

SPRING-SUMMER 2015



Barony of North Woods'

Holmgang

Newsletter for the Barony of North Woods

in the Pentamere Region

of the Kingdom of the Middle

of the Society for Creative Anachronism



“Edinburgh Castle from Portsburgh” Image courtesy of Kim Traynor (CC BY-SA 3.0) 2012

Edinburgh Castle from Portsburgh, the area of the city now called the West Port. Before the draining of the loch on its northern side, this would have been the most familiar view of the Castle for the citizens of Edinburgh. The parts seen here are (right to left) the Half Moon Battery, the Palace Block, the Great Hall and the Queen Anne Building.

All Baronies of the Middle Kingdom Are required to publish a newsletter quarterly, even if they have a web page. If you would like to submit an article to the newsletter, please send it to the Baronial Chronicler.

An electronic version of this newsletter can be found on the Barony of North Woods web page, under Missives.

Barony of North Woods

Baronial Council Meeting

April-12,-2015 (action items are in bold)

Officer Reports

Herald (Verrix) – The herald's report is in with all groups reporting.

Webminister (Rocco) – The website is being updated. The previous Webminister (Aindle) submitted the last report. A pointer site from the Midrealm website will be added (basically an 'official' site that redirects to our own site). The domain is due to be renewed soon. **Rocco will follow up on this renewal.**

Chatelaine (Rycheza) – No groups have reported. Although this is a courtesy copy and not required, groups are encouraged to copy their report to her. **Lucien will follow up with the seneschals of each group.**

Knight's Marshal (Liam- not present) – The report has been filed, although only Ealdnordwuda reported. **Lucien will follow up on this as the above.**

Exchequer (Brigida) – The Barony earned \$100 from the demo at the library. The report is not yet due.

Minister of Youth (Saehildr) – Youth activities occurred at the library demo and It Takes My Child to Raze a Village. A reminder that official youth activities must have a coordinator (who is background checked) and two unrelated adults (one of which may be the coordinator) in attendance. The Minister of Youth also requests a census for youth within the area. Please forward information to her. **Saehildr will follow up on the census.**

Seneschal (Lucien) – The research phase of the Baronial charter rewrite is nearly complete. Writing will begin soon. The current Baronial charter will be published to various sites for public comment as to suggested changes. **Lucien will follow up on this.**

All Officers: Please send your contact info to Rocco to ensure Baronial email addresses are reaching you.

Their Excellencies (Maximilian and Gwennlyen) –

Champions

New youth armored champions were named at It Takes My Child- Robert and Patrick. New youth armored and rapier champions will be chosen at the next running of this event next year. A new service champion was also chosen- Lady Endlin von Baden.

Events

Penguicon is having a SCA demo in 2 weeks (April 26th) and the coordinator, Lady Birke, is seeking assistance. Please help as you are able and contact her for further details.

Coronation is on May 2nd. Assistance is requested for various jobs on the day of (especially teardown).

Squires Tournament is on May 9th. The Baronial Armored Champion will be chosen then and the current champion, Master Zygmunt, will be holding the field in the afternoon, at approximately 3:30.

Crown Tournament will be held on May 23 and 24. Volunteers are being sought.

Baronial Border War will be held on June 19-21st. Their Excellencies request that the populace participate in the A&S competition and that that populace bring many projects.

Tyger Hunt will be on July 10-12. There will be a royal presence so retainers are being sought. His Excellency Max is the liaison to the Fort. The Baronial Rapier champion will be chosen on Saturday.

Pennsic will be on July 24th- August 9th. The theme of the Baronial Party will be “Out of this World” (Sci-Fi), with the theme of next year’s party to be “To Another World” (Fantasy). Help is requested for the Known World Baronial Champions tournament (especially with setup and teardown). **Warder Kata will be coordinating rapier marshals.**

The Barony will be hosting Toys Tourney (which was previously held by Iron Oak) on November 21st at the Heart of the Shepard church in Howell. Aindle and Aliyah will be the site coordinators, but an Event Steward is being sought.

