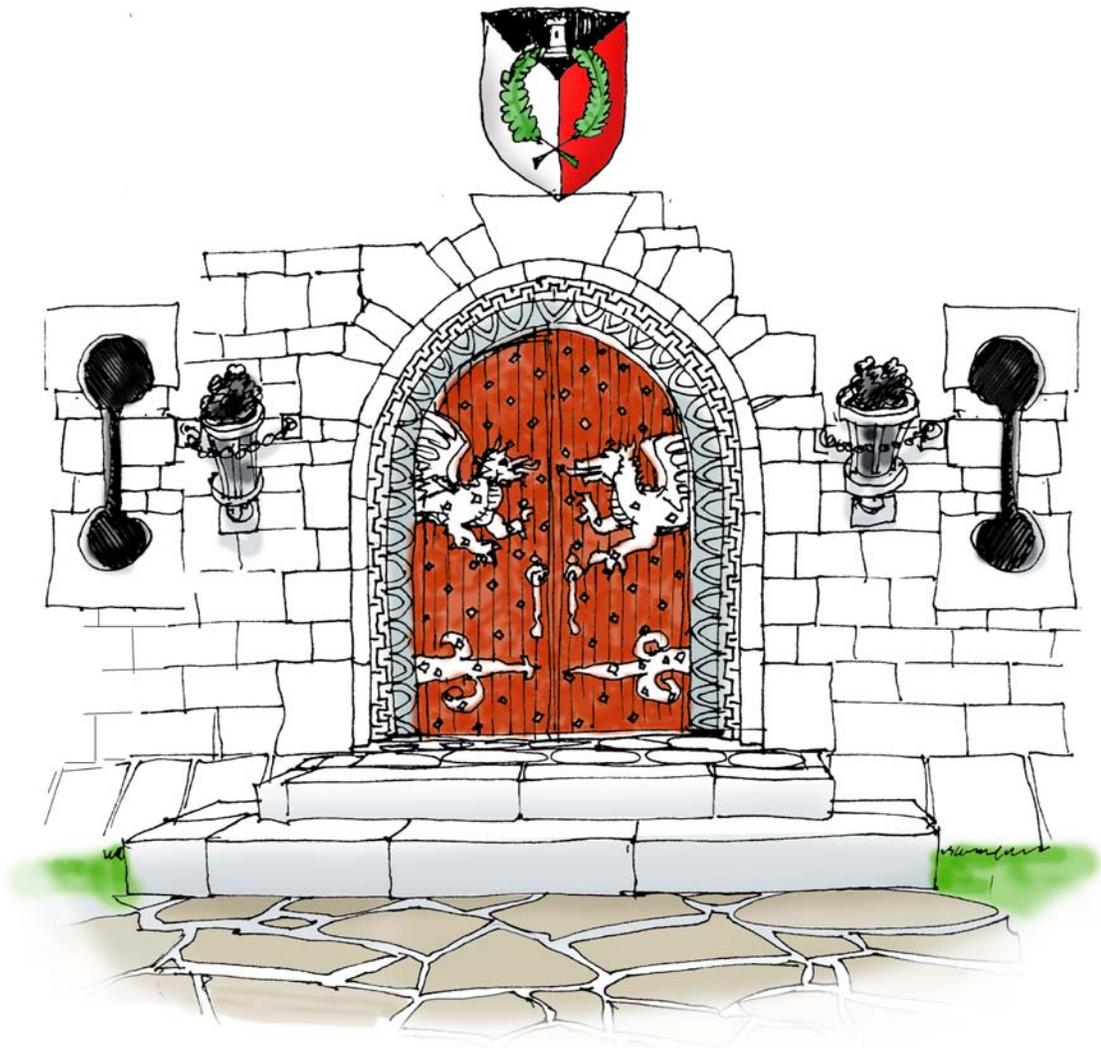
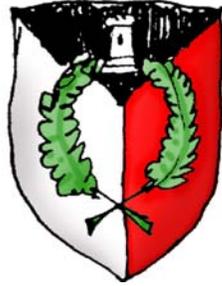


The True  
History  
of the Royal Borough ("Shire") of  
Cynnabar



by  
David Stuart Hoornstra  
known in the Society as  
Daibhid MacLachlan,  
Baron of the Dragon Court, and called "ruadh"

The  
True  
History  
of the Royal Borough of  
**Cynnabar**



From its founding to 1993  
written on the occasion  
of its proposed chartering as a

**Barony**

in this year of  
Nineteen hundred ninety-seven  
Anno Societatis Thirty-One

by

David Stuart Hoornstra

known in the Society as

**Daibhid Mac Lachlan,**

Baron of the Dragon Court,

and called "ruadh"

Third Edition: 2019

Know that all written and shewn herein is the work of Baron Daibhid, except as shall be noted in specific. Copyright for this work except as noted is of David S. Hoornstra, 2019.

# TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER

## FOREWORD to the 2018 Edition

In February 2018, my plan was to just mark the old printout for typos and ego trips, add a few pictures justice demanded, and get it done.

But going through it in March, I realized that *it never was* a history. Since 1993 I have learned more about history and human relations, and even been published myself.

In 1993, having heard that modern historians had put the kibosh to the “Great Man” concept of history, I felt I should suppress my own “leadership” role. With the same scissors, I left out other people’s unique qualities that came to make Cynnabar an SCA group like no other, that make a history worth writing – and reading.

I also left out, as systematically as I could, “the role of sex in history.” I left the reader to conjecture about that and also about the significance of the story. The result of these lacunae was not merely distorted history – it was not history at all.

History is much more than a narrative sequence of events. That’s just chronology.

Chronology from one person’s perspective, with extra spice from his own experience, isn’t history either. No matter how intriguing or tasty, such a dish only amounts to a memoir.

A memoir with a moral might be a great story, but that’s not history either.

To rise to the level of history, the narrative must be worth telling for what it teaches about something, that explains what’s different about this story and why that is significant.

Studying history teaches that every historical narrative carries the marks of the time *in which* written as well as the time *about* which. And, of course, about the person doing the writing.

The influences that moved me to make what efforts I made *are* part of the Cynnabar narrative. My old narrative pretended that Cynnabar just grew naturally out of the mercury-laden soil of Ann Arbor, with no regard for the

gardener. “It was the Medieval Festival, it was the University...” not good enough.

Was Cynnabar merely the production of a *really* dissatisfied man and his girlfriend? Another Dark Horde conspiracy?

A history must ask, and try to answer, such questions. But we must also take into account the effect of the wider world – media, politics, economics – on our little, local actions.

When Barbara Tuchman wrote her best-selling history with “the Calamitous 14th Century” as subtitle, her subject was really what the Hundred Years’ War did to a society which would never be the same.

**This one is more about what the Shire of Cynnabar did to (and for) the Society for Creative Anachronism, which will never be the same.**

“Those who do not study history are condemned to repeat it.” I fully expected and hoped others would read this narrative and *by all means* repeat it. Well... not *all* of it. Just the good parts.

Rather than try to go in and explain on every page how the back story affected this or that decision or event, I am adding a Prologue to fill in the backstory, including –especially – the nature of the SCA as it appeared to me in 1974.

### Many thanks to:

David Craig, who has never stopped pretending that I am all I wish I were.

Jeanne-Marie Quevedo, who in addition to much else, made me believe I actually was a leader.

Joseph Radding, who kept my head from swelling more than necessary.

Jeffrey Forgeng, for invaluable perspective on the SCA and on how history is done.

Debra St. James, for the people she put me in touch with and for her inimitable self.

There are more. They know who they are.

David S. Hoornstra, March 23, 2018

# WHAT HAS SEX GOT TO DO WITH IT?

## PROLOGUE to the 2018 Edition

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR EXCEPT AS MARKED

This rewrite stems in part from my 2017-2018 re-evaluation of my life.

It comes after five years of trying to start an art career that was supposed to start in 1974 after art school. What the hell was I doing that was so important my art career had to wait forty years? I was having fun.

I know now I could have had a lot more fun for a lot less trouble, and an art career into the bargain, but I was following my nose.

It's also a result of learning what history is supposed to be. (See Foreword).

The SCA was founded by Science Fiction fans active in the sixties in California. Add rocket ships and Utopias to the leather and lace of Hippie counterculture. Listen to Poul Andersen and L. Sprague DeCamp about swords, sorcery and ancient cultures including medieval.

Simplistic? Perhaps. But those *were* the elements. You already know there was a costume party and then a plan for more parties. What matters is *how little concern there ever was for history*. The writers named were *the best Science Fiction had to offer* in terms of research. I really enjoyed their books!

But that does not mean reading them amounts to learning one single thing about the middle ages you can put in the "fact" column. Nor would they themselves make such a claim.

Nor did the SCA's founders ever make such a claim for their product. It happened. It was California and they were in that state of mind. We in the Midwest wouldn't understand.

But we in the Midwest put on glasses that made the SCA *look like* what we were looking for. Some of the written flyers even said it *was*: "The Middle Ages as they should have been."

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### 1. The go-getter

I grew up in Sault Ste. Marie, a town devastated by the departure of its only three industries. But our schools, funded in the boom years before I was born, had excellence to spare.

I got into history early. As a child I was nurtured on Scottish tradition, reading Robert Bain's Tartan book at age ten along with Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. *The Scottish Chiefs* (Scotland's epic) rocked my world when I was twelve, introducing me to the treachery, chivalry and unspeakable cruelty of the 14th century.

In high school I majored in journalism but seemed destined to run every other club I joined. Even the 7th-grade intramural basketball team, of which I was the smallest, made me captain.

The one thing I couldn't get, in that town full of military personnel and engineering students, was a date. Nor could most of my male friends. It took a long time to get past that experience.

The local college was a branch of Michigan

Tech. My older brother and all my friends were engineering geeks and science fiction fans of the near-future techno-utopian mold. We took fencing from a military type in the Border Patrol. John Bailey was also a Sci-Fi (we called it "SF") fan and a survivalist who, not six years later, would co-found the first national household in the SCA, the "Great Dark Horde."

*My 1966  
portrait of  
fencing master  
John Bailey,  
later known  
in the SCA as  
Svea Wartooth.*



To me, he provided the “manly” virtues my (divorced) father couldn’t. He took me under his wing and helped diffuse my fears. He introduced me to movers and shakers who commissioned art work. He embedded self-defense techniques in my fencing instruction. He broadened my world by teaching in two and three languages.

I spent hundreds of hours with him in those four years. He fueled my love of history with old swordplay lore and scars from Heidelberg. I’ll never forget the lesson he gave me with his old dueling swords that had seen two bloodings and a kill.

He also taught the arts of the courtly gentleman: fine dining, conversation, how to walk with dignity. He told me, very earnestly, “Do not go to the killing ground,” meaning Viet Nam.\*

His Sault fencing club moved to Sault Tech just as I was becoming a student there.

He may have been the foremost example, but in those days it seemed I could do no wrong in the eyes of my elders, especially teachers.

Another was Dr. Louis Ward, the Humanities department chair who on my first day as a college freshman offered me a job correcting his *sophomores’ essays*.

Then, the following summer, *before* my sophomore year, there was Dr. Shouldice, the new college president. He stopped me in the middle of campus and offered me a better job: re-invent the college paper. I stipulated a salary, office, print budget and the creation of a for-credit journalism class, agreed to on the spot. There being no faculty with any journalism experience, *I taught it*. All that won me a scholarship to U-Michigan.

Ann Arbor was a life-changing eye-opener. Flying high, I crashed in my pride. I found the journalism classes easy except one: I failed a *required 8-o’clock class graded on attendance*.

It took me years to get over that failure, and even longer to understand why it happened. But eventually I realized that, in life, *showing up to*

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\*My “*In memoriam John D. Bailey*,” can be downloaded from the Resources page of [AnnArborSword.com](http://AnnArborSword.com).

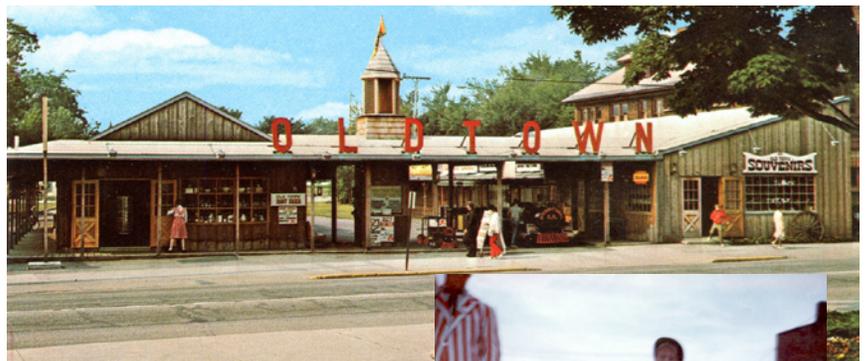


*With two of my college newspaper staff members, who knew I was out of my depth with most women.*

*do the grunt work* is often the whole point.

The draft was still on. I returned to the Sault where my old school was now Lake Superior State College. Became an English major. That was easy; all my enthusiasm went into my theatre minor. Prof. Robert Stern became my new mentor. I choreographed the “non-fight” in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. I assistant-coached and fenced on the club team, helping it go varsity in 1969 with a road victory over U-Tennessee.

I designed a tourist mall (below) in time for the 1968 Sault Ste. Marie TriCentennial that was supposed to be a big tourist attraction. Ran the “old-tyme” print shop/newspaper in it with two of my Sci-Fi fan friends. Bad weather made it a



*Early persona play. That’s me being “arrested” as editor of the Oldtown Sentinel-Gazette in TriCentennial shenanigans.*



horrible bust. We turned it into a “head shop” but still lost our shirts.

I had been an ROTC squad leader on the drill team and became cadet company captain in my fourth year. But after Ann Arbor I fitted better in the Sault’s rather innocent counterculture. I learned guitar and drums; wanted to form a band. Dropped out of ROTC in 1968.

When I graduated with a BA in English in 1969, I was burdened by five big problems. Three of them were bad teeth, no sex life and dread of the future. I solved the biggest – the draft – by joining the Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard *blew the rest away*. I served two of my four years (1970-72) on a slow boat to China. Literally.

I became ship’s photographer and re-worked the cruise book, which became the Decommissioning Book and won me an Admiral’s letter of appreciation. This while really busting ass as an electrician.



*My 2007 painting of CGC Kukui, 11 knots max.*

I came out of the Coast Guard a new man with the courage to turn down a ten-thousand-dollar “ship-over” bonus and go for the art career. I took an early out for school in 1973 to tackle Ann Arbor a second time.

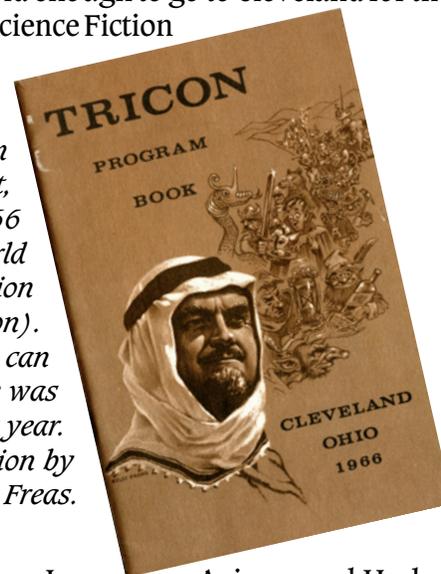
On arrival, I was drafted to lead and teach the U-M fencing club. It grew rapidly for three years as we got into AFLA competition. As Secretary of the Michigan Division a year later, I saw it needed changes and made them happen.

In 1982 I sent a 19-page “white paper” to the national organization’s president on how to revitalize it. He sent copies to every fencing club in the country and appointed me to a national committee. I was already on the Board of Governors.

All that to give you most of the background I brought to the SCA.

But there’s one more item. It requires a trip back to the 1960s and my college sci-fi-fan friends. Six of us, two from as far as Houghton in the U.P., were rabid enough to go to Cleveland for the 1966 World Science Fiction Convention.

*Program booklet, TriCon 1966 (World Science Fiction Convention). As you can see, Dune was big that year. Illustration by Kelly Freas.*



We met Isaac Asimov and Harlan Ellison. Hal Clement, L. Sprague de Camp and many other favorite authors spoke on panels. I sold a painting in the art show run by Bjo (Bee-Jo) Trimble, who would soon be one of the founders of the SCA. (I still have a letter from her. In this year’s first Tournaments Illuminated issue, she has an equestrian article.)

Gene Roddenbury showed two episodes and design sketches from the upcoming Star Trek series. We saw the pilot film for it that *didn’t* star William Shatner.

We went home inspired. I dabbled in writing and illustrating SF but didn’t pursue it seriously. One of our gang got published but didn’t get famous.

But a new friend I met shortly after getting out of the Coast Guard *did*.

Back to Ann Arbor, 1973. Teaching at the U-M fencing club, I repeated Bailey’s advice: “don’t take my word for it – ask other instructors.” One of my students, Chuck Lauer, *did*. His report: “you *gotta* meet this guy.”

That guy was Bob Asprin. When I dropped in at his class, he stopped it and insisted we fence, right then and there. It was like fencing a slightly younger version of myself; I knew his every next trick. He turned out to be another John

Bailey student in a like mold.

He also turned out to be the *other* co-founder of the “Great Dark Horde” in the SCA.

I had heard of the SCA. While overseas I had received a letter from John Bailey saying he had joined it. There being no Ann Arbor chapter, it’s not surprising I hadn’t heard much more. Bob was the Horde’s supreme leader, or Ka-khan, known unofficially as “Yang the Nauseating.”

That rang a bell. If the average outsider knew *one single thing* about the SCA, it would be that there was someone in it called “Yang the Nauseating.” That should tell you how the general public understood the group.

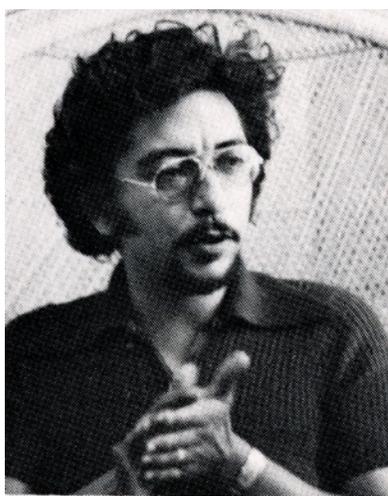
Nonetheless, we hit it off quickly.

Bob’s love of military lore was more literary and historical than militaristic. He was into Rudyard Kipling *and* Gilbert and Sullivan. He combined that with deep involvement in science fiction fandom, locally and nationally. His two years in the Army had been desultory at most. For my part, although my training lets me hold my end up in conversation with “military types,” I have never owned a firearm nor ever intend to.

Introducing me to the Ann Arbor science fiction scene – the Stilyagi Air Corps and their annual “ConFusion” event – he said “you’re coming in on the officer level.” In the service, neither of us had been officers or seen combat.

Bob got his oriental martial arts – and his looks – from his Filipino father, and a gift of storytelling gab from his Irish mother. He had been active in a local dojo where swords were involved. “When the top Japanese master comes to America, he comes to three cities,” he said. “San Francisco, New York and Ann Arbor.” The Vienna Philharmonic later did the same.

An amazingly charismatic individual, Bob ran his national household from the



*One of Bob’s characteristic gestures, rubbing his hands as his plot thickens. From the Robert Lynn Asprin press kit.*

WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) line at work as well as his SF fan group he later solidified into “The Dorsai Irregulars.” The Dorsai were fantasy mercenaries created by Gordon R. Dickson, Bob’s mentor in science fiction writing and publishing. In return, Bob gave Gordie military and combat insights. Chuck Lauer and I followed his lead (photo below).

### **The Society for Creative Anachronism**

Chuck, after being recruited into the SCA by Bob, had “authorized” in Spear at his first event, “killing” a knight in the process with a fencing move!

Naturally, Bob followed up by recruiting me too. Before I knew it I was a member of the Great Dark Horde, equipped with Mongol pants and a short Oriental single-edged weapon somewhat like a machete. The fancy smoking jacket I had bought in Taiwan finally had a use. (I have *never* smoked.)

Although I had toured parts of Taiwan and Japan, including a castle, and climbed Mt. Fuji, I wasn’t interested in an Oriental persona. I was more of a Scottish Highlander. Bob assured me the Horde welcomed all nationalities.



*Chuck Lauer (L) holding forth at a 1970s con with sabre and dagger while an unidentified fan or author looks on. (Photographer unknown)*



*SCA tourney, January 1974, Toledo Ohio. That's Bob in the far left corner.*

The night before my first event, January 1974, I crashed in a huge chair at the Toledo home of Duke Andrew of Seldom Rest with one of his cats. Andrew and I were about as different as two men might well be, but we got on well. Bob described his relationship with such men in terms of Fritz Lieber's "Fahfrd and Grey Mouser" characters. Worked for me too: Bob and I were both more "wiry" than bulky.

The next morning I saw my first SCA tournament, pictured above. Compared with descriptions I had heard, it seemed to me a bit shabby. Burly men strode around each other whacking at whatever opening presented itself. Some wore nothing above the waist but a helm, maybe elbow pads. A few had plenty of natural padding. Nothing about it made me want to try it.

A typical event in those days started with a tournament which ran most of the day and took the biggest room in whatever facility could be rented. As now, an attempt at costume was expected; success was not. During the fighting, non-fighters and those not interested played games, including some that combined dancing, pillows and kissing.

When fighting was over there would usually be a feast. These varied widely depending on who was the cook and what books they had.

After feast usually came the "court," if royalty were present. Royalty gave out awards and heralds made announcements. The ceremonies were all written by one man, Daemon de Folo, who had clearly learned a lot from fiction.

After court, the revel. Some were specifically dessert revels inviting potluck dishes. Usually the principal activity was doing medieval dances from Playford's book. Inevitably, some ladies would show off their "beledi" skills.

Many events in those days had "Post-Revels," usually in a member's home. They were "costume optional," which meant most wore street or regular party clothes. These generally amounted to very casual BYO cocktail parties, and were popular after events at "dry sites."

They provided a chance to decompress and get to know the real people behind the personae without regard to rank or title. They also helped keep the rest of the event "medieval" by providing the mundane socializing. Another popular activity was "filksinging" or just "filking." ("Filk" was SF fan-speak for "folk.")



*Dancers at an SCA event c. 1975*

Bob, also known as “Yang of the Silver Tongue,” was famous for it to the point of being made a Laurel.

Art school left me plenty of time (although the money was running out). Having a complete darkroom and painting setup in my apartment saved me the travel and waiting time. Being older, I didn’t suffer the typical-student stress about grades and assignments.

I had time to hang out at “the Snake Pit” – Bob and Ann Asprin’s home off Newport Drive. Bob filled my head with stories of World-cons, SCA events, and the Viking group up at Northwoods. Through cigarette smoke-clouds, he gave me an interesting view of the SCA and his own life. “Not feeling well?” he’d quip, “Take two Asprins and go to bed.”

He introduced me to George Hunt (*Bork the Indestructible*), Chris Clayton and a few other cronies of all three of his worlds, including martial arts. Although I didn’t start attending dojos, I was impressed when Bob rented the Michigan Theatre and put on a showing of the entire Samurai Trilogy (Toshiro Mifune as Musashi) for the Ann Arbor martial arts community.

It was unforgettable on several counts, but for our purposes what mattered was the “think



*At Pennsic IV, non-combatants couldn’t see the field battle.*

big” attitude. Whatever the enterprise, Bob’s mantra was “I go first class.” This thinking influenced my attitudes about group enterprise, but it was contrary to SCA thinking.

Everything was done, as much as possible, on the cheap, geared to student incomes. Little was done to reverse the flow of money out of the SCA by fund-raising, even taking donations at demos. This fixed attitude discouraged the pursuit of excellence and led to Cynnabar being regarded as “elitist” later on for being normal.

From my perspective, the idea of a group less than ten years old wallowing in “hallowed tradition” was preposterous, but there it was.

But back then, there weren’t many SCA chapters in the region and few allowed themselves to think big. Those which held events were in Chicago, Cleveland, Toledo, Kalamazoo and East Lansing. If you wanted to go a bit further, there were good events in Louisville and Champaign/Urbana.

There was a chapter in Detroit and a household or two here and there, as



*Bob “filking” at an SF con c. 1975. Top center is Gordon R. Dickson. Looking in from the right is George Hunt (“Bork the Indestructible”). SCA “post-revels” looked pretty much like this. They largely disappeared during the eighties.*

in Battle Creek. In that era, chapters came and went as they rose or fell below the minimum number of members.

These were mainly college students (some younger) and recent dropouts. The Detroit Area chapter, called Roaring Wastes, included more working people than students. No events there in those days, but the friendliest welcome to the SCA I got early on was from one of the Detroit area ladies. Aimée wasn't put off by my pitiful Mongol outfit. Later married Sir Garrahan; they're still together and she still radiates that welcome to new people.

When he "authorized," Chuck Lauer became the first member of the Dark Horde to fight in the lists since 1972 when the Horde had boycotted SCA combat for safety reasons. That was one of the reasons the Horde was at odds with the mainstream of the SCA.

Wondering why there was no SCA chapter in Ann Arbor, I was told it was because of the national household's presence. Everyone here was in the Horde.

On the other hand, everyone in East Lansing (The Barony of Northwoods) *was most emphatically not*. This feud between the two cities had



nothing to do with football. There was a story of a Northwoods event, with royalty present, terrorized by Hordesmen "ninjas" silently creeping up on it through the hedges *during court*.

It was also told that Hordesmen were in the habit of raiding Northwoods for women; seducing them away from their Viking boyfriends to spend the night in Ann Arbor.

While I've heard versions of these stories from several witnesses, it's fair to point out that they were biased on the Horde side. The other side didn't grant me interviews on the subject in spite of my journalistic credentials. But during this past few years I *have* been given a Northwoods *insider eye-witness account* of some of these goings-on.

Some hordesmen liked being likened to a medieval motorcycle gang, but not I.

A benefit of not fighting in the lists was that one could socialize with the ladies, generally bored with the combat at which their boyfriends spent so much time and got so smelly. Event sites seldom had showers. You might take one at your crash site. The SCA did *not* "go first-class."

Non-fighters might be involved in dancing games such as we never do these days: "Clench-a-Wench" or "Prinkum-Prankum," both simple things in which each verse ended with kissing.

Music was invariably provided by a boom-box and one of two or three standard dance tapes that got swapped, copied and sometimes re-collated. Due to the nature of the medium, we usually knew what came next.

We had plenty to learn about this SCA. Chuck and I hit the road to virtually every SCA event in reach from February to June 1974. For those not old enough to remember, and some that are, this was the height of the Seventies in America, when urban women felt free to wear loose blouses with generous collar openings and men just felt ... glad.

As I recall, female SCA costumes of the time were not all well-tailored (exception at left). Men who later enjoyed the sideless surcoat needed less imagination. Visual signals of interest or

*Left: at Chicago-area event an unidentified lady poses for me while, in profile, left background, we see Viking/Hordesman Thorbjorn the Greysides.*



*Chuck Lauer (center) gets a sabre medal from the then-president of the AFLA Michigan Division.*

availability were easier to read. Even for a beginner like me.

On a typical weekend, Chuck and I would drive to Chicago Friday night for a Saturday SCA event, and then drive like mad Sunday morning to fence in a Detroit area tournament. Got some speeding tickets that way. We have both always had higher than average energy levels.

The norm for events that far away was to arrange “crash space” through a friend of a friend. But we seldom actually slept at the crash space we had arranged for.

Chuck (*Cirion the Lefthanded*) still fights at Pennsic every year. Lately he has been habitual Midrealm archery champion. He used to be into science fiction, but now is into space exploration – for real.

On one weekend trip I did alone, I received a welcome *very different* from that of the Lady Aimée. A friendly woman I had *not* met, when I telephoned for directions, said “just walk in; I’ll be in bed by that hour.” When I got there and asked where I would sleep, she smiled and lifted her blanket.

What we did in Chicago generally stayed in Chicago, and that was fine with the morality I (like many others) had then. I was still in the early stages of making up for my earlier sexual deprivation. Little I saw or heard in the SCA at that time nudged me towards “real” chivalry. But one of the songs Bob sang at cons *did*.

*“When I was a young man I was quite well thought of,*

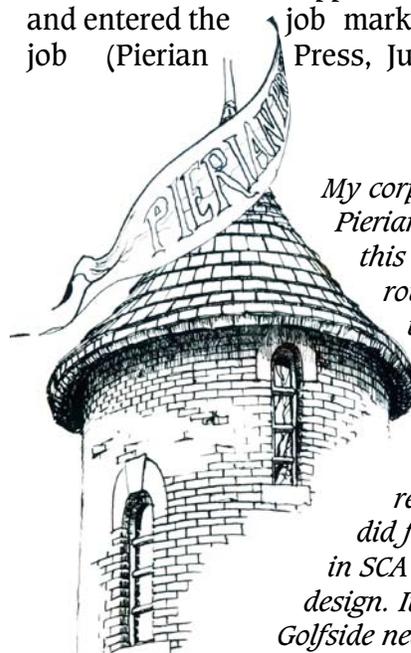
*I could not ask aught that the ladies denied.”*

I had never dreamed of standing that well with the ladies. Sounded great, but then:

*“I nibbled their hearts like a handful of raisins,  
And I never spoke love but I knew that I lied.”*

Lying was completely unacceptable, and comparing women to snack food was pretty low. So I looked to have Lines One and Two without committing Lines Three and Four. Good luck with that. I found out many years later that I had acquired a reputation among people I didn’t even know in the west side of the kingdom. The SCA was slow to learn what mattered and even slower to forget things that didn’t.

Back in Ann Arbor, after a pretty good year in the art school, I dropped out for lack of funds and entered the job market. With my first job (Pierian Press, June ’74) came my



*My corporate ID work for Pierian Press included this sketch of the round tower, part of the 1930 “Tudor” mansion Ed Wall bought for the business. The interior restoration work I did fueled my interest in SCA environment design. It’s still there, on Golfside near Washtenaw.*

first Ann Arbor girlfriend. With no interest in the SCA or fencing, she reduced my road trips.

Pierian Press was a publisher of library profession periodicals like *Reference Services Review*. I started as an editorial assistant, proofreading and pasting up corrections. Then the owner bought a classic brick mansion for his growing business. As one of only three men in a staff of twenty, I was assigned to clean and paint it up for use, including some restoration. Then I became advertising manager.

The U-M Fencing Club was still gaining strength. John Hasler, one of my Sault friends, had moved to Ann Arbor in 1974 and became one of our best fencers. That September he and I



*Danosi (r) giving a clinic with his son Steve*

bought a house with two others from the Sault. Three of us had done that Tricon trip in 1966.

John and I both competed in AFLA tournaments. We drove to Schoolcraft College for lessons via the Fencing Academy of Michigan, the Michigan fencing powerhouse of that era. It was powered by the Hungarian Maestro Istvan Danosi, whose Wayne State team had won six straight NCAA championships. We took lessons from him and his Olympic-veteran fencers.

None of my housemates did the SCA. But after a year, two dropped out and, for a year or so, Chuck Lauer (*Cirion*) became one of the four. For a while he dated a petite blonde named Linda Glasscock whom you'll meet again.

In December '74 he and I went to the Flame Christmas Tourney in Louisville. With the permission of the autocrat, we gave a well-received evening "rapier and dagger" demo using modern sabres and those cut-down daggers seen earlier. People there seemed interested in getting fencing into the SCA.

It seemed if we wanted any SCA activities in Ann Arbor I would have to found my own Dark Horde "Khanate." When I did form the Khanate of the Cat about 1975, it consisted pretty much of fencing students and one or two Ann Arbor people found at events. *Cirion* did not join, having become a squire to Duke Andrew.

### **The decline of the Horde**

In mid-1975, Yang quit going to SCA events. Instead, he asked Chuck/*Cirion* and me to "be his eyes and ears" out there in the kingdom. Rumors went round: Yang was going to quit.

In January 1976, at Yang's request, Chuck

and I put together a new Horde newsletter. I shamelessly used my company's print shop and graphic arts skills to produce it. In it, Yang assured the Horde that he was staying in and would revitalize his SCA activity *and* the Horde. Chuck/*Cirion* and I were "Yang's "staff."

The lady on the cover was one I met at a DeKalb, IL event. I still wear, on occasion, the black velvet purse she made for me.

Shortly after, about March, I



*Horde newsletter, January 1976. Offset printed.*

was pushed out of my role as instructor/coach of the U-M Fencing Club. We'll come back to that.

Later in 1976, it was clear to Bob he had made a promise he could not keep. Realizing that dedication was required for success, he quit his day job, fencing and the SCA permanently to write science fiction full time. He rented a downtown office to write eight hours a day.

What he wrote to the Horde was brief and clear. The Dark Horde members' reaction shocked me. Resentment, anger, little understanding about *his* reasons, life and career. The more loyal they had been, the more bitter.

It was awkward for *Cirion* and me, being associated with Yang. We tried to make the best of it, printing a second edition of *Horde Scrawl* with that letter from Yang, plus others with opinions on the next steps for the Horde. Yang did not endorse anyone for the leadership.

Of course, various parties emerged. The Kuraltai voted a moratorium on anyone becoming Ka-khan for a time. Nearly a score of Brothers walked out. The effect on those who



Robert Lynn  
Asprin's  
"pro" mark,  
by his  
friend Kelly  
Freas, well  
known  
illustrator  
of science  
fiction.

stayed kept me from leaving even in the worst of the disillusionment I felt later.

### **Power, officers and leadership**

I'm not proud of how I felt right then. In spite of knowing I was completely wrong for it, I found myself wanting the Ka-Khan role. I was *not* Mr. Personality. It made *no* sense, but that's the appeal of status and fake power. Knowing that without fighting in the lists I could never be a king or a knight probably helped.

That made me think. Power to do what? I didn't really believe the Dark Horde could be great again. I realized that what value I had to any organization was of a different kind.

I looked back over the different types of "leadership" roles I had played and the officer training I had received. The U.S. military deliberately maintained a traditional, separate officer "caste" that must never fraternize with enlisted personnel; could never be "one of the gang."

Officers walk a tightrope between wanting to be liked and the requirement to be aloof. The military chooses candidates comfortable on that rope. A college education helps. I realized in the Coast Guard that I had that personality.

I thought American officers believed they were nobility in everything but name.

Henry V's "band of brothers" was a deliberate fiction.

The SCA's leadership roles are certainly ambiguous, with bureaucrats telling nobles what to do. I got to know the two landed Barons in Michigan, Aerdigvidder of Andelcrag and Thorvald of Northwoods. Their popularity stemmed from their easy-going styles.

### **The Viet Nam factor**

I ran across quite a few fellow-veterans in that period, but only bonded with one. I don't recall even one claiming to have been an officer. Some were working out serious personal issues stemming from postwar stress. Of these, most were just coming here to forget while a few were working out unresolved military issues.

The ones I got on with best were, like me, using their military experience to build something in the SCA. They were mostly a few years younger than I was. Often they were blue-collar and fond of saying things like "don't call me *Sir*: I *work* for a living."

Veterans who weren't suffering too much found it easy to become thought leaders of people attracted by their confidence and experience of the world.

This group had little patience for people like me who called for excellence, whether based on scholarship or good theatre. They had heard of Bob Dylan, who warned us all "don't follow leaders." They wanted to be "just folks" and left alone to do it as they pleased.

We had few of these in Cynnabar, but we heard from them. They're the ones who called us "elitist."

Like me, some were pretty frustrated by the complete lack of interest in our real military experience on the part of those who led our Midrealm troops. Early in the eighties one of my fencing students got close to one of the Eastern generals, a frustrated VietNam vet. They kept winning; we kept losing.

I didn't push my military background much because I knew the people around me found it uncomfortable. Some felt it undermined their SCA experience. I came to learn to my regret that for most people in the SCA, SCA experience was the only kind that mattered.

The leadership role remaining to me was that of teacher. Which is what I was already doing.

### **The only woman I ever proposed to**

In the fall of '75 or maybe January '76, a junior in Poly Sci had joined the U-M Fencing Club. Having toured Hungary with a Detroit-area Hungarian folk dance troupe, she had the athletic ability to quickly become my best

student – and more. Taught me proper stretching, for one thing.

We had maybe a year and a half of lessons, tournaments, a couple of dates and some pretty innocent dalliance. I even met her parents in a north Detroit suburb. Soon I was taking her on tournament trips, where she carried herself well in competition. Maestro Danosi noticed her and, in Hungarian, offered her a full scholarship. When she turned him down, I thought it was because of *us*. Boy, was I mistaken.

The time it went by like the snow on the wind and before I knew it (May 1977), she was graduating. *Leaving!* I was shocked to discover how attached I had become. I went to her co-op, got on my knees and proposed. Through tears, she said she was on her way to an east coast grad school and the US diplomatic service, where marriage was *out*.

My world was different the next day. My involvements with other women up to then faded in that new light. It would be five more years before I got that serious again.



### Non-students leading student groups

Back to March '76. I lost my role at the U-M Fencing Club. Since I was no longer either student or staff I had no official standing there.

Many U-M “student” organizations have encouraged non-students to not only participate but play strong leadership roles. University officials understand the value of long-term stability, expertise and institutional memory.

The U-M Sailing Club was run for twenty-five years by a non-university man. At a recent meeting I attended, the vast majority of U-M Gilbert and Sullivan Society members looked over forty. Cynnabar is no exception; many U-M “student groups” use *far* more facilities. My continuing in charge for ten years was not out of line with University or early SCA policy.

So my non-student status was a non-issue until an influential, well-heeled faculty member wanted to take over and send his daughter to the NCAA championships. I lost. She won.

1976 was also the year my employer had to lay off the entire staff. I quickly found a job with LithoCrafters, a book printer on Jackson Road.



*I didn't win many cups. This one's fourth (foil) at the 1978 Michigan Invitational.*



### The Ann Arbor Sword Club

Bob had asked me to take over his Ann Arbor Rec Department fencing class. Within a year, my students and I had bought out the department to form the Ann Arbor Sword Club.

We wanted the freedom from the fixed series of beginner foil classes to do individual lessons, historical and theatrical swordplay, plus epee and sabre in a real, competitive, tournament-going club.

