

THE VIGILANCE
MARCH / APRIL A.S. FIFTY (2016)



LABOR FOR MARCH – PRUNING

**AN EARLY 16TH CENTURY STAINED GLASS ROUNDEL CURRENTLY IN THE
NORWICH CASTLE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY. FURTHER DETAILS INSIDE.**

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SHIRE NEWS

Winter elections were held once again at Heronter Twelfth Night on January 2nd. Vivats for our 'new' officers: Seneschal – Duchess Dorinda, Chronicler & Webmaster – THF Dagonell, and Fencing Marshal – Lord Jacob

Happy Birthday to Lord Bjorn Einarrson who will be celebrating on March 12th.

Happy Birthday to Lady Leonor Farfan who will be celebrating on April 1st.

Happy Birthday to Lord Dagonell the Juggler who will be celebrating on April 4th.

Happy Birthday to Master William Shakespeare who be turning 452 on April 23rd. ☺

Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 13th, "Spring ahead, fall back" so be sure to set your clocks ahead one hour or you're going to be late to work on Monday morning!

The official first day of Spring is March 20th, be sure to thank Punxy Phil, the national groundhog for a mild winter. Dunkirk Dave, the local groundhog said it would be more snow.

It's Maple Syrup Season. Check the website www.mapleweekend.com for sugar shacks near you. They will be open to the public on March 19-20, and April 2-3.

Heronter A&S Days are proving to be popular! Artists and crafts folk meet on the last Saturday of the month at Blackleaf Manor to work on projects, learn a skill, or just enjoy a pot-luck. For more information, check the webpage for a Facebook link to the next session.

Heraldry Breakfasts are also enjoying resurgence. The regional herald meets with folks one Sunday a month in a restaurant that serves breakfasts. Check the sca-aethelmearc or ae-heralds groups pages for information about the next session.

The cover illustration is one of a collection of eight roundels depicting labors of the months.

"They were probably originally made for the house of an early sixteenth-century mayor of Norwich, Thomas Pykerell, which still stands. Thereafter they are known to have been installed at a stately home, Brandiston Hall in central Norfolk, from some point in the mid-nineteenth century until 1985. At that point, scholars lost track of the roundels, and they are listed as missing in Kerry Ayre's *Medieval English Figurative Roundels* (CVMA (GB), Summary Catalogue 6, Oxford, 2002, pp. 163–65). Last year however a dealer offered them to Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. The artist has been traditionally identified as one John Wattock from Norwich, but the precise origins of the work remain a mystery. CVMA scholar David King will contribute an exclusive article about the roundels in the next issue of *Vidimus*."

(<http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-61/news/>)

Vidimus (<http://vidimus.org>) is an online magazine for stained glass enthusiasts. A vidimus, latin for "we have seen", was the approved design for a medieval church window. The article mentioned in the quote can be found at: <http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-62/news/>

Introduction to Bardic Performance

THL Brendan O Corraidhe mka Corrie Bergeron

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What is a “bard” in the SCA?

Historical - Irish, Welsh

High social status, well-educated, socially and politically powerful - after all, they wrote the histories.

King Conor Mac Nessa (ca 30CE) had a court bard, Ferceirtne. Ferceirtne's predecessor had a son who'd just passed his boards. He came into court and saw the ollav's feathered cloak laying on the poet's seat. He put it on and sat down. Ferceirtne rebuked him. Conor decreed that they should settle the matter by dispute, which they did. But they argued in the ancient language of the learned, and no one else could understand them. Conor decreed that the arts and sciences should be available to all. He made many other wise laws. Poets became so numerous that the people became incensed. Conor gathered 1200 of them and protected them for seven years until it was safe for them to again go about.

In the SCA

Catch-all term for performers, primarily vocal. Has been restricted in some times & places to song, story, poetry. More recently has opened up (esp. in N.O.) to other kinds of performing arts. Not everyone wants to be called a bard, though. Still some bad feelings between instrumental and period-only performers. See recent FB kerfuffle. It's a big deal to some people. Some people are minstrels or troubadours or minnesingers, NOT bards, thank you very much.

