

FLOWER OF SOUVENANCE

LETTERS FOR THE FALCON GENTLE

#7

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Greetings!

By request I have started using a table of contents again. On the pages the page numbers are not included they are implied.

Ladies on the field - I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to write the Society Marshal regarding armor standards for women and their recent changes. His name and address are:

Viscount Wulfbrand Lurkr
c/o H.D. Nall
175 Findley Square
Hampton, VA 23666

Please be informed as it effects you directly.

Other than that, there is not much to say. Please look at the new disclaimer (on the last page) as it includes new information for subscriptions, advertising, and deadlines.

As always you are entreated to send me submissions for the Estrella War issue!

Many thanks, Cymber.

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Cover Art by Llamrei ap Pendaren

Following is a copy of the letter I sent to the Society Marshall. I would like to find out what the other readers of Flower of Souvenance think about the armor regulations. I know that some Kingdoms have different regulations and I would also like to find out what the standards are for lady fighters in each of the different kingdoms are.

Lady AElfrida Gruemach, Baroness Iron Mountain.

Warm Greetings to his Excellency, Sir Wulfbrand Lurkr, Society Marshal.
From Lady AElfrida Gruemach, Baroness Iron Mountain.

Sorry, I was unable to reach you by phone last week. Thanks for calling back and leaving a message on our machine. Hope things are going well in Arizona.

I heard from some people returning from Pennsic that there will be new armor regulations for lady fighters. They said that from now on, all female fighters must have a solid metal band, to protect their breasts. I talked with our kingdom Earl Marshall, Duke Lawrence of Ashana (my knight), and he said that this was discussed at a meeting, but that nothing had been decided yet.

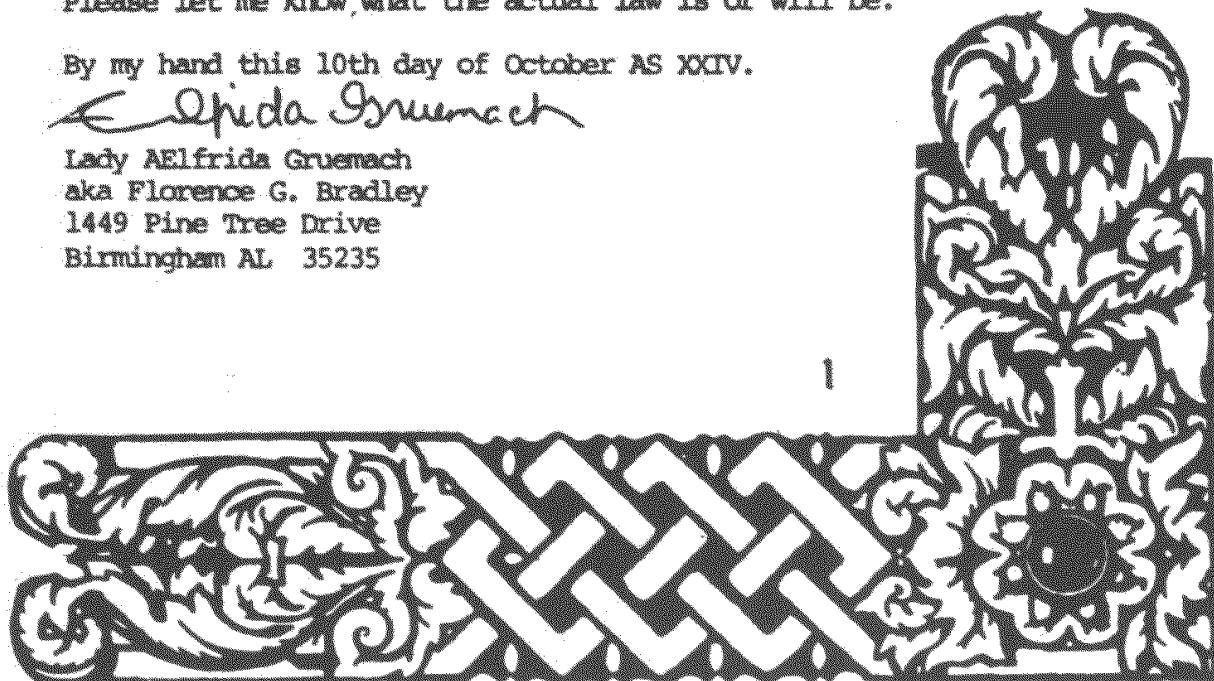
I am writing to you because I am against such legislation across the board, with out considering other armoring options. For example my armor is made out of double thickness sole leather. Twice the normal thickness, that you would find at a Tandy's store. I have been hit in the chest thousands of times since I began fighting seven years ago, and I have never suffered any bruises or injury there. By the same token, I am opposed to wearing chain mail with out ridge protection for fighters who have a size B cup or larger. Some men also have breasts. I do not think that they should be exempt from this ruling, because that would be discrimination.

Please let me know what the actual law is or will be.

By my hand this 10th day of October AS XXIV.

AElfrida Gruemach

Lady AElfrida Gruemach
aka Florence G. Bradley
1449 Pine Tree Drive
Birmingham AL 35235





Brian Mac Braud

In response to Countess Cymber's request for articles to appear in Flowers, I am writing an article for the male constituent of readers who obviously have an interest in women fighters. Specifically, this is an article to help men train women, but it serves just as well for anyone who trains fighters.

I have been fighting in the SCA for nearly four years. During this time I have trained a small number of women fighters. I have also taught Karate for nearly six years. During this time I helped train a fair number of women. Several of the ladies I worked with have gone on to win state titles. I don't claim responsibility for their success, but I have done fairly well in passing my knowledge to women.

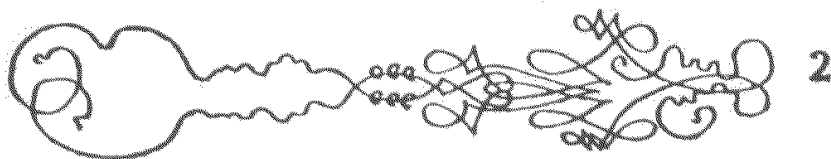
Now after some time without the opposite sex to teach, I again find myself in the process of training a woman. This time though, it is one that wants to make me King. Life is ever interesting!

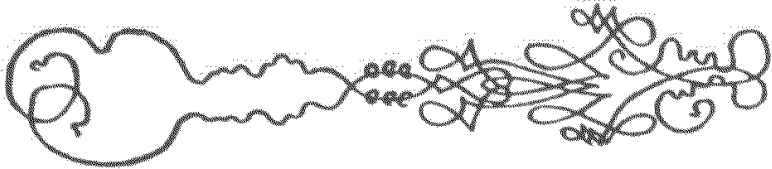
There are many things that must be kept in mind when training anybody, man or woman. Remember that you are dealing with living, thinking beings that have their own loyalties, strengths, weaknesses, and egos. To forget this is to fail to teach.

First assess your student. Find his or her strengths and weaknesses. Then determine their willingness to train. Most newcomers will realize, after one practice bout, that there is much to learn. Some will come in with a chip on their shoulder. Teach these so that they are safe, then leave them to learn by themselves because they will always be a disruption to the class, and will tend to undermine your authority and hence your ability to teach.

Later, if they come to you, take them on. Some will come to you asking to be taught, but not willing to follow your instructions. You must make your decision then as to your course of action. I have had students of another art who come to train with me, but who won't put aside their previous experience and learn what I have to teach. I have even encountered this problem with my own lady. She's been fighting five years longer than I have and most of that was in other Kingdoms. Often times I find it difficult to convince her to practice my techniques when we train. If you encounter this problem, you must carefully explain that these techniques have proven useful in the past and that the fighter would profit by mastering them and practicing them. Then, if the student doesn't find them as useful as the teacher did, he or she doesn't have to use them in a fight.

Since the SCA does not usually maintain the strict discipline of the dojo one must teach "easy". This means not telling a student that a technique that they have developed or have been taught will not work, but maintaining that "If you were to alter that technique this way, it would land more often" or "I think you would find better results by using this technique at the end of this combination instead of that other one." Do not neglect to explain how and under what circumstances to use what you have taught.





Organize your teaching. Write out a lesson plan if need be. Cover important issues each session and remember to concentrate on the basics. When an opponent knows all your tricks and fancy techniques, one can always win by falling back on basic blows and maneuvers. Train your warriors. Establish a format for class and hold to it. For instance:

Class at the Shire of Stout Sticks could consist of;

1. warming up, stretching, loosing up.
2. pellwork, slow-work, explaining new techniques.
3. shield drills armored instruction, single combats with observations and notes.
4. free practice, personal instruction for those who need it.
5. conditioning.

Warming up should consist of drills designed to get your muscles ready to fight, and should be begun before armoring up. Sir Hillary's article in issue #3 of Flowers describes several warm-up exercises that work well.

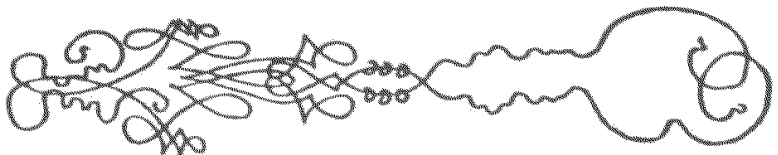
Pellwork is simple and it is a must! It allows a student to increase strength and speed. It allows you a way to fine tune their technique. But the most important thing is that it trains the muscles to throw a fast hard blow on a split second decision, without having to concentrate on technique. Pellwork is the single most important feature for improving one's offense through muscle memory.

Slow-work is the out of armor practice of moving through different blows and combinations at a controlled pace. It allows the instructor to watch for mistakes that tend to blur out at a fast pace, and to make corrections where needed so that the fighter can feel the correct procedure. This is also the time to teach new techniques, stances, footwork, or other things, to an unarmored group of fighters, and allow them to walk through it with you.

Now it's time to put the armor on. Have the students shield drill each other. One person throws the recently taught blows while the other blocks. This can be done at full speed to improve the fighters' timing. Take time with you students. Observe them. Step in and explain when you see a problem. Also remember to let them teach each other. They both have eyes and should eventually be able to spot mistakes, even if they make those mistakes themselves. Have set, single combats where everyone watches and comments on the fight, both the rights and wrongs.

Let them break up and practice against whomever they wish. This is a good time to personally instruct those who seemed to be having trouble earlier.

Now comes the hard part. At a designated time recall all the fighters you have been instructing and start a little conditioning. Most of the fighters have gotten quite a bit of aerobic exercise so far but specific muscle regions need to be taxed further. Traditionally, conditioning is done before practice in the martial arts, but I've found that without the strict discipline of a martial arts class, the average fighter may give up and quit.





Start this conditioning with shield raises. Slowly lift the shield and dip the shield in a parody of actual fighting. Once the students are sufficiently worn out, have them grasp their swords by the blade towards the tip. Work the wrist and forearm by curling and rotating the sword.

Now some specifics for women. Up front we see some basic differences between men and women (pun intended). It is important for guys to realize (with more than just their hormones) that the bumps on her chest are only one of many physical differences that will have to be taught around. Women's breasts come a variety of shapes and sizes and they may not allow some women to throw the same blows the same way you do. Also note that the way a woman's hip rotates is not the same as a man's. This will cause an over exaggeration of some hip movements (watch a woman walk). Teach your women students how to use the shoulders and stomach as well as the hips to increase power and speed.

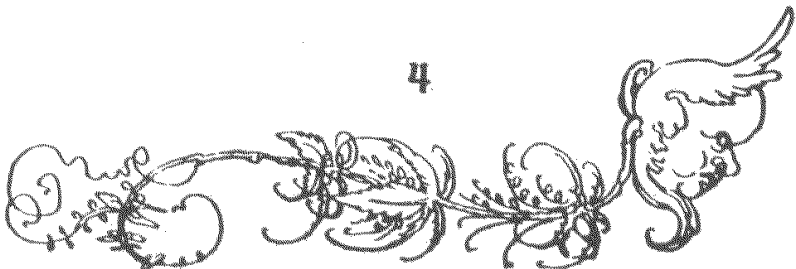
Remember to train people according to their body type. Some techniques that may easily be executed by Sir Goliath may not be as easily executed by a 95 lb. fighter. Be reasonable and correct in your assessment of your students' capabilities. Give all your students a firm grounding in the basics before going into the specifics for their body type. The basics should be body independent.

