

Raven's Herald

Vol. 12 Number 3

Courage and Honor

September, 600

A Celebration of Peace!

His Grace, Duke Maximilian Greystone, has declared a Duchy-wide Holiday on January 1st, 601, in celebration of the Anniversary of our Victory over the Sessuar Emperium. He asks that the populace lay aside all work and join in the festivities, which will

begin on the eve of December 31st with a feast, dancing, and displays of magic and artistry. Smaller festivities will be held in the Baronial capitals for those who cannot attend the activities in the capital.

Craftspeople are asked to bring their wares for dis-

play and performers should prepare their best works. Brewers are being commissioned to bring their best wares, while the Duke's own Head Chef, Hacks, is overseeing a bevy of butchers, bakers, and other cooks to prepare food for the hundreds ex-

pected to be in attendance. His Grace will hold Commoners' Court all day on the 31st, prior to the onset of the celebrations, for those who wish to bring forward concerns about the ongoing rebuilding of the Duchy.

Unusual Spider Activity Concerns Ducal Forces

Reports have reached the Raven's Herald that the Ducal forces established around Ravenholt proper have been experiencing significant problems with an unusual number of Giant Spiders in the area. Giant Spiders themselves are not usually very tough physically, but are considered deadly because of their poisonous bite and their ability to use their webs as offensive attacks, ensnaring unwary passerby before they have a chance to escape. Giant Spiders are usually quite aggressive, and have been known to travel

in packs, but until now they were usually found in small groups, well spread apart from one another, with only as many living in an area that the prey can support.

However, a total of six separate squadrons of Ducal Army forces have recently failed to report for duty, and two members of these squadrons have resurged with reports of large numbers of Giant Spiders acting in wholly unnatural ways. They reported that the Giant Spiders were using what appear to be complex military

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Visit from Prince Kevynn Blackfox

At the long End-of-Summer gathering, His Highness Prince Kevynn Blackfox came for a visit. His primary reason to visit was to congratulate His Grace, Duke Maximilian Greystone, on the successful completion of a quest the Prince had given His Grace.

By rebuilding the Duchy of Ravenholt, Duke Greystone has made the efforts that made him worthy to accept the bond of the land. In a solemn ceremony attended by most of the town, Prince Blackfox shared his land-bond with Duke Greystone, thus strengthening the land and making a great step toward the full cleansing of the Duchy. Upon being accepted by Tyrra, Duke Greystone declared, "The battle has only just begun. We shall persevere as we continue to make this Duchy the strongest and most beautiful Duchy in the lands of Evendarr!"

The Prince also spent some time re-acquainting himself with the people of Ravenholt. He spoke with some of the commoners during his open court, and met at length with each of the noble courts in a series of closed-door sessions.

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Pantherghasts Attack!

As the September gathering began, the citizens of Ravenholt felt the cold dread and fear of several Pantherghasts' approach. Dwarves, Elves, Sarr, and Humans were all gripped with the feeling of being hunted and watched, and before the night had ended, the creatures were seen on the field. Later that eve, Baron Johann led a group through the harsh and trackless wilderness to find the Elven Pantherghast. They were apparently called out of bed for help after it slew Guildmaster Kainon Andrews, Viscountess Tristemere Mirabad, and Ashmont, Head of Guild Security. Calls for help summoned a group of Elves and others to the Guild to hunt the terrifying creature. It was slain, and left behind a bottle later determined to be its own. Ashmont, who died his permanent death, was restored to life by a boon, channeled through Sir Valamar of Cumberland, from an unknown source.

As the gathering wore on, the other Pantherghasts were spotted and pursued, although they eluded capture for many

hours. The Elven hunter was not spotted again, presumably because of its bottle. Sunday afternoon, a Destroy Greater Earth Magic formal was performed on the Elven bottle, cast by Guildmistress Keylandra Dirath. It appeared to take its normal affect. Baron Moonwind, Sir Valamar, and a few others relentlessly attacked the Sarr hunter without the benefit of having a Sarr to aid in the fight. As dawn broke, they proved victorious, gaining the aid of an early-rising Sarr.

