

## Ravenholt Teams Take Home Sword of Evendarr

Four forms knelt in the darkness as a fifth walked towards them with a sword outstretched in his hands - An honor to be bestowed upon them that only a few others had earned, and none more deserving. The story of how they won such an honor began three days prior and a thousand miles to the north.

A few men packed themselves into a carriage and rode south to answer their King's call to defend the southern border. Arriving at the gather, held just outside the Dreadlands, an area to the south of the kingdom riddled with chaos, their belongings were unloaded and their legs stretched. A member of the Barony of Westmarch traveling in a different carriage had not arrived. The Westmarch tournament team was therefore short one person. Tyler Blighe of Northguard was called on to replace the missing Grackleflint. The former Grey Ravens, numbering only three now, were without the minimum four required for a tournament team. Seeking out a fourth they met a Dark Elf named Jherek, who agreed to fight alongside our Squires Risadul Hawkwind and Caleb Marduk, and our ducal court healer,

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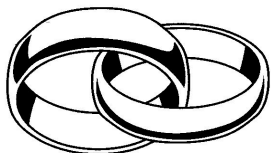
## Evendarrian Land Bonds Threatened

Our recent incursion into the Dreadlands, while dangerous, was not any worse than most adventures. A unique high point, however, was the granting of an audience with His Majesty, King Mykel Endarr II. During our audience, a grave threat came forth, believed to have initiated from His Majesty's earlier trip to the south. An investigation of the King's land bond and of a ring he wore, as well as several others believed to be part of a set, soon revealed a corruption that was starting to overcome those with such bonds.

Not knowing the source, the King's Mages struggled to find a way to prevent the spread of the corruption. After some discussion, a team was sent to try to work with the spirits contained within the rings in order to try to cleanse the corruption. The team was chosen not only for individual strengths and abilities, but because each came from a different region of the kingdom. Ravenholt was represented by Ambassador Shoshoto of the Court of Westmarch.

Once gathered, the team set off to

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## Dark Dangers Threaten Evendarr's Borders

Each year, when the season in Ravenholt is too hot for gathers and newsworthy events seem to lessen, I take my annual vacation to far-off lands. This year, I'd heard King Mykel himself was touring the lower reaches of Evendarr, and there were rumors of a King's Tourney. I figured it was time to head south to see the sights, foolishly thinking I'd actually get away and relax. I was soon to discover that great change was afoot in the kingdom.

When I set out City, I could not the winds would



discovered, the King's Tournament, the first in many years, which was dubbed the "First Avalonian Tourney," was to be held in a newly built keep on the southwestern border of the Kingdom. After getting careful directions and numerous warnings about the dangers of travel should we stray from our path, I cautiously set off. Had anyone warned me that the lands just miles beyond those I was to travel were commonly known as

towards Evendarr have known where take me. As I soon

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## Midsummer's Faire

Due to temporary flooding on the field of the city of Ravenholt earlier this year, the Faire previously scheduled for June, will be held at the August 29<sup>th</sup> gather. As this will allow the Faire to run for two days rather than the expected one, I request that all patrons, entertainers and vendors plan accordingly. Patrons, be sure to bring plenty of gold as well as paper trade money, as this faire will not be held again for at least another year.

There will be merchants from afar as well as entertainment. The Shooting Star Carnival and a gypsy casino will be available. The world famous Goblin Market will be there, as will many other exotic merchants.

The so-called "Green Laws" are to be lifted for the duration of the faire and no violence shall be tolerated against any creature not threatening citizens within the city proper. All weapons are to be peace-bonded within the festival, and gas globes and aura are not to be displayed. The only exceptions will be the guard and the nobles of the ducal household.



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## Plague Has Healers Baffled

The plague previously reported by this newspaper has claimed the lives of eighty people to date, including ten permanent deaths. The town of Mallow has been quarantined to prevent the plague from spreading to outlying towns and villages.

The cause of the plague has yet to be determined, though some speculate that the unusually large rat population may be a factor. Many exhausted relief workers have fallen victim to this malady. Below is a list of persons who have taken permanent death from the plague as well as descriptions of the four bodies still unidentified:

Tyrsia Urmond age 6, daughter of Olaf and Rayna Urmond.

Turgon Oldfield age 94, former blacksmith leaves behind four sons; Sterl age 41, Bruth age 39 and twin sons Medren and Mebron age 37 as well as 40 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Mauria Goldsong, age 29, Spellsinger from Arkham, Eastwyck, family unknown.

Drake Cadwell, Healer, age unknown, origin unknown

Cathie Stephonse age 34, cobbler, daughter of Seth and Christy Stephonse of Malinruin, Eastwyck

Collum McDougle age 53, Alchemist, son of Molly and Robert McDougle of the Highlands.

Unknown deaths:

Elven youth of about 20, shoulder-length blonde hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, perhaps Quentari, Wild or Wood elf, 6 feet tall.

Hobbling woman of about thirty, short, curly red hair, green eyes, pale complexion, 5' 2" tall.

Human woman about 40, short gray hair, dark skin, brown eyes, tattoo of swans on left shoulder, 5' 9" tall.

Human woman of about 50, long black hair shot with gray, dark skin, black eyes, very large build, 6' 5" tall.

If anyone has information that will help in the identification of these people, please contact the Healer's Guild of Mallow.

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### Faire from page 1

Those who wish to sell their wares, as well as those who have talent as entertainers, are encouraged to contact me, Lady Carella LaRose, Clarkton Road, Griswold, where I am staying with friends, to enquire about the cost of vending and the rate of pay for entertainers. Entertainers will be paid a stipend plus whatever tips the good faire-goers reward them with.

There will also be a contest added for entertainers on Sunday, prizes to be announced. You must entertain on Saturday in order to enter this competition. The categories will be; Singing, Storytelling, Acting, and Open Entertainment (for the acts which do not fit the other categories).