Terry Gruber, at that time a new fencer, became Secretary and handled much of the founding paperwork. He is still my partner in running the club forty years later.

We put ads in the Ann Arbor News and Observer and did a main-stage demo at the Ann Arbor Art fair. Classes grew and gained adult continuity. For ten years the Sword Club was the example I held up to Cynnabar.

In the summer of '76 the last of the Rec Department fencing classes was held in Forsythe School. Into that gym strode David Craig with a physique like Arnold, blue eyes blazing from a Caribbean tan, a mind like Aristotle and a beautiful woman on each arm.

Aside from beautiful women, our common interests included Scottish history, swordplay and the finer things in life. He became the most powerful influence on me, from code of ethics to chivalry to language, manners and fine wine. His ballet and physical culture allowed him to perform effortlessly the fencing moves other people struggle with for months. But his ethics caused him to avoid being “competitive.”



*David Craig in Scotland, 1980, helping me photograph its scenery and castles.*

Even so, he became the best of our theatrical swordplay performers. After we broke some of the cheaper brass rapier hilts, he obtained for us two of the sturdy, really beautiful theatrical swords made for the 1974 Richard Lester film *Three Musketeers*. They have survived forty years of giving joy; I used the clamshell one this week at SCA practice. It's part of our logo.

### **The Medieval Festival and other groups**

One day I wandered into Ann Arbor Art Worlds, a non-profit offering all sorts of classes from martial arts and dance to painting. After some chat with the staff I wound up teaching a "keylining" class: graphic arts pasteup, the ancestor of graphic design. (A year later, the Sword Club started teaching classes there.)

Kathy Millar, with boyfriend Jim Moran, was teaching push-hands Tai Chi when we met there. More to the point, they were helping David

Bernstein run the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival. They recruited me. With her sweet charm and quick, well-educated wit, Kathy could have gotten me to do almost anything. I learned yet another kind of leadership from those three.

A couple of days later I was in a big room with other volunteers. My job: sewing a costume to be worn by whoever played God that year. Next thing you know I had agreed to put on some sort of swordfight as an Intermezzi act. (Years later, Kathy married an eastern European with a title and a castle.)

To me, the Medieval Festival offered much more than just another way to "play Medieval." It was education-oriented, presenting period plays directed by dedicated faculty members and other entertainments scarcely heard of in the SCA in the Midwest. The main weekend was staged at the School of Music so it could tie in with Early Music Ensemble performances using period instruments while the SCA was still in boomboxes.

I learned a lot more real medieval lore there than in the SCA during the same years.

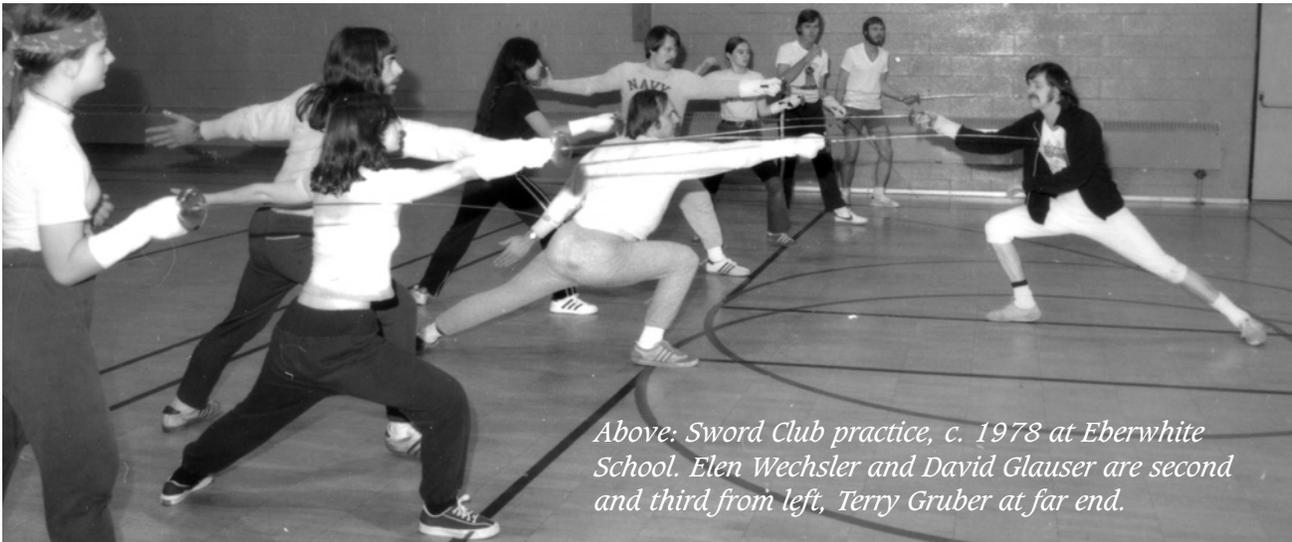
More to the SCA point, the Festival gathered other organizations around it that lived beyond the Festival's summer blooming season. There was a dance troupe called "Tourdion," run by Cindy Milner and Jeff Quick. She later became *Angelica Paganelli*.

The Ann Arbor Morris Team practiced their Renaissance-English traditional dances year round, staging events to celebrate the seasons and participating in every suitable festival.

David Glauser came from Morris dancing to the Khanate of the Cat, to the Sword Club, to the SCA. John Moga came to the SCA. Several other people circulated freely among them all.



*Jim Moran, center, and Kathy Millar, right (in blue tank top), preparing for another performance.*



Above: Sword Club practice, c. 1978 at Eberwhite School. Elen Wechsler and David Glauser are second and third from left, Terry Gruber at far end.

## Inspirations

Elaina Malm was the only one of Yang’s students who stayed when I took over. She joined the khanate and went on SCA trips with me and Chuck. She too is still a good friend.

David Glauser, one of the best-natured people I’ve ever met, joined soon after. His lightning reflexes paired with my experience made him my rapier partner for the fastest bareheaded swordplay I’ve ever ventured to perform. The “Musketeer” swords are perfectly balanced, with false ricassos to reduce the abrasion real ricassos cause your fingers.

The blades have a mass distribution that allows repeated hard full-swing edge-to-edge impacts without damage. For two years that daring play with wonderful, dangerous blades in close action and no safety net formed the peak experiences of my life. Better than armored combat, yes. Better than sex? Tough call.

In 1977 LithoCrafters moved to Chelsea. Not wanting to commute, I got in with Douglass Merchandising in downtown Ann Arbor, my first ad agency job, making stats with the big camera and keylining newspaper ads. Every one of these unintentionally short-term jobs brought new learning and disciplines.

### Way better than armored combat

That was the summer an exceptional, petite chestnut-haired beauty walked up to where I leaned on a tree

at the Medieval Festival on North Campus. She said I had been pointed out to her as the source of information about two things: the SCA and fencing. I was glad to help. *Very glad.*

Elen joined the SCA, the Sword Club – and *me* – on the spot. She was in the Art school with my old painting and photography professors, but specializing in metalwork. She got a jewelry benchworking job at Abracadabra, at the foot of the stairs to my workplace. That became our daily rendezvous.

A lot tougher than she looked, she picked up fencing quickly and joined us in AFLA tournaments and running its Michigan Division. She also joined (of course) the Khanate of the Cat.

On day she did something for which I’ll always be grateful. Working with Hiroko, a top-level Japanese metalsmith, she was able to borrow the Compton Collection Catalogue of Japanese swords for me to spend a week studying.



The Khanate worked as a placeholder, a name and theme for an ongoing party that was really the historical/fantasy side of the Sword Club. I made few attempts to indoctrinate

*Elen, beloved of every cat, with my tabby Floyd after a bath.*

*Right:  
Debra  
in the  
Carriage  
House,  
Stan  
Hywet  
Hall*



*David Glauser (r) and I with the movie swords at Stan Hywet*

it in Horde lore. Of the six or so of us, only Buzz Buzzell (*Korok Starbear*), who *really* was in a motorcycle gang, cared that much for the Mongol theme. In the fullness of time he became Ka-khan.

David Glauser, David Craig, Elen and I planned a trip to an SCA event in Akron, Ohio. David C invited Debra St. James, whom we'd just met, to join us. He made Debra's costume from scratch; I wore the one Elen had just finished; David G wore black leather (above right).

The event was a demo and feast at Stan Hywet Hall, a 1930s Tudor mansion built by the Siberling (Goodyear) Tire fortune. The tour alone was worth the trip. We found magical little corners to play at rapiers and take romantic pictures. The feast in the Gatehouse was presided over by King Laurelyn. Debra was won to the SCA on the spot by his majestic bearing. That weekend spoiled me for the ordinary SCA magic available and added fuel to what was cooking.

Debra married an engineer and they moved to the Chicago area. She stayed in the SCA as *Ysolde of Summerhall*. More on her later.

In June 1978, Elaina Malm was off to U-California Santa Cruz. David Glauser followed her to California. By the time I visited after the June 1979 AFLA Nationals in Colorado, he had moved again. He rejoined us later at Pennsic XIII.

Also in 1978, Douglass Merchandising moved to Livonia. After commuting for a month or two, I got a better job at Typographic Insight, Ann Arbor's top-level, high-tech typesetters.

### **Media influences**

Movies played a tremendous role in forming our idea of what we were looking for in medieval fantasy. *The Vikings* (1958) was one of the two or three biggest influences on early SCA folk, especially those of the Northwoods group, almost entirely Viking personas.

In the late sixties we saw more movies with more and more evidence of research that might romance the more educated, such as Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* and Richard Lester's *Three (and Four) Musketeers* (1974).

Most quoted in the late seventies – *ad nauseam* – was *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. But *Dragons* and *LadyHawke* also stimulated a great deal of talk and emulation in members' fantasy lives, personae and costume efforts. In our circle, *The Lion In Winter* (1968) got the most quotes, as well as extra credit for being filmed in the very same 12c. castle where the story was set.

Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* was certainly on people's minds but most of us never dreamed it could be made into a successful movie.

Being in the print industry, I saw many over-the-top print samples. I started a file called “Extra-SCA Medievalism.” A cover of *Printing Impressions* magazine featured a calligraphed medieval poem from 1475.

But the masterpiece was a lavish 20-page paper-sample brochure for Warren Paper featuring the Higgins Armoury Museum collection. The front-cover armour was actually in relief via a matched embossing job in the paper (right).

I wrote to the company and secured ten leftover copies. So, years later when our scholarly friend Dr. Jeffrey Forgeng became curator of the Higgins, I was able to present him with one. He had never seen it, and was pretty sure there were none in the Higgins’ files.



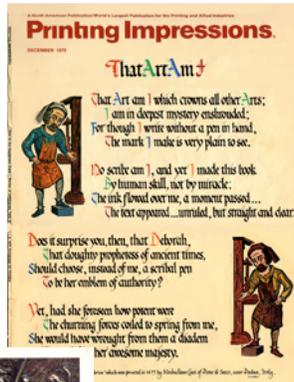
Warren Paper: Higgins

Another influence on us wasn’t a person but a bookstore. *AfterWords* on Main Street in Ann Arbor sold “remaindered” books publishers sold cheap when orders petered out. Coffee-table books like *The Plantagenet Kings* were full of lavishly-printed color photos of castles and paintings with fairly scholarly text.

These books, predating the Internet and the History Channel, were one of the few sources of good, sharp color images of the lives we were fantasizing about. \$80 books would go for \$14.95 or so. My collection got up in the hundreds before other sources, like the Publisher bookstalls at the Medieval Congress, took over.

All that told me that things medieval were rising in the national consciousness, and that more and more resources were becoming available. I hadn’t yet heard about the renaissance in scholarly medieval studies that had begun the decade before. But commercial Renaissance Festivals had begun in California in the sixties and had spread to the Midwest in the 1970s.

These trends were important to the agenda I was forming. If I was going to devote a lot



of time and effort, some of that would be towards making the SCA less of a mob of hippies and more an accepted part of American life. I knew I was not the only one whose employers would wonder just how professional one could be and still be part of the SCA.

I wanted to replace public suspicion of the SCA with public *support*. Ren faires were the signal that it was possible.

Some members were motivated to demand more “atmosphere” in SCA events while others pursued “authenticity.” Many people thought I was pushing the latter while mostly I wanted “magic moments” and felt atmosphere and theatre were the elements needed.

Certain it is that efforts towards authenticity were being done, but they were mostly on the personal scale. Tremendous effort went into tiny artifacts while in the larger-scale “atmosphere” line, little was being attempted.

Atmosphere projects require planning and some agreement on what to do. Some sort of leadership would have to come from those in “authority” whether local, regional or national.

From everything I had heard, the members of the Board of Directors were not interested in any change in the status quo. Worse, they were somewhat afraid to attempt any real leadership of the monster they had inadvertently created. In the tenth and twelfth years of its existence, their major concern seemed to be *not to suffer* from the consequences of it.

The SCA in Midrealm seemed to be run by amateurs with no leadership training. Nor were they empowered to lead. In spite of dynamic-sounding medieval titles, their job descriptions all amounted to just *bureaucrat*.

That left local groups. With any luck, they could develop ideas without much interference from above.

Still heavily influenced by the spirit of the sixties, the SCA still distrusted leaders, especially veterans. One had to tread lightly.

## The Tipping-Point

I was just a little older than most SCA officers in these parts, and had learned from a myriad of organizations from my high school paper to the Army, Coast Guard, three fencing clubs, building a college paper from scratch, college theatre, the AFLA, and the Medieval Festival.

In the SCA I had spent late nights with the Middle Kingdom Seneschal, many hours in Horde Kuraltai meetings and more with Yang and his first-hand knowledge of the Board of Directors.

So I was ready when, in 1978, Elen's excellent egg-tempera illuminations were ignored in favor of a *magic marker* scroll in a Northwoods arts contest. We all thought it was time to set about starting a new SCA chapter. In Ann Arbor, where we could *do things right*.

I had the papers, a blessing from the kingdom seneschal, and intelligent friends ready to put in effort. The Medieval festival was a major resource. We would use their stage at the 1978 Festival to announce and recruit.

What we didn't know was what the Household of the Foundering Fen was up to. They were from Roaring Wastes, a canton of Northwoods, with members in Jackson. Their leader, Linda Glasscock (*Belinda of the Flowing Waters*) had moved to Ann Arbor where, significantly, Bork

the Indestructible also lived.

None of them was interested in our khanate; we had no contact. So we were rather surprised when they arrived on the day of our big announcement with *their own* plan to start an SCA group in Ann Arbor. They merely wanted an SCA rendezvous for their members.

There was conflict built-in. We were nominally "Horde," they definitely "Northwoods."

At that moment, caught by surprise, with the Horde in an upheaval, we felt the situation too sensitive for us to protest. There were too many unknowns, like "what was Bork doing in that crowd?" Years later, Bork ruefully confessed he'd had no idea what had possessed him at that time. It was pretty clear to us. As Eleanor says in *The Lion in Winter*, "Such, my dears, is the role of sex in history."

We waited as diplomatically as we could. In the two years, detailed in the Chronology, we actually made some friends from Northwoods who came here to help train fighters: Sir Aldric, Sir Elestron and his lady Greya, who made excellent gambesons for fighters. It was now inevitable that I would take up rattan combat; she made me one.

I authorized in 1979 with dukes Laurelyn, Moonwulf and Andrew watching thoughtfully.

## IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR

1980 was a very big year for me personally, for the Sword Club, and of course for Cynnabar. First, because of Floyd – my wonderful black-and-white tabby – I had to sell my share of the house. Seems my housemates were violently allergic to cats. When the dander settled, the numbers said I had essentially lived rent-free for five years. The Coast Guard had stabilized my teeth, but now I could afford serious restoration – and tour Scotland.

But when I moved into that apartment on Berkeley, I was once again a single man.

That was the year Larry Bell completed his split from the company he partnered. Seeing that typesetting was a dead-end, he worked to spin an art house off from Typographic Insight.

There I was learning commercial art on-the-job, doing illustrations for Dana World Trade and GM Parts. Once we split off in January, I was literally the creative/production side of the company; he was sales/management. He could open doors and sell work like nobody else.

Larry had already told me I'd be hiring on the creative side; watch out for talent. In mid-1979, after it was clear that Elen and I were not to marry, she had started going alone to SCA events and met a nice man from South Bend.

When they got serious, she introduced us at an SCA event. That serious young man, just out of art school with a BFA, was Joseph Radding.

It transpired fairly soon that as soon as he

could get a job near Ann Arbor they would marry. It was very obvious what might be done about that and by whom.

Hiring him would be a risk. Giving a personal friend a job would be called corrupt at best, abuse of Larry's trust or even foolhardy. But during the last two years David Craig's example had moved my idea of chivalry to a place more like Cyrano than Launcelot.

So now, the idea of giving my former girlfriend's fiancé a job so he could move here and marry her seemed to me a gesture grand enough to be worth a little risk. I didn't take the risk for him, nor for the company, but for her and for me. That was the new state of mind –and heart– I was in. *And still am.*

Even before David Craig's influence, I had left jealousy far behind. I didn't stop loving someone just because we stopped being a couple, or because we never became one in the first place.

Not all people get that. She did. I still cherish the beautiful favor she made for me ... *after* she and Joe were married.

### What's love got to do, got to do with it?

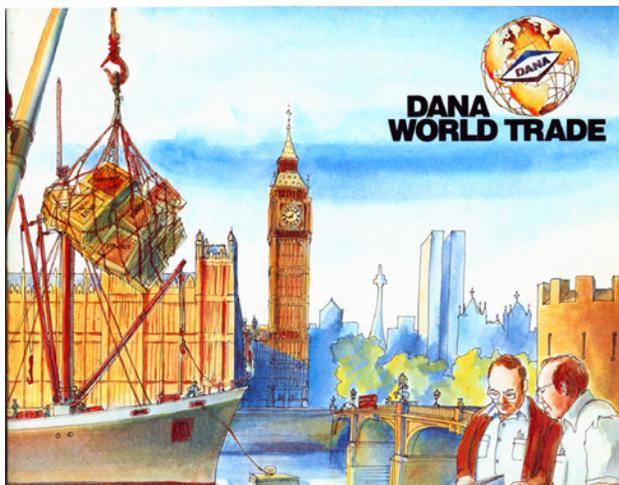
Specifically, with Cynnabar? A lot. Loving well is also about cultivating largeness of spirit. Such a spirit looks down on petty, pointless competition. In such a state we can achieve things bigger than our fears and desires.

Joe and Elen had two weddings; SCA and mundane. I enjoyed both of them to the fullest. Joe and I bonded with the bo-ken he got as a wedding present at that South Bend campground event on May 1.

By then we had already hired him; they had



Joe (*Eliahu ben Itzhak*) and me with his bo-ken



Cover of an eight-page catalog I illustrated, 1980

rented a house which would soon have cats in it. He joined the Sword Club too. The two of them did AFLA competition just before it became the USFA; she became Michigan Division Secretary when the Sword Club was becoming the core of USFA Michigan Division.

I competed in national championships and attended national meetings as a Board of Governors member. Remind you of anything? Kinda like the Cynnabar Conspiracy... later.

For the first year or two the three of us dined out together every week. For many more years, Joe and I not only worked at adjacent drawing boards but lunched together nearly every day.

We had very different personalities but in large part the very same interests and goals. For the next six or eight years we were in constant consultation about everything from the forming of the group to the handling of Crown Tourney to the ...raising of cats.

Although seven years younger, Joe turned out to be a wise counsellor indeed. He had pursued Rabbinical studies; he and Elen both had wisdom beyond their years. His moral force (and his BFA) leveled the table between us both in the SCA and at work. That enabled us to become best friends for almost three years, learning from each other.

With David Craig the four of us were a think tank. Eli began studying SCA combat seriously with Duke Laurelyn, then taught us what he had learned from the best of the new-model, brainier SCA fighters. Earlier, Laurelyn had been a varsity fencer at Case Western University.

Diverging from Sir Aldric's, his method became the cornerstone of the martial power Cynnabar built in the Michigan region.

*Old Castle Lachlan on the  
shore of Loch Fyne.*



*Barbara Wilson ("Barra" – no SCA name)  
also "did" Scotland with David C.*



Laurelyn and I both brought much from fencing to SCA combat. Still, when I proposed bringing fencing into Midrealm in 1979, he – as Earl Marshal – talked me out of it.



In January 1980 our group was still meeting in the Law Lounge of the Cook Law School. I never had a moment's doubt that we would accomplish what we did. What surprised me was how quickly great people came out of the woodwork.

### **The special place of the Horde**

In the summer of 1980 the Horde's feathers were still in a state of ruffle. I had seized the opportunity to have the Khanate of the Cat host the Horde's annual "Khan's Birthday Party" August 1-3, just after the War. The Timberland Game Ranch near Ann Arbor provided a 300-lb. wild boar. Barbecued overnight by Tjukka the Guardian, it helped make the event a success.

Ironically, so did the all-day hard rain Saturday that kept most of us in our tents, because I had a top-secret surprise for the brethren: Yang himself.

I had persuaded him that the best closure for the wounds was face-to-face. For hours he shared bread and salt in every tent, in a gesture that predated all those "peace and reconciliation" events of later world politics. The rain helped by encouraging small, intimate gatherings.

Elen was beloved of the Horde, and they created a special honor for her husband whose fealty was to the king: "Horde Friend." The

couple made friends everywhere but especially with Hordespersons like Solomon ben Jacob.

There yet being no Ann Arbor Chapter camp at that year's Pennsic, the three of us, plus David Glauser (David Fyach) camped with the Horde. Eli and I fought in the Horde contingent supporting Midrealm. I also received my official Seneschal's warrant from Rory O'Tamrair.

The Medieval Festival invited the SCA to participate with combat for the first time during my involvement. I had pursued this for two years. So now, for the first of many years, I had two organizations demo-ing at the same festival.

Early in 1980 I responded to an ad for a Photo Workshop in Scotland for serious photographers (meaning 4 x 5 or larger cameras), taught by former Ansel Adams student Howard Bond. When he sounded a little condescending, David Craig and I decided to do our own.

In September we lugged the 4 x 5 Graflex onto the plane and had two marvelous weeks photographing Scotland, mostly the highlands. My historical fantasy got a boost when we visited one of my clans' lands and Castle Lachlan. We danced at the annual gathering with Mary MacLachlan, daughter of the chief.

From the shingle there, David Craig gathered the feathers I still wear in my Scottish bonnet.

When David Craig married Barbara Wilson in 1981 and they went off to Yale, we lost the most formidable brain of our think tank. But we soon found new ones, notably Linda Duvall.

All three of the organizations I was involved

with grew and prospered during the early 1980s: the Sword Club, Cynnabar and TI Group, of which I became VP/Creative Director by 1988. My income grew every year, and every year I spent every penny on dining, travel, armor, fencing gear, toys... and a *very* few women.



There were many more influences leading into the beginning of Cynnabar, but these are the main threads. They will be picked up from time to time in the main narrative, where others who came later will be introduced.

But going forward from 1980, the most important influences on me were women. (Now, wait a minute, it's not what you think.) In that clearly male-dominated society, where at that time women could only reach high office through the sword of a man, the only roles left for them were to run things. I joined them.

Not just in running things. Like the rest of America, I took stock as the seventies ended. I was now thirty-four. The women I valued had put an end to my promiscuous ways, and now, contemplating leadership, I realized that was for good. The women I wanted to join our group would certainly hesitate if they thought the man in charge was a would-be Bluebeard.

There were men too. You already know about Duke Eli, but Duke Talymar stands high among them. His first coronation in Rockefeller Chapel really got our attention in 1980 and moved my estimate of what the SCA *could* do up a serious notch. Later, his personal leadership moved me to deep respect. He and his Queen Eislinn developed a special relationship with Cynnabar's leading people. Eventually, he married one.

You can spot these people by the fact that others traveled to learn from them. Like Sir Valerius, who stood Midrealm armouring up in steel and deeply influenced our two main armourers, Jay and John, whose work no one in the group has since equalled.

They and their influences on me, on Cynnabar and on the SCA will be featured in sidebars in the body of the chronicle.

## Lifelong Learning

This Prologue is about what happened before Cynnabar got established. But it's not as if there

had been five years of learning and preparing and ten years of carrying it out. If anything, the learning got more intense for me as we went into the new decade. And the story of that learning and doing begins to include more principal actors.

In competitive fencing, you don't have a clue how tough it can get until you start making final rounds. In the SCA, the more we built the tower of Cynnabar, the wider and higher our outlook got. And the more we had to learn.

Without personally winning the crown or taking kingdom high office, I became known as the leader of a group to be reckoned with, which was seen to excel in every department and then create new ones. I proposed new advances to the SCA's quality of re-creation every year.

That quality does not live in the office of the Earl Marshal or even the Kingdom Seneschal. It lives in SCA Events created every week by local chapters. These events are where things happen, good, bad or indifferent; therefore it is in event activities that things can be improved... or not. Kingdom law and SCA custom change in response to these happenings, not the other way around. They became my focus.

I wrote essays every month for our shire newsletter aimed at establishing a philosophy of excellence and leadership by example.

To the best-educated members of our group, little of this was news, but the point was that everyone in the group at least read it and understood even if they did not all agree 100%.

Our top people all had their own ideas about excellence and where they wanted to make it. Some found it in kingdom offices; others ran national events and programs or served on the Board of Directors. We all agreed that this was all for fun, each defining it a bit differently.

After half-hearted efforts, I gave up the idea of pursuing a peerage to follow my own star.

Rather than following the conventional "service" path which leads to a Pelican, I chose to keep working where I thought I could accomplish what I felt was important: things, given the conditions of the SCA, only a local chapter could accomplish. The Pelican order did not add these to its criteria for elevation. As far as I'm concerned, that's their loss and failing, not

mine. I was never after *that* title.

I had seen the limits of what a kingdom officer could accomplish in the seventies and as Eli won the crown and we began to play on the kingdom level I saw those limits more clearly. When I challenged them to change the rules so we could put on period-style events, they always said they *could not*. We could bend the rules from below with more freedom.

### Summing up

So, as I still see it, these are the influences that fed into the founding of Cynnabar, both in 1978 when we first tried to do it and 1980 when we got it going.

- I was an old hand at organizing and leading groups.

- What I found when I walked into the SCA on that wintry day in 1974 seemed a bit shabby – not very authentic, or even atmospheric, in the sense of medieval fantasy. This from someone who has *still* never even been to Disneyland, so don't get the idea I was comparing the SCA to the "big leagues." My comparison was to small-college theatre in northern Michigan.

- But when I got to know the people and hear their fantasy lives and their enthusiasm for the bits of history they knew, I could not help but feel this was a bunch of good people I'd like to hang with.

- At the same time I had been involved with a good many organizations and figured I could contribute to this one.

- As I was getting involved in the SCA I discovered parallel organizations in Ann Arbor like the

Medieval Festival and the Morris Dancers. And I was building my second fencing group in Ann Arbor as the seventies were running out.

- It was sheer coincidence that the person who got me into the SCA – Bob Asprin – was a storehouse of the inside information needed for the task and who at the same time could judge my qualifications for it.

- The people I met doing the U-M Fencing Club, the Medieval Festival and the Sword Club were just the crew needed – smart, educated, enthusiastic and ready. They knew me and my qualifications as well as my quirks and faults.

- They also shared my concerns about the SCA as it was, and to some extent, my hopes for its future.

In such a set of conditions it would have been criminal *not* to have proceeded as we did. None of us knew how much resistance our ideas would get from outside Ann Arbor, but that didn't matter. Our contingency plan was to just do it ourselves if the rest of the SCA didn't like us and how we did things.

Either way, we would try to do it First Class.



From here we go to the Chronology: a cleaned-up version of the original "History."

The discussion of what did get accomplished and the mark Cynnabar made on the SCA will be taken up in the Conclusion after the Chronology.

Together with the Prologue, these elements will, hopefully, add up to the History originally intended.



Armorial Device  
of the Royal Borough of  
Cynnabar



# A Chronology of THE SHIRE OF Cynnabar 1978-1993

In the Kingdom of the Middle (“Midrealm”)  
(Midwest region, United States) of the Society for Creative Anachronism  
by David S. Hoornstra  
known in the SCA as Daibhid “Ruadh” MacLachlan, Baron of the Court  
Third Edition 2019

## Text conventions

- I have used *italics* to designate *SCA persona names of SCA members* at their first appearance in the story, or after a long absence.
- The name “Daibhid” undifferentiated by any surname indicates the author, *when acting in persona*. “David” sometimes appears to designate me when the reference is “third person.” Most of these have been replaced as I switched to first person.
- Every now and then you will notice a phrase in present tense. It is not a typo; it is the “historical present” and often indicates wording lifted direct from my Domesday reports from 1980 to 1990. *Complete sentences lifted are indicated by italics.*

## 2018 EDITION NOTE on COLOR IMAGES.

Originally this book was printed with full-color imagery throughout. These images were lost! In this edition, all but three have been rescanned and inserted. Copies of the three missing originals, all from non-Cynnabar sources, are earnestly solicited.

## Background and Origins

You will see some repetition of this background from the Prologue stated in different ways and with different perspective. Mention here is to keep the chronology clear.

The group that became known first as Dierne Ansilet, then as the Royal Borough of Cynnabar, and later more commonly referred to as the Shire of Cynnabar, was founded on July 23, 1978, at the main stage of the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival. That festival was held every summer for 19 years, the last in 1989. (See also p. 24.) It was not, however, the first significant SCA presence in Ann Arbor.

Of all the communities in the Midwest in the 1970s, Ann Arbor was probably the choicest spot in which to start an SCA chapter. A classic university town, it is the site of the Cook Law School with its Quadrangle, a near-replica of the Tudor-era King’s College, Cambridge.

In addition to the well-known Art Fair, there was an established annual Medieval Festival supported by the School of Music and professors in the Residential College (U-M). There was a Morris dance troupe, and fencing was being taught in four different venues.

Yet, strangely, from 1970 through 1976 there was no SCA chapter here like the Northwoods barony. The reason was a singularly strong personality who dominated the Ann Arbor SCA scene. Bob Asprin (*Yang of the Silver Tongue*, more often called *Yang the Nauseating*) was pursuing an alternative medieval re-creation model with his “Great Dark Horde,” which became not a local chapter but the SCA’s first—and for many years only—national household.

Although modelled on the Golden Horde of Genghis Khan, it welcomed all nationalities and set up as the “Loyal opposition” to the

mainstream “feudal” “Kingdom establishment” (represented perfectly by the East Lansing chapter, “Northwoods”).

From 1970 to the establishment of the Cynnabar name in 1981, Ann Arbor was well-known throughout the young SCA by the unofficial name of “the Crossroads.” Yang’s house, “the Snake Pit,” was the center of local SCA activity until the summer of 1976, when he resigned the SCA, the Dark Horde’s center of activity drifted towards Madison, Wisconsin.

Yang’s time was notable for unpleasant relations between the Ann Arbor Dark Horde members and the people of Northwoods. Cynnabar was born among the still-warm ashes of that adversarial relationship.

I was welcomed into the Horde before I ever saw the SCA; indoctrinated in Horde rhetoric before I met my first non-Horde member.

What I didn’t know was that the Horde I joined in 1974 was already dying at the core. Most of the old Ann Arbor Horde was already gone, and my own brand-new Khanate of the Cat was the only Ann Arbor SCA organization of any kind by 1976 when Yang resigned. I was called *David of the Crossroads* until about 1978.

## The Cynnabar inheritance

Cynnabar’s spirit of independence –from establishment dogma, from unearned authority, from unquestioning respect for SCA rank or anything else– was an indirect legacy from Yang. But it was also a product of Ann Arbor’s free-thinking student protest tradition of the 1960s which I had witnessed.

If it’s true that the Great Household of the Dark Horde was founded in Ann Arbor’s martial arts community, it is just as true that the Ann Arbor Sword Club, devoted to western European swordplay tradition, is central to the ancestry of Cynnabar. Elen Wechsler (6 years later *Duchess Elen o Dynevwr*) joined the Sword Club, the Horde and the SCA all in the same two-week span. She and Joseph Radding (later *Duke Elishu*) were both active in USFA competition.

David Craig (known in the SCA as *David MacDougal*) supported the Sword Club’s fight choreography adventures in 1977 as strongly

as he supported Cynnabar’s baronial process in 1997. David Glauser (*Daibhid Fitheach-Gaolach* – we just called him *David Fiyach*) was my best performance-swordfight partner when he joined the SCA. And Chuck Lauer (*Cirion the Left Handed*) was my fencing student at the University of Michigan Fencing Club when he introduced me to Yang.

For its first year and a half, our group also owed much of its blood to Household Foundering Fen, centered in Detroit. For reasons that will become apparent, its influence on the history of Cynnabar was transitory.

In early 1978, my circle of friends, including Elen, David Craig, David Glauser, “Buzz” Buzzell (*Korok Starbear*) and others, all nominal Horde members, agreed that Ann Arbor needed a better SCA representation than the Dark Horde could provide. In SCA law, a household, regardless of size, cannot hold territory. That meant that Ann Arbor was part of the Northwoods baronial territory (half of Michigan).

More important, we thought that an Ann Arbor resident ought to be able to join the SCA without choosing between the Dark Horde and out-of-town.

We believed the SCA had wonderful, but unexploited, possibilities for the support of idealistic fantasies. We visualized a group which would avoid some of the evils of the SCA we saw then, including the “power” struggles of the Dark Horde, the lack of knowledge (or concern) about the real Middle Ages, and the generally low level of quality in the way the SCA did things then.

This was highlighted for us in particular by a Northwoods “Arts and Sciences” contest in which Elen’s rather authentic (for the times) egg-tempera illumination entry was ignored in favor of one done in magic marker! Seems the judges didn’t know what they were looking at.

## The Founding: Summer of ’78

I mentioned our ideas to *Rory O’Tomrair*, then Midrealm Seneschal, at whose home I frequently stayed for Chicago-area events. He approved the idea of my founding an SCA chapter, and promised a seneschal’s warrant as soon as I provided the necessary member information. Because many of us were active in the Ann



*Cynnabar was founded just out of the picture to the right of this scene at the main stage of the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival on U-M's North Campus School of Music grounds. Combatants are Daibhid (L) and Eliahu (R) c. 1981. The herald is Bianca. My knee-cops are fencing foil bellguards and I'm wearing a "Dur" helm (i. e. one made by Dur of Hidden Mountain.)*

Arbor Medieval Festival, we planned to launch the group using the Festival's main stage, in late July.

We were blindsided.

Unbeknownst to us, Linda Glasscock (*Lady Belinda of the Flowing Waters*) had moved to Ann Arbor, and, supported by her Household Foundering Fen, had decided to inaugurate an SCA chapter. Unaware of *our* plans, they had chosen the very time and place we had set up, only to hear the festival's jester (*Korok*) announce our meeting.

At the time appointed the two groups sat down on the grass just south of the main stage. Several new recruits filtered in. As I began to open the meeting, Belinda interrupted, saying that was her prerogative as the ranking SCA member. It seemed she had an *Award of Arms!*

Ooh. Aah. I had no idea such a thing could matter, but the last thing our circle wanted was a show of divisiveness in front of new people.

To our disbelief, Linda declared her immovable intent to be the group's seneschal with no mention of the kingdom seneschal except to assert that his authorizing me to found the group was irrelevant. When, even more surprising, George Hunt (*Bork the Indestructible*, Yang's former right-hand man) backed her up, we didn't argue. I could not read him: I hadn't seen him in quite a while; not at all in Horde context. We stayed calm and did our best to contribute.

The other founding offices were decided pretty much the same way. The new recruits had little to say. Chris Clayton (*Christophe von Neuland*) became Master of Arms. (I have no idea what that office did, only that it had nothing to do with combat.) I, known then as *Daibhid dhu*, became "Practice Master," sort of a proto-Knights' Marshal. George Hunt (*Bork the Indestructible*) became pursuivant. Elen Wechsler (then called *Elen der Gruffyn of the Wanderwood*) became Exchequer. Our Mistress of Arts was Carol Lynn (*Gwynnedd of York*, 18 years later founding Baroness Roaring Wastes). We had a Master of Science, Bob Sarber (*Horst von Grunwald*).

Good-weather meetings were held in the courtyard next to the Michigan Union, others at Linda's house. I don't recall any trips to Pennsic that year. After fall semester began, we met sporadically at West Quadrangle.

### **1979: The group's original name**

A brainstorm was held to name the group, and the result was "Dierne Ansilet." As I understand it, the first word is Gaelic for "enchanted" and the second is an assemblage of letters from the names Ann Arbor, Silver Swords (Battle Creek), and Detroit, representing the homes of the Foundering Fen members.

A device was chosen, somewhat like our present one, "tierced in pairle" to symbolize the three locales, but involving yellow instead

of red. The tower was to symbolize the urban, civilized nature of our group. Bork submitted the name and arms in early 1979.

We had combined meeting-and-arms practice in a paved courtyard north of the Michigan Union for the rest of the summer. *Sir Aldric* and *Sir Elestron* came frequently from Northwoods to teach fighting; Elestron's lady, called *Greya Ankayrlyn*, cheerfully made really excellent gambesons for beginning fighters who asked.

### The First Event

In May, the group held an event at the American Legion Hall on Main St. in Ann Arbor (now the parking lot north of Michigan Stadium), with fighting at Allmendinger Park two blocks away. In the evening there was a feast cooked by Kay Anderson (later Jarrell, called then *Kay of Triastrium*), and *Baron*

*Thorvald of Northwoods* (Rob McNish) held a court. The event lost \$241, which was "fronted" by Gwynnedd for over two years.

Sometime during the year (unclear in my notes and reports, Jack Smith (*Aethelbert the Quiet*) came on the scene and became Knights' Marshal. Also sometime during the year, Bork became inactive and was replaced as Pursuivant by Ross Anderson (*Malcolm of Skaith*).

In Fall term 1979, U-M law student George Cole (*no SCA name*) joined the group. He had joined the SCA in the Bay area (California), and recruited enough law students to make it legal for us to use a couple of rooms in the beautiful Law Quad from time to time.

Attendance by Foundering Fen members fell off rapidly during fall semester, as Linda became essentially inactive.

