatures used in heraldry.



Meet the Allocamelus, also called an ass-camel in heraldic literature due to the fact that it has the head of an ass and the body having a single hump. When you've finished

laughing at the name, you might be interested to find that this could possibly be a period attempt at describing a llama, according to the heraldic pictorial dictionary. As stated in the heraldic pictorial dictionary online, “Its sole period instance is as the crest of the Eastland Company, 1579, used without authority [Dennys 147].” As most is the case with most heraldic animals, the Allocamelus doesn’t have a default position and so he can be seen in any position one wishes. As this is a non-existing heraldic monster, one cannot color him proper but must specify a color.

*Image and data retrieved from:

<http://mistholme.com/dictionary/allocamelus/>

Altani Unegen

My Pennsic War

Finche Odhinnsdottir

Pennsic 43 was not my first War ever. My first war was actually 22 years ago (there have been a few missed here and there due to various reasons).

Pennsic 43 was, however, my first war as a fighter in the Midrealm Army. Was I nervous? Oh heck yeah I was! Was I excited, too? Do I really have to answer that? *smile*

So, anyway, the highlight of my War actually happened on the first day of battle. It was the first Field Battle.

There we are, House Ev Korcu, assembled on the field, not too far from the Castle. I have my “battle buddies” near me – Sven and Steiner, both keeping an eye on me in case I get into something I can’t handle. I look up, across the open space and see that we are lined up across from the Tuchux. *gulp* Memories of stories race through my head about how *rough* it can be fighting against the ‘Chux. *breathe* I think, “Ok, I got this. I have friends by my side and they’ll keep an eye on me to make sure I don’t get too badly hurt.”

I take my stand, grounding myself so that I'm harder to move if run into. Then, I hear a command to "Charge!" So, I do. I'm not running, because I don't run, but I am moving steadily forward at a kind of 'half-jog'. I believe that I'm trying to keep up with the rest of the line. I hit the "wall of Tuchux" and while I can't really swing my sword all that effectively because of the crush of bodies, I do keep moving... at least, until I lose my footing by tripping over someone and being killed as I fell. It's amazing how fast you get into that "defensive dying" position when there are so many fighters all around you. When I was tapped to safely get up, I was asked if I was ok. I think I was grinning like a fool, as I said I was fine.

I was told later, that I had spear-headed the charge into the Tuchux line and hit them with such power (and luckily at just to right place) that they were reeling out of their line. According to Sven, they looked like they were revolving doors as they spun out of my path. This allowed Sven to follow right up the opening I made and engage a number of the Tuchux polearms and spears.

I was also told, at a later date, by Eidiard, that I actually had a couple of Tuchux "kill teams" out hunting for me – because of that charge. That might explain the spear shot to the chest I took later, that almost knocked me completely off my feet. *grin*

This was one of my favorite Pennsic Wars – ever.

The Beginning: *The Irish Creation Myth*

Megan of Dernehealde

There was primal chaos
Then a trickle of water
Until a mighty torrent
Gushed out upon the earth.

The water quenched
The blazing fires.
A tree grew
Tall and strong.

Danu, the divine water
Goddess, nurtured the tree
The tree was named Bilé (Bee-LEH)
Two acorns fell

From the male acorn
Came The Dagda
From the female
Came the goddess Brighid

They instinctually understood
They must create order
And people the earth
with the children of Danu

In honor of the Mother Goddess, a river was named
Danuvius, but is now known as the Danube.

The Anvil's Ring

T.H.L. Eidiard an Gobihainn,
O.G.R. (X2), C.W., C.E., A.P.F., O.R.C
Randomly Bardic Type Person, Storyteller and Standup
Philosopher

"But I don't have..."

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard this from a person new to the SCA. I think it is time I let you in on a little secret- "So what?" Now, I can almost see that look on your face so stow it! There is more.

