

THE ASHBURY TIMES



MONTH OF FERRET 614

DAME JOVUNN SACRIFICES LIFE

BY COUNT ULTHOC CROWNSMITH

On the twenty-second day of last month, a brave woman gave up her life for the good of the Kingdom.

Dame Jovunn Rannveig had possession of the Death fragment of the shattered Landbond. With the assistance of Lady Oblivia, it was possible for that to be returned to His Grace without her permanent death. She did far more than that.

As far as can be determined, the obelisk that was being used to affect the Marwolaeth and the Ross Separatists was powered by the sacrifice of spirits into it. As

Dame Jovunn was already beyond all shards of her spirit, her sacrifice in fact put the obelisk in stasis, freeing everyone bound by it.

Allow me to be perfectly clear: my daughter did not give her life to save her friend and Liege, His Grace Duke Nevin Kendrick. She did not sacrifice her life to return the landbond. She chose that the lives and freedoms of a clan of Falkirkers, the lives of an entire race of High Ogres, and the lives of every soldier and adventurer that would die fighting them was greater than her own.

As a Count and Knight of the Realm, I cannot disagree with this. As her father, you damned well better believe I do. However, as both, I could not be any more proud.

Dame Jovunn was a shining example of what it meant to be a Knight of the Realm, and had the fire in her heart of a true Vansir. She was loyal and valiant. As her liege, as her father, and as her friend, the void her passing has left in my heart shall not be filled for a very long time.



WITHIN:

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LET IT BE KNOWN

Let it be known that Sir Gabriel Kane of Falkirk has been captured and charged with the crime of High Treason against the land, the people, and the Crown.

He has been found guilty of this crime and his sentence is Death by Obliteration.

Upon being carried out, his permanently dead body reformed in the circle and has been disposed of.

Let this serve as a reminder that Icenia stands strong through all of the turmoil and chaos that has beset our beloved land. That order is still

law and we are ever vigilant.

Everywhere and always,
Paladin Tyler Balloch of the
Ordo Aurum
Champion of Cil Cilurion



IT'S A...

The daughter of Count Ulthoc Crownsmith and Baroness Ezri Silverthorn made her way into the world in much the usual way, though the announcement of her arrival was anything but.

Understandably, the couple kept their impending parenthood a secret at first, though clearly that wouldn't be possible forever. Suspicions first arose when the baroness refused Asitkir wine at dinner — normally her favorite beverage.

Aside from the usual rumors, this child stirred up quite a bit of excitement even before she was born when it was theorized that the Baroness could potentially be carrying the landbond from the Plane of Life within her. This led to no small number of arguments around whether Baroness Ezri should even be on the battlefield. However there were just as many supporters as there were critics. The horned elf Prolon (a healer and midwife) was heard commenting how he had once delivered a child on the battlefield, while the mother still had her sword in hand (which the Baroness's seneschal, Mouse, was quick to clarify was NOT the intention).

*"PLEASE JOIN
US IN
CELEBRATING
THE BIRTH OF
LITTLE
JOVUNN."*

There was also much speculation as to what the child's race might be, and how that would be received from various quarters. The Times was unable to reach any members of the Amani council for comment. Others pondered if the Count was attempting to rebuild his lost race. Still further political conspiracies suggested this could be a "matrimonial pact" of sorts to consolidate power within the Duchy, leaving Blythedale on the outside looking in.

The truth seems much simpler. Over their many years and trials as adventurers, a true bond developed. Private audiences with Her Excellency and His Honor reveal that this has been ongoing for some time, but with enemies the likes of Lochaber and Arienne, they decided discretion was the smartest course of action.

Her Excellency's absence the last few months was noticeable, and led to His Honor fielding many questions about expected dates, culminating in a series of "any day now" responses up to only moments before the announcement.

After months of gossip, rumors

BY ANORA BRIGHTMEADOW

and theorizing, the little girl arrived on the 21st of Serpent. In her last act as the Count's Herald, the late Dame Jovunn Rannveig delivered the following:

"Announcement from His Honor, Count Ulthoc Crownsmith. We have just received a whispering wind from Her Excellency, Baroness Ezri Silverthorn. She says that she has given birth to a baby girl who has "Ulthoc's eyes and her mother's ears." Please join us in celebrating the birth of little Jovunn."

