

The Benevolent Order of Scurrilious Monks

Abbot's Report

Summer Solstice, 2012

Elephants and Camels Can Still Travel

Last March, Brother Prehensile, (Bill Swain) wrote to our Abbot in regards to a proposed bill which would make it illegal to transport elephants and other exotic animals. The bill, if passed into law, would essentially forbid Bill's elephants from traveling to visit their friends at the renaissance faires. The word was passed along through



the Order's secret Facebook group and several Scurrilious Monks visited

<https://www.popvox.com/bills/us/112/hr3359> to voice opposition to the proposed legislation. Some of us urged our Facebook friends to do the same. It is still possible to click "oppose" and we encourage everyone to do so. The bill has been assigned to the House Agriculture congressional committee which will consider it before possibly sending it on to the House or Senate as a whole. The majority of bills never make it past this point. We hope that this one won't, either.

Farm For Rent

Brother Whimsey (Joanne Flynn) and her husband, Nick Newlin, are looking for a very special renter to rent a very special property. Since they have moved into their new home at Imagine Acres, their old farm at Oakey Dokey



acres is now mostly vacant and available to rent. Oakey Dokey Acres is in Brandywine, MD not far from Washington, DC. Nick and Joanne hope to find people



who share their interests in farming, arts and merriment. Perhaps someone who is ideally suited to take up residence at Oakey Dokey Acres is reading these words right now. Nick continues to put out *30-Minute Shakespeare* plays based on his work with inner city high school students. He has just published *Julius Caesar: The 30-Minute Shakespeare* and *The Tempest: The 30-Minute Shakespeare* which are books number 15 and 16 in the

series. Check them out here at Amazon.com http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=30+Minute+Shakespeare or at <http://www.30minuteshakespeare.com/> If you would like a free emailable PDF of one of the plays, email Nick at nick@30minuteshakespeare.com. Nick still performs The *NicoloWhimsey Show* <http://www.nicolowhimsey.com/> with Brother Whimsey and he does solo shows as Nicolo The Jester, too. He also sings and plays keyboards and accordion with about a half a dozen different bands and tells stories at a monthly storytelling program at SpeakeasyDC in Washington. <http://www.speakeasydc.com/about/places/>

Up From the Ashes

Brother Chutzpah (Cindy Wexler) and Bro RoMo (Ron Moses) recently accompanied Brother Dollface (Kandra Niagra) to her reception at the *Art From the Ashes* show in Bastrop, Texas. The picture apparently shows the ladies



grabbing their brother's buttocks as the button was being pushed. They may have learned that bit of photo magic from Reverend Brother Doctor Merlin. Kandra lost her home and nearly everything on her property last September when Bastrop burned. AFTA recruits artists interested in donating a work, and they are then given access to a whole bunch of stuff from the fire, and they make art. The finished pieces are exhibited and sold to benefit victims of the fires. The organization started in California, and they do great work in community healing anywhere there are major fires. It's pretty rare for one of the artists to be able to gather materials from their personal disaster and Kandra's fortitude and generosity of spirit shine. Her first piece, *Angel of Persistence*, sold in the Austin exhibition benefiting Bastrop earlier this year.

"The Show Must Go On" June 11th- June 30th 2011 at the Bastrop, TX Performing Arts Center. Visit artfromtheashes.org for more information or if you are interested in purchasing any works. (Thanks to Brother Chutzpah)

Squeezing Lemons for Pete

Brother Lemonade (Rhonnie DuBose) and her husband, Phil Perry, spent the weekend before the Solstice with the world's oldest hippie activist, Pete Seeger, at the *Clearwater Festival/Great Hudson River Revival*. Pete was joined by his friends, Ani DiFranco, Bela Fleck, Arlo Guthrie, Loudain Wainwright III, Peter Yarrow, Tom Paxton, Holly Near and many more. Inspired by Pete



Seeger's desire to clean up the Hudson River more than forty years ago, the Great Hudson River Revival initially helped raise the funds to build the sloop *Clearwater*, which has since become a world-renowned floating classroom and a symbol of effective grassroots action. The revenue raised by the Revival goes to support *Clearwater's* numerous educational programs and its work toward environmental and social justice—as well as keeping the *Clearwater* afloat. As we go to press, we are anxiously awaiting a photo of Phil and Rhonnie sipping their freshly squeezed lemonade with someone famous. If it doesn't show up soon, we'll have to settle for the picture of their Great Hudson River Revival Creperie which looks very appetizing on its own, even without any famous people.

