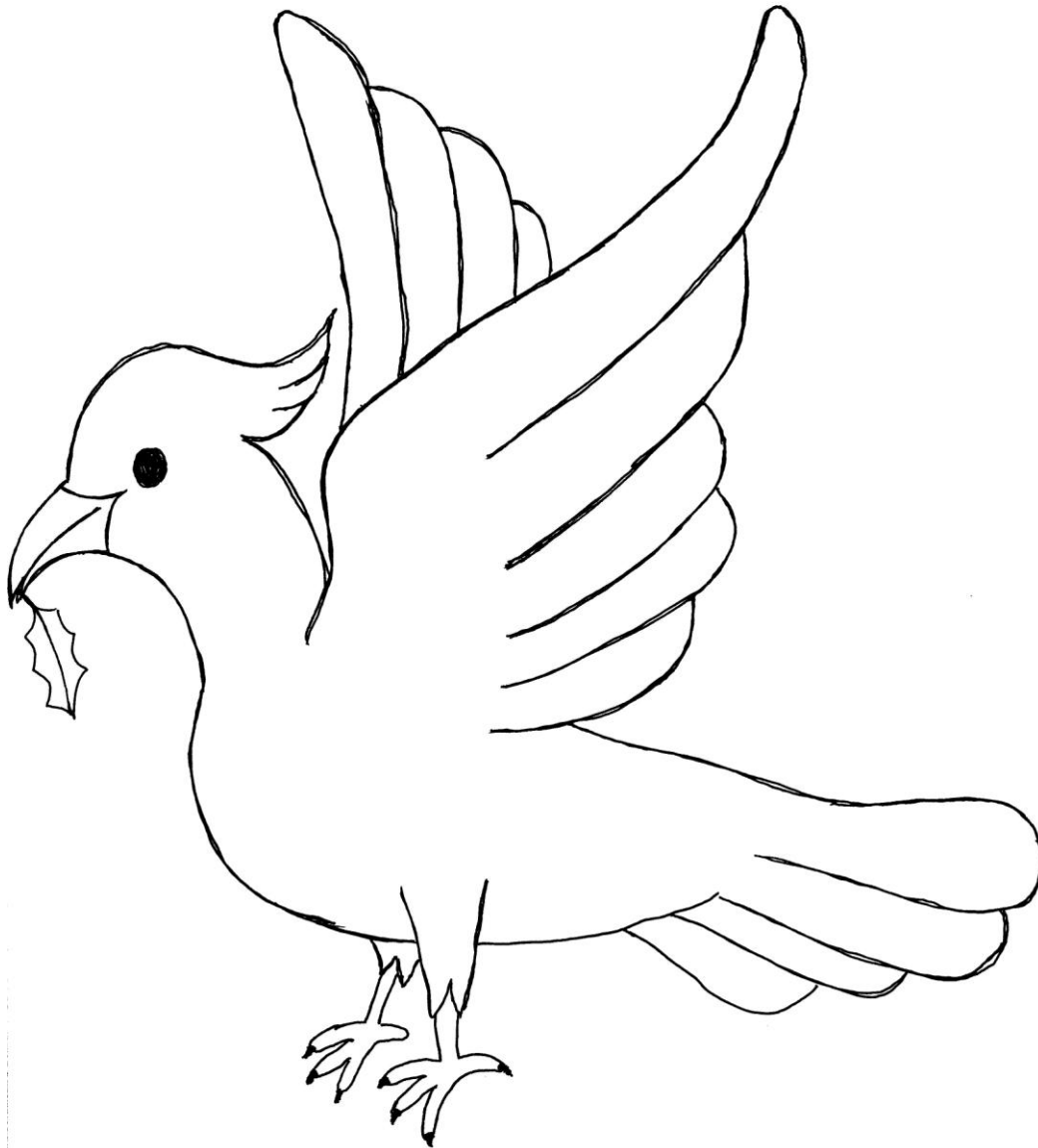


# *The Althing*



*December*  
*as xxxiiii*

## THEIR EXCELLENCIES OF THE DEBATABLE LANDS

Thomas Byron of Haverford and Ariella of Thornbury  
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**Cour d'Or Seneschal (10/11)**  
Rosalia Iuliana Andreere

The Althing's submissions deadline is the first Friday of the month – send your contributions to Elss at [chronicler@debatablelands.org](mailto:chronicler@debatablelands.org).