## public notices

We wanted to say thank you to **all** those who came the aid of the gorbe. Especially to Ducal, Calaquendi, and the baronies of Northguard and Capulus. With your help, protection, and support we were able to bring to an end this "hunter." A special thank you to Shatter for performing the ritual.

Thank you again for keeping our home and family safe.

Chastity Valdeguard

Dheran Blackclaw

Rameses I. Blackclaw

Falkyir Tasyra

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Sir Endril,

I admire your valor... you need not be so modest.

You're not bad for a man.

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Alexa, Arracor, Ehawk, Curyll, Alaric, and all those with whom I spoke at May's gather – I apologize I had not the focus to meet with you further at that time – destiny comes upon us in unusual ways, and not always as expected, nor are we always prepared. I have spent the summer months reflecting upon our impending challenges in the inevitable storm to come, and find myself wanting for knowledge. Thanks to those of you who made kind offers of teaching – I welcome your offers and offer any simple lessons I can provide in return, that we may all strive together towards balance. Perhaps lessons can commence with the next gather.

- Cybele

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Bonatifka!

Natalyia's Romani Caravan coming to Ravenholt! We carry all manner of exotic items from the Orient and other places far flung. Such beauteous things and unusual! And for the more literary minded, a wide selection of books on history, art, costuming and illumination among other topics. And well, such arduous browsing requires some refreshment so of course baked goods to be bought! I may also have some liquid refreshment but still in the process of negotiations with a reputable vintner...

Look for the large pavilion on the field with the burgundy and green trim. Come quickly, buy often and well!

Natalyia

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Cabbage-

Thanks for caring. No more worrying about me though, or little cabbage walks the plank.

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# news from around tyrra

## **Tyrangel**

As of July 10, 603 the land of Tyrangel will henceforth be known as the Sovereign Realm of Tyrangel. Countessa Talandas Stormbringer is from this day forth elevated to Grand Duchess of The Sovereign Realm of Tyrangel. All visiting nobles from foreign lands are to immediately present themselves to one of the following persons upon arriving within the Lands of Tyrangel: Her Grace, Grand Duchess Talandas Stormbringer, Lady Veleka Starwise, Seneschal of Tyrangel, Lord Eltharion Ari, Court Advisor, or Sir Constantine Champion, Knight Commander.

Any visiting noble found within The Sovereign Realm of Tyrangel unannounced will be brought into custody. Additionally, all visiting nobles must provide the appropriate writs of title. By Direction of Her Grace, Grand Duchess Talandas Stormbringer

## **Ravensburg**

Due to some trouble at the mines last gather, we are now in desperate need of help. The mines were unsealed, releasing elementals of chaos and leaving us in a world of trouble. Further investigation into the mines has revealed a gate at the deepest point, which may explain the disappearances of the all the workers. The gate appears unstable and we are currently working on a way to close the gate permanently.

Sincerely,

Duke Eltherian Frostblade, Duke of Ravensburg

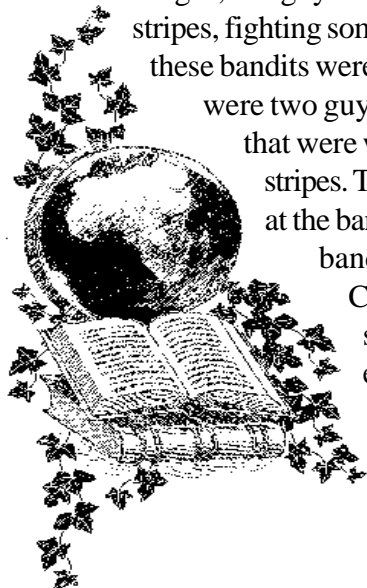
## **Mandrake's Landing (The Outlands)**

Upon the lips of the citizens of Mandrake's Landing is talk that Baron Duncan Barkharrow has sworn allegiance to the Mephosian Empire. Additionally rumored – the Earth Coalition has been seen throwing Chaos. Says one towns person who wishes to remain anonymous: “There was a group of Battle

Mages, the guys in the green tabards with black stripes, fighting some bandits; I later found out that these bandits were illegal slavers. Anyway, there

were two guys in the group of Battle Mages that were wearing white tabards with red stripes. These guys were throwing Chaos at the bandits. They didn't start until the bandits did, but aren't the Earth

Coalition against that stuff? They saw me, so I ran off. Be careful everyone; who knows what the Earth Coalition will do next. Maybe raise undead?!”



## **Talis Ferry (The Southlands)**

Work has resumed in the Talis Ferry mines, however some of the miners are still spooked, claiming that they hear strange noises from the closed portion of the mine. Some say it's haunted or cursed, but we don't see them complaining on payday.

## **Ackliceium**

The Royal Army has fully moved into the Western Province, with well over 20 different subdivisions in the northern portions of the Kingdom. They have been training with several regimental guard positions over the course of the month. It is clear that they are preparing for something quite important. Additionally, reports from the Northwest portions of the kingdom detail farmers, merchants, and soldiers, all suffering from some rotting affliction. Although it somewhat resembles leprosy, there are too many similarities to the undead. Panic and fear are beginning to grip the populace...

## **Ashton**

Found posted around Ashton and neighboring shires: To all who are interested: The Necromancer's Guild has grown far more than we expected, since its start, not too long ago, in Ashton. We now have many new members and are looking for more. If anyone is interested in joining the guild please contact me. Azriel Wormskull, Master of Scrolls and Historian of the Necromancer's Guild

## **Lumberton Shire**

Numerous opinions and rumors abound in the Shire: Adventures have come seeking Lumberton's Fountain of Youth. There is a price of 1000gp on the Count's head. The buildings in Lumberton Shire seem to be talking to each other. The Count is really Morgosh in disguise. The woods are guarded by an evil witch. Everything that is wrong in Lumberton is the fault of all the nature casters. They need to quit tampering with nature! The Mordan's are a bunch of evil dopplegangers whose sole desire is to rule the world.

