

# Raven's Herald

Vol. 14 Number 5

*Habita Diem Gravis*

April 601

## First Gathering of Ravenholt's Spring Season Delayed

Due to the unexpectedly long winter and heavy snows in the areas around Ravenholt, His Grace Duke Roderick has declared that the first Gathering of the Spring season be moved to the week end of April 27. While weather reports from our local weather workers expressed that the days would be warm, the vast quantities

of snow and ice in surrounding areas have not dissipated sufficiently. Said one of the more experienced weather workers, "It shows all the signs of early Spring, warm days (though not as warm as I had hoped) and cold nights.... It may rain on Saturday." In spite of the spring-like predictions, it was later agreed by all that, given

the large numbers of visitors and merchants expected to attend from other lands, it would be safer to postpone the gathering so that all could arrive safely. Numerous caravans have reportedly been stranded due to area flooding by Lake Ardynn.

## Research into Changing Magicks Ongoing

Guildmistress Keylandra Dirath of the Ravenholt Mage's Guild has been commissioned to survey the borders of Ravenholt as part of an ongoing research project to determine changes to the Magicks in these lands. With recent changes to the bone structure commonly known as the Necropolis, and with subsequent enhancements to various magical spells, she is investigating if there is any causal relationship between these and other incidents around Ravenholt. She will be traveling

extensively and may need to report findings to Lake Hollym. It is uncertain whether she will return in time for the newly rescheduled gathering. Guildmistress Keyla reports that she has every confidence that Assistant Guildmistress Dame Quin Tarmiger and Viscount T.F. Arcevol, who is expected to visit during the gathering, will be able to handle all guild business. Any information or theories about these changes can be brought to the Mage's Guild.

## Spring Brings Strange Rustlings to the Woods

Sounds we have not heard over the harsh cold months are now beginning to recur around our beautiful Ravenholt borders. The gentle rustles of branches as creatures move their way back to their spring-time habitats from winter burrows makes for a soothing accompaniment to the ever-gentling temperatures. The mellow songs of early spring birds are delightful counterpoints to ever-increasing glimpses of shapes as they move through the woods and a bevy of tracks show up in the few-remaining drifts of snow and tracts of mud.

## Farming Family Found Dead

Shortly after the thaw, it was discovered that some time during these past hard winter months, four local Ravenholt siblings were found murdered on their farm off Market Road. Corporal Winter of the Town Guard was led to the scene during the early Spring patrols, after being met on the road by a local seer, Zea Shehrevar, in near hysterics, ranting about murder and mayhem. Apparently, a strong vision had come to her of "...great turmoil and attack, leading to death!" She stated that the vision was obscured by some unknown force, so she cannot know who the murderer or murderers might be.

Corporal Winter reported that the bod-

ies were found in positions that indicated apparent violent attack. After some discussion with area residents, it was determined that this family has been living in semi-solitude, attempting to farm some rough ground, for nearly a year. Few residents remember speaking with any of the family members, but it is believed that the family name is Albin. No motive has been determined at this time, although from the condition of the scene, it is believed by some to have been a robbery gone horribly wrong. Any information regarding these deaths should be directed to local authorities or to this paper.

## Mysterious River Sightings

By Jace Zagrius

Several local townsfolk have spoken to this intrepid Raven's Herald reporter. After the recent high waters and extremely high river levels, there have been many reported sightings of indistinct figures seen in and around the waters. One of the sightings inspired a search party as young women were apparently swept away into the rushing water and not seen to resurface. It is unknown if the insubstantial figures about the shore are in any way connected to the women who have gone missing. No further information has been gathered regarding these people.



# News from Around Tyrra

## From Elysia...

- ☞ Baron Scarred of Adron, Elysia, is missing and presumed dead.
- ☞ Justinian Malacar has been named Baron of Adron.
- ☞ The Evermore barbarian clan has been exiled from Elysia.
- ☞ Duchess Elcybeth has re-acknowledged her adopted son, who was estranged after casting necromancy.

