# Flower of Souvenance

letters for the falcons gentle.

VOL I #II NOVEMBER 1987

information for the lady fighter and others

# Letters From the Editor

Yes! It's November in January! No, not really. I have tried to get this out before now, but with the holidays, mundane concerns, and lack of information... Anyway, here it is! There's some good stuff in this one. Art and borders by Lady Orana Ki of Weatherhill, and some good cartoons by Galen of Wiltshire. I have another article from Sir Hilary of Serendip, an article from Duke Erin Breck Gordon, and a summary of a medical article graciously sent by Sir Fern. There is also an article from the Outlandish Yarl Freana, as well as an article by myself with some armoring ideas.

The next issue will be coming out in early February in time for the Atenveldt/Caid War at Estrella. In the next issue i will include a short write-up on the Order of the Oleander, for ladies who participate in the fighting at Estrella.

My normal printing schedual is; February, May, August, November. Just about anything you want to send is acceptable. I would even like to see personal ads to sell equipment, more poetry, war stories... I'm not picky! And, please remember, what you send doesn't have to be just for ladies. A number of lords read this as well. I have encouraged these, and any gentelmen, that they may send stuff in also. I can never have too much to print! Honestly!

My ads have appeared in almost every Kingdom newsletter, and for that I am extreamly greatful. A few have even run them more than one month in a row! An encouraging chronicler even exchanged ad space for a few subscriptions. To that gentel lord I am very greatful.

I have read a few books on women in Medieval history and some will have a review and a short summary in February's issue. I would suggest them for good, informative reading.

On another subject entirely, soon, (after February), I will be changing my legal name to Cymber Forrestal. (It's a long story.) Please, for future referance, subscriptions, and correspondence, make a note of it. The rate is still $6.00 for one year, (four issues). However, when you subscribe, please write me with the number of the issue you want it to begin with.

I hope you holidays were enjoyable. Thank you once again for your interest. I hope I will be hearing from you soon!

Lady Cymber of the Darkwater
c/o Kim Chase
303 South Gilpin
Denver, CO 80209

*Preferrably, submissions should be typed with a good black ribbon on white paper to fit a space 7"x11". All who send in submissions will recieve a free issue of the one which holds thier article.*

The Flower of Souvenance is an unofficial newsletter of the Society for Creative Anachronism. It is for those involved in combat and the art of warfare according to the Marshallate rules and regulations of the Society. This newsletter does not delineate the policies of the Society, or any of it's branches. Mearly opinions of some of it's members.

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# Origin of Title

Flower of Souvenance: A flower to serve as a reminder, a keepsake; sometimes a real flower, but sometimes an artificial one, made of jewels, to serve as an encouragement to, or the badge of, some knightly enterprise.

# Subscriptions!

## Cymber Says - Just Say Yes!

Feel like you're almost in over your head?

I may not know all the answers, but someone in this newsletter might have the answer to your questions. Read about it!
Four times a year, this large publication can be hand delivered to your mailbox for the ridiculasly low price of only-

**$6.00**

per year! That's right! Information from across the Known World will be at your fingertips! Ha! And if that's not good enough, I will personally throw in a free issue for just about any submission to this publication! (Especially ARTWORK!!!)
And if this didn't sound enough like a Ronco commercial, here's a special incentive...the regular cover price is $2.00 each. With your subscription, you will be saving 50 whole cents per issue.

Seriously, this newsletter is a excellent way to discuss problems, learn new ideas about armoring, or even costuming for on the field or off, corrospond with other fighters out of your area that you would like to ask questions of and learn from. I have recieved quite a bit of stuff in such a short period of time, and I believe it will continue, maybe I'll even get more!
In return for your money,(greatfully accepted, I assure you), you will receive a quality newsletter that you can have influence in.
This long-winded commercial is now at an end. Here's the stuff.....

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# Special Articles

NOTE: "HAGGARD" MEANS WILD-CAUGHT ADULT, AS CONTRASTED TO A HAWK TAKEN AS EYAS, BRANCHER OR PASSAGER (IT YEAR OUT OF NEST)



LATHAMS

# FALCONRY:

OR

The Faulcons Lure, and Cure:

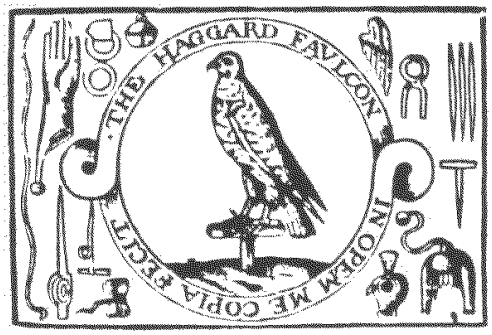
*IN TWO BOOKS.*

*The first, concerning the ordering and training up of all* Hawkes in generall, especially the HAGGARD FAVLCON GENTLE.

The second, teaching approued medicines for the cure *of all Diseases in them.*

Gathered by long practice and experience, and published for the *delight of noble mindes, and instruction of young Faulconers* in things pertaining to this Princely Art.

*By* SYMON LATHAM, *Gent.*




LONDON:
Printed by *Thomas Harper*, for *John Harison*, 1633.

## Lathams Faulconry.

### The first Booke.

### CHAP. I.

*A short Collection of the natures and names of Hawkes, but especially of the Haggard Faulcon.*

WHereas I remember in *Turbervile* his book of Hawking, amongst others of his collections, there is a description of seauen kindes of Faulcons, & for the franknesse of her metall and courage. He prefers the Faulcon gentle, as chiefe amongst them all: and also sets downe his reason why she is so called: which is as he affirmes, for her louing condition and behauiour to the man. Also he shewes that she is venturous and strong, and full of courage: able to brooke and endure all times and seasons, no weather doth come to her amisse, and so as from his Author, he giues her his absolute commendation and praise. The second as bee placeth her, is the Haggard Faulcon, otherwise

B 2 called

**This wonderful lady is one of the very talented in my area, the Barony of Caerthe. She is always performing acts from plays, sonnets, and epics. Unasked, but greatly appreciated, she has sent me an in-depth, and widely researched paper on one of this newsletter's trademarks. It turns out to be more appropriate for my purposes. Many thanks to this scholar of many talents.

In the premier issue of your publication for Ladies of the Sword, you refer to the "Falcon Gentle - The female or young Goshawk." May I be so bold as to suggest a correction?

The Falcon and the Goshawk are different species (and different genus) of the Raptor family. The Falcon is the sole species of the genus Falco; the subspecies Peregrine is Falco Pererinus. The Goshawk is of the genus Accipiter; the northern Goshawk is Accipiter Gentius. Falcons have long, pointed wings and dark, wide-set eyes. They are built for speed and open country, where they can wing up to great height, ("Pride of Place"), then swoop and strike their flying prey. The Goshawk, in contrast, has shorter, rounded wings and light, or red close-set eyes. It is best suited for manuvering in brush and woodland. It will fly with short bursts of speed, taking both aerial and earthbound prey. They are both handled and flown differently, and their handlers are differently named - Falconer and Austringer, or Ostringer.

The term "Gentle" is reserved for the Peregrine Falcon. This suspecies is found worldwide, and has since medival times been the most important and respected bird used for Falconry. In medieval Britain, the Lanner, Gyrfalcon, Hobby, Merlin, and Kestrel were also well known, and other exotic species occasionally used - all of

these being falcons. Modern America has the Gyr, in the Arctic, Peals, Peregrine and Prairie falcons, Merlin and Kestrel, (formerly, and incorrectly called Sparrow Hawk, however is no relation to the Sparrow Hawk of Britain which is an Accipiter).

One origin of the use of "Gentle" is found in Latham's falconry book which dates to 1633. And Turberville, whom he quotes, lived 1540 to 1610. Another suggestion with wide acceptance derives the term from the same root as "gentry" or "gentleman", relating to the idea that only a nobleman should fly the Peregrine. Dame Juliana Berners (1388 - 1485) in her Boke of St. Albans classified who can own which bird, from an Eagle for an Emperor to a Kestrel for a Knave, (commoner). On this list, Peregrine falcons were assigned to Princes and Barons.

As to Accipiters, the American subspecies are Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Sharp-Shinned Hawk. The species most commonly used by gentry in medieval Britain was the Gos. The much smaller Sparrow Hawk, (similar to the American Sharpshin), was assigned to the lower orders, with the little male (musket) for the Holywater Clerk.

In period, "Falcon Gentle" means, quite specifically, the female Peregrine Falcon; the male Peregrine is called "Tiercel", or "Tassle Gentle". See Shakespear's Romeo and Juliet. "Tiercel relates to the French for three, the male of most predatory birds, (Raptors), being approximately 1/3 smaller than the female. With all Hawks used for venery, the simple species name means the female; if the reference is to a male, it is either by use of a sex-specific name, (as "Tiercel" or "Musket"), or by full statement (as "Male Goshawk"). I have never seen a name for the male Gos; the word Goshawk alone denotes female.

The naming of young hawks is related more to stage of development than sex or species. "Eyas" being nestling, "Brancher" being a youngster scrambling or flapping from branch to branch, but not yet actually flying, etc.

Perhaps the term "Gentle" has been applied to a Goshawk by mistake, because the latin name for one of at least 14 subspecies, the northern Gos, is Accipiter Gentilis. I assure you that neither in period, nor in modern falconry is this correct. Indeed, the unmanned, or untrained Gos is the least "gentle" Hawk I have ever known. The manning of a Gos is reputed to be the most difficult task in "De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus" - the art of hunting with birds.

Lady Kyriel Outlands

Duke Erin Breck Gordon
Trimaris

On the topic of female fighters, I have fairly definite, (but always subject to change), ideas on training, weapon styles, and equipment.

As this could be long, I will touch on only one of these topics.

**Initial Training of the Fighter**

The begining training period of any athelete is often the most significant. Poor initial training will absolutely limit the end level of the fighter. Regardless of how good you eventually become, you will not be as good as you would have been without proper initial training.

To begin with, and I believe this is even more important to the female fighter, (especially with no prior athletic training), the new fighter should not be put in armor for several months. This pertains only to sparring situations, using armor to familiarize and for weight training is fine.

One of the worst training techniques is to put a new person in armor and let them start to spar. Not only will you lose a lot of neophytes, (especially if they get really beat up), but you will start them down the road to a ruined fighter.

New fighters should spend at least one session watching experienced fighters use all of the weapon styles, so they may choose which they prefer. There is nothing more frustrating than having some arrogent jerk tell you which weapon you must fight with.

I believe that for the average female fighter the glaive is ideal. However, if a 4'10" 100lb female, (and, by the way, I have one doing so now), wants to fight florentine, I wont stop her. A person will generally fight better with thier weapons choice, than with "a more effective" one they didn't like. This, of course, does not include physical hadicaps. That might preclude effective use of a particular weapon style.

When the choice has been made, the next step is pysical training.

A simple program of push ups, sit ups, light weights, and limbering excercises is an absolute must at the begining of each session.

At my practices we begin with light weights, the amount of the weight begins at each individual level. There are no set minimums, but the number of repetitions increase at each practice.

The same holds true for push ups. Even if you can only do ½ a push up, I you do that ½ several times every day, you will be doing one at next practice.

After the basic workout, my fighters then do chi-flow drills, but that is too advanced for the article. There wouldn't be enough space either.

When your fighters are warmed up, its time to pick up weapons and do slow drills. These repetitions are done to build muscle memory, and should not be done any faster than the fighter can do them flawlessly.

Although I consider perfect technique essential for all fighters, it is even more of an imperative for the smaller and less muscular, generally speaking, female. Ladies, you must make up for any lack of brute strength with speed and precision. All of your blows will need the use of the hips and legs, not just arm and shoulder as many males (incorrectly) do.

After your line drills, you proceed to the pell. The type I recommend is the tire pell. This requires two old tires, bias belts preferred. The first tire becomes the body, the second is cut in half. One half becomes the head, the other half is halved again and becomes the legs.

diagram

Tie the sections together with rope or wire so it looks like the diagram.

All blows that are learned should be done at least 25 times each at the first practice. Increase this by five at each subsequent session, until you reach about 100, that is a good maintanence level.

As to what blows to use and practice, that cannot be well described in print. Further information can be obtained by contacting me directly.

The blows commonly included in the basic Trimarian repetuior are the ratik, fishtail strike, pendulum, short wrap, scorpion, straight and cross snaps, hammer blow, moulenet, and several different thrusts. This is considered the basic beginners package of blows.

After several months of this regimen we go to armored work. Here the new fighter, who hopefully by now has her own properly fitting suit of armor, is ready to exchange blows. As I eluded to earlier, she should already be familiar with her armor and how it wears and moves. It should have been worn already for some of the drills, footwork, and pell work, (maybe 1/4 to 1/3 of the time).

Initially, the neophyte should fight with light contact, building slowly to full power. If this regimen is followed you will develop into a solid fighter.

Future articles will be done on specific weapon forms and styles, armor, melee combat, and tourney tactics.

Good luck to all of you in your fighting endeavor, and remember the most important thing; we fight for honor, chivalry, and the joy of combat. Never let anything change that, or convince you, as one very dishonorable person told me at last Pensics, "Victory will be our honor." Rather follow the philosophy of my knight, Sir Tetsuo, "You can win more by losing well, than by winning badly".

SO YOU WANT TO BE A FIGHTER - Master Freana Geardson, Jarl

The art of combat is very important in the SCA. It is often the first thing the mundane world sees, it chooses our rulers, and it provides the focus for most of our events.

I encourage everyone to learn about this honorable sport. I feel it is necessary to become familiar with fighting if one is to be an active member of our Society. This becoming familiar should include contact practice. Contact should be discouraged if someone had a serious medical problem.

As a Master of the Art, and a trainer of fighters, I would first determine at what level the trainee was to compete at. There are three levels which I will refer to. Each level is based on the attitude, desire and drive of the trainee and not to gender or physical size. The three levels are :

1. Introductory Fighter;
2. Recreational Fighter; and
3. Professional Fighter.

At the first level there are those who wish not to compete but to learn and experience what SCA combat is. This should be a requirement for all members. If this sounds like you, find a belted fighter and explain that this is your only aim. If your area does not have a belted fighter ask the most experienced fighter and carefully explain what help you would like to receive.