Babcock Boat Works

Brother Capt'n Joe (Joe Babcock) reports that his boat projects are proceeding full speed ahead. The picture



shows Joe with his first Tinker Tug a year ago. When we saw it last November the project was much further along. Now she is getting her cabin fitted out. Babcock Boatworks is in Crook's Switch, TX, less than ten miles from the Texas Renaissance Festival. We can see that the tugboat is mounted on a steel beam that rotates to turn the boat upside down, right side up or anywhere in between at the turn of a lever. Joe has also started working on a new project as a volunteer shipwright on a 1942 Danish rescue boat at the Houston Holocaust Museum.

News Briefs

Brother Hermes (Doug Kondziolka) tells us that *Christmas in July* will be happening at the Sterling Renaissance Faire (near Oswego, NY) on July 24 and 25th. There might be a premier of Chris Buehlman's new play: *Marlow's Last Christmas!* Folks are welcome to come! Doug thinks the real title of Chris' play may be *A Sodomite's Christmas....* Our Abbot has been invited to attend the festivities and he is considering his options. In April, Brother Mutha (Al Olson) totaled his wife's car and broke three ribs. His acupuncturist says that he may also have an inflamed spleen or a blocked intestine and that he should see a doctor. Doctors are not easy to come by in this day and age and Al is having trouble scheduling an appointment. In spite of his pain, he performed his solo *Singing Executioner* show at Scarborough Faire and then set the stages for the Fort Worth Ballet and the Fort Worth Opera. Brother Doctor (Danny Lord) moved out of the house he'd been house sitting in for the past three years

when the home owner returned from an extended vacation in Florida. Danny is back to living in his van and will be performing at the Great Lakes Medieval Faire in the Summer and he'll be returning to King Richard's Faire in Massachusetts in the Fall. Brother Costello (David Roe) worked as an extra in the movie *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* and we'll be looking for him when the movie is released on June 22, 2012. Brother Francis (David Doyle) survived his 66th birthday between the Lunar Eclipse of June 3rd and the rare Venus transit across the face of the Sun on June 5th and he remains incommunicado in his undisclosed location. Brother Where Art Thou (Al Craig) has been selling a cache of the late Jim Nelson's artwork with proceeds going to RESCU. RESCU is a non profit organization that helps those involved in the renaissance festival industry with medical expenses. The Texas Renaissance Festival is in second place in a big popularity contest. If they win, they will donate the \$10,000 prize to RESCU. Go to this link and click "vote" below "Texas Renaissance Festival". Due to an unexplained anomaly, those who have already voted can now vote again.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/houston/exclusives/socialmadness> *MY GOD I'M NERVOUS - GIVE THAT KID*

ANOTHER PILL!!! is a true story by Brother Love (Rick Dodson). You can read it here:

<http://www.writerscafe.org/writing/RCD709/953904/> On

his way home from The Norman Medieval Faire, our Abbot's ambulance suffered a transmission failure and he was subsequently ripped off by unscrupulous mechanics. During the same week, a renaissance faire in Fayetteville, AR reneged on a verbal agreement and another renaissance faire in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin went belly up. The triple set of misfortunes left him financially strapped and our Abbot has had to borrow money from the Benevolent Order to cover expenses and to publish and distribute this *Report*.

The Following article is stolen from the Houston Chronicle. The online version includes 12 terrific photos of Brother Goddess (Keridwyn) and her shop. See it here:

<http://www.chron.com/life/houston-belief/article/Devonshire-s-smoke-blows-far-and-wide-3477966.php#photo-2809090>

Devonshire's smoke blows far and wide

By Louis B. Parks

Published 02:43 p.m., Thursday, April 12, 2012

SMITHVILLE - From the outside, the current home of [Devonshire](#)

[Incense and Soap Co.](#) looks unimpressive. Not even quaint or pretty, like the antiques stores and trash-and-treasure shops lining the central streets of this small Texas town.

