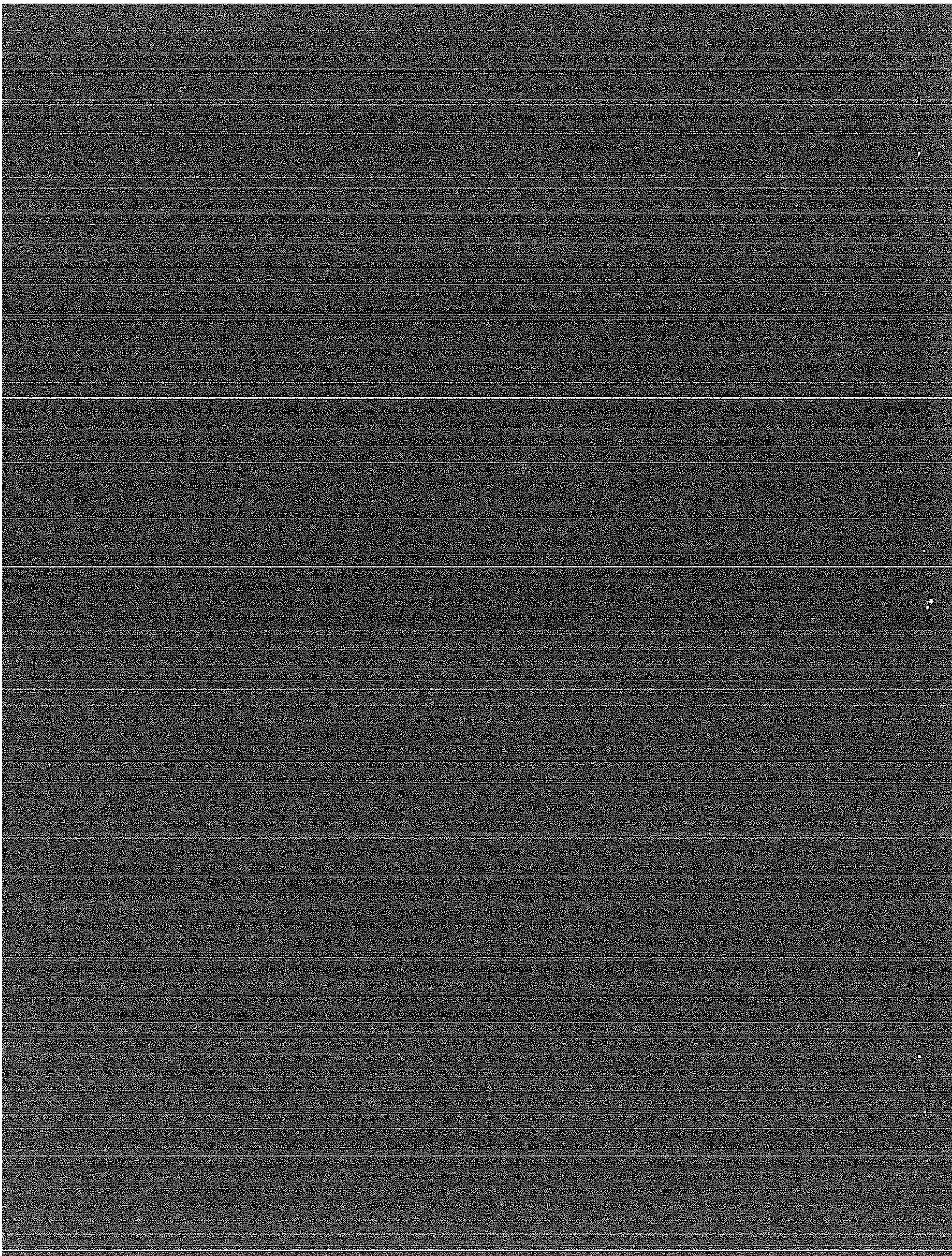
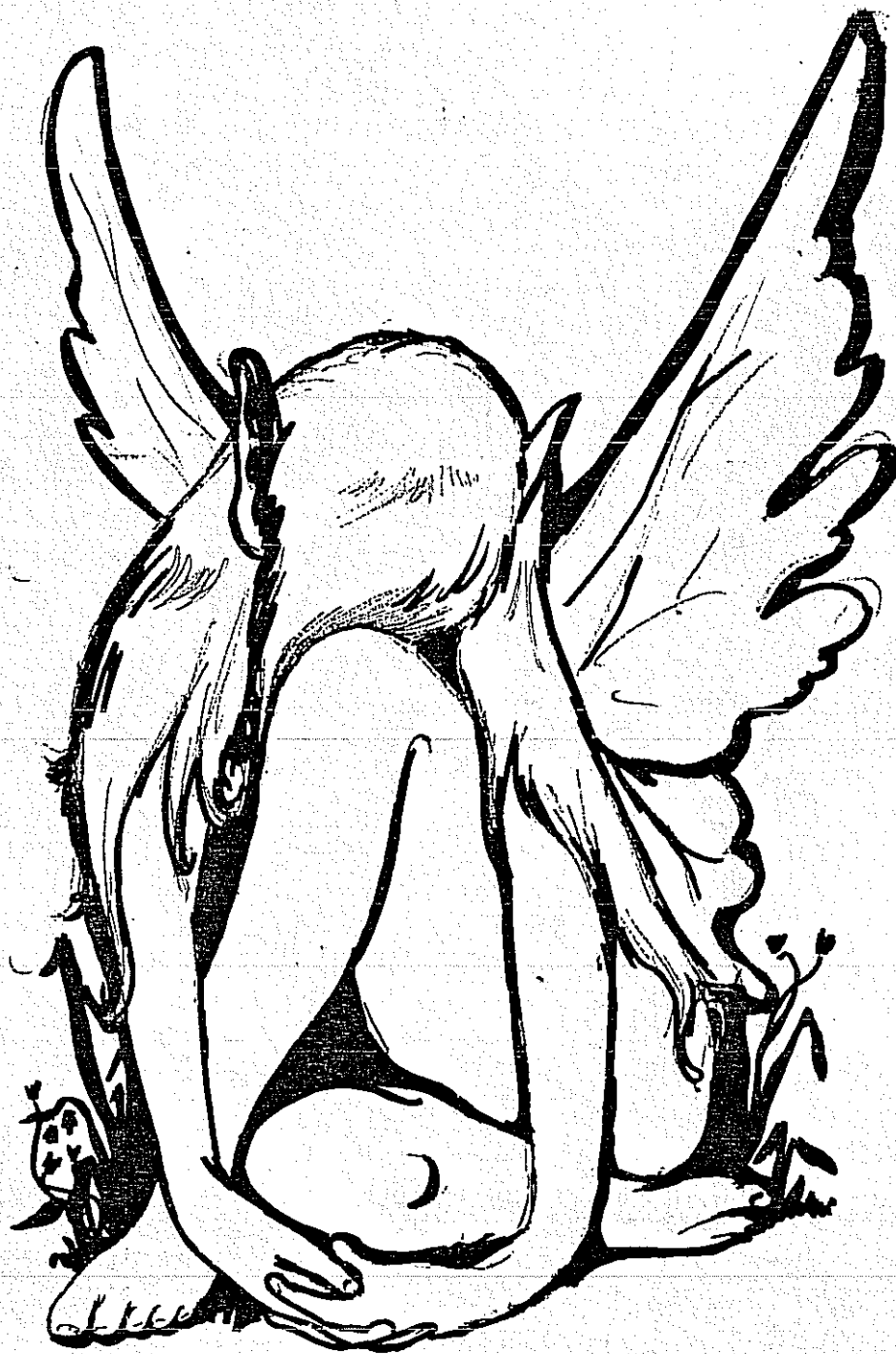
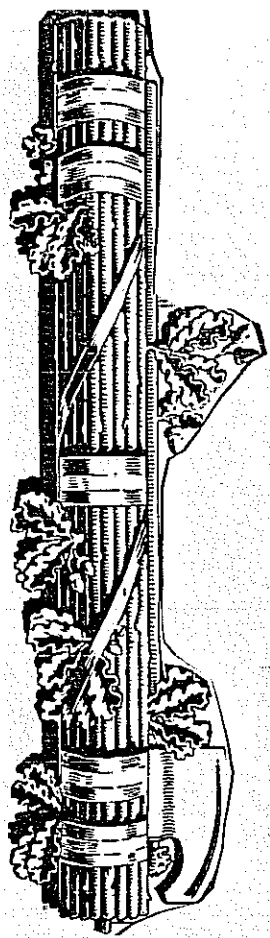