You see, most of us started out with nothing in the SCA. Sure many of "old timers" have things now but not all of them were by going out and spending cash we did not have. I remember some of my first garb was given to me, not because of some exchange of money or property but because the person knew I could use it. SCAdians abhor a person in need so they act quickly to fill it for them. I would point out fighters and A&S people first and foremost. Oh, don't have kneepads? Here, take these. Oh, you don't have ink for that scroll? Here take this. Sound familiar? We help as we can however that may be because we like people around to play the game with us. Want to make a new dress but don't know how? Not a problem. So you want to learn to make a book? Here, sit down and give this a try. You see some times the giving is not just of things but of knowledge that we can share. This is how we grow. This is how the game survives and The Dream continues.

"But I feel bad asking..." Okay, a natural but unneeded emotion. When some of us are doing these things it is not for you. Oh? Did you not think of that? Yes, you see some time in that far distant past someone helped one of us, keeping us in the game. Now, we are just trying to pay that person back for their kindness. It's called "paying it forward." They may never know but it makes us feel good. It becomes second nature after a while, like breathing. Be willing to give us the chance to be a good person.

"I don't want to be beholden to anyone..." Fair enough. If it is a gift then be a good person and accept it in the spirit in which it was given. Take it and say thank you. You are not indebted to anyone any more than your own conscience will allow. Still feel like you owe them and want to clear the slate with them? Fine, then give them a hand lugging that big book bag back to the car or helping to clean up after a class. Done, no debt. Period full stop. Feel better?

Ever been to a campsite and get offered dinner, lunch, a drink or what have you? We share and in that sharing we forge bonds that last years and even decades. There is a certain pride I must admit when someone you helped long ago as a scared new person gets their first award or perhaps a belt from some Peer. Yea, I grin like crazy 'cause I always remember when they started. Years go by and now they are Counts, Knights, Barons, Mistresses or what have you. And as I bow, I still have that stupid grin, remembering when...

'Til next time, I remain,
Eidiard

Pennsic: A Journal

Here follows an account of Pennsic War 43, as seen through the eyes of one Wilhelm Salzburger, Companion of the Order of the Willow, servant of the Middle Kingdom through his works as Minister of Arts and Sciences for the Middle Marches, and who, by the Grace of the Almighty, has been gifted with the skills of a scribe. May His blessings continue to flow forth in excess, forever and ever. Amen. This account has been altered slightly from its original format:

29.Juli

Soon...

Last minute projects keep arising. Now I make a pennan to create a presence for our household, Clan Blackthorn, at war. I regret that the heads of our house will not be joining us this season. At this rate I will need a taller banner pole. But that will have to wait. The sewing of the pennan is almost complete and this evening I paint.

Frantically we pack. Three more days await us. Our hearts ache for news of our loved ones who are already away.

Dorian & I pray daily for their safety- words of storms and unseasonally cold weather travel to us...it would seem this war will be cold indeed.

I have also pickled some venison, and tonight I make more sekanjabin. The preparations are many, but I have high hopes that we finish in time for departure. Directions need acquired, for I hear that part of the King's road in Eathelmarc is shut down for repairs.

I am also most excited to see this years pilgrimage badge- part of the allure is that they are different every year. One day I would very much like to design one of these badges...

But anyway...

Pennsic is not here yet and already I plan my next trip: Coronation. This season it is to be held in the neighboring Barony of Flaming Gryphon. I must remember to make more sekanjabin after war, as part of an auction for the Royal Travel Fund. I love attending Coronation, so I hope I can get away from my work long enough to see the new King. Our current King I will be seeing for the first time at war- though his likeness is known to me.

King Cameron is a mighty man who rivals giants in height, trolls in strength, and trees in girth, with a smile that outshines the man during a full moon. He is the right and proper choice for a king during times of war. With His Majesty Cameron, I have faith that we will be victorious.
DRACO INVICTUS!

