

## Shire of Al-Sahid Newsletter

## Scorpion Tales



## Around the Shire

## November Shire Meeting and Craft Day

This month's Shire and Craft meeting will be Nov. 25 at Lady Magdi's and Randy's. The Craft meeting will be how to make Yule Logs and will start at noon with the Shire meeting starting at 3pm. The meetings are in garb.



## Fighter Practice

Fighter Practices have officially changed to Sundays at noon at Sir Killian's and

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## October Officer Reports



**Seneschal:** Working on the Shire address list and Shire Armorage. Lady Blase and she plan to check out sites for Coronation in Fall 2009.

**Arts & Sciences:** Lady Blase taught a Mead workshop for October Crafts. It will be ready for tasting by Yule 2008. It's hard to wait! The November Craft

meeting will be at Lady Magdi's to make Yule logs. THL Caitlin will take the office this January is planning Persona Tea for that

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THL Teka's. For information please email Sir Killian at [kiltek@earthlink.net](mailto:kiltek@earthlink.net).

## Projects

- Kingdom walls to be planned, we need samples of colors
- Need to make Shire inventory for kingdom by the Domesday report for Exchequer and seneschal.

## Upcoming Kingdom Events and Anniversaries

- 11/10-11 Coronation and Queen's Champion (Calafia)
- 11/17-18 Frost Dragon Tourney & Archery (Naevehjem)
- 11/24 Heatherwyne Medieval Marketplace

## Happenings Around the Shire

- *Ars Caidis* is out! You can pick up your own copy of *Heraldry and the Scribal Arts* at Coronation. THL Caitlin will also have copies with her at the Shire meeting. She will also have copies of some back issues including the *Persona* issue.

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

By any other name would smell as sweet."

— Shakespeare

(July Officer reports, Continued from page 1)

month's Crafts day. She would like to get a list of teachers for next year.

**Castellan:** Two new members were at the Shire meeting and are most welcome. A guest who saw us at the Hesperia Demo joined us at Dreibergen Anniversary.

**Chronicler:** Submissions needed!

**Constable:** Nothing to report.

**Exchequer:** Not present, needs receipts from War to finish 3 quarter report.

**List:** Not present.

**Marshal:** Looking for a deputy marshal. There is a new policy: any problems on the field during a tourney will be reported on the back of herald's list card.

**Children's:** Has an idea for drumming for children, she will look into prices and get back to us.

**Presentations:** Presentations are needed for Queens Champion and Frost Dragon.

**Chirurgion:** Nothing to report.

**Herald:** There are 8 submissions for the College of Herald's. THL Ryan plans to go in November

**Webwright:** Not present.

*We encourage all Shire members to attend Shire meetings whenever possible. Please come in garb.*

## Recipe Corner: A Salad of Watercress and Violets



The printed recipe was found in *The Accomplisht Cook* in 1660 making it somewhat out of our period. But not too much and it's a lovely, pretty recipe. The modernization was redacted by Ken Withers.

### Traditional

Watercress being finely picked, washed, and laid in the dish with violets ... serve it with good oyl and vinegar and scrape on sugar.

### The Modern Version

1/2 cup fragrant violets (*viola odorata*), be sure they haven't been sprayed with insecticide.

2 bunches watercress

3 Tbsp white wine vinegar

4 Tbsp olive oil

1/4 tsp salt

1 tsp brown sugar

Rinse the flowers gently in a bowl of cold water and pat dry. Remove the stems and refrigerate the flowers until needed. Wash the watercress and remove the coarse stems. Wrap in a towel and refrigerate until ready to assemble the salad.

