



## Shire of Al-Sahid Newsletter

## Scorpion Tales

MARCH 2007

## AROUND THE SHIRE

MARCH SHIRE MEETING  
AND CRAFT DAY

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The March meeting will be on March 18 at Holly and Nathan's at 15440 Nasqualli Rd. Their apartment number is F211, but we plan on meeting in the complex's banquet hall. For more information, you can reach Nathan at 760-245-2612. **Important: bring chairs!** The craft meeting is on Filigree Eggs and we will also be working on

the ongoing Banner project. The craft meeting will start at noon and the Shire meeting will start at 3:00.

## FIGHTER PRACTICE

Fighter Practice is usually at 12:00 pm at Sir Killian's, but there will be **NO PRACTICE** Sunday, March 4 in favor of the Pagus Sancti Geronimi event instead. For confirmation, directions and more information about how to hit your friends for

fun and profit, please contact Sir Killian at [kiltek@earthlink.net](mailto:kiltek@earthlink.net).

## COSTUMING SUITS

For information on Garb Gathers, contact Lady Jane at 760-244-9129 or by email at: [sealynn@hotmail.com](mailto:sealynn@hotmail.com).

## PROJECTS AND PLANS

The Banner project is continuing, and will usually be an activity at the Shire Craft meetings.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## FEBRUARY OFFICER REPORTS

**Seneschal:** (Lord Ryan) Reported on the wall project for the Shire encampment. He and other Shire members have pictures encampment walls for sharing and research. Painted canvas is a possibility and we discussed various methods of

attachment. Lady Jane and Lord Gregor will help Lord Ryan with design and engineering ideas to present at the next one or two Shire meetings. Input from all Shire members is very welcome.

Congratulations to Lady Jane who was

elected new Seneschal, and will assume office at Shire Anniversary. Officer warrants, cards, etc. will be due at that same time.

**Art & Science:** (Lady Blase) New banners are our ongoing project. Goal:

*(Report, Continued on page 3)*

## Announcement: You Could be Famous!

by MISTRESS Tonwen ferch Gruffudd Aur, OL



If you have an area of interest that you are passionate about and have a flair for writing, you could be exactly who we're looking for! The editorship of the *Compleat Anachronist (CA)* is changing hands, and we're actively recruiting contributing writers, reviewers, and illustrators.

The *Compleat Anachronist* is published quarterly and is dedicated to in-depth exploration of specific topics of medieval life. It is available by subscription to members of the SCA, or can be purchased through the SCA marketplace.

- **Prospective Writers:** You are invited to send manuscript proposals to the new editor. Proposals may be as short as a few paragraphs that describe your ideas for a manuscript, or as involved as a complete draft of a manuscript. Prospective writers should consider topics that can reasonably fill 40-50 pages of 10 point font text, including illustrations.
- **Reviewers:** Assist the editor in review-

ing manuscripts. Reviewers may recommend changes, deletions, or additions to what the writer has presented, and help the editor check resources and references. We do the best we can to use reviewers whose interests are similar to the topic of the manuscript they are reviewing, so the more reviewers we have, the better.

- **Illustrators:** We're looking into the feasibility of using photographs in the *CA*. However, there may be times that the author of a manuscript is unable or chooses not to use photographs. Illustrators are needed to help authors produce line drawing and other artwork for their manuscripts.

If you are interested in taking part in some exciting changes planned for the *CA*, please contact the new editor:

Rae Hadley

Tonwen ferch Gruffudd Aur

[houndofzeus@pacbell.net](mailto:houndofzeus@pacbell.net) (until the *CA* editor e-mail address is transferred)

In service,

Tonwen ferch Gruffudd Aur, OL

## A Very Large Huzzah

by THL Teka

I wanted to give a big Huzzah to all of those who braved the trip to Florence to attend Estrella War. We had a large showing, I was very proud of our shire.

Those that attended were Lady Blaise, Lord Ryan, Lillian (Lindsay), Jarred Waterford, John Cochran, Lady Magdalen, Lord Davi, Sir Killian, Lady Jade (Alexis), Lord Logan, and of course

me.

There were five of us that took the field, It was Jared's first time. He made us all proud with his determination to keep trying. I just wanted to say "Good show Al-Sahid!." Even

His Majesty noticed.

In service,

THL Teka

*(Officers' Reports, cont. from page 1)*

by Highland War, everyone with a device will have a banner to fly.

Other suggestions for upcoming craft meetings— along with the Shire members and guests to teach them — included inkle loom, brewing, performance and persona, SCA geography, leatherwork, drumming, and dancing.