Me, I do a lot of different stuff: documentably period works in period style (Pastyme in Good Companye, Complaynt to His Purse), close-enough-to-period stuff (Great Selkie, Two Sisters), plausible original versions of period works (Gawain and the Green Knight, Pangur Ban), original works in period style about the SCA and its people (Lysbeth's Song, Oathbinder, the Deed of James ap Llewelyn, The Champions' Deed, Battle Chant for Northshield) “peri-oid” favorites (Crazy Man Michael, Stones, Karelia's Song, The Baron, Treefoot), filk and silly stuff (Dragon Road, Caffeine, Garb Song, Teenage Daughter), and not-totally-blatantly modern crowd-pleasers (Mary Ellen Carter, White Squall).

I'm not a minstrel or troubadour or skald or.... I'm a bard.

Some philosophy

When you get up to perform, it can be scary. (Personally, I've never been bothered much by stage fright much, but I've been performing in front of people since I was a kid.) Let me scare you some more: When you get up to perform, you are asking your audience to give you something they can never get back - their time and attention. That's huge.

Which is why in my list of the Seven Deadly Bardic Sins, I listed Apologizing as #1. If you think that you have to begin your performance by apologizing, then why should an audience give you their precious, irreplaceable time and attention? (More at <http://bardlog.wordpress.com>) You owe it to them to be prepared (unless it's a Bardic Safe Zone - see below).

Here's the other thing - with your VOICE you have the capability to make people cry, laugh, or fight like fiends. You can take them on an emotional journey, take them to fantastic places that they can only imagine, transport them out of space and time - and bring them safely back to here and now. With your VOICE. Don't take that for granted. It's a superpower.

Now you might be saying, whoa whoa whoa!! I just want to sing some songs or tell some stories around the campfire! That's ok, too. Just be aware that that power is there to be developed.

Venues - where (and when and what) can you perform?

I've got a whole blog post about this ("Competitions and Other Places"). Competitions are NOT the only place to perform. In fact, I was given a Purple Fret for singing in the kitchen prepping for feast. (Instigating the Shirtless Squires Dishwashing Squad might have played a role...)

Start with a Bardic Safe Zone. A place where you are among friends, where it doesn't matter if you flub a line or even crash and burn. Your day-camp at a tourney. Your campsite at an overnight event. Your table at feast. Setting up camp. Walking from Point A to Point B at Pennsic. Most bardic circles, especially at smaller local or regional events. Bardic Madness.

Once you have some confidence, try "fyrewalking" at a larger event - going camp to camp, offering a song or a story (leave them wanting more, of course). At Pennsic, look for a ribbon-bedecked mug on the camp gate - that's a sign that they're welcoming bards. If you do period material, look for a golden cord surrounding the camp perimeter - that's an Enchanted Ground, a camp where nothing of the modern world is visible. It's time travel, and very cool if you're up to it..

But start with low stakes and low stress. Sometimes, there will be a "pre-Court show" to entertain folks settling in for Court. It's a captive audience. The downside is that the acoustics are often terrible. If you're a quiet performer, probably not a good choice for you. Likewise, feasts are typically terrible venues unless you do background music. People are there to eat and socialize, and "Shut up you're being entertained!" typically doesn't go over well.

You've probably heard about Bardic Circles. Some people love them - they tend to be Bardic Safe Zones. Others detest them - they're not "real" audiences. The good thing is that you're likely to get a turn, and people will generally be polite. There are a number of different formats. Pick-Pass-Play is very common. When "it" comes around to you, you can pick someone else to do something, just pass, or perform. Your choice, no pressure. Often it's a very good venue for someone new trying to work up the nerve to get up and sing. It's a supportive, forgiving audience.

Note: An often unwritten rule is keep performances to under seven minutes. The SCA generally lacks venues for long form material. A few years ago - at a bardic-only event, no less - a fellow got up and told the entire prologue to the Arabian Nights. He told it well enough, but no one was prepared for a 25-minute story, and there was a good deal of grumbling. Some of

the early-to-bed folks didn't get a chance to perform as a result. Not good. OTOH, there are some events where a space and schedule IS set up for long performances.

Material - where to find it, how to work it up

(i do a whole class on this.) There is a world of material available now that we just didn't have access to years ago. What do you want to do? What's your persona? How invested are you in that? Do you want to specialize in 14th century French love songs, or write rousing anthems for the Dragon Army? Either and both are fine. Or maybe you just want to start with a Nasruddin story or fable. Yes, copyright is A Thing with non-period works. (I do a whole class on this, too.)