## 1980 A PIVOTAL YEAR



*Dance practice & meeting, Cook Room, U-M Law Quad, 1981. Foreground: Andre and Bianca. Right: Ian MacIan. Center BG: Elen and Ian's and Catriona's small son.*

By January 1980, only 3 to 5 people were warming themselves by the fire in the Cook Room. One of those had just arrived: Joseph Radding (Eliahu ben Itzhak), already an authorized fighter, squire to Sir Galem Ostwestley (in Indiana). He wore armor almost entirely of carpet and duct tape.

In April, Belinda moved away, and, on advice from Rory, I became acting seneschal under my new name, *Daibhid Mac Lachlan*. As Aethelbert was vacating the marshal's office, I asked new member Eliahu to take over those duties. How he carried them out shaped much of Cynnabar's next five years.

In early May, nearly the entire shire attended a wedding event in Mithrandiel Mardi (South Bend, Indiana), featuring Elen and Eliahu. The big wedding was at her parents' home in the Detroit area.

At some event in Toledo or Cleveland (I'm guessing since the record says Windsor, which had no group yet), I authorized in Sword and Shield with three dukes watching. When I got a chance to fight duke Andrew a bit later, although he didn't bother to block, I was unable to get him to acknowledge a single blow.

May 3: Talymar's Coronation is at the gorgeous Gothic Chapel, Circle Campus, U-Illinois, Chicago. It was the most gorgeous SCA event most of us had seen to that point. We filled 3 rooms of a lovely small hotel just down the street. Eli carried himself well in the tourney on the mall in front of the chapel but had his hand injured by a rather forceful opponent. The photos on the next page are the first film through a camera I bought for this event.



*Talymar arrives, hatless, to be crowned, in the spectacular chapel.*

*Coming as he did from southeast Ohio, he was not well known to most of us. But over the next decade he and his wife Eislinn (who was too ill to be his first-reign consort) created bonds with many groups, including Cynnabar.*

## **Talymar's Coronation**



*Talymar I accepts the Oath of Fealty from the Great Officers of State*

*The balconies offered views into the court seldom afforded to the SCA photographer. Talymar's splendor rewarded my investment.*

In June, the College of Heraldry rejected the *Dierne Ansilet* name. We were too busy to take it up for another six months. In the meantime, we used "the Crossroads" since few beyond Jackson had learned the other name.



*Baron Master Moonwulf, reputed the best fighter in Midrealm, offers advice to Eli about his opponent. In my own martial encounters with Moonwulf I was overwhelmed by his courtesy and kindness.*

July 2 and 3, it rained on the Dark Horde's *Khan's Birthday* event at the TimberLand Game Ranch on North Territorial Road. As "AutoKhan," I contrived to arrange Yang's last attendance at an SCA event in a "peace and reconciliation" move.

The weekends of July 30 and August 6 saw us at the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival again, with the first combat demo (other than the Sword Club's theatrical steel-sword fights) they had permitted in five years.



Cynnabar owed much of its early notions about authenticity from the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival. Many of the early influential members either were part of the Tourdion Dance Troupe or played Intermezzi characters. People circulated between the Ann Arbor Sword Club, Ann Arbor Morris & Sword, and the Festival. When Cynnabar came along, it became part of the traffic pattern.

The Festival atmosphere was more scholarly than the SCA at that time, but no whit less fun. Its main program was a series of Mystery Plays and Miracle Plays from the York and Wakefield Cycles, with an occasional Sot play, Hans Sachs work, or other farce. They were directed by professors from U-M's Residential College, from whom many of us learned more about medieval culture in one season than in four years of the SCA.

By 1983, Cynnabar was providing 90% of the dancers to the Festival. That year, at our second Ceilidh, Cynnabar presented *The Farce of Peter Patelin*, straight from the Festival's repertory. By 1986 I was doing the graphics.

Authenticity came also from the Music School's role. Early Music scholars played period concerts using the period instruments of the Stearns Collection, exposing us to sounds seldom heard in the SCA.

The Festival was an unusual institution for any American town. One of its influences on us was the concept that one could get one's medievalism right here at home; that the SCA was not the only way to have fun with the Middle Ages.

Long after the Festival's demise in 1989, Cynnabar members retained the habit of considering non-SCA sources for not only information but also inspiration. That influence tended to set us apart.

## Pennsic IX

There was as yet no Cynnabar camp at Pennsic. Eliahu, Elen, David Fitheach and I camped with the Dark Horde. Eli (honored as a "Horde Friend") and I fought for the Middle from within the Horde contingent.

Also at Pennsic, I was officially warranted seneschal by Rory.

### The name Cynnabar

By November, the group was still meeting most Monday evenings around the fireplace of the linenfold-paneled Cook Room in the Law Quad.

The choice of a new name happened at two of those firelit meetings. To describe that event, I can do no better than quote the successful appeal submitted after the new name was rejected for conflict with a science fiction novel.

. . . from the strong educational, artistic and professional makeup of our group came the group "persona:"

A city somewhat like Florence; fortified but open to trade, located near to both the Dark Horde and Northwoods barony but on good terms with all. The name should be simple, ancient, and have perhaps a tinge of Eastern flavor. All this was decided four months before the name came to us.

It was a stormy, well-remembered meeting night when our science officer mentioned that under the city lay—to all report—a large deposit of mercury. Further, this element most frequently occurred in its red sulphide form called in alchemy "Cynnabar".

We loved it on sight: simple, ancient-sounding, appropriate—even the Eastern twang. Our law student promised a brief on that name, and all present were admonished to go forth and seek out other uses, as in fiction, that might present a conflict. A week later, no conflicts had been found, and our law student filed this brief (taking liberties with the entries from the Oxford English Dictionary in what we regarded as the correct spirit):

"CYNNABER: cinnabar, cinnambre: (1) the red crystalline form of mercuric sulphide, HgS (2) the pigment; vermilion (1382 Wyclif, Jer. xxii 14 ("peynteth with cynoper")) (3) A rhombohedral mineral ore (1599 Hakluyt, Voyages II, 229 "great quantitie of quicksilver and cinaper") (4) a locality in the Kingdom, somewhat near Northwoods (5) Dragon's blood (1398 Trevisch, Barth. De P.R. xix, xxvii 878; Hakluyt, op. cit. II 331 "sanguis draconis cinnabaris") (6) Alchéme, a source of quicksilver;

the way to make butter of antimony was by use of mercury from cynnaber (1610 B. Jonson, Alcheme I, iii, 616 “cinaper” )”

Except for (4), the brief turned out to be verbatim from The Oxford English Dictionary II, 419, 1970 by the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

We took the reference to “dragon’s blood” as a good omen: the dragon is the symbol of the Middle Kingdom, and we are at its virtual center. That sealed the unanimous choice.

The law student was George Cole, of course. His brief was not overly scholarly, but we didn’t care. We were won over completely, and the brainstorm began. I proposed the style “Royal Borough” based on my reading about certain towns in Scotland, which by Royal charter were



free of feudal duties to local barons. That fit our independent stance towards Northwoods, whose officers continued to include us in their reports and Order of Precedence.

Although the “Royal Borough” style was approved by the heralds, it fell out of use in the early eighties.

Someone else noted that the three best-known states of mercury were colored red (Cinnabar), white and black. That became the color scheme when we re-submitted the group’s device. Everything seemed to be falling into place.

### **Wassail**

We celebrated a year of upturn with the second of a series of December pot-luck Wassail feasts which continues to this day. 12 of us ate, drank and toasted by candlelight under the barrel vault of the lovely Law Lounge (right), then rolled back the carpet and danced.

Present were several members who had joined us during the year who were to have an impact on us or other groups. Linda Duvall (*Claire of Lynnwood Keep*, Pennsic Autocrat in 1997 for the second time), Conni Bridge (*Bianca Cantecuzene*) who joined with Cindy’s dance troupe Tourdion and became our Gold Key for several years, and Debora St. James (*Isolde of Summerhall*) see sidebar page 27.

## 1981

February 21: 18 local members attended our Mardi Gras potluck feast in the Law Lounge. I think it was Claire's idea.

The local Renaissance dance group Tourdion decided to merge with us, doubling our average attendance. It was led by Cindy Milner (*Angelica*

*Paganelli*), who became our dance mistress for years to come. We had dancing at every meeting in those days, sometimes by firelight. The "boom box" was my reel-to-reel tape deck.

April: a campus demo, the ancestor of Festifall, brings several new members.

June: the big move, in terms of growth, was the Monday night meetings. We had used the Cook Room all year, if available, but sometimes it wasn't, and potential members kept getting frustrated. Moving the meetings to my apartment near Michigan Stadium gave us the consistency we needed to grow. The growth that started then did not let up for six years. Already by the end of 1981, we were averaging 25 people weekly.

Spring: somewhere in here, Claire became our Minister of Arts. *She is showing signs of becoming a super list-making organizer.* Later that year, she began publishing a Cynnabar newsletter.

June 1 was the first **Huron River Day**; I coordinated our participation. Several people from Northwoods came to help, notably including Sir Elestron and Lady Greya. Hundreds saw us fight and show off the arts. Sir Elestron won the double-elimination tourney.

About here, Bianca became our pursuivant.

*August: Medieval Festival again. We are gaining acceptance. And new members. This year's festival brought us some gems.* Several came as a group. Jay and Nanette Johnston gave up their Michigan Marching Band slots and became solid citizens. Jay (*Jan MacIan of Annandale*) became an armorer, pounding out plates on his trailer hitch –and the curbstones at Married Student Housing. Nanette (*Catriona*) became a costumer and seamstress, making

*River Day with the unfinished Cynnabar list banner by Melisande. The Royal arms circle is SOLID embroidery!*

*At right in blue is James Sharp, a member of the Toledo, Ohio group who for lack of activity there came to Cynnabar meetings and events for several years.*

### Cynnabar Traditions

Setting visible example is one of Cynnabar's oldest traditions. In 1982 we put 11 Cynnabar surcoats made by Melisande into Pennsic field, becoming the largest heraldically identifiable group present. The very next year, we were delighted that another group had outdone us —in surcoats. But we had outdone us too —displaying 10 matched, effective war shields to front our 13 surcoated fighters.

For 14 years no one came close to our 1984 list field design. Our 1987 "knight stands" designed by Eli are still unique.

Being "independent-minded, yet peace-loving" only grew into "militarily strong" later, when our surcoats and war heaters began to make an impression, not only on Midrealm kings wishing to make a display, but on Eastern generals, who threw their best troops at us.

The two concepts became inextricably linked when it became apparent that the annual Border War in Ionia between Northwoods and Andelcrag would be decided – lopsidedly – by which barony secured Cynnabar's support.

The tradition reached its peak in 1987 when Cynnabar's forces took on both baronies combined and emerged victorious. It is only fair to note that this peak didn't last.



costuming for many new members as well as the shire's first banner, in fringed satin.

Their friend Lon Grabowski, a percussion student, took up two-sword with gusto, becoming *Albrecht Reinlöwe* along the way.

Jon L. Caulkett (*Janadoc Brandagamba*) was already well-known in Midrealm by the time he joined us –as simply “Hobbit.” It may be taken as typical of Cynnabar that we persuaded him to come up with a more usable, period name. The result: *Johannes aus Brandenburg*. He was a non-fighting squire to the first Northwoods knight, Sir Aldric. He became the hobby-horse rider of the Ann Arbor Morris & Sword dance team.

John Moga (*John Thomas of Erewhon*) also came from the Morris team. Concentrating on the theatrical and demo side of things, with his suave but strong delivery he became our most beloved emcee for several years.

Marci MacDowell (*Tieer*) came to the SCA from Fandom in Toronto via the Horde, and Ann Arbor via the police department. A police-woman, she helped keep us “okay” with our weapons vis-a-vis the constabulary.

### **Pennsic X and the Tuchux**

Once again, the Cynnabar contingent camped with the Horde and served Midrealm from within the Horde unit. I include the following anecdote because Cynnabar folk –Eliahu, Elen, and I, at least– were right in the middle of the essential proceedings.

My tent was next to the gate. The night before field battle, I was just about to nod off when it got rather noisy in the neighborhood. It was the Tuchux coming down the hill, 50 strong, fully armed and carrying steel, not rattan. Torches aloft, they marched up to our gate, which was immediately blocked by a wall of hordesmen and -women.

Thinking that the Horde must be “sorta like them,” they had come to challenge the Horde to *a battle with live steel*. By the looks of them, they were thinking “now would be good.” With the help of Horde Friend Earl Marshal *Laurelyn Darksbane*, we set 'em straight about Horde politics and martial arts policies. Then, in perhaps the boldest move I ever saw from the Horde, we invited them into our camp, sat them down, and

### **The Monday Night Workshops**

Since 1980, Cynnabar has met every Monday night except holidays. Since mid-1982, each meeting has included some sort of one-hour class. These workshops were central to what I thought of as a group-building process.

They were educational, but they also helped get members in the habit of attending the basic Monday meetings. Doing something together is a great way for people to get to know each other and build the foundations of friendships and group consciousness.

Special-interest subgroups formed, each tending to split Cynnabar. I believed the Monday workshops tended to counter that effect.

We made it clear from the outset that any member could teach a workshop, and encouraged everyone to come and support the effort. The result was that many people got their first public-speaking experience in these workshops.

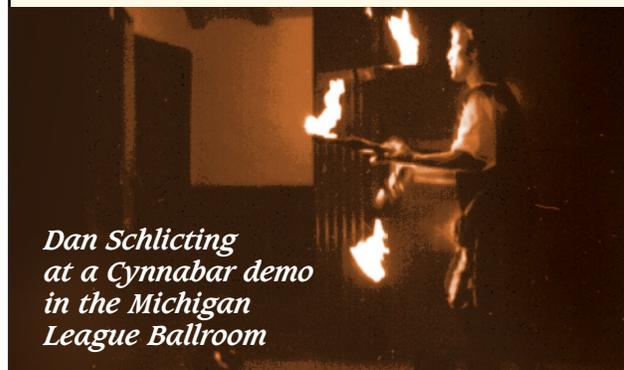
I recall *Minna von Lubeck* as a shy teenager giving her first workshop in drop spinning. Fifteen years later, she was Pennsic Co-Autocrat.

At Catriona's stained-glass workshop, people actually completed candle lanterns and Gothic Sun-catchers.

Ian MacIain, lab assistant at the U-M art school's metal shop, gave a hands-on Mokume-game workshop in which members made and tempered their own tools which they used to inlay silver designs into copper medallions.

Laura Sparrow, Elen's former English teacher, owned a small business offering brass rubbings. One Monday evening we made rubbings from her extensive collection of replica memorial brasses of people like John de Creke.

The students also benefited. Dan Schlicting attended one of Eliahu's juggling workshops in about 1983. Three years later, we hired him for our Elizabethan Wassail. An established pro by then, he was juggling *lit torches*.



*Dan Schlicting  
at a Cynnabar demo  
in the Michigan  
League Ballroom*

uncorked. The party went on til 4 a.m. I spent most of that time getting to know their leader, Wolf, over Tullamore Dew in my tent.

### The first “Cynnabar” event

Claire had persuaded the Jacobsens –owners of an old mill on a farm in Saline– to allow us to plan an outdoor-only event there for Labor Day weekend. Come the weekend, it rained torrentially and flooded the site, forcing cancellation. Our phone calls on Friday managed to intercept and hold back all but one of the parties planning to attend. Those who arrived were shown a good time.

*November: Crown Tourney in DeKalb, Ill. King Moonwulf gives the first awards for service to Cynnabar: Awards of Arms to Claire and Daibhid (in absentia).*

### Student Group Status; practices

Later in the month, it now being established that we are a student group at the University of Michigan, we moved our combined dance and fighting practice into the Michigan Union and onto Sundays, usually in the mornings. We had made it an unofficial policy (we had lots of those) that all Cynnabar fighters *would* be competent dancers as well as pursue competent costuming and personae.

Eliahu had become a combat student of Duke Laurelyn Darksbane. As our knights’ marshal and primary fighting coach, he was very supportive of the idea that dance practice made a great warmup for fighters.

### SCA-Con

SCA-Con was an annual event for SCA officers. Local officers like me were to attend and meet with their kingdom superiors to be refreshed on SCA laws, rules and customs. My superior was Duke Laurelyn’s duchess, Ithrieliel, kingdom seneschal in those days.

Fresh from a year of organizational effort, I was shocked to find out how I was supposed to have been doing it when Ithrieliel proudly handed us copies of her first edition of the *Midrealm Seneschal’s Handbook*. In it, she declared that being a local seneschal was so thankless and miserable that the first task should be finding a successor so as to *get rid of the job*.

I was having so much fun I couldn’t understand such a negative approach. Saying so cost me her everlasting ill-will.

Late in 1981 we gained one of our most valuable and influential members. I had not seen John Bailey for quite some time and then about October word came that his wife Mary had died of cancer. John was shattered. He retired early, sold or stored his goods and hit the road in a van. But before leaving he gathered his khanate in a farewell. Korok Starbear was there with two sisters he had met at a “black powder” event.

One, Jeanne Hohman, lost no time getting my attention. To the annoyance of both Korok and my date, I lost no time either. In Cynnabar she threw herself into project after project, dazzling us with embroidery and costuming output. She took the name *Melisande de Marmande*.

### Year’s End

*Our third annual candlelight Wassail feast has 33 in attendance. Dur of Hidden Mountain lived in Grand Rapids but regarded himself a Cynnabar member. He was the first of many “members in spirit from afar.” He also introduced the bean-cake tradition to Cynnabar, the selection process for the Bean King and Queen, who were then expected to hold a fool’s court.*

This nonsense has been going on now for sixteen years. (*Now, in 2018, more like 36.*)

A Hordesman, Dur was known for welding up simple, strong, inexpensive helms with flat top and sides and ship’s-prow forehead. He provided “Dur helms” to several of us, replacing my freon tank among others. Still looking for a nice shot I took of Dur at a revel.



*Dance practice in the Cook Room, Law Quad*

## 1982

The new year saw Cynnabar really take off as a group. Monday evening meetings continued weekly; we were shocked to discover that many allegedly-active groups met only monthly. We had far too much to do to let a whole week go by without a chance to get together and move things forward. We continued to use my apartment for these while keeping our eyes peeled for a larger, free, and *regularly available* place.

Monthly dessert revels had now become a tradition, usually on a Friday night. But we ceased to use the Law Quad rooms on ethical grounds. George Cole had moved on, and while the administrators still welcomed us, we hardly knew the Law student members, and we began to feel as if we were “getting away with it.”

Claire managed to get our revels into the clubhouse at her complex, Rolling Meadows in Saline, just 5 miles south of Ann Arbor. She was rapidly becoming a central source of organizational energy in the group. She warmly welcomed many of us into her home for brainstorming and special meetings, and enjoyed figuring out how to make things happen.

If I was the philosophical leader (“We don’t have to settle for an ordinary SCA group – we will demonstrate what excellence can do”), Claire was the nuts-and-bolts “here’s how we can make this happen” practical leader.

### How Cynnabar operated in 1982

Not that we had a monopoly on leadership. The group was full of positive, eager, co-operative people. Ideas were blossoming everywhere and people were running with them. Without

any desire to control the flow, there was still an obvious need to co-ordinate what was going on, and we – the de facto leadership group – did some tweaking.

In January, Claire became newsletter editor/Chatelaine. Angelica became Minister of Arts.

We voted to name the newsletter “Citadel” in keeping with our symbol of chivalric urbanity, the tower on our arms. The discussion of that topic was memorable as the very first time any of us (mea culpa) got even slightly tense over an issue. I mention this as an indicator of the harmony in which we normally lived.

At that time, all Monday meetings were “business” meetings in the sense that anyone could bring up an idea and we all felt free to discuss it and possibly decide it on the spot. The fact that most people were new to the SCA made these meetings fun and stimulating for most.

They were a mixture of SCA indoctrination and a constant flow of ideas for projects brought up and batted around for all the world like a 1940s musical drama: “I’ll make the curtains. You’re great at costumes. Jane can...” and so on. Few people minded if some of them spent four hours at a stretch in my crowded living room.

It was there that Nanette proposed a stained-glass class; there that Jay proposed an actual rented workshop to make armor and other projects. If we occasionally bit off more than we could chew, we swallowed it cheerfully enough.

The actual decision-making process could best be described as benevolent Machiavellian. There was a core group of experienced leaders,



River Day 1982, our second and last demo for that event. “Hobbit” (see page 9) is in yellow, center.

some SCA-experienced, some from other places. There was no presumption that “this is the SCA way, so get out the duct tape.”

Still, this core group seemed to get the majority of the ideas. While a workshop was going on in the living room, two or three of us would be betwixt sink and stove, brainstorming specific events, projects the group needed, or even the direction the group should take.

I was almost always involved in these plots, but it was Claire who came up with the phrase “take over the known world.” At that time none of the others would have believed it if you have told them she would later be the first ever Pennsic Autocrat two years in a row.

These completely unofficial discussions usually ended by deciding who would bring up the idea at the meeting. By the time it was presented, there were always three or four people in support. In that atmosphere, it can’t be too surprising that many of our ideas went over with little argument.

If this sounds like “get-your-own-way” leadership, it was downright democracy compared with what Duchess Ithriel had said we were supposed to be doing: giving orders, being “in charge.” In my ten years as seneschal, I never gave a direct order, but managed to get agreement for my programs much of the time.

### **The Privy Council idea is born**

As stated, the shire’s self-appointed movers and shakers had gotten in the habit of deciding things via informal conversations and brainstorms in my kitchen or at Claire’s tea table. We realized that it would not be good in the long run for us to monopolize the leadership, so we dictatorially put ourselves out of business. Our “Privy Council” would be anything but

*Sir Elestron gives advice to Lord Dur (foreground) at Ceilidh 1*



privy; that month we commenced a decades-long campaign to get people to attend.

Part of our concern was to keep the Monday meetings relatively free of the time-consuming process of decision-making. A 1-hour workshop followed by an hour, more or less, of announcements and informal discussion was plenty.

So the Council was, from the outset, a different day, usually Sunday morning once a month. On Council Sundays, some of us would be together from 11 to 1 for council, 1 to 2 for dance practice, then 2 to 6 or so for combat practice, then off to eat somewhere. Or watch *Star Trek: the Next Generation*, practically the only TV any of us watched.

### **Ceilidh I**

As a Scot by persona, I had long had the idea of doing a Ceilidh event, without really knowing what that was. By the time I proposed it, the group had many members who would have wanted a Celtic event anyway, and it had been approved for January. Claire, a teacher, got us a Middle School site in Saline.

In a way, it was a quiet, casual sort of event, far from the intensity one might expect from Cynnabar a few years later. We had “knights on a log” –an idea swiped from the Renaissance Festival– and David MacDougal gave lessons in Highland Sword Dance during the day (the piper played til we dropped).

There were two tourneys. Due to the traditional Ceilidh weather, the official one was

over before many of the fighters arrived. Dag Thorgrimsson won that, the first of his many tournament victories. There was a second tourney, won by Sir Elestron.

**February. Valentine's Day Massacre, Andelcrag (Kalamazoo).**

March. Clancy Day. Angelica of Lostwithiel (later Paganelli) receives Award of Arms.

### **We become "Demo Demons"**

This year marked a shift in our demo methods. By now I had a long history as an activity organizer with Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan fencing organizations, in addition to the SCA, Medieval Festival and the ad agency. So my phone number was widely circulated and I received a lot of calls for educational and even commercial demo/performance sorts of things.

Eliahu and I, still at the same ad agency, considered ourselves capable of almost anything with a theatrical flair. Claire and Melisande were professional teachers, and were more than willing to do it in their spare time too. At the same time, we noticed that not every SCA group found educational demos fun, but we did.

In addition, in the absence of clear guidelines from the SCA on fulfilling our non-profit (educational) status, I declared educational outreach programs part and parcel of our mission. Further, I asserted that as the local chapter of the SCA, we constituted the community's resource for the Middle Ages.

We got the public library to buy a copy of the Known World Handbook. That one move brought us many contacts over a span of years. Our educational demos emphasized the middle ages, not the SCA. Early on, they helped us realize how much we had to learn.

- On **February 6**, we pulled off an 8-hour educational demo for the Cleary College Humanities classes. \$50.00 for the coffers, but more important was the experience and PR.

- **April.** A 4-hour evening workshop for a Plymouth elementary school.

- **May.** Student Activities Fair demo at U-M. (We are now a registered student organization.) This demo brought us several members who would turn out significant in our history.

- **June.** Our first "commercial" demo, for Gelman Sciences, at the spooky Victorian Deke Shant frat house. Eliahu and Albrecht handled it on 24 hours notice.

- While I never quoted "prices" for Cynnabar demos, I was often able to suggest an appropriate donation. That frequently meant \$100.

- **July:** Dance practices are now twice a week to prepare for Medieval Festival. We have decided to be as period-correct as any group in the festival; no giveaways.

- **July 5.** Huron River Day Demo. Our second. We keep a list going all day. Comar comes from Ohio; teaches and authorizes fighters in 2-sword. I learned a lot.

- **Jul 30/August 7-8.** *Ann Arbor Medieval Festival. We finally gain acceptance. SCA provides 95% of the dancers and were allowed 8 hours of combat demo (performance) time. WE HAVE A NEW PROBLEM: more male dancers than female.*



*Cynnabar dancers getting ready to go on at the Medieval Festival '82.*



*Cynnabar at the Bridge, Pennsic 1982. Note Eli, bottom center, Daibhid protecting Eli's head with the greatsword, Beorthwine with blue shield also covering him, and two more "Dur" helms.*

*some of Aerdigvidder's people, Lady Fern, and Earl Berengaer parked 10 feet onto the bridge.*

*We gave not one inch. In 45 minutes, over 100 Easterners died before our wall. In fact, the last three ended the battle by jumping into the "river."*

In June, Melisande had finished embroidering a beautiful Cynnabar marshallate banner for use at the list field, and now volunteered to make surcoats for all the Cynnabar fighters going to Pennsic.

*Aug 30. Bay City group forming; holds event. Eli wins the tourney.*

*Seneschal's informal survey reveals that Cynnabar members are spending as much as 14 hours a week in our practices and meetings.*

*Sept 8. The first edition of the booklet "Cynnabar" is published; our first Guide for new people. Already our many local customs render existing pamphlets like "Forward Into the Past" too general.*

### **Pennsic War XI, 1982**

*August 15-21. We had a Cynnabar war camp for the first time, sleeping 35 people. It was as fun a time at the war for the group as a whole as I can remember. My notes say: The Cynnabar Eating team also distinguished itself.*

*Oct 4th. Campus demo.*

*Melisande did finish the surcoats and we have seven on the field. Eli became the first unbelted fighter chosen to be part of the Champions' melee.*

*Oct 16. The Michigan Renaissance Festival is a new commercial festival in its second year in Clarkston, north of Detroit. Roaring Wastes is sponsor of the SCA involvement. We send a contingent.*

*The king - Andrew, in his third reign- drafts us to be the Royal Guard and leads us into a meat grinder in the field battle.*

*October. Talymar's Coronation is at Flaming*

*To make up for it, he gives us a "roving cork" assignment for the bridge battle. Our mission is to go where needed and stop 'em cold. We do. 20 Tuchux last about 10 minutes on the upper bridge, and we seven, plus*



*Cynnabar camp gate at Pennsic 1982. Only about 120 yards from the barn.*



*Melisande de Marmande receives an Award of Arms from King Talymar, whom she, much later, married.*

*Gryphon in Ohio. At evening court, Melisande de Marmande receives an Award of Arms.*

### More Cynnabar Traditions

Melisande's Award of Arms was the first exception to the Cynnabar "one-year rule." It was our habit to send award recommendations in *as a group* letter signed by everyone *except* the intended recipient. We had specific minimum criteria for our recommendation: have a decent, passable period name, have reasonable period costume, be courteous and courtly, and serve the SCA in some way beyond those basics. We believed that very few people could possibly meet our idea of AoA material in under a year. But in about ten months, Melisande had blown past all expectations.

We –that leadership group mentioned above – also took it upon ourselves to strongly encourage fighters to become well-rounded courtiers.

In October, Cynnabar Privy Council created (illegally, we later discovered) a local award, The Order of the Silver Tower, to recognize courtesy. The first recipient, indeed, the person who inspired the award itself, was Andy Davison (*Andre de la Soie* – yes, as in silk). Several "favors" with the tower were embroidered and awarded to members before we realized that it could not be an honor to receive an illegal award. So we decided that any gentle member in good standing, not carrying the favor of another, who gave primary allegiance to our chapter, could wear such a piece of cloth, which came to be

called the Cynnabar Favor.

### Heraldic Crises

On November 4, word came that our name "Cynnabar" was rejected by the College of Arms on the basis of conflict with a city in a science-fiction novel by Ed Bryant.

*Daibhid writes an appeal to the College of Arms, and to the author (Ed Bryant) whose fiction is in conflict with us. Both are successful, and the name was eventually approved.*

Also in November, we needed a new pursuivant. At my urgent request, Melisande accepted the role of Pursuivant, and fulfilled it well. Her research into the art as practiced in the SCA was a revelation to most of us.

**November Crown.** Eli placed 5th, one spot better than the previous year. At court, he was made King's Champion by HRM Talymar.

December 11. **4th Annual Wassail feast.** 40 present.

December 29 **Royal Progress**, Canton, MI. I believe it was Talymar and Eislinn who did the first Midrealm Royal Progress, just visiting groups and getting in touch with the populace in a way that seldom happens at regular events.

At this one, Jay Johnston (*Ian Maclan of Annandale*) received his Award of Arms. His armor-making and teaching of crafts have been exemplary.

Also at the small (one might say "intimate") court, Ian Maclan and Andre de la Soie became squires to *Sir Garrahan O'Leitrim*. And "*Hobbit*" (Jon Caulkett, now known as *Johannes aus Brandenburg*) received the Order of the Queen's Favor.

*December. "Cynnabar Publications" (Angelica, our indefatigable chronicler) prints the first Cynnabar Domesday Boke. Each shire member has name, device, birthday, and persona story when available.*

*1982 Members-errant: Jeff Skevington (Dag Thorgrimsson) and his friend Thaul Dordsen both live 150 miles away, yet call Cynnabar home. Both received Awards of Arms this year. (Dur has moved to Cincinnati, where he is now Baron Dur of Hidden Mountain, and still calls himself one of us.)*

## 1983

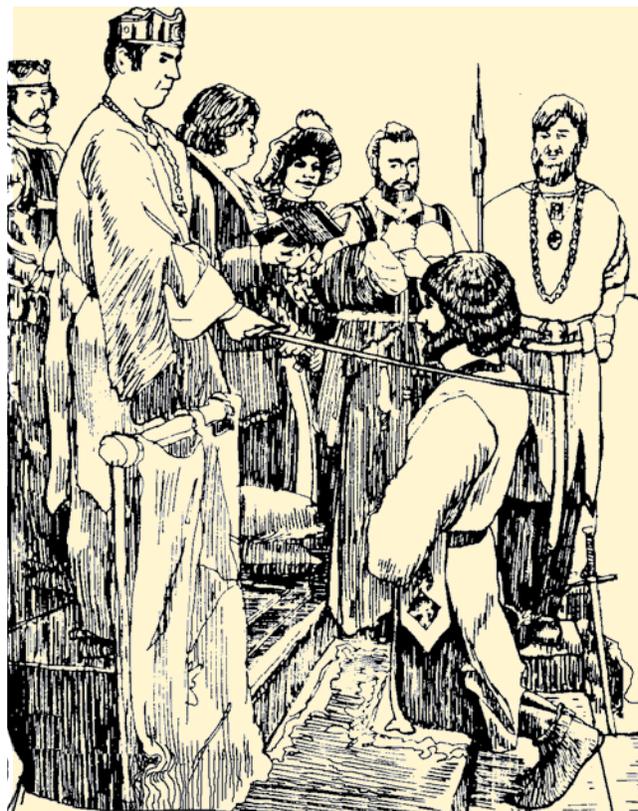
1983 was an exciting year at Cynnabar. It was particularly exciting for me because I got to try so many new ideas for the SCA. It was also the last year I had the freedom to do so.

It began January 22 with the second annual "Ceilidh" --which became the traditional first fighting event of the year in this area. It was at the First Congregational Church on State at William. Lady Claire demonstrated a new Cynnabar tradition: the "unfrazzled SCA event autocrat." Up until then, it was SCA tradition that you could always tell the Autocrat of an event because she (usually not a he) was in a tizzy, often turning purple and fretting, which somehow was connected to the Purple Fret they often received.

Claire received the Purple Fret anyway, that very night, at a court that didn't come easy. HRM Eislinn braved the very bad weather and made the trip alone from southern Ohio...well, most of the way. Her car failed about an hour south, and Lord Dur went to bring her the rest of the way.

36 participants fought; Sir Elestron won. The tourney prize was a large applique banner based on the Manessa Codex made by Melisande de Marmande.

The Cynnabar Tower Players debuted with The Farce of Master Peter Patelin to a delighted audience of over 100 (photo below).



*This sketch of Eli's knighting was done from a photo. I was trying to follow Howard Pyle's style. I later used it as part of the border of our demo handout.*

At Valentine's Day in Kalamazoo, the Cynnabar melee team showed a hint of things to come by taking second place ahead of two teams led by knights.

### First Knight

At Clancy Day, March 26, Eliahu ben Itzhak was lying prone in the middle of the list field, having finally lost a bout, when HRM Talymar strode in and stood over him, flanked by a seneschal and herald. The latter declared court open and summoned the chivalry.

As Eli struggled to get to his feet and get out of the way, he was commanded to stay where he was. The boon begged was for him to be added to the Order of Chivalry.

Elen, Eli's lady, could not be



*Milan prison demo (photo by Milan FCF)*

certainly had all the trappings of security you could want. I taught a calligraphy class, Claire gave a castle slide lecture, and we demonstrated dance and combat.



In May, our group name Cynnabar was registered by Laurel Sovereign of Arms. And in August, just as we were about to go to Pennsic with blank shields, Dragon Herald called to say that our arms had been registered. We

were in business!



Melisande has come to the front as a costumer. Six of the Cynnabar gentlemen were suddenly wearing her velvet flat hats, which seemed to just happen as side-flourishes to the three costumes she finished between February and April.

### **The Cynnabar Island Collegium**

On July 3, we held a combative arts collegium. Count Talymar agreed to come up and teach tactics and strategy for groups. For the first time, a Cynnabar event had great weather.

On July 21, we did a demo for the Northville Public Library. This was notable because of one new recruit: the librarian's daughter, who eventually became Ilsa von Westfalen and a Midrealm

Duchess. I'll confess I recruited her personally.



The Ann Arbor Medieval Festival (July/August) and the Michigan Renaissance Faire (Sept.) gave us an excuse to raise the

*Talymar (center, in scale armor) talks group tactics. In real life he's a high-school teacher.*

present that evening, so Eli was placed on vigil to be knighted two weeks later in a former cow barn at Dearnehalde in southern Ohio.

*As far as I know, that was the first time a Midrealm knight-candidate has been placed on vigil. And he made the most of it. We rented a chapel and actually held an all-night vigil on the Friday night between the two weekends.*

Eliahu accepted the chain of the Northwoods knights, setting a precedent for several Cynnabar knights to follow.



On April 23, we gave what was perhaps the oddest demo in our history. 16 of us gathered in costume and drove to "Milan Donjon," as we called it. The Milan Federal Corrections Facility featured all male less-violent offenders, but it



level of our demo performances to a new level. Earlier, I had participated in the Jubilee Olde English Faire demo in Peoria (Illion) and took strong hints from Moonwulf's demo style.

At the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival, about 25 of us presented four hour-long scripted courtly tourney performances, as well as providing the



*Angelica and Eli at the Northville Library demo  
Photo by Northville School*

dancers and help run the festival.

The Canton of Roaring Wastes (later a Barony) was handling the Ren Faire in those days. We sent a contingent to help them with "their" weekend as well as handling a weekend ourselves. We decorated and manned an info booth and 9 of us put on a Moonwulf-style



*Ian MacIan in his armor workshop*

combat demo in the horse arena.

The owner of the festival came by and said, in effect: "I don't permit the SCA to perform at all of my festivals. But this is really the way I like to see it." He stated that we compared favorably with the best chapters he deals with.

### **Of arms and war**

Ian MacIan (Jay Johnston), our minister of sciences, organized massive war preparations. Building a shield press, he in two weeks completed over 20 war heater shields, 10 for us and the rest for the Northwoods and Andelcrag war parties. All Cynnabar fighters participated in the Cynnabar colors paint project. In the same period, four new fighters were completely outfitted in armor under Ian's supervision.

### **Pennsic XXII**

Our Pennsic participation was another quantum leap improvement over last year's. 50 people camped with us, forcing the creation of an extension dubbed "Cynnabar Heights." This year we fielded 10 in the shield wall with matched heaters and surcoats. The contingents of two baronies, Northwoods and Andalcrag, asked permission to join our little army, and we turned down Duke Andrew's invitation to join him because we already had instructions from the crown.

10 Cynnabar members shot the archery point, one of whom hit all three advancing-man targets. In all, we met with great chivalry, excitement, and fireside revelry.

1983 was also the first year that the idea of becoming a barony first came up seriously. We were far and away the most active group in Michigan, including both baronies,



*The Cynnabar contingent takes the field. Photographer unknown.*

which, truth be told, were experiencing a bit of a slump. We were constantly being asked for help and advice by new groups, some of which were closer to baronial centers than to us.

I had approvals from both barons and all kingdom officers to proceed with paperwork, and I was doing so when . . . fall Crown happened.

### **First Royalty**

Once again, Cynnabar had a strong showing at Crown, fielding four out of the 21-person list. Each was victorious in the first two encounters. Deputy knights-marshal Albrecht Reinlowe was eliminated in his fourth fight. Dag, one of our members from afar, eliminated Sir Bearengaer before going down. Ian Maclan was eliminated in the fourth round by our knights-marshal and knight, Eliahu ben Itzhak.

Eli enjoyed a great rivalry/friendship with Andrew Greencloak, and the ladies of both were excellent with the Celtic harp. So for some time there were dueling harps between Elen and Arianwen in lieu of cheerleaders.

Alas, Andrew did not make the final, but Sir Elestron, the popular Northwoods knight who had practiced for crown with us at the Cynnabar practices, did. There he met Eliahu, who defeated him cleanly. As shown above.

