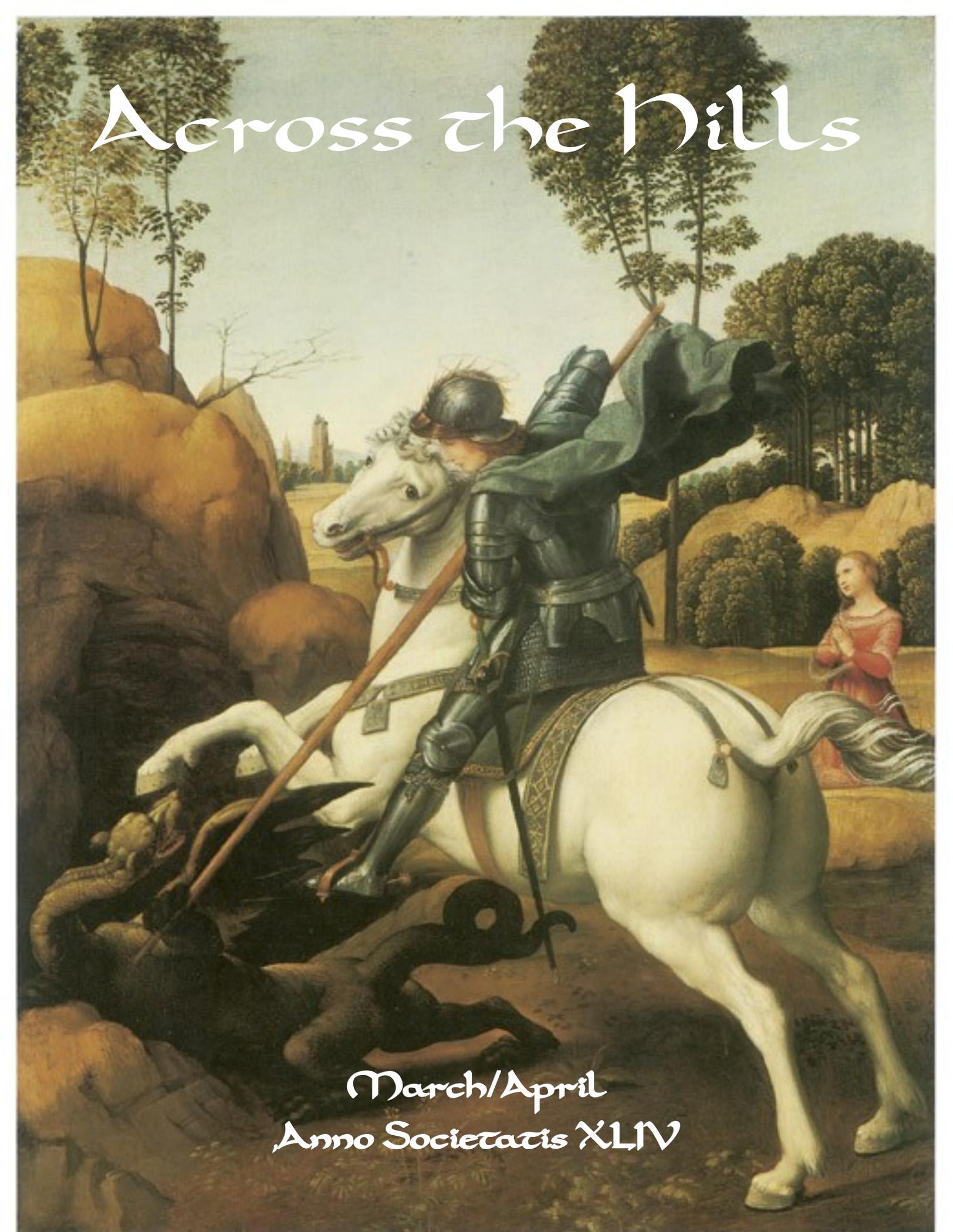


Across the Hills



March/April
Anno Societatis XLIV

From the Baron & Baroness

First of all, a happy announcement from our daughter Jen (Banshee) and George...Jessica Alia made her appearance on April 7, 2010...congratulations to the new family!

Baron Gunnarr traveled to Ice Dragon with the Endless Hills contingent...Her Excellency managed to enter in competition a leather six-fingered glove (in absentia)--in observance of TRM's challenge to the populace to use "The Princess Bride" as documentation...and won a second-place!

Last weekend we attended Coronation and swore our fealty (along with 5 other baronages) to the new Crowns of Aethelmearc. Our thanks to Lord Tigernach and our son Mark for bailing us out of car trouble--you guys ROCK!

If any of you have been thinking about going to a fighter practice, you are missing a great time on Tuesday nights in Forty-Fort--we have attended this event almost every week and are in awe of the sheer numbers of the turnout--vivats to our warriors (and madrigals!)

Baron Gunnarr has been attending the Thursday night practices in Sterlynge Vayle--another round of vivats to our northern neighbors for another great practice site!

Our upcoming progress includes our own Year End Tourney this weekend where we will be choosing our Baronial champions in Thrown, Archery, A&S, and Youth...we hope to see everyone there.

