



*The Newsletter of the Northern Marches, serving Allyshia, Ravenshore and Wuduholt be Secq*

## From The Editor

CATRIONA MACRATH

Winter is often a time of hibernation, but we in the Northern Marches have not been idle. This issue contains the exciting results of Lupercalia, as well as a recipe from the Redwood Spork competition, and other things creative.

The next issue of The Strand will have a theme - celebrating our friendly neighborhood Woodwose. Gather your stories and drawings, and submit them by March Crown.



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## From Their Excellencies

AYLWIN AND CAOIMHE MACNEILL

Another Lupercalia has come and gone and we are proud to announce Baroness Megan and Lord Ulfar as our heirs. Both the Baron and I think they will do a fantastic job in the upcoming year and look forward to their reign. Baroness Megan has been Baroness before and brings experience, enthusiasm, and a positive, forthright style to the position, while Lord Ulf is one of those members who has always impressed us with his sense of honor, integrity, graciousness, and kindness. We wish them good luck and good fortune in the upcoming year.

His Excellency and I will be at Spring Feast in the Shire of Wuduholt be Secq this month and look forward to one last huzzah with our populace. The Shire is chockful of great members and we always look forward to interacting with them. We highly recommend participating with this wonderful group of people whenever you are able. I have seldom met a more gracious, accepting group of ferocious Vikings in my life and we consider ourselves lucky to have such talented and active neighbors.

Last Baroness Nag for my reign....please contact Megan or I if you have largesse

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to donate for taxes. As Baroness Megan stated, this is one of our big opportunities to show Kingdom how talented and active our members are up here in the watery wastelands.

This is probably our last article as Baron and Baroness so please indulge us and allow us to thank those who have been invaluable to us this year. There are a ton of people who should be thanked, but I don't want to take up the entire newsletter. We thanked our court at Lupercalia and every one of you deserves a grand Huzzah. There are, however, a few people who really stood by us and provided assistance above and beyond. Robert, Nicole, Tom (and his renegade twin, Shethok), and Andreina (Magic Hands) held our hands and offered us peacefulness, humor, and a safe haven when needed (and bottles of wine, whiskey, and shots!) Seamus and Darius were ever attentive, available, and hardworking...they made set up, take down, and everything in between function smoothly. Signy and Megan, you helped me maintain my sanity with your supportive listening (reading?) and empathy throughout the year. Estee and Falyndrac provided consistent support and expertise behind the scenes to both of us. Thank you to Catriona (our beloved Tyrant) for all the work you've done in the Barony and keeping us organized. And last, Donovan deserves a ton of thanks for keeping everything going and businesslike. He really can't be thanked enough for the work and effort he puts in as Seneschal.

Last, I have to apologize to those of you for messing up the Baronial Drinking Game (yes, I know about it - drink every time the Baroness says something inappropriate) but you can blame Robert. Robert d'Audrieu gave me some of the best advice we received, well before we even ran for Baron and Baroness. He pointed out that it's not so much the award given that makes it memorable

for people, it's the person giving them the award. We took this wisdom to heart and tried to communicate to each of you who was recognized this year, how much we respect and admire you all for the amazing work and positive, gracious spirit you bring to the Barony and its environs. Thank you all very much...and see you on the other side!

## *Dark Chocolate Salted Caramel Cookies*

At Lupercalia, a Redwood Spork competition was held, in which Her Excellency commanded chocolate must be used. A number of tasty recipes were offered, along with some rather silly documentation. The following is the offering for Dark Chocolate Salted Caramel Cookies, created by Cloelia ban Ghuinedhear and documented somewhat fancifully by Iain Gearr-Sheallach O'Maoilbhreanainn.

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The earliest documented appearance of this confection was during a feast arranged by one Charles Buquet, a 14th century Earl of Cadbury, during a Royal Procession by Edward III. The Earl's account of the event mentions that the King's eldest son took a particular liking to the dark dessert, leading an unnamed courtier to refer to the younger Edward as "The Black Prince."

The Earl claimed to have acquired the recipe from his mentor, a well-travelled nobleman named William of Onqua. The fabulous tales of his alleged travels have led some scholars to suspect that this mysterious figure is the inspiration for, or perhaps the true author of the popular travel memoir *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, which circulated through England and France in the late 1300's. However, because the tales cited by the Earl Buquet in regards to this confection are not found in any surviving copy of *The Travels* the majority of scholars find this to be a dubious conclusion at best.

