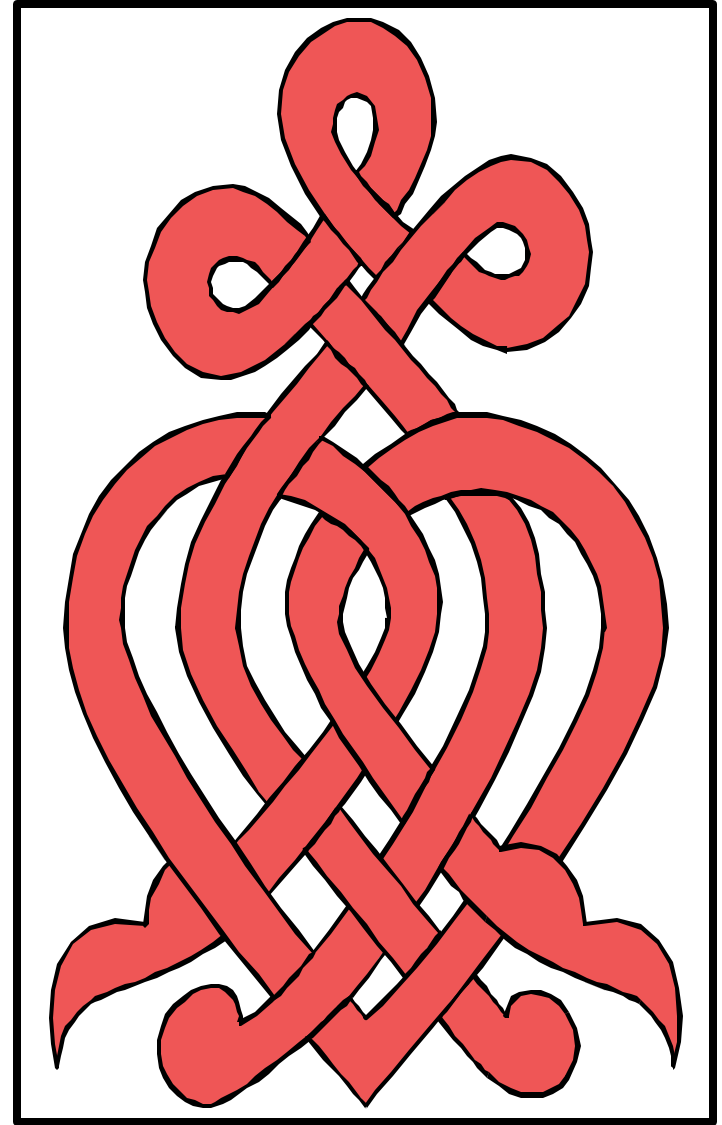


Aire Currents

*Newsletter for the
Canton of Aire Faucon*



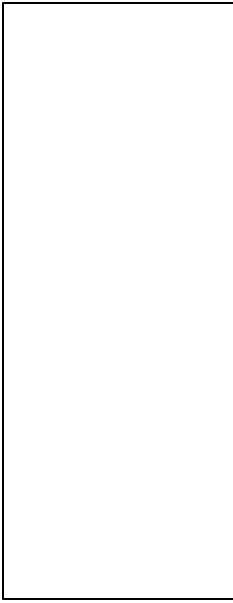
*Volume VII, Issue I & II
January & February A.S. XXXVII being 2003
Gregorian*

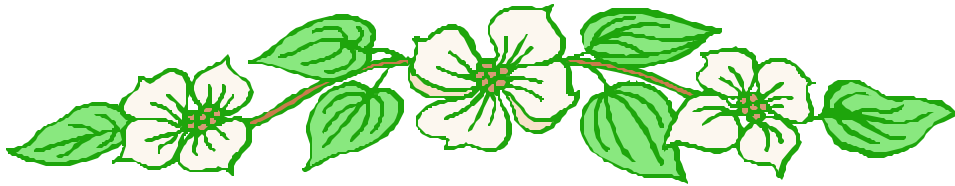


Janet Thompson
515 E. Ohio Avenue
Bessemer City, NC 28016

Come visit us on the web ...