The next weekend is a town demo in Lewisburg PA, in which we have been invited by the Shire of ACG to participate. May 2 is an outdoor practice/cookout at the Baron/ess' home--for all kinds of combat and gentler arts--even a leather-working workshop! Plan to join us for comraderie, fighting, fencing, archery, thrown, craftsy-stuff-- and some food! There might even be some free stuff to be given away...

Also on our agenda is Crown Tourney in May; also Will's Revenge...and Melee Madness, which, among other things, is the site of the next Kingdom Equestrian Championship--come out and cheer on your favorite rider and steed!

It is a busy time ahead for us; please remember that we look forward to the award recommendations from you, the populace...

We have had a busy schedule so far (and with summer's approach, it promises to get even busier!) but it has been a great ride so far--we appreciate all the support we have received from all of you; we cannot do our job well without you!

In Service to the Dream,

Baron Gunnarr of Endless Hills

Baroness Barbary Rose of Endless Hills



Quote of the Month

"Carpe diem! Rejoice while you are alive; enjoy the day; live life to the fullest; make the most of what you have. It is later than you think."

- Horace (65 BC—8 BC)

Projected Baronial Budget for 2010

Baron/ess Travel Fund	\$200.00
Elected Officer office expense (16x\$25)	\$400.00
Equestrian Practice Insurance	\$0.00
Equestrian Insurance - Ice Festival	\$0.00
Equestrian Insurance - St Patricks Day Parade	\$0.00
Equipment Maintenance and Rental	\$50.00
Event Advertising	\$25.00
Fundraising Expense	\$25.00
Printing: Activity: Paper for reports, forms, etc	\$40.00
Printing: O&A: Newsletter & Domesday	\$50.00
Baronial Award tokens & scrolls	\$25.00
Scrapbook	\$0.00
Non event related Food Expenses	\$50.00
Equipment purchase - Cooking equipment	\$150.00
Banner Project	\$10.00
Postage and Shipping	\$30.00
Equipment purchase - Helm	\$0.00
Equipment purchase - Fencing Blades	\$200.00
Equipment purchase - Water Heaters	\$400.00
Equipment purchase - Grill	\$400.00
Equipment purchase - Archery Kit	\$100.00
Equipment purchase - Storage Bags for Thrones	\$100.00
Total	\$2,255.00

Regular Activities

Newcomer's Meet & Greet	Second Wednesday of the month 7pm-9pm (Dickson City Borders)
	Fourth Wednesday of the month, 7pm - 9pm (Wilkes-Barre Barnes & Noble)
Fencing & Heavy Fighting Practice	Tuesdays, 7pm-10pm, Forty-Fort Borough Building
Armorer's Workshop	Last Thursday of the month, 7pm-10pm (contact Lord Tufa)
Arts & Sciences Gather	Third Thursday of the month, 7pm-10pm (contact THL Kateryna)
Bardic Practice	Every other Friday, 7pm-10pm (contact Simona at shipwreckblues@yahoo.com)
Barony Business Meeting	Monthly, date and time varies
Riverouge Business Meeting	Monthly, date and time varies

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Care And Feeding of Period Cookware

Many folks want to use period cookware, if possible, for both the flavor that it imparts to the event and the flavor it imparts to the food. Whether you are cooking in a cast iron skillet over a fire, a low carbon hand hammered wok over a cookstove burner, or in clay bakeware in an oven, there are certain steps to take with them which differ from type to type in order to prepare them for their first use (seasoning them) or to clean them after wonderful if messy meals.

In this article it will be examined how to prepare for use and return to a ready state both metal and clay or terra cotta vessels. Vessel is a generic term as the individual type of cookware you are using which may be inter alia a griddle, a skillet, a wok, a tangine, a high sided baking dish, a lidded (covered) roaster, or what have you.

First, no matter the type of vessel, if you buy it new it should come with the manufacturer's instructions on how best to season and clean the vessel. Follow those. If however you have bought something used at a garage sale, or have mislaid the original instructions, these are methods which are tried and true which you can use to care for your vessels.

Metal Vessels

Period metal vessels will generally be found in two different types. The first is cast iron, the second low carbon steel. Following is a primer on care and cleaning of both those types of vessels.

Upon initially acquiring the piece, wash it in hot soapy water, scrubbing with a soft brush, or if used and rusty, a stiffer cleaning material. You can use steel wool if absolutely necessary to remove any rust that may be found, but avoid it (it will tend to make micro scratches that will be hard to seal) if you can. With new cookware you have to remove the factory applied protective coating that is placed on it by the manufacturer in order to inhibit rust. With used cookware you need to get it to a clean metal state. Make sure your vessel is clean. If brand new it should be a grey or charcoal color. If used it may be splotchy, with portions where the rust has been removed being lighter in color than where carbon has been allowed to build up. Carbon buildup on the surface is exactly what you're looking for but in a controlled manner and in even layers.

