

The Benevolent Order of Scurritious Monks

Abbot's Report

Summer Solstice, 2008

Brother Geek Collects Nearly Ten Thousand Names!!!

We knew that Brother Geek (Joni Massengale) was interested in automobile racing but we were unaware that her interests also include horse racing. Here is an excerpt from an Email dated May 14:

On May 3rd at the conclusion of the Kentucky Derby, my shouts of joy turned to tears of grief when the beautiful filly, Eight Belles had to be put down due to injuries after finishing second. I knew immediately that mine was not the only heart broken. For the next couple of days I filled with sorrow at the memory wishing there was something I could do not only for my own grief, but for those who were sharing it. The following Monday an idea came to me that Churchill Downs should ring "8 Bells" in her honor before next year's Kentucky Derby. "8 Bells" signals the end of watch for sailors and is a nautical euphemism often used in obituaries. My mind quickly made the connection that with the website building skills and resources I have at my disposal, I should try to make this happen. Thus was born, 8BellsForEightBelles.org. (The petition Joni posted at the web site reads as follows)

Whereas the Kentucky Derby is the epitome of Thoroughbred Horse Racing, rich in its history and traditions;
and

whereas the sport of Thoroughbred Horse Racing is a celebration of the beauty and athleticism of the breed;
and

whereas on May 3rd, 2008 one horse raced with the heart of a champion and a spirit greater than her body;
let 8 bells be rung before the 135th running of the Kentucky Derby in memory of the filly,
EIGHT BELLES.

May she live forever in the hearts of us all.

As of this writing, 9,738 people have signed the on line petition. Churchill Downs and Mr. Rick Porter, Eight Belles' owner, have announced their tribute plans which include an "8 Bells" ceremony.

Brother Whimsey Survives Evil Curse!

Since 1996, Brother Whimsey's (Dr. Joanne Flynn's) husband, Dr. Nick Newlin, has been conducting an annual play directing project at Banneker High School in the District of Columbia. Dr. Newlin helps students to perform a 30 minute version of a Shakespeare Play. This year, they chose to perform one of Shakespeare's

The Nicol Whimsey Show!



most famous plays which is often referred to as "The Scottish Play." People call it "The Scottish Play" in order to avoid speaking its name because the play is associated with a deadly curse. Productions of "The Scottish Play" are said to have been plagued with accidents, many ending in death. According to one superstition, Shakespeare got a few of the lines from an actual coven of witches and when they saw the play they were greatly offended and cursed the play. Another tradition tells that the original propmaster

could not find a suitable pot for a cauldron and stole one from a coven, who then cursed the play in revenge for the theft. It is believed that the taboo calls the ghosts of the three witches to the show and it is they who cause all the mishaps. Beginning with its first performance, in 1606, Dear Will himself was forced to play the female lead when Hal Berridge, the boy designated to play the lady with a peculiar notion of hospitality, became inexplicably feverish and died. Others who played the part of Lady M also suffered misfortunes. Sarah Siddons was nearly ravaged by a disapproving audience in 1775; Sybil Thorndike was almost strangled by a burly actor in 1926; Diana Wynyard sleepwalked off the rostrum in 1948, falling down 15 feet. When performed in Amsterdam in 1672, the actor playing the title role substituted a real dagger for the blunted stage one and with it killed Duncan in full view of the entranced audience. During its 1849 performance at New York's Astor Place, a riot broke out in which 31 people were trampled to death. In 1937, when Laurence Olivier took on the lead role, a 25 pound stage weight crashed within an inch of him, and his sword, which broke on stage, flew into the audience and hit a man who later suffered a heart attack. In 1934, British actor Malcolm Keen turned mute on stage, and his replacement, Alister Sim, like Hal Berridge before him, developed a high fever and had to be hospitalized. In the 1942 production headed by John Gielgud, three actors -- Duncan and two witches -- died, and the costume and set designer committed suicide amidst his devilish creations. The indestructible Charlton Heston, in an outdoor production in Bermuda in 1953, suffered severe burns in his groin and leg area when his tights, which had accidentally been soaked in kerosene, burst into flame. An actor's strike felled Rip Torn's 1970 production in New York City; two fires and seven robberies plagued the 1971 version starring David Leary; in the 1981 production at Lincoln Center, J. Kenneth Campbell, who played Macduff, was mugged soon after the play's opening.

Soon after starting rehearsals with his high school Thespians in January of 2008, Dr. Newlin's wife, Brother Whimsey, had to be rushed to the hospital. She was suffering from bleeding in the cerebellum, where fine motor skills and balance reside. That's not good for a juggler or a rope walker. It wasn't good for Franklin D. Roosevelt either. In his case, it proved to be fatal. Dr. Flynn spent a day or two in intensive care

and was released from the hospital a couple of days later. It was a scary January but from what we understand, The Queen of Whimsey has recovered fully and is now doing fine. Her husband, Nicolo, is our Abbot's newest Facebook friend. The entire incident was probably just an odd coincidence.

Brother Clevenstein Buys a House!

After living more than thirty years as a renaissance transient, Brother Clevenstein (Clevenger Peters) has finally settled down. Clevy's Dad died in Minnesota on May 2 at the age of 84. With his inheritance, Clevy bought a house in Black River, Wisconsin.