You should be led through the basic stance, movements, offense and defense, as well as armor construction standards, fighting conventions, and the chivalric code. This should be a serious study, though non-competitive, and should take four complete sessions, approximately three total hours. It is important that the sessions be short and spaced a week apart. In this way the muscles are not overly used, and the mind can concentrate and the body practice on a little knowledge each week. On the last day of your training, your trainer should arrange armor for you so that you may have a contact lesson. During this time the trainer will review what you have learned and then fight with you. The fighting could consist of one person on defense, the other offense and then reverse roles. After this contact review you will be able to spar with the trainer. The fighting must be slow and encouraging ( which is why an experienced fighter is recommended ) If your trainer contests full force all you will learn is that it hurts and you will be put in a situation where you will forget everything you were taught. Learning should be fun and enlightening.

To expand your knowledge you should assist in fighter training, apply yourself in watching the other fighters carefully, ask questions and be willing to answer questions put to you. Watching the tournaments and assisting the Heralds and Ministers of the Lists is also a good means to broaden your study. But once you have reached the contact stage, you should decide to continue with actual contact training or step back and not actively train. If fighting is for you, then you will continue your training at one of the other levels.

The next level of fighting desire is the recreational fighter. This person attends most fighter practices, enters some tournaments, and generally enjoys the sport. The training here begins the same as the first level but it continues where the first level stopped. First the fighter needs to get armored fast. It is too difficult to borrow for extended periods. This level should continue under the tutelage of the trainer until the fighter is comfortable and competitive in one weapon form. To achieve this level the fighter should attend at least a weekly practice. After that point training is not as regimented and comes from more people, often in the form of tips. The fighter learns new weapon forms and enters tournaments as interest dictates. But if there is a more intense desire to reach the limits of your own potential and you are dissatified with a strictly recreational approach you are ready for the next level.

The Professional Fighter is one who studies fighting, puts in many hours of practice, and who wishes to seriously compete. This level is not a skill level but an attitude. Though you will give of yourself to a high degree, it also does not mean that you avoid all else to concentrate on fighting. There is always time available to experience the full range of enjoyments the Society offers. One of my quips of wisdom has been 'If you dance well, you can fight well'.

One difference from the recreational schedule is you have to be on a faster track. Practice should be at least twice a week and you have to be thinking about fighting almost every day. This fast track will still take about two years before you feel truely capable. Remember that you should never stop learning and that you can improve year after year. You need to stay with your primary trainer until you are comfortable and competitive. At that point you need to get a secondary trainer who will train you from scratch, so that you learn another style. Never contradict your trainers by saying "Sir George does not teach it that way". You are there to learn from both people and then combine them into your own style. Try different weapons when you learn. This helps you to have a larger offensive style, learn about weapons that will be used against you, and also expands your imagination by freeing the body and mind from being trapped in one style.

Practice is not the only way to learn. When you begin fighting in tourneis, travel to as many as possible. Not only do you get this experience but at those events you can practice with many different fighters. Also spend time to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the other fighters. There is much to learn by watching someone else fight, the skills that you can practice with or just knowing how you future opponent fights. So at tourneis conserve your energy, no walking, no talking, and watch the fighting.

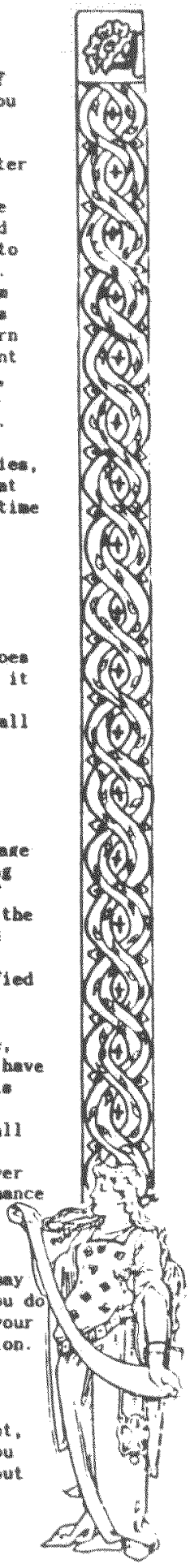
This essay is being written to encourage people to begin fighting. It does not matter what level you are at. One level is not better than another, it just represents different goals. But no matter what level you choose or develop into always be positive in your approach. The following is a small digression into attitude and desire.

The biggest limitation for a fighter is not size, strength, or innate ability, but the limits one puts upon oneself. These self-imposed limitations can take many forms - a defeatist attitude (oh, I'm going to lose anyway), lack of drive (oh, I don't have the time), lack of self-image or confidence or humility (oh, I'm going to look so stupid they are going to laugh). You have to free your mind from these bonds and ask yourself the following question "Do I want to be a proficient fighter?". I used the word proficient. That does not mean good, it does not mean becoming the toughest fighter in twelve baronies, it does not mean becoming a belted fighter. It only means that you have tried your best, seeked out qualified instruction, and practiced, practiced, practiced.

What is at the root of all this? How can you achieve the proper attitude, for without it you have limited yourself from your full potential. You have to ask yourself the question " Am I doing this because I enjoy it?" It is very easy to get involved in any activity for the wrong reasons. These wrong reasons include: You feel it is the thing to do for recognition; all your friends fight; You have something to prove. Get out on that field because you enjoy it. You may not be good, but you feel a thrill whenever you armor up or salute a gentle whose favor you do bear. There is a romance in it that will encourage you to fight and to encourage you to continue fighting after many years.

I may have gotten the previous two paragraphs reversed because romance may precede the proficiency but I wanted to stress that it is hard work. You do yourself and the fighters around you no service if you do not consider your participation seriously. It is a serious sport demanding serious attention. If you do not give it that attention you fail yourself and dishonor the field.

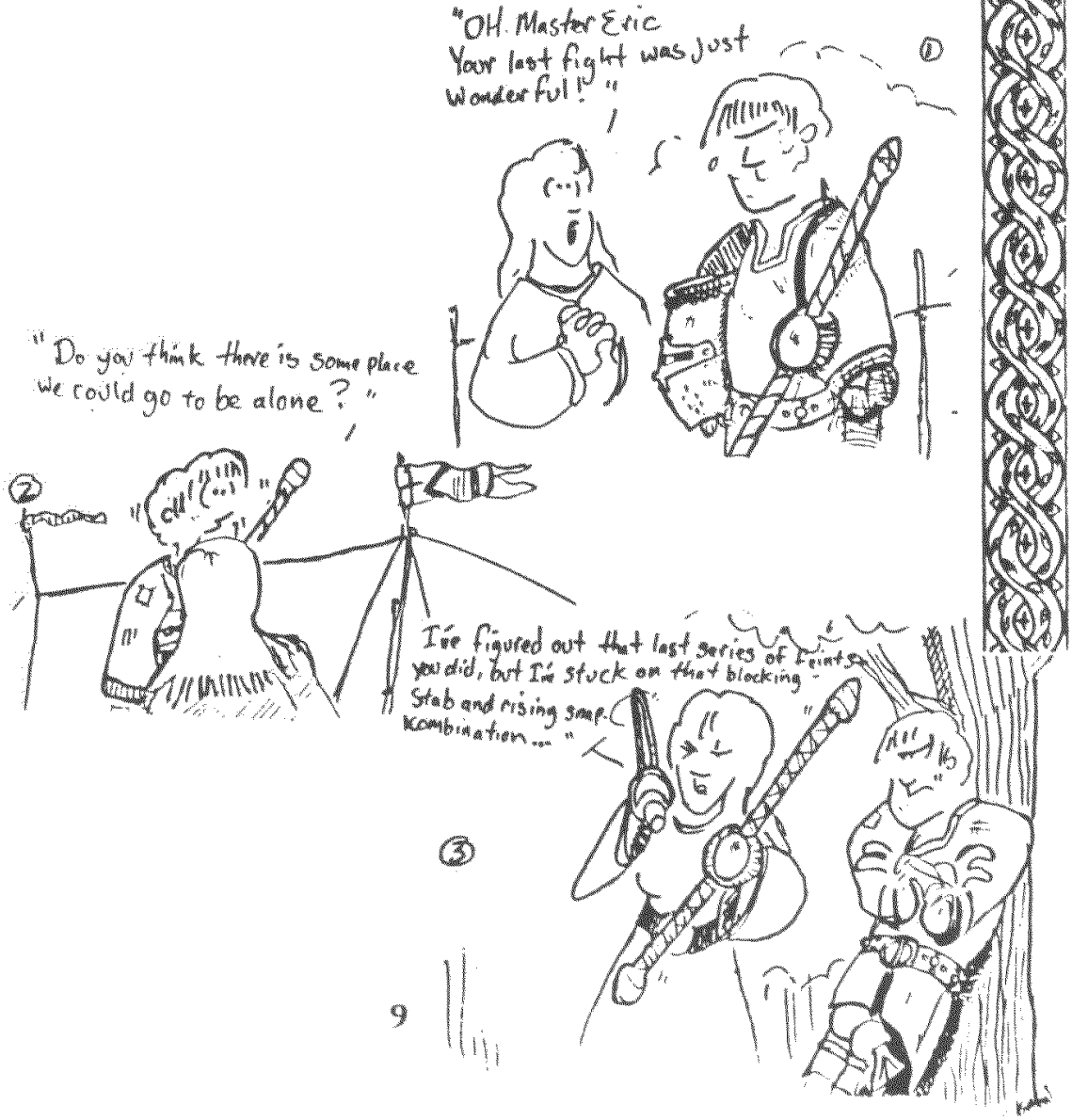
So you want to be a fighter, good. You are being taught stance, movement, defense, offense. You protect your head, they hit you on your tail. You protect your tail, they hit you on your head again. Frustration mounts but you still consider it fun. You have a good attitude.

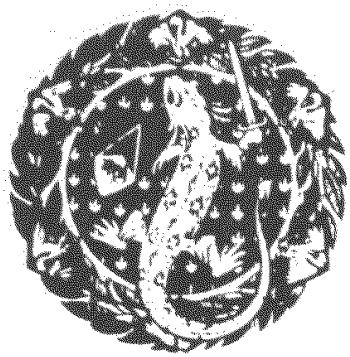


How do you maintain that attitude? You have to know what to expect over the months and you have to know some shortcuts. Improvement will be slow in coming and most of the time it is hard to guage. As you practice with the people around you, you will get better, but so will they. This makes it difficult to see improvement. A similar difficulty is that when they first begin to fight with you they will not be going full out. As you improve they up their attention and you may not notice your improvement.

Improvement is positive feedback and we want to continue it. Do not get in a rut. This rut is practicing with the same small group of fighters and most importantly, training exclusively with one person. To avoid the first part travel to different events as far away as possible. At these events participate in the fighting and encourage practice sessions during some of the off hours. The second part, having more than one trainer is not as easy. Some people who are squires will not train with anyone but their knight. This is a mistake because the improvement is slow and you tend to mimick a style rather than creating your own. You create your own style by blending a variety of styles into your own. Try to find a trainer in a different area, one that you will see at events or at arranged times. It is difficult to have two trainers at the same time and place.

Good luck to you as you begin your fighting. The only person that can truely defeat you is yourself, so work hard and enjoy.





Sir Hilary of Serendip

## THE ZEN OF SWORD AND SHIELD

I don't know what zen really is, but at one level at least it seems to be a matter of finding truth in contradictions - and that's a useful idea, whether it's zen or not.

Consider: Everyone knows that you have to move your sword in order to hit somebody with it. Everyone knows that you have to keep your shield as still as you can, avoiding random movement, in order to have a chance to block incoming shots. But what everyone doesn't know, and indeed finds amusingly weird at first hearing, is that the best way to move your sword is to keep it still, and the best way to keep your shield still is to move it a great deal.

Once you understand them well enough to feel them in your bones, these peculiar assertions point the way to the most effective broadsword technique for the human animal. ANY human animal. Although it's true that big humans with lots of arm and shoulder muscle can often fight successfully from the upper torso, even they would benefit from using more of themselves - and very few of us have that kind of beef to spare. In order to make our presence felt (literally!) upon the field, we've got to rely on the great muscles of our trunks and upper legs - our arms just don't pack enough punch on their own. However, once you're using your hips for power, you have to do some very specific things with your arms to keep your attack flowing and your defenses in place.

The apparent contradiction in my zennish statements comes from the mental images evoked by the word "move". When you think of moving something, you probably think of wrapping your hand around it and then bending, turning, and straightening the assorted arm and shoulder joints to get the thing to the place you want it. After all, this is usually the most efficient way - if you want that glass of juice that's on the table beside your chair, it makes very little sense to keep your arm pressed to your side and turn your whole body 90° so your hand swings into line to pick it up. To use the power of your hips, however, you have to learn to separate "move thing" and "move arm" in your mind, so you'll be able to separate them in your body.

It really is possible for your arm to move when you don't twitch a muscle in it. Nothing mystic about it, there you are, riding in a bus and reading a book, and your arms are going 40 miles an hour down the road. Or walking down the street with your hands in your pockets. OR - and this is the important one - turning your hips with some tension in your belly muscles, so your shoulder girdle rotates around your spine and your arms move back and forth.

To move your sword with your lower body, you have to set up a power train from your hip to your hand. This means keeping your upper arm almost still, because if you wave it about you're going to break the connection. You do have to allow the arm to move forward in relation to the shoulder, but only enough to cover the distance you can't get from the turn of the hip, and not a degree more. In the edge-on guard I teach, which resembles a reverse fencing stance, this arm movement is roughly 45° out of the 170° or so required to get the sword to the target. The recovery - which is at least as important as the strike! - has got to use the same power train, or it all gets out of synch and your arm starts to fight against your body.

Meanwhile, if you keep your other arm still during a hip-driven blow, your shield will be behind you by the time your sword reaches its target - not your ideal defensive position! When you turn your hips and shoulders to power the strike, draw your shield arm in and across your chest to compensate so your shield hangs in space. Your body is moving, so your shield has to move an equal and opposite amount just to stay where it is. Think of it as an eye focussed on your opponent; if it looks away, you die.

Turn off those juice-grabbing reflexes and let your body move your sword, while the arm holding it stays almost still. Ignore that instinctive clutch in the shoulder that comes of trying to "hold still" and whip your shield around as much as you have to keep it where it belongs. Remember the zen of sword and shield:

The best way to move your sword is to keep it still.
The best way to keep your shield still is to move it.

