

The Aerie



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MARCH A.S. LIII (2019) Cum An Iolair Calendar (Events in bold are local)

March 2019

- 7 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
9-17 Gulf Wars XXVIII—Gleann Abhann (Lumberton, MS)
15 Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS.
21 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.
23 Spring RUSH—Moonstone (Emporia, KS)
30 Golden Sea Regional Fighter Practice—Golden Sea (Salina, KS)

April 2019

- 4 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
6 Spring Spears—Calanais Nuadh (Rolla, MO)
12 Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS.
13 Spring Crown Tournament—Three Rivers (Overland, MO)

18 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.

27 Melon Wars—Flinthyll (Burlington, IA)
Spring War College—Amlethsmor (Hallsville, MO)

May 2019

- 2 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
4 Unslung Heroes—Aston Tor (E. Jackson County, MO)
10 Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS.
11 St. George & the Dragon—Oakheart (Springfield, MO)
16 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.
18 Melees & Mayhem—Crescent Moon (Topeka, KS)
Spring Arrows—Deodar (Cedar Rapids, IA)
25 Valor—Vatavia (Wichita, KS)

Shire Birthday List

March

- 2 Rose Wulfden
9 Niccolo
23 Caitlin nic Raigne

April

- 5 Giraude Benet
8 Jadwiga Marina Majewska
11 Fiona nic Gormliatha
14 Lilian Bowyer
27 Ursula of York
30 Felicity (Bronwyn's daughter)

May

- 8 Kitsume

Note from Chronicler

We need articles, book reviews and event reports for *The Aerie*. Please submit those by the 25th of each month to chronicler@shirecai.calontir.org. It would be especially helpful if people write event reviews. It is so simple to write them since you go to events already. There has been a change to the date of the March Cook's Guild. It is now meeting on March 15th. Our Exchequer and our Seneschal need deputies because they would like to step down at the end of this year. Please talk to them if you are interested!

Letter from the Cook's Guild

by HL Fiona nic Gormliatha
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Cook's Guild meets the second Friday of every month at Her Excellency Marguerite's (7216 Cottonwood, Shawnee, KS) give her a call at (913) 268-0416 for directions.

The theme for the January cook's meeting was cold weather foods. Some of the recipes came from the cookbook we call *The Blue Bible "The Medieval Kitchen, Recipes from France & Italy"* by Redon, Sabban & Serventi. The entree was Round-Steak Rolls, which has you take 6 thin slices of bottom round and pound them thinner yet, now you can do as suggested and put a slice of beef kidney or rib or loin fat on each one along

with marrow. We just rolled them up after seasoning with salt & pepper & secured with a toothpick or skewer & then broil for about 10 minutes turning the beef rolls halfway through the cooking. We served them with garlic sauce from the same book: Take ½ C blanched (no brown skins) dry almonds & grind in mortar or blender then add 3 cloves of peeled garlic, one clove at a time. Meanwhile, soak one slice of sandwich bread made into crumbs with a bit of 1 ¾ C meat broth (completely defatted), whisk until smooth & blend in almond-garlic mixture. Whisk in the rest of the broth until it forms a creamy sauce (could just do it in the blender the whole while), check for salt before serving in a gravy boat. Great stuff to serve with the Steak roll-ups! Then a favorite, Sautéed Mushrooms with Spices: Take one (generous) pound cleaned & trimmed mushrooms (wild or cultivated), if they are large cut them in half or quarters. Finely chop one small onion in a bit of olive oil until very soft the mushrooms & raise the heat to high & sauté for a minute. Season with salt & 1 pinch each ground ginger, (freshly) ground pepper & nutmeg & 2 pinches ground coriander seed, lower heat, cover the pan & simmer for about 15 mins. Giving them a stir from time to time. Serve when golden brown. The hobbit in me says Yum! Hard to tell when brown if using Portobello (just kidding).

Then a simple Finocchio or fennel salad: Clean & slice 2 fennel bulbs, parboil for 5 minutes & drain, sauté with 2 Tbsp. olive oil & season with salt & serve.