With women and smaller fighters work hard to increase stamina and strength, because there is little substitute for raw power and speed in the real world. Look at the best fighters in your area. They will usually fall into two categories- physical fighters and technicians. If you are not gifted with the perfect body or massive amounts of strength, you must learn the technique, for your "life" on the field depends on it.

Make your students do sit-ups, especially the kind where you twist at the top. This will help strengthen their blows tremendously by allowing more force to be generated by the hips as well as the shoulders and stomach. Have them do pushups, chin-ups, and curls when possible. These exercises will improve their sword handling capabilities. A setup for cross-body pulls and rows is also useful to improve swordplay.

Remember, there are differences between men and women beyond the physiological ones already mentioned. Women are not traditionally taught to develop those gross hand eye motor skills that are needed to become great fighters in the SCA. Therefore it is up to the trainer to overcome an eighteen to twenty year setback (because most of the women old enough to fight in the SCA have not had the benefit of today's less categorizing views). Other suggestions for improving these deficiencies are, believe it or not, video games. They allow the brain to function at the level needed in combat, while improving hand-eye coordination. Anyone with other ideas for training women, or anyone else for that matter, please feel free to write me.

Brian Mac Braud
c/o Scott Wilson
256 South Dean Road
Auburn, AL 36830



A FAMILIAR WORD ABOUT AN UNFAMILIAR WEAPON

Countess Cymber of the Darkwater

At the request of several fellow heavy weapons fighters at Pennsic, I would like to introduce you to a close, personal friend of mine, the Madu.

During a series of Guardsmen battles at Pennsic, I approached the opposing side and asked them if my favorite weapon was acceptable. One marshal looked it over with a puzzled look on his face and said, "Well, its alien."

Well, alright, I suppose it might seem so. I was first introduced to it by my first Knight, Earl Mika Longbow. It was a stick of rattan with a trusting point only, at each tip, and centered on the stick was an oversized basket hilt. His speed with it was amazing. He could block everything from a slot to a wrap, and then bring it back quick enough for a stab at his attacker. He also used to fight with a tiny pie-plate shield sometimes, usually to impress people like his squires, and it worked. You get to be impressed by a man who can block 98% of all incoming shots with nothing larger than a small dish. He once hinted it was because of his work with the Madu.

Years later I became involved with my current lord and soon-to-be husband. he also fought with a Madu, but in a completely different style. It was strangely "accidental" looking, but with a flowing grace uniquely it's own. As I was in a slump in my fighting progression at the time and decided to pick one up, after all I hadn't much to lose but my life and I was doing that well enough already!

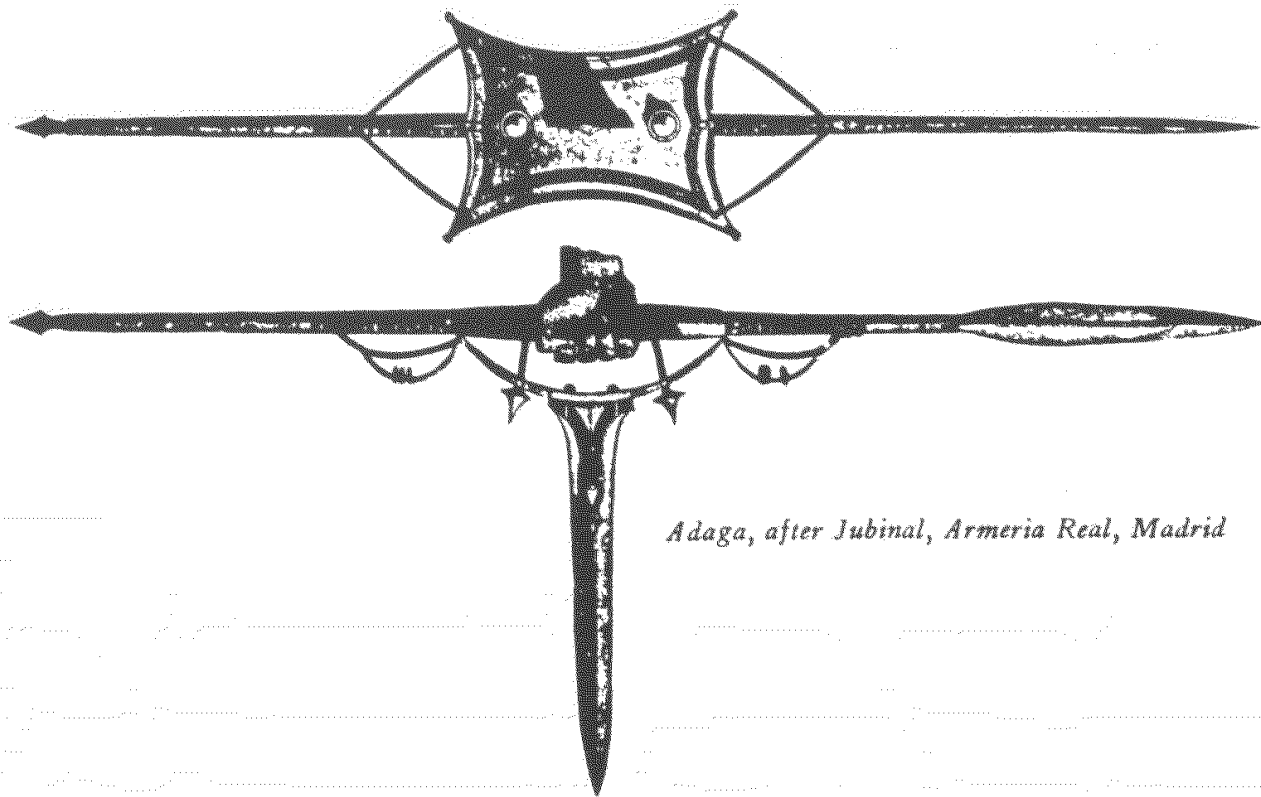
Originally we attached a small, heavy metal plate with a hollowed out boss for a center grip. Later we went to a basket hilt of welded steel. My speed and skill went up dramatically. Although it's not much use against those who do not use face-thrusts, it hits solid enough to the leg, arm or body to be a useful, all-around type weapon/shield.

Historically there are two variations that can be traced. In A Glossary of the Construction Decoration and Use of Arms and Armor; by George Cameron Stone They are listed as follows:

ADAGA, ADARGA, ADARGUE. A shield or parrying weapon. It is of Arabic design and the name is derived from the Arabic el-darakah, a shield.

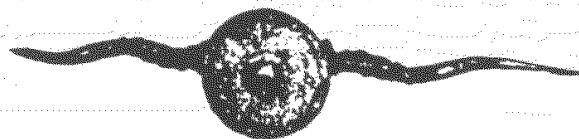
The weapon usually called by this name is a shield made of two ellipses with their longer sides overlapping. Frequently it is made of two oval plates riveted to a straight bar. It is made of metal, leather or wood covered with leather. It was used, mainly in Spain, from the latter part of the 14th to well into the 16th Century.

Under this name Jubinal illustrates a weapon of quite different character, which he says was used by the Moors in the 15th Century.

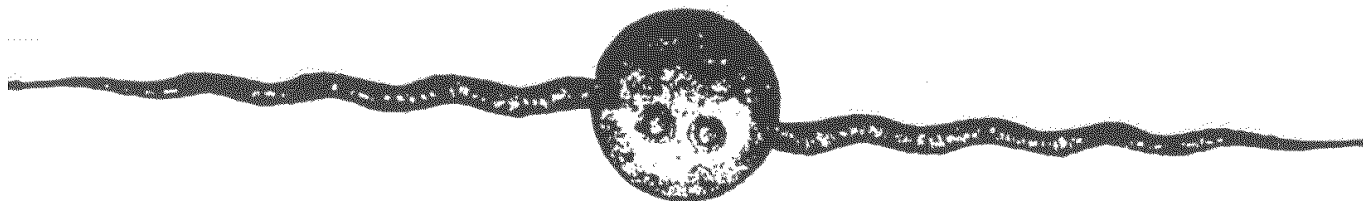


Adaga, after Jubinal, Armeria Real, Madrid

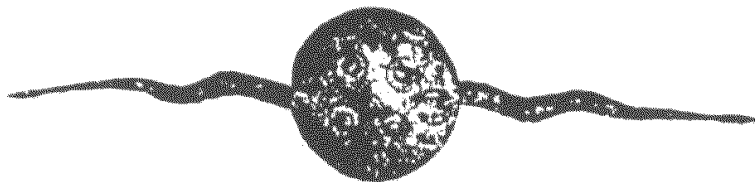
MADU, MARU, SINGAUTA. An Indian parrying and thrusting weapon consisting of a pair of black buck horns fastened together with their points in opposite directions. Usually the horns overlap, but sometimes they are fastened to the opposite ends of a small handle. In either case the hand is protected by a small circular shield of leather or iron. The horns usually have steel points on the ends. It was used by the Bhils and other wild tribes and was a favorite with Hindu religious beggars. It was also used by swordsmen for guarding, being held in the left hand.



Madu. 1. Steel shield 5.5 inches in diameter with a brass boss and a knife-like spike. Lapped horns with steel tips.



2. Steel shield 8.75 inches in diameter, chiseled border inlaid with gold. Very long horns placed end to end and separated by an ivory handle. Length 5 feet 2 inches.



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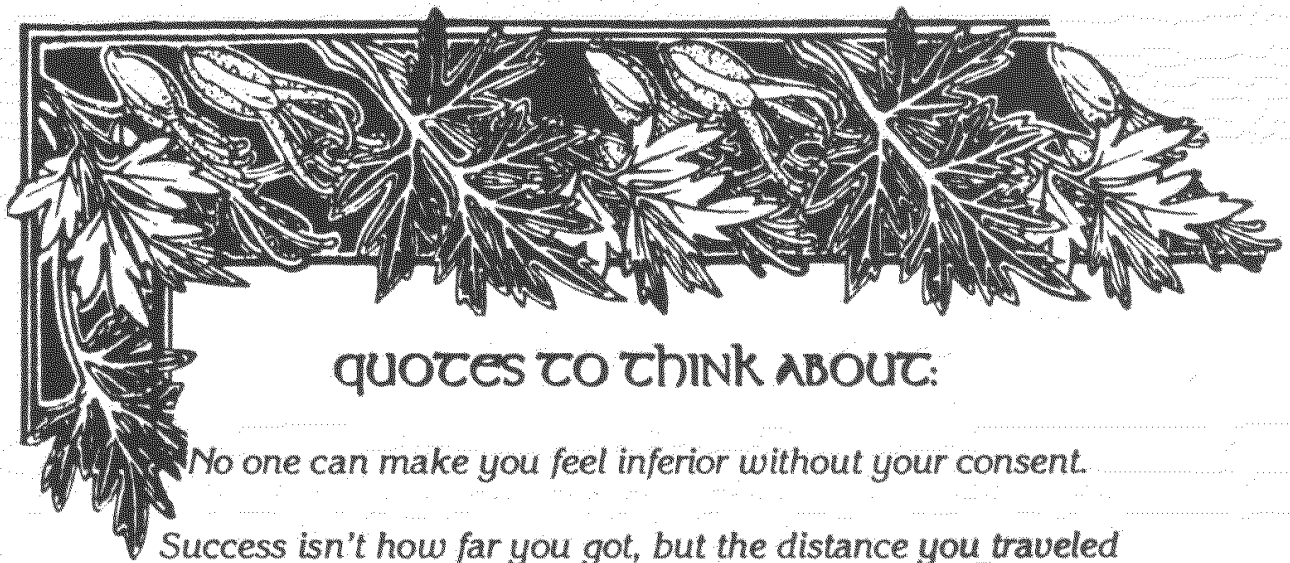
3. Leather shield with brass bosses and ornaments. Lapped horns with steel tips.

