

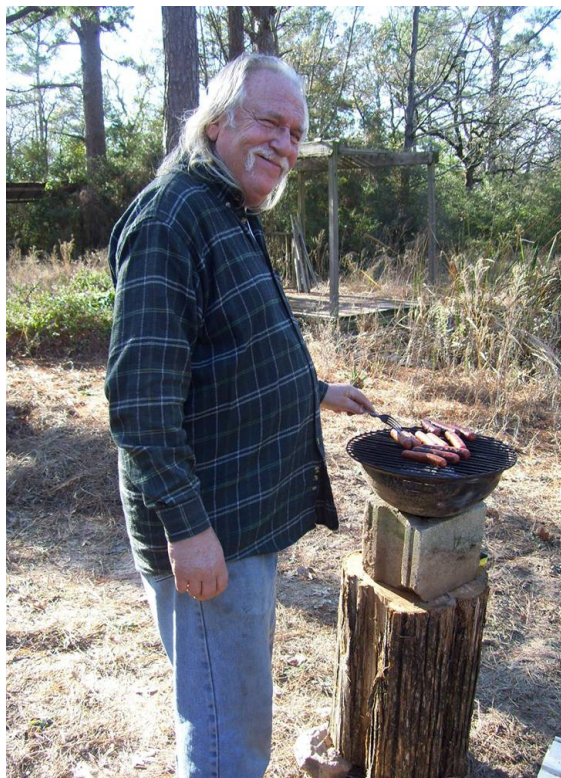
Benevolent Order of Scurrilious Monks

Abbot's Report

Winter Solstice 2021

No More Bernie's Breakfasts!

Our Abbot was surprised to receive Email from Brother Breakfast (Bernie Heissfeld) on the Fourth of July. For those who do not know him, Bernie served breakfasts at various renaissance faires starting in 1983. The last five years of his breakfast business were spent at the Colorado Renaissance Festival. He has now retired from all the



shows due to physical issues. There is an excellent article about Bernie written by Alan Rankin in the now defunct *Renaissance Magazine*. The September—October magazine (issue 124) is still available for free online here:

<https://secureservercdn.net/192.169.223.13/4e9.619.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/124-Sept-2019.pdf>

Coincidentally, (?) Bernie's story comes right after an article about The Montbenoit Abbey Church which was home to Augustinian monks from 1140 until 1773. The French Abbey is now a cheese factory. Bernie is living in Villa Grove, Colorado. His Email address is easypotluck123@yahoo.com.

Brother Ozark Retires!

After manufacturing and marketing toys for 48 years, Brother Ozark (Bill Pierce) has retired at age 69. Bill lured Our Abbot to the penultimate weekend of the Kansas City Renaissance Festival with an offer of free

tickets. Brother Donald had told stories at KCRF for seven seasons from 1981 through 1987 back when the festival was owned and operated by the Kansas City Art Institute. He had not been back in 34 years. He returned to the site on a Friday night after dark



and after spending an hour or two visiting with Bill and his wife, Jan, he ended up sleeping on an air mattress in the Good Time Toys shop. Bill had sold the building two days earlier but was able to retain possession until the end of the season. Brother Donald awoke at 4:30 AM and after meditating for an hour in the dark, he walked the once familiar fairground in the dim light that comes before the dawn. The festival has changed dramatically over the past three decades. It's not a lot bigger than it used to be but most of the empty spaces have been filled in. The festival is magnificent because of the efforts of the artists and craftspeople who have built the buildings. After touring the site, our Abbot chatted a bit with Brother Ozark and then snuck out before opening, his mind swimming with old memories. 2021 has been a banner year for renaissance faires nationwide. After having been cooped up at home for most of 2020, everyone was happy to finally be allowed to go outside and enjoy themselves. After the closing weekend, our Abbot received Email from Brother Ozark. He wrote, *We sold out every toy I could make last week as well as all of our old costumes, displays, and every thing else we could lay hands on including a bunch of refrigerator magnets we snatched off the refrigerator!! We literally stood at our counter with a couple of small baskets of "Chinese good luck bracelets" for sale when the final cannon sounded.*

The show has never been more crowded with people flush with money. The management has never been worse. Long lines for everything and no turkey legs. I would feel somehow guilty for leaving behind such a mess, but I am so happy to have cashed out. When he wasn't at the renaissance festival, Bill kept busy during the week selling beans, okra, broccoli, tomatoes and watermelons from his big garden at the local Farm Auction.

