

# [Artemisia] haven't lightened up enough...

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Look, we are still way too serious here. Now I have the happy pain pills from the doctor as my excuse, but the rest of you are just pathetic. The postings will not stop until at least three more people have broken ribs from laughing too hard. So get with the program people! (And please no cross-posting without asking first)

ttn

Grumpy (formerly Therasia)

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The following is a letter sent to the kingdom seneschal of one of those kingdoms next door.

Irgenwer von Irgenwo/Cate Kelly  
Principality Seneschal  
801 Cerro Arroyo  
Albany, CA 94598

December 18, 2005

Lachlin de Scotia/Val Glazer  
Kingdom Seneschal  
PO Box 002  
Lake Nacimiento, CA 94999

Good Your Grace,

This is a report about the incidents that happened at this year's annual "agitation of the boars" event held in the Shire of Beaconsate, at the Boy Scout Camp in Kingston Heights, CA. As of this morning, all charges have been dropped by all parties. The members of SPETA responsible for the live traps and the disruption of the feast have agreed to pay expenses and damages to the owners of the puppy, Sir Bigod, the Shire of Beaconsate and to the East Bay Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

An incident that contributed to the Beaconsate mess was Sir James's recent accident, wherein he, his wife and two friends from the shire were injured and are still in the hospital. These four are the seneschal, chancellor of the exchequer, marshal and herald for Beaconsate respectively. In addition, Viscountess Katrinka, James's

wife was originally the head cook/feastocrat for the December event. The accident removed the four shire officers from the planning and execution of the event, which is unfortunate since they are the people who know the most about running the Boar Hunt.

Four shire members volunteered to fill in for James and company, taking over the jobs of autocrat, feastocrat, gate and marshal. All are newcomers and none of them have been SCA for more than 2 years. Since none of the real shire officers were available to inject their knowledge of SCA rules and traditions, the new event staff did not realize that Lord Howell ap Howell, the acting marshal, needed to be authorized as a heavy fighter and warranted as a marshal before the event.

Wanting to do a good job as autocrat/event steward, Lady Shaherazad has been reading Corpora and recent BoD minutes. Because of the recent ruling by the BoD prohibiting hunting, the new autocrat decided that the name of the event had to be changed. So the BeaconsGate Annual Boar Hunt became the Annual Agitation of the Boars instead. She also concluded that she needed to clamp down on religious display and invocations at BeaconsGate activities. To wit, on the day of the event, she covered up the Camp Thor sign at the turn-off with one that read "Camp Thorn" instead. She also banned any and all Christmas carols, mistletoe and dreidles at the event.

Since real world laws take precedence over SCA rules, Shaherazad also read up on the laws of the town of Kingston, and discovered that Kingston is a nuclear-free zone – so during set-up on Friday evening, she removed all the smoke detectors with americium-241 from the main lodge of the Boy Scout camp. She removed the welding rods from the Camp's arc welder and all the Coleman lanterns. She also forbade the use of any spice mixes containing potassium chloride because of their potassium-40 content, a move applauded by Sean Lard, the replacement feastocrat, since radioactivity is not period.

While Sean Lard has worked in the kitchen for many feasts, this was his first time running one. He ordered 30 frozen ducks over the internet to be delivered to his apartment in El Cerrito on the Friday before the feast. He realized after delivery that he did not have enough room in his tiny kitchen for 15 boxes (2 apiece) of frozen ducks. So instead of defrosting the ducks in his kitchen, he put the boxes on his balcony to defrost.

When Sean arrived to set-up kitchen on Saturday morning, he discovered that he had forgotten powdered ginger for the armoured turnips. He sent one of the local college student members down to the Berkeley Bowl to buy some. Amy, the student in question, found something even better at the Berkeley Bowl: fresh ginger root. She returned in triumph with her find, whereupon Sean delegated her to make the twelve pans of armoured turnips for the feast.

It wasn't until 3 in the afternoon that the ducks were unpacked from their boxes and were discovered to still be frozen. Spending a cold December night on Sean's El Cerrito balcony had not been sufficient to defrost the fowl. Panic set in in the kitchen but disaster was averted by sending all the cooks home to get their microwaves. Soon a steady stream of defrosted ducks were being piled in one of the two

huge dishwashing sinks since there was no other space left in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Howell was organizing and running the hunt. To remind you how the annual "agitation of the boars" works, here are the rules. The two boars are two armoured fighters using florentine maces. The hunters are armoured fighters armed with spears only. The hounds are armoured fighters with daggers only and the dogs are unarmoured scouts.

Dogs and hounds can only bark. Hounds do not need escorted but each dog must be escorted by one hunter and, of course, dogs must be out of range before either the hunters, hounds or boars can attack one another. The skunk is an armoured fighter with no weaponry but carrying squirt guns. Since the "smell" of anyone sprayed by the skunk disables all the dog and hound noses in the hunting party, the skunk victim must return to the lodge and be cleansed of their stink by touching the holy can of tomato juice

The rules for using skunks were partially overheard by an animal rights activist at Val's Green Pizza in San Pablo where the BeaconsGate October meeting was held. What the activist overheard was "skunk", "boars", "ducks", "gun", "hounds" and "small arms." The activist concluded that we were using hunting dogs to track and corner defenseless skunks who we would then kill using handguns prior to trophy skinning. He also concluded that we had captured both wild ducks and feral pigs and would release them on the day of the event so we could hunt them down for sport.