**Chatelaine:** (Lady Marina) Former Shire members have returned and we are happy to welcome them. Lord Gregor reported on printing costs for business cards, and Jared offered to design them. Lord Gregor agreed to step up to the office as Lady Marina is taking on Children's.

**Chronicler:** (THL Caitlin) As always, needs submissions! Also consider submitting to *Ars Caidis*.

**Constable:** (Lord Davi) Not present.

**Exchequer:** (Lady Magdalen) Not present, sent previous report and balance to Lord Ryan.

**Herald:** (Lord Martin) Not present. Lord Ryan will make a quest to Big Bear to pick up the heraldic research library and bring it back to a more central location. William is interested in being a herald in training, Lord Ryan is interested in taking on Shire Herald again once he steps down as Seneschal, and THL Caitlin is interested in court and field heralding.

**Lists:** (THL Teka) Not present. Nothing to report.

**Marshal:** (Lord Fritz) Sir Drogo

will be stepping down as Earl Marshal and Countess Sir Kolfinna will be stepping up. Lord Ryan is almost done with the thrown weapons handbook draft.

**Children's:** (Lady Jane) Supplies have been inventoried and she will transfer them to Lady Marina for the upcoming change of office.

**Presentations:** Lady Blase and Lord Ryan will be attending Starkhafn Anniversary and will do a presentation to the new Baron and Baroness and to Their Majesties.

**Chirurgion:** (Lady Blase) Ordered emblems to mark Chirurgion and Waterbearer supplies and baldrics. Lady Blase will make two baldrics, one for her office and one for the Waterbearer's office. Jared expressed interest in volunteering.

**Webwright:** Not present, turned in report to Seneschal. The move to kingdom servers is happening. We talked about putting pictures online. We have them but must get permissions.

#### Out Business:

Anniversary: March 31 is in February CP. THL Caitlin will help Lord Fritz as needed with the bardic contest and other performances as he needs to be free to marshal the field. Caitlin and Miranda plan on doing a bardic presentation for Her Majesty and Caitlin will handle sign-ups and moderation for the bardic competition. Caitlin will court herald, and will go over the order of ceremony with Lord Ryan beforehand.

*(Continued on page 4)*



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(Continued from page 3)

The Shire decided to have a local Middle Eastern restaurant prepare the Persian feast for Her Majesty, landed Barons and Baronesses, and guests. Planning on seating 12, and Lady Blase and Lord Ryan will provide a beautiful table. THL Caitlin will write an invitation letter for the Queen and the Barons to get a final head count. The feast will be held in the Dragonwing and other Shire pavilions will be set up nearby for our use.

Insurance and Porta Potties have been taken care of. Baron and Baroness of Dun Or have kindly agreed to run the Rapier competition for us.

Lady Marina will price engraved cups for prizes at Things Remembered.

On a final note, Lady Jane announced that she is seeking mercenaries to assassinate Lord Ryan at Anniversary. Ryan protested, "This is supposed to be covert!" At which Jane replied, "There is nothing covert about me!"

**Highland War:** Lord Ryan accepted the position as autocrat as long as he had deputies. Lady Marina and Lord Fritz volunteered.

**Pop-ups:** Lord Gregor shared research on the new pop-ups. We discussed several possibilities, and decided to get quotes on four blue and gold, 10x10 pop-ups with scallops from EZ-Ups.

*new business*

**Medallions:** Lady Blase brought up ideas about medallions, baldrics, sashes, and the like as identification for Shire officers. Blase will look into the possibility and report.

*April Craft & Shire Meeting*

April's Craft and Shire meeting will be held at Lady Shehira's in Lucerne Valley. Next month's *Scorpion Tales* will have a map and directions. THL Caitlin will lead a workshop on Persona.

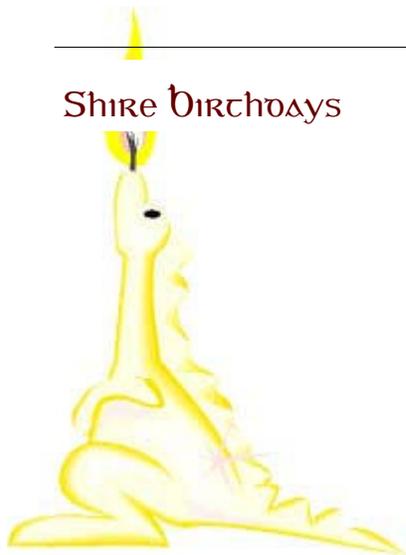


Shire Birthdays

February

- Lord Davi d'Orleans 3/6
- Thomas the Potter 3/7
- William the Bloody 3/22
- Lady Shehira of Alexandria 3/23

Happy Birthdays!!