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## *Disclaimer*

This is the Althing, a publication of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands of the Society of Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not a corporate publication of the Society of Creative Anachronism, Inc., and does not delineate SCA policies. Opinions are those of the authors and may not reflect or imply the view of the Althing or any member of its staff. Content is used with permission.

## *Publication*

The Althing is published every month except August, with an Arts and Sciences issue published once a year. If you'd like to join the Althing mailing list and receive your newsletter by e-mail, you can do so here: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bmdl\\_althing/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bmdl_althing/) or it is available for free on the Barony web site [www.debatablelands.org](http://www.debatablelands.org). Paper copies are available for those without Internet access. Please contact the chronicler with an address to have a paper copy mailed to you at 412-366-5844. If you would prefer to write, the address is on the outside cover.

## *Submissions*

Any gentle wishing to submit articles, artwork, poetry, etc, to the Althing is invited to do so. Please send your work to the chronicler. All material in the Althing is copyrighted to the individual contributors. The chronicler reserves the right to edit, refuse, or reprint any submissions. The submission deadline for the Althing is the first Wednesday of the month.

## *Baronial Discussion E-List*

Need more info on an upcoming baronial event? Just want to chat?

To subscribe to the barony emailing list, go to <http://lists.andrew.cmu.edu/mailman/listinfo/sca-bmdl>, and follow the instructions on the page.

## *Art Work*

Cover Art: Lady Elss of Augsburg © 2009

Other Artwork: Lady Elss of Augsburg © 2009

## *Greetings from the Baron and Baroness*

Unto the Good Gentles of the Barony Marche of the Debatable Lands do Byron and Ariella send Fond Greetings.

In Sylvan Aethelmearc, the winter months are cold and long. We look to the comfort of friends during these holy days, and keep one eye out for the coming of spring.

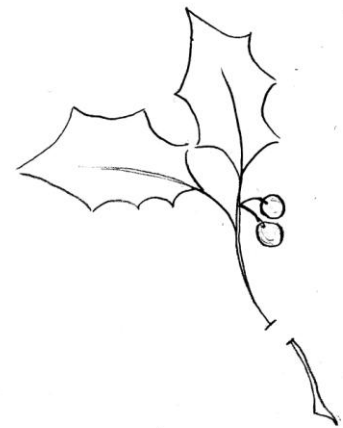
Our next Baronial events will be the Baronial and the Steltonwald 12th Night celebrations, in late January. The invitation to these events is particularly sent out to Barony members who would stand forth as the Baroness's bard. The competition will be held at our Baronial 12th Night; both youth and adult entries are encouraged.

Our thanks go out to Cynewyn, our Deputy Knight Marshal, for finding a new winter fighting site. Let us nonetheless remain vigilant for new indoor sites, as our turnover has historically been high. We also look forward to visiting our friends in surrounding shires and baronies to fight with them during the winter days. We shall keep you informed via the baronial e-mail list.

Keep warm, and keep close to those you hold dear.

Written as the first frost of winter falls,

Byron and Ariella, Baron and Baroness of the Debatable Lands



## *Important Dates Coming Up!*

### **January Barony Meeting**

January 30, 2010 at the Lodge in North Park during BMDL Twelfth Night

### **BMDL Twelfth Night**

January 30, 2010 at the Lodge in North Park – Details on activities in this Althing!

### **BMDL Officers Meeting**

February 3, 2010 -- location not yet determined, probably at CMU.

### **March Barony Meeting and Officers Meeting**

March 7, 2010 at 1 PM – Details to be announced!

### **BMDL Officers Meeting**

April 7, 2010 -- this will be the annual budget meeting.

### **May Barony Meeting**

May 16, 2010 at 1 PM – to be held at the Washington Boulevard practice site.

### **July Barony Meeting**

July 18, 2010 at 1 PM – to be held at the Washington Boulevard practice site.