We also had stuffed Neapolitan eggs from the University of Michigan website: start by taking 1 pinch saffron & soaking in hot water & soak to use later. Then hard boil 7 eggs, (out of 9) shell & cut in half lengthwise, remove the yolks & mix with ¼ C each grated hard & Parmesan cheese, 1/8 C raisins, 3 Tbs. Each parley & marjoram & ½ Tbsp. mint if desired moisten with saffron water & ¾ tsp. Each cinnamon, ginger, cloves, pepper & salt. Separate the whites of the 2 reserved eggs & beat the whites lightly, mix with yolk stuffing, refill the hard egg whites & if you really want to fry them, put them together fry gently (so the filling doesn't fall out) in olive oil & serve. However, we put them on a baking sheet & heat for 10 mins. & serve, not bad! For dessert there was Orange Baklava, where the filling in made of boiled orange pulp—it has you scrub & boil 4 or 5 Valencia oranges (about 1 lb.) for about 1 or so hours (may have to weigh them down with a plate) then cut them up, remove any seeds when cooled & pulse in blender until pureed. Then take the puree in a fine mesh sieve & drain over a bowl for a few minutes to remove any excess liquid, if desired add 2-4 Tbs. Orange marmalade to the puree for added sweetness & flavor. Have ready an 8 x 11 x 2 inch baking pan and 16 filo sheets & ½ C melted unsalted butter. Cut the filo sheets to fit the pan with large, sharp knife & cover with damp towel or plastic wrap to prevent drying, removing a sheet at a time as needed. Butter the bottom of the pan & lay down a sheet of filo & brush with butter, repeating until 8 layers are done, spread orange puree evenly over the filo layers. Layer the remaining sheets of filo brushing each layer with butter until you have another eight layers, ending with the top brushed with butter. Cover pan & refrigerate for at least 30 mins. To firm up the butter. Preheat the oven to 350o, with a sharp knife cut the baklava into diamond shapes, cutting all the way to the bottom. Bake for 30 mins. then turn oven temp down to 300o & bake until top is golden, about another 15 minutes or so. While baklava is baking, make the syrup, combining 2 C sugar, ½ C each water &

fresh orange juice in a saucepan & boil over med-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Turn heat down to med. & simmer until the syrup thickens 15-20 mins., remove & stir in 1 Tbs. Orange flower water, let cool. When the baklava is ready, place pan or wire rack & pour syrup evenly over the top. Re-cut the pieces & serve warm or at room temperature. This was a very different version of baklava, rather liked it, another version adds a layer of pureed roasted pistachios with sugar & cardamom to the oranges might be too much? Uncertain.

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Drink To Make Merry
Wine, Fruit of the Vine
Part III

by HL Fiona nic Gormliatha
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While beer is made of fermented grain, wine is made of fermented fruit—or other things (more on that later). The oldest sample of wine, so far, was found in Colchis, now Georgia (part of Russia) & dates from 8000 BC! And the oldest winery dates from 4600 BC in Armenia—it is believed that wine was first thought of when someone really hungry ate fermenting fruit & discovered that it tasted good. Once again, according to “drunken history” humans became less nomadic hunter-gatherers & more farmers so that they could grow fruit & grain to make wine & beer. It should be noted that while wine is something found in countries where grapevines can be grown, & beer is found in northern areas where grain can be grown. Ancient Greeks went all out in growing grapevines & learning proper pruning, & started up the wine press—they even had a god of the vine & wine by the name of Dionysus (the party god, who could sometimes go horribly violent while drunk). Later on, the Romans had an immense impact on grape growing & wine making since wine was a major part of Roman diet & a valuable trade commodity. They spread it all over their Empire & refined techniques on choosing grape varieties, fermenting & aging. They called their god of wine Bacchus, and they took the barrels invented by the Gauls & glass bottles invented by the Syrians & used them to store & ship wine, replacing the terracotta amphora used by the Greeks. Unfortunately, there was an edict under Domitian (A.D. 92), halting the planting of any new vineyards & uprooting of over half so that needed, but less profitable grains could be grown. They were the ones who started pairing wines with certain foods—red wine with red meat, white wine with poultry or fish and so on.

Wine was a precious commodity in ancient times & was often mixed with water (usually a 4 to one ratio), since drinking it straight might lead to excess, & nobody wanted that—except the Celts & other barbarians. There were red & white wines, dry & sweet & in the Middle East & Asia, where only certain climates could support grapevines, wine was made from dates, pomegranates, flowers or other fruits—or even vegetables (ever heard of parsnip wine? I have!).