EXCERCISES:

1. Stand in a comfortable guard position, with your hands empty. Turn your head so you're looking along your shieldside shoulder toward the spot an opponent would stand. Hold your swordhand palm up, near your ear and behind it, and your shield-hand roughly in front of your chin. Keep your weight absolutely even on both feet.

a. Leaving your hands where they are in relation to your shoulders, rotate your swordside hip forward and back a few times. Allow your shoulders to turn with your hips. Keep your weight even. Watch what your hands do.

b. Pick up a greatsword or a broom and return to guard, with the blade (or broomstick) across your shoulders like a water yoke, and your hands as close as you can get them to their guard positions and still hold onto the stick. Turn as in (a) and watch the stick. Keep the sword or broom for the rest of this excercise.

c. Rotate your swordside hip as far forward as it will go, then disengage your swordhand and extend your arm forward as though you were hitting someone in the temple. Notice how little rotary motion this requires of the arm. Withdraw your arm, take hold of the stick again, and rotate back into guard. Repeat several times, gradually making the extension of the arm blend into the turn.

d. Rotate your swordside hip as far forward as it will go, then disengage your shieldhand and draw it across your body so that the shield would be in its proper place between you and your opponent. Leave your hand there and rotate your body so the stick returns to your hand. Notice how much "movement" - that is, muscular control of the arm - is required to get your hand back in front of you, and to keep it there on the recovery. Leave your hand free, and use your swordside hip to move the stick away from your hand and back to it. Repeat until it feels natural to counter your body's movement with your arm and shoulder.

2. Drop the greatsword, pick up a broadsword and shield, and return to guard.

a. Repeat the steps of Excercise 1 - that is, turn your body and watch your sword and shield without "moving" either, then experiment to see how little you need to do with the sword and how much you have to do with the shield to get them to go where they belong. Remember to keep your weight even on both feet.

b. Find a pell. Go on guard and turn your swordside hip forward, then reach out and touch the pell gently with your sword at about head level, keeping your sheild in line. Pull your hip and side back briskly, relaxing your upper arm and shoulder as you do so, leaving only enough tension in the arm to keep your hand palm up at all times. Your sword should drop in a long, effortless semicircle as you turn, winding up straight out behind you at shoulder level as your hip reaches the neutral guard position. If your shoulder is too loose, your arm will wrap around your body like a rope; too tight, and the excercise will feel very awkward. Keep trying until you get it right - the sense of free power is unmistakable, so you'll know!

c. Once you've got (b) down pat, don't go back to guard when your sword is out behind you. Pull along the length of the blade and turn your hip forward into another blow, letting your hand slide past your jaw as you reach out. Drop your arm again and repeat, gradually picking up the speed until you are hitting near full-force blows without pause, with your hand swinging through a long teardrop shaped arc behind you between shots. Work at keeping your shield in line - no lift or drop, and as little sideways drift as you can manage and still swing your sword in comfort. Rest and repeat, then find someone else to teach this stuff to.

3. Ask yourself nicely to remember these moves while you're fighting!

## Favors and Lady Fighters

Mistress Aeurin Ansteorra

Almost everyone in the SCA carries some sort of favor. It's one of those customs you learn about just as quickly as what title to use when referring to the Crown, or why the person over there with the white belt is talking to the other three wearing red ones. But, as a lady fighter, you may find yourself in some rather unusual situations.

For most ladies in the SCA, this is no problem. One makes a favor, or token of some sort, and asks a gentle lord to carry it for her honor into combat. Sometimes, ladies present simpler favors to friends, or to those gentles she respects, and have a special sort of favor for the person who is her lord. Since this has its wonderful medieval precedent already set, all one needs to do normally is follow the accepted formula. The guys go bash it out on the field, and they do so in the names of, or for the inspiration, of the ladies whose favors they bear. The guys get to be the Warlord, or King, or whatever, and the lady becomes a Queen of Love and Beauty of some sort. However, when the roles are reversed, even partially, some strange things can happen.

At Ansteorra's most recent Kingdom Warlord tournament, Countess Rowan Beatrice Den Kamphire emerged victorious from this progressive melee tournament. She, of course, was carrying the favor of her lord, Count Sir Hector Philip Martel. Nobody could see Sir Hector as "queen of love and beauty," and so a compromise title was invented - King of Honor and Chivalry. I can't help but wonder how it must have looked, to see Rowan placing the usual consort's circlet on Hector's head, but I do know I'd like to be doing the same thing with a Crown or Coronet in the future.

There is, unfortunately, a perceived bit of difference in the custom of giving and receiving favors when the fighter is a lady. It's the very rare person, male or female (particularly the former), who thinks of making a favor specifically for a lady fighter, even though the reverse situation happens all the time. So, what do you, as a lady fighter, do in order to have a favor to carry into combat? Simple, really. Follow a gentle lord's example, who asks a lady if he may bear her favor into combat. Even if that lady has no favor, she'll probably come up with something for him to carry, and start on some sort of permanent token for later. I guess the "quiet, gentile lady" who does not fight, in those respects, has somewhat of an advantage since the lord is generally the one who does the approaching. However, if you take your part as a fighter - regardless of gender - that means you are the one to do the asking. Ask a lord if you may carry his favor into combat, and watch for the slightly startled reactions! And who knows, you might find yourself confronted with some very beautiful handwork on a friendship favor, or sweetheart's token, or something else. Just remember that no matter how used to us they get on the field, guys just tend to forget that we'd like to be fighting for someone else's honor, too. Viscountess Sir Maythen knows what it's like to put a "brass hat" on her lord's head; it's only a matter of time before it happens again.

from Sir William the Lucky

Warmest Greetings!

Feel free to put excerpts from the letter in, but you should probably mention that it was a stream-of-consciousness letter and nothing like a carefully drawn article. Just so your readers know what they are getting. I have hopes of getting a revised edition of the Needlesse House Fighters Handbook and Training Manual out this winter (this time for sure!).

I found a couple of differences between some of your articles (I realize you were hardly in a position to edit on these points!) between what I remember or heard reported shortly after the event and the history as reported by your correspondents:

- On the first occasion that a lady tried combat (at a practice) in the SCA <year II or so>, the problem was not, particularly, prejudice. Nor the fact that the first time she got hit (on the usual for the time lack of armor) she cried out --- most of us do, when hit off armor. Nor that she was moved to tears --- which has also happened to most fighters when hit off armor. But that she cried out: "You shouldn't hit me! I"m a girl!" And it was decided that she was right. This might be called 'shooting yourself in the foot.'

- Trude was practicing (as far as I knew, and I was one of the people at the practice) just because she wanted to learn how to fight. She got authorized, not because she asked to be but because Steven MacEanruig and Paul of Bellatrix were sitting around after practice one evening and decided that a) she was as good as the guys they were currently authorizing to fight, and b) there was no reason why they shouldn't. (It cannot be proved that they were feeling like making waves, but knowing them ....) So they handed her an authorization card at the next practice. If she was not surprised, she is an even better actress than I think she is --- 'open-mouthed astonishment' would be a good description, followed by the question "Can you do that?" To which their answer was, "Who's going to tell us we can't?" The Society Marshal's concerns were addressed by research, but there was never any real chance that Trude would not be allowed to fight between the time she was authorized and the time the Society officially accepted the situation.
It was, perhaps, fortuitous (at least it avoided starting yet another of the then routine set-tos between the Board and the West Kingdom) that the authorization happened late in the fighting season. Which gave the whole winter to thrash out the situation. And Trude helped ease the beginnings by only going out and fighting four challenges the day after the Crown lists rather than entering (as she could have) the lists themselves. This gave those who were distressed time to think the situation over calmly. I cannot speak for the other three, but I told Trude before our challenge fight started that if anyone gave her a hard time about fighting "Because it's not chivalrous for a gentleman to hit a lady" I wanted to hear about it. (After all, it was my honor which was being impugned by such a comment.) Nobody came around

Finally, also enclosed is a copy of a brief paper I wrote up last summer, in response to some ladies' queries about learning to fight. Is this the sort of thing you would be interested in as an article (revised, of course, to be a bit more generally applicable)?

It seems to me that someone, somewhere, ought to mention to ladies who are contemplating taking up fighting that they either have to learn how to sew or resign themselves to a non-SCA wardrobe which is ill-fitting --- at least until women's clothing manufacturers decide to make blouses which allow for shoulder muscles. Even if this paper is not the way to mention it, I would hope you would find some way to work it in. On the other hand, it might cheer some ladies who are contemplating fighting to hear the story of Viscountess Hilary's first shopping trip after (some months after) taking up fighting. She found a dress she liked, took her usual size (her weight having changed not at all since she had been fighting), and went to try it on. Then she came back and got one two sizes smaller. Which fit, as the first one had not. "Muscle is denser than fat," was her analysis.

Why it is no different

- Unlike most other sports, virtually everyone who learns to fight did NOT grow up doing it. (Contrast this with not only such traditional sports as baseball or football, but even with less common ones such as skiing.) Therefore everybody starts out with basically the same depth of ignorance.

  Of course, some individuals seem to have a natural aptitude for it, while others show little or none, but any correlation with gender is so slight as to be unnoticable. Also, natural aptitude is relatively rare; most people who become good at fighting do so by the simple expedient of working at it doggedly over the course of several years.

  One disadvantage women might seem to have is in the area of simple physical strength. In the population as a whole, a case can be made that women are much less likely to have developed muscle (either by working or athletic activities) as men. But the population from which fighters are drawn is not typical of the general population --- most men in the SCA, especially most fighters, have a history of avoiding athletic activity. And averages are not really relevant to individuals --- the fact that the average Swede is taller than the average Korean does not mean that a 5' 5" Swede will never find some 6' 2" Korean towering over him.

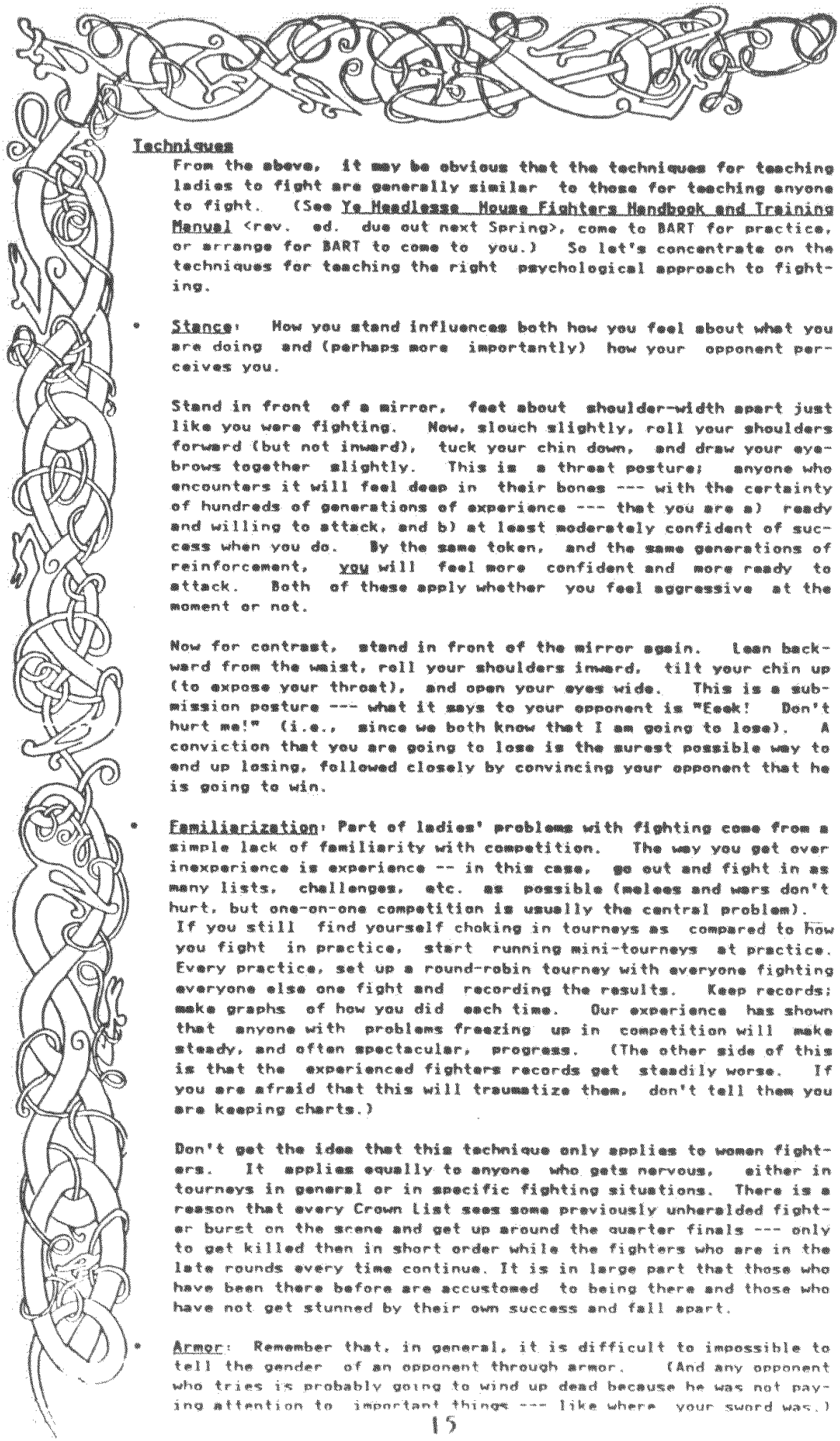
Why it IS different

There are two areas where it does make a difference whether a trainee is male or female. Both are strictly psychological. This undoubtedly proves something.

- In the mundane culture in which we all grew up, boys are routinely expected to compete with each other. Even those of us who hated competing (usually because we almost always lost) grew up with the idea that both winning and losing were part of the way the world was, and that we would be competing (in sports, in school, in our careers, etc.) all of our lives.

  In contrast, until very recently women were discouraged very strongly from competing with each other (and even more strongly from competing with men --- lest they damage our frail little egos by winning). Women under 25 have been less subjected to this sort of nonsense, though it certainly has not died out yet. On the other hand, women over 40 mostly got it drilled into them so thoroughly that is it almost a major psychological barrier to their even trying fighting, let alone going out on the field with the sort of determination to win a fight that men and boys take for granted.