Monica Lenneth  
1993





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Echoes from the Hills  
VOL V # III



The End  
of the  
Purple Reign  
of the Dark God  
Garath  
Black Hawk



# Weekend Warriors

Medieval fantasies of combat and magic are alive and well in merry olde Oak Cliff



Christopher Walden plays *Foggy Dew* on a Irish tin whistle during an afternoon break

By Janis Leibs Dworkis  
Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

In the Barony of Iron Cloud, the warriors Zendathamus and Bloodmoon face each other across the field. Zendathamus wears a leather vest over a sashed tunic. Fringed boots protect his legs. Bloodmoon's gear includes leopard tunic and cap. A rabbit-skin pouch hangs at his side. Weapons are readied as the men wait for the match to begin.

"Bow to your opponent! Bow to the Baron! Lay on!

The warriors run at each other, attacking with swords, defending with shields. Judges stand by to declare the victor.

Just a typical afternoon of fun in merry olde England, A.D. 990? Try merry olde Oak Cliff, A.D. 1991. And welcome to Amtgard.

Amtgard, established in the Kingdom of the Burning Lands (El Paso) in 1982, is an elaborate game played by 20th-century Americans who enjoy pretending to be 10th-century warriors, wizards, healers and bards. Originally a spinoff from The Society for Creative Anachronism, the Amtgard organization now has several chapters in Texas and Colorado and is expanding into the Northeast.

Amtgardians, as they call themselves, are not academicians trying to accurately emulate the Middle Ages. These are men and women who enjoy the fantasy of chivalrous battles and magic potions. And they do take their medieval enjoyment seriously.

The Barony of Iron Cloud, the name of the Oak Cliff chapter, meets an average of 10 hours each week for warrior practice, battles and bardics (sessions of poetry and medieval-style songs). Members are expected to attend required events dressed in period clothing. Leaders of the barony are expected to be proficient in period artwork and cooking as well.



The Dallas Morning News: Randy El Crooke

Above: Malcolm Harris charges an opponent during a Saturday game of Amtgard at Kidd Springs Park. At right: David Morrison (left) fights Eric Smelley.



# Doing battle in merry olde Oak Cliff

Continued from Page 1C.

Amtgard is a highly structured game in which each member develops his or her own medieval character and progresses through the ranks of that character's class (for example, warrior, healer, diviner) by receiving credits according to an extensive set of rules.

"The goal is to try to be the best you can be," says warrior Zendathamus, otherwise known as David Pocat, a 20-year-old art student at the University of Texas at Arlington. "You just go out there and try to win your next battle, beat the next guy. It's the thrill of the battle and conquest."

Lest the battle become altogether too thrilling, Amtgard has strict rules governing fighting. Swords are made of plastic pipe covered with thick foam padding, and shields are also padded. All weapons are constructed so the warriors will be safe without any protective gear. During battle, an opponent is "killed" if he or she receives a blow to the torso or two hits to the arms or legs. Blows to the head or neck are never allowed.

Qinrhyr Woodhelven, a druid and healer, says that the structured fighting serves as a safe way to release tension for the group members. "Where else can you 'kill' your husband three times in one day and not have any consequences to pay?" she asks.

Lady Woodhelven, also known as Mary Butler, a 41-year-old nursing student at El Centro College, is the mother of three teen-age members of the Barony of Iron Cloud. She says she would much rather have them playing Amtgard than engaging in a lot of other activities.

"They have learned so much here," she says. "They've learned about camping and cooking, for example. They've made friends. And they've learned to perform in front of others. And besides all that, it's just a heck of a lot of fun."

Her daughter Katherine agrees. She has created two Amtgard characters for herself. Depending upon how she is dressed for the day, she becomes either assassin Katheryne Bloodstone or maiden-in-distress Passion. "People out here treat each other like they're someone special," she says.

Amtgardians might feel special, but to outsiders coming across a



The Dallas Morning News Randy

David Thomas transforms himself into Tari MagTom during the Amtgard games.

barony battling it out in the local park, the group can look a bit strange, if not downright frightening. Neighbors bordering Kidd Springs Park in Oak Cliff, where Amtgard meets every Saturday afternoon, have called the police several times.

Once, Amtgard members were asked to leave the park, which they did. But by now, they say, the local police are familiar with the group and what they do.