Ale to the Victors may possibly be run by Northwoods in the near future. The possible format which has been suggested is a team tournament similar to Rose Tourney, but for Barons/Baronesses. Their Excellencies request that the dance event run by the Saltatoris Dance Guild be resurrected if possible.

The Baroness’ Baby Project is due by June 1st.

Please make award recommendations to Their Excellencies and/ or to the online award recommendation system

(<http://www.midrealm.org/op/recommend/login.php?from=/op/recommend/>). Please list the accomplishments of the candidate and what events they will be attending.

Group Reports

Ealdnordwuda (Kata) – PaoD and 12th Night were successful events. There was a discussion on the etiquette of hosting an event or demo in the lands of another Canton or Barony. Please request permission from the local seneschal if at all possible before hosting an activity in the lands claimed by another group. Squires Tournament will be on May 9th. The theme of the event will be Peers highlighting their dependents.

Weald Lake (Odelia) – Herald's Pointe and Scribal Symposium was a success. A formally heralded tournament was run for the first time. Planning has begun for next year. To help make the event larger, **Lucien and Rocco will be donating custom shields to the victors of next year's tournament** (for rapier and armored, respectively). It Takes My Child to Raze a Village was run the prior day and was very well attended and successful.

Hawkland Moor (Damiana) – Hawkland Moor is planning on serving lunch tavern at Coronation. Smurf Shoot is coming up on Sunday, June 7th.

Old Business

The heraldry for the new Baronial award, tentatively called the Wolf Pack, is in the submittal process. **Verrix will follow up with this.**

Iron Oak property – The property donated to the Barony will be auctioned off at Squires Tournament in a silent auction format. Proceeds will be donated to the Barony. **Sugawara and Lucien will coordinate getting the property to site** (as it is in their possession). Photos will be taken of any items remaining and submitted for an online sale.

Baronial history book- **Sugawara will be placed in charge of coordinating this as Baronial Chronicler.**

New Business

The Baronial Star patches of varying colors are running low. **Their Excellencies will approach Fearghas to determine the time and cost of commissioning more.**

A question was raised as to the applicability and necessity of the model release form. Specifically, must each participant sign off on this form in order for the pictures taken featuring them to be used, or is it only applicable in more commercial instances? Also, can a blanket consent/ awareness announcement be considered sufficient? **Lucien will follow up on this.**

The next meeting is scheduled for 1:30 pm at Brewery Becker on a date to be determined in July. **Lucien will follow up on this.**

Chronicler's note: July meeting was cancelled due to conflicts. **Next meeting is scheduled for 1:00 pm Sunday October 4th at Brewery Becker. 500W. Main St., Brighton, MI 48116.**

Featured Article

Jan Kochanowski, Father of Polish Literature

by
Lady Rycheza Tkaczyc

Jan Kochanowski was born in 1530 in Sycyna. His parents were comfortably wealthy mid-level gentry, both his mother and his father having come from good fortunes. His formative years were much like the majority of youth of his station. His family had a scholastic bent and he and his brothers Mikolaj and Adnrej would make contributions to Polish literature. He entered the Cracow Academy in 1544. It is now the Jagiellion University thanks to significant refurbishing funded by Anna Jagiellonka and still stands today. Think of it as the Polish Oxford, or Cambridge. Here he would spend his early education neck deep in the Protestant Reformation. He would hear the great debates on religion and they would affect him and his work. It is interesting to note that he never mentions the Virgin Mary or the Saints in his work. He continued his studies abroad, rounding out his education in Italy, particularly Padua. Padua is where he would meet and study under some of the greatest poets of his age.