## PERSONA PLAY: A SUGGESTION FOR THE SAKE OF THE DREAM

by *ThL Caidin* CHRISTIANA  
WINTOUR

*(Editor's note: reprinted from Ars Caidis)*

How can we share a Dream if we are merely modern people dressing up, no matter how skilled and scholarly we may be? Why then must it be so difficult to stay in persona in the SCA? Surely playing a consistent persona is one of our best ways to promote the Dream. Still, the SCA is not known as a persona-friendly playground.

I am going to suggest why this is, as well as some ways to bring persona back into our everyday Society events and pursuits. At first I referred to this process as "persona work," then I realized that it is rather "persona play." Persona play is the act of staying true to your persona's way of looking at the world and expressing that view in your speech and manner.

### What Is Missing?

Persona play is largely missing throughout the Society. The majority of SCA members are 21<sup>st</sup> century people who are interested in recreating some aspect of the past, whether fighting, arts and sciences, service, or whatever their interest might be. There is nothing wrong with this: from this group come our best scholars and artisans. But these people are first and foremost modern people with a shared interest. Beyond possibly creating a back story for themselves, they do not act any differently in the SCA than they do in any other part of their lives.

Then there are people who are attracted to persona play as a means of recreating the Dream. Duke Cariadoc refers to this as a "joint fantasy," where SCA members come together and pretend to be their personas: people who lived in a far distant

*(Continued on page 6)*

*"What's in a name? That which we call a rose*

*By any other word would smell as sweet."*

*--From Romeo and Juliet (II, ii, 1-2)*

## ARS CAIDIS

by *ThL Caidin*

The new *Ars Caidis* is out! This issue is "Persona," and is \$5. I sold out at Festival of the Rose but am printing and binding more, and will have them with me or the next Shire meeting. I also have earlier copies available at \$3 apiece.

You too can contribute to *AC*. I'm going to be keeping the themed issues but also using articles on other subjects, so if have or can write an article on an arts or sciences theme, I would love to have it. I also publish period style poetry. Upcoming themes include Scribal Arts for this spring, Performance Art for summer, Ghost Stories for fall (my favorite!) and Weapons for winter. And remember, I do accept articles on other subjects!

*(Around the Shire, Continued from page 1)*

The Shire Persona Project is online at:

[www.ctaylor-co.com/SCA/Home.htm](http://www.ctaylor-co.com/SCA/Home.htm).

THL Caitlin is collecting the persona write-ups of Shire members for posting online (with permission, of course). At the Persona workshop in April, Shire members will have the chance to begin to, or to further develop, their personas. There is also a questionnaire online to help you develop your persona on your own, but Caitlin loves this stuff and is always happy to help! She can be reached at [christine@ctaylor-co.com](mailto:christine@ctaylor-co.com).

"Justice is the constant and perpetual wish to render every one his due."

-- Emperor Justinian in *Institutes*

#### News Around the Shire

- Holly and Nathan are getting married April 14! The Shire is invited, please wear your best garb for the occasion.
- Congratulations to THL Teka, who was awarded the Corde de Guerre of Caid! Given to fighters who have distinguished themselves in war, Teka's deadly archery carried the day.
- To all Shire members: Please send me your good news — awards, accomplishments, wedding dates... and let your friends celebrate with you.

*(Continued from page 5)*

time. This is not to say that persona players look any better than anyone else. Indeed, their interest may not lie in accurate garb or period fighting techniques. Instead these people try to stay in persona as they understand it and avoid mundane topics of conversation. I maintain that it is these people who are more likely to dream the Dream that the Society is at its best, and who have the capacity to pull in others with them.

In reality, these two groups are not perfectly distinct. The modern member usually does his or her best to stay in persona when called up in Court. (Or if they are Royals, when they are holding Court.) And the persona player cannot always stay in persona even at events – if nothing else, walking into the Gump at a war precludes that. But there is still a distinction.

The persona play approach is challenging in the face of widespread uncertainty and indifference. People do not mean to be unkind but they often do not know how to do it, and do not know how to respond to it. For example, I will often hold out my hand to a man in greeting. Many times the man knows what to do – take it and kiss it – but just as often a man will shake it!