- The other psychological difference has to do with the mechanics of fighting. Except for the microscopic portion of the population who have forearms like Popeye, delivering a good blow requires using your body rather than just your arm. Specifically, it requires putting some hip motion into your blows. A woman who is being trained has no reluctance to flipping one hip forward when delivering a blow. But the reaction of most men (to say nothing of most teenage boys!) to the very idea of doing a belly dancing hip flip verges on hysteria.



Techniques

From the above, it may be obvious that the techniques for teaching ladies to fight are generally similar to those for teaching anyone to fight. (See Ye Headlesse House Fighters Handbook and Training Manual <rev. ed. due out next Spring>, come to BART for practice, or arrange for BART to come to you.) So let's concentrate on the techniques for teaching the right psychological approach to fighting.

- Stance: How you stand influences both how you feel about what you are doing and (perhaps more importantly) how your opponent perceives you.

  Stand in front of a mirror, feet about shoulder-width apart just like you were fighting. Now, slouch slightly, roll your shoulders forward (but not inward), tuck your chin down, and draw your eyebrows together slightly. This is a threat posture; anyone who encounters it will feel deep in their bones --- with the certainty of hundreds of generations of experience --- that you are a) ready and willing to attack, and b) at least moderately confident of success when you do. By the same token, and the same generations of reinforcement, you will feel more confident and more ready to attack. Both of these apply whether you feel aggressive at the moment or not.

  Now for contrast, stand in front of the mirror again. Lean backward from the waist, roll your shoulders inward, tilt your chin up (to expose your throat), and open your eyes wide. This is a submission posture --- what it says to your opponent is "Eeek! Don't hurt me!" (i.e., since we both know that I am going to lose). A conviction that you are going to lose is the surest possible way to end up losing, followed closely by convincing your opponent that he is going to win.

- Familiarization: Part of ladies' problems with fighting come from a simple lack of familiarity with competition. The way you get over inexperience is experience -- in this case, go out and fight in as many lists, challenges, etc. as possible (melees and wars don't hurt, but one-on-one competition is usually the central problem). If you still find yourself choking in tourneys as compared to how you fight in practice, start running mini-tourneys at practice. Every practice, set up a round-robin tourney with everyone fighting everyone else one fight and recording the results. Keep records; make graphs of how you did each time. Our experience has shown that anyone with problems freezing up in competition will make steady, and often spectacular, progress. (The other side of this is that the experienced fighters records get steadily worse. If you are afraid that this will traumatize them, don't tell them you are keeping charts.)

  Don't get the idea that this technique only applies to women fighters. It applies equally to anyone who gets nervous, either in tourneys in general or in specific fighting situations. There is a reason that every Crown list sees some previously unheralded fighter burst on the scene and get up around the quarter finals --- only to get killed then in short order while the fighters who are in the late rounds every time continue. It is in large part that those who have been there before are accustomed to being there and those who have not get stunned by their own success and fall apart.

- Armor: Remember that, in general, it is difficult to impossible to tell the gender of an opponent through armor. (And any opponent who tries is probably going to wind up dead because he was not paying attention to important things --- like where your sword was.)

The relevance of this is that you really don't have to worry about the opinions of someone you don't know concerning women fighting --- he probably won't think to apply them to you anyway. And the people you know, especially in this Kingdom, generally have gotten over their hangups on the subject long since.

* Support: It is extremely helpful, although not necessarily easy to arrange, to have others around who support what you are doing. This includes role models (i.e. other women fighters who have been fighting for some time, preferably successfully) and champions (i.e. experienced and respected male fighters who are in favor of women fighting on principle).

  For all the changes which have taken place in the mundane culture over the past couple of decades, a woman competing on an equal basis with men is still to some extent breaking the cultural norms. This is much easier (though still not easy) if she gets support and encouragement, and much harder if those around her are opposed to the whole idea.

  If your local practice is full of unreconstructed male chauvinists, it might be better to find another group to practice with --- even if it means driving a couple of hours to and from practice. Of course, they will need to change their attitude eventually, but trying to educate them at the same time as you are struggling with your own attitudes (or even just struggling to master the physical side of fighting) is doing things the hard way.

* Caveats: A couple of points may need to be made for those gentlemen who find themselves with ladies among their trainees:

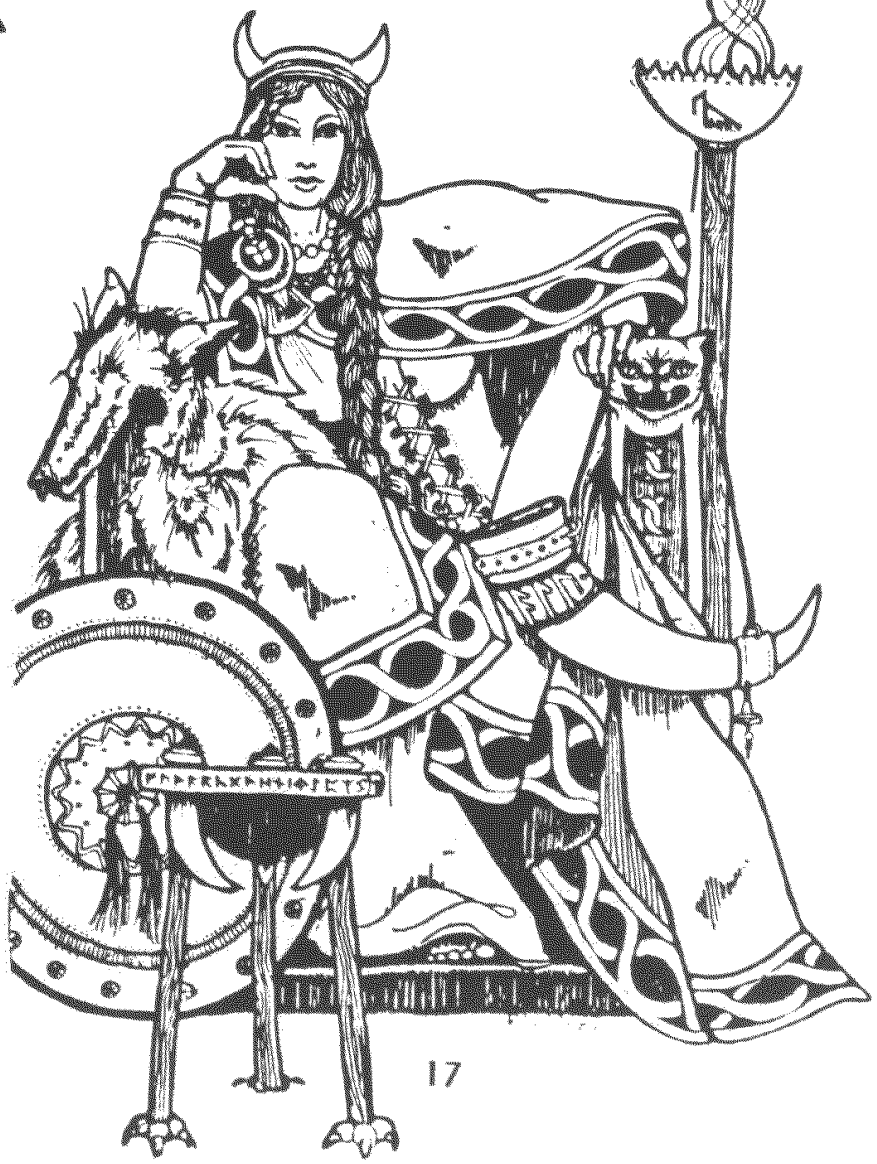
  - Unfortunately, women's clothing is cut on the assumption that women have no shoulder muscles. Fighting training develops shoulder muscles. Therefore, unfair though it may be of the world, ladies who start fighting training are going to find themselves having to sew their own blouses --- or else have them custom tailored. It is a kindness to point this out to them before they start, just so they see the problem coming.

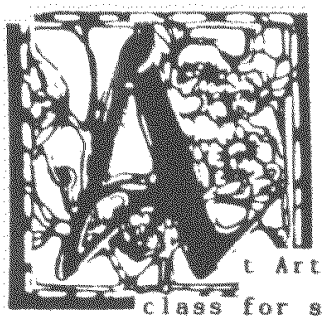
  - Some experienced fighters, especially visitors from afar, have difficulty accepting critiques from less experienced fighters. And even more difficulty accepting critiques from ladies. It helps if you corner them as soon as they arrive and explain that this is how the practice works. Otherwise you will probably have to deal with the collision of cultures after the fact.

1248 McEwing Court
Concord, CA 94521

I have enclosed this good Knight's address for those who are interested in obtaining a copy of his fighter's handbook. It is excellent, everyone could benefit from owning a copy. Hopefully his advertisement will appear soon in this newsletter. I'm sure an encouraging letter wouldn't hurt either.

# Rattan or Heavy Weapons





t Arts and Sciences college in late ASXXII I gave a small class for some of the nuances of lady fighters. Over five were in attendence, (suprised the heck out of me). One was Sir Nicholas DeKane who said he wished to find some answers to questions some ladies looking to fight asked him. Two ladies were there for the same reason, as in their area they were lists officers and people asked them also. And the rest were ladies who wanted some information before they went to the expense of buying equipment. One of those was the lady whose letter follows. One of the first things I told them was that I was far from an authority on the subject, but that I could tell them what was required in armoring and what was a good idea. The same follows later in this issue.

m'lady Robin Outlands

Well, I attended my first fighter practice 14 Sep 87 here in Dragonspine. After 5 weeks, progress is understandably slow - but it's there! I am not at all displeased with things. The fighters here are bringing me along nice and slow, and they have been very encouraging. So far, I have not run into any opposition concerning my fighting, either, which is good for my mental attitude! If there is any heartburn over it, that opinion has not been expressed to me. Everyone is being most helpful when it comes to borrowing armor and my training. Things are going well, and I'm loving every minute of it!!

I have already accumulated some decent armor. I more or less inherited a steel breast plate/back plate set from Baroness Miranda MacTyre, who used to be a fighter herself. It requires some minor modifications to improve chest protection, and also needs to be shortened in the front about 2" - every time I bend over or sit down I get the top of the breast plate jammed into my throat! I've also acquired a beautiful set of articulated (is that the right word?!) leg/knee pieces - stainless steel, I believe. They're wonderful protection, but I didn't realize just how heavy they were until I put them on a belt...thank goodness for hips, or they'd be down around my toes!

Montreal Canada
Lord Yamamoto Tora Gozen

We currently have, in our shire of L'Isle du Dragon Dormant, two heavy weapons women fighters and three women fencers, we are hoping for more. When we find them, they may rest assured of all the support they could need. We have here, a woman's household, a Begquinage, called Les Dames du Dragon, that provides information and moral support to women of all persuasions. We also have a marshal, (myself), who thinks that women fighters are the sexiest thing to hit the earth since bellydancers.

I well appreciate the problems women rattan fighters might face. I myself weigh only 130 lbs. and regularly spar with people literally twice my weight. It is unfortunately true that the ideal person for SCA bashing is also ideal for being a defensive line-man in football. All other things being equal, the bigger 'man' will win. Fortunately things are not equal. The greater lung volume to body weight ratio and the greater surface area to body volume ratio of a light fighter is telling in any armored combat lasting more than a couple minutes. Small people are smaller targets and typically move faster as well. A good light fighter will learn to use these advantages by fighting a mobile and fast hitting fight.

It is a popular myth that small people can't hit hard If you practice starting a blow from your legs and hips and rippling it through your body into the tip of your sword like a whip, you will quickly prove them wrong. Use a well padded pell when practicing this or you will quickly run out of swords. With proper technique (practice) this blow is lightning fast and does not telegraph much.

If you haven't already, try using a polearm or greatsword. With your probable superior speed and endurance you might well keep a bigger shieldman at such a distance that your longer weapon can engage him wilst he cannot reach you. If you try this remember to keep moving fast, around and away from him. Don't let him get close. Learn to fire wickedly fast two hand head shots, then fake to the head and take his leg. On his knees you can finish him off at your leisure.

For a light fighter, which includes most women fighters, to succeed in bashing you must emphasise your strengths. Keep in mind while training that physical conditioning, perfection of technique, and headspace are far more important in our martial art than size. An easy way to get a substantial advantage over most men in this game is to simply practice regularly, (6 hours per week). I was taken out of the field battle at Pennsic by a small woman fighter that I couldn't see until it was too late.

May lady combatants Florish!

OHIO
Lady Magda von Wolfenberg, called the Wolfcub

I joined the SCA just about two years ago. I was dragged kicking and screaming by a friend to an enactment of the Battle of Hastings( the Normans won again, Boo!). I had already read this friend's Known World Handbook and the one thing I was definite on was that I wanted to FIGHT. Consequently, I was introduced to Lady Gwyneth Bannfidhlier, our Baronial Herald, as a"neo who wants to fight" and was promptly engulfed in an exuberant bear hug. (At that point she was the only lady fighter in our shire.) Needless to say, I was hooked and attended the very next fight practice. I am fortunate to live in a college shire- As such, the Marche of the Unicorn has weekly fight practices, a strong program to train neos who want to fight, and just about everybody fights. That year, four of us trained as lady fighters. Two of us have been authorized, one moved and is still working on authorization, and the fourth never followed through. Our Marshall at that time came up with a great way of dealing with me, at least. He promptly introduced me to my new "big sister", Lady Gwyneth. Her armor was just the right size for me to borrow, and she was more than happy to help and teach me. The friendship took, and a semester later

I was "adopted" by the third lady fighter when she came into the shire. I progressed steadily, (while having lots of fun), and I authorized in February. Unfortunately, that's when the trouble began.

At authorization, I was hurt pretty severly on my shield thigh, but I went on to authorize the next fighter because I'm afraid of hearing too much about "sword jocks feel no pain". Anyway, I was stupid and I went on for about two rounds. When they took my (inadeuqate & poorly fitting) leg armor off, my thigh looked like chopped liver. It gave me problems the rest of the year.

As a result, this year I haven't fought much, due to a terror of having my leg mangled again. I am now in the process of coming up with decent armor and plan to begin fighting again this year.

The biggest problem I have had is finding armor. I've finally designed my own, a mixture of stiff leather and chain mail, which I am in the Process of working on now. My barrel helm had to be custom made and scaled down to fit me. Luckily that wasn't a problem due to the presence, near the shire, of

an accomidating armorer. I have always fought in carpet and mattress pads, but after my injury I will never do that again.