## **The Vale**

Posted Publicly around the Vale: From this day forward, any and all gypsies, and those who adopt their dress and style are to present themselves for registration before being allowed entrance into the township of Misty Hollow. Proof of ability to afford quarters within the town may be required as well. This is a noble order from Seneschal Teleos and not up to debate or discussion.

Sir. Tomric Williams Regent Knight of Avalon

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## A Look Back

A Look Back is a new feature in the Herald in which we will travel back through the annals of the Herald's publications to bring a fond bit of memory from days gone by.

### This Month in History, 598

- Wizard's ritual goes awry, bringing forth a pair known as Heartsblood and Anath, who wreaked havoc on the town.
- Spirit known as Kaethe attacks stone elves until put to rest.
- An emissary of Death known as "The Auditor" visited the Guilds to balance the scales of Life and Death
- Order of Oroborous attempts numerous assassinations on the likes of Guildmaster Kendrick and Countess Aleena

### This Month in History, 593

- Sakkalid, one of Ravenholt's most feared liches of all time, wanders the duchy, destroying much in his wake, including the Ravenholt Healers' Circle
- Guxx Unfadoo returns to torment Ravenholt once again, taking in the body and wracking the spirit of Darin Darkcloud, and attempting to overcome other members of Countess Xerina Montesque's former court.
- Princess Andrea Huntington rescued from the Black Rose.
- Princess Andrea Huntington and Prince Basil Ravenhurst announce October wedding plans.

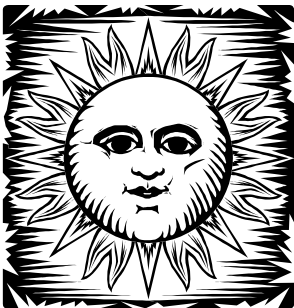
### News from page 3

#### Dar Khabad

The people of the Duchy of Dar Khabhad need help from anyone who is willing. Sometime in the last year, the buildings in the Duchy's capitol city began to degrade and fall. More often than not, the occupants were inside when they fell. Little by little, the majority of the city crumbled, leaving thousands dead, and many others missing. Some townspeople were claimed by what seemed to be the shadows of the city coming alive to take them. At this time, the fallen city has been quarantined. We are in the midst of building the city, but we are in need of help, not only with moving people, but to clear the area where the new capitol is being built, of pests. We are not meeting in the city of Garrison's Bridge for the gathering, but at the new city. It is in the Southwest corner of Hylloc County.

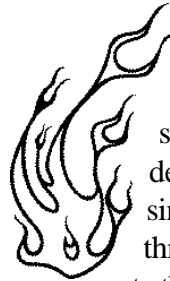
#### Rockshire

A small cavern was discovered where orcs had been harvesting and eating the newly laid eggs of frond beetles. Adventurers risking entry found hordes of the ravenous newly hatched beetles. A royal was located within the hive, as well as many yellow horned young beetles. A few spitters, their white tipped horns barely distinguishable in the dark of the caves were also found. The remainder of the beetles were warriors, with yellow tipped horns, and only a very small number of scouts, which can burrow through wards, were encountered.



## More Suspicious Fires

The arsonist or arsonists plaguing upper Westmarch and Ravenholt City during the spring seems to have moved to southern Eastwyck in recent weeks. There appears to be no pattern to the types of buildings being burned - a farm here, a manse there - other than perhaps the commonality of their remoteness; none of the recent fires have taken place in populous areas. There have been numerous deaths associated with the fires, with entire families burned in their sleep. At one farm, a neighbor, Samuel Effrias, a local corn farmer, saw flames as he was riding home from market business, and claims he saw a pair of in-



dividuals running away from the fire. In the dark, all he could see was someone he described as short, bulky, and dark skinned, and another person who was skinnier and seemed somewhat bowlegged. Since no one fitting those descriptions has been seen by anyone else, and since Farmer Effrias's corn whiskey is renowned throughout Eastwyck, little can be ascertained as to the accuracy of his information.

Are you discreet? Trustworthy? Vigilant? Do you travel well and rapidly on your own? The **Fleet of Foot Fleet** is now hiring couriers of all security clearances for its new Ravenholt City branch office. No prior training necessary, but pay scale will be determined based on experience. Ability to read and write is not mandatory. Training available. See a representative of the Fleet during late day meals at the Tavern in the rebuilt Ravenholt quarters, or watch for recruitment notices posted around town.

## Teams from page 1

Avaron. The Westmarch team consisted of Ambassador Shoshoto, Chester Kapel, Silus and Tyler Blighe.

The day started off with the puzzles competition - both teams did fairly well. They moved on to read poetry, which was also well received. The highlight of the morning, however, was the mimic competition. Contestants were required to mimic what a mime did. The "Not Quite Nobles" (consisting of the ducal household and Jherek, who chose the name for the fact that the team had two squires) did very well, as Squire Risadul showed his dedication: Upon seeing the mime kiss the head merchant who was running the competition, after brief consideration, the Squire let loose and, after taking the head merchant's breath away, gave a sharp pat to his rear end, thus ensuring victory. The afternoon brought the fighter's competition: A five-hit contest against four different merchant fighters. Tyler of Northguard showed well, only losing to one by a single hit. Squire Risadul then took the field and repeated the effort, losing by only two hits to the same man, the head merchant. Squire Feargus of Silvershire stepped in and fought, defeating the first three opponents, including the hard-fought head merchant. However, there was some discussion on whether the judges had missed a hit. An injury required the Squire to choose an opponent from the three he had fought before. Squire Feargus honorably chose the Head Merchant

once again, and again defeated him, proving the first win was no fluke.