In speaking with a member of the Baroness's household, it was later noted that the couple had actually decided to name their daughter Laerjovunn "to honor the memory of a dear friend and valiant noble, while still allowing their daughter to make a name for herself" but apparently, the new father is either forgetful, or hard of hearing. Perhaps both.

OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION OF COUNT ULTHOC CROWNSMITH

As all are likely aware by now, Icenia has lost a valiant defender. By my authority, and with the approval of His Grace, Duke Nevin Kendrick, I do hereby officially rename the estate of Jared in honor of its heroic

and beloved Champion.

The estate of Jared henceforth shall be known as Rannveig. This name shall remain unchanged, regardless of other changes in the Barony of Duchy, for as long as I draw breath. Furthermore, plans

for a memorial for Dame Jovunn are underway. Any interested parties should contact either myself, or Sir Anvilstrike.

In honor and valor,
Count Ulthoc Crownsmith



DUCAL TOURNAMENT IN R'KURA

The Gilded Claw is proud to be hosting this year's Ducal Tournament at Flameheart Keep. We are, as hosts, offering our hospitality to all welcome guests and take you under our protection. We would like to make all the nobility and adventurers aware of some rules and customs of our family. First there are the basic rules:

Wards and Limited Earth and Celestial Circles of Power are allowed to be cast in or on your room in our keep. They are also allowed in or on the small houses on our property.

The casting of Limited Circles of Power are allowed outside as long as they do not interfere or hinder the events of the tournament.

We would like to remind everyone that they will be in our home and that the rooms that people are staying in are my family's personal space, and the kitchen and dining hall are just that. It is not a

tavern and we hope that everyone will be respectful in our home. Please clean up after yourselves.

Sir Amaranthus Landcharmer has graciously offered his culinary expertise and will be preparing the meals for the Ducal Tournament. Please refrain from going into the kitchen during meal times unless given permission from Sir Amaranthus or myself.

There are several customs that we practice that some of you may not be aware of. Kiergani prefer to trade rather than deal in coin. Bring things to trade.

Unattended objects are considered usable to those who need it. For example, if a fight breaks out a member of my keep may pick it up and use it. We do not consider this stealing, and this is not limited to weapons. However, in light of the tournament, the people in my keep have been advised that items kept

in personal spaces are off limits and are not to be taken without permission. Food left out is considered left for anyone to eat.

The natural flora and fauna should be interacted with respectfully. Kin and Gorbe are considered to be the living embodiments of spirit guides. Dryads are considered the living spirit of the earth.

That being said, I hope that everyone enjoys themselves. Travel safe and see you all soon.

Lady Aubry Darksun
Matriarch of The Gilded
Claw



*"THE GILDED
CLAW IS
PROUD TO BE
HOSTING THIS
YEAR'S DUCAL
TOURNAMENT
AT
FLAMEHEART
KEEP."*

ADVENTURERS BE WARNED

Hello, my name is Grok of Blythedale. I am not afraid of evil, necromancers, and anyone who would be a threat to me, my people, or the Duchy of Ashbury.

No matter what the reason, Necromancy is bad and there is nothing worse than it. I would have liked to think that Zatarina of the Healers Guild would have agreed with me.

For her to say that necromancy isn't as bad as Celestial magic, golems in particular, is complete stupid talk. For her to say Celestial magics aren't natural, I say to her necromancy not natural. Taints the land. Celestial magic don't do this. She disagrees but after a few minutes she reluctantly said she saw my point of view. This makes me very

uneasy around her now. For that statement wants to lead me to believe that she is more okay with necromancy than with celestial magic.

I feel that the adventuring population should be on their guard around her now. I for one will be.

-Grok





QIU JUN-WU SQUIRED

Let it be known that on the 22nd of Serpent, His Honor, Count Ulthoc Crownsmith, did Squire the master ritualist Qiu Jun-Wu, as well as named him His Honor's "Aide de Camp."

This title apparently awards

Qiu Jun-Wu the authority to counsel His Honor on legal and military matters. For fulfillment of this position, Qiu Jun-Wu is attached directly to His Honor rather than specifically to either Court, and as such can move freely between them

By B. FEATHERBOTTOM

as needed.