Why do I do it? I like the "hacking". One of the main reasons that kept me from giving up this last year, is that it is a main part of my persona now. Everyone identifies me with the phrase "Magda back now, ja?" I have never been good at athletics, but I found sword and shield remarkably easy to pick up. (Lord, I'm not good, but I'm safe and I have fun.)

As to humorous stories...one of my favorites is of winning an award for "tacky armor", (carpet, matress pads and a camouflage tabard), at an unofficial event. My all time favorite story is when Count Syr Ton the Traveller first moved to the Barony. He came to our fight practice incognito, (Ha! We all knew he had to be a Syr somebody.), and was sent out to fight me. The problem was, no-one remembered to tell him that we had only had 2-3 lessons and to take it easy. I held my own for a while, but the next thing i knew I was on my back, staring at 3 very worried Count Syr Tons who had suddenly relized I didn't know what I was doing. I quit fighting for that knight. Someone told the Count that we all were neos before he whomped us into the ground. The next week's fight practice, Count Syr Ton came up and offered to spar with me. I was apprehensive, but I went ahead. First I took his leg, then his other leg. He took one of my legs, and then one of my shots got over his "barn door" shield and connected solidly with the top of his helm! We froze, the Count said, with a suprised expression, "That's good.", and keeled over face-first.

I was so suprised, my first reaction was, "Get up! You can't be dead!...Oh my gosh! I KILLED him!" As an aftermath the first fight became the subject of a filk song called the "Black and Blues" Since then, Count Syr Ton has come to all the practices he can, and has always been a great help to us.

As of this writing, I am one of the founding members of a Household primarily composed of lady fighters. I would greatly appreciate it if anyone could send us armor designs and instructions they have found helpful.

Lady Magda the Wolfcub
c/o K. Zahller
311 N. College St. #4
Oxford, OH 45506

Mistress Aeurin Ansteorra

No shit! There we were! Pennsic XIII, my first ever Pennsic war, and in reality only the second time I'd participated in melee combat. I was the smallest person in our 13 man army, decked out in a gold cyclas with dagged black and gold "wings" and wearing a helm that bore mantling of my kingdom's colors, black and gold, which got dubbed as "Aeruin's moose ears" before the war was over, thanks to the way the dagging flapped about in a good breeze. You see, I was at that time the newest member of a special order in Ansteorra, known as the Lions of Ansteorra - Defenders of the Dream. Lions are special, only given once per reign to the person whom in the eyes of the Crown best personifies the Dream. A Lion carries no rank nor precedence, but is Ansteorra's highest honor, since it carries the same sort of example for personna "being" that a war banner carries for troops: something to aim for, to fly high, to lead, and to be as bold and brave as its namesake, in combat or anything else. At that time, I wasn't sure exactly what I had done to be recognized. Sure, I played my harp when I got out of armor, and knew enough Celtic stories to keep any Celtic court occupied for hours. But, I was the proverbial "dogmeat" on the field, even though I had a great time winning the dying contests. Still, I was a new Lion, unblooded in melee combat and in my first ever war.

In the woods, our small force was combined with those from the Barony of Septemptria. Led by Sir Finn Kelly O'Donnell and his lady, Sir Cyf Ironhand, we were to hold an uphill path and prevent forces from getting to the "back door" on the way to the banner. This proved very funny, since the overall unit commander was a new Canadian knight who didn't understand the deep South Texas drawls of the majority of our unit - and most of us didn't understand him, either, so I got to translate for both sides. The plan to hold that small pathway with about 35 fighters didn't work when we were overwhelmed by a force that was four times our size and outflanked us as we retreated uphill. I died mightily running uphill backwards, without even getting off a single shot, and vowed to do better later in the war.

Now, before I had left Ansteorra for this great war, I talked to my King. His Majesty Inman had told each of us, and me in particular, to "stick together, fight for whoever makes the best offer, and bring home both stories and glory when you return." And to me, the smallest and youngest member of the forces, he reminded me that "a Lion will never retreat, and will instinctively know where to go when needed." Little did I realize how true his words would become out on the Bridge Battle.

To those who have never seen it, Pennsic XIII brought the appearance of two first time, now common sights: the Calontir Wall, and Calontir as a Kingdom in her own right, purple falcon tabards and all. Ansteorra had a tradition of supporting and travelling into Calontir from years past, and the reverse was true, so our little force of 13 stood with the Purple Wall, side by side and back to back, just as we'd done before. But something else was new, besides the Wall, and the tabards. There was a banner - a huge, purple banner with a stooping gold Falcon on it, woven by Mistress Alarba Bronwen ap Caradoc, who had threatened "to kill anyone who even thinks about damaging that thing!" The banner made itself known off in the Woods battle earlier, having escaped capture by hiding in the swamp and weeds when the force was somehow swarmed and wiped out. But at the start of the Bridge Battle, the Calontir banner waved lazily back in the reserve units, just behind the little knot of Ansteorrans. Verily did the Wall march forward, and drop to its knees, form a roof with smaller shields, and then what must have looked like a million vicious polearms bristled out through small openings. And the noise! And the dust that filled the air, as tons of fighters rammed up into the Wall and died there, piling up like cordwood. To someone with three years combat experience, this was incredible - and it wasn't long before I heard calls for replacements in the front line.

I dropped my shield, and scooted forward to take hold of one of those giant scutums. The noise was deafening. The heat was suffocating. I felt like I had been packed, fully armored, into my own armor bag - but with a few extra body parts, like that kneecop in my back and the elbow that kept jabbing me in the shoulder, as the artilleryman behind me fired yet another shot at someone beyond the Wall. And suddenly, something inside of me began to click. It no longer felt like rattan and fun. There was something very <u>real</u> - and very enjoyable - going on, and I was in the middle of it! Yes, I saw nothing but the person's back in front of me and an occasional foot. I was being pounded in a meatgrinder, but I was doing a very important job. By covering the back of the person in front of me, and by being a part of that Wall, I may not have been scoring kills - but without me, and the other crazy people being similarly pounded by both the opposition and our own troops, we would have been destroyed. I was not just a single fighter, but part of a very efficient team!

When I needed a break to let my lungs collect some non-stuffy air, I crawled out of the line and a replacement came in for me. Inside, I don't think I've ever felt happier! This piece of "dogmeat" had done a good job at a very difficult task...and three more times, I replaced other people who needed a break on the Wall, and later I even got brave enough to form part of the Roof to the Wall. After nearly 2 hours of pounding, in one place or the other of the Wall, I heard a distinctive spund of squeaking, and then giggles, and then a voice saying, "Stop that, ladies, please!"

Squeaking on the battlefield? And giggles? Well, another Calontir legend was born on the Wall that Pennsic. Lord Pavel Iosevich, in response to one of his favorite sick jokes, had duct taped a squeaky toy hamster to the top of his helmet for a crest. Every now and then, Pavel's helm would get squished - and the hamster squeaked, which naturally produced giggles which were pitched high enough that they could be heard through the racket of rattan rain, even by opponents on the other side of the Wall. Those of us in the secondary wall made a game of it, and soon tried to squeak that damned hamster so often it began to annoy Pavel, and confuse our opponents. A hold was called to clear out the dead, and take a water break - and, to those of us secondary shieldmen who had been so mightily amused by that hamster, it was suddenly very obvious that every one of us, in the middle of the pounding - was female. A thirteen woman front line, being pounded by enemy polearms from the front, and our own artillery recoil in behind - yet we did not crumple nor give one inch of ground as bodies had piled around us. Pavel knew then why he'd been having his helmet bashed - and the Tygers saw a row of braids on the front line. We even overheard someone cry, "Ohmigod! We're being demolished by a bunch of <u>women</u>!" As nearly one-fourth of the Calontir army that Pennsic was female, this made us just smile and nod our heads. Some of the Tygers actually left their front line when combat resumed; I guess they just couldn't handle the idea of braids up in the middle of the front line doing so much damage.

Eventually, time and polearms began to take their toll on all of us. I left my shield up on the front line to be used for the secondary line replacement that came in after me, and made my way past scattered polearms and swords to literally bump into the destiny my instinct led me towards. Above his head flapped that purple falcon banner. His hands gripped the banner pole so tightly I could tell his knuckles were white under those gloves. He had on kneepads, and a helmet, but as far as I could see, no other armor. A noncombattant, in the thick of the fight, with a new Kingdom's pride flapping bravely above his shoulders! Inside of that helmet were the most terrified eyes I had ever seen, and yet there was a determination I recognized. Somehow I managed to convince him to leave me the banner and go get some more armor from fallen combattants; he was back in a flash with hockey gloves and a kidney belt. And in the back of my head, I could hear my king saying "a Lion will never retreat, and will instinctively know where to go when needed."

The scared eyes looked back at me, and I told him, "as long as a Lion of Ansteorra stands on this field, that banner <u>will not fall</u>." Some of his fear faded, when I handed him my sword and grabbed two others from the weapons littering the bridge behind the main combat front. For a time, it looked like we would see combat from both directions - the middle bridge needed reinforcements, and the great Purple Wall was beginning to break. We stood back to back, watching. I grabbed a bastard sword, knowing that if we had to make a break for it, I could run with that weapon and keep the banner and myself alive all at once. The Wall's commander sent us with reinforcements to the middle bridge, where we smacked into the opposing forces with fury unexpected after over two hours of fierce contact. And then, I saw a hole - a wonderful hole to the Eastern side of the third bridge, with Tygers trying to sweep around and capture that banner I'd sworn to protect.

To tell the truth, I don't remember a lot of what happened next. I simply did my job, taking on and defeating any and all challengers to the banner as we dashed across that last bridge. Witnesses said I was cussing a blue streak, slicing through opponents like a scythe in a wheat field and leaving them scattered on either side of me as I hacked a free pathway for the Falcon banner through a swarm of Tygers. I whipped past several dear friends who were marshalling on that third bridge, and said hello as my "moose ear" mantling unfurled at a dead run. Countess Sir Cyf Ironhand had sprung to King Eliahu's defense, and left a handy pile of bodies in a ring around them. And before I really could assess what to do next, the last Tyger fell and the Middle had won the battle!

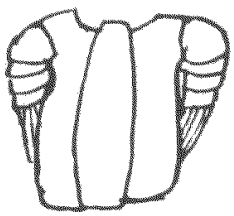
The field erupted around us into cheers for Ansteorra and Calontir. Once again, the noise was deafening, even inside my helmet. I pulled off the helmet, and there were big tears rolling down my face as I shook out my braids. We survivors were picked up on happy shoulders and carried to the corner of the field. Me, the "littlest dogmeat fighter", still alive at the end of the biggest battle of my life....and, it occurred to me, so was that guy with the scared eyes. But, where was he? With no helmet, I couldn't recognize him until Her Majesty Calontir pulled him out of another part of our happy crowd. His eyes weren't scared any more, and his grin was as big as the one I wore. The two of us were again hoisted on shoulders, and all around us people hailed us as heroes. Who, me? I just was doing the job my King told me to do when we left for this war....but nobody seemed to be listening. We were all too happy, too excited and full of victory. And suddenly, the sky opened up and poured on us. I'm not sure what felt better - the cool rainwater dripping into my sweaty armor, or the thrill of surviving, or the bearhug from the no-longer-scared bannerbearer, Andrew Ward.

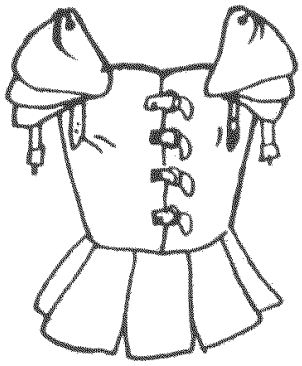
For final court, the Calontir banner had two guards. One carried the same pole he had been white-knuckling on the field. The other wore a dress bearing white Ansteorran lions. And ever since then, Calontir and Ansteorra have stood together, side by side and back to back in wartime. To my surprize, I was later recognized for my actions in combat by songs and poetry in both kingdoms, and even became the premier recipient of Calontir's Queen's Endorsement of Distinction for chivalry on the battlefield. All I did was recognize someone and something that needed protecting, and acted upon those instincts. If I had faced any of those other fighters on the bridges in single combat, with only myself on the line, I would have probably died to a single blow. But with a job to do, and something to be protected, the Lion inside came out and did the job with a ferocity I didn't even know was there.

To this day, Pennsic XIII sticks out in my mind as one of those brilliant gems of memories, that keeps me fighting despite injuries and interferences from the "outside world." Nothing I have done since, nor accomplished beforehand, has even come close to the elation I felt when the battle was over. And, best of all, it showed me that even the most "dogmeat" fighter, male or female, can become a Lion on the field of combat.

Many of my subscribers have written in request of armoring ideas, suggestions, patterns, contacts, etc. In responce to this, I have searched my knight marshall's files in Caerthe, and finding not a whole heck of a lot, searched elsewhere. My first lord in the SCA was an armorer by trade, and an excellent one, for people of his size and strength. He made things beautiful and to last. I've had the same breastplate ever since I started. However, recently changing weapons styles from the protective, slower sword and shield, to the less protected, more agressive madu and sword, I had to face something I had been putting off. My armor had never really fit me correctly, and I was definetly time for a change. Below I have several ideas in body armor and leg harness (cursed difficult things to make). The best armorer for form fitting hardclothes is you. Things like elbows and knees are more easily made by the professionals. First, go to the library and look into their selection of armoring books. Find a style you like, or even a costume you like, and start from there. Patterns are a must. Please make them in a heavy duty paper. Trial and error are the teachers of perfection. Steel provides the best protection, but it is heavy, (unless aluminum), and some shots are hard to guage through it for quite a while.

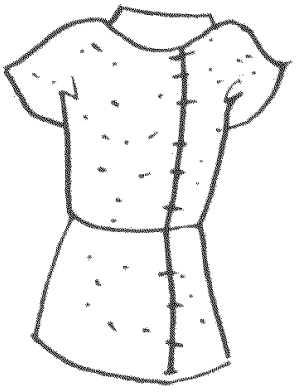
Carpet is inexpensive, for the dumpster-hunter, but is awkward to work with, and you can become hamburger beneath it. Some of the new plastics are good protection, light, and when heated properly will form the way you want without becoming brittle. Leather, I feel, provides the most versitility. Waxed with hardener it is very stiff, it can be used to hide plates beneath, and it's quite easy to cut, sew, pattern, rivet, and feel shots through without heavy injury, (everything will allow for bruises). Short of your standard coat of plates, which doesn't work too well for the well endowed lady, or anyone else with a bra size, I have tried to, as space has allowed, give you what I can.