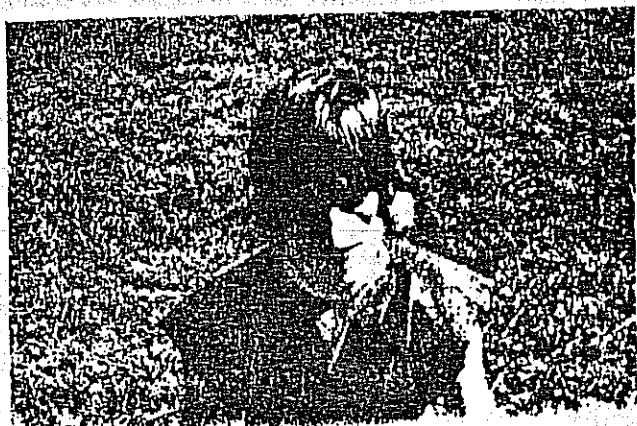
Amtgardians admit that they enjoy the curiosity they arouse in onlookers. "Sometimes we go out in garb just to see what the other people will say," says Zendathamus. "All we really try to do is to safely have fun and enjoy what we're doing. It's a little bit of fun mixed with a little bit of history."

And a bit of magic. In addition to physical battles, the game of Amtgard involves the casting of spells by druids, wizards, healers and bards who are allowed to use magic against their opponents.

Amtgardian weapons might not be the real thing, but their magic is something else again. Consider this:

What would happen to an Amtgard event if it were rained out? In six months of semi-weekly meetings, it's never happened. Around here these days, that's real magic.

Janis Leibs Dworkis is a Dallas free-lance writer.



## THE LITTLE DEMONS

The journey was to take over twelve months. Across mile after mile of uninhabited territory. Across every form of terrain known to mankind, mountains, forest, swamps, oceans, rivers, and finally into the dreaded part of the trip. The hot wastelands of the most feared desert in any known world. The trip alone could kill you without even entering the vast drylands known as The Great Waste. But the promise of so much treasure blinded even the most experienced questors. This is where Kevlar came in.

Kevlar was an experienced questor, with many quests to tell of. He had done it all. Slayed many ferocious dragons, saved even more fair maidens than he could remember, or even cared to. He had slain powerful wizards, and racked up so much treasure, he had to have a special vault built to hold it all.

Yes, Kevlar was a warriors warrior. Scars could be seen all over his body. Scars that told their own story. Stories of much pain and agony. Stories of death and destruction, but none were to be the story being told today. For this is the story of how these sometimes rare, usually useful, yet always stylish pieces of eyeware known throughout the lands as Phazors came into being.

You see, it all came out one day when Kevlar was visiting his personal alchemist in the depths of Kev's mighty castle. It would take the unknowing some 20 minutes to reach the chemist's chamber, for few knew of the secret passage that lead to a powerful device that came from another time. Al the alchemist called the thing a lifesaver, for without the little room that traveled up and down, to and from Al's laboratory to Kevlar's chambers, Al would have surely felt the cold grip of death in his chest during his many trips to speak to Kev or just to visit the outside world.

On this particular day Kev was again seeking Al's advice on his newest quest into the Great Waste. Kev was wondering if the old coot had anything special that would aid him in his trek into the waste. Like maybe a bag of never-ending water. He'd settle for a potion or two of some rare magic that would protect his skin from the sun's heat or the hot winds that raced across the sand dunes. But alas the chemist had nothing of the kind. All Al could give him was some sound advice in traveling through the waste. Advice that any book in any library could give. Kev started to walk about the lab, seemingly like he was seeing it all for the first time. Making small talk, asking Al about his work and asking if there was anything the scientist needed.

Suddenly Al jumped up and yelled like a stuck pig. He dashed to a door in his chamber and wildly opened it, causing the door to slam itself shut before Al could get inside. Al let out a laugh so loud that it echoed off the chamber walls and caused Kev to cover his own ears for fear of losing his hearing and quite possibly his mind. Al's laugh reminded Kev of a crazed wizard who was the main character in one of Kev's many stories of his many quests. After regaining his composure, Al opened the door which led to a small storeroom. Inside were many wooden chests of different sizes, piles of scrolls, a whole roll of unused parchment and one medium size chest of metal. Al grabbed up the chest and with enough effort to cause the elder to break out in a sweat, drug the chest out into the bigger room and motioned Kev to help him place the chest up on the table.