Night brought the Chess and Poker tournaments, and the news that both the Not Quite Nobles and the Barony of Westmarch were tied, and a mere 34 points behind Silvershire. The Chess tournament saw both Chester and Squire Caleb advance to the second round. The squire went up against the Silvershire contestant and after a pitched battle, fell. Chester played the eventual winner of the chess tournament for more than an hour, in a game that saw both good strategy and a few bad mistakes on each side. The Poker tournament proved to be the more important event. Avaron and Shoshoto sat down for their respective teams, and were in the same group as the Silvershire contestant. The top two in each round moved on to the finals. The judge, calling last hand, showed Silvershire in the lead with Shoshoto in Second and Avaron in Third. The betting and the situation called for Shoshoto to have to stay in. The resulting loss allowed Avaron to move through to the second round, along with the Silvershire Contestant. The final round belied the statements of the self proclaimed "bad player," Avaron, who turned out to have amazing luck. He took home second and the Silvershire Player, fourth. The gap closed to 24 points for the Not Quite Nobles and widened for the Westmarch team to 44 points. Both teams went to bed wondering what the next day would bring.

The morning brought the crafting competition and the arrival of Grakelflint and his friends, creating a third northern team, the Just Great Team. The Barony of Westmarch went first and used several stuffed birds and other supplies to build a birdhouse, using Chester as a tree to rest it upon. The Silvershire team created a jousting match, and the Not Quite Nobles performed a skit too risqué to mention here. All three teams tied for first place in the event, and the overall scores remained the same. The story competition brought Silus to the forefront, performing a Dwarven Haiku. While very well done, it was not so well received by the judges. The Not Quite Nobles went with a skit that had guaranteed laughs - "The Life and Hair of Squire Caleb Marduk," which denoted his nobility and considerable ability to woo women, and left the judges in stitches. The Silvershire team told a story that ended up being a joke and did well. The casting competition gave the Silvershire team a first place finish with Westmarch and Not Quite Nobles tying for second. The Tourney would now come down to the Team-on-Team Fighting, and then the grand melee, afterwards.

The first round of the team tournament brought the Barony of Westmarch against Silvershire. While quite competent, Silvershire was quickly overwhelmed by the casting of Silus and Shoshoto. Westmarch went on to fight the Just Great Team, who all were either casters or gassers. A quick

rush brought them within sword distance and after many up and downs, as a number of people were dropped, the Just Great Team lay on the ground. The Not Quite Nobles defeated both of their earlier opponents, setting up a final match between both of the Ravenholt teams. The advantage seemed to lie with Westmarch, with two casters and two fighters with mighty blows, versus the Not Quite Nobles who had two smaller casters and fighters with fewer blows and parries. However, in the initial rush, Avaron managed to spell down Chester and Silus, leaving Shoshoto and Tyler all alone. Going on the run, Shoshoto could not loop around and heal those who were down, and the match ended: The Not Quite Nobles moved on to the finals.

Silvershire next went up against the Just Great Team in the losses bracket. A hard rush and many potions allowed them to take down the Just Great Team. A re-match was set between Westmarch and Silvershire. Silvershire split in half as Westmarch tried to charge the lone Silvershire caster. The caster managed to paralyze both Shoshoto and Chester. Tyler managed to stay up the longest, weaving up to the Silvershire caster before he was spelled down in a very close decision. The stage was then set for the two top points teams to face off. The first round was all Silvershire, who overwhelmed the Not Quite Nobles quickly. Both teams now had two losses, setting up

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## Teams from page 5

a winner-take-all match. The King summoned the Not Quite Nobles over to talk to them quickly before the next match, even offering a drink from the King's own cup. The next match began and Avaron and Squire Caleb moved hard at Sir Fearges, Avaron hit with an early death spell and it seemed the match would be theirs. Sir Fearges, however, dodged a number of spells and another fighter cut down Caleb. Jherek and Risadul almost had their two opponents down when Sir Fearges moved to finish the fight. Jherek went down but Risadul sprinted away. Running the entire length of the edge of the field, Squire Risadul managed to get a potion out, but as he moved back towards Jherek, he was cut down by the Silvershire caster.

The stage was now set for the grand melee, where the winners would be guaranteed fifty more points than the second place team - A large margin in a contest that was coming down to just a few. The overall contest had come down to two teams - the Not Quite Nobles and the Silvershire team. The melee would come down to those from the local area that wanted the Silvershire team to win, and those who wished the Not Quite Nobles to win. Westmarch, the Just Great Team and the Not Quite Nobles lined up and Jherek spoke to a fourth team from out west in Baddira - ultimately, the four teams joined to fight the rest. The northern alliance moved hard at Silvershire, who fought, broke, and scattered. Fighting was all over the field, as a few scattered non-aligned people tried to pick off men from the larger groups. The fight was hectic but the alliance managed to drop the Silvershire team. The Baddira team then moved away and started fighting the teams of the north. Quickly overwhelmed, they fell as well, and the northern teams came together. A decision was made that the Not Quite Nobles would be allowed to win in order to take home the tournament. Just before the rest of the teams conceded, the order came from the King to finish it. A massive melee broke out. Team-on-Team, no one knew who was friend or foe! Jherek moved away to ensure his victory and that of his team's. The rest battled as if no tomorrow. Silus, his armor gleaming and his beard whipping in the wind, with a toothpick stuck in, "to save the taste for later," helped his fellow Westmarch teammates and cut down all that opposed. The end result was that Squire Risadul, Jherek and Silus were the last left standing. Silus and Risadul both bowed out to allow Jherek to win. There was a shocked gasp as a possuming Orc stood and charged Jherek. Our collective hearts fell, and then jumped, as Jherek cut him down with gasses. The Not Quite Nobles team had won the Grand Melee, and quite possibly the tournament.

The last way to get points was a scavenger hunt. The Not Quite Nobles were short as many as twenty items. While the team scrambled, the one person who helped the most was Cynthia Timmons, sewing and gathering, searching and kissing,

and even gassing, she manage to help fill (either by providing or *being*) the entire rest of the list. The lists were passed in and both Silvershire and the Not Quite Nobles did well. Tension built as we awaited the results. While the points were known for most contests, the final tally was still in doubt.