## *Greetings from Cour d'Or!*

Lord Shiro has started a ride sharing email group for people that want to go to practices and events but are limited by their available transportation options. If you would like to carpool to practices, share a ride to an event, or would like to help the transportation challenged get out to try the things you do, please consider joining this email group. <http://groups.google.com/group/bmdlrideboard>

In other news, I am once again the Seneschal of the College of Cour d'Or. I am still looking for deputies for both Seneschal and Chatelaine of the College. The Seneschal makes sure the College continues on from an administrative stand-point. The Chatelaine of the College is responsible for interacting and involving newcomers with the College.

For both, you are required to hold paid SCA membership and file quarterly reports to the Kingdom. If you are interested in shaping the future of our group, please get in touch with me.

Yours in service,  
Rosalia Iuliana Andere  
Seneschall

## *Important News from the Baronial Rapier Marshal:*

The end of the year is upon us, and that means that as announced, I will be stepping down as BMDL rapier marshal on Dec 31. Unfortunately, my previous deputy is unable to take over the position, and that leaves the Barony without a rapier marshal as of 01 Jan. This situation can be solved in one of two ways.

First, an interested rapier marshal could become my deputy before my term expires at the end of the month. That would make them the rapier marshal starting 01 Jan 2010. They would need to put out a call for letters of intent (plus submit one of their own) and have the BMDL officers vote at the next officer's meeting. Please email me if you are interested or want more information.

The second way is for someone to put in a letter of intent after 01 Jan 2010. That person would need to email the BMDL Seneschal and should also email the Region 2 Deputy Rapier Marshal, which will be me (wcanneATgmailDOTCOM.)

Without a Baronial rapier marshal to be in charge, there are no rapier practices in the BMDL, because someone must be in charge of those practices. That means there can be no rapier activities at SCA practices here in the barony at all until the situation is resolved. I regret the situation, and urge anyone interested in the position to contact me as soon as possible. You must be a rapier marshal in order to fill the position.

In the meantime there are practices in neighboring areas that people can attend. The Shire of King's Crossing and incipient Shire of Ballachlagan both have practices. Please contact the respective marshals or seneschals of those groups for exact days and times. St. Swithin's Bog holds one or two practices a week, depending on the demand. Contact their baronial rapier marshal for more details.

I appreciate having the chance to serve as Baronial Rapier Marshal, and look forward to helping out in the future.

I hope that everyone enjoys their end of the year festivities in safety.

Don Clewin Kupferhelbelinc

## *Greetings from your Seneschal!*

As the year draws to a close, so does my term of office. I would like to thank everyone I have worked with over the last few years. This is a very large Barony and it is impossible to know everyone who participates, but I have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know many of the active members.

I know I am leaving the Barony in capable hands. I look forward to the Barony continuing to provide a venue for many varied activities.

YIS,

Fredeburg

## *From the Captain of Archers*

I am available over the winter to help anyone who needs repairs of strings and arrows.

Lady Muirgheal has confirmed the new archery practice parameters. Practice will be on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 at the Beaver Valley Archery Club (the site of Archers to the Wald). I don't expect to be out there every week, but I plan to get out there at least once a month.

Thanks to the generosity of the Canton and their skill at negotiation, this practice is **free**. Donations can be made if you so desire.

Please contact Lady Muirgheal inghen Dubhghaill or me with any questions.

In service to the Barony-Marche,

Urho Waltterinen

crossbow1953@earthlink.net

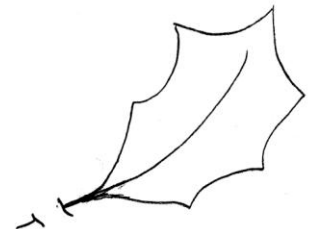
## *Greetings from the Archery Captain for Steltonwald*

Good Gentles,

A reminder that we will be taking a two week break from Archery Practice in the Canton. We will resume regular practice Dec. 30th, 2009 at 6pm.