Sunday evening, the Elven Pantherghast reappeared, to the dismay of the Elves nearby. It proved more elusive that time, and while it was about, the Human hunter also took the field. Soon after, the Dwarven Pantherghast appeared. All of the Dwarves in the town rallied together and with the support of their teams and other townsfolk, they defeated the Pantherghast and took its bottle. The Human Pantherghast was also hunted and slain that night, and according to reports, its bottle was not retrieved.

In the end, the forces of

Ravenholt triumphed, and the formal magics were defended long enough for the destruction of the recovered bottles. It is believed that the bottles of the Elven and Dwarven Pantherghasts were destroyed, although because of the misconception of which circle these destroys had to be cast at, the Elven Pantherghast is still at large.

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tactics, such as dividing the Ducal forces into small sections through the use of terrain and traps, and the goal of the Spiders seemed to be capture, rather than killing for food. Strangest of all, once the Ducal forces were captured, they were held like captives, instead of being rolled into webs and killed. The captured scouts told an amazing tale of actually being carried about gently by the Spiders, being fed and given water at regular intervals, and protected from other monsters that approached the areas where they were being held. The two scouts died, unfortunately, before they could ascertain the fate of their captured brethren.

Following what little the

Ducal scouts could remember of their capture, a "nest" of sorts was recently found. The nest was abandoned, but its size and contents has many Ducal officials concerned. Eyewitness reports tell of a quarter-mile area of the Eastwyck forest festooned with the remains of large spider webs, and the desiccated corpses of animals and humanoids, each drained of all life and bodily fluids, hanging like perverted leaves from the massive trunks of the trees. In the center of this area was what appeared to be a rough shelter like a humanoid would make, with a bed, writing-table and pen, several books, and humanoid foodstuffs. Whomever or whatever this individual was, they apparently had no fear of the Spiders, and many are concerned that this humanoid may be responsible for the Spider's renewed attacks, great numbers, and apparent singularity of purpose, perhaps though some means of control. If the concerns of the Ducal forces are proven true, and these beasts are now under some form of control or guidance, they could make for a formidable army indeed.

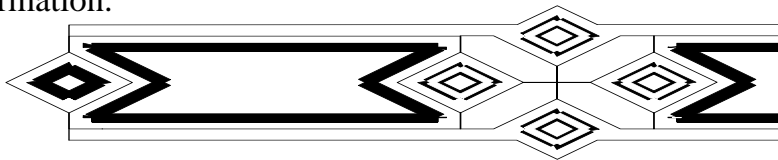
Public Notices

The Raven's Herald is hiring reporters and regular columnists. We pay a few silver for a good lead and up to five gold for finished well-edited work. If you are interested, please send a missive to Holly Castleton, editor-in-chief.

Reward for Information regarding the whereabouts and safety of the warrior Cadoc and his lady Anwyn, of the Dasha Morbihan. Please send word to Ajahana Sheylan, care of the Healers Guild of Neridia's Gate.

Warrior Seeks Healer: In my twilight years I find I do not avoid the rain of daggers upon my back as often as I should. I'm tired of wondering whether I'll wake up in the morning. If you're an elven or mystic healer between the ages of 120 and 160 who wants to share safe walks along the river and can protect me from harm, I'm looking for you. Send word care of this paper. -Sir Lonelyhearth

The Dark Lions are assembling a detailed map of the area around the Capitol. Teams who assist the Pride in this endeavor will be paid in Gold and given a copy of the completed map. Please contact Captain Greymeir for more information.



War Recovery Progressing

With the second anniversary of the end of the Sessuar War approaching, signs of recovery throughout the Duchy were slowly appearing. Many farms reported successful harvests for this year yet much needed mills to grind the wheat & storage buildings are being packed tight as both are still in short supply. It is estimated it may take two months for mills within the Barony of Eastwyck to convert their entire harvest. The Barony of Westmarch meanwhile, reports that a third iron mine was reopened recently, having been closed for almost four years. The much needed ore will be a welcome addition to the Duchy's supplies that have seen little re-