The ceremony was performed privately, at Qiu Jun-Wu's request.

ORDERS OF FELLOWSHIP CREATED

By COUNT ULTHOC CROWNSMITH

By my Authority as Count, with the full backing of His Grace, Duke Nevin Kendrik, I do hereby establish the foundation of Orders of Fellowship within the Duchy of Ashbury.

An Order of Fellowship is a body of persons with their own recognized colors and structure, who have pledged themselves to the defense of the Duchy. As non-nobles, Orders of Fellowship do not necessarily need to swear to uphold the Code of Chivalry (although some Orders may choose to), but will be expected to hold themselves to higher social standard and greater martial readiness than a standard adventurer.

Orders must be Ratified by a Baron/Baroness or the Duke/Duchess of Ashbury. Members of an Order gain the non-gendered, non-noble title of Fellow in recognition of their service to the Duchy. Each Order will be overseen by a Master or Matron of the Order. This person must also be ratified by the noble recognizing the Order. If the Master or Matron is not a Noble of their own standing, they will be awarded the title of Lord or Lady as is appropriate, in recognition of their duties in keeping the Order in a state of preparedness. To be ratified, the following information must be submitted: the Order's name; the head of the Order; the estate

in which the Order is to be based; the purpose or standing for the Order; prerequisites the Order maintains for joining; and the membership to date. This also must be resubmitted each spring to make certain that records are kept current.

For those so interested, I offer a sample to demonstrate what should be submitted for ratification. My suggestion is if the Order is to be based within a Barony, deliver this to the proper Baronial seat; if it is to be based within a Ducal fief, deliver it directly to His Grace, the Duke, or His Grace's seneschal as opportunity allows.

"AN ORDER OF FELLOWSHIP IS A BODY OF PERSONS ... WHO HAVE PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO THE DEFENSE OF THE DUCHY."

THE ORDER OF THE RAM

By COUNT ULTHOC CROWNSMITH

Established: Ferret 614

Master of the Order: Count Ulthoc Crownsmith

Base of Operations: Rannveig

Purpose: The Order of the Ram was established by Count Ulthoc Crownsmith, in memory of his daughter, Dame Jovunn Rannveig. The purpose of the Order is to see to the needs and defense

of the common man and woman of the Duchy both in war and in service, as Dame Jovunn was famous for.

Prerequisites: To assist in maintaining their grounding as Servants of the Commoner, Fellows of the Order of the Ram must have at least apprentice level skill in a craft or trade, be skilled in mercantilism,

or be proficient in the Healing Arts. Members must also swear to uphold the Code of Chivalry.

Membership: Count Ulthoc Crownsmith, Goodman Merrick, Goodmaid Thurisaz.



ATTENTION CITIZENS OF BLYTHEDALE

BY BARON GARATHON VON STORM



A momentous event has occurred that affects all citizens of this fine Barony. His Excellency Baron Ivan Drake, who has lead this land with distinction for many years, has been asked by the Ordo Orum to ascend to their ranks and become a Paladin and warden of all Icenia. He has graciously accepted and will now join the other Paladins of the Ordo in the arduous and crucial task of leading the entirety of our Kingdom. We wish him well and know that by adding such a man to our Kingdom's leadership we are better off. In his last act as Baron he has promoted me to the Baronship of Blythedale. I have accepted this great honor and will strive with everything I am to lead and protect each of you.

Although I have lived and fought for our barony for many years, I have certainly not met all of its citizens and I wanted to take a moment to tell you a bit about myself. I originally hail from the small town of Norwyr in the Planes for Rage where I was a farmer and the sole town guardsman. I lived there with my wife, Elara, and son, Torin, until the coming of the Dominion. All of the residents of Norwyr save myself and Lord Captain Khorwyn Brey were thought killed by the Dominion during that terrible war. After the town was destroyed by gryphons and Dominion soldiers, the Lord Captain found me under the remains of my farmhouse, scarred, broken, and barely alive. With my family thought dead and our home destroyed we made our way to safety in Ashbury where we met many adventurers, soldiers, and nobles who took us in and gave us new purpose. It was not

long before Baron Ivan saw something in us and took us into his household and then onto his court. I was soon placed into the position of High Guard of Blythedale, where I reorganized and retrained our entire guard core and the Baronial Guard. Baron Ivan then made me his squire and I served him faithfully for many years as I learned leadership, politics, warfare, and what it takes to really live the Code of Chivalry. I was then knighted by His Excellency with the approval of His Grace, Duke Nevin Kendrick, and took over the responsibility of running our military. It was not long until I took the position as First Knight and Lord Captain Brey was promoted to replace me leading our military. During this time many trials were set before me and I did my best to serve our people and the Duchy of Ashbury. Some of what occurred was uplifting and some things tested me to the very core of my soul. These included being present at the destruction of the Dominion, releasing the Jade Skeleton, and my wife and son being recovered from the clutches of our enemies.