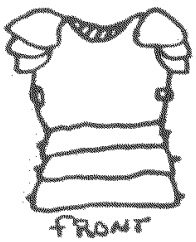


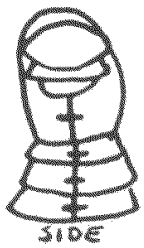


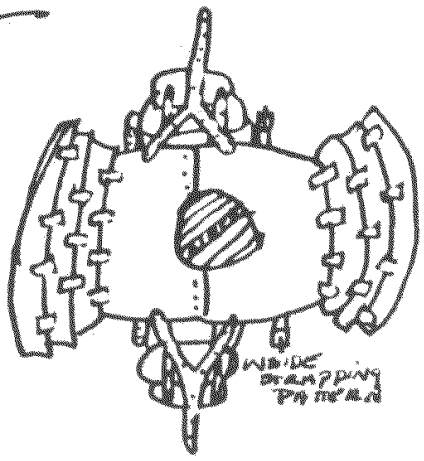
Forming your material is a major point for less bulky armor that works for you instead of against you. And PLEASE look at your armoring standards before begining. My Kingdom does not require breast or feminine groin protection, yours might. Also, if you have not been fighting long, remember that it is always easier to take off unneeded pieces of protection, than to add them. Leather and plastic form easy, compared to metal at least. Heat plastic in the oven, (ask someone where you bought it for heating instructions), wear thick clothing, and when pliable, wrap where that peice would go until hard. For leather you can harden to form but soaking leather in water, then put on like plastic, until dry. We sat in front of a space heater to speed it along. Then melt parrafin and add correct amount of hardener. Use medium paint brush for larger pieces, soak in for smaller ones. Then you can use a hair dryer to soak in excess.

-Drake Wallace



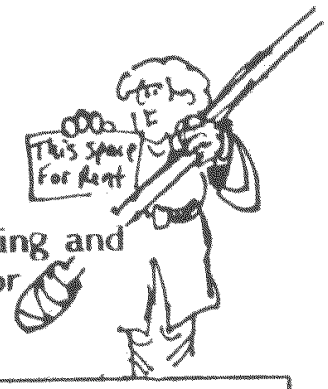


*A good book for ideas for armor is The Art of Armor, it should be in the Humanities section of your local, large library.*

*For fighting philosophy some good titles are; The Sword in the Mind, The Art of War by Sun Tszu, and Book of Five Rings by Musashi.*

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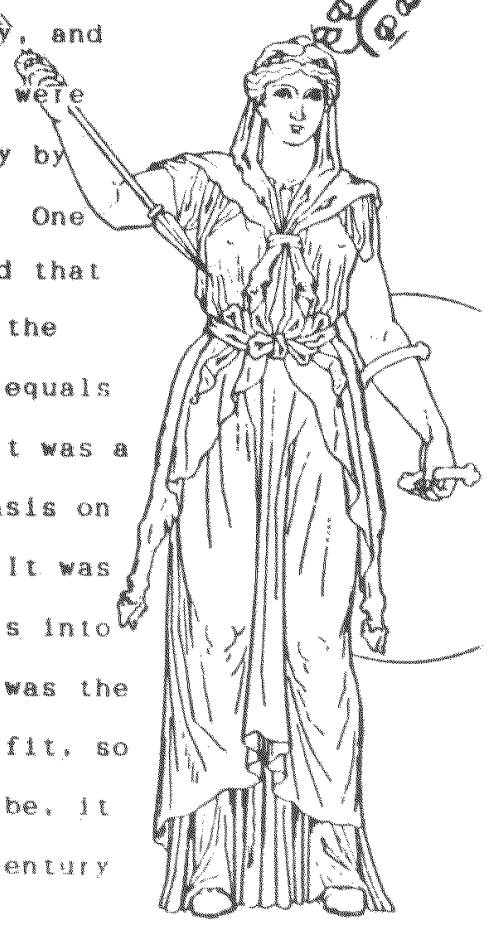
I have a few stories, a barely adequate knowledge of armoring, and a lot of enthusiasm. I am not an especially good fighter -- I win just often enough to stay interested , though I do somewhat better in period fencing. But ultimately it is not the winning I care about, it is the doing. I feel it is an act of courage every time I put on my helmet, and an accomplishment every time I walk off the field. I fight to prove to myself that I can, to earn respect and independence from others, and most of all because it is fun, and I can't stand being left out of the action.

A bit about myself...

Conceited, I know, but perhaps someone will care -- you never know when your mother might be reading... I have many interests in the SCA in addition to fighting. I sew all my clothes and my lord's, and I do embroidery. I also sing with the Greenwood singers and do a little barding. As a public service, I do not dance or cook, but I brew spiced mead that will grow hair on your chest, or anywhere else you spill it. I would like to get involved in period equestrian activities, as I have my own horse.

Mundanely (if it matters), I work as a medical research technician at the University of Oklahoma. I am blissfully married to a recently graduated lawyer (also known as C. Titus Severus), and I am the adoptive mother of Sophie the event-dog and her cat sister, Magic. I am 26 years old.

I chose my persona for a number of reasons, but fighting was one of them. I have no doubt that women have been warriors in various capacities and many cultures throughout time, but that fact is hard to document, because the people who kept the records were the very ones who disapproved of women fighting. The ability to defend one's self, honor, and property meant independence and autonomy, and unfortuneately in many cultures those things were (at least in theory) denied to women, usually by that pervasive conservative force, religion. One of the few cultures in which it is documented that women were accepted as warriors was that of the early Celts. Indeed, women were the social equals of men in most aspects of Celtic society. It was a warlike, tribal society, with a strong emphasis on personal honor and daring acts of courage. It was a society of poetry and music with many doors into twilight otherworlds of myth and magic. It was the society in which I have always felt I would fit, so when it came time to choose who I wanted to be, it was not a hard decision to become a second century tribal Briton.



A little history...

The first time I picked up a sword was five years ago, in the now defunct shire of Braddwyn Lea in Ansteorra. It had taken me a year to work up my courage to do what I had always wanted to do. When I had first seen SCA fighting, I had decided that however much I wanted to fight, I was just too small. To avoid being killed, I had decided to become an archer and content myself with wreaking havoc from a distance.

But that didn't last long. It was impossible for me to sit under a pavillion and watch, knowing there was action happening and I wasn't in it. I am a fighter by nature as much as avocation, and when finally I could stand it no longer, I borrowed my lord's armor and weapons and threw all caution to the winds. No one in Braddwyn Lea knew what they were doing, including me; were a new incipient shire of newbies, and it is a wonder none of us were killed.

Picture this, and laugh if you will: a determined young woman, 5' 4" tall and weighing 130 pounds, staggers onto the field in carpet armor made for a man 6' 4" tall who weighed 200 pounds, dragging a shield that covers her from top of helm to knee when standing fully erect, and a sword half as tall as she. I could hardly move; it must have been hilarious. But it was exhilaration, even when my friends (all male) used me as a pell again and again. Unfortunately I picked up a lot of bad habits since no one there knew how to instruct me.

My first tourney was Tear Down the Walls, the only tourney held in Braddwyn Lea, that same year. My lord and I shared his armor, changing as quickly as we could between bouts. I won only one round of a Swiss five; my friend John of Essex (whose helm I later bought) took my sword arm and then graciously dropped his shield. I killed him left-handed, which earned me an honor challenge from King Inman I. He dispatched me with one blow, but oh, the glory of it! I was hooked forever.

Gradually I made and acquired my own equipment, tailoring it to fit my size and shape. Being the smallest fighter around has gotten me some really nice cast-offs that other people have outgrown. Then, as now, money and time were restrictions that limited me in every way. But when we came to Namron, my fortunes took a turn for the better. At that time there were no other ladies actively fighting in the Barony, but I found the men very encouraging and willing to teach. I finally began to learn some basics and got some very useful practice. The few times I have worked with Countess Sir Cyf Ironhand of nearby Wiesenfeur were the best instructions I ever received.

One thing that has been a pleasant surprise was the willingness of the men to accept me into the brotherhood of fighters without question or hesitation. Most of them have been eager to teach me, and a few kind souls have even given me bits of armor to upgrade the pitiful things I had. The only one who has ever given me any trouble was not himself a fighter, and he did not bother me long.

The men honestly care for me and respect me. They brag about me and joke, sometimes roughly, but always with respect. My own lord, Centurion Claudius Titus Severus, has been especially supportive. The first time I ever beat him (still a rare thing), he was overjoyed and congratulated me for days.

I am seeing more and more lady fighters in this kingdom, and that makes me very happy. An awful lot of them are getting red belts, which is really exciting. We all have a sort of an instant bond and yet a little trepidation about each other, too; we aren't really accustomed to seeing other women in armor yet. We are used to being unique in our group. I hope the day will come soon when it is no surprise at all to see women on the field. And I hope some of the respect we get in the SCA will spill over into mundane life, too.

Some reflections on psychology...

Do women really have to work harder at fighting than men? Yes, I believe we do. In addition to the obvious physical limitations most of us have due to size, we have to defeat the social conditioning we all have acquired in insidious ways. I am a fairly aggressive person, but I had no idea how many mental blocks I had unknowingly acquired about physical aggression. I still have to mentally condition myself to hit hard and not to flinch when being hit every time I fight. I also have to mentally talk myself out of being intimidated by most of

my opponents -- whether because of their size, their maleness, or my own inexperience and lack of self-confidence.

Unlike boys, girls are simply not taught confidence in their physical abilities and competitiveness at an early age, when it would do the most good. They are not taught to be proud and confident about their strength, but rather are told to disguise it. They are not encouraged to push themselves to test their limits and strive for excellence. Girls are taught to avoid discomfort and to excel only in traditionally accepted -- and limited -- ways, and never to upstage men. At least that is how it was when I grew up, not very long ago; I hope it is changing now.

And there were very few positive Role models, especially in the heroic fantasy and historic epics we all loved. Evwyn of Rohan and Joan of Arc were about all.

But even so, we have to overcome centuries of erroneous conditioning before we ever step onto the field. This is not meant to be a feminist diatribe, but some of those points are valid. Women have to tap the strength and courage inherent in us, and respect ourselves before anyone else will respect us, and all this applies directly to fighting. Because fighting is a very psychological sport, the mental blocks are the most difficult to overcome.

The physical ones area easier. We are all stronger than we think we are. Many lady fighters are nearer the size of the men than I am, but they still lack the natural upper body strength men have unless they really work at it. So, just holding a sword and shield, much less moving them, is an effort. Fighting is the most

draining thing I have ever done. It is much more demanding than running or raquetball, and requires much more concentration.

Good conditioning is essential. Things that develop your wind, like running and swimming, really help me stay on the field longer, and a little work with weights helps the upper body strength. Of course, fighting itself is the best practice of all, and it helps develop accuracy as well as strength and endurance. An hard shot still may not count if it is not on target. But never use sex as an excuse for failure; it isn't one. Women are every bit as physically capable as men. What we lack in brute force we make up for in endurance; that's scientific fact, and anyone who has fought much knows there's a lot more to it than brute force.

Unfortunately, I have had to admit that I do have limitations. It would be unwise to believe otherwise. I am very susceptible to the ravages of Ansteorran heat. I cannot reach some men's heads unless they are on the ground. My natural speed is reduced by the weight of the equipment, so that it is not as much of an advantage as it might be, and I can't see over a shield wall to use a spear in a melee.

But I have advantages, too. I am fast and nimble. My low center of gravity keeps me on my feet when another might fall, and my shield covers a good percentage of my body. In melees they put me in front of the spearman because I am the shortest person in the shield wall.

Period fencing has only recently come to our

Barony, and I got into it from the beginning. After heavy weapons, the physical part of it seemed like a breeze, but it is even more mentally demanding. My speed advantage is a factor in light weapons, and I have had several very good teachers. I recommend light weapons to everyone, but especially to women. If you want to fight but haven't the physical strength or the streak of self-destructive insanity necessary for heavy weapons, light weapons are challenging without being as brutally gruelling.

Fighting isn't for everybody, but no one should be afraid to try it just because of their size or sex. It can be frustrating and tiring, but infinitely satisfying. It is a mental and physical challenge unlike any other; it builds discipline and confidence like no other sport. The exercise, the comaraderie, the sense of accomplishment I get from fighting I have found nowhere else. Pitting your own wits and strength directly against someone else's is a unique experience that everyone should have. I builds courage and confidence, and most important, it's fun.

Celeste Cathan West

Outside my tent at the Grand Outlandish in the kingdom of the Outlands(87), during the rain and hail storm, I heard an official herald say deeply, "My lords and ladies, Court will be delayed until after the storm." Then in a high pitched voice by the same herald, "Run away, Run away!!"