Yours in service,

Muirgheal inghean Dubhghaill (muirgheall@gmail.com)



## *Seasonal Greetings unto All, From the Baronial Knight Marshal*

Now that the winds howl and the snow flies it is a fine time to bring fighting practice inside at our new indoor site. Every Sunday 1 - 5 pm at the Pittsburgh Chinese Church (8711 Old Perry Hwy, Pittsburgh, PA 15237) unless otherwise posted on the BMDL mailing list.

The site is a former school converted to a church. We can best show our appreciation by respecting the people and the space. To that end, there is no smoking on the premises nor will there be any unattended children.

Park on the downslope lot off of Highland Rd,(across from the ballfield,) enter the first door, and walk up the stairs to the room on the 3rd floor. Further direction links can be found via your favorite mapping site or Pittsburghchinesechurch.com.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those gentles instrumental in locating and identifying a potential indoor practice site: Sir Kadan, THL Robert Marston, Lord Liam Mac an Tsaoir, and Cynewyn.

May all your seasonal festivities be warm and bright,

Lord Ogami Arashimoto no Shirou

Baronial Knight Marshal

## *Greetings, Worthy Fighters, From the Deputy Knight Marshal in Training*

A winter site has been found! For the duration of these cold blustery months, fight practice will be held Sundays from 1-5 pm at the Pittsburgh Chinese Church. The address is 8711 Old Perry Hwy, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Park in the downslope lot off of Highland Rd, walk around the side of the building (to across from the ballfield,) enter the first door, and walk up the stairs to the room on the 3rd floor. Further directions are below. Practices will continue each week at this site until further notice. There are a few things to note:

- ❖ There is no smoking in the church building or on the grounds.
- ❖ This is a dry site.
- ❖ No children may be left unattended.

Let's help the church desire our frequent return by our respect for the people and the space. I look forward to crossing swords with you in the comfort of the indoors.

In service,

Cynewyn, Deputy Knight Marshal in training

For directions:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=40.56502,-80.041616&num=1&t=h&sll=40.565013,-80.041468&sspn=0.00107,0.002411&ie=UTF8&ll=40.564981,-80.041355&spn=0.00107,0.002411&z=19> (entrance at the green arrow)

[http://www.pittsburghchinesechurch.com/en/pcc\\_locate.htm](http://www.pittsburghchinesechurch.com/en/pcc_locate.htm) Directions from various highways

Feel free to call me at 313-231-2511 if you get lost.

## *Greetings from the Chronicler!*

This month, I must remove my Chronicler's hat, and replace it with another -- that of Autocrat of the BMDL Twelfth Night Celebration! All information on the event is correct here in the December Althing, and more will be in the January Althing, including directions to the site and what happens in case of snow. Also, updates will be added to the Event Webpage, which is located at [http://www.debatablelands.org/events/twelfth\\_night/](http://www.debatablelands.org/events/twelfth_night/) so you can find them again at your convenience.

This month's cover was drawn by me from an illustration on my bedsheets.

Yours in Service.

Lady Elss of Augsburg

Chronicler

## *The Debatable Pie Contest WINNERS!*

As reported by Hilda Hugelman

Bow down before them! Hear their mighty recipes! Cower before the Great Pie Goodness that is them!!! For they have earned the titles Best Pie Makers in the Barony!

We held a pie baking contest at the November Barony Meeting, with two categories: fruit and vegetable. The winners were decided by popular vote. There were many popular and delicious entries. One crown favorite was "Procrastinated Pie" by Lord Pavel, which was simply a bag of apples. But there could be only two winners (sort of)!

The winner of the Vegetable category: Lord Bovi and his delectable Pumpkin Custard Pie (Cheesecake)! Mmmmm.

There was a tie in the Fruit category in which the entrants were so skilled that our expert panel of judges could not decide! The tie stood, and the two winning Fruit Pies were a mouth-watering apple pie by Master Alastar, and a period recipe for Char de Crabb, from the Boke of Gode Cookery, baked by Lady Elss.

Congratulations! They have earned the most delicious bragging rights in the Barony! Now you, the rest of the populace, have the better part of the year to develop your best recipes to knock them from their Supreme Pie Maker pedestals.