## From Neridia...

- ☞ The Neridian Heart, an heirloom of King Nerid Valerton I, was returned to King Justin Clairborne V's possession late this month by the Grand Duke of Versante.
- ☞ Court of Eastwyck awarded Hero's Circler by Lady Leilah Clairborne for valiantly combatting creatures known as "Strange Ones."
- ☞ Serial Killer known only as "Jack" kills 219th victim.
- ☞ Queen Niomi Avendale appoints Shaidu garrison member, Kevin Durath, to act as Ambassador to Neridia.

## Mystic Wood Elf Elder Murdered

The Raven's Herald has received word that a prominent Elder of the Mystic Wood Elves was senselessly murdered last week, within the confines of the Wood itself. Eyewitness reports were not available at press time, but messengers state that the Daemone Clan Elder known commonly as Solstice was slaughtered by what appeared to be an exact twin or copy of himself.

According to reports, Solstice was apparently taking some time in meditation when he was attacked - his shouts and the sound of fighting attracted the attention of others, but they arrived too late to aid him. When allies arrived on the scene, they were shocked to find Solstice's bloodied body being abused and defiled by what appeared to be his exact twin, who was described as "raving" and "incoherent." This being had cast a Circle of Power around Solstice's form, and continued to batter his inert corpse until the Circle dropped.

The being was immediately captured, and tried, when it was discovered that Solstice had suffered his Final Death at the hands of this person or being, he was Obliterated. Whatever or whomever this creature was, it too suffered its Final Death. Solstice's family reports that a small private ceremony was performed April 4, 601 to lay him to rest - those friends or family traveling abroad who wish to pay their respects are urged to travel to the Daemone lands in the Mystic Wood.

Good people,

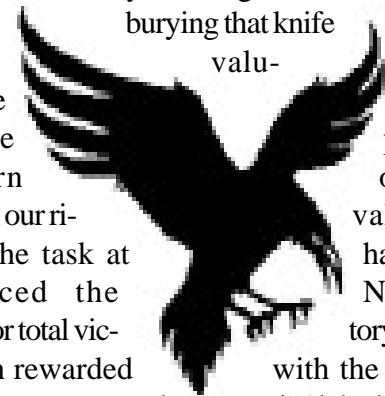
As commander of the Grey Raven I feel it necessary to explain what I am about and what the Grey Raven means to you.

Firstly I wish to clarify my standing and that of the Grey Raven. The Company of the Grey Raven is a part of the Ducal Army of Ravenholt. The Company of the Grey Raven is charged with the duty to advise and support, be it through knowledge, experience, manpower, or equipment all of the citizens of Ravenholt and all of the Noble Courts. We are a resource set in place by His Grace for everyone's benefit in these trying times.

I ask that we all take a moment to reflect upon our actions in this war.

I am not entirely pleased with what I have wrought and I hope others are equally displeased with their own actions. I hope that we all fear as I do the coming battles, and that a divided Ravenholt is sure to fall against the Necropolis.

Too often do I see bared knives between people who must fight side by side against the forces of Chaos. Is burying that knife for personal gain more valuable than the land we live in and the people we protect? We must turn our blades aside from our rivalries and put them to the task at hand. Twice we have faced the Necropolis with a chance for total victory, and twice we have been rewarded with the deaths of our own. If we cannot stand united the land will suffer for our avarice.



I ask anyone who I have slighted or contested with to come to me so we may settle our differences. I humbly apologize to His Grace, the Viscountess and all the Courts of Ravenholt for any actions taken by the Grey Raven that were not in accordance to its mission and standing.

It is the wish of the Viscountess of War and His Grace's that the Grey Raven be the founding stone upon which Ravenholt can stand and face any adversary. I have pledged our abilities and skill to achieving this goal. I ask that you accept our support and allow us to stand with you against the darkness in the battles to come.

Sergeant Archer  
 Commander, Company of the Grey Raven  
 Ducal Army of Ravenholt  
 Long Live His Grace Duke Roderick Ravenhurst

# public notices

S -

So it seems you have finally thrown me off. I escaped from my dungeon, years older (a clever trick on your part), and found out through strangers that it is as if we never were, and that you have returned to your people, to forget me. I knew it would happen eventually, I just wish I had heard it from your lips, and not the careless comments of others. Take this duchy - I will never again bother you here. I have friends elsewhere, and will start over far from you. I owe you something, I think, even if just payment for keeping my secrets. If you should ever need me, send word through the grapevine, I will hear it and come, to stand by your side as I once did.