The totals were calculated and the scores announced. The Just Great Team managed to climb over two teams, even with their late entry, and the Barony of Westmarch managed third. The Not Quite Nobles pulled off the victory by a mere twenty-four points. The noise was spectacular as cheerful congratulations were given by all. The Not Quite Nobles made sure to shake the hands of the second place team, who were gracious in their defeat, before moving down to the King's Circle to receive their prize. I watched as they knelt and the King moved before them with the famed Sword of Evendarr and knighted all four team members as Honorary Knights of the Realm for the span of one year. The sword was then placed in the hand of Sir Risadul, Knight of the Realm. The silence was complete, as all seemed to be in shock. The King returned to his circle and the Knights begged their leave and moved from the circle into the night, the Sword of Evendarr held proudly, they fittingly walked north, toward their home, proud Ravenholt.



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## Bonds from page 1

try to cleanse the rings and restore the ability to control the lands bond to His Majesty King Mykel. Each member of the team was given a specific ring and an attribute they would have to embody in order to cleanse it. Shoshoto was given the ring of Truth and put up against a spirit that always lied. The spirit tried to make Shoshoto lie while he, in turn, tried to make it speak the truth. They sparred mentally at great length before the spirit tired of the pressure and manifested itself, only to be cut down.

Even after all the challenges were faced and won, the rings all still carried a part of the taint. The woman who carried the ring of Compassion then decided to demonstrate her own compassion in a sacrifice for all of Evendarr. She sacrificed herself so that the rings would be cleansed. Goodwoman Darkstrider has died her permanent death for the good of all.

The rings and the land bonds of Evendarr safe, mourning the loss of this valiant woman, the team returned with heavy hearts to their King. His Majesty granted each member of the team the right to quest to become the bearer of each ring and a protector of the Kingdom. The quests were given to King's knights to test each of the candidates. All accepted the tests and will proceed as time allows.

## Dangers from page 1

“The Dreadlands” for their rough and ravaged reaches, I might have opted for sunny Niman as a choice vacation spot, instead.

The trip began fairly tamely as I, and the caravan of Evendarrians with whom I joined up, moved southward. We all enjoyed the gradual changes to the landscape. We passed from the rich and detailed landscape of Evendarr City, down into lovely Kitheria, then skirted through the wilds of Tyrangel – the current kingdom politics of which are a story unto themselves – and finally crossed into the Sutherlands, where we were hospitably treated by all we encountered (many of whom were also traveling to the King’s gather). The string of wagons headed to the Tourney grew longer with each passing day. As we reached the southwestern most reaches of the Sutherlands, however, the terrain grew progressively more rocky and wild, and we began to leave some of the lush greenery of Sutherlands’ summer behind – these lands were the most untamed in Evendarr – yet still beautiful in their own, harsh way.

We soon discovered through chatter and gossip with fellow travelers that the new keep was one of necessity and protection for the kingdom, protecting our borders from those of the Dreadlands. Those who had traveled through them already described rocky outcroppings reaching upward amidst rough, gritty patches of harshly barren earth. Few

trees there grew straight and strong – no sign of healthy pine or oak – naught but brier and thorns among the scree. Some questioned, could His Majesty truly desire these lands for his own?

Why not leave them be? For the Dreadlands, as it happens, are not without their own native peoples, and they are not entirely friendly to the races of man as we know them. In the center of these deadened, near-lifeless lands is a city, if one can call it that, of a reptilian race who call themselves the “Ka’hiss.” The name, when spoken as they do, slithers off the tongue – the forked, serpentine tongue. They are of a military force that, by all reports, makes the Sessai seem tame and harmless as a hobling child.

Hearing fragments of these horrors as we traveled made many of us nervous – several wagonloads even chose to turn back. But I, my plagued reporter’s sense heightened, foolishly moved onward.

We arrived at the Keep as sun set on Thursday eve, just prior to the gather. All appeared calm and organized, though there was the usual air of controlled chaotic mayhem that precedes any tournament. Through the night, many other caravans came in from all directions, though few came directly or even indirectly through the Dreadlands if they could help it.

When all were finally gathered before His Majesty for the official commencement of the gather, the mood was upbeat and cheerful. Camaraderie was

already forming between soon-to-be-combatants, as each tried to weigh their competitors prior to the events. As the ceremonies began, our great and noble King, Mykel Endarr II, himself, was struck with what appeared to all in attendance to be an agonizing pain, and many of his nearest men-at-arms and vassals appeared afflicted with similar agony. After some confusion, a muddled sort of explanation began to circulate among us: His Majesty and several others had felt a great tremor in the lands themselves – they knew it to be some vile evil affecting Tyrra. The moments of pain seemed to briefly ease, until King Mykel complained that a ring he wore, which he had had for many years, was growing hot upon his hand. No sooner had he realized this than we all saw a vast *something*, something we could none of us identify, seem to materialize – some say from the Ring, others from King Mykel himself. To me, it appeared as if he raised his hand to reach out, and in doing so, summoned it forth! But that was my vision upon reflection – in the meantime, this strange creature was attacking all it could reach, until it was battled down by the many brave wizards and warriors in attendance.

Once order was restored and the injured healed, and it was determined that King Mykel and his Princes were as well as could be expected, we were left to our own devices for the night – none could sleep, for the excitement had awakened us all quite thoroughly –

and it was then that the story of the twelve Rings of Evendarr began to be bandied about. It seems that these twelve rings had at one time, been held by twelve Protectors of Evendarr, and that some believe even now that the spirits of those twelve are encapsulated within the rings to watch over Evendarr in times of need. With further research, I was able to determine that the original twelve included many famous names among the Founding Five Families, including Ambrose Huntington, Lady V’Ktara Solonari, whose ring represents Justice, Brother Laramis Hartwell, whose ring represents Compassion, Guildmaster Jarridar Coriolis (Truth), Gurndra Hammerstane (Strength), Shandra MacGregor (Honesty), Lord Arigi Nandemyr (Diplomacy), Magda Ivanova Ajonisa (Wisdom), Dame Commander Allandra Vandoros (also, possibly, Justice), Lord Powell Huntington (Sacrifice), and Earl Haarlan Thunderblade, representing Valor. As I have as yet been unable to determine the story behind the last appearance of these great noble spirits, the Herald will pay well for any who can provide further insights into the rings.