*continued on page 4*



# Apothecary Guild

BY MEGAN PLANTEROSE

Are you interested in Herbal Lore and the Apothecary Arts? You are not alone!

Apothecary meetings in Allyshia are on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

This month we're making solid amber perfume with special guest Teacher Emily Price. In March we'll be making paints and pigments. April's topic will be determined based on what's bloomed by then -it will probably have something to do with nettles. Weekend excursions to ID and harvest locally abundant edible and medicinal plants of medieval significance may be scheduled this spring if there is interest.

To keep up on the latest, join the Pharmacopoeia of the West Facebook page. Network with other Apothecarians in the West Kingdom. Share research, show off projects, ask questions, and more.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/711538385640180/>



(Image credit: "Preparing Medicine from Honey", from a Dispersed Manuscript of an Arabic Translation of De Materia Medica of Dioscorides, dated A.H. 621/ A.D. 1224)

# Spring Feast

Please join the Shire of Wuduholt be Secg February 25th, for a day of merriment and feasting. The winter was long, but there is still delectable food left in the pantry and much to celebrate! This year's feast will feature the "Deliciousness of Apples". Bring your games to share during the day. Then relax and enjoy the evening entertainment and scrumptious feast, including a "new" Viking puppet show and a cider competition (contact Don Davis and1066@charter.com for more info).

Site will open at 1PM and dinner will be served at 6PM. Site closes at 10PM. No open flames; site is discreetly damp.

Del Norte County Fairgrounds : 421 Hwy 101, Crescent City CA 95531

Directions: Make your way to HWY 101, follow until you reach Crescent City; if coming from the south, site is on the right. From the north, site is on the left.

Co-autocrats: Lynn Herriott and Sonja Ingvarsdotor (twinbot.2@gmail.com)

Feastocrat: Lynn Herriott 707-458-3462

Laurel Barneburg, 707-954-7259

Fee: Adults: \$20 • Children 10-17: \$10 • Children 9 and under: Free • Family Cap \$50

Dietary issues? We will have special fee of \$10.00 for anyone who would like to attend the feast but not partake in the food.



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The confection itself consisted of two components. The first was a dark, sweet pastry, it's most prominent ingredient being a spice of unknown origin. The Earl Buquet claimed at the time that he possessed a dwindling supply of the mysterious spice which had been granted to him as an inheritance by his mentor. The Earl said that William of Onqua had brought it home from one of his travels, "...to a distant land populated by orange-skinned dwarfs," and hinted that William had once maintained a living tree on his estate from which the spice was derived.

The second component was referred to in the Earl Buquet's writings as Carmel or Carmelite Honey, and he described it thusly, "...an exceedingly thick honey... light of color... (with) a not unpleasant burnt flavour." Again, he credits its discovery to his mentor William of Onqua. According to the Earl Buquet, the unique honey was originally in the keeping of an isolated sect of the Carmelite Brothers on the slopes of Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, which is where William first encountered it. When the Carmelite Order later relocated to Europe, Onqua donated large sums to establish a monastery on land adjacent to his estates, where the monks kept hives of the unique bees for many years.

## **Ingredients**

1/2 cup butter - I buy salted and mix it cold

1/2 cup white sugar

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1 egg

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 cup flour

2/3 cup unsweetened dark chocolate cocoa powder

1 tsp baking soda

1/8 tsp salt

2 Tbsp milk

1 - 1/2 cups Dark Chocolate Chips - I'm fond of Guittard as they are large

16-17 caramels - I use Brach's because that is what we have here

coarse sea salt

## **Directions**

I use a stand mixer with the paddle attachment - which is why I make everything with cold butter, the cookies spread less which is how I like it :) I also don't sift things in a separate bowl unless it's a super fussy recipe. Life is short, cookie dough should take less than 10 minutes to throw together.

1. Cream the butter with the sugars on medium speed until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla.

2. Add the baking soda, vanilla, and salt.

3. Slowly add the cocoa powder.

4. Add 1 Tbsp of the milk

5. Slowly add the flour

6. Add the 2nd Tbsp of milk

7. Add in chocolate chips

8. The dough will be very dense and you may have to scrape down the bowl between mixing ingredients. It will smell and look a lot like Oreos crumbled up. If it is too dry, add a bit more milk. However, you want a nice dense dough.