-Wil

2. Augustus

It is late, but we are finally here. The journey was most dreadful, taking twice as long as it should. Our wagon broke, we got lost, and did not make it to camp by nightfall, making unpacking most unpleasant. But we are here, we are safe, and all is well. Opening ceremonies begin in two days' time- I have plenty of time to prepare.

I have so much to do now I'm here. Much to do, people to see, and money to lose.

And now here I am with my love, curled up with blankets and candles to continue our pastimes. She reads quietly before bed as I update my chronicles. How quickly we fall in to our routines.

...She is so lovely. I am lucky to have her. And I hope she knows it.

It is my hope this war to learn much, but also to socialize- my work has kept me from being as social as I'd like. Even with all the feast days I often do not get the pleasure.

Our bed was delivered to day as well. Dorian and I ordered one from Halle as a way to save space and make her some money; the only downside is that now it must come home with us. Luckily, the mattresses break down well. Our cart, however, is full to the brim. But enough. It is late.

-Wil

2. Augustus continued

My first entry in the new journal- a gift from my lady. Today I find myself in a class on the seasons and cycles of medieval life. Any notes I have on the subject are sure to follow.

[The contents of the class notes have been removed from this journal for purposes of length. Any interest on the subject can be directed to Wilhelm Salzburger]

3. Augustus

I have attended a class by the Royal Wizard of the Midrealm. Dr. Henry Best is a most amusing act of devilry. Oriental rings are a most fascinating and amusing subject in his hands. He has provided us with notes. Any additional thoughts on the content of the class will be recorded there.

We were taught parlour tricks, and I have collected a couple of coins from the class that he used for the demonstration for my collection. I must remember to pay him for these as they are on loan and do not belong to him

In other news, many new things have happened. I also attended a class on business practices. I'm sure my father did a few of these things in his business as a cooper. I definitely remember the use of sticks broken in to matching pieces to use as receipts. We had sticks in excess due to the nature of the business.

The rest of the day included lots of shopping and eating up top in town. When we returned to camp down on the lake, wine and cheese was pulled from the stores. I feasted and drank far too much, though I was not beyond courtesy. I took it upon myself to escort a shire member to her camp, where she was working for the Baron and Baroness of Fenix. His Excellency was most gracious, and they were celebrating a birthday in the camp, so much revelry was had there. Having already traveled for a quarter to half an hour to the Fenix camp, I decided to head for Ev Korvku's camp, as they were around the corner.

When I arrived the head of the house, Ustad, was out, but Eidiard and Finche sat beneath the tent of hookahs, where in daylight hours many of Ev Korvku can often be found when not on the battlefield. I ambled in to the tent, and there Eidiard gave me a gift. Given my condition, I required assistance with it's opening for a feared breaking the package. I was pleased to discover it was a card game! It was a gift in return for some Oriental coins I had given him, which he suspected to be of much value, and so Eidiard wished to express his gratitude. Soon I need to remind myself how to play Karnoffel!

Still I was taken with drink. It was well past dark; camps prepared lanterns along the path, lighting my way in the night. I greeted many strangers on the way back to camp, and arrived safely after another quarter to half an hour. Not long after I slept, though I awoke to a storm and a raging pain in my head. With some of a special mix created for such instances, my pain passed and I slept well.

5. Augustus

Busy two days!

Yesterday I had planned to be in class all day, though the afternoon heat deterred me.

Dr. Best has caught my attention, for I took another of his classes, this time on divination through sorcery. After a confusing lesson on musical notation, I left and found myself some new shoes, though it has been much too wet to wear them.

Dorian & I were both besieged with a melancholy of the heat, & returned to camp for lunch and a rest. I was prepared to return to the university for singing and more classes on magic I may need to attend confession soon with all of my debauchery and blasphemous dabbling, though Dr. Best assures me all of the magic he has shown us has been approved by the Church.