What is clear is that later in the gather, many brave adventurers were able to recover several, if not all, of these rings, which had apparently been lost through the ages. The adventurers presented them to the Nobles of Evendarr who were in attendance, and were thanked and honored for their

Cont'd on page 8

## Dangers from page 7

dedication to the Crown. While I was unable to obtain the names of all the heroic men and women who fought so valiantly for these invaluable artifacts (so much else was going on that I could not be all places at once – should we discover the names of them, we shall publish them in future Raven's Herald issues), I did hear of one particularly valorous woman, one Nikita Darkstrider, who gave of her own spirit to be placed in a ring which had lost its own. In order to do this, she had to pass into Death's domain, and travel into the Heroes' Graveyard. We would be honored to publish her obituary, should one be made available to us. She was able to get word back out to the gentry of impending dangers of which she was made aware within the graveyard. She spoke of an evil being known only as Emeraldyne, whom some swear is and Emerald Dragon incarnate, who sits amidst the ruins of the Dreadlands and plans his next conquest. Goodwoman Darkstrider determined that Emeraldyne, enraged at the thought of a concordance among the kingdoms, had al-

ready begun moving troops in the form of the Ka'hiss and other vile creatures, towards the Keep and beyond. In addition to these mighty serpentine foes, whom none in my party had (thankfully) yet seen, there were reported to be numerous underlings with a modicum of power each, as granted them by this Emeraldyne, who in turn control smaller troops on his behalf.

We soon found out that Nikita's hard-won information was correct, as a disturbing assortment of Tyrra's most repugnant creatures began concerted attacks upon us. We found ourselves up against corrupted (even for them) Sessuar, an undead horde led by a monstrosity I cannot begin to describe, and even twisted, warped Fae creatures, all of whom seemed somehow under the ultimate control of Emeraldyne. While they all attacked from different directions, their intent was clear – our absolute and utter annihilation. Our brave band of nobles and adventurers fought long and hard against more than 400 soldiers who slithered, rifted, rose from the earth, and otherwise found their way towards us. In the end, the Armies of the Mark and our brave adventurers were able to cause the enemy to retreat, but for how long is unclear.

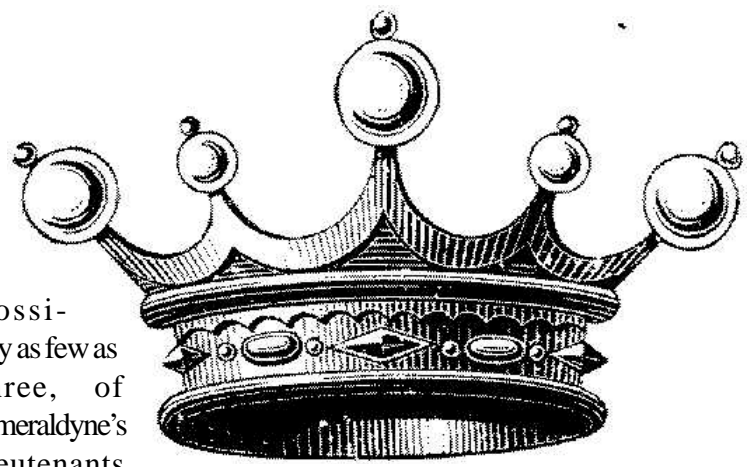
In speaking with some of the more militarily minded men and women of the field after the battle was done, I got the impression that they believed these attacks were the concerted efforts of only a few,

possibly as few as three, of Emeraldyne's lieutenants.

Some wondered aloud as to whether the Keep could hold against a more concerted attack. I, myself, have lived through Greystone's Sessuar War and have lived to breathe another day in vicious Brood attacks, but those were long, drawn out devastation – this was a ferocious flurry of devastation, and I find myself near paralyzed with fear just thinking of it again.

It is my understanding that King Mykel has sent some of his most lithe and secretive scouts southward in an attempt to move beyond the Dreadlands – there were once lands to the south known as Marshaven, which began as an outpost of His Majesty's troops who were scouting for lands for eventual settlement. It is unclear what has happened to those troops, and there are whispers that Emeraldyne's warriors may have done them in. A more recent expedition of His Majesty's men set out early this year with several nobles of the realm, to try a more diplomatic mission. They were expected to return for the gather, but had not appeared by the end of the tournament, to the concern of all.

Amidst all this chaos and destruction, His Majesty, of



course, insisted that the Tournament continue, for he refused to allow his (now sworn) enemies to destroy the honor and integrity of the day. Several of Ravenholt's finest citizens won a hard fought victory against numerous teams of contestants from other duchies, and have been duly given titles as Honorary King's Knights. (See related article, this issue).

The Accords of Avalon were also brought forth and discussed at this, the first of several planned meetings on the topic. I was unable to sit in on the meetings as I was busy covering both the attacks and the tournaments – had I known it would be more than a simple King's Tourney, I'd have brought more Herald staff to help out! We will, of course, pay handsomely for any details concerning the ongoing development of the Accords, as they will affect our lands and our people, as well as our relations with our neighbors on all sides. Never let it be said that our Kingdom is a dull one - I, for one, have returned from my ersatz vacation weary and war-torn, and very much in need...of a vacation.



# Songs From the Faire

## Jack-A-Roe (a traditional ballad)

Oh, there was a wealthy merchant, in Hadran he did dwell.  
He had a lovely daughter, the truth to you I'll tell,  
Oh, the truth to you I'll tell.

She had sweethearts a-plenty and men of high degree.  
There was none but Jackie Frazier, her true love e'er to be,  
Oh, her true love e'er to be.

"Oh daughter, oh daughter, your body I will confine.  
If none but Jack the sailor would ever suit your mind,  
Oh, would ever suit your mind.

"This body you may imprison, my heart you can't confine.  
There's none but Jack the sailor would have this heart of mine,  
Oh, would have this heart of mine.