Once perched on the table, Kev noticed there was a key hole, a small key hole at that. All the while poor Al was trying to open the chest, oblivious to the lock.

"Do you have the key?" asked Kev.

"Key? Blast it, where is that stupid Key?" shouted Al when he became aware of this minor oversight on his part.

Frantically Al searched his personal key ring that held more keys than one man should ever own. After what seemed to be an eternity, Al smiled a smile to fit the fabled Cheshire Cat and held in his hand a small silver key.

"This should do it," he said as he placed the key into the lock on the chest. After much delay, due to Al's age plus the age of the lock, there was this god awful snap as the little key broke off in the lock. Swearing like no sane man ever could, Al beat on the chest with his frail fist in a frantic act to force open the chest.

"Stand back" was all Kev said as he pulled out the small dagger he kept in his boot. After checking on Al's position, and turning his own face away, he jabbed the steel blade into the lock and with the strength of sheer determination Kev snapped the lock, allowing him to open the chest and exposing the contents to him. Al slammed the lid shut, nearly taking Kev's hands off, but Kev was a bit too quick and escaped with nary a scratch. Counting his fingers, Kev swore to himself, and the alchemist began rumaging through the contents.

"I know there in here somewhere" mumbled Al as bits and pieces of the inside of the chest came flying out past Al's head that was slowly disappearing inside the chest. In a matter of moments Al had all but climbed inside the chest that from the outside seemed barely big enough to fit all the stuff that was being strewn about the chamber. Finally it appeared that Al had struck bottom with nothing but his two feet hanging out.

"There you are my little pretties" said Al from deep inside the two foot tall chest, "now if you could give me a hand Kevlar, I can get out of this dreadful place."

Kev stepped back up to the chest and grasped the old man by the ankles. Slowly he lifted the lightweight, half-witted old coot out of the black hole wince he came, he had another of those famous grins stuck on his face. Carefully Kev set the old man down then stepped back to see what wonderful item Al had brought out with him from the depths of the magical chest. Was it a magical sword, maybe a suit of armor that would protect him from the heat of the sun, or better yet a portable oasis. To Kevlar's dismay, the only thing Al seemed to be holding was a pair of eyeglasses. A strange pair of specs at that. They weren't the kind of glasses you'd find in town nor anywhere else Kev had ever been before. Big things these were, with deep black lens and heavy black frames made of some strange light weight material that was totally unknown to Kev. Their general appearance was menacing, and when Al placed them on his face a strange sound was heard as they seemed to suck themselves on to the chemist's face. With the dark lens in place, Kev couldn't see Al's eyes but the chemist walked around the chamber as though his vision was as good as new.

"Yes, I believe that these will do you just fine" stated Al as he paraded around the lab.

"Have you gone completely out of your mind?" asked Kev, "what good are those...those things on your face?"

"Well, for one. They are perfect protection against the bright sun, plus they have many other uses." replied Al. "Here, try um on before you turn them down."

Now Kevlar had had Al on his payroll for an awful long time now. So when the alchemist said to try something out, Kev knew better than to turn him down. With no sign of any second thoughts Kev took the specs from Al and allowed them to place themselves on his face. As funny as that sounded, it was as if the glasses slid right on his face. Again that strange sucking sound was heard and Kevlar felt the frames form a tight seal around his eyes, allowing no outside light to penetrate. At first Kev felt blinded, for the dark lens made him see nothing but blackness, then after a few moments, visions of the lab started to filter through the darkness and finally Kev could see in the dimly lit room as though he was standing in normal daylight. The floor was no longer a white mist that clung inches above the stone floor. For the first time in many years Kev could actually see the stone pattern of the chamber floor. The roof which was always hidden by a sheer wall of blackness was revealed to be a mere 15' above his head. For years Kev had thought the ceiling rose up some 50 or 60 feet. There also seemed to be more doors in the lab now. Doors that until just moments ago were unseen by Kevlar's eyes. What strange powers these glasses had.

"You see, in this world, the demon is stuck in this form. It comes from a place far different than our world. And while it's in our time of existence, it's only powers are the ones it can give to its possessor.

"What are you talking about?" asked Kev, who had bet to put away the sword in his hand.

"Look, it's real simple. The creatures are transformed into this ridiculous shape when they arrived on our world." Al went back to his chair, placed the Phazors in his desk and started to refill his goblet.

"But, how do they get here?" pushed Kev as his burning desire to understand these strange pieces of eyewear caused him to ask more of the alchemist.