Barony or no barony, we had actually been, as a group, ready to slow down our hectic pace a bit. Have a nice winter to regroup and get ready for next year in a calm, sane manner.





## An SCA Wedding

In keeping with the rest of this busy year, we put on **three** SCA events (compared with one each previous year). The third was the wedding of Lord Philip the Pilgrim and Lady Fiadnata o Gleann Àlainn on November 19.

Philip and Fiadnata were two more of those “members from afar,” living in Ohio mostly. Philip is well-known in the kingdom as a field/court herald, and usually serves as such at our events.

But when Sir Elestron fell over (above), calmness was no longer called for (below).

Cynnabar went into high gear to prepare for the royal year. It never occurred to us not to think of it as our job to make Eli and Elen’s reign an example to the kingdom, not of what a group could do but what the SCA could do. It wasn’t a matter of us pushing our services on our friends, but a matter of continuing to work as a team when two of us have these special roles to play.

We rented a church, Melisande researched the ceremonies, and Cesare de Ragazzo (John Moga) played the part of a bishop in vestments he created.

There was a “Last Kiss” tournament and a candlelight feast & revel. Music was provided for the feast by the Northwoods consort, and for the dance by Jeff Quick, a professional paid for by our MoA, Angelica.

There was a hand-kissing contest too. I think I may have won that.

*Top photo by David. Bottom: photographer unknown.*



## 1984, a Royal year

The year 1984 in Cynnabar was dominated by the effort to make Eli and Elen's reign as memorable and dream-fulfilling as possible. We were very open-eyed about the potential for impact on the kingdom. The entire group pretty much shared the same view: that Cynnabar had a new way of doing the SCA, a positive-oriented concept of how things should be done, from the design of events to the way people, in office or not, should be treated.

The Cynnabar concept, if one can call it that, was no single person's idea. Different leaders in the shire contributed different things. If I had a vision of excellence and Claire had a businesslike organizational flair, Eli and Elen had a concept of how to handle people to bring out the positive in each.

Their reign provided them a chance to teach this skill by example repeated many times over. Not that I can say that they were successful with every single person; no one can say that. But I can say that they tried their best to treat everyone well with remarkable consistency.

One thing they failed at. Early on, they decreed to one and all that "We are not cute." You can fool all the people some of the time.

With Eli's theatrical background, you can imagine that management of the Royal presence at events was handled a bit like a road show.



They selected a Royal Staff from the shire, with specific jobs.

Eli took two squires at Ceilidh; Andre de la Soie and Johan Wolfgang aus Goldenherz. They were made responsible for the care and setup of thrones and regalia. Lady Melisande de Marmande, our pursuivant, already had a strong working relationship with Lady Graidhne, the Dragon Herald, so it was natural for her to handle presentation paperwork and correspondence. This group was committed to attending as many events as possible, and relieving as many Royal headaches as possible.

Much of the early travel was to drum up support for the War effort, and it seems Eli and Elen were more successful at this than most. From what I could tell, they worked as hard as anyone.

Since Eli and I worked at the same ad agency, it was inevitable that there would be some effort to promote the reign and its purposes through the media. Of which more later.



An Order of the Willow was presented to Lady Angelica at 12th Night.

### Ceilidh –Third Annual

Held January 28 at the Pittsfield Grange Hall. Cramped quarters– hard to believe we actually held a tourney in there, but the photos prove it. Autocrat was Claire. The event about broke even. Willow for Daibhid (me); Silver Oak for



*This is supposed to be a Ceilidh Photo, but until I find one, it's the Cynnabar Workshop in the early days*

Ian Maclan, who also won the tourney.

### The Coronation of Eli and Elen (I)

May 5 at the First Baptist Church in Ann Arbor. We used the sanctuary for both courts. There was a Maypole set up for dancing and a tourney held in the church hall downstairs.

My contribution was keeping the heat off Eli at work and doing the publicity.

In the March Pale, my editorial on how to give a toast appeared. The April pale had a 2-color cover with the same artwork I produced for the Coronation program, an editorial on pageantry in the lists, also aimed at Coronation, and 4 pages of announcements including a fancy 2-page ad.

The flyer for the event was an 11 x 17 fold-down brochure, and there was a program



*Tournament at Coronation with the new list enclosure which worked as planned. Photog unknown.*

handed out at the event.

Eli and I designed a new list enclosure for the tourney, replacing our flimsy 2 x 2 post-and-ropes with a sturdy 2 x 4 post-and-rail system with steel hardware. Each post was 6 feet tall and notched to hold a banner. Trouble was, you



*A newspaper clip of Ian Maclan, wearing his work and teaching at a school demo. Photo by the Ann Arbor News.*

### The Cynnabar Workshop

Ian Maclan wasn't the only Cynnabar member who dreamed of some sort of permanent SCA facility, but he's the one that put it together.

Ian was a very enthusiastic self-taught armorer. Well, not quite self-taught. Changing majors from music to metalwork, he followed the same path as Elen O Dynevwr before him in the U-M Art School BFA program. So he had his art and metal basics in hand by the time he began studying Valerius Paencalvus' work and

asking questions. In 1981 and 82 he had begun hammering out crude armor on a trailer hitch and the curbstone at Married Student Housing, and by '83 he had begun to acquire some tools.

At the War, Ian proposed a permanent workshop for the shire. On our return, the search was on. John Vernier, another metals student and Ian's "apprentice," looked at many sites, but the one that came through happened because of our active role in the Medieval Festival.

Jim Moran, one of the Festival's movers, had gotten hold of a used industrial building as an arts center, and we got the basement. 20 x 40 feet, heat, power, and a moat (when it rained).

At first the shop was subsidized by Cynnabar, and we stored our property there (where we also built much if it). Eventually, the shop went independent as a non-SCA association of SCA members. Much armor was built there, as well as event site decorations and event equipment such as our wooden list-field enclosure.

Guichart de Chadenac (John Vernier) surpassed his teacher and took over the stewardship for several years, leaving it to Jim and Jeannie Ritzman, who ran it as "The Institute for Medieval Arts and Sciences" (IMAS) until 1996.

couldn't see across the room for the banners. But my, it was colorful. We also made a point to provide spectator seating and required that fighter gear be kept out of the way.

Lady Seonaid – daughter of one of the Medieval Festival founders– cooked the feast as apprentice to Angelica. Lady Gwendolyn of Salisbury ran a quest on the subject of Shakespearean royalty. Lady Claire served as Autocrat, and became Baroness of Court at the evening court.

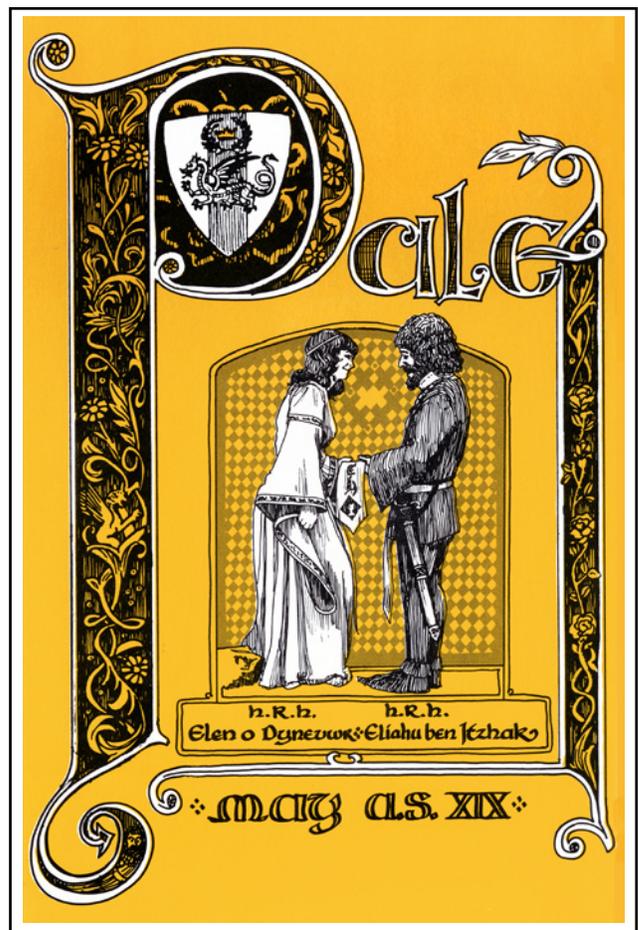
We got help on the event from neighboring groups: Sir Garraghan and Catherine LeMoyné teamed up as Marshal and Lists mistress. The Northwoods Mummers' Guild presented a farce, and Lord Cedric from Rimsholt helped as a herald.

The event netted about \$400.

At Crown Tourney, several Cynnabar fighters carried themselves well, and several members received awards: Queen's Favor to Lady Catriona of Leslie Tower, Queen's Champion to Ian MacIain of Annandale, and Baron of Court to Daibhid "ruadh" MacLachlan.

### Demo demons at it again

- A week after Coronation, we gave an educational demo at a school in Toledo, Ohio, a town with its own SCA chapter. Since they were not up to it, we stepped in.
- In April, we had done a demo at the Michigan Theatre during intermission of a period movie.



*Program cover and the first Pale 2-color cover art by David/Daibhid*

Now, in July, we are asked to perform a “live prologue” to the silent classic “Robin Hood.” There was a live orchestra in the pit, stage lights on and special-effects fog all over the place as the curtain rose on Ian and me bashing each other. “Robin Hood” (a local TV personality) rides in on a real horse to break it up, and we swing into a demo. We wound up with 7 minutes of TV air time.

- The Medieval Festival saw little of us this year, because most

*Live prologue to The Adventures of Robin Hood silent film at the Michigan Theatre with live orchestra – and us!*

# Penmsic War XIII

Left: the Midrealm Royal Camp-cum-Cynnabar



Cynnabar was right behind the Royals, literally, throughout the war. Our camp extended from just behind the royal pavilion (which four of us had just bought) in a double row for 80 feet. The new list enclosure formed the royal demesne in front. The people of Cynnabar were to be the shining instrument with which Eli and Elen could wage whatever part of the war could be won with diplomacy and panache.

Friday evening, there was a reception of all the Known World royalty in the enclosure, with the purpose of establishing that Midrealm was a class act that could be supported with pride.

The battles themselves are a blur in my memory except for two incidents. One was purely personal, but the other was purely Royal. At one point in the bridge fight, we were down to one man left on the lower bridge while the other two bridges held firm. I remember seeing that one man hold his own against half a bridge full of Easterners, who, it must be said, forebore simply running him down en masse. He stayed put for five or six minutes before Midrealm reinforcements arrived to support their tired king . . . from *behind* the Easterners.

Half the Cynnabar camp got "the plague," and Eli worked himself to the point of ill health, and certainly wondered when it was over whether it had been worth it.

Back at the office, it was a struggle to get back to a reasonable level of productivity, but our boss' eyebrows went up in a most satisfying way when he saw King Eliahu looking up at



Cynnabar helped stage a Royal Reception



After the bridgefight.

Photo/ engraving by The Wall Street Journal.



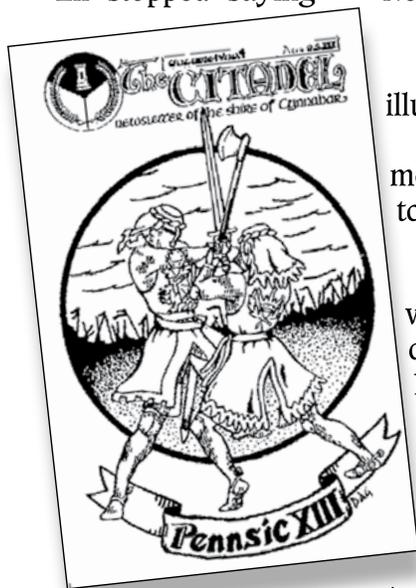
him from the front page of his Wall Street Journal (right).

The personal one was at the field battle when we got separated. There I was with a great sword and no cover. I ran along the front of the Eastern army, picking off the unwary until a detachment led by a duke was sent to deal with me.

They cornered me at last and offered single combat. I got two before the duke defeated me.

of us were at Pennsic War by the main weekend. A passing stranger who helped herald for our skeleton-crew combats ended up being the last Easterner to die a week later at the Pennsic bridge fight. Our list enclosure and a tent went straight from the Festival site to Cooper's Lake.

After the War, there was a terrific letdown. Nobody wanted to do anything. "I began to wonder," says my Domesday Report for that year, "whether we would ever do anything again." But on October 7, explaining ourselves to the public in a campus demo, we realized just how much we were enjoying ourselves. Even Eli stopped saying "No . . . never again."



Dag Thorgrimsson illustrated the October *Pale* cover. Three members were invited to Crown; none went.

At Coronation, we were "relieved of duty" with a Purple Fretty for the group.

### Cynnabar at the end of 1984

Active membership was over 50 people; official sustaining members over 25. We had about \$450 in the bank, and the rented workshop was self-sufficient.

We had a solid cadre of officers. Dag moved to Cynnabar becoming Knights-Marshal. *Deirdre Collingwood* (Chris Hutson) is Minister of Arts.

Andre de la Soie relieved Elen as Exchequer so she could be Queen. Lady Angelica still put out a superb Citadel and other publications. Minna Dietrich von Lubeck was now Pursuivant and Wolfgang, one of the solidest citizens of the shield wall, is also our surgeon.

Ian was still Minister of Sciences and Daibhid was still Seneschal. We now had a Principal Mundane Officer whose job it was to represent us, as a student, with the University of which we are a student organization. Holding this office was Faustyn Fauconnier (Jill Barnes).

Baroness Claire was still shire Chatelaine, but in addition has been acting as the warehouse



Also, the Order of the Queen's Favor to Ian MacIain and to Melisande.

Early in the year, Eli and I, who bought printing as part of our jobs at the agency, arranged a free "tail-stock" print job to get, among other things, some business cards for the SCA. We made camera-ready art and had over a thousand of each printed on glossy card stock (above).

Some were used as Crown Tourney tokens.

for the SCA Armorial. Now, she adds Middle Kingdom Information Officer to her duties.

### The Turning Point

With the end of 1984 and Eli and Elen's first reign, we come also to the end of Cynnabar's formative years. All the basic tones have been set. Forces have been set in motion that will change the fabric of the shire and have repercussions a decade later.

The exposure to kingdom-level statecraft and operations starts the move of several key members to higher levels. They will play valuable roles in kingdom and national SCA policy, necessarily at the cost of the local chapter. In turn, the local chapter will be forced to develop new blood, which will prove difficult for a group so used to counting on its stalwarts.

From my perspective, it is impossible to evaluate the impact these people have on the wider society. All I can do is mention their deeds visible from here, and allow readers to draw their own conclusions. For me, their impact on the SCA will still be Cynnabar's impact.

## 1985

With the end of 1984, we began to encounter our first minor difficulties as a group. Success in one area took a toll on others. Our entry onto the kingdom scene marked the end of the childlike innocence of the group; its ability to agree almost unanimously on every project and direction. Not to say we dissolved into squabbling over details. We didn't dissolve at all. We, as individuals, suffered to varying degrees over each disagreement, and most of us learned to live with personal disappointment for the greater benefit of the group.

### Trying to grow up

As seneschal during the euphoric building phase, I began to expect an uninterrupted series of successes. When things got tougher, I took every setback as a personal failure, but for the most part it spurred me to more effort to cope. In the end, I was forced to admit that personal-ity was not my strong suit, and that mere logic and an appeal to higher purposes and principles could not always carry the day. I had to learn to let others carry out diplomatic tasks to help keep things as smooth as possible in choppy waters.

As factionalism began to rear its ugly head, I realized that I had to remain neutral at all costs or lose any footing I might have to mediate. I neither joined nor founded any households. I did my best to keep households from creating "in-groups" that might leave the rest of the shire feeling unwanted or somehow un-cool. Our Horde members were quietly asked to help in this.

### New leaders come to the fore

As more and more members took on responsibilities, they naturally began to have their own ideas on how things ought to be done and even what direction the SCA should take. For the first time, there were two or more opinions in the group on the purposes of the SCA and on where it should fall on the fantasy/authenticity spectrum. And, for the first time, there was real competition for the leadership of the group.

Now, I had never bought into the concept that holding an office, e.g., seneschal, actually made you the group's leader. My military experience had proved to me quite painfully that you had

to win that role every time you wanted to use it. Good thing; else I was lost ten times over.

We had several leaders, each staking out territory, but thankfully no one trying to take it all. I had recognized Claire's leadership abilities in 1981 and tacitly conceded to her the running of events.

In spite of my own military background, in view of the way Midrealm saw things, I conceded to Sir Eli the martial area. And Angelica had the run of the entire Cynnabar arts establishment for the first five years.

### My changing role

I still had the role I cherished most – the visionary leader and innovator with an overarching concept of the group in the SCA scene. For that to work, I believed the group needed unity among these staked-out territories.

The thing I feared most was what we had founded Cynnabar to avoid -- the rise of personality cults; the losing track of a group's purpose and focusing on charismatic individuals. Statesmanship, I said, dealt in larger-group purposes and missions; politics dealt in personalities and personal power trips.

I asked the group to eschew this sort of thing and strive for higher levels of fun for the many, not the few. I encouraged our leaders to remember the lessons of the Dark Horde and avoid turning activity groups into personal followers.

Since I participated in most of these sub-groups personally, I was able to monitor such trends. The best I could do was to remind everyone of the wider world beyond the group, (fighting or arts), in which their activity thrived.

The tool I relied on most for group unity was the total-group project. I found that specialized projects by a few people tended to split us into special-interest groups, while large projects involving as many as possible, working towards a single goal, tended to create more of a family feeling and tended to teach each of us every member's good qualities.

In the long term, in spite of feeling powerless most of the time, I was rewarded once or twice a year, when yet another SCA member from the other side of the country would move here

and exclaim after two months “My God —you people don’t have politics here! It’s amazing. I’ve never seen that before.” and so on. Such comments made me fight back tears.

Before Eli won the crown, the group project was an event or demo. During that first “Royal” year, Eli’s reign was our project, and everyone then in the group pretty well understood the social dynamic. Of course, there was the Royal Staff (of which I was not a part) and the rest of us, but to each our abilities’ extent, we were part of a well-oiled machine.

### “Unanimous” to “consensus”

Up to a point. The development of individual leadership also led to greater difficulty in reaching agreement when there was more than one good idea on the table.

During the first few years, for reasons already given, we reached decisions almost unanimously. My own policy was to do nothing we didn’t all agree on, and agreement came easy. In 1985, we relaxed our demand from unanimity to a sort of consensus, but at that time we didn’t

#### Notable ladies who started here

David Craig and I met Debora St, James before our group was founded. At her first event, on seeing King Laurelyn, she asked “how do you get to be Queen?” As *Isolde of Summerhall*, she moved to Atlantia about 1979. Back in Midrealm by 1983, she became the seneschal of the Shire of Blackhawk, and is remembered as the strong leader who really built that group. I carried her favor at tourneys for two years.

She moved to the West, becoming the Princess of The Mists in 1990. These days, the Company of St. George, led by Count Brion Thorbird, calls her “She who must be obeyed.”

Barb Niemeyer (*Seonaid Sunbird*) was born into the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival, and came to Cynnabar as a Festival veteran in her teens. After several active years here, she met the duke called Michael of Bedford at the War. She moved east, and the next time we saw her, she was Queen of Atlantia. I wore the camail she sold me on Michael’s behalf for years.

Beth Morris joined the SCA here in the summer of ’82. When I last saw her about 2000, *Baroness Keili Fitwarin* had become Seneschal of Atlantia, a peer, and a fighter. I still have the favor she sent me years ago.

have a consensus model in common with the rest of the SCA. I used the term with my own fuzzy idea of what it meant.

Our “Privy Council” took to voting on issues, and we soon learned how that process could divide us into winners and losers. Our/my efforts to mitigate that effect consisted in personal shuttle diplomacy to bring factions together before they met across the table.

At the end of that first reign, our well-oiled machine was also a tired one. But we recovered quickly, and the machine needed a project to sink its teeth into. Fortunately, we had one.

### The Elizabethan Wassail

The idea that became collectively termed as above (or “public Wassail” to distinguish it from the shire’s annual Yuletide party) was brought up by Melisande de Marmande on Claire’s bed on New Year’s morning with daylight coming in the windows. There were about six of us - the usual suspects at the continuation of our New Year’s party hosted by Claire – all sober.



*Cesare (left) pioneered comfortable hosen for men. Catriona (R) made Cynnabar’s first banner.*

The idea caught on and grew.

On March 3, we held a brainstorm about what to do and how to do it. We knew that the Detroit Institute of Arts had been doing it for years, sold out 3 years in advance at \$75 a shot. Knowing that the DIA had six or seven different performing arts groups contributing their efforts, we aimed a little lower. Our idea was to take the basic Madrigal Feast idea, add our persona-play concept and crank up the theatricals a bit.

Our plan was still ambitious: to put on a Wassail for the public beyond the scope of anything we had ever heard of. There would be the usual boar's head, a group of Madrigal singers, a strolling lutenist, a great juggler, a mime ballad, a dance demo, all presided over by a glittering head table. So much is normal, but seldom carried out with much authenticity.

We would add costume authentic enough



to invite close scrutiny, a live-steel swordfight, and a cast of personages in Elizabethan personae created for the occasion; The Duke of Kirkleigh and his court. Each persona was worked out to interact with the others, and the "table actors" (coached by Count Eli) circulated among the tables, stimulating conversation and audience interaction.

Thus, the SCA persona idea was brought to the public in an appealing, involving way. But we didn't use our SCA personae. Melisande and Claire created a complete fictitious place and ducal family in northern England as shown in the map and family tree. The year was 1580, and Melisande researched current events and drilled us on the outlook we should have.\*

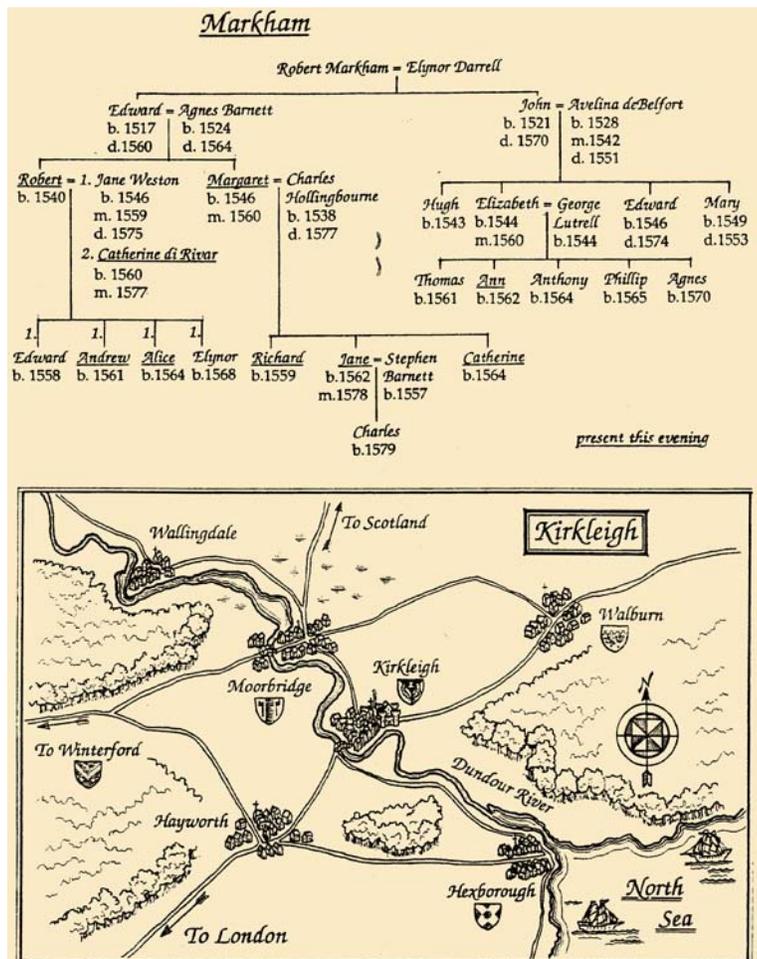
We knew we'd have to rehearse basically all year. Although justified as a fund-raiser, in my view, shared by the ringleaders, it was a way to elevate the level of persona, costume and performing arts in the SCA itself. We had gotten that far when events began to play into our hands.

The Michigan Union Food Services Director called and invited us to provide period atmosphere for a March 26 Elizabethan feast he was throwing for the National Association of College and University Food Services.

It was short notice, but we provided a head table full of dignitaries and six "table actors" who mingled with the guests, drawing them into Elizabethan-era conversation. We were such a hit that our host offered to go partners with us. "Why don't we put on a December Wassail Feast?" he asked.

We told him that we had already booked his hall for exactly that.

*The Markham family and its holdings were created in detail from scratch. Family tree by Melisande, Map by Dag.*



\*E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World View* (no pub. date) Random House, NY.



### August 1-11 Ann Arbor Medieval Festival

This year we returned to the larger-format demo as a double performance of a courtly skit. First, 20 members saunter in, court-garbed, presided over by a queen, court, and an ambassador who gives a prize to the best galliardier. Later, we return for a “tournament” won by an “unknown knight” who proves to be the king, (well, *of course*) among other things.

In keeping with our Wassail performance plans, this is a scripted performance, and at our tent we are signing up potential Wassail customers.

### December 8: Elizabethan Wassail Performance.

This should have read “December 7 and 8,” but the food services director failed to keep our reservation in the computer and sold our Saturday night! So a year’s effort culminated in only one performance to a crowd of 91 and a loss of about \$400.

Our total budget was about \$1800, not counting food service. Lady Melisande de Marmande had costumed her fingers off all

*The “Three Graces” being admired by “Capt.” William Brigandyne – photo courtesy of the Ann Arbor Inn*

year to put five or six of us in splendid, authentic-as-possible Elizabethan glitter. Individuals paid for the fabric; she tailored the outfits to fit them correctly as clothing, *not costumes*, which are more adaptable.

Baroness Claire struggled a bit with an unprecedented management job (at least for us).

The show came off very well. We seem to have pulled off an unquestioned artistic success. Experienced Madrigal goers told us that we were second only to the Detroit Institute of Arts in quality. And the first spinoff back into the SCA was not long in coming: the group costuming



*Elen, Andre, Deirdre, and Tom Ultz (Cathaior-Mor)*



*Ann Arbor Morris and Sword  
at Elizabethan Wassail  
(photog. unknown)*

won a special prize at the 1986 Northwoods Twelfth Night.

On the down side, Angelica complained that we had no mandate to do demos of any sort, let alone theatricals. She was also concerned that if you didn't want to be involved with the E. Wassail, you were "out." She didn't want us to send a message to new people that they had to be Elizabethan to toe the line or be cool.

We were surprised by members of other groups dropping comments that Cynnabar had become a bunch of Elizabethans. None of had changed our SCA persona. We certainly didn't like the idea that our pursuit of excellence might be causing some people to regard us as stuck-up, but we couldn't just not do it.

From the 3 or four years of doing this, there are hundreds of Elizabethan Wassail photos and art. In 1993 I wrote here that perhaps a future edition of this history, with a lot of help, will begin to credit all the creative hard work that went into it. Not here. I will put together a little PDF document with photos and supporting info to be made available ... soon.



There were more E.Wassail performances, although it did not become the annual affair we originally conceived. In 1986, we played it for a corporate dinner early, then performed it late in the year at McKenny Union of Eastern Michigan University. We used the same characters, costumes and scenarios for several demo/performances, some of which brought in more money than the regular fund-raiser.

In the early 1990s, after a hiatus, the E-Wassail was revived on behalf of the Canton of Roaring Wastes as a fund-raiser to help save the beautiful, historic St. Charles Borromeo Church. In the late nineties, Roaring Wastes Barony has kind of "run with it."

## The rest of 1985, in brief

**January: At 12th Night**, North Woods, Countess Elen became a member of the Order of the Rose, normal for a former queen.



**"Ceilidh IV," January 19**, was Celtic in theme as usual, with an obstacle course ("the highlands") built of plywood in the Cynnabar shop, and a trial of skill (the "games") added to the tournament for Celticity. David MacDougal provided the cabers.

In keeping with my desire to see good-looking armor in the lists, I inaugurated a Seneschal's Prize, won by *Sir Fuyuzuru Tadashi*. Tourney won by Lord Dag, who presented the prizes to

*Sir Reynard the Brown*, the runner-up. Count Sir Eli and cohorts presented a farce, Angelica cooked a feast, and 3 AoA's came to Cynnabar folk: Minna Dietrich von Lubeck, James Foxston, Deirdre Collingwood. Sir Reynard suffered a cracked rib in the tourney. Attendance: 100, Feast: 80, Profit \$147.00



**At Valentine's Day, February 9** in Andelcrag, Cynnabar teams took first and (I believe, third—can't find a note on it) in the 4-man melee tourney.



**April 20:** 18 shire members go horseback riding. Included learning basic tack/saddling.



*Posed publicity photo of the  
knighting ceremony featured in this  
year's production. Ian MacIan is  
modeling his latest work.*

members, regardless of previous contests. The message: "this is what ordinary people can do." It was very well received; I was asked to do another one for the next crown tourney.

The second experiment was adding morning arts and sciences workshops to the schedule. This not only broadened the appeal of the event; it also made better use of a full-day event.

A large majority of comments on our feedback forms were favorable. It's hard to prove, but we believed the new combination of activities we inaugurated led to SCA-Con's replacement by the Royal University of Midrealm (RUM).

Back before RUM was invented, Collegium events were thin on the ground, and none were official kingdom events. But the workshops held at our SCA-Con pointed the way to it.

**May 4: Coronation.** Cynnabar team #1 wins melee tourney.



**June:** Pale cover by Daibhid MacLachlan.



**SCA-Con, June 15.** Our first Kingdom event since 1984. SCA-Con was the annual meeting where each kingdom officer would hold a session with all their local counterparts and teach them their jobs, update them on rules and Board rulings, answer questions, and give advice.

These relatively modern events were holdovers from the days when science-fiction fandom was still just below the surface.

I wasn't the only one who thought it absurd to gather in medieval costume in modern classrooms to strictly modern business. Worse, doing so in medieval personas and ranks which trumped modern expertise in discussions. SCA-Con's popularity was waning, and we pioneered two ideas to improve things a bit.

I devised the "Medieval Museum" specifically for a "modern" event. It was not a contest but a display of the best artifacts made by SCA



**June 17:** it's announced that Elen's designs for the new Midrealm crowns had been approved. Her MFA was in metalwork, from Cranbrook.



**Pennsic XIV.** Baroness Claire handled setting up our camp on the 10th. But not without overcoming severe obstacles. Seems that the two separate unmarked sites where she attempted to set up were claimed by other groups. The "troll" had no notion of this, and the first time, Claire took all the tents down and moved them. *Personally.* Well . . . that was before Claire ever ran Pennsic.

Once again, we broke all previous camp size records. Thanks to our melee team record, a group of five Cynnabar fighters was selected for the champions' battle. And once again, the Cynnabar contingent held the upper bridge over 45 minutes, as it had in 1982.



**October 13 Privy Council:** members of the Order of the Silver Tower, founded to recognize members for extra courtly behaviour (just before



the Queen's Favor was started) express concern that they are pedestaled. Privy Council authorizes the group to allow it to fade away if they so desire.

**October 18: A medieval scholarly conference.** U-Michigan Medieval and Renaissance Collegium Troubadour Conference. We are invited to mingle with the incoming international scholars at the reception, specifically in garb and persona. We and our ad hoc musical group, including a new member who plays lute, are a hit. I stretched my vocabulary to converse with one or two of the French scholars.

This was an opportunity to reach one of my goals, bridging the gap between the SCA and the medieval scholarly world. We blew it. Only years later did I find out that *some one* of us managed to offend Dr. Mermier. Nothing was said at the time. We kept receiving mailings for a while, then nothing. When I made overtures, they were rejected with cold politeness.

I had not kept a close enough eye on things. I knew from an earlier encounter that Mermier was pretty touchy. Maybe even snooty.



**Crown Tourney, October 26, Roaring Wastes.** At the War, Midrealm Seneschal Myrra de Blackwoode had asked me to organize another Medieval Museum in lieu of the Arts and Sciences competition usually held at crown. This time, I brought a lot more velvet display cloth. Many wonderful artifacts, many not seen at SCA events for years, were brought, each with a little museum-style card. We received many compliments on both the idea and the displays themselves.

Meanwhile, upstairs, our new Knights-

Marshall Dag Thorgrimsson reached the final round, only to be defeated by Palymar (photo at left)— after giving up at least three limbs —as a courtesy— in the three bouts. We were as proud of his chivalric gestures as we would have been had he won.

### From my 1985 Domesday Report:

#### STATE OF THE SHIRE:

Exchequer in January:	about \$400
at end of 1985:	about 0.00
Membership: Active:	about 50
Paid SCA members:	over 33

This is according to the August Registry print-out, and does not count two green-card aliens. Baron Northwoods (Thorvald) works here, and HRM Alen is here for law school. Confusing "Alen" and "Alien" wasn't new. The Pale did a spoof on TIME magazine's movie coverage with the quote "In the Middle, no one can hear you scream." TIME sued for copyright violation.

**Holdings:** The shire continues to rent a 40 x 20 foot workshop, with forge, anvils, raising stakes, etc., rent paid by subscription.

Four members share ownership of a 10 x 20' pavilion which has served as the Royal tent for two wars now.

**FUTURE PLANS:** To feel right applying for Baronial status, we need a more active, organized musical establishment. We need to make it easier for new people to get involved, more shire-involved ministers of art and science. And we need to work on working together.

We are confident that new approaches to these goals, now in place, will succeed.

#### 1985 Honorable Mentions

- *Minna Dietrich von Lubeck* (Alison Kistner) is still our Pursuivant, serving well.

- Baroness *Claire of Lynnwood Keep* (Linda Duvall) again exceeded all previous efforts, on behalf of the Elizabethan Wassail, the shire, and the Dream.

- *Lady Angelica Paganelli* (Cindy Milner) seemed opposed to all I wished for the first half of 1985. But, since the war, she has set an example of service, initiative, and good nature .

- Lady *Melisande de Marmande* (Jeanne Hohman) as always, served from a 50-mile



*Chris Hutson (Deirdre Collingwood) and Liisa Mazzaro (later duchess Ilsa von Westfalen)*

distance, but virtually re clothed our shire's core group during the past six months in the most glittering Elizabethan I ever saw. She did not sew all the garb by any means, but did write a series of articles on the process for the Citadel.

- Liisa Mazzaro has everything but an SCA name. While putting up with the inconsistencies and soothing the angst of her seneschal/boyfriend, and a handicapping work schedule, she has served with calm, resourceful creativity.\*

- *Johann Wolfgang von Goldenherz* (Kevin Galbraith) squire to Sir Eli and my deputy seneschal, has provided an example of cheerful service the entire year. Giving workshops in First Aid and brewing, pitching in when needed, with a broad smile and encouraging word.

- Lord *Dag Thorgrimsson* (Jeff Skevington) excelled in the list field and set a good example of personal appearance and courtly manner.

- *Guichart de Chadenac* (John Vernier) is (as of January '86) our new MoA. He is quiet and studious but also cheerful and courteous, willing to share a great wealth of knowledge, some of which he has learned as apprentice to Ian Maclan, some at U-M Art School (Metals).

- *Tzvi ben Avraham* (Dan Loundy) is our new Treasurer. His contributions to the shire are varied, and we expect great things from him.

- *Juliana Fairfax* (Laura Christian) served all

year in a very trying role as Principal Mundane Officer, which is our name for the liaison with the University's Scheduling, Student Accounts, and other offices relating to student organizations. She worked hard to get us into 2 Michigan Union rooms per month as dance and fighting—and Public Wassail— practice sites.

- *Keara Calder* became our Chatelaine (new people person around here) and proved hard-working and helpful.

- *Sylvina* is Keara's sister. Together with Juliana, they make up what are called hereabouts "the three graces." They are modest individuals who have begun to provide us with vocal and wind music at revels. We expect great things from them in future.

- *Calum Creachadair* (Erik Panek) is an early Celt who at first didn't seem to fit in with Cynnabar ways, but who has proven consistently helpful and courteous, as well as well-studied in history. Also a very quick sword.

- *Drusus Romanus Valerianus* (Clint Hodo) isn't so much a new person (true of many mentioned here) as "recently noticeable." He has begun to make concrete contribution.



*Tzvi ben Avraham (Dan Loundy) and Juliana Fairfax (Laura Christian) photo: Ann Arbor Inn*

## Our second Knight

The year started off with **Ceilidh** on January 25. It was the second in the Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds. It's a typical enough fairgrounds building, big enough for a 300-person event. It was organized by Wolfgang, who paid the price of a trip to the hospital and five stitches.

There was a prize tourney marshalled by Eli and Dag (I don't recall who won). Tourney prizes were a shield and a pair of gauntlets by Ian Maclan. I did another Medieval Museum. Beorthwine ran a chess tourney. Minna ran children's games. Aelfric and Timothy prepared the feast.

At court, Dag Thorgrimsson was placed on vigil to be knighted by HRM Alen. Like Sir Eliahu, he stood a formal all-night vigil, this one at Rolling Meadows Clubhouse in Claire's dwelling complex. The elevation took place a week or so later at a Tirnewydd event (Ohio).