The first person in the SCA to use one in combat was Sir Asad ud Din, who still plays in the Freehold of the Great River (Outlands).

As for its combat use, it varies from person to person. Most people use it as much offensive as defensive, striking with the upper as well as lower spike, shield hooking and deflecting blows with the center boss or basket hilt. I hold it loosely with all but the first two fingers, letting it pivot for more agility. In Kingdoms where grappling is allowed the shafts of the Madu could be grasped as there is no blade edge, only point. When fighting against one there is the center slot to consider as well as the ability to spin the Madu out of it's protective range.

I find that a shield is too inhibiting and allows for much less vision than the Madu. They can be light or heavy, depending upon preference. The center "shield" area can be centered, or put off center for more reach with a certain spike. It's not what I would call an "acquired taste". Some of those who have fought with one, stuck with it, some prefer florintine swords instead, some prefer a shield.

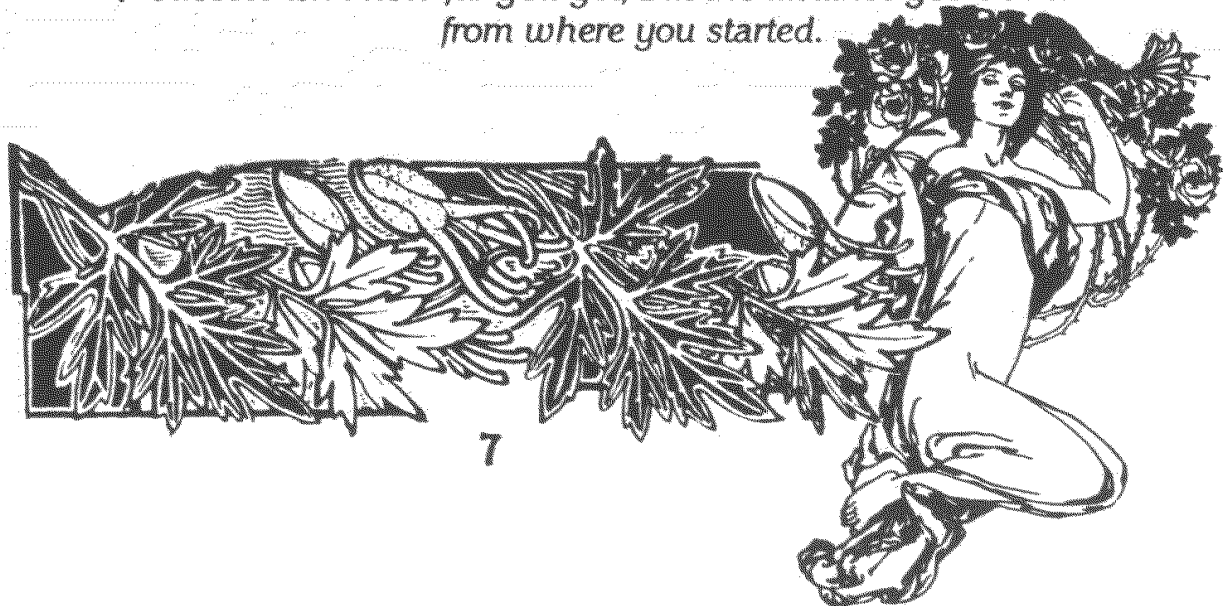
Like all weapons it has its good and bad points, but it is ever a weapon to be respected.



QUOTES TO THINK ABOUT:

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

Success isn't how far you got, but the distance you traveled from where you started.





THE DRAGON FLIES AT DAWN

By Gwyneth Maeve of Falconguard

The dragon flies at dawn.
You sleep now, 'round a spear-shaft curled;
Tomorrow thou shalt be unfurled
And in the winds of battle swirled.

The dragon flies at dawn.
Beloved Dafydd, kin and friend,
A Norman spear thy life did end;
Soon on thy slayers we descend.

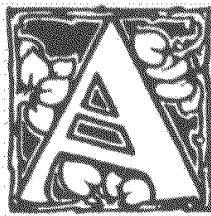
The dragon flies at dawn.
We've sent our scouts down to the ford,
Unslung the shield, unsheathed the sword
To avenge the murder of our lord.

The dragon flies at dawn.
I am no maiden shy and frail;
I've scorned my silken gown and veil
and wait here, clothed in helm and mail.

The dragon flies at dawn.
The stars are watching, cold and bright.
Our vengeance we await this night:
Death comes on wings of morning light.

(This poem is patterned after early, 6-10th Century, Welsh poetry of which a common feature was the use of incremental repetition to reinforce a theme.)





LESSON IN TACTICS:

The Mustache War, April A.S. XXIII
an editorial
by Viscount Galen of Bristol, KSCA, CSG

The Mustache War was fought between the Baronies of Bryn Gwlad and the Steppes, primarily for fun. The excuse was that Baron of the Steppes, Master Robin of Gilwell, claimed heraldic infringement by the men of Bryn Gwlad upon his registered badge ("[fieldless], a mustache [tinctureless]"). The war was fought on April 1st, A.S. XXIII (1989 c.e.), and was treated as a practice for the War with the Outlands later in the year.

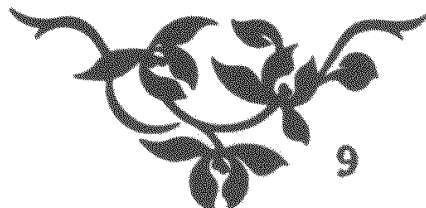
Both sides exhibited a very high level of chivalry and good will toward their opponents, and it was quite a friendly war.

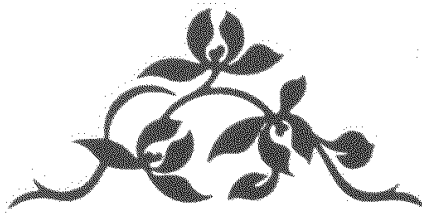
About half of each side was made up of very in-experienced fighters, many of whom had been fighting for less than one month. These were led, on the Steppes side, by highly experienced war leaders, notably the Steppes Warlord, Duke Inman McMoore, with Count Finn Kelly O'Donnell, Sir Arthur of the Fen, Sir Burke Kyriell McDonald, and the Captain of the Steppes Baronial Guard, Lord Gunthar Jonson. The Bryn Gwlad troops were led by the Captain of the Baronial Guard, Lord Conor mac Cinniede, with Lord Kien MacEwan, who was a member of the Eastrealm's House von Halstern, a renowned fighting unit; these two were coached by Sir Ricardo di Pisa and myself, and aided on the field by Lord Pendaran Glamorgan, Don Christian Richard Dupre, Lord Robin Solarius, Duke Hector Phillip Martel, Lord Sean Tabor and myself.

The first battle was a pass battle in which the Steppes was the defender. They set up a standard shield wall with poles behind it. Javeline throwers and a few archers sent missiles at the Bryn Gwlad forces. Bryn Gwlad advanced slowly and whittled away at the wall in standard fashion with primarily pole weapons, while our numerous archers (about ten) decimated their backfield. Duke Inman died in this barrage. The battle ended with most of Steppes' commanders dead, their shield-wall destroyed, and their forces in disarray. Bryn Gwlad had taken heavy casualties but maintained its formations and command structure.

In the second such battle, Steppes was the aggressor. Bryn Gwlad set up its defense slightly back from the narrowest portion of the pass, in a concave formation. Steppes sent a party led by Sir Burke through the center of the wall, and they killed several of the Bryn Gwlad polemen, including Lord Conor, before they were killed. The shield wall's discipline proved equal to the task of closing up after being breached, and the Steppes was unable to sustain the attack or reinforce Burke. Laird Kien took control of the force, and the battle progressed much as the first had done, with the archers inflicting heavy casualties among the highest-threat opposing fighters.

The second scenario called for combat across a long low ridge, about five feet tall and no more than fifteen feet across, with two openings, one large and one small, through the hedge below one side. Bryn Gwlad took up a defensive position on the side opposite the hedge, just below the top of the ridge, so that attacking forces would be most exposed upon reaching



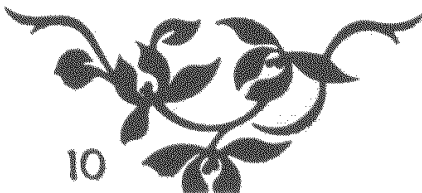


the top, and their second rank rendered useless. The bulk of the army took the large opening, and while my team of ten (including three archers) held the small opening with the six shieldmen from Ffynnon Gath. The large opening was defended in standard fashion, with heavy casualties on both sides. Attempts to punch through the shieldwall, while somewhat successful, always ended with the attackers killed and the shield wall closed behind them. The small opening had only one such attack, and some were sent from the main force to help dispatch them. After this, only two or three of Steppes' fighters opposed us on the small pass, so we went through (Fahd Lonewolf, carrying a spear and backed up by a lone archer, did a good job of holding back the passage for the Steppes until I sent the entire group through at once). We came around the back of the severely depleted Steppes force and the battle was quickly over.

In the second combat in the ridge scenario, the Bryn Gwlad forces arrayed themselves similarly, and the Steppes forces pulled back about 30 yards to fight an action in open field. The Steppes were organized in several smaller mobile units and attempt to wait until our archers had run out of arrows. After about twenty minutes of careful shooting, Duke Inman and Count Finn had fallen, as had most of their polemen. Skirmishing groups led by Lord Sean Tabor and by Duke Hector had sallied out several times and engaged small groups, inflicting some casualties in this fashion. As our archers reached the point of about a half dozen arrows each, we pulled them back. Soon the remaining Steppes forces gathered into a single shieldwall. Certain that we could not be flanked, we charged out through the passes and fought. Their shield wall dissolved upon contact with ours, and ours followed suit. However, our fighters re-formed into groups of three to five fighters, while theirs went singly or in twos. We won the field, suffering heavy casualties.

The next battle was the ford battle. The Steppes was to defend a ford, and we were to attack across it. Belted fighters and nobles were assumed to be mounted, and others were assumed to be on foot. This manifested itself in the ford as the unmounted fighters were forced to their knees. When lay-on was called, the Bryn Gwlad force was disorganized and uncertain what the plan was. Steppes chose to take advantage of this by abandoning their defense and charging across the ford, so we ended up fighting between the same two large bushes that had previously defined the pass battle. Steppes' charge was met decisively, and their fighters were stopped by the sheer mass of our army. (In the course of their charge across the ford, the Steppes lost nearly a dozen fighters in the stream who had not been told exactly where the ford was.) A tight-packed melee ensued. Bryn Gwlad's commanders continuously urged fighters forward through any available avenue, and encouraged the front line to push forward. Steppes had no such direction or encouragement. Apparently, neither side thought to send fighters around the bush to flank their opponents, which theoretically should have been legal under the scenario (this time, it was just a bush; it didn't represent something else that couldn't be flanked). This tactic by the Steppes effectively neutralized our archers, but to the surprise of many on both sides, Bryn Gwlad still prevailed, due primarily, I believe, to superior discipline.

Next was the "capture-the-flag" scenario, in which each army's Baron, banner, champion, guard captain and two others were the points. Standing for the Steppes with Master Robin were his Warlord, Duke Inman, his





banner-bearer, Lord Karl Sturmfeuer (Count Finn's squire), and two others, Sir Thorkel and Lord Sutan (who are both former Warlords of the Steppes). With Herr Johann was his champion, Don Dominic Sentri, Laird Kien MacEwan for the Baronial Guard (Lord Conor had previously been injured), Lord Antonio (Don Alden's cadet) with the Baronial flag, plus Duke Hector, and myself. The Bryn Gwlad tactic was to separate the targets as much as possible and place them in teams that could protect them, while the bulk of the army sought their targets. We expected they would do the same thing. They didn't. A team including Duke Inman, Sir Thorkel, and Lord Sutan, with Sir Burke, Lord Frederick and Lord Lance came charging across the field and were directly responsible for the deaths of most of our targets. (During this time, Duke Inman injured his shoulder when, about to strike Don Sentri, he realized that Sentri's faceplate had come open, and stopped a blow he had already thrown.) However, by the time they had finished this work, the rest of the Steppes army was dead. Bryn Gwlad had about twenty fighters left; our only remaining champion was Duke Hector. Facing them were Duke Inman, Sir Thorkel, Lord Sutan, Sir Burke, and Lord Frederick. The other Steppes targets were dead, as was the rest of their army. Rather than hide in our force and mop them up, Duke Hector chivalrously chose to face them in single combat. In this manner he slew Lord Frederick, Duke Inman, and Sir Thorkel. Hector was felled by Sir Burke. Lord Sutan was their only remaining champion. Twenty Bryn Gwlad fighters remained on the field against two from the Steppes, but under the rules of this scenario, they had won.