## Article:

### *English Land Tenure: A View from the Top*

By Master Dani of the Seven Wells (dani (at) pobox.com)

In principle, any land not kept by the King in post-Conquest<sup>1</sup> England was divided among some two hundred “tenants in chief” in exchange for services – specifically military services, often expressed as a number of knights. A tenant in chief could sub-infeudate part of that land to sub-tenants, in exchange for their support (and military services). They could do the same in turn with part of their own land.

Technically, the land was granted for the tenant’s maintenance, while the tenant served his lord, and could revert to that lord. In practice, by the thirteenth century, the holding passed from father to oldest son, though the Lord received a fee when the heir inherited. A family could only lose the holding for treason – which included picking the wrong side in a civil war – or if the direct male line died out. The usual custom in the latter case was for the land to be divided among the daughters, who were married as their lord decreed. (Yes, this meant that the lord could expect excellent bribes from suitors.) The lord also got to be, or to select, the guardian if the heir was male but still a minor. The guardian got to pocket the estate’s profits. (Yes, this meant that the lord could expect excellent bribes...)

The nicely-pyramidal structure of tenants and sub-tenants didn’t last. On the continent, nobles often had coherent territories. The Count of Foo ruled the County of Foo, which served as a basis of his military and economic power. In England, a Lord might hold slivers of land, scattered across several counties, from several other Lords – or from their tenants or sub-tenants. A tenant might rent small plots of land from another tenant – or sub-tenant, or even peasant – in order to rationalize a holding. England became a crazy-quilt of sub-holdings, which prevented most English nobles from building independent power bases.

The exchange of service for land didn’t last either, and was gradually commuted to cash payments. (When you are renting one fifth of a knight’s fee, it become impractical to show up for eight days duty a year.) By the thirteenth century, a tenant in chief probably couldn’t tell you who technically owed him service, and possibly couldn’t tell you how many knights he technically owed the king.

#### References:

“Rural England, 1085-1135: A study of Social and Agrarian Conditions”, Reginald Lennard, Clarendon Press, 1959.

“The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community”, Chris Given-Wilson, Routledge 1996.

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<sup>1</sup> Many sources treat the Norman Conquest as a great divide, with feudalism on one side and something freer and fuzzier on the other. It may be a mistake to give the Norman Conquest too much credit for the way English feudalism developed. William was able to impose a nearly-pyramidal system backed up by an efficient (for the times) bureaucracy largely because Saxon England was already traveling down that road.

## *Events of Note*

### *Reminder: Vikingr is Finally Back!*

From Court Baron Leonard the Younger:

Greetings,

After the hectic holiday season, the VIKINGR study group will be renewed. The focus of attention will primarily be the dynamic effects upon European cultures (east and west) by the last of the great dark ages and early middle ages migrations. Scandinavians, Magyars, etc. were all active and on the move, creating the foundations of later nation-states.

The meetings will be (at least initially) be scheduled on the last Thursday of alternate months, at 7:30 pm, at the home of Baron Len. A mailing list is being compiled for all who are interested in participating. Please contact me to be included on my "snail mail" list to receive notices and other information. Phone (412) 241-2105. No e-mail is available. Phone for directions or to be sent a map.

It was always our custom previously to bring a contribution to the snack table at our bimonthly meetings. Special covered dish; bag of chips; beverage; all were welcome. We always ate well while expounding on our research. Let us continue.

Once a year, usually just before the holiday season kicked in, we had a Saturday night film fest. Medieval movies: good, bad, ugly, hilariously awful - but great fun, all of 'em. Let's do that again. Plenty of SCA crash space until Sunday morning.

Yours in service,

Baron Len

NOTE: To indicate your interest or to ask questions, please contact Baron Len directly via telephone at 412.241-2105, as he does not use electronic media.

### *Monthly Medieval Cooking Gathering*

If you are interested in attending the medieval cooking gathering at Odriana vander Brugghe's home, which is open to anyone that would like to attend, please contact Odriana via email at [jenn.strobel@gmail.com](mailto:jenn.strobel@gmail.com) or by phone 412.213.8116 (no calls before 9:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m., please).

Unfortunately, the dates for the upcoming gatherings are as yet undetermined.