When the Roman empire fell, it fell to the Roman Church, which needed wine to celebrate Mass to continue wine production. Eventually, the monks would sell their wines to local taverns & turn their vineyards & fermenting into a commercial industry. They also gave wine appellations, such as Burgundy, Bordeaux, Champagne (Dom Perignon was a Benedictine monk!) from France or Reislung from Germany, favored wines from historic areas.

According to medieval physician Galen, wine was a healthy choice, red wine in particular aided digestion, gave one good blood & brightened the mood. Most strove to drink wine of the best quality, the first pressing of the best vintage (and highest alcohol content) went to the nobility, while second & third pressings went to the common folk, while the poorest had to make do with vinegar to drink or flavor their water. Wine was often used for cooking & many recipes were found to fix wines that went bad--one could mix in herbs or spices, or honey, or just make some honey wine or Mead.

A word here on honey & beekeeping: Man's love of honey is ancient & well-documented, a cave drawing in Valencia, Spain dating from the Neolithic times shows a figure raiding a beehive in a hollow tree. Sumerians were the first to domesticate bees, Canaan was called the "Land of milk & honey" for good reason & the Egyptians made terracotta pots as the first beehives, so honey could travel down the Nile & all could know the "nectar of the gods." Beehives were also made from hollow logs, boxes & woven straw domes called "skeps".

Smoke is used to calm the bees so the honey can be harvested, but care had to be taken that the bees had enough honey to share & that not too many bees were killed while the honey was harvested. This made honey expensive—and now we are suffering under colony collapse of bees, so beware! The Reverend Langstroth of Philadelphia invented the removable frames we use with beehives now in 1851, which are easier on the bees & their keepers. There is mention made of those rare souls called "bee charmers", who can remove honey without much in the way of stings—one wonders if such folk were descendants of the "Melissae" who were Greek demigoddesses/nymphs/priestesses that cared for bees & traded off their honey & wax. We know tantalizingly little about them. There are some superstitions regarding Bees & beehives, for instance a beekeeper is compelled to

Charlemagne made laws commanding that any farm owner also had to keep bees, (probably because honey & beeswax were often asked as tribute from peasants for their rent from nobles or the Church), plus sanctions against those who stole hives or honey. As well as having an almost indefinite shelf life, honey was also used as a medicine, especially a wound healer. Then there is beeswax, used for sweet-smelling candles, seals for documents or foodstuffs & for medicine as well.

Mead that is flavored with flowers or herbs are commonly called metheglin & those flavored with fruit are referred to as melomels. It was a popular drink all around the Old World, but most particularly among the Celts (especially the Welsh) & Norse—the epic poem "Beowulf" has most of the action happen in a mead hall.

Recipes:

You may need some sort of wine press or crusher that will process your grapes or fruit (or just start with commercially bought juice). A saccharometer to determine your sugar content (for successful fermentation needs to be about 22 % for 11 % alcohol, add sugar to get up to this level) & perhaps some sort of method of determining the acid content of your juice (needs to be about .6-.8%). You will definitely need a gallon or 5 gallon non-metallic container to ferment your wine in—jar, crock, barrel, & even one of those food-grade plastic buckets that formerly held pickles or something. Everything needs to be clean; you may need Campden tablets to sterilize your gear

without imparting a chemical taste to your wine. You will also need some clear tubing to siphon or "rack" your wine & perhaps a fermentation lock or two, although I have seen folks make one out of a small plastic bag & a rubber band. Most of this stuff can be scrounged or purchased a brew shop (there is a local one called "Bacchus & Barleycorn" just off of Shawnee Mission Parkway).