The final battle was a resurrection battle, in which each fighter could return to the field twice after being killed. Archers were not permitted to resurrect as archers. In this battle, Steppes targeted our archers early on, to great effect. Most, with no experience or interest in other weapons, did not return. The Bryn Gwlad fighters showed discipline and teamwork, and were effectively dominating the field throughout. Lord Pendaran spent a great deal of time in charge of a shieldwall which was constantly losing and gaining members. The Steppes fighters, by contrast, seemed unable to form into teams or units, and were mopped up in ones and twos, almost always facing superior numbers. In my opinion, Bryn Gwlad dominated the field in this battle.

Traditionally, Ansteorra has held to an "Alamo" style of war fighting: outnumbered hopelessly, dying gloriously, and writing great songs and poems about it. Teamwork in which individual excellence takes second place to group survival is not practiced; rather, we have practiced a philosophy whereby our best fighters roam the field, alone or in small groups, and seek glory in combat against larger groups. This was seen in the Battle of the Lost Lands, and from the Steppes army at the Mustache War.

Bryn Gwlad, influenced by fighters from out of Kingdom, attempted something not usually seen here. Many of our fighters lacked skill or experience, but they had been trained to fight together in units. When they got separated, they didn't seek glory in combat, but rather survival with the team. Their lack of experience was the cause of the heavy casualties we took in every battle. But their discipline was the main reason for the fact that we controlled the field at the end of every battle.

But this discipline was not self-discipline. We had set up an organization





in which we were broken up into small groups, no more than ten each. Each smaller unit had a leader and "deputy". Lord Conor had a unit to command personally, as well as being over the other units. Lord Robin was his second in command. Laird Kien had a unit, and took over the army when Conor fell. Lord Pendaran was his second. I had a unit, with Don Dupre as my second; I was prepared to take command if Kien fell. With six officers, each of whom able to command the entire army, plus allies organized similarly with Lord Sean, Duke Hector, and Sir Cameron.

Such small units also gave us flexibility. Each commander was able to make independent decisions based on the situation as he saw it. There was never a case of shouting "Follow me!" and the leader going off alone. The troops knew who to follow, and were ready to go when and where they were led.

The archers have received much credit, and well-deserved, for their contribution. But they alone did not win the war. Strangely, despite knowing more than a year in advance that we would have archers, the Steppes made little if any effort to have archers of their own. The archery often made us able to eliminate their leaders and highest-threat fighters from a distance. But much more importantly, they quickly became afraid of us. I believe that if they had been able to turn similar firepower on us, they would have had more confidence.

We even looked better. Standing in a well-disciplined shieldwall with matching surcoats and shields, the Ffynnon Gath team, none of them experienced in combat, stood off numerous opponents simply because they looked like they were formidable. And they felt formidable. It was like that for our whole troop. Steppes, many of them in hastily made green tabard with painted "steppes bends" on them, looked uncomfortable in their clashing colors and unfamiliar surcoats. Our baronial guard is long since comfortable with its uniform.

We have demonstrated that Ansteorran fighters can function effectively in a disciplined organization. We have shown that small, simple teams and a clear and a survivable leadership structure is an effective organization. We have shown that a good-looking team makes a better army than a crowd of individual fighters, even though the crowd have higher-caliber fighters. An army full of people seeking individual glory will lose when faced with an army seeking the group's glory. And we have shown, as we have seen before in Adlersruhe, that a victorious army can be chivalrous with the best of them.

And it was fun.



FIRST PUBLISHED IN "IF COMETH IN THE MAIL", THE
NEWSLETTER OF THE BARDNY OF BRYN GULAD.



WOMEN'S PRIZE TOURNAMENT - PENNSIC XXVIII

by Viscountess Yseult Summerhall

44 women showed to participate in this First Women's Prize Tourney! It was only part of the total female fighting force gathered at Pennsic.

The women who got involved had a great time, and not in just the fighting - but meeting each other talking of our strengths and weakness as individuals and as a group. Fighting and talking, such a wealth of information in one place. Such a variety of people.

From the rank novice in her first tourney to the Viscountess Gwelia of Drachenvald, in her own right. From the extremely chivalrous to a few rhinohides. Just like any other tourney held at Pennsic that year. Except for the fact that it was requested that only women enter for a unique opportunity to do combat with other women from different backgrounds, training and experience.

These was some initial protest over the concept of a Women Only Tourney, which was strangely lacking from the Queen's Champion Archery Shoot which was also exclusively for women. One of the points of this tourney was that we must come over our own "programming" as well as help others to. Double standards exist in every stretch of mundane and Society life which we must challenge and change.

By creating an atmosphere where women can meet, exchange ideas and blows without the outside influence of men, we might be able to arrive at our own answers to questions of training, behavior and armor standards.

Many women did not enter, but those who did seemed to have left with something more than a few bruises. Ideas and knowledge were passed freely among the combatants on and off the field. There were bad experiences and good, but all were learning experiences.

This Tourney drew a sizable crowd ranging from those who wished to jeer and make disparaging remarks, (thankfully few), to those who wished to protest the "unnecessary" segregation of gender, to those who came to support the ladies, to those who were merely curious.

There were bad remarks, to be sure. Many men felt afterward they should have demanded to be allowed into the list on the basis of sex discrimination. They did not feel it was fair to make them feel as possibly women would have felt if there had been a tourney exclusively for men. These men do not seem to get the point. The point was not to exclude men for the sake of segregation, but for that of encouragement for those fighters who might not otherwise receive it in a chance like this. There was no spiteful or malicious intent when it was decided to exclude men from the tourney. Many tourneys all over the Known World end up being all male for lack of female involvement, that is what we are trying to change.



Certainly if men stressed the point of sex-discrimination, besides taking this a bit too far, they would no doubt win their point - but lose the battle. Must we then petition all tourneys for exclusives, ie all Knights, all Champions, all "Invitationals"?

Possibly when the numbers of women on the field becomes greater than a mere fraction of the total, there will no longer be a need for tournaments or awards specifically for ladies in heavy weapons fighting. But now, there is a need.

There were more good remarks than bad! There was a great deal of networking, encouraging others to get involved on a local level in training and encouragement to other women. What could they do in their area? Why do the style in fighting differ so much? What is the best technique for throwing this or that blow? What do you do against much larger opponents? What about lefties? Where does intimidation come in and how can we use it effectively without bullying our opponent?

There were discussions about what certain areas felt the attitude and apparel should be of women fighters on and off the field compared to the feelings of the actual women in the area. There was talk of breast/groin protection; Are they really necessary? How is the best way to armor without inhibiting movement? Should you fight when pregnant, (depending on medical advice)? What is the physiological impact of women on the field to long standing chauvinists? Is there even such a thing anymore in the Society as the man who refuses to engage in honorable combat with a woman? Where are they and how can they be helped to understand? How can you win the fight without besting your opponent? What exactly should squirehood between people of different genders consist of? And many, many more!

In other words, it was a complete success for the exact reasons we needed it for. Actions are better than words, but they also promote words that inspire actions. Let's do this every Pennsic!



AT LAST!!!

The Revised Edition of Ye Headless House Fighters Handbook and Training Manual is now available!

Everything from basic armor requirements, stance, and blows, to advanced fighting techniques and training drills.

Not to be confused with the SCA's Fighter's Handbook, this is not an encyclopedia, but a training manual organized into a series of lessons which can benefit everyone from novice to expert!

All this can be yours for a mere \$8.00 (plus \$2.00 book rate postage; \$4.00 for Canadian addresses).

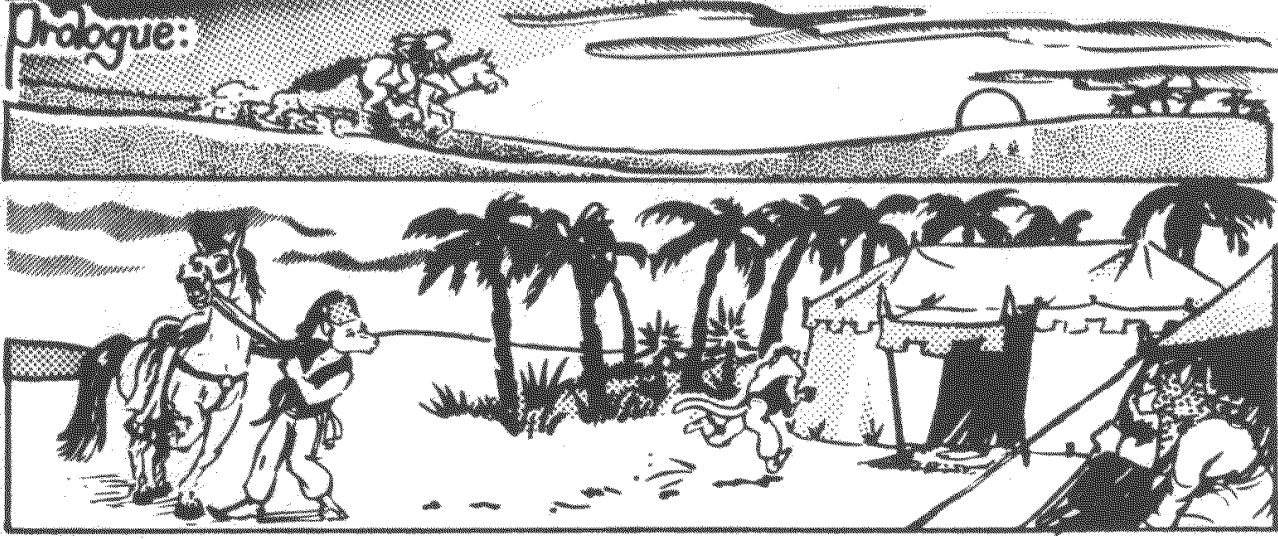
Send your check or money order to:

William Jouris

1248 McEwing Court

Concord, CA 94521

Orlogue:



WE TRACKED THEM TO THE RIVER WART, YOUR GRACE. THERE THEY SPLIT UP. BLANCADRIN WE COULDN'T FIND, BUT MARPHISA HAS TAKEN REFUGE AT VIXEN'S KEEP. WE COULD TRY A NIGHT RAID, BUT...

NO!

NO! I'LL NOT CHASE MY OWN BAD LUCK. SHE WAS HER MOTHER'S DEATH AND MY DESPAIR. LET HER GO!

FROM THIS DAY ON... I HAVE NO DAUGHTER!