<http://aire.atlantia.sca.org/airenoframe.htm>





Canton Regnum for Aire Faucon

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(Margaret Evans)
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Sean Ashcraft
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Knight's Marshal:

Baron Wolfgang the Gamesman
(Brian Weber)
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Kingdom Calendar

February 2003

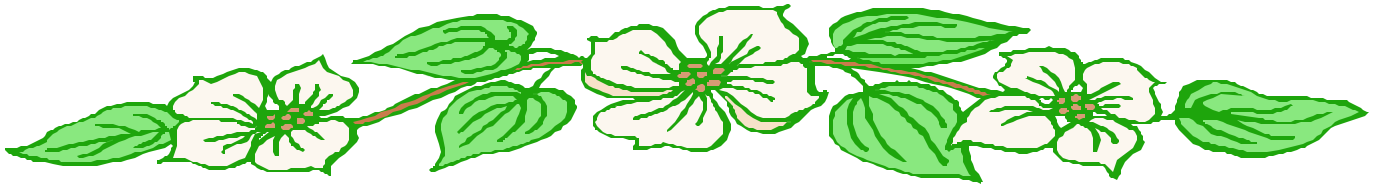
1	Atlantian University	Bridgewater, VA
7-9	Tourney of Ymir	Wake Forest, NC
15	All for One, One for all, Parte Deux	Salisbury, NC
15	Mid-Winters Dance Revel	Lothian, MD
22	Performer's Symposium	Fairfax, VA
22	Ice Axe	Powhatan, VA
22	Feast of St. Brigit	Lewisville, NC

March 2003

1	Kingdom Arts & Sciences Festival	Greenville, SC
8	Banquet dels Quatre Barres	Chesterfield, VA
10-16	Gulf Wars XII	Lumberton, MS
15	Lezione at Palazzo	Crozet, VA
21-23	Raiders of the Lost Cove V	Camp Lejeune, NC
28-30	Baronial Birthday and Investiture	Williamsburg, VA
29	Inn on the Road VII	Casar, NC
29	Defending the Gate	Fredericksburg, VA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Lydia February 1
Susanna February 8
Gaelen February 16
Rose Aaron March 10
Wolfgang March 16



MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2003

New Business: The canton website needs to be completely revamped. Asim, Roger and Cyriac have been invited to create mockups for a "new" site and the canton will decide whose they wish to go with. Website is moving onto the kingdom webserver at a cost of \$60/year. This includes tech support and elists.

Candlemas: Gaelan is still looking for a Kidcrat, he has someone in mind to ask. Achbar and Saunooke are in charge of the heavy scenario. Ronan is in charge of rapier. Dryw will be coming to teach dance. The pig and pig cooker have been ordered! The prizes have been handled. Lydia proposed that she make a bag lunch for the event. **Inn on the Road:** Brianna is now autocrat. Fiona is the Feastocrat with Keelin as her assistant. All the personnel positions have been filled. Cristian will be sponsoring another tourney for the female fighters. The A&S is: open category - traveling items, and a poetry competition (theme to be announced). For charity (The Battered Women's Shelter) - there will be bardic, entertaining for tips (tokens), the most tokens wins. The canton address book needs to be updated, please send your information, including awards to Maeve.

Seneschal: Doni is stepping into the MoAS position, with Kathryn as her deputy. Margaret will be filling the Chatelaine position. The fourth quarter report is in. Applying for position of Deputy Baronial Seneschal. Sherra is taking over as Autocrat of Inn on the Road.

Exchequer: \$1192.21 in checking account.

Marshal: Side sword is now legal for demos. Anyone interested should contact Marion. The armor requirements are slightly different.

MoAS: Bera received her Pearl at Kingdom 12th Night.

Chronicler: Time to renew newsletter subscriptions, \$6.00/year. Looking for persona stories, artwork, and other material to include in issues.

Chatelaine: One newcomer has contacted her. She is in the process of transferring the loaner garb.



THE SENESCHALE'S SENDING

Her Excellency has issued a challenge! In a Phoenix Eye is now opened to other Baronies as well. Let's get started and show everyone the fabulous things we can do. The rules and categories will be put up on the baronial website for all to review.