We live in the future, and the Library of Alexandria is at your fingertips. But keep your saltshaker handy. Just because it's at the top of a Google search doesn't mean that it's accurate. Take advantage of the folks who've spent years studying this material. We now have members with Ph.D.s in medieval history and music. Wikipedia is ok for a starting point, but follow the links at the bottom of the article. If you have access to a community college, chances are their library has access to a gajillion free online resources. (And in Ohio, there's OhioLINK.) They often have dedicated research librarians whose job it is to help patrons find good resources. By nature, they tend to be curious people who like an intellectual challenge.

So you've found a poem or song or a story you want to do. How do you turn it into a compelling performance? Often, the piece is going to be longer than can be reasonably performed in an SCA context. You have to edit it down. Find the key characters and plot points. Where are the emotional hits? Keep those. Are there minor side characters that doesn't really contribute? Some long description of landscape or action that can be condensed? Cut, cut, cut. (Hunting scenes in Gawain and the Green Knight, replaced by dialog that evening.) But some detail you might want to leave in (Gawain's shield, painting the picture of knightly virtue and values.)

Do you have to memorize? No. It's best if you can, but better a good performance on-book than a poor one off-book. And some people simply cannot memorize. But do try to make the book (or tablet) look period so as not to break the spell.

Preparing and performing

Unpreparedness is Bardic Deadly Sin #2.

There is no substitute for practice.
There is no substitute for practice.
There is no substitute for practice.

Muscle memory is A Thing. That's why fighters work the pell, why musicians practice scales. Words and tones are produced by moving specific muscles in the chest, throat, jaws, mouth, and lips. "We've patched her rents and stopped her vents, dogged hatch and porthole down." "No matter what you've lost, be it a job, a love, a friend." Over and over and over and over and over...

When working up a new piece, if you're not sick of hearing yourself do it, it's probably not ready.

free-wheeling post-revels. It seemed that every barony and shire *had* to have a bardic champion.

I won my share of them. In ASXX I was the champion of both Bryn Gwlad (Austin) and Stargate (Houston). I never did win the Kingdom championship, though. I served a term as the Principal of the Queen's College of Bards, but I never won the coveted title of Premier Bard of Ansteorra.** (I did eventually win the title of Midrealm Queen's Bard, with a story that I cooked up literally overnight three days before the competition. That's another tale, though.)

Competition produces stress. Some of it can be good stress (inspiring you to do your best). Some of it can be bad stress (feeling that you're not good enough, or that you have to be better than everyone else). And even good stress is still stress. People under stress act a little different than they do otherwise.

Me, when I enter a bardic competition, I'm in it to win it. I'll pull out all the stops. I'll pander shamelessly to the judges – they're the only audience that matters, right? I'll typically have several pieces polished and ready to go, depending on what the other performers are doing, because my goal is to be *better than them*.

Frankly, it's not a real nice part of my personality that comes out in competitions, which is why I don't enter them much anymore. I don't much like the version of me that takes the stage in competition. I might turn in a top-shelf performance, but I don't necessarily feel really good about it afterward.

But that's me. There's no question that competitions are an excellent venue for up-and-coming performers to get noticed, especially outside their local area.

They're not the only venues, though. I'm a big fan of encouraging non-competitive performance venues. Let's talk about some of those.

Circles

There are many different ways to structure a bardic circle. Themed or not. Pick-pass-play. Pass the token. Popcorn (whoever wants to go next, goes next). And others. Circles *can* be Bardic Safe Zones. Low-key, folks who know each other, with an express purpose of trying new stuff or encouraging new performers.

But circles aren't always BSZs.

Even in an informal setting, it can be very intimidating to a new performer to follow a Really Good Performance. (Hint: don't be [Timid!](#)) Heck, it can be intimidating to an old hand! Case in point: A couple of years ago at Pennsic I was sitting in a circle next to my old friend Owen Alun from Northshield. He did one of his signature pieces (Thorvaldsaga, aka Treefoot), and across the circle I saw Cariadoc – Cariadoc! – *leaning forward on the edge of his seat*. I had to follow *that!!!* No pressure...

Tips for performing a Circle. #1 Shut Up and Listen for a Bit. I totally violated this just a few months ago at Bardic Roundhouse. I moved from the mostly-instrumental Jam Session to the not-mostly-instrumental Bardic Circle and, stupidly assuming that it was a free-for-all, got my [Pride](#) all wound up and said, “Ok, I’m here! What do y’all want to hear?” (In my meagre defense, when I walked in the group was in one of those talk-among-yourselves phases and it was not at all clear who if anyone was Up Next.) Fortunately, I was among good friends who gently informed me that Someone Else was Up Next. Pass the humble pie, please.

