Benevolent Order of Scurrilious Monks

Abbot's Report

Winter Solstice 2023

A Ring From the King!

Our Abbot was recently pleased to answer a phone call from Brother Twang (Michael Marzella). We reminisced about how we first met at the first annual BARF (Bay Area Renaissance Faire) back in 1980. Up until that time, Michael had spent ten years writing feature stories for the *St. Petersburg Times*. Our future brother Ron Boulden hired us along with many other entertainers who are still our friends more than forty years later. Michael, and his then wife Marilyn, played the parts of Orlando di Lasso and Katherine DeMedici. It was their first renaissance

faire. They went on to become King Henry VIII and Queen Ann Boleyn, the roles that made them famous on the renaissance festival circuit. His powerful voice also greeted visitors to the United Kingdom at Disney's EPCOT Center where he performed eight street shows a day for five years. Our Abbot sometimes plays a game on his telephone called "Royal Match". It may just be a remarkable coincidence that the voice of the King in that game sounds exactly like the voice of Brother Twang. Michael is one of six biological brothers. At age 77, he is now retired and living on an island off the western coast of Florida. In addition to his Social Security payments, he also receives a pension from Actor's Equity and occasional residuals from his villainous appearance on the *Superboy* TV show. He has replaced his left knee and has some stainless steel screws in his left ankle. He is hearing better with the help of a blue tooth hearing aid and his heart keeps beating a steady rhythm with the help of an implanted pacemaker. He is still big and he remains a hero to many of us.

Our Webmaster Breaks a Leg!!

Brother Geek (Joni Massengale) was doing a happy dance in the kitchen of the Nuevo Chile Monastery when she

took a decidedly unhappy (and unwelcome) turn and broke her leg. Her leg was twisted and painfully trapped under a shelf below a sink and X rays revealed that she

had fractured her tibia up near the knee. When she revisited her orthopedic surgeon on December 6, he told her that he had to squint in order to see the break on her new X ray. The break did not require surgery and she didn't need to wear a cast. If she can remember not to run, jump or dance for a couple of more weeks, she'll be well along the road to a complete and total recovery.

Fool Hearty in Distress

Last winter, Brother Shakey Jake's (Mark Reed's) wife Tara, better known to most as Ima Nutt of The *Fool Hearty Untrained Dog Show*, was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. It had metastasized into her heart, brain, liver, and hip bone. She has had radiation on her brain and hip, 2 ambulance rides, 2 ER visits, 2 emergency surgeries, drains installed in her heart and lung sacs for over 2 months, and a blood clot. Our friend, Christine Angele, organized group meditations and prayer circles

set to take place twice daily at 11:11am and pm. Tara has been visiting a physical therapist and she has gained the strength to walk again, to stand up from the toilet, to step up a curb without falling on her face, to walk up stairs, and to bend over. Although *Fool Hearty* was unable to perform at Sherwood Forest Faire this year, the meditation, medication and exercise were all effective and they were able to perform every weekend of the Texas Renaissance Festival in the Fall. Tara's treacherous health insurance company has refused to pay for many of her most expensive treatments. Although the GoFundMe campaign that her friends created for her has been very successful, it has not collected nearly enough to satisfy the greedy medical industrial complex. Those wishing to help can donate here: https://gofund.me/0774b07c

Total Eclipse Next April!!

This picture first appeared in the Summer Solstice 2017 *Abbot's Report*. The black line shows the path of the total solar eclipse that occurred on August 21, 2017. The orange line shows the path of another total solar eclipse that will occur on April 8, 2024. The lines intersect in Makanda, Illinois, home of the Rainmaker Trading

Company. The 2017 event in Makanda was so significant that the *CBS Sunday Morning* program sent a crew to

interview Brother Day VO (Dave Dardis) and report on the festivities. Our Abbot is expecting a major disclosure event in early April and he is hoping to travel to Makanda

for the eclipse on April 8. Scarborough Renaissance Festival near Waxahachie, Texas will be opening on April 6, 2024. It is also in the totality path of the April 8 eclipse. Chances are good that there will be merry activities going on at Scarborugh as well as in Makanda when the moon blocks out the sun at around 2:00 Central Time. According to The Order's official astrologer,

Brother Francis (David Doyle), The Solar Eclipse of April 8, 2024 occurs in the degree Aries 19°24'. The theme is: THE TRANSMUTATION OF LIGHT INTO LOVE.

Obituaries

Brother Peter Rabbi (Mitch Cohen) died in his sleep on July 8, 2023. His actual *Turtle Races* were never especially exciting but Engleburt Hump always hyped them for twenty minutes before the Turts were released from their paddock. His patter made the show hilariously

entertaining right up to and through the *Ceremonial Moment of Giving*. Mitch was a Madison Avenue Ad Man in New York City back in the 1950s. He moved into his Greenwich Village apartment as a young man and when he wasn't traveling and working at various renaissance

faires, he lived there until he died. He was a poet who recited his poetry at the drop of a hat. His first turtle races were run in Washington Square Park, a short walk from his home. Since his apartment had been rent controlled, his landlord had been offering Mitch big bucks to move out for several years. He may have been the only person who celebrated Brother Peter Rabbi's death. Our Abbot's favorite Mitch Cohen quote: "The work we do is valid!"