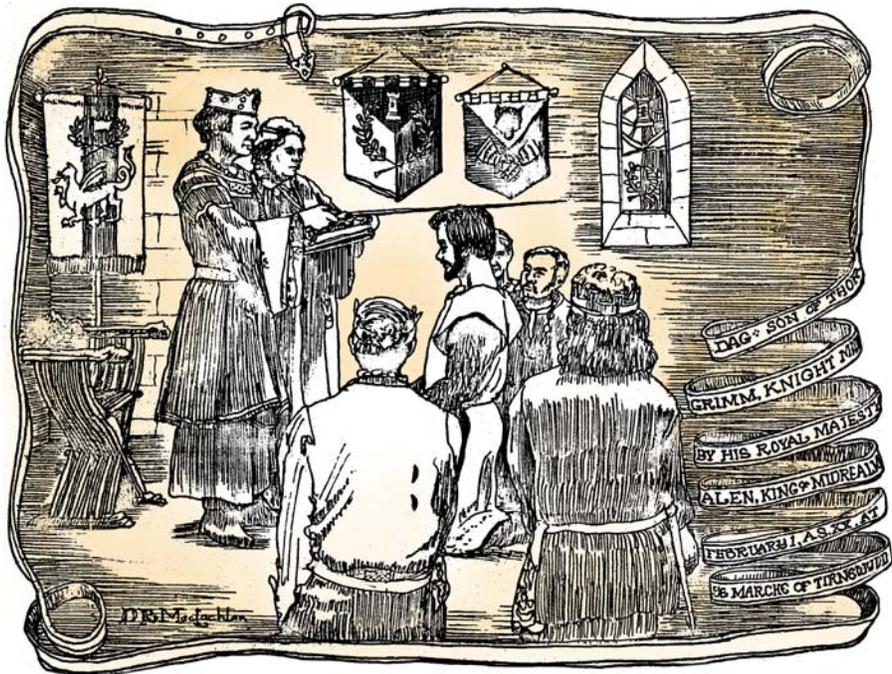
In the week between, Dag and I spent a good part of a night discussing knighthood vs. mastery. In the early SCA, the title "Master" was often chosen by those whose personae conflicted with fealty, a condition of knighthood. Because of the effect on the larger game we play, the respect that comes only with giving respect, and the service aspect of medieval knighthood—all things I argued for—I was glad he chose knighthood. I believe Eli gave the same counsel.

Our Monday night meetings are now in the basement of East Quad; not a very glamorous site, but big enough, warm enough if a bit echo-prone, and consistent. We had Michigan Union rooms for practices, not only arms but the Wassail rehearsals.

We still have the workshop, although it is prone to financial troubles and flooding.

### Demos

- **June 2** (week of): **Haisley Elementary**



**School, Ann Arbor** — a week-long series of demos and workshops.

- **June 12: Shar-it-age Festival**, Lincoln Consolidated School District, Ypsilanti, Michigan. They had steam engines, fire truck, an airplane and our campsite and demos (fighting, dance).

- **July 25-6 and August 1-2: Ann Arbor Medieval Festival**. Set up campsite, scripted performance demos of dance and a tourney. Members also played key roles as Festival Steering Committee members and chiefs of:

Site: Ian Maclan of Annandale

Food Service: Liisa (Ilsa of Westphalen)

Publicity: Daibhid Ruadh MacLachlan

This time, food service was an innovation.

- **July 16 U-Michigan Union Food Services** — "mingling" demo with dancing and fighting for a Party for the Big Ten Conference Food Service Directors. Outdoors at the School of Music, who provided music. It was a blast; we made them look *good*.

- **September 12 — U-M Campus Demo**, part of "Festifall 86." Booth, displays, fighting.

- **September 27 Northville Public Library**—Dance/fighting demo.

- **November 7 Ann Arbor Inn** — Mingling/performance demo for the Corporate Sales dept. customer party. We provided a harper, minglers in persona, calligraphy for name tags on

the spot, a dance demo, and a choreographed swordfight from our Wassail performance. The hotel provided all the food and drink we could take, a pair of rooms in which to sleep it off (the pictures tell the story), and a donation of \$500.

**December 5 and 6: Elizabethan Wassail.** At the Michigan Union Ballroom, feast by the Union Food Services, everything else by us. A major dinner theatre production involving most of the shire and half the year in preparation, not to mention a \$16,000 budget. Very little of that came to us; last year we lost money.

We hired a local madrigal group and the North Woods Consort to make up for our shortfalls in the musical area, but the juggler we hired is a pro who started out in our group. We provided a head table cast of dancers and mime ballad performers, plus a vocal trio, and a theatrical



*Our best shot of Baroness Claire Fitzwilliam (courtesy Ann Arbor Inn)*



*Dag and Eli share a comic moment after the show with the Michigan Union Food Service executives. This is from the 1987 production. (photog unknown)*

rapier fight (Sir Eli with Sir Dag).

This year's innovation was a researched knighting ceremony followed by an armored, steel-sword "test of arms" (Wolfgang and Ian).

We seated 250 for a full house Saturday night but fell a bit short Friday. Baroness Claire FitzWilliam was producer, Sir Eliahu ben Itzhak director, Lady Melisande de Marmande as costume co-ordinator and Sir Dag Thorgrimsson as tech director. Countess Elen O Dynevwr was music



co-ordinator.

**A notable new member** of the group may as well be mentioned here. Gerhard (Sean O'Dea) was, by Wassail, a new squire to Sir Dag. He also is a professional in cinematography, and not only helped with lighting for the Wassail event, but put the entire evening on videotape for future self-critique.

Gerhard (*at the Michigan Ren Fest, left*) is also remarkable in his insistence on making a complete set of steel armor before going out to train for combat.

**Exchequer:** As of December 15, we have \$1,179.28 in various accounts.

## The Arts

We have a new MoA this year: *Guichart de Chadenac* (John Vernier, at right).

Arts activity in the shire is at an all time high, particularly theatre, costume, and music. Most of the Monday night workshops are in the arts. Elizabethan costuming has been getting a lot of attention this year with the continuing Elizabethan Wassail project.



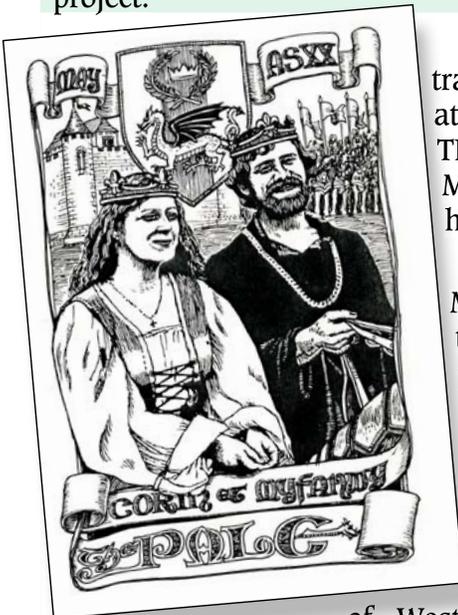
the Wassail theatrics. Juliana Fairfax has been getting more deeply into Celtic Harp, and with her close associates Sylvina and Keara Calder, have done considerable performing in demos, festivals, and the Wassail. Beorthwine is learning Celtic Harp, and Elen o Dynevwr is already fairly proficient.

We have added our dance workshops to Monday night

## Sciences

Most Sciences activities are taking place in the Shire's workshop. Ian Maclan has now been making his living as an armorer for about a year. He completed his first bascinets this year, as well as two close helms as part of two suits for our Elizabethan Wassail. Our MoA, Guichart, is accomplished enough to turn out articulating elbows, knees, hinged greaves, etc.

- Beorthwine of Grafham Wood is turning out instruments like Celtic Harps and psaltries.
- *Tzvi ben Avraham* reached journeymen level in the Brewers and Vintners Guild this year, specializing in mead and beer.
- Cathmor an feich Fitzgerald (Tom Ultz) will replace Ian Maclan of Annandale as MoS in January 1987.
- Knights' Marshal: Sir Dag Thorgrimsson (Jeff Skevington) has maintained the office well. This year we gave out three new Cynnabar surcoats, signifying an authorized fighter who upholds the shire's ideals.



Daibhid illustrated a Pale cover at the request of THMs Corin and Myfanwy (shown here).

- **Costume:** Melisande continues to help people with Elizabethan costuming. More and more people are completing garb. Elen o Dynevwr, Ilsa

of Westphalen, Deirdre Collingwood, and Mary Mosher have done notable work this year.

- **Performance:** Sir Eliahu has started a Commedia dell' Arte troupe, as well as directing



**Chirurgeon:** Wolfgang aus Goldenherz has maintained his Instructor RC Card by giving First Aid and CPR classes regularly. He encourages people to be involved.

*Left: Helms on! for the field battle at Pennsic XV. At far right, a man who by this time was beloved by many at Cynnabar: "Lord Slyme."*

**Something strange happened at the War this year Pennsic XV).**

Viviane Moos was a New York free-lance photo-journalist of the 35mm persuasion until 1986. That was the year she decided to try her hand at 4 x 5 view camera portraiture of an odd variety: medieval people.

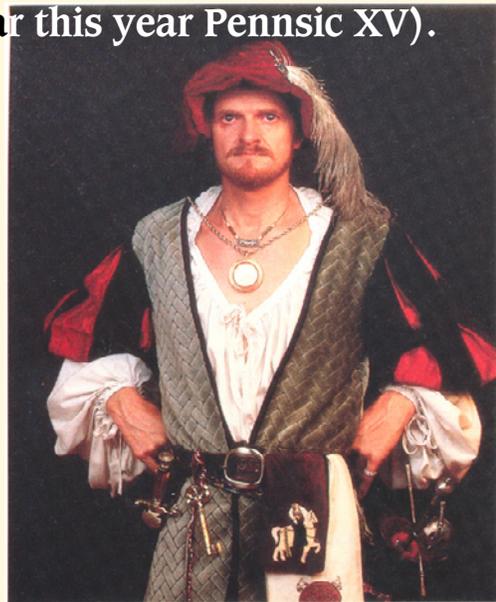
She rented the house east of Horde Hill for Pennsic and simply hung out around campfires for the first week, meeting thousands of people and selecting faces to photograph. She chose just 28, and spent an hour or more with each, using a professional studio setup with lights and props.



Of those 28 people, 12 --almost half--were from Cynnabar.

If we'd known, we might have brought our good clothes.

*All photos on this page © 1986 by Viviane Moos*



During a portrait study of the Society for Creative Anachronism, New Yorker Viviane Moos discovered a fellow photographer. Under the guise of 16th-century Baron Daibhidh Ruadh Maclachlan (above) was David Hoornstra, who has a commercial photo studio in Ann Arbor, Mich.

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*Left, Albrecht Reinlowe (Lon Grabowski). Below Left, Ian MacIan. The photo of Dag below was used in a promo piece to try to sell the series Viviane shot. The shot above was the only one sold in the first year, and that only because of my "pro photographer" status.*



## 1987 –A.S. 21 (XXI) the Year that Was

Just as I thought things were going to slack off a bit, they revved up. We continued our tradition of having only events starting with a “C.” That meant three major events this year, including a crown tourney, which Eli won.

Baroness Claire served as Autocrat for Pennsic War. And we repeated our Elizabethan Wassail, plus about a dozen demos, of which at least five were major productions even by our standards.

*Italics/green: sections from Domesday reports.*

*We started the year with about \$500 in the bank and ended with about \$5000. Once again, membership is up, and no sign of that five-year slump other groups have warned us about.*

The big difference in 1987 was not Eli and Elen being Royal again but a whole generation of relatively new people coming of age and moving into positions of responsibility.

\*

**Membership.** 64 persons regularly attend one or more of our regularly scheduled activities. I estimate: 30 sustaining, 2 Family, 7 Associate (does not include SCA members who live in the area but do not attend our activities. A zip-code listing would show higher numbers).

**Officers.** I now have 2 deputy seneschals. I took on Wolfgang over a year ago to run occasional meetings and promote good will. He will soon become our knights’ marshal. I added *Oscad de Segovia* (Robert Esteves) this summer as a property control officer – **no small task!**

- *Cathmor an feich Fitzgerald* (Tom Ultz) became Minister of Sciences in January
- Chronicler- *Ingerith* (Julie Johnson) (Sept.)



*Cynnabar camp fire at Pennsic, '86 or '87*

- Pursuivant— *Cormac Mac Eogan* (Steve Counselman) (in October)

- Co- Chatelains- *Deirdre Collingwood* (Chris Hutson) and (Gold Key) *Romheld* (Bruce Phillips) (in October)

We still met weekly for a workshop and meeting in Room 124 of East Quad.

Attendance: Workshops: 5-15. Meetings: 15-35.

Practices continued on Sunday, usually in the Michigan Union or outdoors at a municipal park. But more practices were added.

*Right now a typical Sunday schedule is:*

*11 a.m.: Commedia dell' Cynnabar*

*12 noon: Dance*

*1 or 2: Fighting*

*5:30: Vocal group (Usually at Angelica's)*

*Plus, a new group, Recorder. Practices are being held by Juliana Fairfax (Laura Lehman (later Christian)) at her home, announced weekly.*

*Brewers and Vintners Guild meetings are now held monthly, usually at "Inertia House," the home of Tzvi ben Avraham, master brewer.*

**PRIVY COUNCIL** continues open TO ALL.

- **The CYNABAR WORKSHOP** stopped being subsidized by the shire but thrived on its membership, operating on a dues/key system. Although it has no specific open hours, our top armorers announced times when they would be there to supervise and teach.

- **ANNUAL Shire Wassail.** Potluck feast, Bean Court, dancing and merriment. Attendance this year: about 50. Included performances by the Commedia troupe and the vocal group.

- **ANNUAL Halloween Party** was at the Clubhouse of Baroness Claire's condo complex (Rolling Meadows). Any costume except SCA.

- **MONTHLY Dessert Revels**, usually Friday evenings at the Clubhouse (above) This summer we experimented with Saturday outdoor events like a fighting tourney and games. Summer Solstice was celebrated at Angelica Paganelli's new house. Attendance this year: about 35.

\*



*Prize tourney banner by Melisande (also in pic above) photographed (left) at Cynabar's 40th Anniversary event.*

### Events (mostly from Domesday reports)

- **Ceilidh-fest.** Our annual Ceilidh got a Germanic twist this year (trying to work in the Oktoberfest idea). The event was moved to March from its traditional position in January. And for the third year, we used Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds.

There was, of course, a prize tourney with a banner by Melisande (to be returned) and prizes for both the winner and the gentle who inspired him/her. Prizes were a goblet by *Lord Daebher* (of the Valley of Three Walls group) and a favor by *Lady Estrella* (Chris Corliss). Autocrat was *Oscad de Segovia*, assisted by his feast cook, *Fritz*. (I have no more data on Fritz.)

Attendance overall: 160. Feast tickets sold: 83 (a sellout). The tourney was experimental, with over 80 bouts to be fit in. So three list fields were set up in the hall, and the event was run so smoothly that it finished *an hour ahead of schedule*. No injuries.

Victor: Count Sir Eliahu ben Itzhak.

Contests were held in Embroidery and Illumination. The event cleared \$230.

- **CROWN TOURNEY** — May 30. Site: Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds Outdoor/indoor. Autocrat: Wolfgang von dem Goldenherz.

Feast was by Angelica Paganelli, assisted by *Morgan MacIvor*, who cooked the whole roast pig all Friday/Saturday night. Tourney prize: the throne. Cynabar fighters did well; four of us were among the final eight undefeated. They included Baron Daibhid and Wolfgang, along with Sir Dag, who was runner-up, and **Count Eli who ended up winning the crown.**

The Medieval Museum, which I introduced at a SCA-Con about two years ago, turned out to be a failure this time. A dragon contest was held; any medium. I don't recall the winner.

Attendance was about 250, the feast (above) was sold out at 200. I managed to get the ceiling lights turned off except over the head table. This was still very unusual in Midwest area SCA events.

With continued awareness of SCA members' tight budgets, our big innovation this year was the "investment" event – raising the bar on quality without penalizing poorer members. We budgeted to *lose money* by spending for extra niceties. But Angelica blew it by saving \$500 on the food --so we ended up *making* \$400.

### Coronation of Eliahu and Elen (2)

October 3. Sites were the Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds and, for the Coronation itself, Saline Methodist Church, just down the road.

Autocrat was Minna von Lubeck.

Sir Dag ran a tourney: Hold-the-field, Wounds retained, for total victories. Winner: Sir Palymar. The lists were run by *Ute* (Barb Esteves), *Annalise* (*Ilsa--Liisa* Mazzaro), *Deirdre* (Chris Hutson), and Tzvi.

Due to the way reservations came in and Angelica bought food, and the fact that the more expensive sites were booked, we ended up with a \$1000 surplus, half of which went, quite properly, to the kingdom.

### **Demonstrations/ Public Performances**

In late spring 1987 we inaugurated a Demo Committee to organize these things. This was done not only to take the load off the seneschal, who as contact person had been organizing most of the demos, but to counteract a minority view that performances other than school demos were not appropriate SCA activities.

The demo committee was to assure that demos supported Cynnabar's goals. Demos were divided into (a) primarily educational (no monetary reward asked); (b) recruiting; and (c) fund-raising/performance, where we act as theatrical performers for the fun of it, in expectation of a donation to the group, or both.

Because we had over \$2000 in the bank, we wished to make it clear to educators that no donations were needed. This we did, but it seems the educators had their own ideas, and insisted on our accepting their already-written donation checks. This happened in every case but one.

To appease the minority, performance demos were not encouraged, which translated into more reluctance on my part in initial contacts with those asking for our expertise. The result was turning down two or three such events and being offered higher sums for others.

For perspective, a couple hundred dollars for a good "assembly" presentation was not much for many high school districts' budget. We were a bargain, and we delivered good educational experiences.

Our first two Elizabethan Wassails in '85 and '86 had widened our reputation for expertise in



*Bad guys: Sirs Dag and Eli play the dark side*

medieval/renaissance lore, and led to many of the demo opportunities of 1987.

**January 7**— Demo at ConFusion (an Ann Arbor area Science Fiction Convention). 5 Fighters directed by Sir Dag inaugurated his Prince Valiant/Conan "How they REALLY did it/ How we do it" demo. Audience: 50. There was also a calligraphy/illumination workshop and a dance workshop.

- January 21, 26, and 27. A "commercial" demo for **Irwin Magnetics, Inc.** in support of their first annual sales meeting. Irwin was a client of TI Group, where Eli and I both worked. Irwin needed some fireworks to jazz up their sales meeting.

On Wednesday, Sir Eli went through the offices as a herald announcing big doings to come. Then, on Monday morning at 8 a.m. at Weber's Inn, 6 fighters burst into the sales meeting just as it was beginning, and... there was combat. We repeated that performance with a smaller force at the whole company's noon luncheon.

That evening, we provided a trumpeter and fire-throwing juggler Dan Schlicting for the formal closing dinner at the Michigan League. (picture in the *Monday Night Workshops* sidebar page 7). The shire received a \$500 donation for its efforts.

- February 28— **University of Michigan Medical Center's** new "Med-Inn." This fun/commercial demo came via TI Group from the Medical Center's Marketing Department. Lady Catriona of Leslie Tower calligraphed the menu

for the occasion. About 14 Cynnabar members took part, working with less than 50 guests. They loved it. Med-Inn donated \$500 to SCA-Cynnabar.

- March 25 — **Mead's Mill Middle School**, Northville, MI Educational Demo — Involved 40 miles of travel on a weeknight for the 6 to 10 members who went out that Wednesday night. Claire & Dag were leaders. Audience: 240 6th-8th grade students. At the end, an envelope containing a check for over \$200 was pressed on us.

- April 10—Educational Demo — **Franklin Middle School**, Wayne, Michigan. Participants needed Friday afternoon free to travel 30 miles east to do this assembly program for 1000 students. Deirdre taught most of them to dance; Baron Daibhid and Ian Maclan led the fighting demo; 5 or 6 other members participated. We received a \$450 donation.

- April 23 —Party/recruiting demo at **Marriott Inn/Legends Lounge**. This place used to be a “Win Schuler’s” restaurant, and still has the dark oak-beam decor. Annalise, (later *Duchess Ilsa*) a food-services major at Eastern Michigan, doing her internship there, organized this party as an educational project. One Thursday night a month, Legends featured a special theme.

We “emceed,” gave out their door prizes, taught them how to dance, set up a game room with skittles, bowls, a model catapult, chess, a beanbag toss into a window of a 5-foot “Cynnabar tower,” and a dart game with a target being “Sir Dart Evader,” the latter two created by Sir Dag.

He also conducted a hilarious jousting tourney (above): guests were given boffers and shields, set on skateboards, and pushed towards



*At the Legends demo, Sir Dag readies Rocco, Ilsa (Liisa's) brother.*

each other to collide in the middle of the dance floor. (The light plastic shields came via Dag’s day job at Tobins Lake Studios, a theatre prop/set supplier.) We climaxed the evening with an SCA fighting tourney.

- May 13—Educational demo—**Livonia Schools’ “Young Authors”** at Bentley School. Originally, the organizers wanted a full day of medieval arts. But that close to Crown, I didn’t believe I’d get many volunteers.

What they got was 3 speakers on three topics and a 4-fighter demo including Count Eli, Baron Daibhid, Ian Maclan, and Beorthwine. They were de-

lighted, and sent us a \$250 donation. Audience: 2 flights of 150 each in an auditorium. We had to cut off the flood of questions.

- June 5—**Share-It-Age Festival** --an educational Demo—Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Ypsilanti, Mi. An all-day, set-up-the-camp demo with thousands of kids and their parents touring in random-sized groups. This being not only a week after Crown but also a weekday, we had only a skeleton crew. Guichart and I took a vacation day, and Beorthwine came in before his



*Beorthwine holds forth at the Shar-it-age Festival.*

night shift. So did Gerd von Eisenherz. We fought *all day*--between a million or so questions.

I think it was about this time I developed my "Five Standard Questions" to save my voice at demos. Three examples:

1. *Does it hurt to get hit with those things? - Not if the armor works.*
2. *What does the armor weigh? - 40 to 70 lb.*
3. *Why would anyone do this? - Because it's more fun than you can have without... (insert ribald activity here).*

- June 26—Parade. Our unofficial equestrian, *Charles Greythorn* (Chuck Mosher), rode in full armor in a Circus parade benefiting MacAuley

**The Baronies of Northwoods and Andelcrag held their annual Border War this year, but neither was victorious.**

**Cynnabar defeated both... combined.**

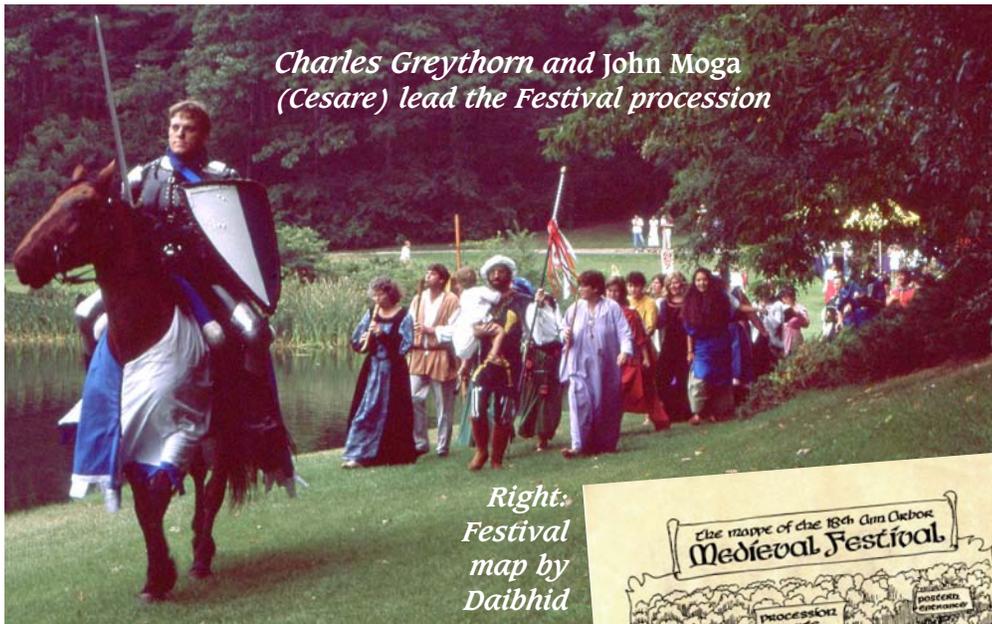
Between the four of us (Deirdre ran dance and much more SCA participation) we provided all the visuals: posters, programs, ads, ad sales, banners, signs. Ian organized a complete art fair, He and Catriona built 3 or four new pavilions. Catriona set up a store promotion including two full window displays.

The simple fact is, the Festival was dying around us: we were trying to keep it alive by brute force. Its founders and its professor/drama coaches were drifting away into other lives, and we felt not quite ready to fill their shoes --especially with the kind of year we were having.

We did our usual SCA dance and fighting demos, using our helmets in a record-breaking hat pass for the financially strapped festival. With the Pennsic War already starting, a skeleton crew manned the SCA pavilion, fighting at intervals for the two days of the main festival.

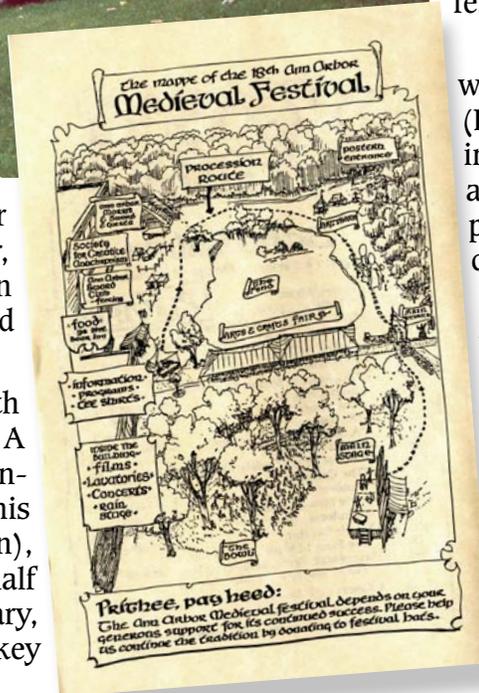
Others were busy with war preparations (Baroness Claire being War Autocrat and Eli and Elen preparing a princely camp).

Many of the pavilions at the festival were taken down and loaded directly on vehicles leaving for Cooper's Lake.



*Charles Greythorn and John Moga (Cesare) lead the Festival procession*

*Right: Festival map by Daibhid*



Health Center, accompanied by other fighters on foot with Cynnabar's banner, handing out Medieval Festival leaflets. Ian MacLan and Guichart de Chadenac marched in full plate.

- July 25, 26, August 1 & 2. The 18th Annual **Ann Arbor Medieval Festival**. A few Cynnabar members, your historian included, but more notably Ian MacLan and his wife Catriona (Jay and Nanette Johnston), were up to our hips in this festival for half the year, starting with meetings in February, which I ran, and including 8 out of 20 key festival jobs.



*At the multi-kingdom war court, Princess Elen speaks in a ceremony. Since Melisande's Laurel elevation was at that court, it's almost certainly hers (in the brown dress left). Dag (right) is King's Champion.*

### **Pennsic XVII "Eislinn's War"**

Several behind-the-scenes facts are necessary to understand what happened in the summer of 1988 and in the years that followed. I am writing from memory twenty years later, in 2018. I haven't a single note on it because, the day of my return from that war, I lost my job.

As with some other 2018 additions, this is not strictly a Cynnabar story, but was a highly emotional experience shared by many of us.

Earlier we have mentioned bonds growing over the years between *Talymar* and *Eislinn* and members of Cynnabar. They were especially close with Eli, Elen, Claire and Melisande. While I had, and still have, deep respect for Talymar I was not part of that circle.

Talymar had again won the crown in the fall of 1987. His wife, Countess *Eislinn the Patient*, had not always been in the best of health (perhaps why the name), and due to which she had not been able to reign with Talymar after his first crown win, but now it was hoped that finally she would enjoy a full reign.

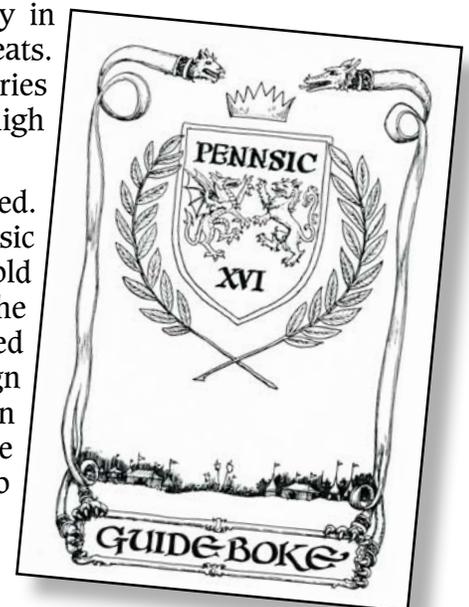
But even before Coronation, news leaked out that she had been diagnosed with cancer *again* with a poor prognosis. This led Eli and Elen to again seek the crown because they were they were uniquely positioned to ease the Johnson

family's burdens during their reign.

I'm pretty sure Eli and Elen appeared and held courts across the kingdom to save the couple stress and effort, and in the process campaigned for wide support at Pennsic. However that may be, the Middle Kingdom received the largest turnout of allies it had ever seen. Calontir decided not to fight for the East or Midrealm but *for Eislinn*.

At the end of each battle and (I believe) at court, long chants of "Eislinn! "Eislinn!" were heard from every side, including the East, which showed its chivalry in one of its few defeats. Songs and stories abound about the high feelings aroused.

Claire Autocratted. Eli designed a Pennsic XVI patch which sold enough to net the shire \$450. I used the patch design on my illustration for the cover of the Pennsic XVI info booklet (right).





*Dag and Daibhid*



*Andre de la Soie*



*Aimeric at the Rooster Tail. He moved to Denmark where he leads a theatre troupe.*

- September 12 & 13 — **Michigan Renaissance Festival Demo.** Actually, this was Roaring Wastes' demo, but they *did* invite us, and who were we to miss a demo? We had six or eight fighters and half a dozen dancers to add to their numbers. Much fun.

- September 18 —demo—**Festifall.** Our annual set-up-a-booth-on-campus demo. All day Friday, skeleton crew. Pretty good recruitment.

- Sept. 20— **TV demo** for a channel 15 (Cable) program on organizations. They interviewed us, and taped our practices and part of a meeting. We got the master tapes as well as the program itself. Aired 11/22/87.

- October 9 — Educational Demo, Ann Arbor

**Pioneer High.** A one-hour, Friday, non-fighting, classroom demo by 5 members. Audience: 30.

- December 14 **The Roostertail**, Detroit, Mi. — **Demo/Wassail Performance.**

Because of all the other things pressing this year, we decided that rehearsing all year for a full-scale Elizabethan Wassail would just be too much. So . . . we didn't.

So when this offer-we-couldn't-refuse came through, we had just 3 weeks to revive, rework, rehearse, cast and deliver this one-night stand of our Elizabethan Wassail. In the swordfight, I replaced HRM Eliahu, who was recovering from surgery, and Wolfgang took my usual role as the Duke of Kirkleigh.

Untried beginners stepped in and performed beautifully, most of them travelling the 50

**Below: part of our head table at the Rooster Tail demo.** *Photos courtesy of the Rooster Tail*



*Annalise/Ilsa (Liisa Mazzaro) and Wolfgang Aus Goldenherz (Kevin Galbraith)*



*Chuck Shefferly and Elayna Lilley (Maria Schumacher).*

miles on that Monday night after work or school. But it was fun, and the \$2000 donation more than wiped out the Wassail's losses of 1985 and 86. And put our treasury up to \$5000.

Well --there you have it. A heck of a lot of demos. Now that I see them all laid out in a row, I'm stunned at what we did that year, with another Royal war being planned around us. And I'd do every one of them again.

### Advancing the "Cynnabar Conspiracy"

*Regional and national:*

- Baroness Claire, already SCA Information Officer, is now Regional Seneschal for Michigan. *(Remember, she started this idea.)*
- Angelica Paganelli is now deputy Chronicler for 2 or 3 states.
- Minna von Lubeck is now Fenris Pursuivant.
- Baron Daibhid and HRM Eliahu were nominated for the SCA Board of Directors.

### *Guilds and subgroups*

- The Cynnabar Brewers and Vintners Guild has received a charter.
- Commedia dell' Cynnabar seems to be on its feet, guided by *Aimeric Raimbeaut de Salbart* (Stephan Vernier, *Guichart's* brother).
- Cynnabar members, students or staff at Eastern Michigan, are firming up our Student Group Status there, with building-use privileges.

### Baronial Bid - again

We have reached a consensus that we will pursue advancement to Baronial Status—after Eli and Elen are off the thrones. But we have no consensus on Baron/Baroness. We are also aware that our reporting record during the past year has not been great. We've been too busy *doing* things.



### Bits and pieces of 1987

We lost our room-use privilege at one of the major University buildings, the League, for one year (till August '88) due to an incident involving two bottles of beer alleged to be missing, among other things. We have taken all possible appropriate action.

\*

Member Gael Grossman left the shire noisily over *Eliahu ben Itzhak's* Coronation being held on Yom Kippur. I conferred with HRM before replying to her letter of protest.

\*

Before moving to Regional office, Lady Angelica Paganelli published *The Barley-Mow* within the shire (a camp-fire song book with tapes). She also dashed off a special New People's issue of our newsletter, *The Citadel*, and updated our *New Person's Handbook*. Then, presumably in a moment of ennui, she completed the new *Domesday Boke* for the group.

There was a veritable snowstorm of costume work done this year in Cynnabar. Melisande's Laurel is just the tip of the iceberg. She, Ingerith and Elen turned out marvels of embroidery too.

\*

**Performing Arts:** Angelica has started a vocal ensemble, which performed at our Wassail, as did the Commedia Troupe (Aimeric). Dierdre Collingwood has whipped the dancers into fine shape; they're having a good time.

**Too much money.** We have about \$5000 in the bank. Privy Council has directed the Treasurer, Tzvi ben Avraham, to deliver more specific reports and to prepare our books in proper double-entry form. William Brigandyne has offered expertise in this.

\*

*Green behind type = quoting from senschal's report to the kingdom*

**Our new Pursuivant** is Cormac Mac Eogan.

\*

Many other people's work made the shire work in 1987. I'll just list a few names here.

**Gwendolyn of Salisbury (Laura Bolletino)**—list mistress, aide to Royalty, reality checker

**Bianca Cantecuzene (Conni Bridge)** — “Rent-a-garb” mistress, always helpful when present

**Estrella of Trinity (Chris Corliss)** — outspoken, positive, helpful, welcoming

**Beorthwine of Grafham Wood**—Harpmaker, hard worker, always cheerful in service

**Cormac Mac Eogan** —Steadily cheerful, helpful, inertial—dare we say responsible?

**David Mac Dougal (David Craig)** – a founding-era member, serious, helpful, valued

**Ute von Munchen (Barb Esteves)**— cheerful support to all, especially Oscar

**Seamus (Jim Hickey)** — cheerfully holding our workshop together with sheer patience



*Catrina of Leslie Tower and Hallfrithr Throndrsdottir at a school demo*

**Drusus Romanus Valerianus (Clint Hodo)** — cheerful fighter & reality checker

**Deirdre Collingwood (Chris Hutson)**—Dance mistress extra-ordinaire, cheerful hard worker

**Ingerith**—mentioned as our new Chronicler, but deserves more (God, the embroidery!!!)

**Juliana Fairfax (Laura Lehman)**—wonderful harper, helper, and heaper of good cheer on all

**Annalise von Westfal (Liisa)**—list mistress, demo committee chair, Very Involved Person

**Hallfrithr Throndrsdottir** — dedicated to first aid, persistently patient with all

**Gerd von Eisenherz (Sean O’Dea)** — this cheerful, tireless squire drops his own bag to help others.

**Calum Creachadair (Eric Panek)**—cheerfully feisty fighter, partyer of boundless energy

**Romheld (later, Edward) (Bruce)**—cheerful, helpful, consistently **there** when you need him

**William Brigandyne**—reality checker, bridge of communication gaps, dancer, actor



*Mrs Aureliane / Jeanne-Marie Efferding (later Quevedo)*

### **Distinguished visitor**

We are pleased to report the presence in our shire (attending grad school) of a distinguished herald and peer: Baroness *Aureliane Rioghail*, 3-time principal Herald of Ansteorra, Laurel and Pelican, and founding Baroness of the Steppes. The Steppes seems to be Ansteorra’s answer to Cynnabar, except that the Steppes came first (in the 1970s). But it’s also in a big city – Dallas.

Even so, after taking a good look at Cynnabar, she calls it “the most active group she has ever seen.”



*This is from late 1984, of Eli getting his County hat*

# INTERMEZZO

*the view from 2018 with some additions 2019*

This little step aside from chronology is about what happened in the years 1980-1987 from my very personal perspective.

In 1980 I was 34, past due for the age-thirty crisis I never did encounter. Since getting out of the service I felt pretty much in control of my life right through 1981. During the seventies I had read Tom Peters' *The Pursuit of Excellence* and become a devotee of his philosophy, applying it right and left.

**As seneschal**, I believe I kept the tiller dead in the middle and steered the straight course. I had my own goals for what Cynnabar should accomplish and we pretty much exceeded them. Setting direction in the early days paid off. I made sure that our outward stance was welcoming to people with positive attitudes, interest in the Middle Ages and a willingness to learn.

This conscious shaping of our image was necessary if we wanted something more than a group with a "losing" attitude, where things are expected to go wrong, mediocrity is accepted and duct-tape fixes whatever. I felt it necessary to counteract the message new people would receive out in the wider SCA.

Earlier, SCA custom was that seneschals stayed in office indefinitely. I planned to stay until I had accomplished what I felt a local chapter could support. When Claire arrived, I knew almost immediately I had a rival. She liked to run things, but was neither a visionary nor a reformer. Nor a rattan fighter. But by about 1986 she obviously thought I should leave the seneschal job for someone else.

Most people would have used my experience to move "up" to kingdom offices. And certainly, Cynnabar could continue to excel without further effort from me. But I felt it was the laboratory where SCA improvement could be modeled. Thus I could contribute more as seneschal of Cynnabar than in any role short of Steward.

**Work life.** In 1980 my dream job was just taking off. My breakout years were 1982-1986. I took my photography skills to the next level, shooting new cars for Oldsmobile introductions and brochures. I wrote/design them, hired

models and arranged locations for glamour shoots.

I had hired more creatives after Joe Radding and it was my job to lead them into the realms Larry Bell could and did open up for us. I had 14-hour workdays, 28-hour weeks doing the SCA, and a few more teaching fencing in two venues. *I loved it all.*

While other staff members deserved it, I still spent most of my lunch hours with Joe. We plotted ever-higher achievements for Cynnabar, and put little time on work achievement.

That emphasis cost us the careers we might have had. Larry was not that impressed, and when he was faced with selling the company, the two of us were in no position to take over with Bob Conlin, my second hire. Success needed all three of us.