Busking

Busking is simply picking a spot out in public, setting out a hat for tips, and performing. Street performance. I busked at the Texas RenFest for nearly a decade, and fed myself through grad school by leading beery singalongs of classic folk/rock favorites at the local watering hole.

When busking, especially in SCA contexts, be aware of your audible radius. Set limits. Share the stage: work out who-plays-where-when with other performers. If you’re playing near merchants, don’t EVER interfere with sales. Don’t outstay your welcome.

If you set out a hat to get tips, you really should be well-[Prepared](#), not just noodling around. You’re not just asking for your audience’s attention, but their coin as well, and all the rules of non-BSZ venue and performance apply.

And play by the rules: don’t take tips for doing songs under current copyright (e.g., written in the last hundred years) that you don’t have permission from the artist to perform for money.

Feasts

Frankly, feasts are a terrible performance venue. People are there to eat and chat with friends. Acoustically, the room is generally either very live (amplifies the slightest sound) or very dead (kills sound). Either way you generally can’t be heard from one end of the table to the next, much less across the hall. Ever notice how often people are nearly shouting at each other across the table just to be heard?

You absolutely do NOT want to be the person who says (in effect), “SHUT UP THIS IS ENTERTAINMENT.” (If the Crown or Coronet says it, then I hope you are Prepared and can deliver on their promise!)

Other than that, If asked to perform at a feast, you might consider these options:

1. Politely decline.
2. Play background instrumental music (harpists who can noodle / improvise, or instrumental consorts with a decent repertoire have this totally sussed)
3. Work individual tables, doing your best to command attention and be heard eight feet away.

4. Do the wandering minstrel bit, not really caring if anyone is really listening. You're part of the hall decoration, but that doesn't mean you can't be subtle and clever. Do "Rise/Baker's Edition" while people are setting up and filling up on the bread on the table, "Greensleeves" for the salad course, etc. (Do NOT do the Mousse Song for dessert unless all the children have left the hall!)

or....

5. Leeeetle tiiiiny tuuuube nooodles! Emcee the feast, and make it *memorable*.

Many years ago, there was an Italian feast at a big event (Midrealm Crown?) in Nordskogen, Northshield (Minneapolis, Minnesota).

You must understand that this part of the country was settled by the descendants of Vikings, and the local SCA has, shall we say, a distinct and authentic Scandinavian flavor. Lutefisk (think fish Jello) was actually served at a revel. "Racial integration" means Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Finns living in harmony. You've seen the movie "Fargo"? That's NOT made-up dialog. Yah, shore, youbetcha, dey really do talk dat vey up dere, don't'cha know, dere hey. They understand what Sesame Street's Swedish Chef is saying. When I moved to Minnesota I was given a copy of the book, "How to Talk Minnesotan." It proved VERY useful.

And an Italian feast was served.

Somehow, Baron Lewys Blackmore and I were roped into announcing the feast. And somehow, we hit on the following idea: Lewys, being a worldly, um. ah, "gentleman adventurer of the high seas" (who never sails without letters of marque, even if he has to pay a scribe to produce them), would announce each dish in proper (that is, floridly over-the-top) Italian...ish. I, being a low-born fellow of Irish-Norse background, would "translate" into the local Scandihoovian dialect.

So, "Siiiiigniores e Signorinas! Aaa prriiimo! La ensalaaaada grrraaande e vvverrrrte con aoio rrobuuustooo!" became, "Vell, now, to start vit, vee got cha a green salad. But hit's not de lime Yello salad you're yoosed to in yoor Lut'ran church basement, don't'cha'know. Hit's all plant leaves and stoff like dat, but choo can actually eat dem. Ant on de side dere's dis dressink stoff, vich might be a leetle bit spicy fer yer taste, so don't joost slater it on, dere hey."

And so it went. Totally improv, for all that's worth. We just played off each other. At some point I announced a pasta dish as "Leeeetle tiiiiny tuuuube nooodles!" People were in stitches. It was great fun.

Flash forward FIFTEEN YEARS.