Warmly,

Odriana

### *Wednesday Scriptoria*

There is a twice-monthly scriptorium held at Odriana's home in Hampton Township. The scriptorium will be held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. Scribes of all levels of experience are welcome, new scribes especially so. For directions, please contact Odriana vander Brugghe by sending email to [jenn.strobel@gmail.com](mailto:jenn.strobel@gmail.com).

*Coming Event:*  
*Twelfth Night Celebration*  
*The Lodge at North Park*  
*January 30, 2010*

The Twelfth Night Celebration for the Barony Marche of the Debatable Lands is fast approaching! Many hands are working together to make this Twelfth Night full of fun and merriment. Here are the details:

- ❖ Location: The Lodge at North Park, (no street number) Pearce Mill Road, Allison Park, PA 15101
- ❖ When: on Saturday, January 30, 2010, the site will open at 10 AM and close at 9 PM or later, so that all may have enough time to enjoy the day.

Remember that this is a FREE event -- everyone is invited, there is no charge at the door and no non-member surcharge! No reservations are required.

Because this is also a Potluck, each person is requested to bring a dish to share. There will be nibbling and noshing all day long. Worried that someone else might be bringing the same thing you are? Not a problem: go to <http://www.luckypotluck.com/potluck/BMDLTwelfthnight> and check the list of dishes to see who is bringing what, and then list your own dish. If you have any questions, please contact Odriana vander Brugghe (jenn.strobel@gmail.com).

When you arrive, be sure to stop at the Troll table. Everyone will need to show a blue card or sign a waiver, and you will want to pick up a program and a token. Also, you may want to select a cookie -- but watch out! The two with the secret marks on the bottom mean that you have been chosen as the King or Queen of Misrule!

For the fighters in the Barony (and beyond), Lord Gabriel Hawke will be organizing a Two-Hour Bear Pit, with weapons and armor inspection at 11 AM. The tourney will start at noon, and run for two hours. There will also be Fun Fighting later in the day for kids young and old!

As this will be a family-and-friends-friendly event, there will be many activities for the younger ones of the Barony. There will be gingerbread cookie decorating, ornament making, and a showing of Basil and Bast, the book-DVD about two cats and the Hundred Years War. Games of all types will be available for any who wish to play.

So enjoyable were the impromptu musical gatherings around the fire at Pennsic this last summer, that all are invited to enjoy a Bardic Circle during the day. Musicians, bring your instruments, singers, bring your lyrics, poets, bring your epics -- everyone else be ready to hum along! After the circle, any and all may participate in the competition for the Baroness' Bardic Champion, which will be directed by Michael Alewright.

As the weather turns colder, thoughts turn towards not only the holidays, but to the long winter ahead. It is during the winter months that there is a greater emphasis on the arts and sciences as we find projects to keep us near the fire. In the spirit of the beginning of winter and in celebration of the process of making things, there will be a BMDL Twelfth Night A&S Display for projects in all

states of completion. There will be space for items that are complete as well as space for items that are in process. The requested documentation is one paragraph describing your contribution to the display. All ages are invited to participate in this display. If you have any questions about the display or you would like to reserve space in advance, please contact Odriana vander Brugghe via email at jenn.strobel@gmail.com or by phone 412.213.8116 (no calls before 9 a.m. or after 9 p.m., please).

Our esteemed Royal Baker, Urho Waltterinen, will preside over a Cookie Baking Competition! For those of you who enjoyed the Debatable Pie Competition, now is your chance to participate as well. Cookie of any and every type are welcome -- bar cookies, rolled cookies, drop cookies, cookies cut and shaped, filled and frosted, and everything else!

Lest you should find that the day be only fun and frivolity, a brief Barony Meeting will be held. Also, visiting Royalty will be holding Court, as will our own Baron and Baroness. We are pleased to announce that Court will be preceded by a performance by the members of the Debatable Choir, who have been diligently practicing seasonal favorites for our enjoyment.

Once the business of Court is completed, it is back to the fun and frivolity, thanks to a performance by that world-renowned commedia dell'arte troupe, I Genesii!! This special play reveals the Twelfth Night practices of Venice, and is not for the faint of heart or funny bone.