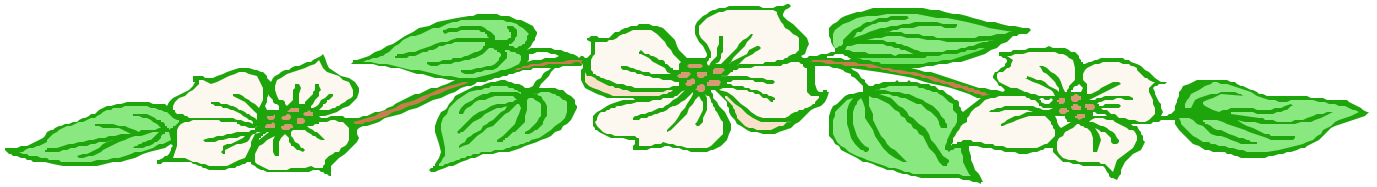
I'm looking forward to seeing everyone more as the tourney and eventing season revs up!

In service,
LADY MAEVE



A&S' LIGHT

Check out these pages for information on Atlantia's kingdom-wide guilds -- for costuming, dance, embroidery, fiber arts, glasswork, lace-making, and spinning -- as well as localized guilds.



His Excellency, Baron Corun MacAnndra, Baron of Storvik, gave a beautiful description of what the MoAS badge means.

It is the light of knowledge that all those involved in the Arts and Sciences keep alight for all to see.

But it has come to symbolize more than that to me. As Officers, each MoAS at every level undertakes the obligation to keep this flame lit.

The badge then becomes the burning fire of passion for those who wish to become versed in some aspect of the Arts or Sciences.

It is the light on the desk by which we read our research material.

It is the cook fire and the flames of the furnace in which hot metal is forged to strengthen our fighters and bring us prowess on the field.

It is the hearthfire that warms us during the winter months and dispels the darkness of ignorance.

It is the light in the window of the Kingdom that acts as a beacon to all of Atlantia's craftspeople.

So then, Officers of the Arts and Sciences, wear your badge proudly, and be that beacon. For it only takes one candle to light the way for others to become shining examples, and thereby gloriously brighten Atlantia.

Sincerely,
LADY SERAPHINA



THE CHATELAINE'S CALL

I have had several interested people contact me through email, asking for information on our group happenings. We also had two new people show up at the last business meeting. Jared, who is interested in fighting, and his mother Janice, who is interested in just about everything. Janice said that her husband and daughter would also like to come play with us. We will hopefully see them again at Candlemas.

If anyone is in contact with new folks and would like to give them my email, please feel free to do so.
Mogee1@juno.com

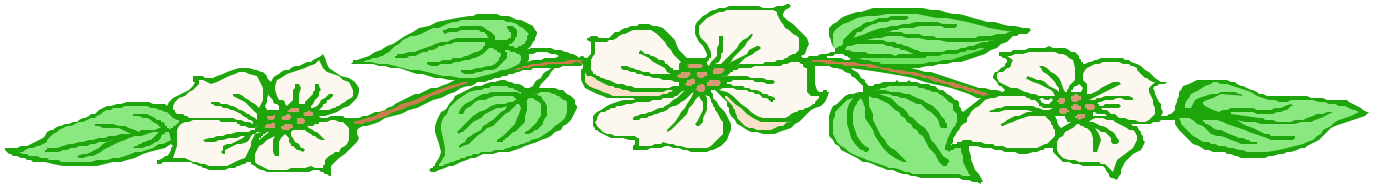
Sincerely,
LADY MARGARET



THE CHRONICLER'S MUSINGS

I hope everyone enjoys Asim's article on Middle Eastern dancing. I encourage (strongly) all of you to follow his example and give me more material to put into YOUR newsletter.

Until next month, I remain...



Always in Service,
LADY MAEVE

PERIOD MIDDLE EASTERN DANCE

The Period Dancer in the Middle East: A Survey
By Sayyid (Lord) Asim al-Talib

[NOTE: This is very much a work in progress. Not only are conclusions in flux, but also new data is being gathered, especially primary source information. Any dance research mavens, critiquers, or people simply curious to know more, are welcome to email me.]

Professional Dancing

The vast majority of professional raks dancers were women - although men were not unknown. The records, at least from the sparse English language sources I've been able to read so far, indicate that many early-period professional dancers were also slaves.