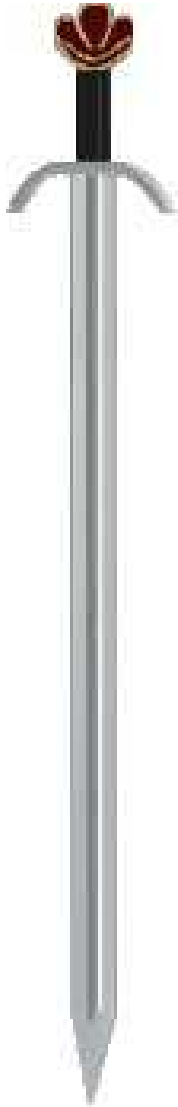
Mix the oil, vinegar, salt, and sugar until blended. In a salad bowl, add the dressing to the watercress and toss until coated. Add the violets and toss gently to distribute them throughout the salad.



## Seneschal's Corner



Lady Jane de Sealynn



With the year fast approaching its end, I want to say thank you to everyone. You have supported me through my beginnings as seneschal. I plan to do better next year. Please everyone come to our Yule party and celebrate the year past and to year coming.

I am looking for autocrats for next year, please step forward and enjoy the joy of autocrating.

Jane

*"To sleep, perchance to dream-  
ay, there's the rub."*

*— Shakespeare, Hamlet*

## Autumn Moons and Holidays



by THL Johnnac Ilyn Lewis

Calendar customs are the date-based traditions and customs associated with seasons, holidays, and days of the year. For those that have grown up with official holidays being created or moved in order to provide Mondays off, it may seem odd to read of days honoring saints martyred in far off places in the third century and realize that these days were kept "holy", hence holidays, in places thousands of miles and centuries removed in time. Calendar customs were a very real part of the Medieval and Renaissance Ages, and as such deserve study in these 'Current Middle Ages' as practiced within the Society.

Autumn arrived just past 6 PM (Eastern time) on September 22nd this year. Today we associate the season with the start of school and the academic year. Football reappears on Friday nights, and Saturdays are college game days. Days eventually grow colder, leaves change color and fall, and it grows dark ever earlier. In medieval times, autumn was the season of harvest and slaughter. There was both a Harvest Moon and a Hunter's Moon in the fall. In 2005, September 17th was the Full Harvest Moon. The full Hunter's Moon is October 17th. The Harvest Moon provided light for the harvest to continue late into the evening. The Hunter's Moon provided light for hunting. The Tudor agrarian writer Thomas Tusser urged caution about lending farm tools in September. It was a month for keeping corn (grain) from the crow, fencing, mending, and trenching. He also offered advice on gathering fruits without bruising so as to prevent rotting later, the care of hives and bees, and the inventorying of farm animals and tools.

Among the first important holidays of Autumn is that of Michaelmas. The feast of St. Michael the

Archangel or Michaelmas on September 29th was a major holiday in a number of countries. (It's still celebrated throughout Europe as a harvest or wine festival in many places.) In England this was a Quarter Day or one of the four dates in which rents might be due. It was also a traditional date for fairs, especially hiring fairs where new servants and agrarian workers might be hired. Live-stock might be sold at this time, as farmers decreased the number of animals that would need feeding over the winter. Geese fattened on stubble might also be sold at the Michaelmas fairs. Foodwise, this was also a day for eating a goose, and it was said those that ate goose on Michaelmas Day would never lack for money during the rest of the year. The association that Elizabeth I was eating a goose on Michaelmas Day in 1588 when word was received that the Spanish Armada had been defeated is legendary, of course as the Armada was defeated in August and not late September. The story is repeated in numerous places, however, in association with the holiday.

For the Anglo-Saxons, the month of October was Wynmonath or "wine month". In October, Thomas Tusser recommended that the 'barley-land be looked over and attended to, that white wheat be sown among the pease-etch, that acorns be gathered, and in general that all matters of tillage be considered.

Among the important and remembered feast days in October comes that of October

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25th.

*This day is call'd the feast of Crispian. He that  
outlives this day, and comes safe home, Will stand a  
tip-toe when this day is nam'd, And rouse him at  
the name of Crispian.*

*And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by, From this  
day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be  
remember'd; We few, we happy few, we band of broth-  
ers;*

— William Shakespeare. Henry V

Saints Crispin and Crispinian were martyred on October 25th in 285 or 286. On this day in 1415, Henry V defeated the French at Agincourt, hence Shakespeare's famous speech.