-E

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Lost: Family dog. Dwarven Shepherd. Tan and Black Coat. 5'4" at shoulder. May bite or cast Necromancy. Named Dioggee. Will come if called. If found, please return to Necropolis.

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Citizens of Ravenholt - Let it be known that I am seeking any of the following, specific ritual components:

Hawk Feathers - Pure Blue Quartz  
Star Sapphire - Wand of Lightning-Struck Oak  
Lesser/Greater Air Elemental Essence  
Ozone from a Fresh Lightning Strike  
Thunder of a Lightning Storm

And, one of any of the following Ritual Scrolls:

Enchant, Elemental Aura, Channel Spell

I must obtain these by the next Storm Season.

May the April Winds Guide your Path,

Curyll Taylor Stormydd

~~Weatherworker of Cumberland~~

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I am looking to update my list of current members of the Ravenholt Mage's Guild. I am looking to get your name and team affiliation as well as any other notable piece of information that you would like me to have. Please stop by and let me know. Thank you for your assistance.

Keyla, Guildmistress, Ravenholt Mage's Guild

To the crew of the Siren's Angst,

Oh how you inspire me as you search for your Woe. It reminds me of hundreds of years ago, before my horns grew in, when I was but a little Bull. When I was young... and stupid. Before I was cursed to walk Tyrra as a monkey. No offense. I know how difficult it was to be so far from the sea, and yet you persevered. I know how difficult it is to be a strange, stranger in a far away land. How tough it is to be yourself.

My Mystic, regardless what anyone says, it okay to be pissy, and my large Dark Elf friend, constant laughter, albeit annoying, works for you, and to my little hobbling... I'm sorry; maybe a race change would make things better.

Just remember, don't give in to your delusions of adequacy, surge above them! In the world there are winners and many losers. Chances are, you're one of them!

Good Luck my "Legitimate Merchant" friends.

Captain Kage Amadeus Minari,

Captain of the Dark Harbinger,

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Leader of the Bloodmoon

I, Janus (pronounced Yanus) Rethleson, son of Rethel Magnus's son, current swordcarl serving with the Barony of Cumberland, have been charged by Valamar, Squire of Cumberland to make a Public Apology for stating that the law which executed Alan Moonwind, Baron Regent of Cumberland was asinine. It is now clear to me that unlike in my homeland, there are "different" customs here in Ravenholt.

So said...I apologize for saying the law is asinine.

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## Man Gone Missing

A local merchant, Walter Twolus, has reported that Jonathan Caruthers, an elderly near-hermit and customer of his, has not been seen during his last two supply runs. While he reports that it is not unusual for Old Man Caruthers to be away, he is concerned since, when he arrived with his latest delivery, the last bundle of provisions had gone untouched. In investigating the Caruthers cabin, he found a layer of dust on everything, and no signs of recent use. Twolus reports, "He was an odd bird - always paid in silver, no matter what the bill, but he was a regular customer. I'm kinda worried." Any information should be directed to the Raven's Herald.

# the signpost

Messages to and from travelers lost at...The Crossroads

April

To Phillip.

Lodar got detained by some Magistrate in Niman. It was something about property rights. He should be out in a month or two.

We lost the trail of the woman named Lilly. We did find a clue about a Sarr woman who was looking for information. She was asking about stories of people being transported to other places, and one of the people she spoke with told us where she might be going.

Apparently there is this town in Ravenholt that people are trapped in by some mists. We are going there to try to catch the Sarr woman. She has a couple of weeks lead time on us, so we are going to take the shortest roads we can. A local guide told us that going through Ashbury would be quickest, so that's what we'll do.

When we have the Sarr, we will send word ahead that we are coming back.