It's important to remember that slavery, in Islam, is a somewhat different thing in Islam. Although still an act of reducing a person to an object, Mohammed's laws improved the slave's lot. He encouraged the owner to treat his property with fairness, and to restrain from ill use. He also made manumission, the act of freeing a slave, an activity that Allah looked kindly upon.

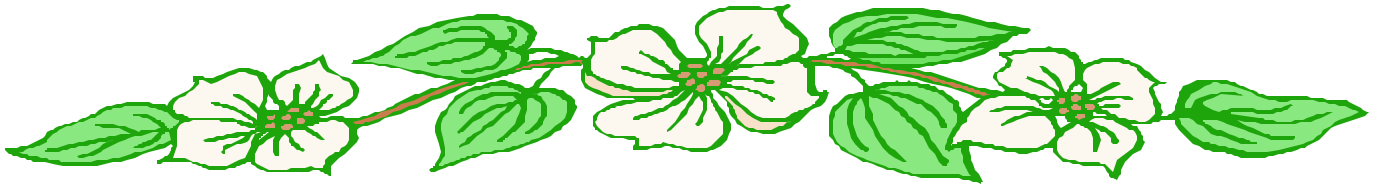
In addition, the pre-Islamic cultural background contributed to raising the value of a slave trained for entertainment, even as it created a low value for their arts on a cultural level. Long-standing interests in music and dance wrestled with the strictures of Islamic law. Just as harmful to the development of raks was the disdain amongst the "learned classes"; the few, sparse artistic dance references[1] reflect this issue.

Almost all dancers in period were not only dancers. They were more like vaudeville actors, able to sing, write poetry, and do any number of entertaining acts.[2] This was especially true of the slave-dancers, in fact; they were more than able to hold conversations on any number of topics. Indeed, dance was a lesser component for many of their repertoires, as many people saw it as the least of the arts.

These factors all combined to make dance a "low art", best done by the common people or by slaves trained in the act. The "guilty pleasure" feeling that dance generated in the average Islamic person meant, amongst other things, that they were willing to pay well to enjoy it. Therefore dancers, although being outcasts from much of polite society[3], also seemed to have enjoyed an above-average wage, if a free woman. As a slave they were offered for a high profit, encouraging the acts of training and supporting the slave dancer.[4]

Either way, I theorize[5] that we end up with 3 major classes of professional dancers. The first is the professional slave dancer, sold directly to individuals. Most of the buyers were of a high level, including people attached to the royal court, if not the Caliph or Sultan himself. Part of the reason was not just the high price of purchase, but also the need to clothe, feed, and shelter a highly trained individual.

The second is the Prostitute/Dancer. They seem to have not gone through extensive training on average, as their style is regularly maligned in the European writings that primarily mention them[6]. They were



plentiful, however, and willing to dance in front of anyone for the right price. This seems to have left a number of commentators with the impression that all dancers, public or not, were prostitutes.

Third, there is the performance-only dancer. Often she was willing to dance for anyone, but not necessarily to have sex with him. This is a subject of some investigation, as such entities as the Ottoman-era dance companies imply that they were primarily, if not completely, non-sexual in nature. These individuals would be the closest to modern-era professional dancers.

Social Dancing

Many people who would never think of dancing for money did so for fun in period, as well. Although this strongly depended on the time and place in period, there are a number of examples of period dancing going on. A considerable number of laws were placed on the books in various areas to curtail dancing amongst the common folk, a sure sign that such activities were occurring.

Of note is the tradition of the nighttime music and dance performances, similar to the Scadian bardic circle concept. There are pre-period references to such activities, including, amongst some groups, a call-and-response singing tradition with dancing added on top. The Bedouins may have been one significant transmitter, as their term for it, *Zambras*[7], was picked up by a number of other cultures, including al-Andalus.

There are few details about these activities. Shiloah comments on al-Shirwani's description of a *Zambra* that another writer attended in 1016. He explains that the writer saw female musicians who accompanied a female dancer, but Shiloah goes on to explain that male musicians also took part.