Another challenge is no one's fault -- the SCA does not have a clear-cut time and place as a common area for persona players, but spans centuries and continents in scope. This does make personal interaction more complex than say, at Renaissance Faires where everyone is in the same time period. Still, we lose the Dream entirely every time we merely dress up, go to an event, and talk about computer games.

"I find it unfortunate that this view of the Society seems to have become rarer and rarer over the

*(Continued on page 8)*

## William's Sate

### Your Eye on the SCA

By William the Bloody

Hail populous of the Shire, hail!

William The Bloody here again in yet another attempt to hog up as much of this wonderful newsletter I can. This time I share with you an ongoing project to aid newcomers or really just about anyone with a question. I will provide information in general about the SCA and plenty of resources on the web and sometimes throw out a handy little how-to. If anyone wishes to see a particular topic tackled or you just have something you would like to comment on, please feel free to email me: [bladealchemist@earthlink.net](mailto:bladealchemist@earthlink.net)

Cheers,

William the Bloody

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**Where are we?** We are in the Shire of al-Sahid in the Kingdom of Caid of course! Some quick facts; did you know that Kingdom of Caid has 36 local groups, and was founded in A.S.XIII (1978)?! This puts us among the oldest Kingdoms in the society, Huzzah! For more information on our Kingdom and others, there is a handy map/guide to the knowne world, visit here.

<http://misfit-robots.com/sca/map/index.html>

**What is the SCA?** Well honestly we don't have the space for that, but if you are already reading this then I suppose you have a pretty good idea what it is. However there is a summary article, which can sum up some of the basic concepts of the SCA and should be read by anyone interested in the SCA and would like to know just who we are and what we do. For a basic history and overview please visit this site:

<http://www.sca.org/sca-intro.html>

**Why is he called William the Bloody?!** Well to be honest my parents almost named me Liam, but that is a whole different story. In the SCA one of the things you do is research a name and develop a persona. I wont touch too much on personas right now as I believe it will be featured in the newsletter by someone else and quite frankly if you swing over to the shire's web page and follow it to THL Caitlin's site, it's all the persona help you will ever need. For a crash course in names and what the mean to you, please follow the below listed links.

<http://www.sca.org/heraldry/laurel/whatis/name.html>

This one includes addition resources and further information on the topic:

<http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/dietmar/hints.html>

And of course, the name archive:

<http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/>

**What about my children?!** Whoa take it easy medieval soccer moms and dads, I have stuff for you too! Here are some helpful links about how your teen or child fit into the family friendly SCA.

Guide for parents and teens:

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chatelaine/SCATeens.pdf>

Children's homepage:

<http://www.sca-caid.org/children/index.html>

years, to the point that many members have not so much rejected as never considered it-and to the point where there are almost no events at which there is any serious attempt to maintain the illusion, save by a few scattered individuals.”

-- Duke Cariadoc of the Bow

According to His Grace, there are two primary reasons why this has happened: staying in persona requires continuing effort, and staying in persona is swimming against a very strong tide.

1. **Staying in persona requires a continuing effort.** The initial effort is very real, although it becomes much easier and far more natural after one has done it consistently for a time. But at the beginning the prospect can be daunting. It is especially difficult if the people around you do not know how to respond in kind, or are even actively trying to keep you from staying in persona.
2. **Staying in persona is swimming against the tide.** It is perfectly acceptable in most times and places in the SCA to talk about anything and everything mundane. To attempt anything else can be aberrant. This means that people carrying on mundane conversations at an event can talk in perfect union with the vast majority of other SCA members. But the small group of people doing persona play can only talk to each other, or risk being brought sharply back to the mundane world. (Not to mention getting strange looks.)

“Can and should anything be done to alter the direction in which the Society has drifted? Whether you believe it should be changed depends on whether you agree with me about what the Society should be. If you do, there remains the question of whether and how a change might be made. My own opinion is that the only way is for a substantial number of people to discover that staying in persona, making events real, is simply more fun than the alternative. It is difficult for a single individual to either stay in persona or show others what a real event could be. Perhaps a group of friends, a household or something similar, could make a deliberate effort to come to events in persona, support each other in their roles, and gradually ease the people

around them into doing the same. Perhaps a small group, a new shire, could decide to make its own events as real as possible, and gradually spread the idea through the kingdom. Perhaps at some mass event such as the Pennsic War a group of true believers could fence in a patch of enchanted ground for their encampment and let it be known that whoever came inside was undertaking to join them while he remained. Perhaps the idea would spread. Perhaps.”