Abbot Had Visitors!

Brother Lee (Ashley Nichols) and his Mom, Kathy Nichols, traveled from Florida to Missouri on their way to visit family in Iowa last August. They stopped in Willow Springs, Missouri to visit the house that the family had built back in the eighties. Ashley was towing his Jeep behind his big RV and he had fun four wheeling on the trails that he and his sister used to ride on with their dirt bikes when they were young. The next day, Ashley and his Mom drove a few more hours through the Ozarks to a beautiful State Park on Lake Pomme de Terre. Our Abbot lives ten minutes away from that park. We ate lunch in the RV by the lake and we talked and talked. Then we sat by the campfire and made supper and we talked some more. Ashley has been 3D printing with metals for several years. Recently, his company was purchased by Lockheed Martin. Who could have guessed



that a Scurrilious Monk would end up working for the largest defense contractor in the world?

Historical Tome Nears Completion!

Brother Mutha (Al Olson) has been writing *The History of The American Renaissance Festival* for many years now. He would have finished it earlier but stuff just kept happening. He'll soon have proofs in hand. He'll spend the holiday season proofreading when he's not organizing props for the Fort Worth



Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker Suite*. The first edition will be comprised of 420 signed and numbered hard cover copies. He hopes to have them available for sale in February. The Kindle edition should be available soon after, possibly also in February, 2022. We are all hoping that Al will earn a spot on the New York Times Bestseller List.

Beads May Be Available

Our Abbot recently received correspondence from Brother Marx (Owl Morrison). She wrote: *We at TRF have been making clay beads and sech out of the clay that was dug up from Clark's grave site. Besides being a therapeutic artistic endeavor, part of the idea behind this effort is to raise \$ for the Ded Bob Smarty Pants Scholarship Fund by soliciting donations and or outright sale to benefit.* Brother



Precarious (Danielle Dupont) sent this photo. When asked for information about how beads might be purchased, she replied, *a donation to his smarty pants would be appreciated, and Danielle will ship as long as she has more!*

Obituaries

Brother Satan (Lewis Gottstein) died on the third of July, 2021. He had manufactured and marketed horns at several renaissance and medieval festivals across the country. They were not the kind of horns that people



could blow on, they were the kind of horns that some people like to wear on their heads. Lewis graduated from The University of Wisconsin (Oshkosh) in 1978 with a degree in Radio, TV and Film. He had grown up in a suburb of Chicago where his father had run a diner. They sold a lot of hot dogs. We have learned from experience that some people roast weenies well and other people will never be very good at it. Lewie was a masterful weenie roaster. When our Abbot got canned from the New York Renaissance Faire, he was happy to sell one of his Airstream trailers to Lewie, knowing that the traditional Weenie Roast location would remain in good hands. Lewie passed away at Aurora Health Center in Oshkosh after a long illness. It was probably just an odd coincidence that he and Dave Sheppard passed within six months of each other.

Brother Capt'n Joe (Joe Babcock) passed away on September 7, 2021 at the age of 75. First and foremost, Joe was a family man. When he died, he was surrounded by his wife of 51 years, Mona, and their grown up kids. Brother Donald feels like he owed Brother Capt'n Joe a few favors and he regrets that he'll never again have an opportunity to pay them back. When the Benevolent Order held its monastic conclave in January of 2016, Capt'n Joe set up a nearly new travel trailer at Nuevo Chile so that our Abbot would have a comfortable place

to stay during the three day gathering. It wasn't the first time he had helped Brother Donald out. Before he fell into the renaissance festival business, Brother Capt'n Joe had been building Cinderella's Castle at



Walt Disney World in Florida. We met him later, in Texas, at the first annual Scarborough Faire in 1981. It was he who built the original front gate towers with the conical roofs. He put the handle on the round pub in the Holleyfield which transformed it into the "mug pub". He created the fifteen foot tall giant costume and he was the first to be able to operate it. A year and a half later, our Abbot was walking down Rt. 105 near Plantersville, Texas, carrying a flat tire off of his 1965 Buick Rusticruiser. Capt'n Joe picked him up in his pick up truck and took him to a small auto salvage yard where he was able to buy a used tire. While we were there, we saw a 1965 Chevrolet school bus with a back porch welded onto the back of it. After working with Joe on a commercial carpentry job for a couple of weeks, our Abbot was able to return to that junkyard where he bought that bus which he still owns today. Capt'n Joe ran an electrical cable about fifty yards into the woods near his home and Brother Donald and his dog, John, became the very first residents of the "Capt'ns Campground". Fewer than ten miles from the Texas Renaissance Festival, the campground was later inhabited by several rennies who were not allowed to live at the festival because they owned dogs. Joe eventually wore his knees out and ended up in an electric wheelchair. That didn't slow him down much. He equipped his three story home with wheelchair ramps and runways that gave him access to his entire estate. He moved around faster than most walking men.