I'm cleaning up the kitchen after an event with a local knight in my new baronial home hundreds of miles away at the far end of the old Midrealm. I recount the story of that feast, just to make chat while we're swabbing and sweeping. He exclaims, "THAT WAS

YOU!?!?! We were laughing all the way to Cleveland! I complained that my arms were sore, and so-and-so said, ‘Yoost poot some leeeetle tiiiiny tuuuube nooodles on eet!’”

Ubiquitous Bardic

Just do it. A few examples:

Feast-kitchen sing-alongs, washing dishes. If you can convince some hunky young squires to join you (and especially if they take off their shirts) you just might get a service award. It’s been known to happen.

Wandering an event site with a basket of goods for sale, singing short “hawking” ditties set to period tunes. E.g., To Greensleves: “Come buy my confits, very nice / Your fetid breath they will freshen. / I’ve anise, ginger and cinnamon / Your loneliness they will lessen.” (Good advertising gets your attention!)

Sing on the way to a battle. Some kingdoms are really good at this (Calontir, Northshield) but households can do it, too. Or just gather your courage and start solo. You never know who might join in.

Sing *during* a melee! Kari was belting out a song in the midst of a Pennsic field battle when a spearman nailed him. The spearman’s shieldman hollered, “You idiot! Why’d you kill him? I was enjoying that song!”

Be atmosphere. Sing or play in your pavilion or under a tree, with no expectation of audience. Let the music float out and help make the magic happen for others. Even if you’re just noodling around, it adds to the event.

Just.

Do.

It.

Addenda

* Yes, I know that the line is really, “Competition (singular) IN other places.” “Sultans of Swing” by Dire Straits is not only one of the best songs in the usually-whiney “Life as a rock star is SO HARD” genre (e.g. Rush’s “Limelight” and Bob Seeger’s “Turn the Page”), but also features some of the tastiest guitar work ever recorded.

**Years ago or so I made it to Pennsic and visited the Ansteorran camp. An old friend spotted me and grabbed me by the arm. “Brendan!” he said. “There’s someone you have to meet!” He dragged me through the camp to a tent and called inside. “Lady so-and-so? (I’m sorry, I really don’t recall her name.) You have a visitor!” I was, to say the least, puzzled as a young woman

the losing-est bards in Aethelmarc. I'm actually one of the entering-ist bards in Aethelmarc. I've won the Royal Bard competition twice, and since I've entered the majority of them, that means I've lost it dozens of times! But no one has ever introduced me as 'The bard who lost the Royal Championship over twenty times', only as 'a two-time winner of the Royal Bardic'. Your wins are recorded in history, only you remember the losses.

At this point, I'd like to tell you a little about myself. I'm a gamer. In college, I would spend all weekend playing war games. Literally. We'd start after our last class on Friday and play Risk or Diplomacy all night Friday, all day Saturday, and well into Sunday. On Sunday afternoon, with my dreams of world conquest as shattered as broken glass, I'd help put away the pieces and then ask, "Okay, what do you want to play next?" Winning was cool, but the victory would be forgotten by next weekend. One of the problems with the SCA is we give danglies to 'winners' and people forget it's the performance that's the thing. If you want to perform in bardic competitions, you're going to have to develop a thick skin. More on this below. That being said, I'd like to give a few tips on entering bardic performances.

Find out the rules of the competition. Most bardic events consist of each competitor performing one piece, but I've seen competitions where a few, but not all, performers are called upon for an encore before the judge/s choose/s the winner. Some competitions can have an elaborate set of rules. I've seen competitions that were multi-tiered, with three rounds, half the entrants eliminated after each round, you cannot have the same type of performance (filk, period, poem, story, instrument, etc) twice in a row and each round had a theme. Whew! Sometimes, the contests are 'any kind of performance' and acts like juggling, magic, puppetry, or instrumental are allowed to compete.

Try to find out who is judging. The audience? Pick something that will have them stomping boots on floors and tankards on tables. A laurel for music? Something documented to period. The king? If you don't know anything about him, try a campfire drinking song. If you know something about his persona, pick something from his persona's time and place. If you're not going with original work, have more than one song prepared. The second person to perform the same song in competition seldom wins. The other reason you need more than one piece is that you may find yourself in a run-off with the other finalists as mentioned above. Try to pick as different a piece as possible to show your versatility, even if it's not a requirement. Follow a drinking song with a period piece, music with a spoken story. I've seen competitions where each competitor was given a topic and had to compose on the spot. It helps to have a repertoire of historical incidents. I could tell a story of Michaelangelo or Genghis Khan off the cuff. Memorize a few rhyme patterns of sonnets. It keeps your poetry from becoming doggeral. It also makes you look like a bardic badass, if you can knock off a sonnet when others are struggling with simpler rhymes. Limericks are crowd pleasers, but it's difficult to create a piece that fits the rhyme scheme and is both clean and funny within limited time parameters.