Now Jackie's gone sailing with trouble on his mind.  
To leave his native country and his darling girl behind,  
Oh, his darling girl behind.

She went into the tailor shop and dressed in men's array,  
Then she went into the vessel to  
convey herself away,  
Oh, convey herself away.

"Before you step onboard, sir, your  
name I'd like to know."  
She smiled all in her countenance,  
said, "They call me Jack-A-Roe,  
Oh, they call me Jack-A-Roe."

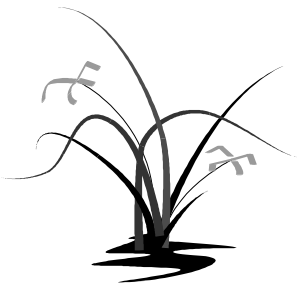
"Your waist is light and slender, your fingers neat and small,  
Your cheeks too red and rosy for to face the cannonball,  
Oh, to face the cannonball.

"I know my waist is slender and my fingers they are small,  
But they would not make me tremble for to see ten thousand fall,  
Oh, to see ten thousand fall."

The war soon being over, they hunted all around.  
Among the dead and dying her darling love she found,  
Oh, her darling love she found.

She picked him up all in her arms and carried him to town,  
And sent for her physician to quickly heal his wounds,  
Oh, to quickly heal his wounds.

This couple, they got married, so well they did agree,  
This couple they got married, so why not you and me,  
Oh, so why not you and me.



## out-of-game information

### NERO Mass Returns to Its Roots: Scouting Program Needs Advisors

I have been working with the director of our region's Boy Scouting organization to begin preparations for us to sponsor a Venturing program. For those who are unaware, in our earliest days, NERO was an Explorers' Post for the scouts. Venturing is sort of Explorers Version 2.0, providing specialized content for young people (male and female) from ages 14 to 21. Those interested in continuing with scouting can participate beyond the age of 21 as a Venturing leader. In sponsoring such a program, we become eligible for many scouting resources, including connections to teens who have specifically expressed interest in fantasy/sci-fi, theater, and other categories, as well as to advertising and camp facilities. The primary reason for us to get involved is as a source of new players, both as NPCs and PCs. Several other chapters have had great response from the scouts in their area, and have enjoyed working with their local Venturing programs.

The intent is to begin all Venturing scouts as NPCs, with the

guidance and help of people interested in being the adult supervisors for the program. The BSA tries to have all Venturing programs work towards some aspect of leadership development, so we'll encourage teamwork and have the group work on specific small game-supporting projects they can really make their own.

In order to qualify for this, we need several 21+ adult guides for the program. We are required to have at least one of each gender if we are providing a mixed-gender program. The time commitment will be twofold – first, leaders will need to commit to on-site meeting time with the Venturers just prior to each event, and second, will need to commit outside time of various amounts to help on specific projects the group will work on, such as a single mask-making day or a props inventorying day, etc. If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible. ([owner@neromass.com](mailto:owner@neromass.com) or 203-426-7729. Thanks!

- Rachel

## Ravenholt Plot Presence Available for Team Meetings

Several plot members recently attended a team meeting (at the team's request) to go over several matters of both IG and OOG nature. I personally found it quite valuable, even though for the majority of the meeting I simply sat and listened to the in-game interactions of the team. I learned a lot from it about what plot was being successful in getting out to players, and what we were not communicating well, and I also learned a great deal about the kind of game play the various team members enjoyed, both through their out-of-game comments and through observing the in-game interactions. I realized I would love the opportunity to understand a little more about all the teams that are represented at Ravenholt, if the players on them are interested and willing.

So, if your team holds regular team meetings and would like to have me attend, as a plot member, to answer questions and to allow me to learn more about your team, please contact me to see about scheduling a time. While plot's meeting and event schedule does not make it possible for all plot members to attend, I will personally attempt to make a meeting a year for each team that desires it.

You can feel free to use the time to ask questions, provide suggestions, or just let me listen in on your team discussions to get a better feel for team interactions, goals, etc. My schedule is very tight, between work and existing NERO commitments, so the closer your meeting is to southwestern Connecticut, the easier it will be for me to find time that works. Otherwise, if I have to travel more than an hour, non-event weekend afternoons and sometimes evenings are occasionally possible. I will always need a fair amount of advance notice. Please do not feel obligated to take me up on this, but again, know that I would welcome the opportunity.

-Rachel

## Parking at the Ware Site

It is vital that players park in the field lot beyond the manor house instead of lot behind the kitchen. Only staff of the camp and medical staff may park behind the tavern. It is mandatory that the entire driveway remains clear.

Additionally, please remember that you may NOT park in either the driveway between the mod building and the manor house, or on the road. Finally, National has stated that NERO takes no responsibility for damage to vehicles while in the parking lots at events. As such, we ask that all players ensure that combat does not spill over into parking areas so as to avoid risk to the cars.

## staff contact info

**Owner:** [owner@neromass.com](mailto:owner@neromass.com)

Rachel Morris (203) 426-7729  
NERO Mass, 25 Aunt Park Lane, Newtown, CT 06470

**Event Registration:** [register-online@neromass.com](mailto:register-online@neromass.com)

Phone: (203) 426-7729

Mail: NERO Mass, 25 Aunt Park Lane, Newtown, CT 06470

<http://www.neromass.com/register.html>

**Character Update:** [update@neromass.com](mailto:update@neromass.com)

Bob Hawkins (508) 786-0643

**Ravenholt NPCs:** [npc@neromass.com](mailto:npc@neromass.com)

Gary Strong (603) 595-8894

**Crossroads NPCs:** [crossroadsnpc@yahoo.com](mailto:crossroadsnpc@yahoo.com)

**Newsletter:** [newsletter@neromass.com](mailto:newsletter@neromass.com)

Mail: NERO Mass, 25 Aunt Park Lane, Newtown, CT 06470

**Adjudication:** [adjudication@neromass.com](mailto:adjudication@neromass.com)

Jeff Collins (508) 261-8842

Chris Herbert (508) 835-4393

**Plot:**

Ravenholt: [ravenholt@neromass.com](mailto:ravenholt@neromass.com)

Crossroads: [crossroads@neromass.com](mailto:crossroads@neromass.com)

For additional staff contact information, see:

[www.neromass.com/staff.html](http://www.neromass.com/staff.html)

## Things NERO Mass Needs ASAP

(Besides NPCs preregistering for events!)