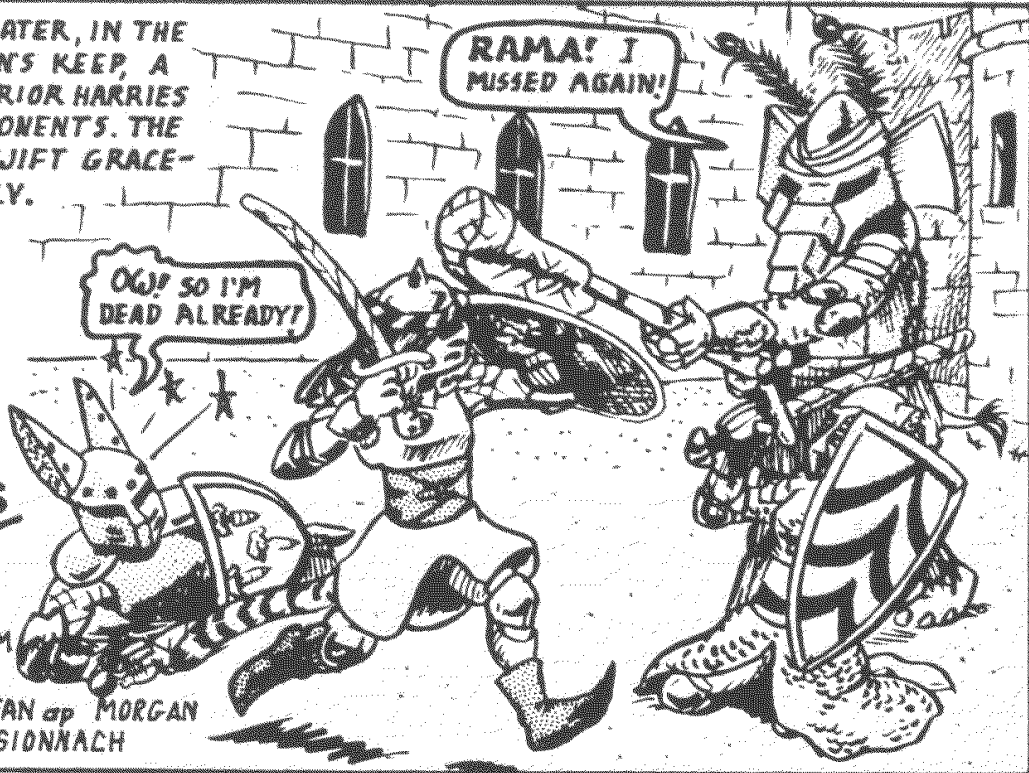


THREE DAYS LATER, IN THE BAILEY OF VIXEN'S KEEP, A SOLITARY WARRIOR HARRIES A TRIO OF OPPONENTS. THE WARRIOR IS SWIFT GRACEFUL AND DEADLY. THE WARRIOR ALSO WEARS A SHROUD OF MYSTERY THAT MAY HIDE

Old Scars

ART BY WILLIAM BLACKFOX

STORY BY CADFAN ap MORGAN AND SOABA NI SIDNACH



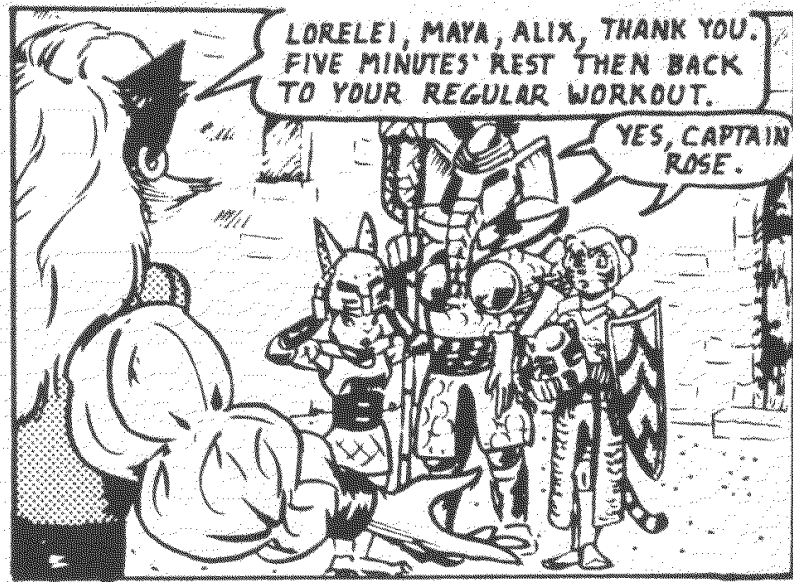
OW! SO I'M DEAD ALREADY!

RAMA! I MUSED AGAIN!



HOLD!

I'VE SEEN ENOUGH!



LORELEI, MAYA, ALIX, THANK YOU. FIVE MINUTES' REST THEN BACK TO YOUR REGULAR WORKOUT.

YES, CAPTAIN ROSE.



YOU NOW KNOW SOMETHING OF MY SKILLS, CAPTAIN ROSE. HAVE I THE PERMISSION TO JOIN YOUR ACADEMY?

HMMM...

YOU SAY YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR FATHER'S PERMISSION? TODD BAD...



FOR HIM!

YOU CERTAINLY HAVE HIS MOVES. YOU'LL DO.

YES, MILADY!

AKBAR!

NOW SHOWER AND CHANGE, THEN BE IN MY OFFICE IN TWENTY MINUTES - PRECISELY!



WELL, IT WOULD SEEM THAT DUKE MARSIL'S LOSS IS CAPTAIN ROSE'S GAIN.

DUKE WHO?

WASN'T HE THE ONE WHO ABDICATED HALFWAY THROUGH HIS THIRD REIGN?

THE SAME. HE AND HIS HOUSEHOLD TOOK TO THE DESERT AFTER SOME... POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THAT WAS LONG AGO.



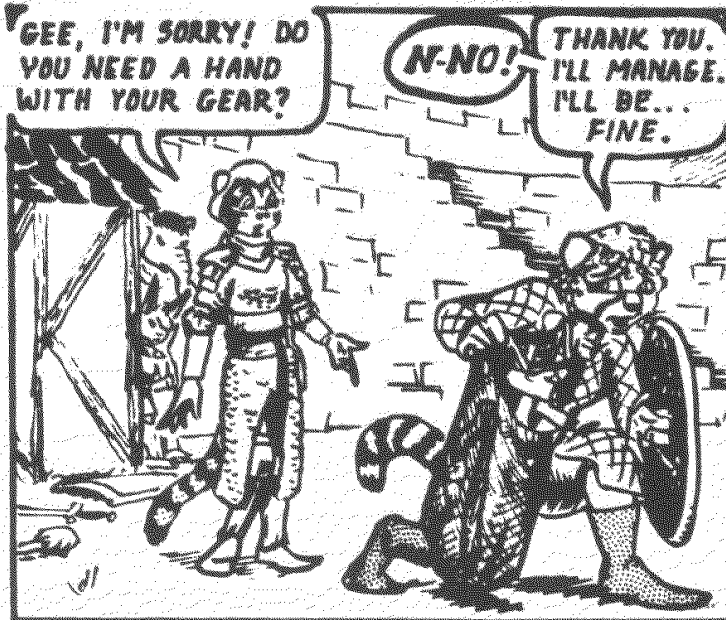
YEAH, NOW I REMEMBER. HE HAD SOME REALLY CRANKY IDEAS ABOUT "A WOMAN'S PLACE". HE DIDN'T EVEN THINK THEY SHOULD LEARN TO READ!



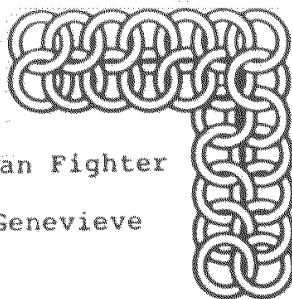
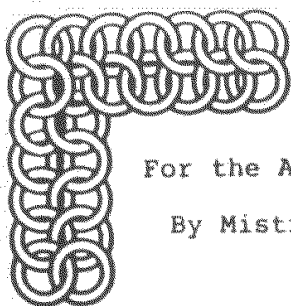
WELL, THAT SURE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE SLOWED HER DOWN.

WHOEVER HEARD OF A SLOW CHEETAH?





End part 1



For the Aspiring Woman Fighter

By Mistress Marie Genevieve

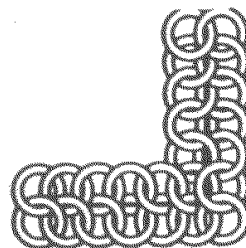
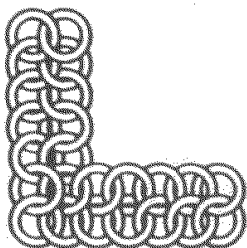
Fighting is usually thought of as an activity for men in the SCA. This has been changing over the years, and there are now more women on the field than ever, both in our Kingdom and in others. This is certainly a good thing, for it makes one of our main activities more interesting and accessible to half our membership. I would like to share a few things I have learned and observed in my first year of fighting.

Having other women on the field can serve as an inspiration for the novice female fighter. There are all types of women: from large and small, to thin and not so thin, athletically inclined to couch potatoes, just as there are all types of men who fight. Like the male fighters, those women who work at their fighting get better at it. Always remember though: you will progress at your own rate, not someone else's. There is always the natural at any sport: the person who looks as though she has been doing this all her life after 2 weeks of practice. Measuring yourself against someone like this will only destroy your own morale. Your progress should be measured against where you were before, not against your friend's (or enemy's) progress. You are your only competition - strive to surpass yourself.

Another important point: all new fighters are dog meat. As a beginner you will lose a lot. This cannot be repeated enough. Get used to it. You will lose a lot. Don't get discouraged. Some of the best fighters in the SCA stunk as new fighters. Try to improve just a little bit at a time. Maybe this time you lasted a while before being killed, instead of being one-shotted like last time. That's an improvement: your defense has gotten better. Maybe you took your opponent's leg; good, you're learning to see openings. Progress won't be overnight. Go out to each match with the idea of improving one thing; maybe try leg shots this time, or try more combinations. Concentrate on improving just one thing at a time, instead of trying to do too much at once. When you feel secure with that one thing, add something else.

Don't be afraid to ask for advice. After you have fought someone, ask them for pointers, especially if they are more experienced (like knights and squires). Most fighters love to talk about fighting, and will be glad to help you out.

One thing that will really help your progress is pell work. Here is where you can practice shots, fakes, combinations, or whatever before you go out on the field. Practicing with another fighter is also useful. This means practice a particular defense, or shot, not just mock list fighting.

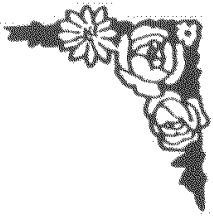


When first starting out, try fighting whatever weapon style appeals to you, whether 2 weapon, shield and weapon, or bastard sword, or whatever. Eventually, you should learn them all, but to start with, pick what is comfortable for you. For most people, this is sword and shield. This way, you can learn the basics of offense and defense, with the added plus of protection for your body (the shield) while you learn. You will get hit, but there is less that is exposed with a shield. The other styles require a bit more skill to be effective than sword and shield does.

One point on armor: leg armor can be very painful to your lower back. The belt supporting the legs usually tilts forward over the hips so that all of the weight is in the small of the back. This is a miserable feeling. I have found that one way to eliminate this problem is to use a belt and suspender combination. Use a military or leather type suspender (something non-stretchy) combined with a belt worn around the hips, not the waist. This puts most of the weight on the hips (if the belt is worn snugly), and very little on the shoulders.

I hope this helps motivate some women who may be unsure about fighting to go out there and try it. Borrow armor, have your knight marshal work with you so you can get an idea of the basics. If you are just left on your own to be someone's target practice, find another person to teach you. This is not the way to introduce anyone, male or female, to fighting. Work at it for a few practices; get a taste of fighting, then decide. It is not for everyone, but for those who do like it, fighting can be quite a challenging activity, and really brings you closer to the times we are trying to recreate. Good luck and good fighting!

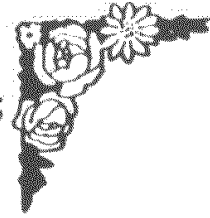




GROIN PROTECTION FOR ALL FIGHTERS

Lady Cate's version of the "Dwarf Diaper"

by Lady Catrine van der Nacker



1- You start by making a full size paper pattern from the one supplied here. This version is for wearing on the outside of the fighters pants. It measures 40" around at the waist. It fastens at the sides with either "D" rings and straps or metal eyelets and lacings.

2- Make a mock-up of the paper pattern out of muslin and size to fit the wearer.

3- Cut the diaper out of the material of your choice, using your muslin mock-up. I like a heavy leather, for all around protection. But you can use an extra heavy material that is quilted, like a gambeson. Try this diaper on to check the fit.