*Orrin*



Looking up at the night sky, I see the moon bright with radiance. The deep forest around me is alive with creatures of the night. I am surrounded by hoots and howls, belonging to creatures I had never seen before I arrived.

I came here to this strange land a few years ago. At first the people who were already here made it sound like I had no chance of surviving if I didn't work non-stop. However, I've come to find that that's not true at all. In fact, this place is beginning to grow on me. Around every corner is another adventure.

What was that? I could have sworn I heard a loud bell. I should get back to town. That bell was sounded for a reason; maybe they need my help. I find the path to town in the dark think forest and begin jogging.

They call it the Crossroads. At least that's what the original townsfolk call it. The people back home will never believe this place. I can't wait to share my tales with them. That is, if I ever do get home...

## From the Desk of Phillip Auberfoyle:

Dear Diary,

The Admiral is convalescing nicely, and I expect more information from him soon. Loder has reported some interesting possibilities, and I've sent him extra funds to hire some help.

I've received reports that some of my correspondence has been copied and reprinted elsewhere. I will have to investigate this to see who is selling me out. Until I have an answer, I will have to use codes and send fewer letters to my benefactor.

I have just received a package from S'Rek, containing drawings of a town that he copied from a person's tattooed forearm. I will be going to the villa to compare this drawing with the ones in the Admiral's secret diary.

ABCA BDBE FGHB IJ FKJL LGIM C EGNGEIBO KGFMI,  
MGFM MJLKE DBI EMCIIBO IMB EGKBNPB JQ NGFMI.  
DJRO QKBEM IMBD AJ OBNA GN IMBGO NRSTBOE CAN SGFMI,  
MCHBNJREUCLE LGIM C MJOOGTKB TGIB.

ORN DB CNAMGAB LMBN DJN ERN GIAJBEEBI.  
TOCHB FCSTKGNF MBOJ MCIM PCEI MGE KCEI TBI.  
NBHBO LBOB TJON NJO OJPVBA GN TCEEGBNI,  
LMGKEI ICVGNF DJRO KGQB FCGGNGNF CRFMI JQ OBFOBI.

Philip,

I went back to that town, bringing along a dozen "friends" in case Lilly did not want to be interviewed by you. When we first arrived, we found nothing alive in the entire area. My first thought was that they had all gone back, even though you said the Admiral told you it was impossible.

Then when we searched the houses, we found that everything valuable and portable was gone as well. We were unable to track them, so I can only assume that they had some sort of warning well in advance of our "visit". Based on our direction of approach, they could only have gone one or two ways out of the mountains.

I am sending one team to Kincora and I'll lead the other team into Evendarr. I do not hold out hope for a capture, so I'll keep my ears open for clues to another possible match.

*Lodar*

# Crossroads Out of Game Information

## Only Two Weeks to Go Until Crossroads Time!

The clock is ticking, counting down the hours until we get to unveil our campaign for you. We have plots thick with intrigue, puzzles, riddles, and mystery. We have foes and allies waiting to meet (or beat) you. Modules, monsters, traps and random encounters abound. This is the chance for you to play that character concept you have been thinking about for a while, and not have to stop playing your primary character to do it. Try a different race, another class, a new philosophy.

People who played our Intro event have a lot to say about The Crossroads:

“Everything was roleplay. From the established groups we had to deal with to the crunchy combat roles, everything had a personality.” - “I had a chance to play a Sarr, without having to stop playing my Ravenholt character.” - “There was fear. Not all of the time, but we had to work hard to succeed, and that made it cool.” - “I am a great and powerful wizard! What? Oh, it’s just you guys. (Grumble, grumble)” - “I love LARPing. Now there’s *another* game I can play!” - “The runebones were great. They gave the game great atmosphere, and trading to get the cool looking ones was the best part of the weekend for me.” - “People got to choose their groups and their leaders. They got to be bad, either a little or a lot.” - “The PC’s all like me, but I’m supposed to be the villain!” - “Does this look done to you?” (Asked of a blind woman by a Sarr who had just ‘cooked’ a FOOD tag) - “Can we go back into game? Please?” (Just before closing ceremonies, which were already running behind...)