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. If the audience thinks it's impromptu, that's fine, but it shouldn't actually be unrehearsed. Time your performance during rehearsals. Too long equals too boring. A mummer's play with multiple actors, or a puppet show can probably go 15-20 minutes. A solo performance should be kept to 5-7 minutes.

If there is someone listed in the event announcement as being in charge of entertainment for the event, write them an email. Introduce yourself, tell him what kind of performer you are (juggler, harpist, singer, etc.), how long your performance is, any conditions you need (a level floor space for your hammered dulcimer, enough light to read music by, etc.) and when you expect to arrive on site.

When you arrive on site, ask the troll to point out the MC to you. Introduce yourself, tell him where your equipment (if any) is, how many people are needed to carry it up to high table, how long you need to prepare (psyche yourself up, tune your instrument, etc.). If the performances are going to be at a specific place, see if you can leave your musical instruments or any equipment there. If the performances will be held during the feast, tell the MC where you will be seated. If the seating chart isn't up yet, tell him whether you're on-board or off-board and inform him when you do get a seat. Remember, he has to find you in a room lit only by candles.

When the MC tells you that you're on next, gather your equipment together as quickly as possible and do whatever set up is needed for your performance. If you have something bulky like a harp or a hammered dulcimer and high table is on a stage, it might actually be better to set up in front of the stage as the area in front of high table is usually just wide enough for a server.

Make sure the MC knows how to pronounce your name. If you have a name that's difficult to pronounce you may wish to give him either a phonetic or a shortened form of it on a cue card if need be. Try to stand one step behind and to the side when he is speaking to high table so that you are visible to high table but not upstaging him. If he is standing on the stairs to the stage, stand to the side of the foot of the stairs. If your equipment is set up, stand by it. He will direct their attention to you. Wait quietly while the MC talks. Bow to the royalty when he mentions your name. Do not speak until the MC bows and turns to walk away. Address high table by their correct titles. (If you do not know them, ask the MC beforehand). Give a brief introduction of your act. This should be two sentences at the most. For example:

"Your majesties, I would like to perform a Scottish love ballad titled, "Band of Shearers". It was traditionally sung in late summer and early autumn during sheep clipping season."

You do not have to give your name as the MC has already introduced you. Work out your introduction ahead of time so that there are no surprises in it. Please note in the above example, I said "clipping" as "sheep shearing season" can be a tongue twister. Having a prepared statement also eliminates the awkwardness of fumbling for words.

Next, the Judges are insane. Remember this. There's no other explanation. I've seen them choose winners for reasons that defy explanation. I've seen a bard who literally had the joint rocking with audience members stamping their feet in time to the music lose to an entrant who could barely be heard past the second row. Case in point; It was an event with a tavern and a laid back bardic competition. No rules posted, simply mention of a prize for the best bard. I had no clue who was judging, there was no sign up sheet, no master of ceremonies, just folks hanging out in the bar. Another senior bard and myself casually started running things, leading the applause after every performance, asking who wanted to go next, making sure everyone had a chance to perform. One gentle decided to try his hand at performing. His selection was "Ricketty Ticketty Tin" an old bardic campfire standby, but not one I would use in a serious competition. He was nervous and it showed. He was butchering the song, singing off-key, forgetting lines, skipping entire lyrics. I nodded my head at the other bard and when he came around to the chorus, we joined him. We sang the chorus together in full volume and more softly on the lyrics. If he forgot a line, we supplied it. He missed a lyric, we started it. He started to drift off-key, we pulled him back into harmony. He finished the song and we led the applause. Afterward, he came over to me and thanked me for the assist. I told him not to worry about it, every bard has an off-night once in a while. In court that evening, one of the audience members was called up. She was the judge for the bardic competition. You guessed it, she chose the Ricketty Ticketty Tin singer. After court and during the feast I sought her out.

"Excuse me, I'm interested in how you picked the bardic winner."

"Well, it was obvious he was the best performer."