The 31st of October is of course now celebrated as Halloween. Folklorist Steve Roud characterizes it as "the most misrepresented and misunderstood festival in the traditional calendar." October 31st was once the eve of Samhain in Celtic Ireland and Scotland. Some historians and folklorists argue that it was never connected with the dead in pre-Christian times. Others argue that it was always a night of divination, magic, fairies and ghosts when the veil between the dead and living was lifted. Under the Catholic Church the night became All Hallows' Eve or Allhallows' Eve or Hallowtide, leading up to November's Feasts of All Saints and All Souls. It's hard now to separate the very old customs from the 19th century Victorian, the 20th century American or the Neo-Pagan elements that now distinguish the holiday. Certainly Halloween today now mixes Hollywood with traditions like trick or treating, elaborate costumes, games, bonfires, ghost stories, etc. The sources below offer more information for those wanting to delve more deeply into the holiday and its traditions.

Lest we think that ghosts and hauntings weren't of concern in past times, one may look to a work by Ludwig Lavater (1527-1586): Of ghostes and spirites walking by nyght and of strange noyses, crackes, and sundry forewarnynges, whiche commonly happen before the death of menne, great slaughters." It was translated into English by R.H. and published in 1572.

The Venerable Bede noted that November was known as Blod-monath or blood month, reflecting that it was the time of slaughter. "At Hallontide, slaughter time entereth in and then the husbandmans feasting begin:" wrote Thomas Tusser. Other agrarian activities for November included droving cattle for sale, threshing barley and wheat, setting garlic and peas, chimney cleaning, and privie cleaning. Then around Martinmas came the slaughter of hogs and cattle, especially the hanging of a beef to be eaten at Easter in the coming year.

The first of November's is the Feast of All Saints, (All Hallows or Hallowtide). It was instituted to honor all the saints, known and unknown. So many early martyrs died during the persecutions of the Emperor Diocletian, that separate feast days could not be dedicated to each. As early as the 5th century the holiday was celebrated on the Friday after Easter. In the 7th century Pope Gregory III dedicated the Pantheon in Rome and set the date as that of November 1st ; then in the 9th century Gregory IV extended the celebration to the entire church. All Saints is followed by All Souls' Day on November 2nd. All Souls' commemorates all the faithful departed. It is at this time that the faithful on earth may help the recently departed dead in purgatory through their prayers and by attending mass. It dates to 998. In Latin America and most especially Mexico these days today make up Los Dias de Los Muertos or the Days of the Dead which is celebrated with ceremony, reverence, and molded sugar skulls.

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The other major feast of November is that of Martinmas on November the 11th. St Martin of Tours (c316-397) was a hugely popular medieval saint. At Amiens, he clothed a poor beggar with half of his own cloak. A dream that night revealed that he had clothed Christ. He went on to become Bishop of the Church of Tours. Martinmas was an important date in the traditional calendar. It marked a date when rents might be due, and in Scotland, it was a quarter day. It could also again be a time of hiring faires when servants sought new positions. Given that this was the season of slaughtering cattle and pigs, Martinmas was often a day given to festive eating and drinking. It was considered unlucky in fact in Ireland and Scotland not to slaughter some beast or fowl on Martinmas with the flesh then being eaten by all in the household. Should the weather be mild and sunny, it was known as St. Martin's summer (rather like our Indian Summer), but all the time it was with the knowledge that "At Saint Martin's Day, winter is on his way".

This concludes our short examination of the holidays of late September, October, and November.

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For more information on these months, please see Johnnae's columns in The Pale.

Contributed by THL Johnnae llyn Lewis, CE.



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*THL Caitlin singing at 12th night*



*Queen Ithuna and Lord Davi*



*Their Majesties and Lord Gregory*