The rules addendum may seem intimidating at first, but just remember a couple of things about it. If you’ve played NERO before, the main differences are: Runebones and spell tattoos instead of spellbooks; two-handed weapons (except staff and bow) do a base of 4 points; anyone can construct makeshift weapons which do 1 less point of damage; and, start with 30 Build for each character.

While the Production system is a big part of the campaign addendum, don’t worry about knowing it cold. Your character will be “learning the ropes” while you play, and we are making sure that you *will* be able to play and have fun regardless of your knowledge of this activity. Besides, there is nothing in the rules that requires you to have production skills; for example, one person on your team can be the Herbalist while another concentrates solely on gaining spells. Diversity and flexibility are paramount in our campaign concept. If you’ve never played NERO before, or if you have questions about the production system (or anything else for that matter), we have our staff and NPC’s on hand to help you IG and OOG. You can also email or call with questions before or after events.

We are eager to give you an event to rave about. We just need you to do a couple of things: **Pre-reg, so we can be sure of having the event** (203-426-7729 or [registration@neromass.com](mailto:registration@neromass.com)). Email ([crossroads@neromass.com](mailto:crossroads@neromass.com)) or call (Bob Hawkins at 508-786-0643) to get your character history in and your character built. Tell your friends. Come to The Crossroads and have a great time!

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## Crossroads Variant Reset Playtest

The Crossroads variant campaign is using a special playtest of 6AM Skill Reset. This playtest is being evaluated for use in The Crossroads campaign, only, and may be withdrawn if, after examination, it has a detrimental effect or is found to be unworkable.

The 6AM reset will mean that all character skills that are usable a specific number of times per day, such as Spells, Critical Attacks, Assassinate, Create Scroll, or Alchemy, to name a few, will be “reset” at 6AM instead of at 6PM as is commonly used in NERO.

## What to Think About When NPCing Crossroads

1. Call and register for the event. This will give us the ability to print an appropriate number of Monster Packets. A Monster Packet is a small informational dossier which lists our standard monsters for the weekend (description, nature, background in the campaign, and some small tips for developing our sinister fauna into believable, fun, characters for you to play and enjoy playing).

2. Think of possible characters beforehand. Because we cater to a smaller player base we have the luxury of having a greater number of non-combat roles available. If you develop a character beforehand we will be delighted to tweak our plotlines to fit an existing NPC concept, rather than leaning for the “farmer from outside of town” angle.

3. Bring appropriate costuming. Whatever you think might help.

4. Bring an NPC team. If you have a team from another game, feel free to bring them along. Why practice sparring when you can practice full combat, in a role-playing environment?

5. Write modules. If you feel comfortable with the campaign setting, our monsters, and the atmosphere we’re trying to keep up, and you wish to submit modules, minor string plotlines, or plot lines in general, feel free. Crossroad, like all NERO campaigns, is a collaborative effort. Any and all submissions will be considered.

After you have pre-registered to NPC, then contact us at [crossroads@neromass.com](mailto:crossroads@neromass.com) and our staff will get in touch with you. If you wish to call, dial 508-886-2124 to reach Mike Holdorf. If there is no answer, please leave a message.



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*Crossroads Season Opener - May 4-6th*  
*Dark Legends Season Opener - May 18-20th*  
*Ravenholt Long Weekend - May 25 - 28th*

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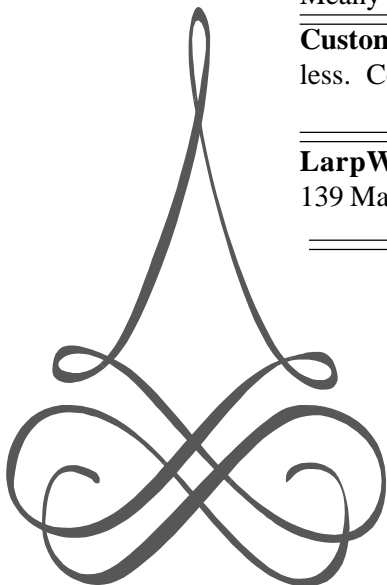
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