Much of who and what I am I owe to his excellency Baron Ivan, but it is important for you to know that I am not the same man. I firmly believe in the Code and every citizen's right to pursue their own path. You deserve to live free and safe from harm. However, we must remember that our Kingdom is beset on all sides by monsters, undead, and people who wish to destroy our way of life. Our Barony sits at the very center of Icenia and as such we are the most vulnerable to assault by a myriad of

enemies. I believe that a strong Baronial defense is our best course to deter those who would do us and the Duchy of Ashbury ill. As such my first task will be to hone our military forces and guard divisions into the best trained and outfitted military in all of Icenia. Enemies of our kingdom will respect and fear our banner as soon as we have taken the field. I have been a soldier for most of my life and I am not an idle man. I will actively work to protect these lands and its people with all the skills I possess. Our allies can depend on us and our enemies need be warned that I am here and will die to protect this Barony.

In this endeavor, every man and woman is needed. I will not conscript you into service but I implore those who can serve to do so. All skills are needed and desired from the lowliest of craftsmen to the strongest wizards and warriors. If you wish to serve, a use will be found for you.

My door is always open for any citizen of Blythedale. I or a member of my court will regularly be available for you to come and speak with in Greystone. As I am often in the field at His Grace's command, my wife, Lady Elara Von Storm, is now officially my Seneschal and will handle all daily domestic issues in my absence. Lord Captain Khorwyn Brey will continue in his position as commander of our military. Squire Readella will remain as High Guard of Blythedale, commanding all domestic guardsmen and leading the Baronial Guard. Circle Master Rowan has been running all of the Earth scholars of Blythedale for some time and is now officially promoted to Grandmaster of Earth Scholars. Wizard Nathan Westwind has been living among us for a num-

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE CODE AND EVERY CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO PURSUE THEIR OWN PATH."





ATTENTION CITIZENS OF BLYTHEDALE (CONTINUED)

ber of years and personally assisting and advising the court in celestial concerns. He is hereby promoted to Archwizard of Blythedale and head of our Celestial casters.

Let it be known that I am actively looking for the next generation of court members. If any citizen or adventurer has interest please see any of my court members. I am also in need of a second

squire. If you think have what it takes to walk the path of nobility then please see me. The road is long, but the reward for our citizens is beyond measure. Over the next few months I will be visiting every estate in Blythedale conducting town hall meetings and getting to know your concerns. Much of my court will be with me and available to answer your questions.

I love the land to which I have sworn fealty and I have pledged my service not only to His Grace, Duke Kendrick, but also to every citizen of Blythedale.

Yours in Service,

Baron Garathon von Storm of Blythedale

THE REBIRTH OF FALKIRK

BY PALADIN VACHT SILVERFANG

For two long years, the Duchy of Falkirk fell prey to the evil and violence of this realm and beyond. For two years, its people went without homes or food. For two years, our greatest hopes were held prisoners to our worst fears.

In the Month of Serpent, 614, Falkirk was liberated. After the court of Blythedale, its military, and the accompanying host of adventurers repelled the siege of Stirling Keep, we were able to effectively and swiftly cut through our enemy to its source.

Warlord Calum Tolmie, after having seized power over Clan Ross following Baron Gavin Ross' supposed death, assumed control over an extraplanar artifact left behind by Tranquis, the Overlord of Death, who was destroyed by adventurers on his own plane nigh a year ago. Tolmie proceeded to use this artifact through which he was

able to direct the Marwolaeth, now mutated into unearthly monsters, and keep his own Rossmen from dying.