"That's a good question" continued Al, seated once again behind his desk. "My first employer told me that a being from another world brought one of the little demons to this world. Once here the demon's form was suddenly changed to that of a dark pair of specks. Try as it could, the visiting being could not effect the strange transformation that had overtaken it's companions. In the long run the being decided he could do nothing more for the demon so he departed this world and left the demon here to live the rest of it's existence as an inanimate object."

"That still doesn't explain why the thing attaches itself to you," complained Kev. He was still getting shivers whenever he thought of his reflection in the mirror.

"I told you, the longer you wear the specks, the more of the demons powers you will possess."

"And this demon won't suck my soul or any of my friends souls, will it?"

"Nah, that not how it works."

"So, what does it cost?"

"Well, nothing really, You see, It, the demon, has found it's little nitch in our life, and since back in it's home plane, the creature is just a peon compared to the other creatures that inhabit it's home lands, the demon seeks not to return to it's home, but instead wants to stay here and be of use to our kind."

"That may be all well and true," stated Kevlar as he approached the dark specks once again. "but why did you have those things locked up?"

"They are meant for those such as yourself," answered Al, adding, "I had forgotten I even had them til this quest to the Great Waste came up." The last time Al had even used the black specks was many years ago, before he had even met Kevlar.

"And you still say that these...these Phazors as you call them, will actually aid me in my quest into the waste?"

"I'd venture so far as to say they could aid you well before you even reach the waste lands."

"Then it's decided. I'll use these Phazors during my quest, and I'll return to you so you can write down my tales of conquest."

"Fantastic" replied Al in a gesture of real pleasure. "There is one other thing I should tell you about the Phazors before you go."

"Yea, and whats that?" asked Kev as he slipped the Phazors back on.

"Well, my first employer did mention something about a major drawback to the Phazors. It had something to do with a bunch of these ancient beings coming around every now and then to find their stranded companions, as they put it. While according to the demons side of the story, these beings just want to enslave him again. And the demon has been known to use its possessor to escape from these beings."

"Use em? Just what do you mean by that?"

"The demon has hidden powers. Powers that when used skillfully can slay men, many men. Even it's own possessor."

"Sounds good to me," replied Kevlar from over his departing shoulder. "Wish me luck, Al" was all he said, then Kevlar was off. Off to begin his newest quest with his newest treasure. A pair of Phazors.

Al crossed the room towards one of the newest doors and opened the thing to reveal a wine rack built inside the small closet. Pulling out a dusty old unmarked bottle, Al went over to his desk and produced two goblets.

"The first thing you will notice" started Al as he filled up both goblets, "is that the wearer can see as clear as day even in the darkest of night. Plus while underground where there is no light, he can see as if standing outside in a moonlight night."

"By now you've also noticed that the glasses cause the wearer to see through all illusions and will aid you in finding secret passages."

Handing a goblet to Kev, Al sat down behind his desk and continued in his description of the magical specks.

"After a while the specks will start doing other things too, but that won't be till you've owned them for a while. I've never worn them for more than a few hours, so I'm not exactly sure what all they can do. My research into their past has taken up a lot of my time and still I'm sure there are things that the specks can do that have yet to be uncovered."

Reaching across the desk, Al grabbed the wine bottle again and topped off his glass. Motioning to Kevlar who turned down the refill, Al continued with his story.

"I saw my first pair of these specks which are known to be the well-informed as Phazors, in the ruined city of Catoria. They were in the possession of my first employer, a great and powerful wizard who taught me the minor powers of these Phazors. Some of which you're experiencing right now. Others will crop up from time to time. After a while you should be able to control the powers but it takes weeks of constant use. So far none have yet to suffer any ill effects, other than a strong dislike of bright lights. Especially the flashing kind. But the benefits will outweigh the bleaker effects every time."

Kevlar got up from his seat and headed towards a mirror on a nearby wall. As watched his single-minded, well paying employer approach the mirror to look upon his reflection. The warrior's reaction was typical, in that viewing yourself while wearing these glasses usually brought on the same type of reaction from most of its possessors. One of pure horror.