We need CLAWS galore, and other WEAPONS.

We need PACKETS.

Shelf units and standing storage units

Did we mention - packets, claws, and weapons?

## 2003 Schedule

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>REG. BEGINS</u> <u>(10 AM)</u>
Ravenholt Long Weekend	08/29 - 09/01/03	SOLD OUT
Crossroads Weekend	09/12 - 09/14/03	ON SALE
Ravenholt Weekend	09/26 - 09/28/03	SOLD OUT
Crossroads Long Weekend	10/10 - 10/13/03	ON SALE
Ravenholt Season Closer	10/24 - 10/26/03	09/06/03

# Crossroads Transfer Policy Announcement

Per a recent policy presented to all chapters by NERO International, we are no longer permitted to allow transfers out of a “non-standard” NERO sub-campaign, as Crossroads has been deemed to be due to its additional production rules and other variants. To make a smooth transition for those who had planned to move their characters out to the Tyrran environment, as had been the plan for Crossroads since its inception, Joseph Valenti ([neroint@aol.com](mailto:neroint@aol.com)) is allowing us to offer a one-time window of opportunity for those players wishing to transfer their characters out of Crossroads and into the primary Tyrran campaigns. This option will only be available through November 15th, 2003.

If you wish to take advantage of this, you must inform Rachel Morris ([owner@neromass.com](mailto:owner@neromass.com)) and the Crossroads Campaign Plot Committee ([crossroads@neromass.com](mailto:crossroads@neromass.com)) by November 15th, 2003. If you are planning to do so and are attending one of the next two scheduled Crossroads events, please let the staff know in plenty of time, so that they can provide an in-game transition for you and allow for the effects of this mandated conceptual evolution of the game to be played out “on-stage,” as it were.

Per National, this option will not be allowed again after the window has passed. I apologize for any inconvenience or difficulty this may cause to you in making decisions about your character concepts. This resolution is in no way the preferred one of the Crossroads staff, but I know that they will make every attempt to create a powerful, intense in-game experience for those choosing National’s exit option. Please contact Rachel directly if you have questions.

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## Changes to the Attunement Playtest as of May Ravenholt Event

Please note that in-game changes have caused one-shot items to no longer need attuning. This means that you may use single activate items without going through the attunement process. You still must attune any other magic items per the published write-up. Additionally, the following scrolls transfer freely in and out of Ravenholt:

Bane Vs X	Enchant
Change Race	Expanded Enchantment
Channel	Extend/Greater Extend
Cloak Vs X	Greater Ward
Create Formal Magic Platform	Invest/Divest
Create High Horoscope	Magic Aura
Create Ltd Formal Magic Scroll	Mend Golem
Create Mark/Remove Mark	Obliterate
Create Perm Circle Of Power	Planar Asylum
Create Stake Of Woe	Protection Aura
Create Unltd Formal Magic Scroll	Render Indestructible
Damage Aura	Spirit Farewell
Delimit	Spirit Forge
Delve History	Spirit Link
Destroy Magic (Great/Less)	Vengeance
Dream Vision	Whispering Wind
Elemental Aura	

## New Player/New Character Guides

Per a discussion at this year’s Town Meeting, we are trying to gather the names and contact information of people interested in being either in-game or out-of-game guides for new players for all our campaigns, and for people new to given races who want help with their role. These are not the same as the old style race marshals, but instead, are positions intended to help smooth the transition into game play for other players. An added benefit for all will be a higher quality in-game feel, as new players will be more prepared and therefore more able to support an ongoing improvement in in-game-ness, overall.

New players need help understanding the general ins and outs of the game – whatever our limited new player training time doesn’t cover. They’ll need help developing and submitting character histories, getting good, inexpensive garb together, knowing who they need to go to for various in-game and out-of-game issues, and how to play their race correctly in terms of makeup and presentation, and where to get good supplies to do so. Additionally, those people willing to be in-game guides will be sent players with minor game tie-outs to get them involved, such as “My mother met your mother when she was selling potions in Dragonshire City, and they got to talking about and she told your mom to have me look you up when I got to Ravenholt City because you know your way around” or “Hey! Weren’t you a year ahead of me at Lake Hollym?” and so on. Out of game, during events, plot will want to get feedback from you if you have new players under your wing who do not seem to be getting involved in anything.

If you’re interested in helping out, please send Rachel an email with the following information that can be given to new players:

- Name
- Phone
- Email
- Good times to call
- Are you willing to be an OOG Guide for New Players (Yes/No)
- Which campaigns?
- Are you willing to be an OOG Guide for the following Races (please list)
- Are you willing to be an IG Guide for new characters (please list campaign and character name(s) you can be contacted as, in game, along with various contact tidbits that can be used to hook you up with the new character. Also provide any limitations for the characters, such as “Never send Asmodeus any Sarr in-game – he’ll kill them on sight.”)

Be sure to list any areas you feel you can help people with above and beyond the basics of learning the game!

Thanks!

-Rachel



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 Register to NPC for all Events!*

## the Back page

### 8th Edition Rule Books Available Online

NERO 8th Edition Rule Books are available via our on-line registration and ordering screens at:

<http://www.neromass.com/registration/register.html>

Rule books are \$15 plus \$3.50 S&H. Please allow 5 to 7 business days for shipping.

### NERO Mass Web Page

[www.neromass.com](http://www.neromass.com)

### Ravenholt Campaign Plot Web Page

[www.neromass.com/ravenholt.html](http://www.neromass.com/ravenholt.html)

### Crossroads Campaign Web Page

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