In 1987 Larry sold TI Group to a man we could not respect, who fired me a year later. Bob went on to have a successful company, R. J. Conlin Associates. Joe found a job in Detroit. The company failed soon after.

So I lost my "career" job in 1988 on returning from Pennsic, just before giving up being seneschal. My work life was a struggle for the rest of this chronicle, from 1988 to 1993.

**My fencing career** peaked in the early 1980s. The Sword Club was growing. I was fencing in national championships, placing 32nd nationally and 3rd in Michigan. I was also active in the national organization during the change from AFLA to USFA. I was on the national publicity committee in 1982, but the questionable politics around the selection of a new logo soured me.

In 1983, the Sword Club's membership dropped to the point where we moved into the Ann Arbor Y, keeping our identity and teaching their classes. By 1986 that relationship was going sour: the Y never kept its promise to allow us to welcome visitors and guests. And as I got more involved with the SCA, logging 28 hours per week by 1986, my fencing activity declined. That year I turned 40.

**SCA Combat.** In 1978 I had not planned to become a fighter, but I took the notion that the group leader should participate in the major activities. Besides, I had talked swordfighting in front of these people too often.

Joe Radding arrived as a squire, a step above me on the path to knighthood. That seemed to matter then; it made him our fighting authority. While I was glad to leave him that turf, I had to talk him into becoming knights'-marshal.

The crown seemed too far out of reach to even think of. In those days, if you were not a Knight you entered Crown Tournament only by invitation. Both proficiency and courtly graces mattered. By early 1983 several of us *expected* to be invited, and to do well.

I got invited for years but for only three crowns did I have a lady to fight for. We all wanted to be the top fighter in the group, but Eli kept ahead of us. It was OK by me: my hero was Robin Hood, who led men who could best him.

Yes, my fantasy included being the leader of Cynnabar, although it wasn't acceptable to say so. But when Daebher, the leader of the Three Walls group and a fan of Cynnabar, wrote a marching song for us, one verse said "*Daibhid rules with an iron hand...*" I didn't rule at all.

We didn't sing it for long because of another, *very* politically-incorrect verse. I'm sure some people didn't like the "Daibhid" verse either.

**My love life.** Since missing my big chance in 1976, I kept my heart away from the fire until late 1981. That's when *a very special woman* came into my life. I wasn't ready.

She warned me not to get involved, but she might as well have spoken to the gatehouse. To gain time I tried to conceal the love that grew beyond anything I had imagined. She taught me much, but never betrayed the secret of winning her. When she broke it off after only six months, I was destroyed.

I knew I had done it all wrong; failed to learn to become a man she could love. I looked for the cure in the medicine of hard work and resolved to become that man before next time.

The breakup drove a wedge between me and Joe and Elen. I expected more than cold comfort. I fully understand why they left me off the staff for both their reigns, but I was still surprised

and hurt. Nonetheless, I did my best to keep an even hand in my dealings. For most of our years with TI Group I did my best never to add to Joe's burdens.

My other best friend David Craig had gone off to New Haven with his bride, so I was pretty much alone to deal with it. Few of my Sword Club friends had the insight to be much support. I was a wreck, but had to keep going.

When, a year later, I met a very nice young lady, my heart wasn't really available. She did her best to make me happy, but I could not get serious. She stayed for two years. Later I called her "the one I should have married."

**The wider SCA.** There were SCA-wide issues that could not be addressed by local example. Angelica brought up the fact that I could not appeal to the SCA's purpose or mission because there weren't any. I began calling for such basic tools to reduce our pointless division.

I also wanted reforms in rank and title schemes that left a lot of members out in the cold looking in, and stifled the grandeur and ring of truth the SCA could have enjoyed.

In the late eighties, I shared these ideas with Joe, but he was quite cool about them. He acknowledged the validity of my points but declined to take them up. He certainly had his own ideas, and his experience playing on the kingdom stage no doubt reinforced his sense of superior knowledge.

I was already subscribing to the Minutes of the Board of Directors and writing letters to them. Based on those communications I was nominated to the Board – not by anyone in Midrealm, but by the Society Steward herself.

When, in 1991, a double peer from across the country told me I should be Society Steward, I knew I would never get there without Joe's support. His mere silence would be deafening.

As the years passed and Joe actually served on the Board of Directors his actions seemed to continue to favor the SCA status quo more than reform. This could not but drive us further apart and add to my disappointment – not for me, but for my vision of the SCA's future.

\*

On such winds I soared and crashed during the years just chronicled.

## 1988 – A.S. XXIII (23)

The year began with the loss of two of our longest-serving, generous members Jay and Nanette Johnston. (*Jan Maclan of Annandale* and *Catriona of Leslie Tower*) And, of course, their children. They have moved back to Cheboygan to join the family business.

Jay sold some of his tools (including the Beverly Shear) to the shop to ensure its continued viability as an armour shop. The shop continues to struggle financially. Osgad de Segovia, as deputy Exchequer, managed that this year along with Exchequer Tzvi. By mid-March, they reported the workshop solvent.

It wasn't just the workshop's fault. The loss we took on Elizabethan Wassail last year messed up our bookkeeping with the University, which withdraws funds, seemingly at random, from our Student organization account to pay that.



A greater loss happened before April, when our newsletter *The Citadel*, Vol. 7 No. 12 was dedicated in memory of Her Grace Duchess *Eislinn the Patient* (Julie Johnson). The shire council voted a donation to the Cancer Society in her name.

Her husband, Duke Talymar, is already noted in this history for the impression he made on many of us and the bonds that grew between the couple and Cynnabar.



The bulkiest of the shire's property is being moved to Baron Daibhid's newly-rented house on Lohr Road. We had been paying the Performance Network some rent on the space shared by the Medieval Festival and our own property. It's in the same building as the workshop. Daibhid will receive a monthly storage fee, rather less than commercial rates.



For a couple of years now, shire Council minutes have been taken, written up and printed in the *Citadel*. *Ingerith* (Julie Johnson, our Chronicler, is doing that now as well.)

Beorthwine of Grafham Wood became our Minister of Sciences in January. Also, *Annalise /Ilsa* (Liisa) became Demo Committee Chair.

After leaving the throne in May, Duchess Elen became our Minister of Arts. Shortly thereafter, she began hosting calligraphy and illumination workshops.

Baroness Claire started the "Tapestry Guild," meeting at her place in Saline Wednesday evenings to create event site decorations. I applauded this loudly.



In 1987, The SCA Board of Directors finally decided to solicit candidates for Board members from outside their own circle of friends and acquaintances. A questionnaire on the burning issues of the day was sent to all members. My 3-page essay response prompted a call from a Board member who asked me more questions and mentioned me to the Society Steward, Hilary of Serendip. She called me and after a very long, enjoyable conversation, asked if I would be willing to become a Board candidate.

When the Board publicly asked for nominations, others were added to the initial list until there were 20.

**Of those 20, FOUR were from CYNBAR:**

- Baron Daibhid MacLachlan
- Duke Eliahu ben Itzhak
- Mistress Claire of Lynnwood Keep
- Mistress Aureliane Rioghail (who earned her stripes elsewhere)

Several *kingdoms* had no more than four on that list. We're just a shire. In the event, Duke Eli did indeed serve on the Board. Later, So did Claire Fitzwilliam, autocrat of two Pennsics.

**Bal Polonaise, Demo, February 7**  
*at the Detroit Athletic Club*

This was *not* how I expected to make the Society page of any newspaper. It came about via one of the strangest demo experiences I have ever had, and one I hope never to repeat. The Bal (pronounced Ball) was a benefit for the Michigan Opera Theatre, and affected to be an Olde Worlde Eastern European posh occasion, with orchestra for waltzing, wine flowing freely, and tickets at \$125-\$250.

All this sounded great when they called me

## PARTY LINE



BERT EMANUELE/Detroit Free Press

Judge William and Mary Lynn Giovan with David Hoornstra.

## BAL POLONAIS V

■ **Particulars:** Chivalry flowered once more as Bal Polonais V drew about 225 revelers to the Detroit Athletic Club Saturday night to dine, dance and contribute \$125 to \$250 per person to the Art of Poland Associates of the Detroit

■ **Everybody was awed by:** The Knights in Armor exhibition, which included a court procession of pages and trumpeters and a demonstration of medieval tournament-style combat.

■ **Spotted in the crowd:** Judge Roman S. Gribbs

asking for knights in armor. Guichart and I volunteered, only to be pedestalized LITERALLY! We were living statues for an ungodly length of time, and we overheard what statues are reputed to overhear.

We didn't much like it. But for some quirky reason, when it was time for the swordfight, we decided that rattan would no longer do. We used the large steel weapons fitted up for our Elizabethan Wassail. The nice cut on my bascinet is from that exchange. Later, off the pedestals

(photo), we were somewhat "lionized."

## Ceilidh-Althing, March 26

Once again, our Ceilidh was warped, this time in a Scandinavian direction. Sir Dag devised a "holmgang" tourney involving small squares marked on the ground within which each fighter had to remain, each taking turns to throw a specific number of blows. Funny thing -- Dag won it.

*Estrella* (Christine Corliss) ran the quest.

## Inertia House

This "organization" (usually referred to, to the seneschal's obvious chagrin, as "I" House). The ringleader was *Tzvi ben Avraham* (Dan Loundy), closely abetted by *Oscadh de Segovia* (Robert Esteves). There were others. We have their names. Don't ask.

If you've never seen the I-House banner (below) – or the I-House livery for that matter, you're in better health than the rest of us. These objects followed but one heraldic tenet: easy recognition from a distance (which I declared to be the preferred viewing position). Suffice it to say that Day-glo Orange and Hawaiian print pattern figured prominently.

If you read the Citadel for late 1987 and 1988, you will see references in letters and editorials to Cynnabar's "Old Guard" and "New Guard." Often, the New Guard is described as



Cynnabar at Pennsic XVII. L > R: Beorthwine, Tzvi, (below I-House banner!), Cormac, Oscadh, Throckmorton, Todd ( ), Andre, Charles, Eli, Albrecht, Dag, Gerhard, Daibhid, Romheld, Midair, Ian, Guichart, Drusus.

not wanting to see the group do extravaganzas like the Elizabethan Wassail because they tend to leave newer people out of their depth. (Like on costuming expense.) And the Old Guard is characterized as wanting to just go ahead with grand plans regardless of a growing number of newer people who just don't see the fun in it.

"I" House pretty well represented the New Guard. Personally, I thought they personified the "me" generation even better. (I, me, get it?)

Be that as it may, if you look at the pictures taken at the 1988 Elizabethan Wassail, you will find every one of the new guard actively involved. Well, actually, they didn't wait that long. They were partly responsible for the Ceilidh becoming the Ceilidh-Althing, and they took active roles in its production. Naturally, they did a little flag-waving too. Ooh. Aah.



**1988 Elizabethan Wassail** was held at the McKenny Union at Eastern Michigan University for several reasons, not the least of which was dissatisfaction with the UM Food Service's ...service.

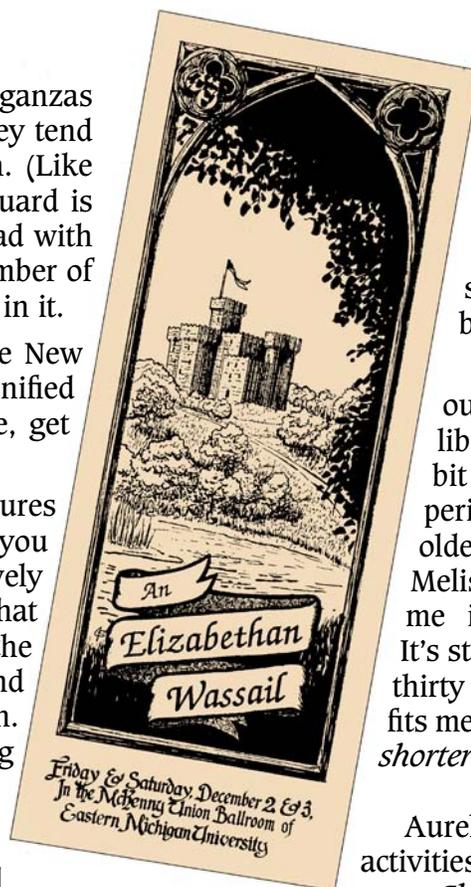
Per our rules for event organization, the production was organized via a "bid" system whereby enterprising members offer to organize, showing how they will involve the membership. This one started with a brainstorm at Gwen and William's house January 3. (Gwendolyn of Salisbury and "Captain" William Brigandyne, modernly Laura Bolletino and Charles Roth.)

I personally remember the 1988 production as the best scripted, not only for authenticity but for emotional power. A 2018 glance over some of those lines brought a shiver to my spine.

Cormac Mac Eogan was memorable as Brice, who earns the rank of Esquire and gets the girl, and *Elayna Lilley* (Maria Schmacher), a trained mezzo-soprano playing "the girl," stunned us with her song. (She later sang with the MOT.)

Aureliane researched the powerful award ceremony and scroll text --just the sort of thing that will spin back into the SCA.

The usual rapier fight was made somewhat less usual by the swordplay of David MacDougal, who, through an unfortunate loss of traction,



*Guest program for 1988 Elizabethan Wassail.*

*Cover art by Dag Thorgrimsson*

severely strained his back.

My "Henry VIII" outfit (below) was deliberately chosen from a bit before the Wassail's period to reflect what an older man might wear. Melisande tailored it for me in \$25/yard fabrics. It's still in great shape after thirty years, but no longer fits me perfectly because I'm shorter.



Aureliane organized two activities new to us. The first was a *Shakespearean Reader's*

*Theatre*, a parlor activity wherein people get together to read aloud a Shakespeare play. Aureliane assigns the parts. It started at her apartment in Belleville and continued at the house we later shared.

The other activity isn't so much a shire activity as a chance for members to learn and serve in the wider SCA heraldic world.

Mistress Aureliane is Ave Herald Extraordinary, a top-level herald not attached to



*Elizabethan Wassail: Minna von Lübeck plays the duchess in Ilsa/Liisa's costume with a hat I made.*

## 1988 – Data missing

Three pages is a very small size for a year's narrative at this point in the history, especially compared to 1987. Most of my narratives closely follow the corresponding seneschal's Domesday Report I filed from 1980 through 1989.

But my 1988 Domesday Report is missing. Nor do I have more than one issue of the monthly Citadel for that year. All other source documents are correspondingly lightweight. I fear I am missing some info.

What we DO have are pictures from the 1988 Elizabethan Wassail. I offer a few here pending some real news from 1988. As I continue to sort photos (in 2019-20) I will add those here that can be dated from 1988, and their descriptions

can be expected to fill in narrative blanks.

I am interested in information on any events or demos that happened in 1988 that you don't see described here. You may send to:

david@davidclassicdesign.com

### Officer Notes:

(These are from that lonely February 1988 issue of the Citadel.)

*Wolfgang von Goldenherz* (Kevin Galbraith) became Knights' Marshal.

*Guichart de Chadenac* (John Vernier) was still Minister of Arts.

*Tzvi ben Avraham* (Dan Loundy) was still Treasurer.



*These are all posed pictures taken at a dress rehearsal of the 1988 Elizabethan Wassail. Since I'm not in any of these I probably took them. The shot of me on the previous page is from the same setup and film.*

## 1989 – A.S. XXIV (24)

For most of 1989, we continued to meet in the usual digs. East Quad for Monday night meetings, except summer, when we were back in at the Michigan League. We did lose the Michigan Union Anderson Rooms as our Arms practice site, but we had been looking at Eastern Michigan University sites anyway. We practiced most of the year at Bowen Fieldhouse.

That site was obtained for us by our equestrian member, *Charles Greythorn* (Chuck Mosher) a campus police officer there. Charles is a self-taught horseman who bought a horse and actually brought him to the 1984 Crown Tourney here. He is a solid, strong fighter, but work and family make his attendance irregular. His wife Mary has been active in our Wassails.

### Significant others

*Syr Aldric Northmark* (Glenn McGregor) and his then lady *Mrs Siobhan O'Rourke* (Pat McGregor), longtime pillars of Northwoods Barony, have moved to Ann Arbor. We are surprised and pleased that they have both plunged into the life of Cynnabar where we might have expected them to simply commute to East Lansing for their SCA activity. Sir Aldric is the principal organizer of the North Woods Consort, the most effective live period music source in these parts. He has begun teaching wind music at their home.

Mrs Siobhan was Society Chronicler, but took the time to attend our meetings. Her presence added to Cynnabar's growing national-SCA awareness. She also gave me moral and intellectual support in my SCA endeavors.

Sir Aldric is also still active as a fighter, at least at our practices. He puts on his helm at the beginning of practice and does not doff it until the end. I later found in period tourney rules "He who unhelms himself during the tournament shall not have the prize." They were into endurance.

**Monday night Workshops** became more systematic in 1989.

- Sir Dag taught a monthly "War Command School" workshop series from June until the Pennsic War, featuring Group Tactics and leadership.

- June featured a series of Pre-War workshops: Summer Garb with Lady Angelica, Camping and Cooking—(group-taught), and Camp furniture/lanterns, led by Lord Beorthwine, our MOS.

- Baron Daibhid led a series of Event Workshops which culminated in a group forming to sponsor a big event next March. In a parallel development, Sir Dag proposed to Privy Council a modification of the autocrating scheme for the shire to use in proposing and deciding to host events. This was adopted for trial in the Festa Primavera (2) event of spring 1990.

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### The Sciences Workshop disconnects.

Supervising the shop for most of this year was John Vernier, (Guichart de Chadenac, CSO), who now holds a BFA in metalworking from U of Michigan. There were about 15 members. In September, John decided to try to make a living as a self-employed armorer, moving into his own shop. This created a leadership and teaching vacuum in our shop.



*Cormac Mac Eaogan is invested with his Cynnabar Surcoat at the Border War by incoming Knights-Marshal Wolfgang aus Goldenherz, assisted by outgoing marshal Sir Dag Thorgrimsson. Photo by \_\_\_\_\_.*

Privy Council voted to terminate Cynnabar's official involvement with the shop by the first of January 1990. *Oscad* (Robert Esteves) started the process of either rehabilitating the shop membership or presiding over the shop's detachment from the shire.

A group formed to continue the workshop if the landlord agrees, electing a shop steward for the first month (January 1990) pending landlord agreement or denial.

In its five years as part of the shire, the workshop contributed heavily to Cynnabar's enterprises. The red list field barriers were built there, as was the obstacle course for our Ceilidh-Fest event, as well as armor beyond the capability of any individual without it and its teachers.

During much of its history, it served as storage space for bulky shire property later stored in my basement. It carried us over the time when we all lived in apartments. Once many of the older members graduated to garages and basements – no longer undergrads – the shop was no longer the focus it had been.

Those involved will remember it as a force in the growth of Cynnabar whose place it's hard to imagine being filled in any other way.

**Brewers and Vintners Guild.** Met occasionally at the home of *Tzvi ben Avraham*, the GuildMaster (there is a Middle Kingdom Brewer's and Vintners' Guild charter). The group (about 10 members) donated some cases of Cynnabeer to the War effort again this year.

**The Tapestry Workshop** met sporadically at Claire's.

**Reader's Theatre** was taken over by *Estrella de Trinity* (Chris Corliss) to group-read Shakespeare and other edifying period work, to gain period language and performance insight and a sense of being at home with periodish English, and for the fun of it. The group made a very successful presentation of "Mistress Laurel Seamchecker" at our Shire Wassail. About 8 active members.

**Dance Practices.** *Deirdre Collingwood* (Chris Hutson) held dance practices on Sundays, bringing dance tapes and a player.

**Costume workshop.** Monthly at Eli & Elen's, taught by Elen and guest instructors. During April and May, these were quite popular, and

featured special Smocking, Coronation Prep, and Crown Prep editions.

## Calligraphy and Illumination Workshops

Monthly from February through May at at Eli & Elen's, and taught by Elen, Eliahu and guest instructors. Averaged 8-10 people. Elen holds an MFA from Cranbrook Institute of Fine Arts; Eli a BFA from Northwestern.

**Privy Council.** The monthly "real business" meeting of the shire, usually Sundays. We rotated the chair, and tried to limit each month's business to 2 hours. A Cynnabar rule was that all officers must attend. All shire members were welcome and had a voice in the consensus.

**Music Workshops** Each Tuesday night since September, Sir Aldric Northmark has taught music to all comers; vocal and instrumental. Of the vocal we got a little taste at our shire Wassail: four or five late-period madrigals which, after a shaky start, were quite well done.

**Treasurer** Tzvi ben Avraham has had charge of as much as \$5000 of shire monies this year. He now has one deputy, Angelica Paganelli, for the shire newsletter monies.

**Knights-Marshal** *Wolfgang von dem Goldenherz* (Kevin Galbraith) reported no



*A pirate by the sea at Andelcrag: Gunnbjorn Gunnarson (Michael Rosecrans)*

*(Photo: Karen Voss)*

serious injuries this year, either in practices or at events. Our fighter roster reached a peak of 22 authorized fighters during the year.

Angelica Paganelli, already regional chronicler, accepted the shire Chronicler post in July, relieving *Ingerith of Egilsay* (Julie Johnson) as her pregnancy approached its term. The new desktop-published look was much easier to read. She also continued publishing two important items:

a. the **Domesday Boke** of the shire, which includes not only the name, address, title and phone number of each member who submits material in time, but often their arms, what they teach, and their persona story.

b. a shire people's **Database of skills**: what each can teach, would like to learn, or can do.

*Cormac* (Steve Counselman) continues as our Pursuivant. According to Mrs Aureliane Rioghail, Ave Herald Extraordinary, "he has the eye" for book heraldry.

## Replacement Seneschal

*Baron Daibhid "ruadh" MacLachlan* (I, David Hoorstra), in office since 1980, announced my retirement from it at the December Privy Council, effective January 1, 1990. *Wolfgang* (Kevin Galbraith), deputy for Shire Relations (running meetings and generally being a nice guy), will take over.

While Kevin was *anything but* a clone of my style, he had the meetings portion of the job well under control.

The other leading seneschal candidate, Chris Hutson (*Deirdre Collingwood* -or Colintree, depending on when) will serve as deputy. I became deputy for shire property since it was stored in

my basement and my landlady's garage.

## Demo Committee

Annalise (or *Ilsa*) of Westfalen continued to chair the

*I call this picture "After the Battle." At Pennsic, photog unknown.*



demo committee. She and Sir Dag have made most of the contacts and shown great enthusiasm for demos. I still picked up a lot of the slack, especially at Medieval Festival time.

## Chatelaine

Deirdre Collingwood gave this office up in July, pointing out that the shire is responsible **in toto** for the welcome of new people, and she **wished the office to be vacant for 3 months** while the shire got used to dealing with new people as a group instead of merely pointing out the chatelaine and dismissing the new people.

So the shire did without a chatelaine until December, when *Estrella* volunteered for the post and I agreed.

## Newcomer Program

Lack of an official chatelaine did not prevent us from having a very effective new people's introduction to the SCA that fall. Experienced members were concerned that we were not getting as many new people started in on SCA involvement in recent years as before.

But given the excellent crop of potential new people from the Medieval Festival and Festifall demos, we thought it worthwhile to put some care and effort into our fall indoctrinations.

We put together a good New People's welcome, then followed up with six straight Monday Night workshops on newcomer skills. By the second week we had our Newcomer Guide ready to hand out, and needed almost thirty.

We wrapped it all up with the Hastings Memorial Feast October 14, designed as a local first event for new people. It seemed to work: some of the bright new faces were still with us at winter break.

## Newcomer Guide revision

Originally started as a chatelaine project, the rewriting project was expanded to allow input from anyone concerned with new people's impression of the SCA and Cynnabar. At the same time, it was limited to "what you need to learn and do to get started" plus items that a newcomer would not be likely to get elsewhere, such as Cynnabar's geographic surroundings and Middle Kingdom customs and perceptions.

After a year's work by many, including Deirdre, Estrella, Wolfgang, *Edward* or *Romheld*

(Bruce Phillips), Aureliane Rioghaile and me, we finally put the thing to bed.\*

### The Cynnabar Conspiracy, 1989

Again it seemed Cynnabar members were holding down every administrative post outside of Cynnabar in sight. At one point, four candidates for the Board of Directors were nominated from our numbers. Now Eli is *on* the Board, taking temporary leave from his post as Regional Marshal.

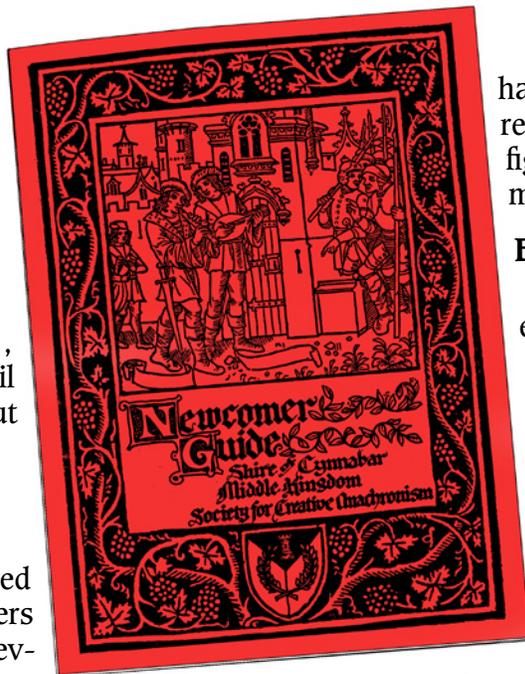
With Mistress Siobhan and Sir Aldric moving here this summer, we completed our monopoly of regional offices and now have two members in Society-level office. I'd say "national," but now the SCA is *international*.

Mistress Aureliane consented to be Coordinator of the 1989 traveling **BoD Meeting** because prime candidates Siobhan could not and Claire, while not busy as **Chancellor of *Regnum Universitatis Mediterrani*** (Royal University of Midrealm), was going to be busy as **Autocrat of Pennsic War**. Again.

At the War, while no current Cynnabar members were Royal, we still counted two former members on the thrones at Saturday night court. **HRH Ysolde, Princess of the Mists**, (Bay area, CA) and **HRM Seonaid, Queen of Atlantia**, both started their SCA careers with more than a year at Cynnabar.

We did lose one officer this year. Mrs. Melisande (Jeanne Hohman), Kingdom Information Officer, married Duke Talymar and

\* The SCA had a flyer called "Good Grief!" explaining SCA jargon in an extremely outdated and incorrect manner. This was part of the reason we did our own. BUT eventually I sent a critique to the Board and *they fixed it*, sending me a letter of thanks! I fell over.



has moved to Ohio to restart her career there. While she never allowed a fighter to win a crown for her, in my mind she will always be a duchess.

### Event Workshops

In 1988, I noticed that while our events were becoming ever more smoothly run as our cadre of autocrats became seasoned and as we built more tools to make them that way, the events themselves didn't seem much more **medieval**.

I had long been reading sources to find out what sort of events *medievally themselves* put on. Taking a fresh look, I discovered that we were further from the mark than I'd guessed.

Mrs Aureliane's knowledge, experience and library of such things were a big influence on my investigation. But my crusading for tournaments to rival King Rene's fell on either deaf or fearful ears.

I looked for another way. Could we apply Elizabethan-Wassail intensity and interest in atmosphere-setting theatrics to a Cynnabar SCA event? I believed we could. But with our top



Angelica Paganelli and Morgan Mac Ivor, modernly Cindy and Pat Hamilton, at a Pirate event. Photo courtesy Karen Voss

*“Dragons” stone arch piece: design drawing (faded back) and in use at the Michigan Renaissance Festival (right).*

people involved in faraway concerns, it seemed to me we had to start from far less knowledge and experience than the Wassail had going at first. We would need a new event-organizing core group.

My Event Workshops were aimed at bringing the rest of the populace into the **event creativity** business. They led to a group forming to put on Festa Primavera.

### **Shire property:**

There were 3 major acquisitions this year:

1. Several **“medieval” theatrical set pieces** from the U-Mich Professional Theatre Program’s production of the musical “Dragons”-- *not* your typical flimsy stage-set pieces but sturdy “stone”arches, a well with hoist, a “marble” pedestal, and two 10' tall sign standards. They were designed by John Ezell, Hallmark Distinguished Professor of Design that year at U. of Missouri - Kansas City.

The sign standards, waterproofed, saw outdoor service at our Pentamer War Maneuvers and the Ren Fest. Over the next several years, the stone arches were used at demos and events to add medieval flavor. In 1996, they were discarded enroute from our house, where Jeanne-Marie no longer wanted them taking up shared garage space, to a new storage shed.

{2018 comment: I knew when I started editing this document I would be reminded of some tough moments. When I found out the stone arches were gone I was so angry I am now surprised I didn’t quit the SCA on the spot. It was a next-to-last straw in a life that wasn’t going well. But that’s not part of this story. And quitting was never part of my problem-solving process. Whoever you are, don’t think twice.}

2. A **12 x 15' Marquee Pavilion** with red dagging, custom built by Tentmasters at a cost of \$924.00. It debuted at our backyard event in



honor of HRH Isolde, Princess of the Mists. For years it served as the centerpiece of Cynnabar camp at Pennsic, as well as other events and demos like Shar-it-age (page 39).

3. A 10 x 10-foot knock-down trade show backdrop and frame saved from the dumpster by M. Siobhan at the University of Michigan computer center. It became changing room walls for indoor sites.

We also foolishly accepted donation of *two* huge antiquated copying machines, which I stored until we could get rid of them. And an old Commodore computer, for which we also found a new home.



### **Speaking of theatrics**

Sometime during the past year or so, Dag had been enhancing his theatrical depth and serving the shire at the same time. Through his job at Tobins Lake Studios (purveyors of theatrical backdrops and shippable scenery and props) he had contrived to produce a 12 x 32-foot stone wall” backdrop out of a faded older drop.

The shire paid for the creation of a new 12' x 45' drop, sewn up at a discount and painted at Tobins Lake, after hours, by Dag. He had a bit of help from Eliahu. Above, it is partially seen covering the back wall at our Michigan Renaissance Festival booth. I lettered the signs.

These pieces have helped add flavor to



events for years, and continue to be in demand. In 1997, the large one served to enhance the Royal area at our Crown Tourney and, later, at Palymar's Coronation.

Dag has also been involved in stage fight work at the Civic Theatre, in a 1989 production of *The Lion in Winter*.

### Ten Years

Ten years wasn't always considered a terribly long time to hold any one office in the SCA. 1980 SCA thinking expected this job to be either boring or a disaster. It was neither. It was a continuous challenge crowned with success.

I did not stay in office long enough to complete my projects, or tire of it. But I had stayed longer than some thought I ought to, and that was the sole reason I left it. At the same time, the role of the seneschal in the SCA had changed a great deal since I started.

### Events and Demos 1989

**Festa Primavera (1)**, March 25, Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds, Saline, Michigan.

Our annual major event this year broke from the string of Ceilidh variations to go for a Festival of Spring idea, with definite Italian Renaissance overtones. Each element, the feast, the quest, the tourney, shared roles in bringing some of the Renaissance to life. This was the first of two Festas.

Contests in Poetry, Inventions (a La Leonardo), Subtlety, Drawing (models supplied), Renaissance Clothing, and a

quest, where well-rounded knowledge was the key, all contributed to the theme.

Mistress Aureliane organized a banner-painting workshop, turning out eight 3 x 4-foot banners of the arms of the Italian City-States of the Renaissance. Four are shown above.

Fighter gear strewn around the site was one of the problems we set ourselves to solve. So Duke Eliahu designed and supervised construction of a set of knock-down fighter benches, complete with a post for helm and shield plus covered storage space for less-authentic gear. Although there were not enough for all participating fighters, the brightly-painted structure helped define the space and hide gear.

This event also debuted the large red canopy ("cloth of estate") made by the "Tapestry



*Guichart, resplendent among the Venans at Festa Primavera. Helm posts and little more of the new "fighter benches" are visible.*



*The tournament at Festa Primavera (1). The new Cloth of Estate is shown top right. That's Edmund at center.*

workshop” to overhang head tables and thrones.

We strongly encouraged period-looking tournament participants. Points toward the final round could be gained or taken away by things like the presence or absence of duct tape, use of armorial bearings, etc. The tourney was won by Sir Tadashi.

**Michigan Arts and Sciences Faire, April 22.** Autocrat: *Minna von Lubeck* (Alison Galbraith). Michigan Region Arts and Sciences Faire (and competitions), feast, and MK Court. Several local awards. The pentathlon winner was Countess Ariake. 30 feasters tasted a very light summer repast. The outgoing Middle Kingdom Minister of Sciences oversaw the competitions and complimented all who participated.

### Local Event

June 24, our second all-day shire-only revel with local tournament and a light feast. This one was in honor of former shire member *Ysolde of Summerhall* (Debora St. James) who was now Princess of the Mists.

Due to the sweltering 95-degree, windless heat wave, only three combatants even put on armor. Calum Creachadir was my longest-lasting opponent. David Corliss (*Beorthwine of Grafham Wood, CSO*) prepared a special cold feast which got excellent reviews. The micro-event lost a little money.

### Major events on 2 consecutive weekends

The War Maneuvers event was always part

of the plan. Hosting the SCA Board of Directors wasn't. No problem. We could field two complete event crews.

### Michigan Region War Maneuvers

July 14, 15, 16, Knights of Columbus Campground, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Autocrat/Organizer was *Johann Wolfgang vom Goldenherz* (Kevin Galbraith). Feast supervised by Alison Galbraith (Minna von Lubeck) in a simple, not-hot, lightweight style. As much as a year before, Kevin had planned to use innovations like volunteers to help guests etc. At this event he carried these out.

The idea was, if you want people to do something your way, like park out of sight, *help them do it*. Ergo, Wolfie had porters to unload and carry gear. Over 40 fighters participated. As the *pièce de résistance*, Kevin built a ten-foot-high archery tower with simulated arrow-slit for archers to shoot down from. This was quite well received.

One problem was signage. Somehow, people got lost, and apparently the directions in the flyer did not match up with the sign locations. It's worth mentioning that over the years we have attempted to outdo every group in the region in this matter of directional signage. I have no photos of some of the creative tricks used like rotatable arrows, but with all the artists we had in the group, what do you expect?

## The SCA Board of Directors' Third Quarter Meeting 1989

July 21, 22, and 23 Organizer was Mistress Aureliane Roighail (Jeanne-Marie Efferding). I was astonished at the thoroughness of Aureliane's planning and follow-through. Since we lived together I saw it at close range. Even details like "crash" space got a thorough information-gathering, forms-dissemination, and back-checking. The result: an event that went as close to clockwork as any I've seen.

Mistress Claire's obtaining sites in the nearby town of Saline for Friday and Saturday helped considerably to eliminate any problem with the Ann Arbor Art Fair, which ties up the central city and straddles the main campus.

A feast was again delivered on time by Minna and her crew. It got good reviews. Same story of the revel. Mistress Aureliane engineered the Friday refreshments herself.

A terrific crew did the airport pickup of Board members and national officers—in Cynnabar T-shirts for identification.

We had sign problems with this event also, with two of them grabbed by the Saline police.

Reactions from the Board to the event and the "Principality?" "Barony?" "Shire? No way!" -- of Cynnabar were overwhelmingly favorable. During the meeting itself, Board members repeatedly referred to us as "the barony." According to Aureliane's figures, we made \$50 on the event, but frankly, we didn't care. We had saved Eli the travel hassles.



## Hastings Memorial Feast

October 14 (Local event) at Byrd Memorial Chapel. Use of the Byrd Chapel was a side benefit of my renting a house on the Byrd estate. The late David Byrd (Ann Arbor's first black architect) was an instructor whose students built a quasi-Romanesque chapel of concrete block. For a *very* modest fee, we used it for small local revels until, after five years, Mrs. Byrd deeded it to the congregation, who kicked us out.

David Corliss (*Beorthwine of Grafham Wood, CSO*) cooked a feast for the shire and gave commentaries on the contents, in our second annual specifically new-people's event.



## Cynnabar Wassail

Dec. 16, Byrd Memorial Chapel.

Our annual Yuletide potluck feast was quite enjoyable this year. As the last person served, I can attest there were plenty of tasty things for all. A new member at one of her very first events, Marilee Lloyd (now called *Arianna*), reigned as "bean queen", but as you might expect of the consort of our witty *Throckmorton* (Thom Dowds), she rose well to the occasion.

She had the help of HRM Tadashi, who served as "Court Serious." Plus, our Reader's Theatre group entertained us with L. Gwendolyn of Salisbury as "Mistress Laurel Seamchecker," and Sir Aldric's new music group gave us four or five madrigals.



## Demonstrations

**Mead's Mill Middle School**, Mar 22, Northville: 10 shire members gave 200 kids a two-hour production with workshops and a mass dance/fighting demo.

**Eastern Michigan University Activities Fair**, April 8, all day Saturday at Bowen Fieldhouse. 4 fighters and 3 or 4 non-fighters, our list field, and various crafts and photos were displayed to a virtually empty house. We asked: *why April at the end of the school year?*

**Blue & Gold Banquet**, Cub Scout troop, evening of April 19 at an elementary school in Hartland (north of Brighton!) A \$50 donation.

**Dearborn Fordson High School**, May 2.

A noon demo, basically a lecture given to one class by Sir Dag Thorgrimsson.

## The Ann Arbor Medieval Festival

July 29/30, August 5/6.

Starting a week after the two-events-in-a-row, and hitting its stride as many Cynnabarites were leaving for the war, the Medieval Festival never had a chance. Even so, thanks to M. Aureliane's careful and continuous conversations with the public, we came away with probably the best-qualified list of contacts ever. . . without consuming a single "brown flyer."

On the first weekend (West Park and the Arboretum) we fielded three and two fighters, respectively. On the second weekend, we didn't have enough people to show a dance, but got a

couple more fighters. We did get a number of inquiries about Wassail and captured addresses.

*That was the end of a 20-year Festival run.*

## Share-it-Age Festival

June 2, Lincoln Consolidated Schools. All day Friday. 8-10 members showed up, some for the whole day. This was our fourth year of involvement with this school district's extravaganza of firetrucks, airplanes, steam engines, Civil War re-enactors, and us, organized by Hal Taylor, a teacher in the district. We fended off about 2,000 youngsters in part by pre-empting the "standard five questions" mentioned in last year's coverage of this event.

