

The Benevolent Order of Scurrilious Monks

Abbot's Report

Summer Solstice, 2010

Chippewa Valley Renaissance Faire
Our Abbot has spent much of May and June at the Chippewa Valley Renaissance Faire in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. The faire started its life as the Wisconsin Renaissance Faire. It went bankrupt after four years. After the show was closed for a year, the property went up for auction and was bought by Kevin and Shannon Balts at a bargain price. They formed a corporation called Wisconsin Festival Grounds, Inc. The new corporation has many things that the old corporation lacked, most notably, money. They were able to hire John Mills to manage the faire. John Mills used to be the artistic director of King Richard's Faire in both Wisconsin and Massachusetts. John Mills hired Brother Costello (David Roe) to be the faire's musical director. Between the two of them, they enlisted the help of many of their old friends. Topping the list was Brother Twang, (Michael



Marzella,) believed by many to be the best renaissance festival king to ever wear the crown. Brother Twang recorded radio and television

commercial that instantly gave the faire an air of professionalism and credibility. Brother Doctor (Danny Lord of Mischief) signed on to play the Palace, the faire's biggest stage. Jim Lilliquist is Brother Also. He and his lovely wife, Joyce, perform all day long as the *Gypsy Guerrilla Band*. One cannot over emphasize how much energy and merriment they inject into any festival they participate in. Their music echos throughout the site from opening gate all the way through the final Minstrels' Jam of the day. That's still not enough time for them to play all of the tunes they know. Brother Mutha, (Al Olson) came up from Texas for the final three weekends of the show. He is still doing the *Smee and Blogg Singing Executioners Show* but this year, he is doing it as a solo act while his partner, John Doering, plays music in Massachusetts. Jacquie Manning and Todd Menton dusted off their 16th century repertoire after years of playing music outside of renaissance faires. Richard Weber is the faire's costumier and is still playing Sir Percival DeGage. Lolly Foy reprised her role as Queen Katherine and when Scarborough Renaissance Festival closed, she was joined by her husband, Terry Foy, who is better known as Zilch the Tory Steller. Bob and Leslie Bielefeld also came up from Waxahachie after finishing another year at Scarborough Renaissance Festival and so did Thomas Neundel who joined Jerry Berry and Brad Collier of the *New Minstrel Review*. *Hey Nunny Nunny* played the Rose Theatre for the first three weekends and when they left for Colorado, they were replaced by *Franco the Master Hypnotist* who many of us remember as *Franco the Flying Sorcerer*. Billy Miller is playing woodwinds and strings and Bob Hollister is doing puppet shows.

Its been very interesting to watch the progress of this fledgling renaissance faire. The Wisconsin Renaissance Faire was a piss-ant little show that could never draw a crowd. The Chippewa Valley Renaissance Faire has filled its entertainment roster with Renaissance Masters. The transformation has

been remarkable. Attendance has been as high as 1500 people a day and the numbers seem to be growing. The show has been going so well this year that they are extending for a sixth weekend (through June 26.)

Twenty years ago, a festival promoter asked our Abbot's opinion on what made for a good renaissance faire. He replied, "great parties."



Brother Costello has been the quintessential social director for this show, playing music at the Angus Pub on weekend nights and organizing and promoting week day activities and events throughout the entire run. Levels of camaraderie, *esprit de corps* and morale are all high. Wisconsin Festival Grounds Inc. will be producing a Wild West Fest/Steampunk Emporium in September and they'll be sponsoring a Halloween Show in October.

Brother Clevenstein Visits a Renaissance Faire!

For many years, Brother Clevenstein (Clevenger



Peters) was the driving force behind the Benevolent Order's Weenie Roasts at the Arizona Renaissance Festival. Our Abbot was surprised to learn that Brother Clevenstein would routinely buy, roast and serve 3,000 weenies at a typical Arizona Weenie Roast. Since retiring, he no longer travels to Arizona to roast weenies but he still knows how its done. He recently made a guest appearance at the Chippewa Falls Weenie Roast where we roasted a paltry 200 weenies. Our Abbot visited Clevy at his house in Black River Falls, Wisconsin earlier this month. Its close to the golf course and Brother Clevenstein has been working hard on his game.