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ASSOCIATIONS

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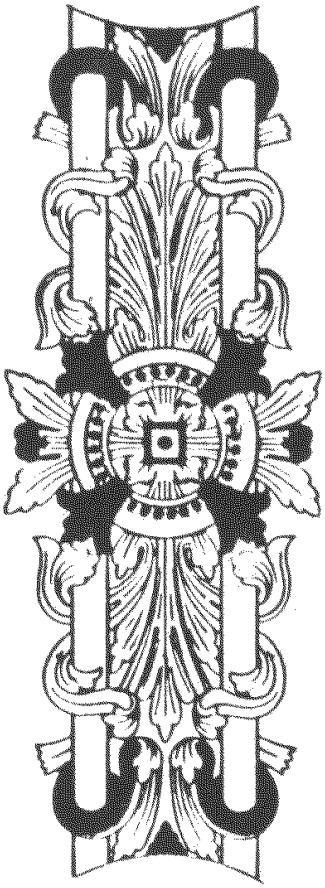
## Section 6 — CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS



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P.O. Box 360743 Phone: (415) 428-1181
Milpitas, CA 95035 Hilda Powers, Pres.
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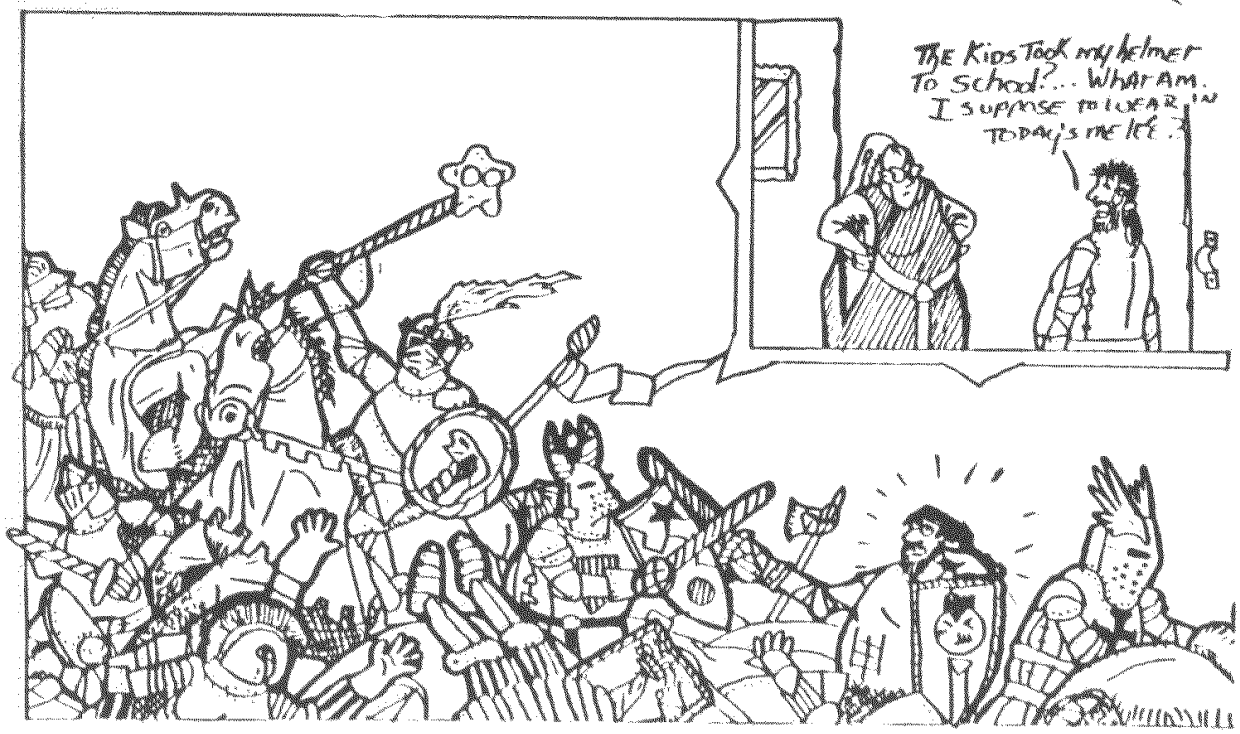
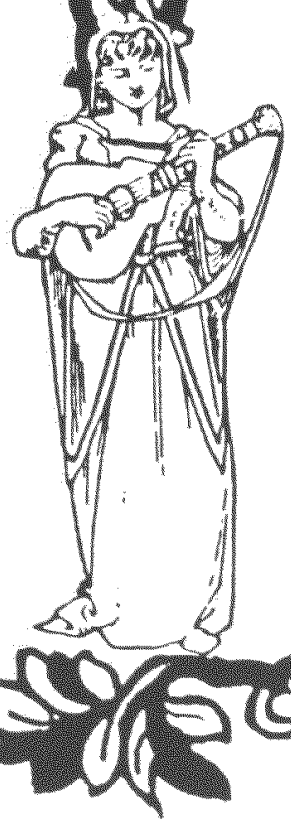


# Poetry



## A Cautionary Note

William the Lucky

*Some have said there's nothing new*
*under the sun and stars,*
*Yet the Valkyries have brought*
*something new from the wars:*
*Found amidst the casualties*
*who were beyond all pain,*
*Well used weapons in their hands,*
*Ladies among the slain.*

*Here is one but five feet tall*
*with halberd eight feet long,*
*There another clad in mail*
*chanting a battle song,*
*And a third with grinning cat*
*upon a sable shield—*
*All but lately borne above*
*from the red battle field.*

*Armor cannot hide their forms*
*from the discerning eye,*
*But the man who stops to gaze*
*will in that moment die.*
*While within the revel hall*
*admire as you will;*
*With a Lady on the field:*
*know that she's come to kill.*

From TI #41, Winter AS XI (1976)

Well, I just received the info on the FLOWERS OF SOUVENANCE, it sounds great! Well, a submission. Yeah, yeah, that's a great idea! So, what to do? A romance story? No, I never finish writing them. I know! A book report! Yes! I just finished one of my favorite books after reading it for the hundredth time or so. It fits! So, while I still thought about it, here is a "book report" for everyone to read. So, no guts, no glory! Here goes nothing!

The book:Queen of Knights
The author:David Wind writing as Monica Barrie
The publisher:Pocket Historical
Copyright: 1985

"Queen of Knights"? Well, so it's a fantasy. I enjoyed it. I'm not saying you will. If you can find it. I found the last copy about two years ago, at a Target or Gemco(Lifetime membership? Yeah,right buddy!) I must warn you also, It's a romance. Not a bodice-ripper, but a romance nonetheless. The basic underlying story is a female, Gwendolyn,and her husband, Miles. And, I can't forget the silver sword and her Eagle, Valkyrie. The sword is magical, and she learns, late in the book to see through her eagle's eyes. There is an evil knight, and all seem to be intimates of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, and there is a special guest appearance by Sir Robin of Locksley, as an archer in a melee Tournament.

She had taught herself how to fight with her magical sword, but she begs a boon of her husband, and he teaches her how to fight properly. Unfortunately,no great detail is given, except in some weapons, and speed is stressed. She fights in a tourney, disguised, of course, and detail, but very little, is given to this. But, a redeeming factor is in the explanation of training(find a good forest and be attacked by your companion a lot) and, Armor.Including steps of putting on armor.

Then, The Crusades happen, and Miles goes away, While she controls the castle, with the help of her maid and twin squires. The evil knight interferes, and Miles is captured, and held for no ransom by Saladin himself. The two strike a friendship of sorts, until Miles refuses to become a Muslim. Gwendolyn senses this, and then the travel and fighting, and some of the fun begins. All in all, it is an enjoyable book, and worth reading once, especially if you enjoy fantasy and romance books. At 372 pages for $3.95 at the time of publication(!(1985, remember), it's worth it if you read it once or twice.

So, sorry for taking your time, I hope you enjoyed it,and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or ideas on how to write a coherent book report! As you can tell, I need it!

Long Live the Dream!
Celeste Cathan,
Kingdom of Caid,
Barony of Lyondomere
2317 Via Pinale
P.V.E. CA 90274

# Rapier

## THE ART of Swishy Poke..
### PART I..
### THE challenge.

A Short Discourse on the Subject of Fence, with Notes of Interest concerning Its Practice by Ladies

By Lord Alexandre Lerot d'Avignè, Premier of the Order of the White Scarf of the Outlands

Many questions have been raised concerning the place of Rapier Combat in the Society, questions concerning safety, interest, its place in history. I will attempt to address as many of these questions as I may.

As to the question of Rapier combat in history, my own research, and that of others, has led me to conclude that Rapier Combat is, indeed period, late period admittedly, but period nonetheless.

To determine more accurately the place of Rapier combat, one must first trace the distinctive elements of Rapier combat that set it apart from the more traditional styles of combat practiced with rattan in the SCA.

The main distinction between Rapier Combat and prior forms of combat was the use of the point versus the use of the edge. The preference for the use of the point led to the development of the Rapier, a sword designed primarily for thrusting. It appears that this rediscovery of the point took place in the early 1500's, probably in Spain.

That this rediscovery took place is documented in a variety of manuals of Fence that were published in the mid 1500's. These include de Carranza's *De la Filosofia de las Armas*, and de Narvaez's *Libro de las Grandezas de la Espada*. The *Filosofia* was published in 1569, well before the SCA cutoff date of 1600.

The Spanish, however, championed a style in these early days

that differs greatly from Rapier Combat as we now practice it. It was the Italians who developed the use of the point into the style with which we are most familiar.

This change, from cut to thrust, was so widespread that, by 1576, it had been introduced to England, chronically late in accepting such innovations. Indeed, by 1600, not only had three Italian Masters set up Schools in London, but one, Vincentio Saviolo, had published a manual concerning combat with Rapier and Dagger, in England, in English.

With the question of the historical accuracy of Rapier Combat hopefully laid to rest, I shall address the subject of Fencing and Rapier Combat in these Current Middle Ages.

The question of safety is an important one. Any fighter, Rattan or Rapier, would not dream of arguing otherwise. I feel, as do many others, that Rapier Combat, as practiced in the Society, is well within acceptable bounds of safety. The primary danger in Fencing lies in the broken blade. A broken blade is quite capable of penetrating a fencing jacket and the flesh beneath. The probability of such an occurrence is quite low, however. In order for a broken blade to penetrate to that extent not only must the combatants be using excessive force in the first place, but some extraordinary move must also have been executed.

To prevent such a dangerous occurrence several steps must be taken. The first and foremost of these is to train Rapier combatants to deliver light touches. A blow need not raise a welt to have been delivered with sufficient force. The flip side of this requires that one also train Rapier combatants to accept

light touches. If a light touch is the standard, force sufficient to penetrate armor and flesh is much less likely to be delivered. The second most important step is to have each combat well marshaled. A marshal in Rapier combat has as one of her (or his) primary duties to watch for loose tips on the weapon and broken blades. The Rapier Fighters also must watch for these incidents, both on their blades, and their opponents. Experienced Rapier Fighters can often tell that a blade is broken merely by the sound it gives when struck, a sudden change in pitch indicating a shortening of the resonating area, in this case the blade.

Given these two precepts, Rapier Combat is a safe and enjoyable aspect of the Society's Martial activity. The danger of injury is always there, as it is in any martial activity, but the risk is so low as to be acceptable, as is the case with Rattan Fighting, or, indeed, with taking a bath or crossing a busy street.

In conclusion, although I have looked, I can find no historical precedent for Lady Rapier Combatants in period. The earliest reference that I can find took place in France in 1650 between two sisters. This is not to indicate in any way that Ladies should not engage in Rapier Combat, quite the contrary, I heartily encourage anyone, male, female or otherwise to practice the art. One of the aspects of the Society which is most appealing is its ability to engage in Anachronism, and Anachronistically speaking, Lady Rapier Fighters are perfectly acceptable.

A final note: It is entirely possible that some of my information is erroneous. Anyone with information concerning any aspect of Fencing is more than welcome to correspond with me. I would love to hear of historical sources, current news of Rapier fighting, or anything else which pertains to this Noble Science in our current Middle Ages.

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I entered my first fencing tournament recently at the Sargeant's and Yeoman's Tourney in the Barony of Thescorre (Rochester, NY). One of my opponents in the round robin match was Jenna Christine. After a few fruitless exchanges, I lunged. She parried. Hoping to avoid her parry, I dropped my blade down as I came forward. I ended up completing the lunge harmlessly between her knees. Seizing the opportunity, I turned my wrist over and drew the tip of my foil up the length of her body from groin protector to gorget. She took a step back, saluted to acknowledge the "kill" and dropped to the grass. The marshall came back onto the field and turned to Jenna to confirm the results.

"You're dead, my lady?"

"Yeah", she replied, still lying prone "It was good."

The marshall turned to the list table intending to announce the result when she continued.

"But then, almost anything inserted between my legs feels pretty good."

I was thankful that I still had my fencing mask on, because I know I blushed as red as the marshall did.

On a more serious note, Dear Goody, the East Kingdom's answer to Dear Abby, recently replied to a letter in Pikestaff (the East Kingdom newsletter) from a fighter who felt "unchivalrous" going into combat against a woman. Goody gave him an answer, but she is not a fighter. I would be interested in hearing opinions from female fighters on this topic.

- Dagonell the Juggler

# Letters to the Editor

## Questions and (Hopefully) Answers

Here follows some opinions of mine that I would like to discuss.

I've only had one fighter of the feminine persuasion to examine closely, but I've dealt with several other successful ones, and not so successful ones, as a local officer. Two generalizations seem worth making. First, those who succeed have "permission" to do what they do. My own lady has been seeking her parents approval all her days, and claims my frown at the concept kept her off the field for months. I can easily see "fighters" remaining "would be's" out of the mistaken notion that "They shouldn't do that." It has occurred to me before that a "Lady" is defined by what she doesn't or can't do, a human being is defined by what they can do.

Second, where are women taught persistance? Patience, I know about, (not as much as any woman knows, but quite a bit), but what about persistance. That is, the keep asking, trying, pushing, 'till you get the answer you want. My lady was fortunate enough to attract the attention of the best fighter/teacher in Ansteorra almost at once. Those who are not so fortunate need to keep trying. 44

I remember, as an officer, being asked by novices of both genders, "How do I make the Fighters take me seriously?" (Such a thing to ask a Senescal!) I hope my answer boiled down to- be serious long enough and it will happen. But-I cannot remember seeing any of the women who asked me that on the field later. Some of the men. No women. Perhaps I didn't recognise them.

What I think is that many people of all types, in all circumstances, are waiting for the permission to live their own lives. That they can only give themselves. And that many more don't try enough ways, or places or times to achieve their heart's desire.

Lord Rupert, Ansteorra

## ONE FIGHTERS OPINION

My lord, as with all people, thier opinions are based on what that individual is exposed to. In the situations you mention, my experiance, and,therfore, opinion is somewhat different. As a fighter, early in my development, my actions were, and still are to some degree, not accepted by my family. I was brought into the SCA by my boyfriend in High School. When we first started out he helped with my armor, but wasn't what I would call encouraging. The Knight I squired to at first was helpful when I asked for guidence, but not as an ongoing thing because of mundane responsibilities. It's not that I didn't have "permission", or that I felt that"I shouldn't do that" that kept me from progressing in SCA combat. It has taken me four years to reach the point others do in maybe a year, because of lack of encouragement and the patronization of the older generation of fighters. At this point I have progressed farther in six months than I have in years because of a new, supportive lord, and an active Knight I squired to not too long ago. Maybe permission wasn't the word you meant to use.

Persistance, that's a hard one for me. Normally I don't keep with anything that doesn't give me results immediatly . But I did with fighting. Maybe it was because there was no other woman I knew of still doing it in my area. I would assume most women are taught persistance in school sports, others in studies. But fighting is different from any other thing that happens in a

mundane life. Especially for women. Fencing is available in some schools, even shinai as a martial art in Kendo. But a similarity for SCA heavy weapons combat isn't.