The scarcity of comments belies the frequency of dance. As Chengir says in his *Lecture on Historical Dance*, "The very mention of dancers at a wedding...implies that these were common place occurrences that al-Ghazali felt he needed to discuss." He builds a case for dance being popular by pointing out how often it was repressed, an interesting tack in the research into this field.

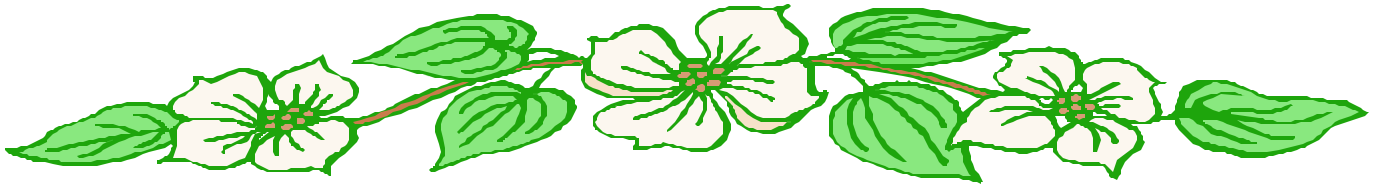
Raks-Style Dance in Period

Chengir also notes that *raks*, "belly dance" is far from the only form of dance in period; he identifies 6 distinct types. We will focus this section on *raks* ("belly dance") in period.

Looking at And's research, it is almost certain that late-period *raks* in Ottoman times was very similar to pre-*raks* *shaquri raks*, lacking the modern embellishments such as stage usage and ballet-ish toe work. And gives an extended piece from a 15th Century Turkish treatise on dance. This work also describes the dance in some detail, and puts it into a spiritual context[8]. In the process, it documents "*raks*" as the correct period term[9] for this dance.

Both Shiloah and And note Guillamue Postel's period observations of what could easily be a form of *raks*, complete with handkerchief. According to Postel, one dancer "does a mime, so strongly mimicking the gestures of love that describing it...would excite more desire than pleasure." [10]

And writes an extended description of the public dance, apparently a composite from period and post-period sources:



"...dancing consisted of suggestive contortions, a good deal of stomach play and twisting of the body, falling upon the knees with the trunk held back until the head nearly touched the floor behind [...], writhing, swaying the body with a slight twist[...]"

It is notable that, although the boy dancers had their own styles, they also did dancers that mimicked the women, as the women did for the men's dances.

One more description comes from Persia. According to Shiloah, Al-Masudi's work *Meadows of Gold* contains an extended description[11] of the "principles of dance", as they were explained to Persian Caliph al-Mu'tamid. This description, or at least Shiloah's take on it, fits well with other, period, descriptions of raks.

Conclusion

There are many other aspects of dance in the Middle East one can cover, from the folk dances to the tale of the Persian Caliph al-Amin performing kurre, a "ball dance" in court. Even with all that, there is much missing. We still lack a detailed period source, an "instruction book" on period raks. There are no "from a dancer's perspective" writings known. Even the writings we do have lack the kind of detail that makes excellent re-creations easy. It may be that such a thing does not exist. After all, raks is an improvisational form, and the interactions we have had with raks dancers in the 20th century indicate that the dance has been passed orally from person to person, and formal instruction was merely an expanded version of that.

At the same time, I think we are on the verge of major breakthroughs in the research into period dance. With the period sources quoted in the books here, we could see our way to a strong definition of the "look and feel" of period raks. We may always lack a understating of "how", but we, today, can re-create the style and clothing to a great degree. In this way, raks can fit into the SCA as not just a fun activity, but also the result of intensive research and polishing of many different, and varied, skills.

[1] Shiloah (pg. 137) mentions that "the principals of dance" are touched on in *MEADOWS OF GOLD*...

[2] Chamas (no page).

[3] I have yet to find even a hint of a period reference to a dancer's day-to-day life.