Can this really be the place that hand-makes incense - and dozens of certified organic fragrance products - for sale across the country and

used as far away as The Vatican? And then you remember Devonshire, once larger and growing, was a victim of the Bastrop fire, the company's second major fire in eight years. The prosaic white and baby-blue temporary Smithville storefront doesn't even have a sign, just a notice in one of its two small windows: "Hippies use Side Door." You're pretty sure that warning is tongue-in-cheek the instant you approach the open door and are enveloped in a gentle cloud of fragrance. You know it when you're greeted by Keridwyn Hershberger, Devonshire's owner, sales clerk, shipping manager, materials supplier and hands-on incense and soap maker.

One-woman company

In fact, she's the only active employee now that her father, [James Hershberger](#), who founded the business in 1967, no longer works in the business. In her new shop, 37-year-old Hershberger is surrounded by shelves holding dozens of products she made. And of course, incense. Devonshire produces its own hand-made incense in two forms, wand (on a stick) and resin (non-self-combustible incense used in, among other things, censers in Catholic services). The incense is sold wholesale to distributors and monasteries across the country, many of which re-label it as their own brand.

"I remember going into a bookstore in Madison when I was in college (at the [University of Wisconsin](#)), and they had our incense under three different brand names, and three different prices, just depending on what wholesale warehouse it had gone to and how they repackaged it," Hershberger said. That's how Devonshire became a supplier to the Vatican.

"We used to sell to major distributing houses, and one managed to pick up the Vatican account. It was sold through a [Catholic organization](#). When they went out of business, we were able to take the account over."

Incense on television

Hershberger, who is not Catholic, was still thrilled when she saw some of her company's incense wands on TV while watching a speech by [Pope John Paul II](#) a decade ago. She recognized the wands by the color pattern. "I thought, that's myrrh (purple), temple (copper) and frankincense (black); nobody else does that."

For the past 25 years, the Devonshire business was located in various buildings on 30 wooded acres the Hershbergers own near Bastrop. That land was devastated last summer by wildfires that destroyed more than 1,500 homes. To keep going, Hershberger quickly set up in this

Smithville building, which in its past has housed a dance hall, a restaurant, plumber and electrician shops and who knows what else. She still has a few of the machines used to make her large line of products because they'd been moved to a better power source in town before the fires. Some of her inventory was stored there, too, when the fires hit. "What you see in this building is all I had left after the fire," she says, "and a lot of this I had to buy." Hershberger says all this with an eye-rolling "whatever" expression and a laugh. Her business had burned down before - a fire in 2004 shrank the company to just her and her dad. This time, she says, she just took most of it in stride. "I lost my goat in the fire, and that might not sound like a big deal, but that's what hurt. Brambles was my pet. They're funny little animals. They're funnier than dogs," she said. Hershberger started making soaps with her dad as a child. She was studying chemistry and physics in college in Wisconsin, when her aging father asked her to come back and help with the business. In addition to helping make the company's products, she spent most of her year on the road at renaissance fairs and street shows, selling and demonstrating soap-making while wearing elaborate period costumes. "I put on a good show," she says. She has been featured or interviewed for the [History Channel](#) (Modern Marvels, discussing the making of soap), [Discovery Channel](#), the Health and Beauty Network and was heard in December on PBS' "Marketplace," on which she was interviewed in a segment discussing the future of frankincense in Africa. Late in 2007, she adopted her son, Evan, now 5, and cut back on traveling. Hershberger is now looking for financing to replace equipment she lost. Some she thinks she can make herself; she's handy with an oxygen-acetylene torch. Among many other things, [Louis B. Parks](#) is a former *Chronicle* staff writer who now lives in *Wimberly*. Keridwyn just finished being interviewed for another new show on the History Channel called

Women in Industry.

