

“A newsletter for the Barony that’s never a boar”



The Ben Dunfirth Clarion

fall A.S. LIX (2024)

in this issue...

*A missive from Their Excellencies
“Beyond the Mega-Practice”
Updates from Pennsic & fanExpo
Upcoming events & meetings*

www.bendunfirth.com

From Their Excellencies

Baroness Meredyth Llwellwyn
Baron Jørgen Lennertson

Unto the populace Ben Dunfirth, do We, Jørgen and Meredyth send greetings. Fall is once again upon us, and we look forward to crisp autumn days and cool nights in the lands of the great Boar. We have once again moved into our fall meeting space at the Hamilton District Christian High Cafeteria. We look forward to our weekly meetings and practices in this space through the fall and winter months. Specific details for the meeting can be found on our baronial website. The Kingdom event calendar is brimming with a whole host of activities: more details can be found in the online event calendar.

Our own event Huntsman's Harvest is fast approaching, and we encourage everyone to come out, get involved and enjoy the food and activities! It takes a lot of people to run a barony, and we wanted to take a moment and thank all the people who have held a baronial office, the people who are actively holding a post right now, and those people who are newly volunteering to take over one of our vacant posts. We greatly appreciate all the time and effort you put forth in the execution of your duties! To that end if you are interested in volunteering for any roles, please seek us out and we would be happy to discuss any opportunities you are interested in.

As always we make a special request to our populace: we would greatly appreciate any award recommendation you have to share. Unfortunately we cannot be everywhere all the time, so if you see someone doing something you feel they should be recognized for let us know!

In kind and faithful service to the Barony and Kingdom,

Jørgen Lennertson and Meredyth Llwellyn, Baron and Baroness of Ben Dunfirth



From the Chronicler

Ascelyn of Ben Dunfirth, Armiger

Thank you all for picking up (downloading) this Fall 2024 edition of Ben Dunfirth's Baronial newsletter, the *Clarion*. This is my first newsletter as baronial chronicler so as is my prerogative I've remodeled a bit, put on a fresh coat of paint, and shuffled around the furniture.

What to expect

At a time when most SCA discussion happens in either highly-visible but ephemeral social media channels or in private discussion, our baronial newsletter serves as a more durable record of the game we play. This means we will continue to report the awards and achievements of our barony's members, as well as document events as best we can through photos and the written word. News on upcoming events will also be included, though admittedly you are more likely to seek out the most up-to-date event details online.

What I am particularly keen on is making space in our newsletter for sharing our thoughts, projects, and stories: with few of us maintaining our own websites, most online sharing doesn't lend itself well to longer posts (like deep research) or later recall (ever tried to find something that was posted more than a month ago in a Facebook group?).

I especially want to encourage contributors who would like to write about "the game" itself—discussion of our game often takes place in the arena of the comment section or in scandalized, hushed discussions about so-and-so. Publishing only four times a year, the *Clarion* is a "slow" channel where we can reflect on what game we want to play and how to get there, in a format that doesn't encourage focusing on the latest gaffe or misjudgement.

Why is everything sideways?

You'll notice that the *Clarion* has gone landscape! My experimentation with this newsletter owes a lot to zine design, and this layout serves as a tribute to that format. I want this newsletter to be a place where nothing's too small to be worth sharing and there's room for everyone to bring their own ideas to the table.

"Under Construction"

Because I am working in a different publishing software than my wonderful predecessor, formats and templating for this newsletter are starting from scratch. Do not be surprised if some sections are a little bare-bones as I hit the ground running.

Cheers,
Asce

Beyond the Mega-Practice:

Ideas for local events outside the martial disciplines

Magistra Nika Dmitrieva doch' Zvezdina, OL, OP

Mega-practices have become increasingly popular in Ealdormere, a trend that started before the pandemic and has very much picked up speed since. Whether they focus on just one martial discipline or all four of them, mega-practices have become de facto small events, often attracting an audience beyond the local group and involving social aspects and, occasionally, classes as well. These are certainly filling an event gap, particularly in the winter months, as more and more groups are challenged in hosting more than one regular event per year and as inflationary prices on just about everything makes long travel less common for many SCAdians.

However, for the most part, this concept has not expanded much beyond the martial disciplines. One could argue that some traditional local "party"-type events, such as Rising Waters' Yuletide dessert revel and the traditional Ben Dunfirth chili cookoff, could qualify as social mini-events, but these tend to be more gatherings of SCAdians rather than SCA events.

I do think there is a significant gap in Ealdormere, however, that small local events might fill. I'm noticing that outside of FOOL, Practicum, and to some extent Blue Dragon, classes aren't getting as much play as I think they could, and I think smaller

local events could help fill that space. I'm going to describe a few possibilities, on an escalating scale of complexity.

Ben Dunfirth has already done the first type of event: the Informal A&S get-together. Get a room somewhere, and open it up to projects of any kind, perhaps with someone leading informal instruction/assistance in (insert name of craft here.) We often have called these "stitch and bitch" in the past, but no reason why it wouldn't work for things besides sewing.

Next up would be the structured workshop. In this case, get a room or find a space with the right equipment and bring in an instructor for a longer class, much like you'd see at FOOL. People show up around lunchtime and by dinner time, they've either made a thing or gotten a great start on one. Add on a potluck dinner or some pizza, and you have social time as well. These could potentially last multiple weeks if needed.

The third idea is the mini-collegium on a single topic. Get a site, pick a topic (e.g. clothing, scribal arts, leatherworking, fibre arts, cookery, etc.) and host a series of classes just on that thing with a common area for those who didn't want to go to every class. (It isn't a large step up from this to a full single-topic collegium with a couple of streams, much like Step Sprightly for dance.)