4- Now you can add the side fastens. If you are using the "D" rings and straps place the "D" rings on the front piece, about three quarters of an inch from the edge where marked on the diagram. Making sure that they rest on the leather, (or a hip shot will shove them into your hip bones, causing great pain and bruising; and this is after all what we are trying to avoid, aren't we). Sew or rivet the straps to the back sides, where they are indicated on the diagram. If you are going to use the eyelets (metal), place them one half inch apart and on half inch from the edge, as indicated on the diagram. Some people like to place the "D" rings on their shield side and the metal eyelets on their sword side, the choice is yours.

5- If you are making your diaper out of gambeson material be sure to attach a heavy seam binding around all of the edges, before attaching any of the fasteners (this step is not needed when using leather).

6- Now for the most important part!

Most men like to add a piece of metal in the crotch and front for protection. Be sure to file the edges and then roll them when sewing the metal, (I don't even want to think of what would happen if you were to omit this stage). But, for the ladies, a couple of "Stay Free Maxi Pads" are really great padding, and can be disposed of after each use. You just peel off the paper backing and press firmly into the crotch of the diaper.

If using metal, you should lace it in, for added mobility.

These pattern pieces can be either cut separately then sewn together, or for a smoother fit, fit the paper pattern pieces together before

you cut out your muslin mock-up. Then use your muslin mock-up as your pattern when cutting your diaper.

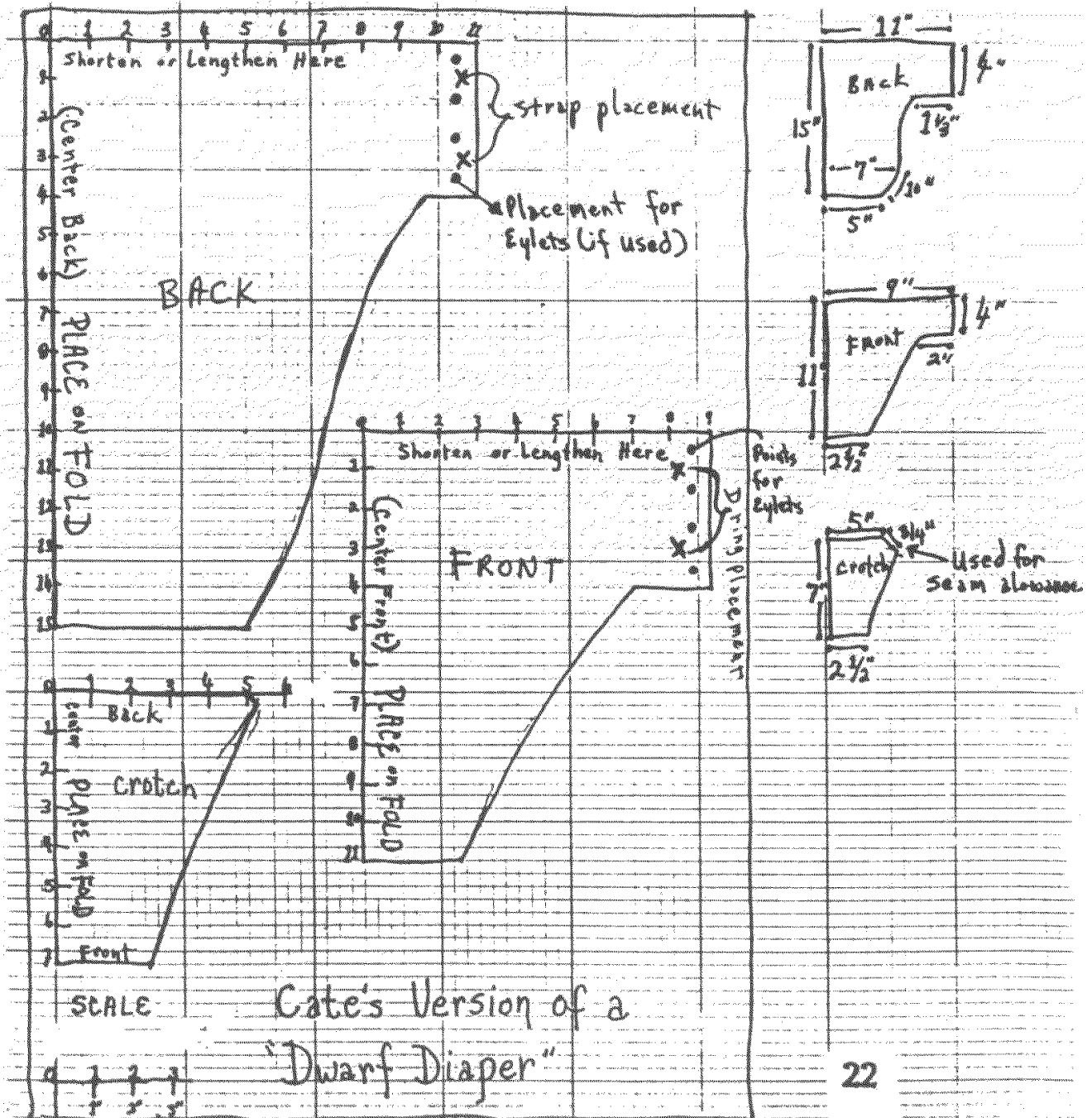
There are many versions of the "Dwarf Diaper". If you would like to try some of them with a different cut for example, go to a fabric shop and get a pattern that is designed to make underwear. Some people like a higher or lower cut around the leg, and these patterns can help you achieve this without having to do a lot of altering of this pattern.

If you would like a higher waist (for added kidney protection), all you need to do is borrow a weight lifter's belt from another fighter, lay it over your paper pattern before you cut it, and trace it along the upper edge of the back waist line, leaving the sides the same width.

This version of the "Dwarf Diaper" works well with most any type of armor. And not only affords groin protection, but hip and pelvic protection as well, and makes for added mobility.

I hope that this will help you and add to your protection.

Have fun and good fighting to you all!





IN HER OWN WORDS
Queen Elina
Her Royal Majesty of Trimaris



This last Pennsic War seems to have seen the flowering of female fighters. Not only was there a melee tourney fought by and for the fighting Princesses. There was a Lady's List, Lady fighter practices and more ladies on the field than ever before. To top it all off the hottest selling T-shirt of the War featured an armored, mounted female fighter. In short, our presence was felt.

One of the highlights, and something worth repeating was the Lady's List. This was a Prize Tourney sponsored by the Princess of the Mists and well attended by fighters from around the known world. While the Princess of the Mists, Yseult swore she had not hoped to see more than a dozen, nearly 50 ladies took the field in an effort to try their hand. For many this was the first list they had ever entered. Many more felt less intimidation facing a female in their first try at one on one combat. For the more experienced fighter it gave the opportunity to try new styles and see new techniques. I had the distinct pleasure of explaining that the weapon I was using was called a "glaive", to my opponent. I then explained how it was effectively used, and then graphically demonstrated.

The Tourney gathered no small crowd either. Many would-be fighters as well as male fighters and non-fighters alike came to watch. I overheard one man say that he knew ladies couldn't fight well, he was just there to see a good "cat fight". Before I could round on the man to give him a piece of my mind, some unknown knight jumped to our collective defense.

He explained in no uncertain terms that if that's what he came for he would not see it. These ladies weren't playing or putting on a show. Ladies fight ladies differently and he should be prepared to see some surprising ability.

The anonymous Knight was right, we do fight differently when we fight each other. Whether it's a lack of intimidation at facing someone your own size and strength or the knowledge that technique, not brutality, will win. We seem to bring out the best in each other.

One Knight noted that we as a group were kind of funny to watch. At the command "Lay On" we would fight most ferociously and then proceed to show great concern over whether or not we hurt our opponent.

Some ladies chose not to fight in the Tourney feeling that it was exclusive, and placed unnecessary stigma as a "female" fighter. To those that entered no such stigma was felt. More than anything it was the opportunity to face different styles used by people of like abilities.

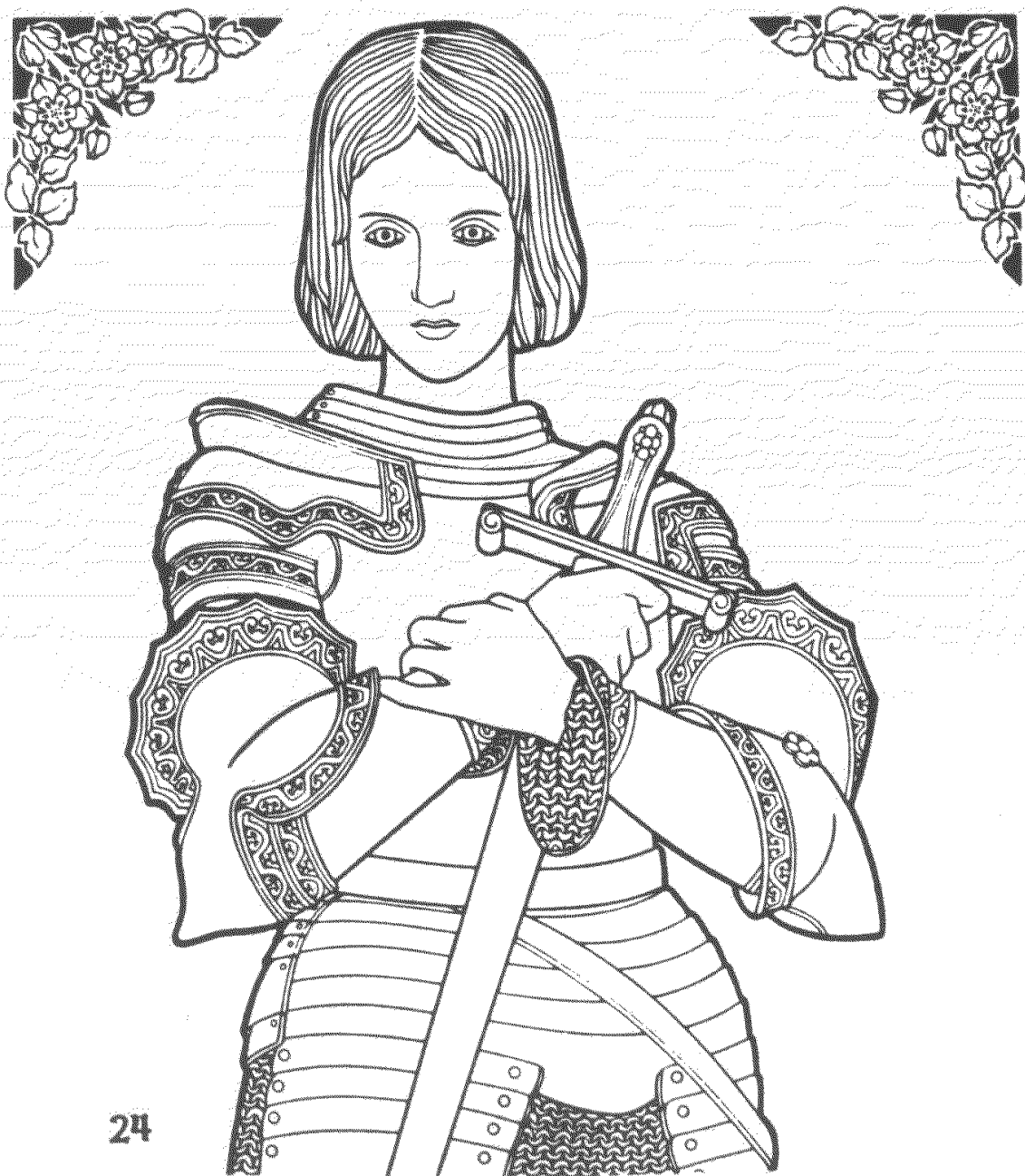
While I can learn some technique from His Majesty Palamar of

the Middle I must use it differently because I'm not 6'2" and 220 lbs. with the ability to bench press a small elephant. I'm far more likely to learn practical application from the Viscountess from Drachenvald, who won by her own hand, and place first in the tourney. The best key is the ability to take the best of both. Learn technique wherever you can, and then learn to apply it to yourself. This Tourney gave us the opportunity to see how others have applied themselves.