Eastwyck Garrisons Raided

Late last month, a large group of unknown brigands assaulted several Ducal garrisons within the Barony of Eastwyck within several days of each other. The unknown group, numbering above twenty capable warriors & casters, quickly stormed their intended target, mostly arms storage areas, incapacitating any defenders within before removing all supplies kept there. No deaths were reported in any of the raids throughout the Barony. These brigands, described as clad in nondescript clothes with covering hoods or face wraps to prevent identification are believed to be the same group that struck an armed caravan earlier this year in the Barony of Cumberland. In all, it was estimated that over one hundred weapons & fifty suits of armor were stolen in the raids as well as assorted tools to make & repair these items. Baron Johann of Eastwyck immediately dispatched the Eastwyck Rangers in pursuit of this at large group. Any information concerning these raids is asked to be forwarded to Sheriff Wolfstar, whom is investigating these recent brigand raids throughout the Duchy.

laxation of war rationing status due to low production throughout the Duchy. Skilled labor is also in short supply within the Duchy due to huge losses suffered by our citizens during the great conflict. It is with relief that His Grace announced last month that all citizens within the Duchy will have shelter this upcoming winter with new homes having just been completed in many towns & villages through out the Duchy. With a large harvest & shelter for all, this winter looks to be less harsh than previous winters since the war for the citizens of our Duchy.

Orphanage Founded

As part of his unflinching efforts to rebuild the Duchy to even greater heights than its previous glory, His Grace, Duke Maximillian Greystone, has announced that several steps being taken for the further alleviation of the suffering caused by the war against the forces of the Sessuar Imperium.

His Grace has announced the creation of a new Orphanage, currently being constructed on the outskirts of Ravenholt, on the Westmarch border. The Orphanage will be dedicated to the surviving children orphaned by the wars that Ravenholt has suffered. Although the Orphanage is to be sponsored by the Ravenholt military, any and all donations will be accepted, be they of material goods, services or coin. Please contact Captain Greymeir of the Dark Lions, or the Ducal Household for more information.

On the afternoon of October 2, 600, the Armies of Ravenholt are sponsoring a

Bake Sale. Many tempting sweets and confections will be offered for sale, and the proceeds of the sale will be used for the relocation of displaced Ravenholt families to northern Cumberland and Capulus.

On the evening of October 2, 600, an auction sponsored by the Armies of Ravenholt will take place in the capitol city of Ravenholt in the Tavern. Items to be sold will include rare production components, Formal Ritual Magic Scrolls and weapons and armor of surpassing strength and durability. All are invited to attend, as all proceeds of the auction will be used as compensation for the families of those that have permanently died in the War against the Sessuar.

His Grace stated that there are several more plans in the works for other methods of aid for victims of the war, which will be announced in due time.



Ducal Astrologers See Bright Times Ahead

Astrologers throughout the duchy have been reporting promising visions and generally positive visions about the realm of late. It has been determined that several who reported a sense of loss and emptiness now report a sense of anticipation.

The Duke's own astrologers report that upcoming weeks may prove somewhat difficult for travelers. It is highly recommended that those abroad come to roost in the relative safety of one town or another. One seer recommends that caravans travel with extra security.

The October gathering at Ravenholt may prove highly eventful, as it is known that in the dark of a nearly new moon, this time of year often sees heightened activity from both the Graveyard of the Four Winds and the Heroes' Graveyard. While some may benefit from the potential for ancestral visits, astrologers warn that other spirits may bring painful memories of the war.

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Prince Kevynn left Sunday to continue his tour of his lands after expressing his pleasure at the strides taken against the foes of Ravenholt, and offering his advice and suggestions on how to continue improvements.

Long live Duke Greystone,
Long live Prince Kevynn,
Long live King Mykel!

Sir Alan Moonwind,
Baron of Cumberland

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself; I am Holly Castleton, the newest editor-in-chief of the Raven's Herald.

Growing up in Ravenholt, I was often aware of big news that never seemed to make the Herald. As I am now painfully aware, the resources of the reporting staff are limited, and as such, we cannot be everywhere to record news in-the-making. I plan to place my field reporters in town as often as possible. If you have news you are just bursting to share with the duchy, please don't hesitate to send me a missive or to speak with our reporters. Be famous and revered as a hero – be in the Raven's Herald!