Haitians Need Help

Brother Jack Benny (David Casey) has been raising money for Haiti relief for several years. Up until this summer, he has avoided on line fundraising. Instead, he has always sent personal appeals and hand written thank you notes via snail mail. It took a major disaster for him to upgrade his efforts to the Internet. A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti on August 14, 2021. Rescue efforts were hindered by a tropical storm which followed closely upon its heels. Less than two weeks later, Hurricane Ida struck the island nation bringing even more death and devastation. The *Abbot's Report* reaches five times more readers than does our Facebook page. So here is a compendium of excerpts from his recent posts on the secret BOOSM Facebook page:

Haiti Fundraising Update:

Dear Brothers and Sister Brothers,

If you have not made the time to contribute to help save the lives of families and children suffering from lack of food, shelter, and clean drinking water in Duchity, Haiti,



Post-Construction 2020

a town in which I worked to help build a vocational school every June for eight years, please do. If it feels like I'm nagging you, I'm not. I'm begging you. Please donate a modicum of your good fortune with people in desperate need; it will serve your spirit in kind. The reports out of Duchity (eighty miles from the epicenter) are dire. Despagne, one of my dearest friends there, lost his brother (a man I'd met many times) in a massive landslide. Many homes of people I know in Duchity (pronounced Do Shitty!) are rubble. Injured people are waiting for help, and clean water is a major aftermath problem. The trade school campus has experienced substantial damage, but a full assessment by qualified engineers won't occur for weeks, possibly even months. In the meantime, the vocational center's undamaged buildings will house health care and emergency relief workers because the roads leading up to Duchity are barely passable. Our current goal is to use the campus as a clean water distribution station, an emergency medical clinic, and a temporary shelter for families that have been left homeless.

Survival in Duchity, Haiti has always been a daily struggle; now it has become one of life or death. I ask you, in the name of humanity, to respond to this crisis as generously as you are able. The emergency in Duchity and Southwestern Haiti is far from over for so many families there, but neither is our effort to aid them! Pondering the devastation of Hurricane Ida, please keep in mind that the people of Duchity have never had air conditioning, refrigerators, running water, electricity, nor FEMA, the National Guard, an army of utility workers, or a national emergency declaration backed by a federal government. They live in a country with negative economic opportunities and barely survive without political upheavals, gangsterism, presidential assassination, deforestation, and massive earthquakes, followed by tropical storms. Now imagine being born there.....Lucy and I have sent our first relief donation to The Vermont Haiti Project, the nonprofit organization I originally went to Duchity with in 2012. We will undoubtedly end up contributing again, once the scope of the need has been fully assessed. VHP is a small but dedicated group of volunteers who will coordinate the distribution of funds through two local, Haitian aid groups, supervised by Despagne and his school administrators. In the VHP's latest appeal they stress the efficacy of our aid going directly to our Haitian partners as opposed to big international aid groups. We know and trust these specific people and groups because we have worked with them for years. I truly feel the best way to aid the community that, many of you have supported for years, with me as your liaison, is through the Vermont Haiti Project. Your donations have ranged from \$10 to \$1,000. Does the amount matter? Yes, because the mother who receives the \$10 can feed her family for three days and with the \$1,000, she can completely rebuild her shattered home. The \$50 replants her subsistence garden and the \$100 gets her injured husband medical care. If you've ever felt disheartened by your ability to positively impact our world, here's your chance. It's in my power, it's in your power, it's in the Power of Us. Power of Us has now raised \$12,063 to directly aid earthquake victims in Duchity, Haiti. Please contribute, if you can. Two ways to shine: Vermont Haiti Project website with Paypal <http://www.vermonthaitiproject.org/?fbclid=IwAR3iBMRXk29kKyqcYVE92wvrWWUMleCvKL15aIzL7OMw48ty5vwbLfzqomg> or mail a check to The Vermont Haiti Project, 63 Maple Leaf Lane, Shelburne, Vermont, 05482.

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