The Celebration would not be complete without Dancing -- so, there will be dancing! And, there will be live music! The Barony Dancemaster, Cai o'r Llyn will be compiling a selection of dances that will keep us on our feet into the night.

A complete list and schedule of activities will be in the program that will be available at the door when you arrive, and will be posted on the website as far ahead of time as possible.

Complete directions will be posted on the website, and will be included in the January Althing.

The autocrat for this event is Lady Elss of Augsburg (Rocky Hayeslip), who is grateful to be mentored by Hilda Hugelman. All inquiries may be directed to the autocrat at elss\_of\_augsburg at yahoo.com or to Rocky Hayeslip, 221 Pine Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 or by cell at 724.759.3333.

Mark your calendars now for the BMDL Twelfth Night Celebration on Saturday, January 30, 2010 at the Lodge at North Park.

## *Table Manners*

By Master Dani of the Seven Wells (dani (at) pobox.com)

The following advice is culled from "The Boke of Nurture":

- ❖ Don't spit over the table.
- ❖ Don't pick your teeth with your knife or fingers – especially if they are rotten.
- ❖ Wipe your mouth with your napkin before drinking.
- ❖ Don't use your napkin for blowing your nose; use your handkerchief.
- ❖ Don't blow on your soup or drink – especially if your breath stinks.
- ❖ Don't throw bones onto the floor.
- ❖ Don't break wind.

Ref: "The Boke of Nurture, or Schoole of Good Manners", Hugh Rhodes, 1577.

Furnivall, Frederick J., ed., "The Babees Book", Early English Text Society, 1868.

THE CANTON OF STELTONWALD OFFICERS AND MEETINGS  
(Beaver County)

**Seneschal**

Lady Madeleine de l'Este  
madeleinedlest at yahoo.com

**Knight Marshal**

THL Robert Marston  
kardasl+@pitt.edu

**Arts & Science**

Bonita of Steltonwald  
novakbonnie at hotmail.com

**Exchequer**

Baron Master Geoffrey fitz David  
chinaex at ccia.com

**Captain of Archers**

Muirgheal inghean Dubhghaill  
Muirgheall at gmail.com

**Castelain**

Lord Bóvi Farmaðr  
david\_black42 at yahoo.com

**Web Minister**

Maestra Gianna di Aurelio  
giannadiaurelio at comcast.net

**Minister of Youth**

Tomasia da Collina Ventuso

**Canton Meeting**

Third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.  
Beaver County Courthouse  
madeleinedlest at yahoo.com

**A&S - Every Thursday**

Bonita of Steltonwald  
novakbonnie at hotmail.com

**Archery**

Wednesdays, 6 PM - 9 PM,  
except the third Wednesday of any month  
Muirgheal inghean Dubhghaill  
Beaver Valley Archery Club  
captainofarchers at steltonwald.org

**Fight practice**

Every Tuesday, 6pm, at the Economy Grange  
Contact Robert

**Sewing**

Aoibheil of Dun Holen

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

THE COLLEGE OF COUR D'OR OFFICERS AND MEETINGS  
(Pittsburgh area colleges and universities)

**Seneschal**

Rosalia Iuliana Andrere

**Pursuivant**

Roana d'Evreux (Sara Gryger)

**Knight Marshal**

Maghnus de Cnoc an Iora

**Thistle (CMU) Liaison to Cour d'Or**

Dmitriy Shelomin ([dvrwaboy@gmail.com](mailto:dvrwaboy@gmail.com))

**Deputy Thistle**

Arslan ibn Da'ud

**Four Towers (Pitt) Liaison to Cour d'Or**

Richardt von Wien ([physica@yahoo.com](mailto:physica@yahoo.com))

**CMU Rooms Reservationist**

Margaret Makafee

**Email List**

send to  
[subscribe-sca-courdor@lists.andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:subscribe-sca-courdor@lists.andrew.cmu.edu)

Els of Augsburg  
c/o Rocky Hayeslip  
221 Pine Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

The Althing is the newsletter of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands.

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**FIRST CLASS MAIL – PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**