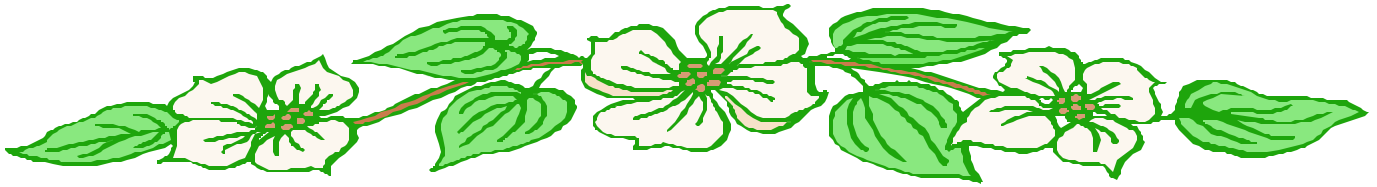
[4] Or both - Mersini indicates that Khayzuran (Caliph Harun al-Rashid's mother) was a free women when sold into slavery.

[5] I must emphasize that this is a "running start"; there is little documentation for these divisions on a formal basis, especially the "professional full-time dancer" versus "dancer/prostitute" split

[6] There are, potentially, many reasons this may have occurred, cultural bias being one of them.

[7] Shiloah (pg. 77) is my primary source for this information.

[8] The context (And. Pgs. 11-13) is that raks represents the "Autumn" period, with 3 other dance styles



falling under the other seasons.

[9] According to Shay (Endnotes to Chap. 7), raks is also a Farsi term. A case could be made for tracking the history of raks via entomology.

[10] Shiloah pg. 139

[11] Shiloah ps. 137

RAIDERS OF THE LOST COVE V
MARCH 21ST – 23RD, 2003
STRONGHOLD OF RAVEN'S COVE

Didn't get enough fighting at Gulf Wars? Or maybe you didn't get to go to Gulf Wars!!! Whatever the case, we may have an answer for you, if you are looking for one. Come to the coastal regions of North Carolina and be a raider or maybe even a village defender. Heavy and rapier fighting will abound throughout the day. A&S competition and a collegium are also a part of the day's activities. The theme for this year is Viking Raiders. Please check the following website for more information and updates: <http://ravenscove.atlantia.sca.org>

This is an event/demo held in conjunction with the Marine Corps Community Service Renaissance Festival.

Site Fee: Members \$2.00 Non-members: \$5.00 Feast: \$10.00
Children 6-12 are half price and those 5 and under are our guest.

Send reservations to Lady Maderun, the Exchequer, at the following address: Diana Fillpot, 105 Walnut Creek Road, Jacksonville, NC 28546

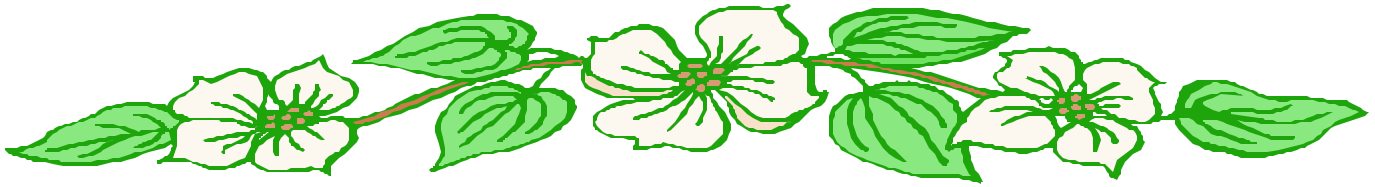
Site: Mitchell Camp, 247 4-H Camp Road, Swansboro, NC 28584. Site will open at 6pm on Friday night and will close at noon on Sunday. No open fires. No pets. Site is dry during the day, but discretely wet (absolutely no original containers) at feast. There will be a revel inside after the feast until 2am.

Autocrat: Lord Duncan MacLaren (Shawn McLerren), 200 Canterbury Road, Jacksonville, NC 28540 (910) 938-0626, e-mail: duncan07@earthlink.net

Merchants/Entertainers: If you desire to do merchenting please contact Debbie Hoffman at (919) 451-1521. She is the Facility Manager for Marston Pavilion. Entertainers are greatly desired for the pleasure of our guests during feast. Please contact the Autocrat if you would like to perform at this time.

Directions:

Make your best route to Highway 24 going towards Swansboro, NC. If coming from the south, turn right from Hwy 24 in Swansboro onto Hammock's Beach Road at the ABC store. Proceed 1.1 miles. Turn right onto 4-H Camp Road, and go until it ends (another mile). If coming from the north, turn left from Hwy 24 in Swansboro onto Hammock's Beach Road at the ABC store. Proceed as above.