Italy was the seat of Renaissance poetry because it had something few other languages had at the time. Something that other languages borrowed from each other to develop during this period of history, as young men would study there and carry their learning home. Italian was already rich in synonyms. You had many word choices for different objects, people, places and feelings. This aspect, which we don't even really think about anymore, allows a poet to follow a form without changing the meaning of his work. Three journeys to Padua for study and one side trip to France and Kochanowski was ready to enter the intellectual and political scene.

After some time in various mid-level courts, bishops, assorted magnates, etc., he earned a position as King Zygmunt August, personal secretary and courier. This is when his career really took off.

When he was serving in King Zygmunt's court he entered into the great political and intellectual debates of his time. His vehicle was poetry, and his language was Polish.

This was the moment that he secured his place in history because, for the first time Polish people could read great discourses in their own language. After returning from Italy, Kochanowski would write hundreds of Poems, as well as several essays and plays in Polish. With his contemporary Mikolaj Rej, he would change the face of Polish literature in a single generation. His language and the subjects he chooses to write about are unique. Unlike most men of his era he didn't focus exclusively on moral and religious topics. He wrote about what interested him at the time it interested him His topics clearly show the course of his life, beginning now. You can actually chart his mental state and interests through his work.

During his 15 years at Court in Cracow he wrote many dry, stuffy plays in which he made points about the political figures and events around him, including an Ode to King Zygmunt after a military victory and a poem called the Satyr, which deals primarily with imagery about a carnal creature devouring the innocent out of greed.

Then in 1575 he married Dorota Podlodowska, and settled at his family's country estate in Czarnolas. Here is when he would begin his most prolific period. During this time he wrote works that tell us about the man he was, allowing us to peek inside his head in a way that wasn't really available for any Polish author before this, or even immediately after. He wrote hundreds of poems, about topics ranging from the beauty of nature to how he loved Poland, and his thoughts on every day human feelings and observations.

He wrote a series of epigrams which he called Trifles. A direct poke at a contemporary known for saying that anyone who would call an epigram a trifling thing doesn't really understand it. His trifles are short

for the era, some only two lines long and are full of this sense of humor as he writes pieces like “On a Spanish Doctor” in which a doctor’s patients attempt to offer him hospitality, which he refuses. They follow him home and pull him from his bed to share a tankard. Being only a Spaniard he can’t hold his liquor and laments “I went to sleep sober, will rise Drunken”. Another comedic piece is “To a Maid” in which an old man warns a pretty young thing not to be put off by his grey beard, for “the older the cat, the harder the tail” and the old dry oak has a root that “still stands mightily”.

He writes about his feelings without coaching them into the metaphors of his day. He writes a poem “To His Lady” where he tells the world he is happy that his monuments to the woman he loves are poems and won’t decay like sculptures of gold or stone. He prays for rain in one Trifle and writes about the superiority of the Linden Tree over other trees, in another. He lauds it for its shade, superior fragrance, and its ability to attract song birds, especially nightingales. Someone was clearly enjoying his retirement, even spending the time to translate the Psalms into Polish for common consumption.

He spent a great deal of time contemplating human existence. In his poems on health, “Human Life” and sleep, discuss what man should and does find important. He wonders at people who seek conflict and strife and points out that he would “let others fight on, while I wonder at the view.” He refers to Sleep as teaching us to die, and dreams as the souls wanderings, while our body is at rest. And laments that we only value our health after we have lost it. “To the Mountains and Forests” is particularly poignant in this vein as he thinks back on the fullness and business of his career and travels and points out how he is glad to look out his window, see the view and be able to reminisce. He speaks to God, using the metaphors of his time, calling him, “Eternal Thought” and “Timeless Steward”.

He also writes his “Songs” during this period. They mostly deal with the importance of being happy with the gifts God has given you and the folly of coveting more than you have. They are full of joy in the everyday and caution that we will all die so it is pointless to worry about what we can’t change. He is fatalistic in these poems, pointing out that “groundless worries are the devil’s curses”, as “Fortune gives orders...while human designs turn into blunder.”