For five gallons of wine, you will need 70 lbs. Of grapes—wine grapes, pale ones for white wine—or 5 gal. Of juice. Crush grapes & stems (but not the seeds), in a press or with a potato masher & strain through a nylon mesh bag into a bucket or crock of some sort—but do not squeeze unless you like cloudy white wine (ignore this step if you are making red wine). Add sugar to adjust content (use that saccharometer) to 21 percent & adjust acid content to .7% & use tartaric acid as needed to get there. Your juice needs to be about 70o F., add 5 Campden tablets that have been dissolved in some of the juice. After 4-12 hours add 1 package vintner's yeast & 5 capsules yeast energizer & stir thoroughly—siphon into 5 gal. Glass bottle & fill smaller bottle with any excess, stopper with cotton & let stand in 55o-60o F. area (stirring once a day, if making red wine to mix skins with juice)-a cellar is perfect for this step. Once the fermentation calms (about 5 days), fill the 5 gal. Bottle with the extra juice (or some previous wine) to within 1 inch of the stopper, replace cotton with a fermentation lock. This is a device that allows the gas of fermentation to escape but prevents wild yeasts from invading, it is filled with a small amount of water. Watch the bubbles in the fermentation lock escape until it stops & sugar level is near zero—fermentation is nearly done! Siphon/rack your wine into a clean 5 gallon bottle making sure that your siphon tube is near the bottom of the new bottle so that the new wine does not splash & over oxidize & that the sediment or "lees" in the old fermentation are not disturbed & make the wine cloudy. Dissolve 2 ½ Campden tablets in some wine or the reserved juice (if any is left) & add to the new wine to (again) within 1 inch of the stopper & put in the fermentation lock & set bottle in 65o-70o F. area for 2-3 months. Rack wine as many times as needed to make clear (a good test is to put a lighted candle behind your glass jar & if you can see the edge of the flame, the wine is clear enough), refrigerate for two days to stabilize, return to room temp. siphon into bottles, cork & label. Longer aging gives you better flavor, I guess.

To make a gallon of Mead, have 6 lbs of honey ready, crush 1 Campden tablet & 1 capsule yeast energizer & stir into 3 lbs. Of the honey, then pour the honey slowly into 2 cups warm water, (remember, non-metallic container) stirring constantly until honey is completely dissolved. Stir in ¾ oz. Citric, malic or tartaric acid (or a mix of them) & 1 ½ tsp. Strong tea. Cover & leave in a warm place (about 70o F) for a day, then stir in 1 package vintner's or mead yeast, cover & fit with fermentation lock & let ferment for 5 days. On the fifth day, dissolve the last 3 lbs of honey in 2 C warm water & add to the original mixture, put lid & fermentation lock back on & let work for 2 more days. Rack the mead into clean 1 gal. Pail or glass bottle, making sure not to disturb the sediment at the bottom of the mixture (dead yeast). Fill the new container to within 1 inch of the stopper by adding warm (70o) water if needed & fit with fermentation lock & let it work until done, racking whenever sediment forms until the mead is clean, then bottle, label & store in cool, dark area. These are the recipes I have from "Back to Basics. If you would like to try more period recipes, SCA publications has a selection

of single subject pamphlets called “The Compleat Anachronist”—like “The Compleat Anachronist Handbook of Brewing”; “Making Medieval Mead, or Mead Before Digby” (Sir Kenelm Digby published some recipes in the late 1500’s); “Intoxicating Beverages of the Middle East”; “Medieval Brewing”: the Rise & Fall of Gruit: Low Country Herbal Beer.

A Word on Strong Spirits: There are two kinds of distillation, freeze distillation & the hot, pot “still” sort we are familiar with. The Freeze method is ancient, someone probably left out some beer or wine, the water in it froze, the ice was picked out & when the reduced brew was found to have more alcohol content, more freezing was in order! Pot stills are ancient, the oldest dates from 3000 BC in the Indus Valley, & were used by many civilizations until a lot of the Roman knowledge was lost during the Dark Ages. Stills were reintroduced to Europe during the 1100’s since the Arabs kept the skill, medieval people felt that anything that came out of a still was medicinal, purified, & called the liquid “aqua vitae” or “the water of life”—which is where we get the word for whiskey. It is thought that whiskey is beer, distilled—sort of—like beer, a mash is made but it is the barrel aging after the distillation that makes the whiskey. Brandy was often called “burnt wine” during the middle ages for the same reason—it was wine refined to raise the alcohol content.

Bibliography:

Eyewitness Books series: Medieval Life

“Back to Basics” How to Learn & Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Readers Digest 1981).

“Food in History” by Reay Tannahill

Websites: “Medieval Drink” or “Medieval Cuisine”, “The Medieval Calendar”

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