-- Duke Cariadoc of the Bow in Dying Dream

### How to Do Persona Play

Please note that I am not a fanatical persona player -- even though I love persona play, I do not try to maintain it throughout all hours of an event. There are simply times when it is not appropriate, and other times that no one knows how to respond and you are left talking to yourself. I am also not holding myself up as a shining example, since without other persona players to play off of I rarely do it myself. My SCA New Year's resolution is to change that. (I also resolve to actually sleep the night before Pentathlon. This is probably a foolish resolution.)

If you are intrigued by the idea of persona play but are not sure where to start, here are some suggestions.

- *Enchanted Ground.* The concept is from Duke Cariadoc's brilliant notion of a persona area, Enchanted Ground at Pennsic. An Enchanted Ground encampment is a protected persona-play area. People are free to come and go at will so it serves both those who like their persona play in small doses as well as those who can keep it up all day. The more period the physical surroundings, the easier this will be.

Since other people will not be able to read your mind, you must physically separate your area while announcing that it is an Enchanted Ground for persona play. His Grace puts his Enchanted Ground encampment in an accessible area and holds a bardic circle most evenings. He cordons it off with a sign announcing what Enchanted Ground is, and people are free to enter as long as they stay in persona. If anyone in the encampment needs to discuss something modern, they exit the area. This is not as difficult as it seems: Faire actors are used to staying in persona on the streets, and ducking back-stage as needed!

The campsite should be reasonably period-looking, as it's challenging enough to stay in persona without staring at your nylon pup tent. The same thing can be done at an day events with your sunshade or pavilion, although an Enchanted Ground at these events will likely be less formal.

- *Group Persona Play.* This is best done with a household or a group of people who agree to do persona play together. This group generates its own persona play without noticing mundane conversations around it. This need not be – indeed, should not be – viewed as a rejection or exclusion, but rather a certain way of interacting that supports the Dream. If a household, they might choose to make their encampment/pavilion an Enchanted Ground, or may make their persona play more informal.

Individual group members can easily go in and out of persona with other people not in the group, and can talk about mundane topics with other individuals as needed. They can then quickly switch back to persona play with fellow group members. Such a group can choose to be strict or more relaxed about their persona play among themselves.

- *Persona Competitions.* Persona performance can be anything from a judged persona competition, to writing articles in persona, to performing bardic as your persona, and to participating in persona-based competitions such as Persona Pentathlons.

Judged persona competitions can be found at events and at Caid's Pentathlon. They are not precisely what I mean as persona play because they concentrate on knowledge of your persona's history and geography, but they're fun and are a great way to develop a back story that makes sense. (I am personally prejudiced against ridiculous back stories.)

- *Writing articles in persona.* This means sharing your knowledge in an article or class as if your persona were writing or speaking. Naturally you should write using your persona's point-of-view – which can be an interesting exercise if it is different from your

own! Lord Ulrich made a habit of this with several excellent articles he submitted to the newsletter, and I would love to see more of it.

- *Performing as your persona:* Performing the bardic arts as your persona adds an extra dimension to your performance. The audience may or may not know you are doing it, but I believe that a persona dimension adds depth to a performance. This need not mean that you have to stick with your persona's contemporary works, but that there is a reason that your persona would know them. For example, my 16th century Englishwoman spends some time in Venice. Following the Battle of Lepanto, a number of Turkish religious writings and poems entered Venetian literary society. And this, good gentles, is why my persona knows Rumi. Of course, one can always argue that your persona can have learned pieces from all over the Known World. There is nothing wrong with this: we play in the SCA and not in a recreated Renaissance England or Court of Burgundy.
- *Persona Pentathlon/Presentation:* I do not know how possible a competition would be to do on a kingdom scale given our existing Pentathlons. (I love Pentathlon, don't change a thing.) But a war, or a Shire or Barony might want to adopt the idea for an A&S Persona Pentathlon. For example, a late 15th century gentlewoman from England might draw entries exclusively from her persona's given location and time period. She might enter a Burgundian gown, a hennin, a poem written in the style of her times, a dessert from 15th century English recipes, and a jewelry box painted with period designs from the same time period and location. Of course, for the next Persona Pentathlon the same person might decide to enter as a Norman or a Viking. As long as all of her entries were consistent to the chosen time and place, she is perfectly within the rules.

There are many more ways to do persona play in the SCA. I believe that persona play is one of the quickest and most rewarding ways to transport yourself and others into the Dream that we share. Such a gift given to yourself and to others is a great gift indeed.