9. Chill if the dough is too soft. We live in Humboldt, everything is always cold, I don't chill the dough.

10. Unwrap those caramels! Do this beforehand while watching TV or such -

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then feel guilty about all that plastic wrapper waste. You can use Rolos, or other chocolate caramel covered candies - but I feel that chocolate tastes inferior when you bake with it.

11. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees and prepare your cookie sheet. I recommend a thin cookie sheet - not a roasting sheet/pan - and parchment paper.

12. Take a quarter machine gumball size of dough, flatten it a bit, pop down one of your unwrapped caramels. Take a bit more dough, less than what is in your hand, and put it on top. Now mold the dough around the caramel, trying to make sure the wall between the dough and caramel isn't too thin (it will ooze out if so, and burnt caramel is an acquired taste)

13. Place round caramel dough ball on baking sheet - repeat until you fill your sheet, dough about an inch apart as these don't really spread.

14. Sprinkle your dough balls with coarse sea salt, to your satisfaction.

15. Bake them 12 to 13 minutes. They won't look done, but I promise, they are.

16. Let them cool on the sheet for a few minutes. If you don't, they'll bust apart and while they'll still be yummy, no one else is going to want them - which could be a good thing.

17. You're done! I like these cold - I like all my desserts cold. Pack them up in a sealed container - they can live up to a week or so like this, but who are we kidding, you're going to eat them before that time frame is up.

18. Enjoy!



## *A&S Night*

A&S Monday nights continue at Conall and Megan's house.

Each month we have a tentative special topic. Sometimes we have a teacher; sometimes we just all swan in and muddle through until we figure it out. Either way, Arts and Sciences are more fun as a group! Tedious tasks seem less so with friends and many things are easier with an extra hand or two.

This month we're making largesse and taxes. In March we'll be trying our hands at woodblock carving and printing. In April, Luiggi will be teaching sheath-making (details and materials list TBA). As always, you don't have to dive into that month's topic if it's not your thing; all are still welcomed and encouraged to attend. As always, armoring and armor repair will be going on in the shop, and BYOProject is always welcome.

Do you have something you'd like to teach or learn? Let us know!

## *Calendar of Events*

Feb. 25 Spring Feast, Wuduholt be Secg

Mar. 10 Baronial Business Meeting

Mar. 25 March Crown

Apr. 14-16 Fools' Tourney, Ravenshore

Apr. 22 Heron's Pool

### *Ongoing events*

Heavy Fighter Practice - Tuesdays 6:30pm

Rapier Practice - Sundays 12:30pm

Apothecary Guild - 3rd Wednesday 6:30pm

Check the official calendar at [allyshia.westkingdom.org/calendar](http://allyshia.westkingdom.org/calendar) for details.



## Ragnar's Stone

BY HEATH THE WANDERER

“Ragnar, how goes your words?” asked Bjorn. He sat on the dirt with his back to a fallen tree. His massive size prohibited the use of the two plank chairs his companions toted around. Bjorn’s cloak lay across the log. His size did give him some respite from the chill in the air. The steady fire in the pit helped, but he feared strange sounds in the night more than he feared cold nights.

“It is fine, Bjorn,” replied Ragnar, “but, I have more work to do before I die.” He sat closer to the fire, wrapped in a blanket from southern lands.

“Then work quickly, my friend!” exclaimed Ulfr. “Death does not wait for us to catch up with our plans.”

Bjorn and Ulfr laughed and drank deeply from the mead horns in hand. Ragnar smiled. They teased him often, but lightly, about his stone. He worked it every day, in smooth sailing and calm nights. When the weather kicked, or when threats came from the darkness, he stood by their side, just as fearless, just as ferocious. When time crawled by them and the world ignored them, he chiseled runes into a circular stone as wide as a small buckler. It weighed him down, but Bjorn said it would make him stronger.

“What if you do not finish?” asked Ulfr with a sobering voice. He squatted next to the fire. His blanket lay on the ground to the side and he pressed himself against the heat as if it were a woman with wine in her hands.

“Then my story will go unfinished,” said Ragnar, accepting that his fate was not in his hands.