**Circus Parade**, Ann Arbor Summer Festival launch, June 23. We were represented in this parade by Chuck Mosher (Charles Greythorn), on horseback in full plate armor, John Vernier (Guichart de Chadenac,) on foot in armor, and one or two others in costume.

## Festifall

September 1 – U of Michigan Student Group Fair on campus.

September \_\_\_\_ – Robin Hood Campground Demo – INFO NEEDED!! I know we did green costumes but when?



## Other items of interest

### The Cynnabar T-Shirts

Designed by Sir Dag in 1988, these full-color renderings of the shire's arms on your choice of



*My Cynnabar tee shirt in 2018. It's telling me to get to more practices.*

*There have many excellent scrolls done in Cynnabar, but none others shown in this history.*

*I'm indulging myself by showing this one I did for my then lady, Mrs Aureliane. I made the seal from an impression I took from the original copper Midrealm Seal.*

tee or baseball shirts came to reality that spring, largely through the additional efforts of Wolfie. Over 50 shirts were ordered and sold, just in time for use by greeters helping with airport pickups for the board of Directors meeting here. They had no trouble being recognized.

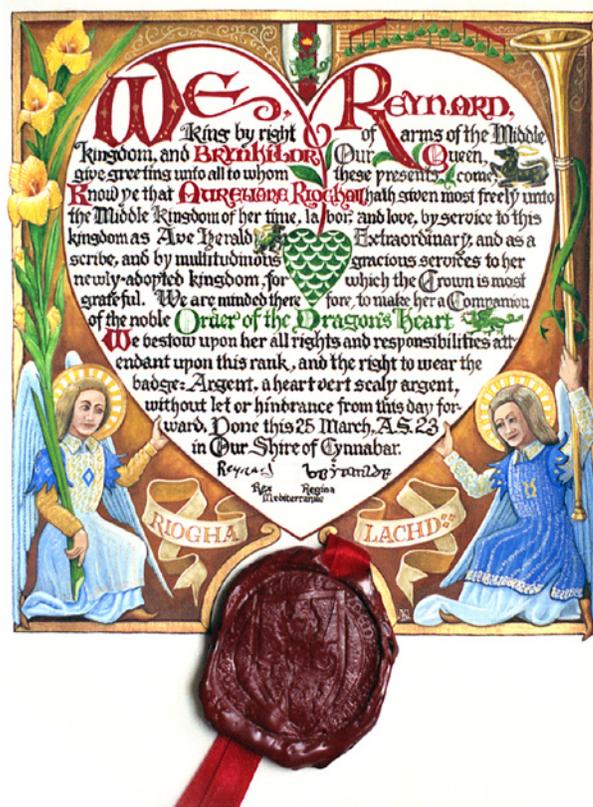
**2018 Note:** I wore mine the other day after Rapier practice at the Michigan Union.

## Recognitions

- Duchess Elen O Dynevyr: Order of the Laurel for costuming and embroidery
- Duke Eliahu ben Itzhak: Baron of Court
- Aureliane Rioghail: O. Dragon's Heart
- Minna von Lubeck: O. Dragon's Heart
- Daibhid Ruadh MacLachlan: C. Purple Fret
- Wolfgang vom Goldenherz: Dragon's Tooth
- Danielle Erin nic Conn (Dana McEvoy): C. Willow
- Wolfgang and Gerd: "Thing 1" and "Thing 2" (big guards for Dag and Ilsa's courts)

## Awards of Arms:

- Ute von Munchen (Barb Esteves)
- David mac Dougal mac Rori mac Donnyle Mac Morgainn (David Craig)
- Cordelia (Lee Phillips)
- Lewynn of Westone (Rhea Beegen)
- Muirgien nic Connail (Becky Goodman)



## 1990 – A.S. XXV (25)

In this year, the advancement of the group from Shire to Baronial Status, which looked so imminent in the glow of the praise given in person just last year by the Board of Directors, was kicked far down the road. Had the group known just how far, it might have reacted differently from how it did.

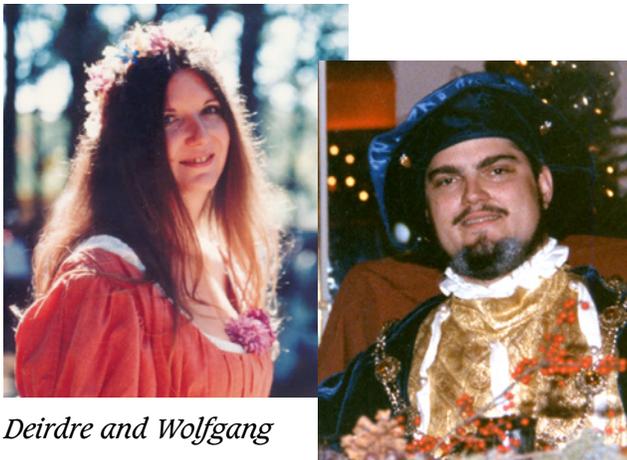
The “Town Meeting” at which this took place brought out in strong relief a rift in the group between those who played on the kingdom and Society-level stage and the rest of us.



From this point forward (and throughout if I get that much ambition) the main story will switch to chronological order instead of by category such as Demos, so the story makes more cause-and-effect sense. Officer changes and awards will be stuck into side-bars as at right.



All the shire’s offices changed hands with the exception of the Minister of Sciences, who continued to be Beorthwine of Grafham Wood (David Corliss).



*Deirdre and Wolfgang*

### The Seneschal’s office

After staying with me for ten years, it changed hands twice. I had handed it off to Wolfie (Kevin) at the turn of the year, but in mid-year he handed it off to *Deirdre Colintrie* (Chris Hutson) in July. Deirdre was a well-established second-generation “core” member, highly familiar to and on good terms with everyone.

By now, the personality of the seneschal no longer had much impact on the direction of the group as long as it was neutral in conduct. Both

### Officer changes

When we changed from the traditional officer-chooses-successor method I don’t recall, but it was long gone by 1990. We regarded that idea as one more example of the SCA’s bad habit of trying to mix modern administrative processes with medieval personas.

That “apprentice” idea encouraged nepotism. And while it may have been appropriate for some groups, it was out of place in Ann Arbor where educated members abounded. From the seneschal down, we never needed the SCA to teach us administration.

So our officers, whether or not they have a “trained” successor, announce their intention to vacate and a solicitation for candidates opens. A deputy might have the inside track, but no guarantee. The shire council chooses.

- **Minister of Arts:** In January, **Danielle nic Conn** (Dana MacEvoy) replaced Elen.

- **Treasurer:** **Ute von München** (Barb Esteves) replaced Tzvi (Dan Loundy) at year’s end. Barb is an accountant by profession.

- **Knights’ Marshal:** in June, Baron **Daibhid MacLachlan** temporarily replaced Dag Thorgrimsson while he deals with being Prince and then King of Midrealm.

- **Pursuivant:** **Lewynn of Westone** (Rhea Beegen) replaced Cormac (Steve Counselman), effective at year’s end. Although she had no previous experience as either an officer or as a herald, she had been attending Mistress Aureliane’s heraldic commenting sessions.

- **Chatelaine:** **Branwyn** (Elizabeth Tuck) will take over at year end from Estrella (Chris Corliss), whose job takes her further from Ann Arbor. Branwyn and her husband *Count Thorvald the Golden* (Steve Tuck) had moved here from Calontir for his grad school.

- **Chronicler:** **Tanwyn** (Glenda Andre), replaces Angelica (Cindy Hamilton) at year end.

Kevin and Chris provided plenty of the “warm fuzzies” that never came naturally to me.

## Event design and production

The impact I had always wanted to have was on the design of the events and demos we put on. I had realized being seneschal was no longer the best place from which to lead. The opportunities I had this year fit in nicely with our evolving event-production process.

Since 1981, our process had differed from the SCA-standard “autocrat” custom in one essential way. We thought having an event “belong” to the autocrat from start to finish was better for the autocrat than for the group. We wanted as much agreement and group ownership up front as possible. Many hands made light the work *and* spread the pride of accomplishment.

The sacrifice was artistic unity of design. Eli

always maintained you couldn’t do good design by committee, but without contesting that truth we put group involvement first.

What evolved was not the goal but the method. While I promoted the concept of event design, the group adjusted the production process. Individuals or groups would submit a “bid” to produce an event according to their pet design, complete with site, core staff and budget. The Council would evaluate and approve or not. Usually, it would ask for modifications and/or budget clarifications and approve it.

The first event under this system was being designed even as the process was evolving further with Dag’s proposal in late 1989.

# FESTA DELLA PRIMAVERA

Festa della Primavera March 31, 1990 (“A Festival of Spring”) was the single most extravagant SCA event the shire ever put on.

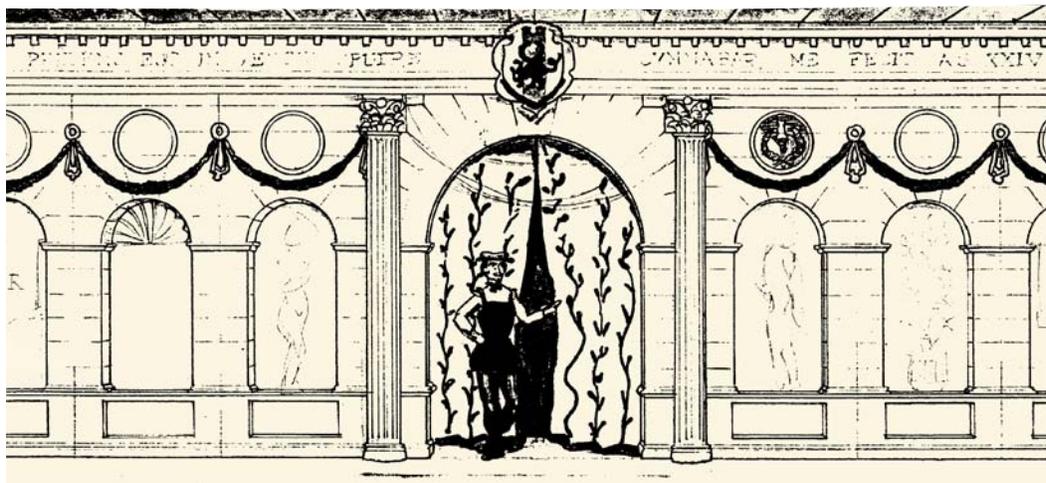
In 1989 we had done “Festa Primavera.” This year the title was corrected by the addition of “della” (“of the”). I had argued against just adding Roman numerals to event names because it suggests “more of the same.” If you thought *that* was what Cynnabar was about, you haven’t been paying attention. (“Festa 2.0” might have been more accurate if not “period.”)

We already had some stage set pieces we could use, but in my event workshops I suggested designing first and seeing whether things fit the design, rather than cutting your doublet to fit the cloth. What, I asked, would



*Cover of the 12-page program guests received at the welcome desk. It includes rules for all contests and some atmosphere-setting material. Above, sketch for printed streamers.*

*actually* get the guests into the feeling of the proposed event theme?



*Proposed view of “welcome entrance” wall dividing of “mundane” area from main event site space. Artist’s concept drawn by Daibhid over the blueprint by Ronan. See photo next page.*



We did a virtual “walk through” of our event site from the guest’s point of view, asking what would they see and hear as they came through our Italian-Renaissance Disney Room. We came up with a list of site decor items, plus a menu of communication devices like signage at the entrance and programs for guests complete with schedules and contest rules. Some would be Italian-Renaissance-specific; others we could use for any event.

We had a very excited bunch of people working on this event for a good part of the winter.

*Above: the tourney in progress. My pictures fell a little short of expectation.*

*Right: “Welcome entrance” wall as built fell a bit short of the vision. This shows the inside.*

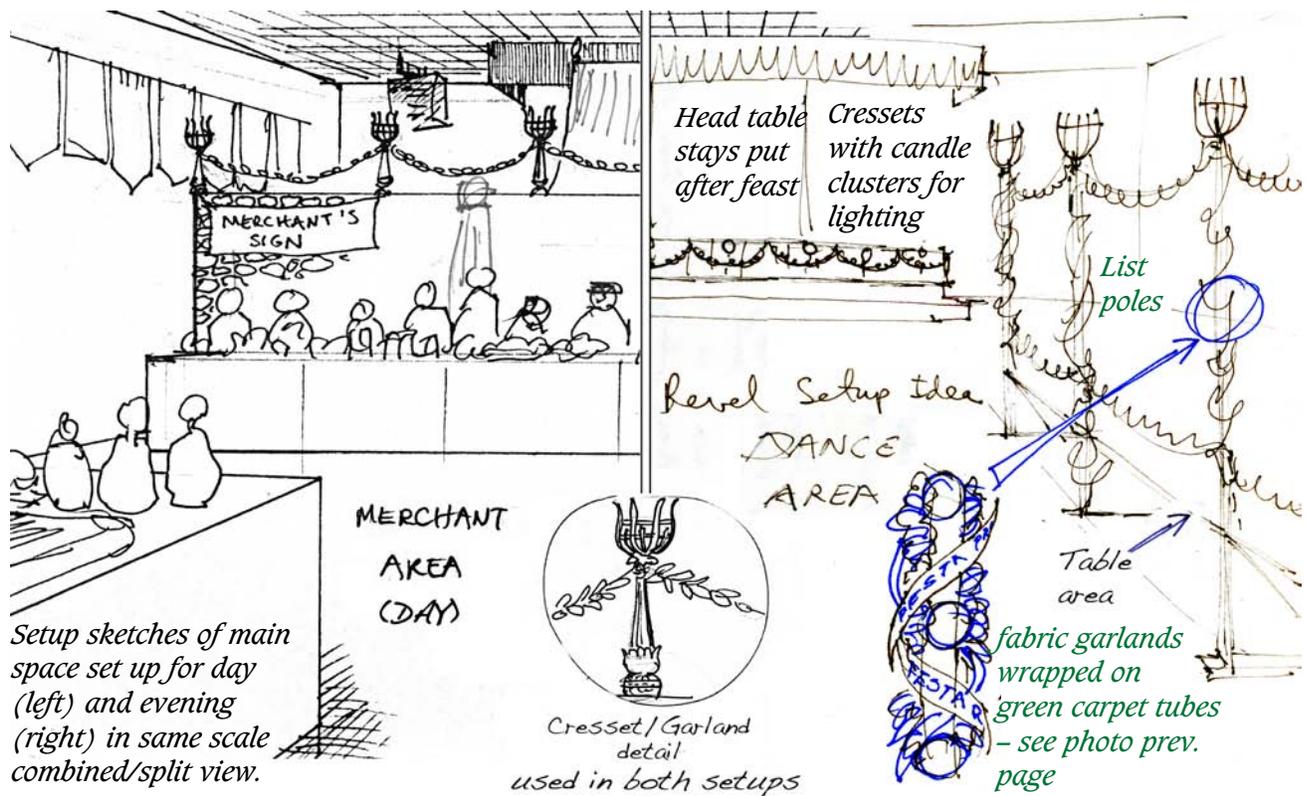
*We didn’t get the Corinthian pillars or the entablature (top) finished.*



We had always used grid paper to plot out our site plans, but never tried to actually visualize them. I had done freelance architectural renderings, and Eli and I had done them in 1984 for the list field enclosure. Why not apply that to the event environment?

I had planned to simply drop sketches on our set builders, but we now had an architectural intern in the group. *Ronan* (Pat Roach) drew up professional-grade plans for set pieces.

Now we’re *past* serious, I thought, with thinly-concealed glee. We bought a little material



but scrounged lumber from dumpsters.\* Ronin and Guichart headed up a construction crew to put the thing up. It was a wall to separate the “mundane” entrance area from the “period” event space with a “welcome” gate built in 4 x 8-foot modules (drawing on page 60).

An artist crew put the arms of nearby groups on six foamcore roundels. Another crew made a gold curtain for our entrance archway and painted a green leaf pattern on it (previous page). We already had the City-state banners from last year; these were incorporated in the “Quest for Merchant Princes” organized by Angelica.

Another concern was lighting. The feast could be lit by candles on the tables, but the revel and court were another matter. Torches? Our site had a white suspended ceiling, so smoke was a concern. We experimented with corn cobs but fell back to candles. We designed cressets to hold clusters of five candles each. A crew cut up steel strips and wood-block candle holders to make fourteen cressets (sketch above), one for each of the tall posts in our list-field enclosure. The list enclosure could be set up in free-standing straight-line sections, so they became rows of light-standards. But the candles melted down where they joined at their bases.

\*When students moved out of dorms, discarded loft lumber was in plenty.

I associated green garlands with the “primavera” idea. Cheap green cloth, left over from the Robin Hood Campground demo in an earlier year, was scissored to make them. Some were “swagged” across the stone-wall backdrop hanging from the back of the bleachers as a backdrop for the merchant tables (above).

More were spiral-wrapped around green-painted sections of carpet tube along with white streamers imprinted “Festa della Primavera.” These were popped onto the list posts for a “Venetian” sort of look (above).

We also made some side-table 4-candle units with reflectors. To supplement the flame lighting, we got some yellow gel to color the fluorescent ceiling lights more like candlelight.

Even with ingenious metal hardware, setting up the site was a massive undertaking. All the essential pieces were in place by 1 a.m., but Guichart, Ronan and I painted and pieced the details til about 4. Even so, the next day I turned in my best tourney combat performance to date at age 44.

The tourney was a three-part affair that presaged the “King Renee” experiments in Midrealm, with a helmshau, a multiformat Tourney and three “showpiece” “passages of arms” intended for the delight of spectators. Sir Dag was Marshal in Charge.



*In this view of the merchant row behind the list bleachers you can see the columns did get built, but instead of flanking the entrance they are supporting two of the cressets with candles. The stone-wall backdrop is hung from the back of the bleachers.*

While I (Daibhid) was the event site designer and in charge of producing the decorations, I was not the event co-ordinator. That was ably handled by Minna von Lubeck, who kept track of budgets and activities with a firm hand.

Estrella de Trinite (Chris Corliss) chafed a 4-course feast in keeping with the theme. The revel was also planned out, with “The Play of John John and His Wife” by the Bedlam Players, music by “I Musici Cinnebari,” a presentation of the desserts and minstrelsie.

There were also contests in Crossbow shooting, “Flying Fingers” Garb making, and Portrait Drawing.

After the tournament, the bleachers had to be rolled out through the stagework wall (which had a removable section for the purpose) and the heavy dais had to be moved.

The feast was 90% candlelight, not without complaints. One woman reported wax dripping on her dress. Another said she could not see to get things from her purse. This told me that not everyone in the SCA thought medieval atmosphere was to be considered in the same breath as modern convenience.

So many people worked so hard on this event that it won’t be possible to list all, but I still have the signup list with notes, and I quote:

Guichart	Design/construction
Ronan	Design/construction
Dag	Design/construction

Cormac	Design/construction
Elynnid (Lynn Jones)	Design/construction
Galiana	Design/decoration
Kieran	Design/construction
Deirdre	Whatever time allows
Dana (Danielle)	What she said
Wayne Burke	Design/construction
Pete Richardson	Construction (have lathe)
Osion	Construction
Jaroslav	Construction
Caitlin	Painting
Wolfgang	I’m just a handy guy

The heaviest burden fell on Guichart, Ronan, and Wayne.

I think some people regarded this event as “David’s Folly” for the amount of work it took on the part of these people. I can’t deny that this may have been a fair assessment, and may well be why this level of effort has seldom been attempted even by Cynnabar since.

But it was certainly not the last, or most ambitious, event I was allowed to design and see put on for the SCA public. Even so, in terms of total group effort, it fell far short of the Elizabethan Wassails.

Our other major event of the year was completely different. It wasn’t “period” at all.



### Dag and Ilsa win the Crown

Lady Ilsa of Westfalen (Liisa Mazzaro) inspired Sir Dag Thorgrimsson (Jeff Skevington) to victory in Spring Crown, May 26 in Flaming Gryphon. Dag having been runner-up four times before, we had expecting this for years. There was no lack of plans for costuming and event themes.

## *History is strange.*

Looking back, we see the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival was our only major demo through our entire history until it ended in 1989. To me it was a major sea-change.

But then, the very next year saw us take over the Michigan renaissance Festival SCA presence which we ran for ten years. Then the Festival decided they had enough swordfights and dismissed us. I asked “what now?”

That was the year they started the Saline Celtic Festival and invited us to be one of the field events. In 2019, twenty years later, it’s still our major public appearance each year. The Ann Arbor Sword Club was added ten years later, and we have been side by side ever since, two groups I co-founded in the seventies.

So now the annual question, now that I’m in *my* seventies, is how many lists will I fight in?



## **The Michigan Renaissance Festival** – *a major demo up for grabs*

The “Ren Faire,” as we called it, has run mid-August through September since about 1979, in the Holly, north of Detroit. Since the very first year, the SCA demos there had been organized by the Canton of Roaring Wastes, who invited participation from other groups in Michigan.

The last demo of the Roaring Wastes series I remember included not only a longish combat demo twice a day but also a cooking demo in front of the display booth, the results of which would be fed to the demonstrators at the end of the day. Very tasty it was, but, I found later, violated the Festival’s traffic-space rules.

In 1990, the Roaring Wastes organizers, headed by Lady Grazie, decided that publicity wasn’t enough return for their efforts, and asked the Festival for money. When the festival refused, Grazie’s group decided it was over.

In early 1990, Grazie set up an unofficial

gathering of Michigan area seneschals and other interested parties. Unofficial because those demos had been, too. I was invited. Grazie broke it to us that the Festival demo was, in effect, up for grabs by any group that wanted to sponsor it. There was a silence in which it seemed everyone there was looking at me.

With the Ann Arbor Sword Club, I had put on two theatrical rapier swordfights at the Festival in 1982 and 1989, so I already had Festival contacts. I also believed it would be criminal neglect to let this opportunity die.

But, no longer being seneschal or even on the demo committee, I knew that Cynnabar might refuse the opportunity. But I also knew that we could make a silk purse out of what looked to Roaring Wastes like a sow’s ear. I said, “let me see if Cynnabar will do it.” For those present, that seemed to settle it. More later.



## **The Baronial Saga, stymied.**

As the year began, Mistress Aureliane had completed a statistical survey of the group regarding advancement to Baronial status. A Town Meeting of the group was suggested for discussion of that possibility. Someone suggested that we solicit the assistance of the new kingdom Seneschal, *Gareth* (Roy Gathercoal) as a meeting moderator. Duke Eli endorsed this, saying Gareth was a professional at organizational problem-solving. It was arranged that he would lead a shire-wide discussion about it.

A day-long session was held July 21 at the Byrd Chapel with an evening dessert revel. Gareth started out with his interpretation of the

SCA’s overall organization and dynamics, and discussed the consensus process at length.

I’m pretty fuzzy on how, but he transitioned to a discussion of Cynnabar’s problems, with the emphasis on “led” and “problems.” Gradually, he gave us to understand that there were people who thought we were not ready to be a barony on several counts. First, that we were perceived as having a superior attitude by surrounding groups. Second, that we were thought to have a problem welcoming new people. And third, that we had no consensus on who should be Baron and/or Baroness, nor was one likely soon.

I'm not sure there was any real discussion or whether we even got to ask questions. And I don't recall the revel if indeed we had one. Nobody I knew was in the mood.

Some members, including me, were dissatisfied. It dawned on us that Gareth's agenda had never been to help us become a barony, but

to tell us that we weren't going to be one any time soon. He had implied that we weren't close enough to discuss the process.

Some members wondered why so many of Cynnabar's peers were not present at the meeting. Be that as it may, it was clear that baronial status for Cynnabar would be stymied as long

### David's 2018/19 Perspective on the 1990 Baronial Fiasco

The writeup *in the text*, written in 1997, was my attempt to gloss over what had happened in 1990. Now that we really seemed about to become a barony, I didn't want to rock the boat. But now anything called a history needs the "gloss-over" or coverup uncovered. Only in 2018 did I take the time to figure it out.

The stress I was under in 1990 colored my view considerably. *But what I didn't know colored it even more.* In 1997 these two deficiencies still had not been corrected.

From 1988 to the 1990 Town Meeting, I was under a lot of stress: after losing my career job, as described in the Prologue, I did not find adequate employment. With 25 others let go a little earlier, I was scrambling for free-lance work in a down market.

I had missed three really important points surrounding the selection of our first baron/baroness.

The first was that the dominant group in Cynnabar had expected that when the time came, Eli and Elen would be the founding baron and baroness. Ever since Eli won the crown in 1983, his core group had followed him to kingdom-wide service and offices. To them, it's now obvious, no one else in the shire could compare with the couple.

The second was that SCA groups had been choosing long-term couples, preferably married, over singles, to be their baronesses. Had I known, I never would have put my hat in the ring, alone, as I did *six years later*.

The third was that Joe and Elen were divorcing. I had not seen the signs, nor had I been in his/their company for probably a year after eight years of daily contact.

I was not the only one lacking these three important facts. Most of those at the meeting seemed no more aware than I, and of course

those closest to the couple were precisely those who didn't show up.

So in the light of these facts *and that Joe recommended Gareth for this task*, it should be clear that Gareth did indeed come to put a stop to our application for Baronial status by persuading us it would not be accepted.

What bothers me now is that Gareth could have told the truth. Instead he pretended that three other facts were the problem – two of which I did not then, and still don't, accept.

- If superior-attitude jealousy were a real problem, Roaring Wastes would have died before handing us the Ren Faire *that very year*. They looked to us for leadership.

- Welcoming new people has seldom if ever been a shortcoming of Cynnabar compared to any group in the region, including baronies. (It's true that we did not suffer fools gladly.)

- If not having consensus on who would be baron/ess was an issue, Gareth skipped the chance to help out. Not a word of advice.

How could suspicion have been avoided? Given that he was there to stop us, who stood to gain? *Those concerned about who would become founding baron/ess, and who needed a delay.* The high-ranking Cynnabar members who stayed away from the meeting came straight to mind.

How could *anyone* concerned miss so pivotal a meeting? Obvious conclusion: *by knowing in advance what would happen and being fine with that.* For such a person, being present would have been very uncomfortable ... on the spot to support the group or be spotlighted by their silence – as indeed they were by their absence. They had skipped the chance at solidarity with the rest of Cynnabar and left the rest of us trying for years to fix *what was never wrong*.

One might have expected a better approach.

as the kingdom seneschal and his unnamed sources thought as they did.

In retrospect not long after, many members did a lot of soul-searching about our “shortcomings.” The shire Council debated again moving

the decision-making back to Monday meetings, and decided not to. It was suggested that we work hard to be a good chapter for the next few months.

### More Demos to Die for

- **Tappan School**, Ann Arbor, Feb. 21, 8 to 10 am. Notes say calligraphy and combat with the name “DH” (me) but no other names.

- **Eberwhite School**, Ann Arbor, May 5. Entertain 150 children while their parents build a playground. A good cause -- The Ann Arbor Sword Club used to use their gym, and found them a very progressive school where they played classical music on the PA all day.

- **A Midsummer Night’s Dream**, July 28, was a Multiple Sclerosis Society fundraiser at the Edsel and Eleanor Ford Mansion on Lake St. Clair. This was an all-star demo, with the best chefs in Michigan laying it on thick, with support from the Governor and the state’s US senators. It was a \$200-a-plate affair with Titania, Oberon, Puck, etc. portrayed by professional actors. We set up pavilion and list field and put on a really energetic combat demo. We were treated very well and invited to partake of the goodies. There was also a \$200 donation.



OK, if you’re wondering “why Cynnabar?” and not the rest of the southeast Michigan SCA, you haven’t been paying attention. I mention it here because it supports my 2018 comments on our 1990 baronial bid. I already mentioned how the Michigan Renaissance Festival demo came to us.

- **Festifall**, the now-annual September campus demo.

- **Briarwood Mall** in Ann Arbor (when???) provided a \$250 donation as the result of a Renaissance dance demonstration we put on.

- **Salem High School** (Plymouth), Beorthwine’s Alma Mater. Classroom workshops December 11-12: David taught calligraphy, Kami Landy/Ellen Wetmore Morality Plays/Commedia dell’Arte, Beorthwine Castle Design, and Alison Galbraith Heraldry.

### The Michigan Renaissance Festival demo done by Cynnabar, fall 1990

This demo was entirely unofficial. Technically, I was in charge with no sponsoring group. But

*Right: Michigan Ren Fest demo: the booth got great traffic.*



Michigan Ren Fest demo:  
(right) Dag prepares the "knights" and audience for the combats.

Below: Gerhardt.



Michigan Ren Fest demo:  
(left) Kay of Triasterium welcomes visitors in the booth.

### Ren Fest: Benefits to the SCA

Work? Sure, it's a lot of work, *and a lot of fun*. But for me, the most important benefit is the potential to improve the SCA through the kind of on-stage habits required by the Ren Fest. The elimination of modern items, the ability to stay in persona when appropriate, and the "see-ourselves-as-others-see-us" kind of discipline all help feed back into SCA events the quality I had always advocated.

I've always used demos to promote the tourney as an entertainment. In the SCA, we tend to take the tourney audience for granted, even when it's obvious that *nobody but the participants are watching*.

At the Ren Fest we start with different "givens." You know the audience is looking for an exciting spectacle and comparing you to the jousters. You have to replace the jousters' horse advantage with other qualities. It is

painfully clear when you are boring.

So, in my ten years of running this demo, I constantly pushed for better theatrics and better-looking armor than the jousters provided. We now had three other members with theatrical educations. Two of them, Dag and Eli, also had a good deal of influence, and I asked them to use it to support my agenda. And Dag's squire *Gerhardt von Eisenherz* was a cinema pro who bought in 100%.

The hard work was rewarded, for me, in unforgettable magic moments. Each Saturday night after closing was party time for "Rennies." After closing our booth we had to walk through the entire length of the site to get to our cars... at twilight, through period-style candle-lit buildings, everyone in costume, period live music in the pubs.

It was period-fantasy magic beyond anything short of the best Pennsic evenings.

*Coronation: TRM Dag and Ilsa process out. Photo by Karen Woodburn Voss is actually of their second Coronation.*

in fact, it was almost entirely Cynnabar.

In my contact with the Festival organizers, I made it clear that we didn't need money for our demos, and that we believed 12,000 people going past the booth each day was worth a lot to us, especially if it meant that people looking for the SCA could find us. That put us on a footing of understanding; we understood the marketing dynamics the same way.

We did a single weekend, decorating the booth with our excellent supply of banners, stageprops and artifacts, and fighting two performances a day with really spiffy fighters, plenty of non-fighters and ladies to inspire us, and our sturdy list field enclosure.

The festival's owner came by at the end of Sunday and offered high compliments on our showmanship, asking us to do two weekends the next year. He said he owned five festivals, but by no means allowed the SCA to have demos at all of them. But one group, he said, worked so well *with* the Festival that he was putting up buildings for them on site. I drooled.

### **Dag and Ilsa's Coronation**

This rather grand event was held in October at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Detroit and was hosted by the Roaring Wastes group. Dag and Ilsa had made many friends there.

St. Charles is also the site of Roaring Wastes' indoor arms practices (I had attended several), and the beneficiary of a modified Elizabethan



Wassail described earlier.

For a number of different reasons including exhaustion after Ren Fest, I was not at Coronation or any other royal court until early 1991. So, a totally unexpected honor was delayed for two months. More on this later.

### **The EECS Building**

Our resident jester, Midair Mac Cormac (Chuck Cohen) was a student in the U-M Engineering School, specializing in robotics. In 1990, he and others arranged a classroom for us in that building on North Campus, where meetings would end up for the next six years.

We also had our first Royal University of Midrealm session there.

### **Royal University of Midrealm at the "Cynnabar Campus"**

November 17. Event Co-ordinator was *Caitlin of Strathpefir* (Nancy Farmer). Our holding this may have had something to do with Claire being R.U.M. Chancellor.

We hadn't done one of these before, but then there had only been six before us. We had done the last SCA-Con, adding workshops and

foreshadowing the University's all-teaching format.

It was held in several labs and classrooms of the University's Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences Building on North Campus ... a truly modern, fluorescent-lit environment.

Our innovation (if you didn't know there would be an innovation, you haven't been paying attention) was the "Library of Cynnabar" organized by *David mac Dougal mac ...* (David Craig, who had worked at the Yale University Library). It consisted of all the relevant books anyone would loan or bring to the building, which were listed, sorted, and arranged on tables as a display for reference. The idea was not so much to provide a reading or reference room, as to let "students" see the wealth of information available in published books. David also provided a typed catalogue.

The event was characterized by a high degree of organization, with liveried Cynnabar members everywhere offering help.



### A Short Story about Midair

Every now and then something happens the way it's supposed to. About the time Midair came to the SCA at Cynnabar, I had been in the habit of telling new people that "service to the SCA is not something you decide to do for fun and then call it service. Service is finding out what is needed and supplying it."

Midair is one of those few people who actually asked what was needed. I pointed to our demo handouts and said "You know, we talk about having jousting and jesters, but we fall short. Comedy is the hardest performance art, but the one we need most."

Not long after that, Midair became a juggler and jester. Which, when you know him, turns out to be the opposite of his real personality.

A very serious fellow, he is. His longish article on the introduction of the stirrup appeared in the April 1990 Citadel.

**2018 Note:** I recently ran across a Citadel article published not long after I had written the above. In it, Midair tells how he had learned to juggle *long before he came to the SCA.*



Cover art by Baron Daibhid



Midair MacCormac (Chuck Cohen) makes a galloping getaway with an award. Photo: Karen Voss.

#### Other awards in 1990

- Duke Eliahu ben Itzhak -- Order of the Pelican, June 16
- Daibhid Ruadh MacLachlan - Order of the Dragon's Heart; Queen's Champion
- Johann Wolfgang vom Goldenherz -- Order of the Dragon's Tooth
- Elunyd (Lynn Jones) -- Award of Arms

## Of Photos, reports, history, and memories

In the Prologue and on the website there's a lot about my photography work. In Midrealm, not to mention Cynnabar, before the days of cellphones, I was one of the most prolific photographers. Talymar's first coronation was the first major event attended by our budding group, but my photos of it were the very first rolls of film through my new SLR, bought that very day.

Mostly I shot slides. Thousands. From 1980 to 1987, Monday meetings often featured slide shows of the weekend's events. Professional work at the agency showed us that color transparencies got you higher quality when you went to press, as in brochures. But it took a costly custom lab to get ordinary prints until transparency scanners became affordable (mine is five years old). Many images in this book had never been printed until I scanned them in 2018.

While I got photos of much of our history, I could not take pictures of my own activities.

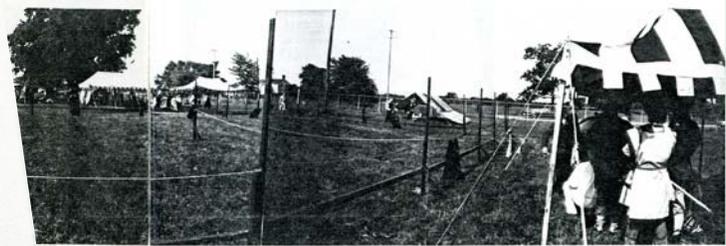
There's probably not one single photo of me running a meeting or setting up an event.

But my Domesday reports benefited. I pasted up glossy color prints into Pictorial Supplements as a great way to help get my message across to the people at kingdom level to enhance Cynnabar's renown. Our file copies were black-and-white photocopies.

But after Pennsic in 1988 (where I used a 2-1/4" Hasselblad, losing my job situation put an end to color prints and reduced travel to many events.

In 1990, I was no longer seneschal. My successors were neither pro photographers nor as obsessed with telling our story. Starting with 1991, I have Domesday reports on hand through 1992. I filled in gaps where I ran across material, and used what photos I could find. All that to say the story thins out a bit as we go forward.

When I started my David Classic Design website in 2005 I included a black-and-white version of the 1987 history. In January 2018, I promised this history would be available, color-restored, for the Jubilee in September.



CROWN  
JOURNEY

at Cynnabar, above:  
Cynnabar's list field setup.  
Left: the final round and the  
result. Below right: the  
"medical museum."



*At left, Eli defeats Dag in the final round of the 1987 Spring Crown.*

## 1991– A.S. XXVI (26)

Planning for our March event Day of Heroes was well in hand as the year opened. Jeanne-Marie Efferding (Mistress Aureliane) organized another banner-making project specifically for the event, this time a set of five long Celtic knotwork designs on unbleached muslin. Many hands painted in the designs she adapted from sources like the *Book of Kells* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.

The group was also following Aureliane's lead in considering a choice of heraldic beast to represent the group, plus a motto to go on an achievement of our arms. It came down to a near toss-up between an elephant and a lion dragonet, with a slight plurality to the elephant. It was pointed out that an elephant can support a tower—our central charge—quite handsomely, as in a Renaissance chess rook.

I am the harbinger of the  
**Da hairhroih** (day of heroes) March 30, AS XXV, Ann Arbor, MI  
Come to Cynnabar for a day of Irish revelry and heroics.  
This is a "scenario" event. The scene: somewhere in Ireland in the sixth century, an Irish lord holds high and heroic feasting and revelry. You need not be either ancient or Irish to attend and enjoy.

### Da hairhroih "Day of Heroes"

was held March 30 at our now-usual site, Saline Farm Council Fairgrounds. Instead of



an Autocrat, we had Cormac mac Eogan as "Laird of the Hall."

Instead of the typical Trivial-Pursuit-Standing-Up, we had a very intense Quest to solve the riddle of the *Donn Cuailnge*, based on the ancient Irish "Ulster Cycle" of legend. Twelve members of Cynnabar wore special costumes and played the roles of characters from the cycle as mobile quest stations. The whole thing was cunningly arranged by Kami Landy.

The tournament was devised by the decidedly non-Celtic Deputy Knights-Marshal *Khaalid*

*bin Kaazim* (MKA Luis Gomez), with several innovations, serious enough to warrant a rules exception from the Earl Marshal. As a tourney for heroes in the Irish tradition, it sought to select champions in four categories: Prowess, Swiftiness of foot, Poetry, and Heroic Virtue.