As the day closed we realized that this would be an excellent idea for next year as well. One note of caution, on a local level or even Kingdom level a ladies List can be exclusive and unnecessarily segregated. There are simply too few to be a truly unique learning tool. The novelty of doing it at Pennsic is that we have the opportunity to learn of styles and techniques from all over.

Keep playing - and enjoy yourself.

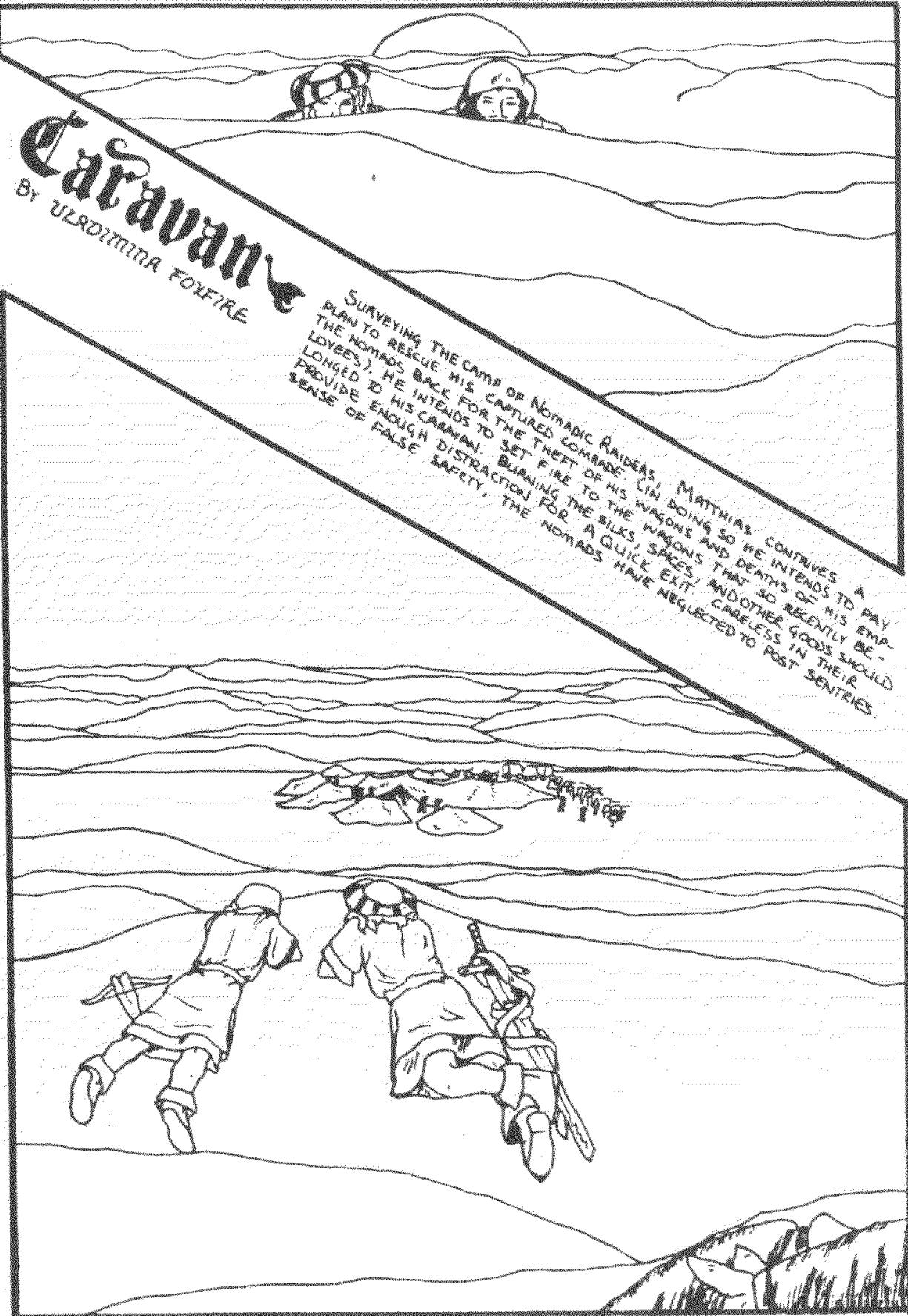
Elina, Queen of Trimaris

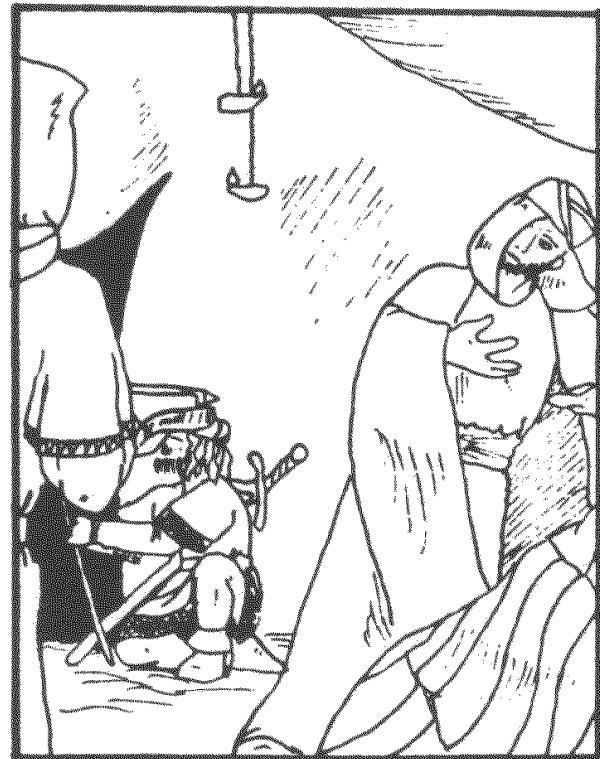
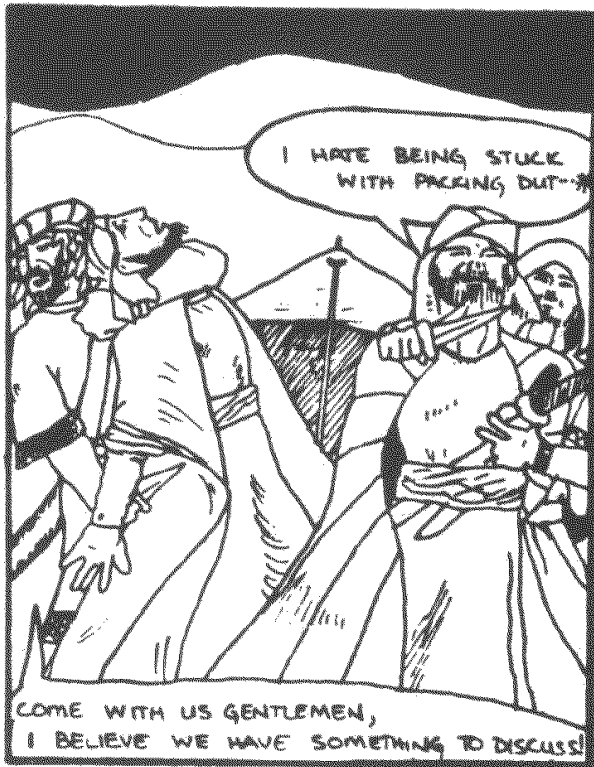


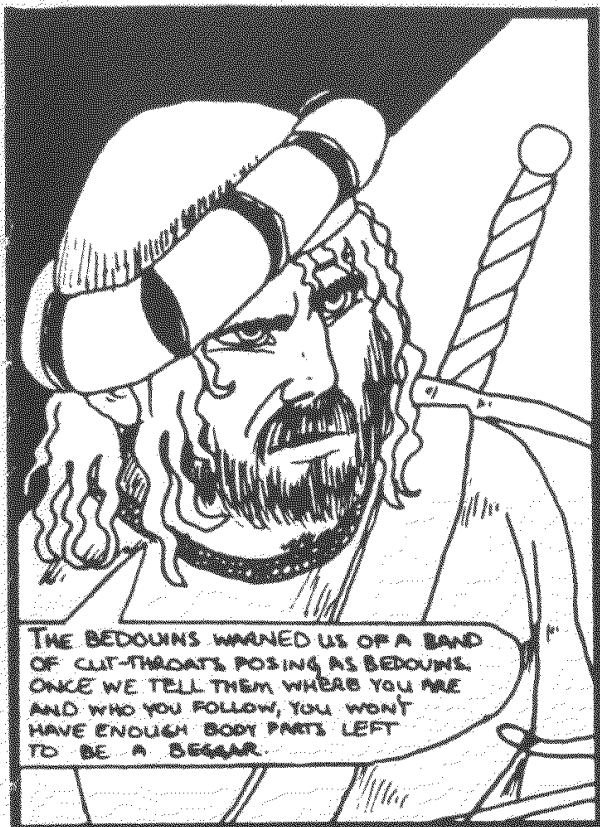
Caravan

By ULRICH FOXFIRE

SURVEYING THE CAMP OF NOMADIC RAIDERS, MATTHIAS CONTRIVES A PLAN TO RESCUE HIS CAPTURED COMRADE. (IN DOING SO HE INTENDS TO PAY THE NOMADS BACK FOR THE THEFT OF HIS WAGONS AND DEATHS OF HIS EMPLOYEES). HE INTENDS TO SET FIRE TO THE WAGONS THAT SO RECENTLY BELONGED TO HIS CARAVAN. BURNING THE SILKS, SACKS, AND OTHER GOODS SHOULD PROVIDE ENOUGH DISTRACTION FOR A QUICK EXIT. CARELESS IN THEIR SENSE OF FALSE SAFETY, THE NOMADS HAVE NEGLECTED TO POST SENTRIES.







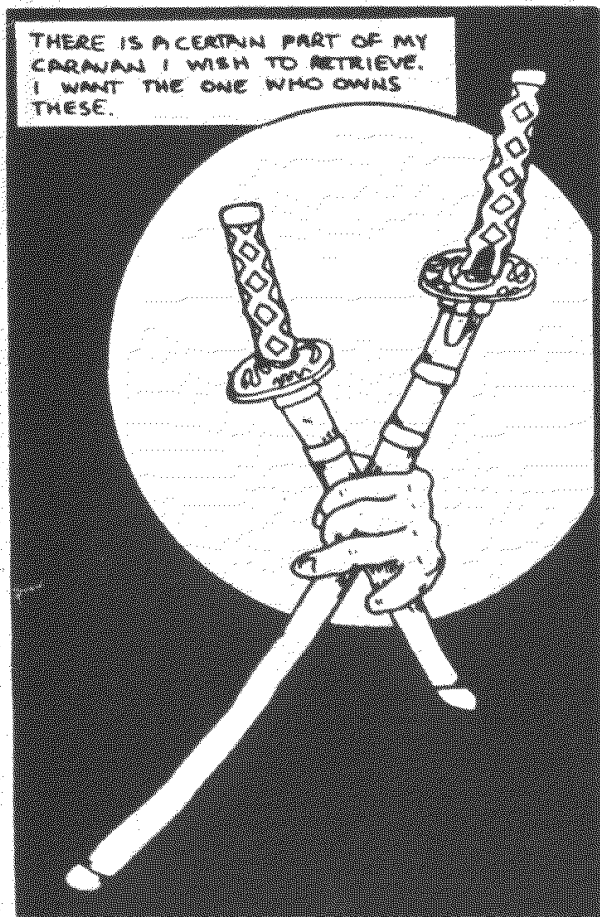
THE BEDUINS WARNED US OF A BAND OF CLIT-THROATS POSING AS BEDUINS. ONCE WE TELL THEM WHERE YOU ARE AND WHO YOU FOLLOW, YOU WON'T HAVE ENOUGH BODY PARTS LEFT TO BE A BEGAR.