Finally, we have the full mini-collegium. For this, we would need a site where a couple of simultaneous tracks of classes could run. This would not be restricted to just one topic—it would include whatever people were willing to teach, with a central area to gather and share for people not in classes. Again, not a large step up to something like Practicum in the Althing; the main difference is scope.

The thing that all of these have in common is that they can mostly run in a single large room in the winter, but could potentially take place outdoors in the warmer months, depending on the needs. And the clever will have noted that some indoor mega-practice sites would absolutely work with an added A&S track if there is access to extra space. I even recall a few years back a service symposium that was organized with three tracks of classes covering all kinds of service-related topics.

The main challenges with these events are twofold: First, finding suitable sites. This is not just in terms of cost, but also in terms of equipment needed to do particular arts. The second is staffing. A mega-practice needs marshals and maybe gate staff (and butts if there is archery or thrown weapons); that's about it. An arts-focused mini event beyond the simple “show up and do your thing socially” requires one or more instructors and, for the last couple of options, someone to do the scheduling. But I'd argue there should be a market for these sorts of things, and they're likely to get better attendance if there is a specific class or classes that will be offered along with social space.

I would love to see more of these kinds of events held, particularly in the winter months, as a way for people to be involved in A&S at a more local level in the same way the mega-practices have allowed for bigger gatherings for those practicing martial skills. If anyone is interested in putting this kind of thing together and would like to discuss further, feel free to contact me.



*A Ben Dunfirth sewing day in 2023
Photo by Gabriel of Ben Dunfirth*

Pennsic 2024

While Their Excellencies were unable to attend, Pennsic War LI was nevertheless an eventful occasion for many a Ben Dunfirth resident. This was Their Majesties Evander and Marioun's first Pennsic reign, with Honourable Hun Hespeler serving as their Warlord for armoured hostilities. Monday morning brought the joyous squiring of Noble Fischer to Master Gaijin as well as the knighting of Sir Brand Thorwaldson.

Wednesday, during a brief lull on the list field, the Honourable John Spooner stood for the Middle Allies in the Arts & Science war point, where he achieved a perfect score for his *Lying Press and Plow*.

Accomplishments and recognition of Ben Dunfirthers continued on through the waning days of the War, with Dominus Howell James of Town's End receiving both their Award of Arms and the Queen's Favour in Ealdormere's Royal Court Thursday evening. Howell went on to perform the following night in the Known World Players' production of a new dramatic work, *The Reckoning*.



Demo Events: Many Thanks

Many thanks to the inhabitants of Ben Dunfirth who journeyed up the coast of the inland sea to volunteer at Ealdomere's booth at ~~Toronto~~ Eoforwic FanExpo, as well as further north to Middle Ages on the Green.



Events in Brief

For things that I don't have photos for, or were too close to press time...

Stone the Crows & Brawl in the Fall

Both events had a contingent of Ben Dunfirthers attend.

Coronation

Following a hunting accident and a hasty, grief-fueled swearing-in, Their Majesties Crispin I and Anne I were crowned King and Queen of Ealdormere. We welcome home Duke and Duchess Evander and Marioun as they enjoy a well-earned retirement from the lupine thrones.

In addition, we would like to congratulate Noble Gabriel of Ben Dunfirth, who received their Award of Arms at Coronation.

Huntsman's Harvest

Germania Park Campground

4221 Trinity Church Road, Binbrook, LoR 1Co

Admission: Member 15\$, Non-Member 25\$,

Under 18 Free.

Lunch: Beef and barley stew – gluten-free and vegetarian options available

[See webpage for details.](#)

Schedule (at time of publication)

10:00 AM – Event gate opens

Their Majesties' Discretion – Morning Court

10:00 AM – Thrown Weapons | Range opens

10:00 AM – Archery | Range opens/Inspections Begin

[TBD] – Order of the Crucible Meeting

[TBD] – Order of the Laurel Meeting

[TBD] – Armoured | Authorizations

[TBD] – Rapier | Authorizations

[TBD] – All Martial | Their Royal Majesties' Champion Tournament

[TBD] – All Martial | Baronial Champion Tournament

12:00 PM – Lunch Table Opens

1:00 PM – Armoured | Poker Card Tournament

2:00 PM – Armoured | Hungry Barbarian Tournament

3:00 PM – Brewer's Competition at Town Hall

4:00 PM – Preserves Competition at Town Hall

Evening Court, followed by Potluck Feast

Baronial Meetings

Cafeteria of Hamilton District Christian High School

92 Glanaster Road, Ancaster

Business meeting at 7 PM followed by fight practice.

No meeting October 14th, November 18th, December 22nd, or December 30th at time of publication.

Other Upcoming Events

For the most up-to-date event information, please consult the kingdom calendar and event webpages.

October 6 – Beat Your Meeting

Didn't get enough fighting in at Huntsman's? Head a short ways southeast and get a fight practice in the next day (and fulfill your order meeting duties if you're in a martial order).

October 19 – Crown Tournament

Ramshaven plays host this fall's tournament.

October 26 – Step Spritely

A by-donation event dance event in Vest Yorkvik. An events reachable by public bus wagon!

November 16 – Queen's Prize Tournament

An A&S event in northeastern Septentria, focused on encouraging those new to the arts & sciences. See event page for details on how to submit an entry.

December 7 – Wassail

Less than two months out from fall crown, we return to Shakespeare (hey, it's a period name!) for fighting, shopping, and plenty aside.

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