Today has been more relaxed than the rush of yesterday's class schedule. Tanti Paro, Pompeia, Dorian et I were wandering around the city to get images for our wedding portraits. It was a very relaxed afternoon that wound down with good news.

Talymar and Halle both ran in to me and expressed their wish to perform music with me at a later date. We will discuss details after war, but it will be a most exciting bardic prospect! Now I feel a responsibility to His Grace to practice my new drum!

Speaking of music, I had the pleasure of attending a concert this Sunday past, the likes of which I may not see any time soon. It was a humorous and often farsical performance by Effeawalt Wystle. He is a most talented and amusing musician.

The other bardic arts are not to be ignored either. Though I was not there to witness it, news spread like wildfire that our own Edith de Brereton won the Knowne World Poetry Competition! I knew she was a blessed writer.

She is not the only talented Dernehealder. Atsur, currently Baronial Champion of Flaming Gryphon, became a squire to Sir Ustad. He was originally a part of our shire before academic endeavors sent him from our borders.

Today, there is much to celebrate!

Tonight is the Clan Blue Feather ball. Maybe the weather will let up so we can actually go. Otherwise, the next big event here is the Madness at Mattens and Thursday gambling at House Effervo's camp.

AMNS

-Wil

6. Augustus

A grand day indeed! Last night was the Blue Feather Ball. Much revelry and beautiful costume there was, and the Clan even received an award from the Kingdom of Northshield for their dedication to hospitality with the ball, which has been running for three and twenty years! Dorian

and I returned late from the ball, and awoke early the next day.

With a confusion of the date, I expected a scribal day today, but the confusion led to a wonderful event:

Today I managed to attend a class by Master Johannes- a Laurel in Calligraphy and Illumination. We had a discussion and maybe I have a teacher. Blessings, maybe even a master to help me further my craft! What a fortuitous day that I should confuse the dates. The Wheel of Fate turned in my favor this day.

Shopping has also happened in prep for tonight's Madness. Many shops have special deals and though the Sun has not yet considered sleeping, many have already prepared. I must note that I had the fortune of showing Effenwalt to some of my friends at the Madness at Mattens, for he was busking with his tunes outside of his shop. I threw him some money and asked for a particular song I reveled about upon my return from the concert. It was a lot of fun indeed!

Tomorrow is archery and gambling. House Effervo will be a most lively place! Hoobah!

-Wil

7. Augustus

Today I discovered Baronial coin could not be earned for taking classes, as many in the Barony were also inclined to think, though the point was moot as I still earned my pay at the archery range. I was given one coin for my time, though I shot five war points. I suspect that I am owed.

Now I sit at Middle Kingdom Court, which runs so long we have had to take a rest and get some air. More to come.

-Wil

12. Augustus

The war is now over.

Court, though long, felt quick. Dr. Best was Laureled, and a spy was discovered amongst the number of his company. Apparently it was Zsof's plan to make him a Laurel so that he may, as a paraphrase, suffer the Laurel's meetings for the rest of his days. Dorian and I enjoyed the spectacle, even the interpreter signing to the audience of conversations on the Dais.

We slept well that night, after a day of archery, then drinking and gambling at House Effervo. That was a busy day indeed.

Friday was somewhat more relaxed, though I missed my one class in order to take my new shoes back to Bohemond, who made them, as they broke again. My Grandfather, who was a cobbler, would never have made shoes like this, though I do admit the stitching is fine and at least they are snug and fit properly. Bohemond had to take them home with him to repair, but I trust they will work well when returned to me.

Afterwards, Dorian and I shopped a bit more before all closed for the end of war. I bought some more trim for my tunics, and I have uses for every yard I bought!

Many folks left that day, but the Shire's exodus came Saturday. Even we made our way home that day. We made it

home safely, though I fell ill for a couple days. Today, I believe I am well, which is fortunate for I have returned to work, until either Coronation or His Grace's silver anniversary event.