On Friday evening before the event, several members of the Society for the Prevention of Ethical Treatment of Animals (SPETA) snuck onto the grounds of Camp Thor and placed specially designed live traps throughout the woods. These traps were rigged to spray a permanent but non-toxic day-glo paint onto whatever was trapped, thus ruining its usefulness for making real-fur clothing.

During the afternoon of the hunt, Sir Bigod in his role as a hound was out of sight, sniffing out the path ahead of his hunting party. In the dense brush along the old quarry wall, he tripped and fell into one of the live traps. He did not realize he had just been sprayed with hot pink paint since his helm does a good job of muffling sound. He never heard the spray can. Thinking the trap was another one of Sir James's boar hunt innovations, Sir Bigod decided to play along. Getting comfortable, he started a lonely and dejected howl that was so realistic that neither of the two hunting parties realized a human was making that noise. The hunting parties concluded independently that the howl was from a dog somewhere in the neighborhood surrounding the boy scout camp. Their mistake was soon revealed when the cops and animal control arrived.

Hidden SPETA members monitoring the event concluded that a hunting dog was caught in a live trap and that its owners had cruelly left it behind - and so they called the police. Independent of this, an elderly lady who lived near the camp had already called animal control to report a pack of wild dogs loose at the boy scout camp. Escorted by the grounds keeper of the camp, the Kingston Heights Police and the Contra Costa Animal Control officers searched the camp for the "abused dog" and found the live traps. They recovered a pink puppy, two feral pink cats, a pink raccoon, a real black and pink skunk, Sir Bigod in

pink armour and an armadillo. Afterwards, the assembled dogs and hounds had to do a demonstration of baying before everyone was convinced of the true identity of the pack of wild dogs.

All would have ended well if the event had ended just then - but there was a feast still in the offing. When the cops arrived, the entire kitchen staff ran out of the kitchen at the sound of sirens right outside the lodge, leaving behind a large pile of defrosted ducks in the sink. Amy was just pulling the first of the armoured turnip pans out of the oven. Not wanting to miss out on the excitement, she placed the hot pan on the only easily available spot while running out the back door: on top of the ducks in the sink. The fire in the sink must have started soon after but since Shaherazad had removed the smoke detectors, no one was aware of a fire for several minutes.

Finally, the heat sensors and sprinkler system triggered as the fire alarm went off. The flaming sink full of burning duck was near to overflowing with duck fat, turnips and sprinkler water. Unfortunately, duck fat floats and so the sprinklers succeeded in spreading the burning fat on a sheet of water spreading through the kitchen and across the main dining hall floor. It is only because the El Cerrito Fire Department Engine House #2 is just around the corner from Camp Thor that the main lodge was saved with very little damage. We had to clean all the fire suppression foam out of the kitchen and dining hall but the feast was finally served one hour late and minus one course. Some slightly slick spots remained on the floor but people assumed that mopping could be safely put off until after dinner since there was no dancing scheduled.

When the fire was out, the fire station chief did question where the smoke detectors had gone. Shaherazad fessed up about the nuclear free zone (which no one outside of the shire had heard about yet) and then produced the state-of-the-art PID smoke detectors she was going to replace the old ones with as a personal donation to the boy scout camp "because everyone, even Boy Scouts, deserve to live in a safe and nuclear-free world." After we all recovered from the shock of that announcement, the fire chief chided her not to replace any other smoke detectors until the replacements were actually on hand and then chose not to pursue the matter any farther. Since the fire damage was minimal, the Boy Scouts are going to overlook Lady Shaherazad's well-intentioned actions and the Shire of Beaconsgate will be painting and repairing the wood work in the lodge kitchen this Spring.

The other fire that evening was the armoured turnips. Neither Amy nor Sean realized that fresh ginger is 10 times more potent than powdered ginger and Amy used the quantities specified in the recipe exactly, substituting the fresh ginger root one-for-one for the powdered ginger.

They discovered their error right after high table was served the armoured turnips. The King took the first bite, smiled, nodded and was going for another when he made a funny squeek and reached frantically for the nearest pitcher of fluid. As he lunged, he slipped on a spot of duck fat, missed the pitcher and knocked it over, fell on the table, knocking the remains of the roast beef onto the brand-new white houppeland (with real gold couching) worn by the visiting Queen of Uberwaldt and then flung the rest of the dishes away from him in all directions as the table collapsed underneath him. As he recovered his balance and composure, the King summoned Sean and told him that next

time, don't use too much ginger. Sean is a man who believes there is no such thing as too much ginger and probably kept that belief right up to the moment that the King made him taste the turnips. Sean claimed afterwards that he never said there was too much ginger, though someone pointed out that that was because he was too busy gagging to speak.

That is all I have been able to uncover for now. I will inform you as soon as possible if and when more information about the Beaconsgate "Agitation of the Boars" event becomes available. Let's hope the aftermath of this event continues to remain quiet since I know you have your hands full with the stolen elephant incident in The Far West/Guam.

YIS,  
Irgenwer

(c. 2005 by C. M. Helm-Clark)

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