Edward Jefferson Cahill, better known to one and all as Eddie Jeff, died on Sunday, October 8 in Huntersville,

North Carolina at age 74. He was surrounded by friends and music. He was born on December 14, 1948 in a hospital on Mitchel Air Force Base on Long Island, New York but we remember him as one of the Minnesota guys. He graduated from High School in Minnesota in 1967 where he played in one of his first bands, *The Prophets*. By the time our Abbot met him at the New York

Renaissance Faire forty years later, he had grown up to be an excellent singer and a superb guitarist. From the best of his recollection, he'd written a couple of hundred songs and recorded five full length albums. Those who are not fortunate enough to own any of those albums can enjoy listening to Eddie Jeff for hours on YouTube.

The future Brother Bittersweet (Christi Potter) visited the Kerrville Folk Festival one year where she met a Texas State Fiddling Champion named Malcolm Smith. He

became the love of her life and they lived together until he died. She took up the hammered dulcimer as a tribute to his musical legacy. So most of us came to know her as

a musician. Not many of us knew that she was also a martial arts expert who could have kicked our heads off if she'd wanted to. Fortunately, she never really wanted to. She did serve as head of security at the Nuevo Chile Monastery for a time. Our Abbot has a vivid memory of passing out behind a junque shoppe after drinking too much and smoking something that was unexpectedly powerful. When he awoke a few seconds later, he found that Christi was loosening his collar and peering down into his eyes with an expression of extreme concern. A few years later, (or perhaps it was a few years earlier,) Brother Donald was visiting with Brother Jam (Jim Hancock) in the campground at the Sterling Renfair. Christi was Jim's next door neighbor. Although the two

seemed kind of like an old married couple, after the loss of Malcolm, to the best of our knowledge, Kristi never really took chances on romances again. One would probably not be much mistaken if one were to say that Brother Bittersweet died with a broken heart on November 11, 2023.

Brother Chutzpah (Cindy Wexler) died at age 64 in her home on Renfair Drive on June 27, 2023. She met Dave Sheppard back when Dave was airbrushing tee shirts. The frequencies of their vibrations harmonized and they started living together in the back of Dave's step van.

They eventually started manufacturing and marketing the kind of horns that people wore on their heads. Cindy was a traveler. Not just to get from one renaissance faire to another; she was also a tourist. She was a photographer and a writer. One can spend hours perusing her Facebook

page. Bro RoMo (Ron Moses) says Cindy was responsible for him becoming active on Facebook. When

Cindy went traveling in her shiny black convertible, sometimes she'd send postcards. Not the kind of postcards that one would toss in the trashcan; they were the kind of postcards that got tacked up on the wall. She also like to crochet. She liked to make fermented food.

She loved her pets. She always had a smile on her face and she made friends wherever she went. For many years, she maintained and updated the *Dead Wren Singing and Dancing Society* pages on Facebook. Whenever she heard news of the death of a renaissance festival professional, she made sure that their names made it onto the Dead Wren discussion page and data base as quickly as possible. When she finally appeared on those pages herself, the expressions of love and grief were immense.

Brother Time (Dick Sheridan) was born on Jan. 26, 1936. He died in December of 2023 at age 87. During his high school years he studied drums with Charlie Perry and he started working as a professional musician in 1954. In the 1960s he was a member of house bands at various clubs including The Blue Angel, Copacabana, and The Persian Room at the Plaza Hotel. He accompanied guest stars such as Barbra Streisand, Della Reese, Jack Jones, Tom Jones and Oscar Brown Jr. to name just a few. In 1968, he started a long engagement with Bobby Short at the Café Carlyle in the Carlyle Hotel. Dick started making and marketing wooden toys at renaissance faires in 1999. Our Abbot may have first met Dick at Scarborough Faire

where he had a shop near Brother Peter Rabbi's Turtledrome. We spent more time with him at the New York Renaissance Faire. His home was about 20 miles away in Goshen, NY where he hosted a chicken BBQ every year. He always handed out printed invitations to all of his many friends. He loved circuses and he had a big model Sheridan Brothers Circus in his basement. All of the dogs loved Dick and they all knew that Dick probably had dog treats. Brother Time took lots of pictures. He posted many of them on Facebook and he put many more of them in a book he wrote entitled, *"Let's Go Hear Al and Zoot" The Trip of a Lifetime in Photos*

and Words. To quote Brother Kaboom! (David Epley), "You may be cool, but you'll never be Dick Sheridan cool. RIP, brother." NO EL