"Umm, no it isn't, that's why I was asking."

"He was the only bard who got the audience to join in on the chorus."

Considering how much original work I had heard that night, that wasn't too surprising. It would have been nice to know that was part of the judging standard.

When you have finished your performance, bow, gather your equipment and leave. There may be still more acts following you. If your gear is too bulky to carry off, move it out of harm's way and retrieve it later.

When they announce in court that the no-talent hack who followed you was declared the winner, smile and applaud. When you get home, have a stiff drink and then check the event schedule to see when the next bardic competition is. Good luck!

The 20th anniversary of Feast of the Bears

Hosted by [Shire of Stormsport](#)

March 5, 2016 9:00 AM - March 5, 2016 8:00 PM

Late February and early March bring depression and loneliness to the lands of Aethelmearc so the Shire of Stormsport has felt it our duty to bring some light and cheer to the winter-weary by celebrating the Bears Event. Come join us on Saturday March 5th to help celebrate our twenty year anniversary! As usual, there will be a great deal of fighting, with both a double elimination tourney and a bear pit, designed so every fighter will have as much fighting as he could possibly want. This year, Her Grace Dorinda will be leading a fencing list.

The shire has not held a silent auction in several years so I expect some choice items when we clean out our closets, including a copy of the Visconti Hours. The funds raised will go to the Equestrians, to help finance their attendance at 50 Year. Lady Maggie Bakestre will teach a fun period card game.

The site is St. Teresa's Catholic Church, 9 Third Avenue, Union City, PA 16438, open from 9am to 8pm. The site is wet, but no open flames. Your autocrat for the day is Lady Leah Janette (MKA Janet Davis) 432 W 7th Street Erie, PA 16502, 814-315-0222.

Once again we will be holding a Kids Kitchen for the sideboard. Our head cooks from Stormsport are Lady Evelyn (age 11) and Lady Katherine (age 9), Children ages 4+ and their parent/guardian are invited to help us prepare the sideboard for the day. We will have kitchen prep jobs for all ability levels, with lessons on food safety and basic cooking techniques, all supervised by Ottilige von Rappoltswailer. Questions and dietary concerns can be directed to her at ottilige@rocketmail.com

There will be a succulent feast featuring some favorites from past Bears events. The price for feast is \$10.00 per person and is limited to 48.

Site fees for the event are \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children ages 5-12, and children under 5 are free. Students with a valid id are \$5.00. This includes a sideboard lunch. An additional \$5.00 non-member surcharge will be collected at the door. Please send reservations to Ciar ingen ui Chrotaig (Char Smith, 1007 W. Grandview Blvd, Erie PA 16509, charsmith@verizon.net). Please make checks payable to SCA-PA, Inc. Shire of Stormsport.

DIRECTIONS: From North: Take your best route to I-90 West and take Exit 41 in North East, PA. Turn left onto Route 89 South. After about 13 miles, PA-89 S joins with Route 8. Continue following Route 8 for another 8 miles into Union City. At the first traffic light, turn right onto West High Street. Follow this for two blocks, then turn right onto 2nd Ave. After one block, turn left.

From the South & West: Take your best route to I-79 North and take Exit 166 for Edinboro, PA. Turn right onto US Route 6N, which becomes US Route 6. Follow this until it intersects with PA Route 8 (approximately 19 miles). Turn left onto PA-8. Go through two stop lights, and at the

Aethelmearc A&S Faire

Hosted by Shire of Hartstone

April 23, 2016 9 AM - April 23, 2016 7 PM

Calling all artisans! Come one, come all to the inaugural Aethelmearc A&S Faire, held this year within the borders of the shire of Hartstone! The event will take place April 23, 2016 at the Wellsville Elementary School, 50-98 School St, Wellsville, NY 14895. Trol opens at 9:00 and closes at 2 p.m. We must be off site by 7 p.m. Questions may be directed to the autocrat, THL Renata rouge (Ren Finnemore)3367 State Rt. 248, Wellsville, NY or (ladyren@gmail.com or 585-596-515; no calls after 9 p.m.)

A luscious day board is planned, under the watchful eye of Lady Lasairfhiona inghean Aindriasa. Any dietary questions or restrictions may be directed to her, Vicki Presler, 6549 Gardner Rd, Bath, NY 14810, (607) 382-0690 (ravenheart.vp@gmail.com.)