It began with a footrace in armor, carrying all the weapons each warrior planned to use in the day's combats. That was followed by a pool-system tourney with judges for blows, and was scored on a basis of number of valid blows landed. Blows were not acted out, which required permission from the Earl Marshal.

A survey of fighters, fighter spectators, and non-fighter spectators was taken on people's approval level of the tourney format. The numerical tabulation, published later in the Citadel, came out close to neutral.

Each entrant could enter a piece of their own heroic poesy, which would figure in the outcome. The arts display became the "Laird's Trove" for the day.

### The fight over the Battle

When it was proposed by peoples east of here that Pentamere get together to sponsor a war (Battle of the Inland Seas), it caused two small simultaneous wars in our councils. The two conflicts made this discussion bitter.

First, whether to support an event whose essential decisions would be made by methods we did not approve of. One side said "we ought

to take this chance to show we're not an elitist group, even if we are" while the other shot back "we ought to stand up for our principles of decision-making rather than endorse theirs."

Because of the time pressure to lay down \$500 in the near term with no guarantee that we would get adequate representation for this tax, "maybe if" was not an acceptable answer.

Second, "is it okay for the consensus decision-making model to block this decision when so many of us want it?" One of the chief reasons for the consensus model was that it didn't make an angry minority of losers the way voting could every day. But this discussion left the *majority* angry.

We discussed both these issues simultaneously, and then tried to discuss them separately. The upshot was that we did *not* reach a consensus to lay down \$500 and be part of the Inland Seas alliance. (In other words, we stayed with consensus and did not consent.) The anger and mutual annoyance from those meetings did not evaporate in some cases for a year.

### The Cynnabar Surcoat

In June, as part of the preparation for Pennsic, we discussed the Cynnabar war contingent. Who should lead it? Can there be standards for who can wear the shire's colors on the field?

In previous years, we had nearly always had an easy time deciding a war leader, but now we had a number of candidates and the mood of the group was not to simply always hand it to the top fighter in the order of precedence.

And in times past, our traditions decided *ad hoc* allowed senior fighters to decide that a consensus on a fighter existed and award a surcoat. But now the Council decided that it alone could dispense the right to wear the shire's colors and deferred to later the criteria for those who thus could represent the group.

During this period and for several years, *David Mac Dougal* (David Craig) tirelessly took notes at the monthly councils and transcribed them into cogent, clear, concise reports, many of which were published in the Citadel.

Late in the year, our Treasury showed a balance of around \$1000 of unappropriated funds.

### Unexpected honor

This story is more about the Middle Kingdom than Cynnabar except that the characters were shire members.

Early in 1991 I received an unexpected mark of appreciation, being appointed Queen's Champion to Ilsa, for whom I had fought in Crown Tourney from 1984-86. I still wear her favor with pride (and her permission).



I have always maintained that the best award is not a scroll but a *role*, and of this one I took full advantage. I was delighted when TRMs invited me to join them at Ice Dragon March 9 where negotiations were held for the upcoming Pennsic.

Middle Kingdom had not begun to consider bringing in Rapier, but as an experienced fencer I had authorized in it at Pennsic 1989. So I brought both armor and rapier gear.

My duties were to show our colors as proudly as possible, and while I did not win the rattan tourney, I was assured I would not be forgotten by my Eastern opponents.

Then I turned to the Rapier event, which was well along. Taking advantage of the royal surcoat, I laid a challenge to the top three finishers to bouts of five valid hits each.

I was able to dispatch all three with so much room to spare that they made me a special trophy I have always kept, containing some old coins. Thus I may be the only person to have championed a Midrealm sovereign with both rattan and rapier.

Dag and Ilsa were pleased. In a later reign Dag got me involved in the inauguration of rapier in the Middle Kingdom.





*L to R: Elunnyd (Lynn Jones), Elena (Maria Schumacher) as "the duchess" and Bridget.*

## Michigan Renaissance Festival 1991

SCA Presentations, Sept 7 & 8, 14 & 15

This was my second time running this demo. Due to the war and my work schedule, recruitment was late and local. Contact was made to other groups but only one person came from beyond Cynnabar.

My notes don't mention planning meetings although there are notes about script-writers in the narrative. My recollection is that the overall plan was mine, reinforced by input from the Festival's directors. For instance, I had seen the training curriculum for regular festival performers.

The first weekend, we had our display booth like last year, *plus* two 1-hour list-field performances per day were to simulate a late period passage of arms in honor of the Duchess' birthday. The second weekend was "booth only."

Combat was period style, with no acting out of wounds or death, resulting in many more minutes per hour per "knight" of hard, nonstop battle than in regular SCA tourney combat. This placed a heavy burden on the fighters who performed, and they carried it with valiant determination and uncomplaining grace.

In my report, I said "the way everyone worked together for the success of the enterprise reminded me of Cynnabar's early days more than anything in the past 5 years."

**Throckmorton** - delivered the shire's pavilion just in time. **Kieran Grey (Kevin Janka)** - helped with the display booth Saturday and was drafted to play a marshal in the combat demo. **Arielle de Pontoise (Natalie Henderson)** - helped plan the demo, put in a day in the booth. **Elunnyd (Lynn Jones)** - helped out all day Sunday, at booth and list field, carrying water and helping with armor and whatever else was needed. **Midair (Charles Cohen)** - came and heralded Saturday afternoon combats. Helped entertain with his energy and good humor all who came by. **Gerhardt von Eisenherz** - Although he could not be present, loaned his pavilion, chainmail shirt, and weapons to be used at the tourney. **Danielle** - helped with the display booth Saturday, staying to close up



*John Vernier (Guichart de Chadenac) demonstrating armor at the Renaissance Festival booth.*

and secure all the displays for the night so that the “morning crew” could go home and recover for the next day’s exertions. **Mistress Kay** of Triastrium - brought artifacts to display, then anchored the display booth all day Sunday with matchless cheer and unerring knowledge. **Guichart** - helped plan the demo, then brought 2 tons of armoring equipment, set it up and demonstrated for two days. The quality of his display and his knowledge provided the craft booth with enormous credibility. He also helped set up and decorate the SCA booth & list field. **Juliana Fairfax** (Laura Christian) - in between Our Lady’s Madrigal Singers performances, played harp and recorder virtually all day both days. **Aeesha** - helped plan the demo, recruited the recorder ensemble, performed Sat. & Sun.

**Syr Aldric** - came with recorders and led the consort in most excellent musicmaking in the booth all day Saturday and Sunday. A strong material contribution to our credibility.

**Julie Pierce**, a Northwoods member - performed with the recorder consort both days. **Aelfric** (Chuck Shefferly) - came and fought valiantly all day Sunday.

**Elena** (Maria Schumacher) - loaned her pavilion, helped load cargo and do setup Friday. Then she helped clean my armor til 2 in the morning. A few hours later, she helped load pavilions in the van and complete the setup Saturday morning, performed in all four performances, helped take down the lists Sunday night, and worked what was left of the weekend in between.

**Sir Dag** - Helped set up Friday night & Saturday morning, loaned many valuable props,



*Kieran (L) marshals. Daibhid kneels. Audience looks. The shield bears my device before Aureliane taught me what was good heraldry and what was not.*

filled in the sketchy script ideas provided, then performed nobly in all four performances, helped take down Sunday night. Without a murmur, he passed up the opportunity to fight in any of the performances, in spite of having worked on his armor just in case. He and Ilsa also loaned one of the nicer scrolls seen here in a while for display.



*Daniel at work*

**Countess Ilsa** - loaned her Coronation dress for display, performed nobly on Saturday (having other engagements for Sunday) and helped regale the audiences in booth and list field.

**Duke Eliahu** - After working on his armor all night Friday night, came and loaned artifacts for display, helped set up booth and list field, performed in all four combat performances to the point of exhaustion (recovering each day sufficiently to regale our audiences with SCA lore). After all this, he stayed to the end Sunday night picking up and packing the list field.

**Daniel** (Tim McDaniel) - helped load a ton of stuff Friday night, drove to the site and helped set up the two booths and list field, then helped organize the combats, and heralded for two performances of same. Saturday, went off at his own expense to get copies of the flyers we hadn’t gotten in advance, also most generously procured drinkables for all. Sunday, he helped pick up and load to the last stick, and throughout the weekend, tirelessly, patiently, did everything else that was asked or even hinted at. He repeatedly foresaw things that would need to be done to stave off later disasters and materially contributed to the success of the enterprise.

**Teleri** (Sharon Spanogle) - helped with the crafts booth Saturday, talking with visitors and demonstrating.

**Sir Wolfgang** - Came, saw, conquered. Helped set up Saturday morning, then came to the field with shining armor and a light in his eyes, performed many feats of valor upon his adversaries and came off victor. Wolfie was also



*This 2-page photo is a temporary placeholder until more 1991 pictures come to the surface. The undated slide shows Cynnabar's army in the front line of a Pennsic field battle just about to begin. It's probably from before Calontir broke away to form a new kingdom, since they are the troops in purple surcoats.*

unstinting in his assistance to others wherever needed. **Bridget** – came and inspired Wolfie to new heights.

### **The Ren Faire jousters**

In the past, the horse jousters we had encountered at the RenFest had exhibited little interest in the SCA. They lived in a different world with a low opinion of the SCA. But once Cynnabar started doing the Michigan RenFest demos, we saw change. Young Sam Brafford, who became known as **Hawk**, joined us between our first and second years there.

Although deeply involved in the horse jousting, he came to our rescue repeatedly, literally running, half in armor, from one end of the Festival to the other to get from their performance to ours or vice versa. His sacrifice of time and energy, by adding one more fighter each time, made it possible for the few other combatants to make it through the hours of combat performance. Then, when an unexpectedly hard rain threatened the cloth stone wall backdrop in the booth (he was camping there), he took it down and stowed it.

Another jousting partner who usually exceeded the Michigan RenFest jousts, came by while Guichart was demonstrating armor making. So impressed was he that he bought Guichart's entire harness to use in jousting. He also ended up joining the SCA and became my favorite outrageous-demo partner. After several changes of name (Kieran

was the one I remember he used longest) he is now (2018, per Facebook) **Sir Chulainn**. His House Leonthas, including several Gulf War vets like himself, emphasized period-correct, mirror-bright armor and the courage and courtesy to match.

I, in addition to organizing and designing, helped transport, set up and take down equipment, provided some weapon and calligraphy items for display, fought in the four combat performances, and spoke to visitors in the booth.

I see I've just spent two pages on "just a demo" (most of it just the first weekend!) Well, it was a lot more than that to me. The list of names I've given here, of people who worked hard side by side for no particular glory but that of the SCA itself, includes *most of the same people* who only six months before were on either side of Cynnabar's bitterest internal conflict.

### **The grand finale**

The passage of arms was scripted as a small gathering in honor of a duchess we provided, played by Elena. Sir Dag played the duke, wearing the outfit made by Melisande for me to play the duke in our Elizabethan Wassails.

Our combatants emerged two at a time from arming pavilions and met with savage fury in the center of the field. The audience loved it. We used period marshaling style and played with some of the grand themes.



What we script-writers were unaware of was that Wolfie was going to win it all that day. We asked for powerful fighting, but he swept us off the field like so many barley-straws. The prize he was after was the grand moment at the end when he asked for the hand of a lady of the court (*Bridget*).

**He wasn't acting.** He proposed, for real, as the climax of our demo. (I think she accepted.)

The Renaissance Festival organizers were quite pleased. On Monday I got a call offering us a drink concession booth to run the following weekend, *with a share of the profits*. I can tell you from personal experience that it was a tough and thankless task, but a valuable experience. Toni Kennedy came to the front, having had some experience of the sort, and put in two very grueling days on our behalf. She was assisted by Tim McDaniel and Brad Grupczynski among others. Tim did a detailed writeup on the process and how to keep it efficient and profitable in the unlikely event of our *ever* wanting to repeat the experiment.

The booth netted the group over \$400. I took pains to communicate that the total effort of the demo was what earned it.

The irony was that we took this demo on because the Renaissance Festival would not give the previous group money. Without asking (but not, it must be said, without hard work), the Festival ended by getting money to us.

That may have given me an undeserved reputation as a deal-maker, but Cynnabar's *deserved* reputation just continued to grow.

### **Avis Farms Demo**

October 12. We were recruited by *Cirion the Lefthanded* (Chuck Lauer) to do a 1-hour demo at the Annual Avis Farms party, this year called a Fall Festival. Cirion (remember? –the guy that got me into this organization in the first place?) was an architect living in Lansing and hitting maybe three events a year.

Warren Avis, the founder of Avis Rent-a-Car, kept his jumping horses at his South State Road farm, part of which is now the business park. So the riders among us --Sam and Teri Brafford, Cirion and Elunnyd (Lynn Jones) got to gallop about. Guichart, Hawk (Sam), Cirion and I demo'd combat all we could. (These are recorded facts, of which I have *no memory*.)

There was a donation to the shire. The plan to set up an archery range at that site never quite got done.

### **Share-it-age 1991, October**

This annual educational festival had been on hiatus for lack of funds, but I welcomed it back. Hal Taylor, a teacher at Lincoln Consolidated Schools south of Ypsilanti, had put together this annual extravaganza of airplanes, steam tractors, fire engines, military vehicles, and people to demonstrate them for years. We were just another strange and wonderful thing for the 2,000 students to discover.

It being a Friday, all-day thing, we seldom had many people there. Records don't show who showed, but I'd put money on Beorthwine, and Guichart was pretty regular too. Gerhart had to skip the Ren Faire so may have done this one.

## 1992– A.S. XXVI (26)

In 1992, the shire's average attendance at meetings hit 50. They are still at the EECS building, in room 1311. The meetings themselves had evolved somewhat since my time, but settled into this sort of schedule:

7:00 p. m. Workshop

8:00 p.m. Break, questions, time to put the next week's schedule of meetings on the blackboard, chat in the hall, prepare announcements.

8:15 Information meeting. All who can are asked to put their meeting announcements in writing on the blackboard, and refrain from unnecessary consumption of meeting time. We still have a couple of members who seem to feel that making an announcement every week is the only thing that keeps them alive. Our tolerance of this varies.

Me? Well . . . since I'm demo chair, I frequently have something to relate, but what with this and that, I seem to have a permanent spot on the "people with announcements" list.

We still have Shire Council, the name changed during this year from Privy Council, because people blamed lack of attendance on the picturesque and period-sounding name. It still makes the tough decisions, and David Mac Dougal still takes detailed minutes, which usually get published in the Citadel. Each year we get a little more systematic with this, and each year we have some major discussion about how decisions get made, and some minor change gets made in the process.

### Regular Weekly Activities

We didn't do this for 1991, so we'll get a bit more detailed this time.

- Arms Practice, usually at the Student Theatre Arts Complex, usually referred to as STAC. We are, after all, the Society for Creative Acronyms, and we are getting a lot of them lately. Sir Dag is once again Knights' Marshal, and has a part-time job at STAC. This gives him access to a substantial theatrical woodworking shop,

and a bit of armoring goes on there. Let me be clear, however, that the shire paid a regular fee for its use of a rehearsal hall there.

- Archery Practice at Washtenaw Sportmen's Club, where Archer Captain/Marshal *Alexander MacIntosh of Islay* (Dan Jarrell) has a membership.

- Bedlam Players, usually Tuesdays at the home of a member. At the end of '91, it was being co-ordinated by *Daniel de Lincoln* (Tim McDaniel).

- Institute for Medieval Arts and Sciences. That's the new name for the independent and unofficial workshop being rented in the Performance Network complex. It's the very same shop, technically non-SCA, but every single member is an SCA member, and nearly all the projects there are SCA projects. Its doings are regularly announced at our meetings, and Cynnabar members are still welcome to look in on Wednesday nights.

- Heraldic Commenting. Mistress Aureliane is still conducting her weekly commenting sessions on whatever Laurel Letter of Intent is in circulation. The sessions double as book-herald training. Held at the home Aureliane and I share on Lohr Road.

- Middle Eastern Dance is taught now and then by Lady *Findabhair* (Laura Frederick). These usually take place on the same day as,



Clancy Day : HRM Lisa (with HRM Comar) convenes Pelicans.

and in the next room from, the Arms practice.

### Other Officers

- **Seneschal:** Mistress *Kay of Triasterium* (Kay Jarrell) took over from Deirdre in late September. Kay was part of the old Dierne Ansilet group in 1978-9. A Companion of the Order of the Laurel, Kay was inactive for several years before returning, recently, as a Cynnabar member. A fountain of good cheer and common sense, she is an obvious choice for seneschal.

- **Castellan** was Gunnbjorn Gunnarsson (Michael Rosecrans)

- **Chirurgion** was Sir Wolfgang (Kevin Galbraith), whose attendance has slackened lately. For clues, see last year's Ren Fest report. However, Lady **Hallfrithr Throndrsdottir** (Chris McHenry) has been very active at Pennsic Chirurgion's point and was elevated to Master Chirurgion this year. "Halla" is a doctoral student in some medical area.

- **Chronicler** was *Tânwen a Teviotdale* (Glenda Andre).

- **Exchequer** was *Countess Ilsa von Westfal* (Liisa Mazzaro), who abandoned her mundane career in food services to take up banking. Until Fall Crown, which Dag won, which made her a Princess again, which means the office will be taken up by *Midair Mac Cormac* (Chuck Cohen) in January '93.

- **Minister of Arts and Sciences** is still Danielle nic Chonn (Dana McEvoy).

### Event in 1992

#### Tournoi au Coeur de Printemps

This "Tourney at the heart of Spring" was our answer to the King Rene Tournoi in Nordskogen held the previous fall. To be clear, it was not so much an imitation as a project on parallel lines. Here and there in the SCA, certain chivalrically-minded people had been research-



*The lists at Tournoi. You can see the miniature shields of the Tenans set up for challenges, and a good view of the Cynnabar List Enclosure. Elayna Lilley was in charge of site decor.*

ing period tourneys and talking them up (now that we've been doing it by guess and by gosh for twenty-five years).

Contact with people like Dr. Jeffrey Singman, a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies, who has been on the way out of the SCA for years, had confirmed many beliefs I had been forming independently about the possibilities in period-style events, and with Tournoi au Coeur de Printemps they came to bloom.

For the sake of a slightly less-biased view, I quote from Mistress Kay of Triasterium in her Domesday Report:

"The Annual Spring event held April 18 had a theme of courtly love in the high middle ages. Baron Daibhid "Ruadh" MacLachlan was Event Co-ordinator (autocrat). It was very successful both in the shire's opinion and that of the attendees. We had a net profit of \$600 on the feast and site rental, but are still contesting the decision of the site owners not to return our security deposit. Activities included a combat with a special Team Challenge, a feast of which I was proud to be co-

chef with Osion Diarmedd D'Argentium (Mark Brown), merchanting, a well-received Court of Love organized by David mac Dougal presided over by HRM Queen Lisa, a performance by the Bedlam Players, Royal Court, including the knighting of our own Sir Gerhard, and a revel with dancing that ran well into the night."

She also mentioned the cartels (challenges) presented at courts at several earlier events by our knights, inviting them to take on our "Tenans."

Because Dag insisted that a Baron had no martial status I could not be part of the venans. I mentioned this in a conversation with Sir Thorvald, a knight of my close acquaintance I greatly respected, and he offered to make me his squire to satisfy this rule. I still wear that red belt.

We set up our shields to be struck by the Venans in challenge. You could choose combat with a Duke, a Count, a Knight, or a Squire, and earn points according to which you fought



*The Court of Love in progress at Tournoi. Queen Lisa presides (left). The blur to the right of her is David mac Dougal, who really conducted it. Seated, in armor, is Count Thorvald the Golden. Foreground, right, his back to us, is Capdaio (Richard Vernier).*

as well as the outcome. Encounters were fought in counted blows, the number to be agreed on between each set of combatants.

Many chose, for instance, “Seven Blows, one for each of the seven Virtues.” Many chose to disregard any blow not landing on head or body. There was an option to fight in standard SCA wound-and-kill currency, but few did so.

Lady Elena Lilley (Maria Schumacher) co-ordinated the site decor for this event. She acquired an acre or so of red, white, and black cloth and made huge wall coverings in Cynnabar colors (shown on the previous page). She and her crew made more banners in a generally-heraldic style and the hall was really aglow.

Sir Corwin, one of the ringleaders of the Nordskogen “King René” Tournoi, came, enjoyed, and told me that their people look on Cynnabar events as the standard to try to equal, and that this present one was one of the most enjoyable he had ever attended.

**BUT...** this was the last SCA event in the Saline Farm Council Grounds for years to come. They (Stan Poet) did indeed withhold our site fee and declined to consider any additional events. The ostensible reasons were damage to the floor and unauthorized use of the floor buffer.

My own errors in judgment led to both of these problems.

With the perspective of time, it is clear that Stan and his council simply did not want to rent to non-profit groups like us when they could —and do— get several times



*The Crowned “A”, symbol of “Amor” was suggested as an event site token for Tournoi by Mistress Aureliane. She procured the metal version for the first Tournoi. The ceramic ones were crafted by another member for the second Tournoi, a subject for a later history.*

#### Awards at other events:

- Aylwin the Traveler: A. o. A.
- Throckmorton the Upholstered: Purple Fret

#### Luminaries

In her Domesday report, Mistress Kay offered a “VIP” list, which kinda corresponds to my Very Involved Person list quoted in my 1989 report. Hers is a little different, but shows the kind of peer-power our little non-barony has. These are all people active in the group’s affairs in this year.

- HRH Sir Dag Thorgrimsson, Earl/Prince
- HRH Ilsa von Westfal, Countess/Princess
- Duke Sir Eliahu ben Itzhak, OP, Bn/Ct.
- Sir Aldric Northmark, OL
- Mistress Kay of Triasterium, OL
- Count Sir Thorvald the Golden



*Lady Elayna as a demo duchess. The hat is borrowed, but the rest isn't.*

as much money from events like the Flower and Garden Show.

#### Awards at Tournoi:

Award of Arms:

- Midair the Juggler
- Tamara of Cynnabar
- Aoidhne Mora
- Fiachra Machir Sionnac
- Hawk with Broken Heart
- Seamus Padraiggin O’hlcaedhe

Purple Fret:

- Oscad de Segovia
- Ute von Munchen
- Cormac mac Eoghan
- Deirdre Colintree
- Estrella de Trinite

- Countess Branwyn  
Corbeaublanc
- Mistress Claire of  
Lynnwood Keep, Bns/Ct.
- Msris Siobhan O'Rourke,  
OP
- Msris Aureliane  
Rioghail, OP, OL,  
Baroness of Court, Ave  
Herald Extraordinary
- Msris Fiona Goodburne  
MacNichol, OL
- Sir Johann Wolfgang aus  
Goldenherz,
- Sir Gerhard von  
Eisenherz
- Daibhid "ruadh"  
MacLachlan, Baron/Ct.

Kay is not specific about the activities of these people. Some of them really deserve specifics, but at the moment I really have to add to this list, of which only one is not a peer.

- Lady Elena Lilley has really gotten active, particularly with fabric arts and the making of events more grandly medieval. It's my bias, of course, to recognize such, but her costuming is really coming along (photo previous page).

- Lady *Findabhair ni Ealasaid* (Laura Frederick) —cheerful, personable teacher of Middle Eastern dance does not attend a lot of meetings, but quietly brings a somewhat scholarly flavor as **Editor** of the SCA's main publication, **Tournaments Illuminated**. In one issue is a fine article on medieval tournaments by Will McLean and a short one on persona by me. A peer? no.

- **David mac Dougal (David Craig)** Sure, David has been my best friend for well over a decade, but it's clear to me that he is also the shire's best friend. Yes, he is a keen student of heraldry. Yes, he supports period research and



Cover art © 1992 by Daibhid Ruadh MacLachlan (David S. Hoornstra, your not-too-humble author) for an issue of *Tournaments Illuminated*, published probably in 1992 (my copy is missing). The inspiration was Stokesay castle's great hall, a Tudor place. This drawing tried to portray how Stokesay might have looked when set for a feast, and also reflects my dream for a permanent SCA facility for a Cynnabar-size group.

its use in our events. He brings Courtly Love to life, not only with his culled readings and careful explanations not only to performers in demos, but, at Tournoi, before the Queen of the realm.

David Craig does the tough things, and I don't just mean research. He speaks up for honor and clear thought when it is least likely to win smiles, and keeps us on the straight course when we'd rather just let it go because we're feeling the heat of peer pressure. And don't think he lets *me* off the hook.

After years of such service, David has an

Award of Arms this year.

• *Rigaut de Veilhac, also known as Capdaio* is **Richard Vernier**, a recently retired Professor of Romance Languages at Wayne State. A warm and engaging fellow, he is pursuing medieval instruments such as the veille. He sits quietly in our meetings and attends occasional events, and assists whoever knows enough to ask. He is father to John and Stephan Vernier (*Guichart and Aimeric*).

### Demos in 1992 (section from Mrsis Kay)

Demo activity continued at a slower pace this year as part of a several-year decline. Minor demo requests are up, but we have had a hard time satisfying the requests for weekdays and weekday evenings. The cub scouts have discovered us, as three years ago did the middle schools. The continuing absence of the Ann Arbor Medieval Festival these past three years cuts into our Ann Arbor presence.

Revenue from demos continues low (\$350 on the year) corresponding to the small-scale nature of the demand. The quality of our demos, however, continues to improve.

#### • Field Elementary School

Canton, Michigan, a town east of Ann Arbor, January 16th, 6-8 pm. Duke Eliahu and Baron Daibhid MacLachlan provided the combat demo; Baroness Claire taught the dance segment to her Gifted and Talented students. There was a \$50.00 donation to the shire.

#### • Share-it-Age Festival Participation

May 29, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Ypsilanti, Michigan. The event returned to spring this year, bringing military, medieval, and technological life from different ages to life for about 2,000 elementary school children. Cynnabar set up a pavilion and demonstrated combat for most of this Friday, with about 8 participants total to stem a veritable tide of interested youth.

The Festival donated \$200 to the Shire.

#### • Camp Munhackie Cub Scout demo June 26.

Baron Daibhid and Lord Gunnbjorn demonstrated armor and combat for two crowds of 100 scouts each during an afternoon at a camp 20 miles from Ann Arbor.

#### • St. Joseph's Church Summer Fun Festival



Dexter, Michigan, Sunday July 19, 1-4 pm. We set up the shire pavilion and a modest set of barriers on the church grounds in costume to do whatever we could to entertain, inform, and/or amuse the guests. That included combat by Sir Dag and Baron Daibhid (above) and a limited amount of music. A modest display of artifacts was shown. We found out rather too late that combat was *not* what one of the major directors had in mind. Still, \$100 was donated.

#### • Michigan Renaissance Festival

August 22-23, August 29-30, September 12-13. This is the second year Cynnabar has sponsored this demo under the co-ordination of Baron Daibhid, who is in his third year of arranging this demo for the SCA. This year the demo expanded to three weekends.

New this year was a Court of Love, researched and co-ordinated by *David mac Dougal* (David Craig). Little scrolls with intriguing questions on the topic of courtly love were devised for the edification of the audience and handed round by our lords and ladies. They were received very enthusiastically.

Participation in this year's demo was up on all fronts, including musicians playing all day on the third weekend. A total of 39 people, including 3 non-local, participated. The combat featured eight high-quality combatants including 2 knights, a count and a duke. The intensity and degree of audience involvement reached a new high.

Attendance at the festival during one of the weekends was reported at 24,000 visitors.

- **Festifall** University of Michigan campus, September 25; the annual student activity/organization fair. As a student organization, we reserved two tables and had a good physical display as well as excellent welcomers at the booth all day.

- **Cub Scout demo**

Nov 19 at an unnamed elementary school. Lord Oscad (Robert Esteves, in the process of becoming a teacher) ran the demo, which was all but cancelled due to no



*Ysolde of Summerhall (Debora St. James) Seneschal of the Shire of Blackhawk. I (David/Daibhid) carried her favor in the lists 1982-84.*

volunteer signups.

## **Dag and Ilsa Royals again**

Fall Crown Tourney was held just up the road at Stormvale (Flint, MI). I (David) arrived in time to see Sir Dag emerge into the parking lot to cool off just after winning the hotly-contested last two rounds.

This being our fourth time around, the shire didn't get too excited. Dag and Ilsa had cemented some pretty good alliances, and we knew they would get plenty of help from beyond Cynnabar.

## **Wassail!**

Our annual December shire Wassail was moved to the Grange Hall to accommodate the friends of Cynnabar members we tend to wish to invite. Attendance: 92 people including beyond the shire.



*The Ionia, MI chapter (Three Walls) was fortunate to have access to Bertha Brock Park and its wood-and-stone pavilion. This feast was during Eli & Elen's first reign. The court that night was sheer magic. It was not as hard then to find a site that permitted candlelight, but unheard of to get two big working fireplaces! For me, this was the ideal, but not everyone in Cynnabar, let alone the SCA, agreed.*

## 1993 – A.S. XXVII (27)

The year started pretty up-beat, with much planning for Dag and Ilsa's second Coronation. Since Roaring Wastes would handle the event, we could concentrate on a few details to make the thing grander.

The shire's operation continued much as it had in 1992, except for one thing: for the first time in over a decade, Cynnabar did not hold a major event. We did sponsor a Musician's Day organized by the Sir Aldric on behalf of the Northwoods Consort, but no tourney and a turnout of about sixty.

In the aftermath of the 1990 roadblock in our progress towards barony status, we had been working to create more shire unity and more younger-member involvement in offices and leadership.

**New officers** this year included:

- *Midair the Juggler* (Chuck Cohen) became our new Treasurer.

- I, *Daibhid "ruadh" MacLachlan* (David S. Hoornstra) became the Chronicler (not to be

confused with Historian, which at that time we didn't have) about halfway through the year due to life getting in the way of the previous chronicler's SCA participation. As a print media designer as well as a former journalism major and college-paper editor, I took full advantage of the chance to raise the bar.

- *Arianna* (Marilee Lloyd) became the Minister of Arts. She is an architect at the University.

- *Milovana* (Jim Davison, Andre de la Soie's younger brother) became our Castellan. Jim is a technophile, but not to the degree that Midair is.

- *Rustan Langschritt* (Mark Galliver) became our Pursuivant. He is relatively new to the shire; a computer person of sorts. (But aren't most of us, now?)

### Trends and activities

While Baroness Kay's Domesday report was upbeat about the year and its progress, I don't believe most of the older members thought we were doing all that well. Some responded by looking beyond the group, to the kingdom level for their personal growth and reward.

*Beorthwine of Grafham Wood* (David Corliss) became Midrealm Minister of Sciences this year, and we thought him perfect for the job in some ways. He seemed to be coming into his own too as an instructor at Wayne State University.

As king, Dag gave me an opportunity to help steer the Midrealm's almost-inevitable acceptance of rapier fencing by getting me involved in the planning process.

Claire and Eli had been playing on the SCA-wide stage for some time now, and there was little change in that area. Claire was Michigan Regional Exchequer. *Master Ranthulfr Asparlundr* was Michigan Regional Laurel Secretary. Sir Wolfie was Regional Marshal. *Mistress Dulcinea* was Michigan Regent for the Royal University of Midrealm. And *Alexander Macintosh of Islay* was Michigan Regional Archery Marshal.

On the local level, we held quarterly revels, usually at the Byrd Chapel next to my backyard, and these were well received. They helped

### Notables passing through

We have been enriched by mobile nobles. Some came for work; most for graduate school.

Sir Aldric and Mistress Siobhan, long of Northwoods, were well-established when they moved here about 1990. Sir Aldric had taught fighting arts here in '78-80, and Siobhan had been supportive to us, especially during her time as Kingdom Chronicler, but also as Society Chronicler. They moved to the West in 1994.

Mistress Aureliane Rioghail, Ave Herald Extraordinary, came for grad school in 1987. She had been founding Baroness of the Steppes in Ansteorra, inaugurator of the annual Lion Tourney still going on there, and had served twice as Star Principal Herald – once for the Principality, once for the kingdom. She enriched our heraldic life greatly over her six years here.

Count Sir Thorvald the Golden came for grad school with his Countess Branwyn, who served as our Chatelaine for a term. They were the second set of crowned heads of Calontir. I became his squire in 1992. In 1997, he completed his PhD and took a teaching job in Indiana.

us get to know the newer people. I should say they helped most members do so, for I was struggling with life and, being chronicler notwithstanding, my involvement with the chapter hit an all-time low.

Aureliane's influence towards more heraldic display was taking serious root. Cynnabar already had acres of wall hangings to decorate event sites, but now, spurred in part by the



*Dag and Ilsa  
preside at  
court  
in their  
heraldic  
outfits*

upcoming coronation, individuals were beginning to make heraldic outfits and trappings. Princess Ilsa, who in the past three years had really come on as a seamstress, took it up with a vengeance.

### **Coronation**

Several Cynnabar members were involved in Dag and Ilsa's second coronation. Aureliane and Elena were part of a trio performing Ilsa's processional music, based on a well-known play about mermaids. Several of us were part of the ring-mailed guard that marched in with Dag. Mine was 100-year-old 100% riveted iron. And some built a palanquin carried by four men, on which Ilsa rode in standing.

There was much Cynnabar sewing done, not only for coronation but for royal clothing for the reign, including armorial garments for each. Dag and Ilsa both did a lot of this work themselves.



### **Events**

(from Mistress Kay's Domesday report)

**Shire Revel:** April 23. A dessert revel was sponsored by our Arts and Sciences office at the Byrd Chapel. Dancing ensued and lasted late.

**Shire Revel:** June 11. We met at the Heidelberg restaurant's upper hall as an experiment in using public space. The theme was that we were

### **A Royal project for Pennsic**

(from Mistress Kay's Domesday report)

Our big group project this year was to create the decorations that were used for their Majesty's State Dinner at Pennsic War. A dedicated core group organized the designing, sewing and painting of a baldric, tabard and table runner/banner for each of the 13 kingdoms and the two branches of the Dark Horde. We handed the painting of arms and badges out to many members of the shire.

Their Majesties were pleased with our results, as were the guests, who took home new sets of retainer regalia as a result of this project. We are particularly proud of the fact that His Outlandish Majesty was so taken with his server's tabard that he took it to wear in the next day's field battle.

This project was done at the suggestion of their Majesties as a replacement for our traditional donation of 10% of our treasury to the Royal Travel Fund. All monies were contributed by the organizers and participants.

all travelers stopping to eat at the Blasted Tower Inn. Advantages: no cleanup, food from kitchen was ordered and served by our costumed “tavern wenches” (giving us each the meal of our choice, within each member’s means,) and good atmosphere and decor. Disadvantages: not accessible to our wheel-chair using member, or to some not able to climb stairs easily. We decided to try other sites before doing it there again.

**Musician’s Day:** July 17. The Shire supported House Northmark, Sir Aldric and Mistress Sioban as hosts of this long-running special interest symposium. Classes on vocal and instrumental music, dance, and music composition were held at the First Methodist Church of Saline, Michigan, with a revel and performances in the evening. We just about broke even, with a \$14.00 loss due to a smaller than anticipated turnout. This event was advertised in the Pale. Attendance was approximately 60. No Court was held.

**Shire Revel:** Oct. 22 saw another in our series of local gatherings. We were at the Byrd Chapel (below), and the theme was travelers over-nighting at the hall of the local Lord and Lady on their way to the Great Crown Tournament. An auction of lost and found, old shire property, and donated items netted over \$300!

**Shire Revel:** We gathered again at Byrd Chapel (photo below) for a revel on the Blasted

Tower Inn theme on Nov. 5th. Stew was prepared for the “travelers” by a team of organizers, and desserts were brought by the guests.

**Wassail Feast and Revel:** On December 18, a potluck feast was held at the Pittsfield Grange Hall in Ann Arbor. Nearly 90 attended, both old members and folks joining us for their first “in costume” event. After a widely varied and delicious buffet service, Bean Cakes were passed for the ladies and gentlemen, and a Lord and Lady of Misrule selected by Fortune. After Court, Dancing and socializing continued until the wee hours.

### Awards and Honors

*At Twelfth Night, Northwoods, January 16:*

- Francesca Maria Lucia Angelina Agnelli (Karen Berwald) - Arms -
- Daniel de Lincoln (Tim McDaniel) - Arms
- Guichart de Chadenac (John Vernier) - Laurel

*At Border Wars, Rimsholt June 26:*

- Magdalena Vogelsang (Debora YanHeyingen) - Arms -
- Alina of Cynnabar (Elaine Prather) - Arms
- Annachle mac Feidhlimidh - Arms
- Eachan de Baarde (Tim Baird) - Arms

*At Coronation October 2:*

- Dag Szartavargr Thorgrimsson (Jeff



Skevington) - Duke

- Lisa von Westfal ( Liisa Mazzaro) - Duchess

*At other events:*

- Kay of Triasterium (Kay Jarrell) - Purple Fret  
- at Tiger Hunt, Hawkland Moor July 10
- Alexander Macintosh of Islay (Dan Jarrell)  
- Arms - at Pennsic Middle Kingdom Court  
August 18
- Gwendolyn of the Micmacs (Gwen Missavage)  
- Arms - February 20

### More to come

The history of the Shire is not complete. I plan to finish this up to 1996. Also, I promised a summation of the contributions to the SCA made by the group in its seventeen years as a shire. That will have to wait until the next update. This one's going on the web in August 2019.

David S. Hoornstra (*Daibhid MacLachlan*)

*Cynnabar War team 1988*



### NOTE II: THE SAGA CONTINUES

In 2018 Baronial Historian Elizabeth Calhoun asked me to collaborate on a similar history of Cynnabar's next phase. So watch this space, as they say, for the Next Generation.

**Next project:** Swordplay, art and history are three of my several avocations, but photography has always been a strong fourth or fifth. This book presents nearly 200 photos, mostly mine, but my files contain over 3000 SCA slides and maybe half as many negative-based photos never seen even on Cynnabar slide shows. Plus 5 x 5 and Hasselblad 2.25" transparencies. The best few hundred will be presented in *Cynnabar photos 1978- ?*, a sizeable downloadable pdf

book. It will include some descriptive and identification information for perspective just as in this book. (The title might end up more artsy.)

From that publication, individuals will be able to request higher-resolution images or prints. But, long in advance, I will provide for the privacy of those who do not want their recognizable images to be made available to others in that way.

David S. Hoornstra