INN ON THE ROAD VII – SEGUE INN
MARCH 29TH
CANTON OF AIRE FAUCON

Camp Loy White, Casar, NC

Since last seeing our friends at the Fishguard Inn, they have started on a pilgrimage to parts unknown. Having grown weary from their travels, they have taken refuge at a quaint little "Inn on the Road". Join us for a day of fighting tournaments, gaming, and feasting at the Segue Inn.

Fighting - There will be tourneys for the Heavy and Rapier fighters, as well as the return of our customary "animal shoot" (of the stuffed variety).

Arts & Sciences - As weary travelers gather at the end of their day's trek, they can't help but notice one another's traveling gear.

1. **Best open category.** Object that would be used/carried by a traveler.

2. **Best poem, of any style.** Subject to be provided on site. Poetry form rules will be available.

Gaming - Games of chance are always a favorite at the Inn on the Road, and this year is no exception. We'll have a variety of your old favorites, as well as some new ones sure to challenge your luck and wits.

Merchants - You are welcome but must provide your own tables and shelter. Please let us know you are coming.

Feast - A sumptuous feast will be prepared for 88 gentles by Lady Fiona MacLeod and Feastocrat-in-Training Lady Keelin O'Duinn so reserve your space early!

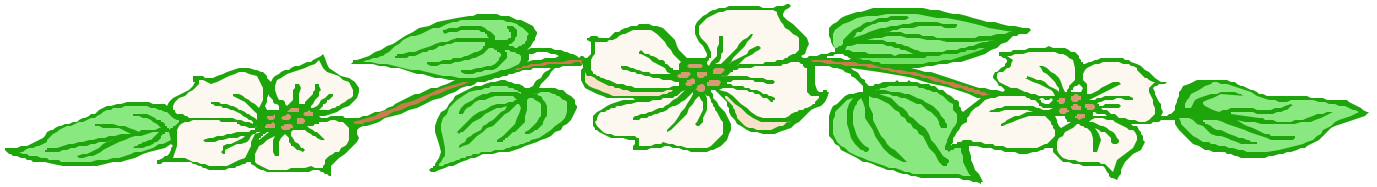
Cost - On Board \$10, Off Board \$5, Children 12 and under $\frac{1}{2}$ price, Children under 6 are guests of the Canton. Make all checks payable to "Canton of Aire Faucon, SCA Inc." Send reservations to the Reservationist, Lady Keelin O'Duinn (Nicole Cochran), 2704 Lowell Road, Gastonia, NC, 28054, (704) 824-4660, email: sadunnddeal@aol.com

Autocrat: Lady Brianna O'Duinn (Sherra Dunn), 2704 Lowell Road, Gastonia, NC, 28054, (704) 824-4660, email: sadunnddeal@aol.com

The site is once again Camp Loy White, 258 Hull Road, Casar, NC 28020. Site opens at 10:00 am and closes at 10:00 p.m. This site is **Absolutely Bone Dry**. Anyone who has alcohol on site will be asked to leave and will not get a refund of their event fee. Sorry, no pets allowed.

As per SCA policy, their parents who have signed a waiver for them must accompany minors, or minors must have a minor waiver signed by their parent to turn in when they check in, even if they have a membership card. Minors without waivers cannot be permitted to attend the event.

Directions



From I-40 East or West: Take NC Hwy. 18 towards Shelby. Turn Right on NC Hwy. 10 towards Casar, go about 8 miles, turn Left onto St. Paul's Church Rd., go 2 miles, turn Right on Hull Rd., go $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, Camp Loy White is on the Left.

From I-85 North or South: Take US Hwy. 74 to Shelby, follow Business 74 to the right, after 1.5 miles go north (Right) on NC Hwy. 180. After 5.1 miles turn right on NC Hwy. 18. Go approx. 9 miles & turn Left on Carpenter's Grove Road (there is a sign for Camp Loy White and also one for Belwood Community Center at this intersection). Go 2.5 miles. Turn Left on St. Paul's Church Rd., go 2 miles and turn Left on Hull Rd. Go $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, then Left into Camp Loy White.

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