“I will finish it for you, then.”

Ragnar looked up at his friend. Their

eyes met and the friendship forged over long years completed the conversation. Bjorn interrupted.

“Ulfr! Don’t lie to the man. You can’t draw words.”

They all threw back their heads and laughed. Ulfr’s attempts to learn the runes always ended with vulgar words and something broken. His anger never directed itself towards his brothers in arms, making it safe for jest. Also, he always came back for another attempt, even if a year passed.

“Of course, I couldn’t finish it, either. My hands were not meant for such fine work.” Bjorn’s hand nearly spanned, pinky to thumb, the stone itself.

“If I die before I finish, you two will go to the lands of the dead and bring me back, just so I can finish telling my story.”

No one laughed. Ragnar had never said such a thing and it resonated in the night air.

“Brother,” Ulfr said solemnly, “We will try to do such a thing even if you do finish that stone.”

A moment of silence rode the bonds between them.

“I know,” said Ragnar, a faint smile on his lips. “I know.”

They all drank deep before turning to lighter topics.

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David sat on his folding camp chair. One nylon armrest sagged, worn and frayed from use and abuse. He opened a bottle of beer, took a sip, and dropped it into the functioning arm rest’s drink holder.

“Mary, tell the group what you told me

on the drive up.”

“Oh, the stone!” said Mary, excitement rising in her eyes. “A recent dig found a round rune stone telling the tale of a man’s life in Norway. The story started on the edge and spiraled inward. It had some lively bits, but mostly it told a story of sailing, fighting, sailing, loving, sailing, fighting.”

“What? Just like that?” asked Mike.

“Actually, yes. Just like that. No embellishments, no details, almost like a simple journal. The interesting thing, though, is that it was all first person except for the last part. The spiral stopped half way in, then in the center, the runes start up again. Or, rather, they finish. Like someone added the ending before finishing the story.”

“And then I died,” said Mike. “Is that how it ended?”

“Nope. The scholars think someone else finished the story. It loosely translates to, ‘Ulfr get Ragnar Bjorn from gods.’ The story starts with Ragnar’s name and Ulfr and Bjorn are mentioned often. Someone suggested that Ragnar died before the story was finished and Ulfr finished the story.”

“From the gods? You mean, Valhalla?” asked David.

“That’s my guess,” said Mary. “Like, Ulfr had to go to the lands of the dead to get his friends back.”

“I hope someone comes after me when I am gone,” said David. “At least for a visit and a drink.”

“Right?” said Mike. “Man. Can you imagine that Ulfr traveling the world looking for a way into the lands of the dead?”

They sat silently as their imaginations spun tales in their heads.

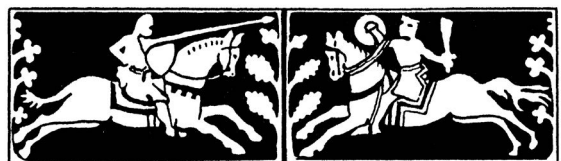
## Northern Marches Arts and Sciences

Save the date! Northern Marches A&S will be happening the weekend of August 11 in the Barony of Allyshia.

It’s some ways off yet, but planning classes takes time. Last year’s event was a big success, drawing folks from An Tir and central Kingdom. If you’re interested in teaching a class at this year’s Northern Marches A&S, please contact Signy Jólinnardóttir via Facebook or [and1066@charter.com](mailto:and1066@charter.com) to get on our growing list of great instructors!

Also, if you have a class you’d like to see taught, let us know, and we’ll see if someone is willing to teach it.

Got littles? We’re working on setting up a Youth Point, and possibly also having a class or two suited to our future Laurels. Let us know if you’re approved through the Kingdom process to work with youth, and if you have a class in mind, or just want to help distract little hands while parents attend classes.



This is the January/February 2017 issue of The Strand, the official newsletter of the Barony of Allyshia. Allyshia is a branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not a corporate publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc, and does not delineate SCA policies. This newsletter is available online at <http://www.allyshia.westkingdom.org>. Articles and artwork contained herein is reprinted by permission of the author/artist, and may be reproduced only with their permission. Submissions should be sent to [catriona.macrath@allyshia.westkingdom.org](mailto:catriona.macrath@allyshia.westkingdom.org).