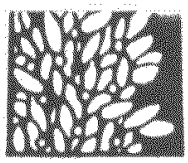
My personal opinion is that sports related persistance is somewhat related to each individuals pain thresh hold . Men are taught as boys that getting dirty, scuffing your knees, and big bruises are all a part of winning the game. Watch football. They are told it is not ok to show pain. Women are told to stay clean, pretty, stick to scholatics or "clean" games like softball, volleyball , or running. The more physical sports are unladylike. At least, that is what it seemed like they were trying to get across where I grew up. At the most tag football and killer dodgeball. And young women are taught a subtle vulnerability. Cry if you hurt. It's ok. Someone will come and help you. A lot of women in my aquaintence have taught themselves not to cry as they got older. I wish I could. Persistance in SCA fighting is difficult with pain along the way. Most women can take it. With childbirth in their future or past, in comparison it doesn't seen much. But there are times when you begin to say, "One more tourney. I've gotten banged up, but I'm getting better."

I don't know Ansteorra, but when a fighter is badly injured the crowd and the opponent feel bad. When that fighter is a woman, the opponent (if male) feels <u>really</u> bad. And everyone in the crowd comes forward concerned. If there are tears, everyone goes into worry. I try to control myself when I get hurt, but my two reactions are anger and tears. Since anger is a big no-no, there are uncontrollable tears. I hate it when I do it. It makes me think I'm a fool, and I think immediately that everyone thinks I'm a silly little girl who got hurt playing big boys games. It's hard to be persistant like that. I feel worse when I look at my opponent and I see how bad he feels. Men are usually taught not to hit defenseless women. We wear armor on the field, so combat is different. But when we are hurt, everything stops, healers rush to the sidelines, your lord runs up, I've even seen tears on my opponents face.

But, of course, those are worst case scenarios. Persistence is different for all on the field, of course. There has to be the spark of enthusiasm when donning armor. The remembered compliment of the Duke and Viscount as you walk off the field from holding out in your shieldwall the longest. The comments from others you never thought would notice your fighting in a million years. All the things that make fighting a pleasure, for me at least, have come with time invested. I never found the answer I wanted, but I did find a few that I needed.

ALABAMA

Lady Alfrida Gruemach, Baroness Iron Mountain



I think your newletter is a terrific idea. I have been fighting in the SCA for about five years. I started in the mundane state of South Carolina and moved to Alabama. Currently I am the only active female fighter in Alabama, and the same was true when I lived in South Carolina. I wish there had been something like this out when I first started. I'm sure you will be recieving a lot of positive feedback from fighters all over.

- This typifies the letters I have been recieving in praise of the FOS. I appreciate all the complements. However, several have written in apprehention about a newsletter solely for the lady fighter only. They feel that our hard earned position as equals on the field of combat might prove endangered if we start to set ourselves apart. I understand the consternation over that, but as I have said in the begining, and here now, this info can and has been used by any type of fighter in the SCA. The following is a letter I recieved that made me think quite a bit, and I would like to share it and my answering letter with you.

Ruth Cantu near the Barony of the Far West

I just joined the SCA about two years ago. And, of course, the best teacher for a fighter or future fighter is experience . But I would like to find out about this "insanity" before I try it out myself and invest my own money into armor. My love for weapons got me interested in fighting. When the FOS came out it gave me information that I could use. And since that involves female fighters that's even better. Back in the states I had other engagements that stopped me from trying this idea to it's max. Now that I'm in Korea I have more time but there are few female fighters here to give me advice and guidence. For example; what area of the body to protect the most, what problems they faced in getting thier first armor, tricks of the trade as far as getting armor to fit, and rattan weapons to balance right.

Also the different fighting styles and how each one relates to body movement so I can see what I should try out first.

-I hope this issue helped you out some. There will be more information pertaining to armor and fighting styles available in upcoming issues. The hardest one is trying to teach a fighting style on paper. I've seen it done by the best, but without instruction with hands on experience it can be confusing. I would suggest two things. Try to get in touch with Sir Trude Lacklandia, (aka Trude Duckworth). She should be in your area in the US Army. Second, when it comes out, get a copy of Sir William the Lucky's Headless House Fighter's Handbook. I have it from good authority that it is one of the best, (short of a real class),on the subject of fighting.

Claude Ansteorra

I see a noble picture: a warrior dons his helm, while his lady hands him his sword, and checks the seams on the gambeson and tunic she made.....

Who helps the lady fighter? Not with fighting, the other fighters do that. With all the things that being a fighter leaves precious little time for? For she will surely sew her own garb, probably make her own armor, and absolutely be whispered,(or shouted about), if she is not immaculate at court....

And what reward for one who tries to help? I is not US if the ladies get anything but reflected glory. Is there anything for a man who fills the tankard, or the gas tank, or the bank account. And how many fighters of all sorts aren't there because they had to work, or just couldn't do it all alone?

-I'm sure there are many who would have "picked up the stick" if time, money, or helpful companionship allowed. What kind of reward does a man look for when he fills the empty_____ of his favorite lady fighter. If it is appreciation and gratitude, I am sure he will get it along with thanks. There are exceptional lady fighters that do their own armoring and garb as well as their husband's/boyfriend's. They also do calligraphy, illumination, music, officer's duties, service, demo's, look after kids, cook meals, clean house, and hold down steady jobs. They are called "wonderwomen", and sometimes "Sir _____" . I don't know about them, but I'm always asking my lord to help me with things that he can.

About this bank account thing...any more at home like you?

Celeste Cathan West

Are costume ideas accepted? Personae stories, romance/ fantasy/fiction short stories?

YES! When it comes right down to it, I'll publish just about anything anyone sends me. I would prefer, however, personae stories, period or anachronistically period fiction short stories, and romance is ok, as long as the hero and herione are both fast with a blade. Send me anything you think might be of interest to the readers of the FOS. Just remember, quite a number of gentelmen also subscribe to this newsletter and I would like it to interest them as well. (ie-no Harlequin or soap-opera stuff unless in good taste. ha ha)

Maeve the Hither-dweller of the House of the Drunken archers
OUTLANDS

Thanks again for the advice that you and Duke Christopher gave freely to me at the Unser Haven Octoberfest Tourney. I initially thought that my decision to try fighting would be met with discouragement. Instead, I've found more encouragement than I ever expected! My helm should be finished shortly, and a lot of time in November will be set aside for constructing armor...We'll see what happens then!

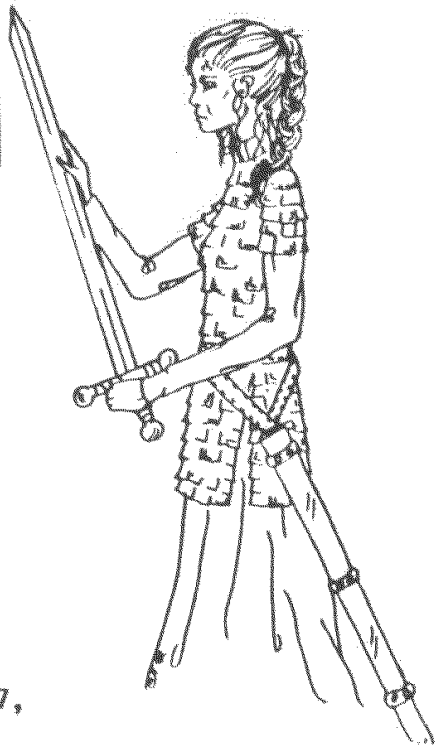
Lord Cadfan Morgan Godrudd Ansteorra

Hi! We me at Pennsic. I don't know if you remember me, but I'm sure you remember my Laurel, Mistress Aeruin, (who says Hi! too).

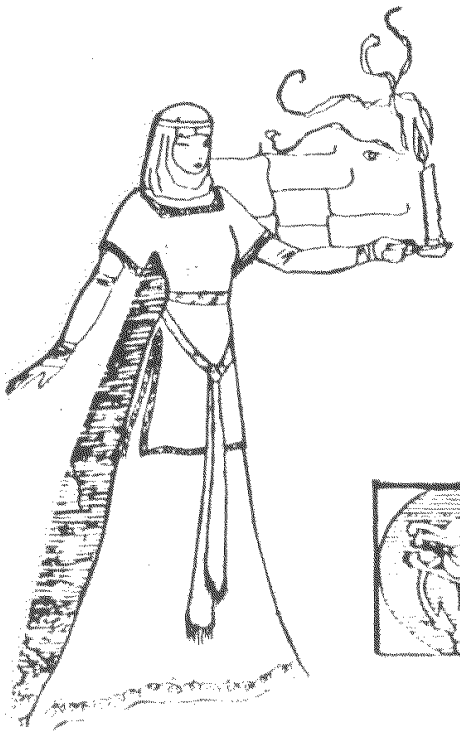
I was really very impressed with your first issue. The two biggest reasons for my being in the SCA are : the unusual, (but almost always solid gold), characters that abound in this group, and, the different perspective it gives it gives me on life in general. Your newsletter catered to both of these interests. Lady fighters are very special people, even for the SCA, and consequently getting to see things from thier point of view is fascinating. Plus, being a bard, I enjoy collecting war stories!

-I usually try to keep away from publishing such letters to avoid blowing my own horn, but I felt I should include this one because it's from a gentleman, and he's a nice and extremely talented young man.

# Art Credits



Baroness Katherine Linnet Holford;
Vine border 20, 21, 22, 29, 48, 49, 52.
Darkwater; Flower border 1, 2, 17, 25, 26, 27, 35, 39, and redrawn cartoon 36.
Supplied by Kata de Mar and Mermade Magickal Arts; 17, 21, 29, 47, 51.
Supplied by Lady Ki of Weatherhill; Cover, 25, borders, 4, 6, 11, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43.
Master Gabriel du Reynard; Border 37.
Galen of Wiltshire; Cartoons inside back cover, 9, 20, 27, 38, 39, 44.
Aoibhiel of Dunholen; Border 13, 14, 15, 16.



## SURVEY

If you need need space please use extra sheet(s) of paper.

Where are you approximately.

1. Kingdom:_____; 2. Principality/Region: _____ ;
3. Barony, Shire, Canton. College, Ridding:_____ ;
4. What is your Kingdoms/Principality/Local rules if any as to women's breast and genital protection: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who are you.

4. Rank:_____; 5. Are you a warranted marshal:____;
6. How long have you been a fighter (circle one) under 6 months; one year; two years; three years; four years; five years; six years; seven years; eight years; nine years; ten years; how many years over ten years ___;
7. What are the weapons you most commonly fight with: _____

_____

8. Armor style, and materials _____

_____

Physical characteristics:

9. Height ____; 10. Weight ____; 11. Bone structure:(circle one) small, medium, large; 12. Bra size ___,cup size;___ ; 13. What one or combination best describes the structure of your breasts: soft, medium, firm, hard, lumpy,

Other:_____

Breast and Genital protection:

14. What type if any breast and genital protection are you know using:_____
15. What are its pros, and cons _____

_____

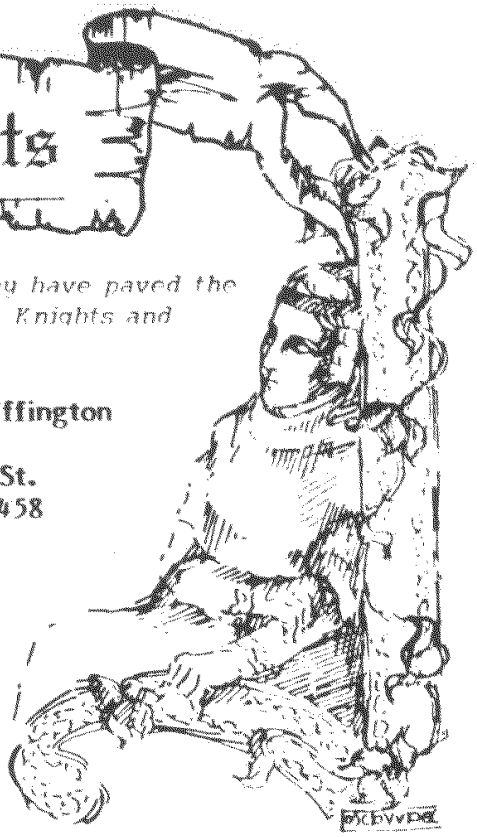
_____

Did you try the breast protection described in this article?___; What are its pros, and cons: _____

_____

The information gathered here will help to develop some general characteristics of female fighters, their likes and dislikes. Please return your completed survey as soon as possible to Lady Pegasus Devona c/o Laurie E. W. Brandt, 928 S. Davis St., McMinnville, OR 97128. The results of this survey will be compiled and made available in the next years Summer issue.

# Lady Knights



*We owe these courageous Knights quite a bit. They have paved the way for the rest of us to someday wear the belts of Knights and Masters.*

**Sir Trude Lacklandia**
**c/o Trude Duckworth**
**362nd SIG. CO.**
**APO San Francisco, CA**
**96301-0036**

**Lady Mary of Uffington**
**c/o Mary Rowe**
**417 Kostmayer St.**
**Slidell, LA 70458**

**Sir Maythen of Elfhaven**
**c/o Dana Kramer-Rolls**
**6174 Bernhard Ave.**
**Richmond, CA 94805**

Countess Sir Andrea of Clearmount
(unable to find current adress)

**Sir Cyf O'Donnell**
**c/o Sonja & Fred Ross**
**730 N. College**
**Edmond, OK 73034**

Sir Polverk Mmchiliavich
(unable to find current adress)

**Sir Hilary of Serendip**
**c/o Hilda Powers**
**5390 Broadway #25**
**Oakland, CA 94618**

**Sir Leah DeSpencer**
**c/o Leah Spencer**
**2359 Cavalier Dr.**
**Salt Lake City, UT 84121**

**Sir Fern De'La'Foret**
**c/o Lorraine Erikson**
**7 Sherman Terrace #6**
**Madison, WI 53704**

"The fighter prepares... Mentally, he is ready for this fight, and his body has been trained for combat..."
1
"With total-discipline, and this final act of arming, I become the Perfect killing machine, ready for anything..."
2
I'm not ready
"What'ya doing Mom?"
3

# Flower of Souvenance

Lady Cymber of the Dark Water
C/O KC Chase
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Denver, CO 80209