The cost of the event is \$13 for adults, \$7 for children under 12, babes in arms are free, (site fee includes the day board.) \$5 non-membership fee will apply. Reservations may be sent to Lady Lasairfhiona inghean Aindriasa, Shire of Hartstone P.O. Box 45, Kanona, NY 14856. Please make all checks payable to SCA-NY, Inc.-Shire of Hartstone.

Information about the Faire format may be found on the Kingdom A&S website, <http://aeans.aethelmearc.org/>,

Directions: Take your best route to NY I-86.

From the East: Stay on I-86 W, follow signs for Interstate 86 W/U.S. 17 W / Hornell / Olean / Jamestown; Take exit 33 toward NY-21/Almond/Andover; Turn right onto Karr Valley Rd, Continue onto Karrdale St. Turn right onto NY-21 S/N Main St/Rte 21 S S, continue to follow NY-21 S/Rte 21 S S for 12.8 miles. Turn right onto NY-417 W/E Chestnut St .Continue to follow NY-417 W for 7.8 miles. Turn left onto Fair St, then left onto School St.

From Corning, NY: Take the I-86 W/NY-17 W exit. Turn left onto NY-417/S Hamilton St., turn left to merge onto Interstate 99. Take exit 8 for NY-417 toward Erwin/Addison,turn right onto NY-417 W. Stay on NY-417 W for 46.6 miles. Turn left onto Fair St then left onto School St.

From the West: Take your best route to Olean, NY. Stay on I-86. Take the exit toward State Route 19 N; turn right onto State Route 19 N for 3.3 miles, Slight right onto NY-19 S/Greenwich St Continue to follow NY-19 S for 9.9 miles. Continue onto NY-417 E for .6 miles and turn right onto Fair St then turn left onto School St.

Or, make your way to NY-417 E in Olean and follow for 15.5 miles ; turn right onto NY-417 E/Wellsville St., continue to follow NY-417 E for 12.5 miles, turn right to stay on NY-417 E continue for 2.1 miles, then turn right onto Fair St and left onto School St.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- MAR 5 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THREE BEARS EVENT
[HTTP://AETHELMEARC.ORG/EVENTINFO.PHP?EVENT=1106](http://aethelmearc.org/eventinfo.php?event=1106)
- MAR 5 DEADLINE FOR LITERARY ENTRIES FOR ICE DRAGON
- MAR 6 HERALDRY BREAKFAST IN RHYDDERICH HAEL
- MAR 12 LORD BJORN'S BIRTHDAY
- MAR 13 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS
- MAR 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY
[HTTP://BUFFALOIRISH.COM](http://buffaloirish.com)
- MAR 25 GOOD FRIDAY
- MAR 27 EASTER SUNDAY
- MAR 28 DYNGUS DAY
[HTTP://WWW.DYNGUSDAY.COM](http://www.dyngusday.com)

APRIL

- APR 1 LADY LEONOR'S BIRTHDAY
- APR 2 FESTIVAL OF THE PASSING OF THE ICE DRAGON
[HTTP://AETHELMEARC.ORG/EVENTINFO.PHP?EVENT=1067](http://aethelmearc.org/eventinfo.php?event=1067)
- APR 4 LORD DAGONELL'S BIRTHDAY
- APR 18 TAX DAY
- APR 23 FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER
- APR 23 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY
- APR 23 AETHELMEARC A&S FAIRE
[HTTP://AETHELMEARC.ORG/EVENTINFO.PHP?EVENT=1110](http://aethelmearc.org/eventinfo.php?event=1110)
- APR 30 LAST DAY OF PASSOVER

MAY

- MAY 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR A.S. LI (FIFTY-ONE)
- MAY 5 CINCO DE MAYO
- MAY 7 AETHELMEARC SPRING CROWN TOURNAMENT
[HTTP://AETHELMEARC.ORG/EVENTINFO.PHP?EVENT=1011](http://aethelmearc.org/eventinfo.php?event=1011)
- MAY 8 MOTHER'S DAY
- MAY 19 – 22 AETHELMEARC WAR PRACTICE
[HTTP://AETHELMEARC.ORG/EVENTINFO.PHP?EVENT=1078](http://aethelmearc.org/eventinfo.php?event=1078)
- MAY 30 MEMORIAL DAY

The Vigilance: A Publication of Heronter
c/o Dagonell the Juggler mka David P. Salley
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