After these five years of quiet and contentment Kochanowski would break a new literary boundary, this time in form. In 1580 he lost his two year-old daughter Urzula, the fourth of his five children. Unusual for a time with a high infant mortality rate he was shattered at the loss. He wrote about it, almost immediately, in a Treny, or Lament. He was soon criticized for it, by the academic community. This form was to be used in writing for Popes, Kings and other Great Men. How dare he write one for a child and a girl? His response was to essentially thumb his nose at them, writing a cycle of nineteen laments and seeing that they were published together. Outside of his political pieces in King Zygmunt’s court, this was to be the only original work he published during his lifetime.

The language is beautiful and heartbreaking, with strong imagery. He compares his feelings to a panicked bird when a serpent attacks her nest. She pecks at it but must retreat when it turns upon her, gaping. He talks about how empty and quiet the house is without her laughter. Lament V remarks on his confusion at her sudden loss like a gardener who carefully tends a sapling only to have it dry up and die. In Lament IX he begs to buy the wisdom to not feel this pain anymore. Almost more painful is the footnote of this book

While he was writing this book his second daughter also passed into the beyond. She was given four lines.

Epitaph to Hanna Kochanowski

And you too Hanna, your sister quickly followed
And ahead of time visited the lower world,
So your hapless father mourned you both together
And prepared himself for more enduring pleasure.

He didn't write anything else after this cycle. He would die himself only 4 years later, at the age of 54. In the years following his death his Trifles and then his Songs would be published. His work would live on quietly and later would gain a resurgence in popularity in the 18th century. This is when he would earn the title he shares with Mikolaj Rej. The Father of Polish literature. These two men alongside each other would start the trend of writing for Poles in Polish, but unlike Rej who wrote in Polish because he never liked to study and frequently quipped that he had no Latin or Greek, Kochanowski made a conscious, deliberate choice.

He chose to give the Polish people a voice in their own tongue and to speak for them about the things the Polish heart held dear, like the shade of the fragrant linden tree, and how beautiful the mountains are, and the simple joy of coming together with friends.

We want to make merry.
Tell your men to hurry,
Let them, lord, bring good wine to the table
And play the lute or the golden fiddle.

Sources:

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Poetry Corner

Pennsic Pillows

The time of travel

Drums sounding in the distance

The Emperor calls

High grass and sun beats our heads

Fresh mown grass our soft pillows



Baron and Baroness

Baron Maximilian der Zauberer and Baroness Gwenllyen the Minstrel

(Robert and Janet Scheltema)

4262 Dickson Dr., Sterling Hts., MI 48310

BaronAndBaroness@SCANorthWords.org

Baronial Officers



Seneschal

Warder Lucien Featherstone

Seneschal@SCANorthWords.org



Exchequer

Lady Brigida Alderotti

Exchequer@SCANorthWords.org



Herald

THL Verrix Verctissignos Caledonios

Herald@SCANorthWords.org



Minister of Arts & Science

Lady Fujinamino Kaede-Hime

MOAS@SCANorthWords.org



Knight's Marshal

Liam

KMarshal@SCANorthWords.org



Chatelaine

Lady Rycheza Tkaczyc

Chatelaine@SCANorthWords.org



Webminister

Baron Rocco Barbarossa

Webminister@SCANorthWords.org



Minister of Youth

THL Sæhildr Barngodr

MOY@SCANorthWords.org



Chronicler

Lord Sugawara No Tokihira

Chronicler@SCANorthWords.org

Groups of the Barony



Canton of Ealdnordwuda

Warder Kata Aragunnrsdottir

kata.aragunnrsdottir@yahoo.com

<http://www.midrealm.org/ealdnordwuda/>



Riding of Hawkland Moor

Damiana Isabel Cardona

elftaiz@ameritech.net

<http://www.midrealm.org/hawklandmoor/>



Canton of Weald Lake

Lady Odelia of White Waters

seneschal@wealdlake.org

<http://www.wealdlake.org/>

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