And so continues the cycle. The Wheel keeps turning- projects are planned, drawn and plotted, feasts anticipated, until we return 'home' again.

Ad Majora Natus Sum

-Herr Wilhelm Salzburger, C.W.

Poetry by Edith

I was told by the MoAs to put my poems that won in competitions into the newsletter. And so I oblige.

Ducal Silver Sonnet

Now come together, gentles far and wide
While still the summer sun blesses the land.
Come boast and feast; come now to share the pride,
The union of the Stag and Meslisande.

The year was long ago, called silver hence
When our two lovers came this day to wed.
From renewed life and love, this is from whence
Out of her heart, she mothered and she led.

With her hands, she sewed and glory brought,
This lady who to service gave her soul.
While Talymar took up his sword and fought -
But in their minds, they strive for the same goal.

Come celebrate their love, strong as before
As we wish for them a lifetime more.

The Big Winner

Blood-worm bound to battle,
Bring to us a kindom.
Sing the sweetest death song;
Send unending crow cries.

Swing yours sturdy short-swords;
Send your shield-walls walking.
Midrealm's might makers,
Make your promise waken.

May the Midrealm prosper;
May the dragon never die.

Take with terror, turning
Tiger's lies to turmoil.
Fealty feeds the faithful,
Fathers and sons made one.

Beauty brings the bloodshed,
Born of mean worn weary.
Destruction, the dawning;
Dynasties songs make last.

May the Midrealm prosper;
May the dragon never die.

My First Pennsic (Of Many to Come)

Pennsic, Pennsic... where to begin? I heard the word for the first time before I'd ever even held one of our SCA swords. At the time I had no idea what it was, but now, one year and eleven days later from my first encounter with the SCA, I know what Pennsic is. It's the best place in the world. Several years ago I had a wonderful dream where I was in a battlefield, surrounded by hundreds and hundreds of other people sword fighting, and when I woke I was sad because I *knew* that was an experience I would never have. I mean, where could I possibly find that many people that like that kind of thing? Never in my life have I been so happy to find I was wrong. Pennsic (and the SCA in general) is quite literally a dream come true. I've finally found the place that I belong!

If I had to pick my favorite experience from Pennsic I would have to say it'd be from the time I got in the gate until about the time I drove back out of it 9 days later. To narrow it down any more than that would just be an unrealistic summary to be perfectly honest. It's nearly impossible for me to pick a single moment, because all of Pennsic was simply one happy blur, plus a couple of bruises.

As I drove up over the hill and caught my first glimpse of the sea of tents, the grin that had been peering over my steering wheel the entire drive up to Pennsylvania grew to the point that it nearly split my face in two. I parked in the line of cars waiting in the battlefield and called my mom with such enthusiasm that she probably had no idea what I

was actually saying, but I'm sure she could tell what I meant by the excited squeals coming out of the phone. I had arrived at Pennsic. The following two days were filled with getting to know the camp, a lot of shopping, a little of getting lost, and my first ever shooting star. And then it was War Week.

Woken by a good old holler through the tent wall, I crawled out of my turtle shell and began to armor up for my first ever battle (first real melee even). Marching up to the field with the warriors of Holt Herotus around me, I didn't feel nearly as nervous as I felt like I should. Too calm almost. At the sidelines fighters milled everywhere, preparing for the beginning of war. We found our place with the Middle Marches on the far right and then the trumpets blared and we "charged", at a walk. I stuck like Velcro to Lamorack, who had been charged as my first shield buddy, as I tried to make sense of the colorful chaos of people. Shield walls formed. A few seconds later, without warning, His Grace Sir Talymar seemed to come flinging out of enemy lines. Then I was dead. Gotta love spears.

Second field battle I got swept into my first column charge and ended up flat on my back, surrounded by a mangled mass of legs. 'Die defensively!' I thought urgently but I was quite stuck; my legs tangled between two other fallen fighters, my shield arm flung out uselessly to the side.