Brother Mutha Forays into Legitimate Theater

Brother Mutha (Al Olson,) author of the upcoming *History of the American Renaissance Festival*, has graduated from renaissance festivals into legitimate theater. For the past eleven years, he's been working part time with the Stagehands Union in Fort Worth, Texas. As the renfaire bookings have decreased, he has been doing more and more work with Opera, Ballet and Broadway musicals.



Recently, he was contracted for a two month gig as assistant properties master for the Fort Worth Opera Festival. Instead of working 2 days a week at renaissance faires, his schedule increased to 14 hours a day for seven days a week. Brother Mutha says that despite the long hours, the Opera gig was

the coolest job he's had aside from performing. Since the Super Bowl is scheduled to be played near Fort Worth this year, he is likely to be seen on the field along with 200 other Union Stage Hands during the half time show. Many of us can imagine which old quarterback he's hoping to be cheering on.

Brother Doctor Provides Health Care Options

After spending many years living in his van or in a little Manhattan apartment, Brother Doctor (Danny Lord) has moved into a house in Minneapolis, about two hours from Chippewa Falls. He has been doing an extended house sitting job while the house's owner has been caring for an ailing mother in Florida. His semi permanent living facilities have afforded him the opportunity to return to work as a clown doctor. Every Tuesday, Danny travels to Abbot Northwestern Hospital's Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Floor in downtown Minneapolis. He performs comedy, magic and witty repartee as a therapeutic humorologist, proving all the while that laughter is the best medicine. He likes the work so well that he recently turned down a lucrative gig in New York in order to keep performing his medical duties and to stay closer to his family in Minnesota. When he's not working at the hospital, he enjoys visiting with his mother who is now 87 and playing with his son who is now 9. Be advised that Danny's son, Sky, has learned to work with cups and balls.

R.E.S.C.U. Makes Blue Cross Look Sick!!!

While we are on the subject of health care options, we would be remiss if we neglected to mention the R.E.S.C.U. Foundation. Much to our surprise, it seems that renaissance festival workers now have better health care coverage than most people who work for large corporations. Since its inception in 2004, the R.E.S.C.U. Foundation has provided health care assistance to more than 500 people. Some of those people have needed help with simple medical problems, some of them need long term continuing treatments. Last year, the foundation paid out more than \$100,000 for medical expenses

and over the past six years, R.E.S.C.U. has collected and dispersed more than \$350,000. Moreover, as a non profit health care provider, they are also able to negotiate adjustments to participants' medical bills. During the last two years, R.E.S.C.U. Foundation has been able to reduce its participants' health care bills by more than *1.2 million dollars!* On Saturday, June 19, R.E.S.C.U. Foundation sponsored a rally at the Chippewa Falls Renaissance Faire where they collected another \$1331. If you would like to make a donation or if you need help with medical expenses, visit www.RESCUfoundation.org.

Chase Bank is trying to repair its tarnished image by giving away big pots full of money to charities. R.E.S.C.U. has an excellent chance of winning a \$20,000 grant. They have a slim chance of winning \$100,000 and an even smaller chance of winning a quarter of a million buckaroos. Chase Community Giving is running a popularity contest for charities on Facebook. The most popular charity wins the million, the four next popular win a hundred grand each and the next 195 most popular charities will win \$20,000 each. R.E.S.C.U. is doing well in the balloting because lots of rennies have Facebook pages and know how to use them. R.E.S.C.U. has 399 votes and ranks 22nd in the balloting as of the Summer Solstice. Voting ends July 13.



BOOSM.org Has New Pix!

The Benevolent Order's web site doesn't see much activity. Occasionally, someone will go there to buy our Abbot's storytelling CDs or magnetic peace symbols. However, we recently added a photo page that some may be interested in viewing. The page features a photo of every Scurrilious Monk. Some photos are terrific, some are mediocre. If you wish that we would have used a different picture of you, send the picture you would prefer to see on the website to our Abbot via Email: donald@boosm.org To peruse the picture page, go http://www.boosm.org/monk_photos.php As our collection improves, we may be able to start implementing Brother Reluctant's plan to market *Scurrilious Monk Trading Cards*.