Through much struggle and grief, the host assembled at Stirling Keep was able to seek out this artifact as well as Warlord Tolmie. Whilst the gathered forces repelled the onslaught of Marwolaeth, Dame Jovunn Rannveig of Nordenn surrendered the Landbond of Death, as well as her last life, to deactivate the artifact. With this ultimate sacrifice, Dame Jovunn was able to release the Marwolaeth of their tainted forms, return the Rossmen to their right minds, and bring new hope to all Falkirkers.

For the first time in two long years, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. With the remnants of the separatist Rossmen retreating in the wake of a great loss, the men and women of Stirling will move forward to reclaim

their homes. At last, we may let go of our fears and step out into the wondrous light of day.

From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of my gracious Baroness Bonnie Bannock, I thank all who came to Falkirk's aid when we needed it most. I wish to personally thank Prolon L'ar for his guidance, Chulainn Steelclaw for his ferocity, Sir Grim Anvilstrike for his decency, and most of all, Dame Jovunn Rannveig, who gave everything so that we might live on without fear.

We will continue the arduous and daunting task of reforming the Duchy of Falkirk, but know that we will never forget this day, the day when all from far and wide came together to bring freedom back to these lands: the Liberation of Falkirk.

Thank you.

*"AT LAST, WE
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If you're well-spoken and seeking extra coin, the Ashbury Times has an opportunity for you! We're actively seeking contributors of news articles in exchange for good silver. For further information, speak with a local Times representative or send a missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City!

If you have any information or theories regarding the appearance of spirits this past month at Falkirk Keep, please contact Ohtar Altohtaro Armand.

I shall happily part with the following, all of which I suspect shall retain their relative, ah, "freshness" for at least a half-decade: three pyrotis ("pyroti"?); three feyander (interestingly, there is no existent pluralization! oh-ho!); two fangteeth; two pennae; jetsam; nightshade.

For the love of Fortannis, take these off my hands lest I die in a magical avalanche. Given the relative potency of each - I reiterate that each shall retain its freshness for five years - I suspect 2 gold per reagent is unquestionably fair. However, if anyone desires the entire lot, I would part with it for 20 gold. I will, of course, consider other offers - consider being the key word. Interested parties may contact me privately.

Humbly, V

Interested in advertising or posting a personal? Seek out your local Times representative or send a missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City!

TALK OF THE TAVERN

In our monthly installment of "Talk of the Tavern," we'll be sharing some of the most notable rumors and stories going around Ashbury's local taverns — to keep you, our readers, apprised of what the common folk are saying.

Many folks are abuzz with talk of the upcoming Ducal Tournament in the estate of R'Kura. Several of the competitions have stirred adventurer interest, including a dessert competition hosted by Sir Amaranthus! Worry not, adventurers; he's judging, not competing.

Speaking of Honor Duels, having a high profile honor duel at a tournament seems to have become a yearly occurrence. Lord Captain Flint has challenged Squire Vox. This stems from a poi-

soning competition Vox tried to put on as a barely legal tournament event.

Speaking of nobles and nobility, Count Ulthoc and Baroness Ezri's daughter was named Jovunn, and was born within 24 hours of the death of her namesake Dame Jovunn. One has to wonder if this has something to do with the Landbonds of Life and Death seeking balance.

Getting back to lighter topics, at the last gather a number of adventurers were heard trying to practice acting "human." Is it possible



the other races envy humans more than they let on?

On the subject of humans, members of the court of Blythedale were seen actively trying to recruit more

women onto their court. Are they looking for a companion for the famed Blythedale Kid? They should look to the court of the Ash Forest for aid. Lately it has seemed that they only recruit young women. Perhaps the two courts should join and form a County of their own, not unlike the recently united Nordenn and Corrheim.

Speaking of Corrheim, many have expressed delight-

ed surprise in how well Sir Grim has settled into his role as knight. That being said, the Dwarf still has much on his plate— rumor has it that even after the events that took place in Stonehollow, two of the abominations that made their attack there remain to be destroyed.

It has been reported that requests for tea in taverns have been on the rise. The rumors seem to trace back to Squire Qiu Jun-Wu, who has already made an excellent example of giving freely to others through distribution of various kinds of tea.

That's all for this month's Talk of the Tavern! If you have a rumor you'd like to share, send your missive to our headquarters in Ashbury City.