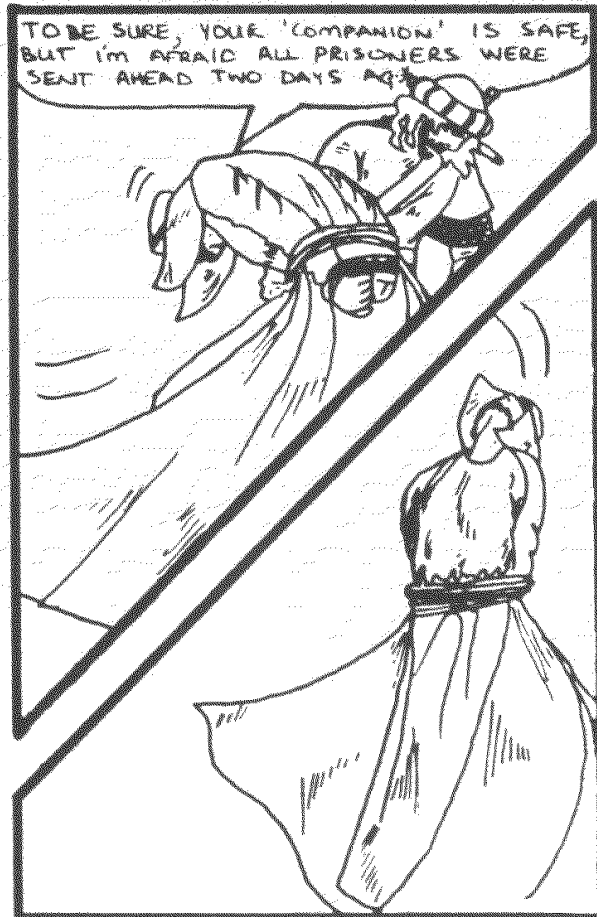
ENTERING THIS CAMP EMPTY HANDED IS A LOT EASIER THAN LEAVING IT WITH YOUR CARGO.

BUT YOU ARE WRONG, CAPTAIN. WE DO NOT SEEK MY CARGO, AT LEAST NOT ALL OF IT.

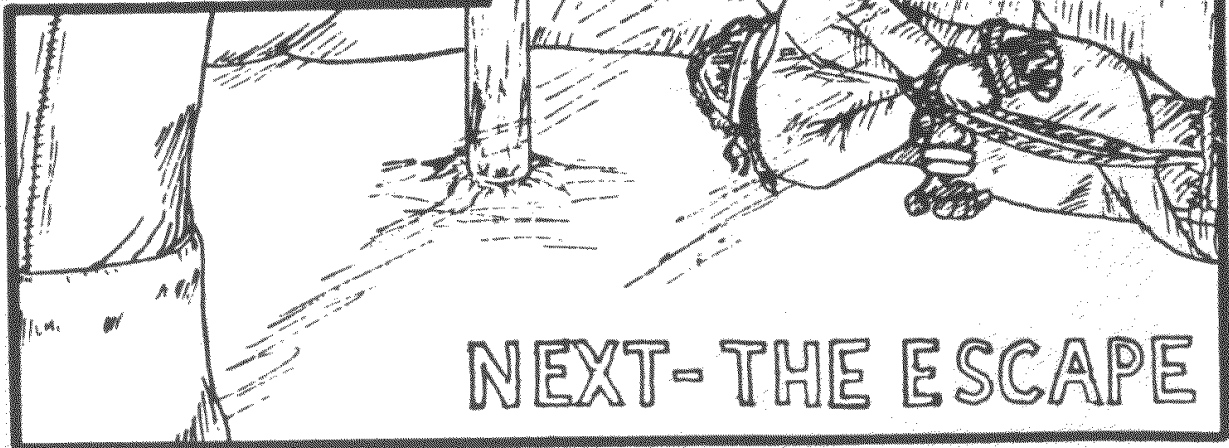
OH?



THERE IS A CERTAIN PART OF MY CARAVAN I WISH TO RETRIEVE. I WANT THE ONE WHO OWNS THESE.



TO BE SURE, YOUR 'COMPANION' IS SAFE, BUT I'M AFRAID ALL PRISONERS WERE SENT AHEAD TWO DAYS AGO.





As a member of the laws committee for the newly formed principality of Aethelmark, I can give a partial answer to the question asked in the last issue of Flowers.

EAST KINGDOM LAW

Section VII - East Kingdom Events

D. The Crown Tourney

1. Eligibility for the Crown Tourney

j. No entrants in the Crown Lists of the East may be both prospective Consort and prospective Sovereign except as provided for in item i. below:

i. Any lord or lady may champion each other in the Crown Lists so long as neither is championed by any other person.

ii. It is the specific intent of this law to emphasize that entrants in the Lists fight for the honor of their lord or lady and no other.

AETHELMARK PRINCIPALITY LAW

Section V - Principality Level Events

Paragraph III - Coronet Tournaments are open to all, eighteen years of age or older, who have lived in the Principality for at least a year, and who have submitted a name and device to the College of Arms. A lord and lady may champion each other so long as neither of them is championed by any other person.

As to how it works in the field... My barony doesn't have any rattan fighting ladies with rattan fighting lords, so I haven't seen it in the rattan lists, however about half of our fencers are women so couples frequently face off against each other in fencing tournaments.

The herald announces "Salute the crown of the East". The fencers salute the royalty or due East if the royalty is not present. "Salute your most worthy opponent". The fencers salute each other. "Salute the one who inspires you this day". If the fencers are lord and lady, again they salute each other. "Salute the crowds here assembled". The fencers salute the audience. "Allez" (French for "Lay On"). At the last Baronial Fencing Championship Tourney, one of the opponents the winner had to defeat was his own lady. We just don't see any problems with couples facing each other in competition.

Now if I may ask a question of my own. The most recent issue touched upon image problems of large breasted women as well as the running discussion of male fighters who have trouble fighting women. There are circumstances which involve both problems at once. I know both male costumers and male armorers who find it awkward helping a woman make armor or garb because in the process of taking measurements or checking how patterns fit, it's often necessary to touch her body. This problem has its serious side as well. At every CPR class I've been to, there's always at least one shy male who has difficulty bringing himself to place his hands on the chest of a female MANNEQUIN! I pity the full figured woman who may need CPR if someone like this is the only person available. Do any of the readers have any ideas about this problem, or don't think this is a problem?

Ragone



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Greetings, I have been a subscriber of EOS since it's inception and I enjoy the magazine very much. Issue #5 seemed to be a little different than some of the others. It seemed like a gripe forum. I was interested in the comments made by everyone, but what happened to some of the other stuff. I wonder if all you received that time was that type of letter. How about some letters from lady fighters detailing what they have done at various tournaments and wars. Maybe tips for the loading of "dragons" and traveling. Other practical stuff like that would be greatly appreciated by all I'm sure. I would like to see a bigger issue also, but then I guess that would be dependent on any articles you receive.

Stephen of Boynes Town

Thank you for your comments. It is my hope that many will read your letter and take the hint. Yes, #5 was a gripe forum, but I feel that airing of problems helps in learning solutions.

Yes, I wish that the issues were larger and more helpful than some have said, but I am almost entirely dependent upon submitted articles. If they don't come in I can't print them. I could talk the ears off a Chimera but even I get tired of hearing my own voice and opinions

"Has the Oleander been passed as a house badge or device?"

Celeste Cathan

Oh, such a simple question. Such a Complex answer. Well. if you really want to know, let me begin at the top, and indulge me with my point of view.

As most of you know the Oleander was started at the last Great Desert War in Atenveldt by then Queen (Sir) Trude Lacklandia. Of the fewer than ten of us who stepped forward to receive the Oleander at least three Kingdoms were represented.

The next year at the first Estrella War the number of ladies who had been present on the heavy weapons field in armor had doubled. The H.L. Regina Masquer and I took it upon ourselves and our Households to prepare scrolls and favors from that point on. It worked out as no one seemed to mind. No one else continued past the third year but us.

Each year Regina and her house would create the favors, and I would supply the scrolls, complete with an area for the Queens of Atenveldt and Caid to sign.

Last year when I made the scrolls I decided that since the Outlands had supplied the accoutrements for the Order that the least we could ask for was a space for our own Queen to sign. Silly me, I forget

how seriously we all take this game at times.

The Queen of Atenveldt was infuriated as she felt that it was her Kingdoms award and her Kingdoms War. The Queen of Caid's signature was welcome as they were the traditional foes at the War. The fecal matter had hit the oscillating object and there was anger on each side.

This was over an unofficial award. Regina and myself began to try to register the Oleander to the House of Amazons and ourselves. The Kingdom of Atenveldt tried to register it as their official award. It got real messy.

Finally the next Queen of Atenveldt, Anna, graciously suggested that she and I sit down and talk about the whole thing, (which hadn't been done for over 6 mos.). As she had not been present at the original misunderstanding I told her an admittedly biased account of what the current state of affairs was.

In speaking we realized that if it were made official by anyone, it would not be able to be given to members of outside Kingdoms without the consent of the Ruling Crowns. What a hassle it would be, last count for new members was over 40. It would defeat the purpose of the Order, because these ladies would not be able to be recognized. Registering it at all would entail finding a specific Kingdom or person and limiting its range severely.

The final agreement was that it would stay in it's unofficial status, but that Atenveldt would begin to take up some of the work involved. Scrolls would no longer be passed out, or if they were, no signatures would appear. Everything is settled and all are happy with the arrangement, or at least they should be.

"...There is one person (his name is Allan Zurfluh) who is very interested in becoming a Marshall, and there are two people willing to learn from him. Here's the problem: Allan was injured very badly in his right leg many years ago, and cannot take any kind of blow in that leg (he can't even let his dog sit in his lap).

Three questions:

- Can he become a teacher if he doesn't experience fighting?
- Where or how can he learn if he is so far from other fighters?
- Will his future students be properly served by his tutelage?

The reasons I ask these questions of you is that I perceive in some of your articles that women fighters are isolated from one another, and sometimes isolated from good instructors. Perhaps some women have had to learn fighting techniques by themselves. Perhaps some have experience with learning from untrained Marshals.

It is this aspect of isolation that leads me to believe you would have very valid insights into the above questions. I do not want to encourage Allan if his goals are too high, however, neither do I wish to trample his aspirations if they can be achieved. I, myself, am not a fighter, so I do not have the proper knowledge to advise on my own."

Thank you for having the confidence in myself and the readers of the FOS to pose such a thought provoking question.

To begin with I would ask what the gentles wish to learn from Allan. Is it fighting or some aspect of the marshallate. There are many teacher over the Known World that no longer or never have experienced firsthand what they teach. As you might expect not all are good at teaching. But again that depends upon what he wishes to teach. You can teach the marshallate Rules, Rules of the List, Rules of Conduct without ever having entered the field. With fighting it is more difficult to.

The problem with his leg, is it pressure he cannot endure, or is it movement? Does it have the strength to carry suitable protection for his condition? There are many physically challenged people who do combat in the SCA. The most notable example is Kief af Kiersted who fights quite well and valorously without the use of one of his legs. He has developed a style more suitable to himself that works well with SCA style combat. I could supply with his address if you wish.

He can read or study video tapes to learn some fighting if there are none to learn from in his area, but there is no substitute for travelling to where the fighter population is more dense. If he could do that as much as possible, he can decide if it is worth the time and effort and then go from there.

As to the last question, I feel that anyone is capable of learning worthwhile things from anyone. In fighting, there are many more facets to it than just the physical one. There is mental conditioning, Chivalric intent and ideal, compassion, perseverance, armor construction, rules and regulations, the ideal of the Favor and many others. Even developing a series of exercise and stretches can improve the fighting ability of anyone. Squires cannot always learn the style of their Knights, and must sometimes ask the help of another in search of a different style. But the Knights knowledge encompasses so much else that the squire will need to know, there is no reason to think the Knight a failure.

There is no reason not to encourage Allan if it is truly something he wants to accomplish. Do not take it upon yourself to be worried about taking him down the wrong path. He can make up his own mind, and you are doing the best a friend can do by supporting him in whatever he decides.



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