JAZZBO is Denied Entry into the U.S.

Brother Pompadour (Dennis Cooper) and his lovely wife Kamruen adopted a baby boy last winter. Dennis had hoped to bring his son and mother in law with him



to New York this summer on his annual pilgrimage to the Tuxedo renaissance faire. After months of haggling with bureaucratic officials in Thailand, his plans had to be postponed. Apparently, American officials fear that Tuntan JAZZBO Cooper, who is not yet two, might be a potential terrorist or a job seeker who is trying to take jobs away from American citizens. Brother Pompadour is still looking for someone with O negative blood who is willing to

donate half of their liver. He promises that your liver will grow back to its original size within a year after your surgery. His 50th birthday is June 21. Send an Email to thaicowboy_1@yahoo.com

Brother Can-You-Spare-a-Dime Got Ripped Off!

Here's the story that Ray St. Louis Emailed to all of us a couple of weeks ago: *Please help spread the word that James Link and Rebecca DeShon are thieves. They were managing my ride business at the just completed GA Ren Fest until they quit their jobs two days before final weekend. They stole all the money receipts of the previous 3-day weekend, under reported those receipts to festival management, and took all the paperwork for that weekend as well as some of the paperwork of the entire fair to cover their tracks. They also probably skimmed money for the run of the fair. I estimate my loss as somewhere between 5 and 8 thousand dollars, 5 for sure from Memorial day weekend. I am faced with an accounting nightmare for taxes and 1099's when that comes up again. I am dealing with the Fairburn GA Police Department with regards to this crime. A hearing has been set for the first week of August to determine whether they will be charged with felony theft. I will attend and testify at this hearing along with some of my ride pushers. The two of them will be subpoenaed to attend as well. I fully expect the hearing to result in charges of grand theft. If I can prevent them from ever working on the festival circuit again, I will have a bit of satisfaction and hopefully save some future employer from a similar fate.*

On an even sadder note: Ray's younger brother Andre St. Louis died this past October 17 after a 15 month battle with cancer. He was a terrific guy who was much loved and will be greatly missed.

Obituary

Brother Sapphire (Felice Osband) became the fifth Scurrilous Monk to kick the proverbial bucket. She died sometime around January 15th from complications due to AIDS. She first started working as an apprentice glass blower at the Sterling Renaissance Faire sometime in the late 1970s. She started her own glass bending business soon after that and made glass pendants, figurines, pipes and jewelry at various renaissance faires during most of the rest of her life. She reminded some of us of a character named *Alice* in

the popular renaissance romance novel *The Road Dog Diary*. She had an unusually extroverted and enthusiastic personality. Here is a picture of Felice with our Abbot from about 25 years ago. Finding these big pot plants growing at the Kansas City Renaissance Festival made for a memorably happy day.



Julie Mondin is on TV Again!!

We had hoped to see our friend Julie Mondin in the recent Hollywood movie *Walk Hard*. Apparently, she ended up on the cutting room floor. We're hoping she'll have better luck on the upcoming TV series *The Starter Wife* starring Debra Messing. The show premieres in September. Here is an actual photo of Julie taken while on the set. Her harp can also be briefly seen and heard on a Nikon commercial in a wedding scene with Ashton Kutcher.



Hitch Hiker Revisited

In 1982, Our Abbot, Brother Donald, drove his school bus to King Richard's Faire in Wisconsin. Apparently, he picked up a pair of hitch hikers along the way. Twenty six years later, he was once again telling those same silly stories a few hundred miles away in Omaha, Nebraska. A woman who attended story time on that particular day said that she and her boyfriend had been hitch hiking in Wisconsin a long time ago and had been picked up by a storyteller with an old black dog in a school bus who was going to a renaissance faire. Since they had no better plans she and her boyfriend decided to ride along in that school bus to visit their very first renaissance faire. They liked it so well that they bought costumes. Since that time, the couple had married and had a daughter. Attending renaissance faires had become one of their favorite hobbies. Her daughter took a picture of her mother sitting on our Abbot's lap. A few days later, our Abbot received the following Email with this picture attached:

*G'day Brother Don Teller of Tales,
We originally met in Chicago 25 years ago. I was hitchhiking and this guy in a schoolbus with a dog picked us up and we ended up at my first ren fest. When we met again at Omaha my daughter took our picture and you asked her to send it to you. Well...here it is, I should have taken my hat off.*



It was amazing to see you again. You look great! I am so glad that I stopped to talk with you. I have been to renfairs around the country and out of the country, my initial turnon to this was all because of you. My other half in tights is all because of you.

It just goes to show that we often never know what kind of effect we may have had on the lives of others.

Sometimes, Rennie Life Sucks

Here is the nice renaissance festival promoter showing our Abbot where to park his trailer:



Here is our Abbot's trailer a week later:



Danny Lord wanted to have his name mentioned in this *Abbot's Report*. He performed at the Arizona Renaissance Faire for the entire run and will attempt to complete the entire run at Sterling as well.

Arsene Marries



Arsene Dupin married Joan Sefcik sometime around the end of January this year. We like the wedding photo.