After the piece has been washed and thoroughly dried, you must season (or in the case of used vessels, re-season) it. Turn your oven on to 450 degrees and place the rack in the center of your oven. Put the piece in the oven as it is warming up for a few minutes to ensure that it has in fact dried thoroughly. Do not let it become too warm to handle. After removing it from the oven, allow the oven to come up to temperature. While that is happening, gather some paper towels and a form of cooking fat. I personally season mine in the oven at the pizzeria at 550 degrees and use lard; however the choice of fat is up to you. A generic inexpensive oil works famously. Woks are often seasoned in peanut oil due to its high heat handling capabilities. Do not waste good money on using olive oils, olive oil will smoke at a very early stage and lower temperature and may impart that flavor in later use.

Wipe the inside cooking surface of the vessel with a paper towel on which you've poured some of your oil, or if using lard, use a gloved hand to rub it well onto the cooking surface. Some cooks recommend oiling both the inside of the vessel and the outside as this will give you the ability to cook on the outside (making as an example the bottom of an inverted frying pan into a form of griddle). Nota bene: If your vessel has a nonmetallic handle, remove it or if assembling it new, do this step before attaching the handle. Place the greased vessel in the oven at 450 Fahrenheit for ten minutes. When that time has expired, remove the vessel and let it cool on the top of the stove. While it is still warm to the touch but able to be handled, rub any excess fat or oil into the metal or off with a clean dry paper towel. You're now ready to cook with it, or store it for later use. If you're going to put the vessel into storage for a period of time, you may

want to rub another light coat of oil on it at room temperature, place the vessel in a large paper bag, and store it that way. The operative word here however is LIGHT coat of oil for storage.

After cooking with the vessel, allow it to cool sufficiently to handle. Wipe out with cloth or paper towel whatever cooking mung is left. If you need to scour it, I recommend either a bamboo slat brush, or pouring a handful of salt into the

vessel and using that as a scouring agent or media with a damp towel or wash rag. MUI IMPORTANTE: DO NOT USE SOAP OR SOAP IMPREGNATED CLEANING ITEMS ON IT. YOU WILL REMOVE OR RUIN THE SEASONING YOU HAVE BEEN BUILDING UP. Once the vessel is clean, wipe it with a light coat of oil or fat, and store it till it is needed again. The more you use your cast iron or low carbon steel cookware, the more of a carbon buildup you will get, and the better and more evenly it will cook.

The more you use cast iron the more it will blacken; the more you use low carbon steel it will also grey and/or blacken. This is normal and desirous and is not only a manner of making the surface more non stick but also preventing oxidation.

If you are using copper, brass or bronze cookware, you can clean it with soap and water. For the harder stains which will occur, you can use a commercial cleaner such as Cameo Copper Cleaner, or cut a lemon in half and push the cut face into salt and use that. The salt will again act as a scouring agent and the mild acid in the lemon will likewise help to remove any buildups that occur. Then after either method wash the vessel with soap and water.

Clay or Terra Cotta Vessels

With clay or terra cotta vessels, wash the item first in hot soapy water. Before using it for the first time, soak it in water for at least thirty (30) minutes immediately before using. Some procedues recommend rubbing a large cut clove of garlic on the cooking surface before using. When using the vessel, it is important to remember not to preheat the oven. Sudden changes in temperature will cause the clay or terra cotta to crack and will ruin it, whether it is glazed or not. Prepare the ingredients, place them in the vessel, then place the vessel in the oven, and turn the oven on, allowing the vessel to come up to temperature with the oven. This will add as much as 30 minutes to the cook time in your recipe. Alternatively, some recommend adding 50-100 degrees to the temperature in the recipe and then cooking for the required amount of time in the recipe; however I have never tried this method. Never pour hot liquids into a cold vessel nor cold liquids into an already heated vessel, as again the sudden temperature differentials may cause irreparable harm to the vessel.

After use, allow the clay pot to cool, and scrub with a soft bristled kitchen brush and water. Again, avoid using soap, or anything stiff enough to scratch or weaken the vessel. You can make a paste out of baking soda and water and use that to scour with if needed, and that will also remove any lingering flavors and odors from the previous cooking use. Store carefully; I like to put sheets of clean paper towels between mine to prevent damage.

Remember to soak the vessel for at least ten minutes immediately prior to its next use. AS you use your clay or terra cotta vessel more, it will darken with age and use. This is normal.

Wooden Vessels

When using wooden vessels such as bowls, plates, and platters, one is not cooking on them so much as serving or eating from them. Period woodware should be washed first with hot soapy water and then rinsed well. Remember never to allow it to soak in water or it will absorb water and become warped or cracked or otherwise damaged as it dries. Dry the piece well then beeswax should be rubbed into it. There are commercial items available that can easily be used; make sure that you use food grade waxes meant for sealing woodware for use, not furniture grade polishes or waxes.

If you take care of your period gear, it will last you for untold years to come. There is for example a bronze axe head dating back several thousand years to pre Roman Europe which holds the edge it had when its long lost last owner sharpened it.

Words from your friendly neighborhood Roman.

Septimus Severius Salvatoriensis Caecus

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Baronial Officers

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