Finally I managed to pull my shield over my torso just in the nick of time as someone ended up accidentally sitting smack in the middle of it seconds later. I looked at the guy surprised, then my face lit up upon realizing it hadn't hurt

when he landed on me! I almost laughed out loud. *I love my shield!* (Thank you Eidiard!) Once everyone got untangled and I had crawled out of the way I realized, I wasn't actually dead! So I found the chevron and carried on!

Nothing else notable happened for me in battle until Friday. As we lined up at the field's edge I thought about the various injuries my friends had obtained throughout the week and for a moment I paused thinking, *what on earth am I doing here charging into this mosh pit of swords and shields?* All these strong, experienced fighters have been limping off the field and I, toothpick that I am, am just asking to get squished! For a second I pondered this, then I thought *oh what the heck, it's so worth it!* and raised my shield.

“Draco Invictus!”. “Draco Invictus!” we shouted in reply and charged at full sprint to the nearest post. Shield walls materialized and I successfully blocked a spear thrust. And another. And another! For nearly ten minutes I survived the shield wall, much to my pleasant surprise. Then, in a moment of truth, a fighter from the enemy lines came charging right at me. I stepped to the side, raised my sword and brought it down with a crack upon his helm. *I'd killed my first man.* Two minutes later I died myself and went skipping back to the resurrection point for a drink, chirping about how I'd gotten my first kill.

Though it may have been the most exciting aspect, fighting wasn't the only highlight of Pennsic. Shopping left nothing to be desired. I think my favorite thing was that whenever you walked in a shop the merchant would almost always say “Let me know if you have any questions.” *Not*

“How can I help you?” or anything that made you feel pressured to hurry up and buy something, and given the time to peruse I found I did have questions. “What’s this, how does that work, how is this made, what culture would have used that strange looking thing?” And they would explain with enthusiasm. Needless to say I learned a lot more than any shopping trip I ever made to Walmart. After the first few excursions I stopped trying to go with groups because I always took too long. By the time I finally looked at Every Single Thing in the tent I would walk back out to find the rest of the group waiting for me at the end of the row.

But the best of it all were the people, both friends and strangers (who felt like friends after a few minutes), and the timeless ease that pervaded the place. Hours of talking and laughing and joking (and hitting each other with sticks), I can’t imagine a better way to spend a couple weeks out of the summer. I can’t wait to go Home!

~ Morgan Varner of Dernehealde

My First Pennsic

We have a ton of stories about Pennsic; this is mine. I traveled to Pennsic with Their Excellencies Fenix, who sponsored me in exchange for having their kids watched some of the time. Looking back, I think I would spend more time with the girls if I were to relive the two weeks; they were insanely creative and had awesome personalities. They always had some pretend game going on, often about princesses or wizards. I imagine them being tough fighters one day.

I got to do a lot of wandering, both with the girls and (mostly) without them. We looked at the shops and all of the strange things they had for sale; I ate at some of the restaurants, though not often since Her Excellency made such good food every night. Every dress I took with me got unbelievably muddy, but it felt authentic. I felt at ease walking around and finding my friends.

The first time I got drunk was at Pennsic. I remember walking back and just looking at the camps and people in wonder. Everything was fascinating to me in that time, even when I felt moody.

My favorite thing was getting slightly closer to some of the members of the shire. I remember walking around at Midnight Madness trying not to lose anyone, clinging to each other, or making my way to one camp or the other to sit and enjoy the atmosphere. I remember meeting a friend of my laurel and being *so* excited to discuss poetry with him, since I finally had found a place where I could. And, when

the time came to leave, I remember a comfy ride in a large van with a very zany group of girls.

Even with a sense of obligation and a feeling that I wasn't doing enough for the people who "hired" me, I felt at ease in this new place with its strange sights and sounds. I hope that I may go again and discover even more next year.

-Edith