When Kev looked into the mirror he was stricken with a grip of terror so real that for a moment he was lost for words. All he could get out was something that sounded like a scream, or was it a cry of sheer pain? There before him in his reflection, sitting atop his head was the ugliest looking demon that Kevlar had ever seen. But it didn't stay there. The beast on his head had already begun to join itself with Kevlar's skull. Baking away from the mirror, with no care for his own well-being, Kev stumbled into a small table and slammed against a wall before he could find the strength to remove the beast from his head. Drawing sword, Kevlar spun around ready to deliver a death blow to the creature from hell, but all he saw before him were the black lens specks. No beast from the depths, no monster to slay. Just those cursed glasses.

"What type of foul magic is this?" swore Kev when once again words would come to his mouth. He turned towards Al with a look that could have killed. Sword held outward at the wino chemist, Kev demanded an explanation.

"There is one particular effect that haunts these items. Then again it's not entirely an effect, no, that just doesn't explain it. What it is is more like a curse of sorts, only no really ill effects will be felt by you. You see the demon you saw in the mirror is the reason for all the strange powers that the Phazors are known for."

Rising from behind his desk, Al walked over to where the dark glasses were sitting, and after getting Kev's permission Al picked up the glasses and stuck them in his belt.

## THE CELTIC CULT OF THE SEVERED HEAD

Between 700 B.C. and 100 A.D., Celtic tribes thrived in France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Human heads were a persistent theme in Celtic life. Much like the Christian Cross, the head was a symbol of the religious outlook of the Celts. The Celts believed that a head could remain alive after being cut from the body and used to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck. Victorious Celts gathered in the heads of their enemies after a battle and displayed them in their homes and sanctuaries. The most prized heads, usually those of dangerous enemies, were embalmed in cedar oil and kept in coffers as treasures, or exhibited on stone pillars in niches. The Celts also sculpted heads out of stone and metal to supplement the real things. The sculpted head was designed to look as if it had actually been cut from a body. The head cult made metal masks to cover the skulls of enemies to represent their faces. Evidence of this head cult turned up at Roquepertuse and Entremont, both in the south of France.

In summary, throughout history, the human species has had a fascination with human heads and skulls. Many different cultures have similar beliefs concerning human heads. A few examples of these are as follows.

The Headhunting tribes of Africa and South America would take the heads of their enemies, shrink them, and hang them on their huts to ward off evil spirits. They also believed that the soul of the person was still trapped in the shrunken head and that the possessor would have that soul as a servant in the afterlife.

Another example is the Arthurian Legend of the Beheading game. This game consisted of a challenge from the Green Knight to any and all knights who were willing to fight against him. The rules of the game were simple and the outcome final. The Green Knight's opponent, making the first swing, had one chance to behead him. If the swing failed, then the Green Knight would take his deadly swing.

Finally, examples of the use of the skull in Heraldry. Pirates flew black or red skull and crossbone flags depending on their intentions. Black meant that quarter would be given if no resistance was offered, and red signified that no one would be left alive. Lastly, the skull and crossbones is still used as a symbol of poison.

The topic of severed heads and skulls may be gruesome, but the old saying still holds true... TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.



## Bards: Fact and Fantasy

The bard class that is used in Amtgard closely parallels the history and the abilities of the historical bard. The bards lived in Wales and Ireland from the 5th century until well into the Middle Ages. The training that a person received to earn the title of bard lasted seven years. If he wished to continue his study and work towards the rank of filé or ollamh took an additional five years of study.

The seven years of training consisted of difficult studies. An apprentice bard had to memorize the Twelve Books of Poetry. These books had a variety of tales dealing with courtships, destructions, tragic deaths, cattle raids and encounters with the Others. There were 350 separate poems in all. The apprentice also had to learn the art of composing. The test for determining if an applicant had learned enough to be a bard was difficult. The ollamh randomly chose poem titles from the Twelve Books and the apprentice had to give a complete recitation of each with every word correct, as well as proper inflection, emphasis and embellishment. Once this part of the test was passed, the apprentice then recited a poem of his own composition. The ollamh then decided if the apprentice was worthy of the title of bard.

While the Amtgard bard does not need to "apprentice" for seven years, he does need to play the class for twelve weeks before moving up a level.

From the first day, an Amtgard bard must always carry a musical instrument. This calls back to when the apprentice bard made his own instrument and carried it with him the rest of his life. The instrument stayed with the bard even in death, by being buried with

him. The Amtgard bard is distinguishable on the field not only by his musical instrument but by the color of his garb. The rules state that a bard must wear bright colors such as orange, yellow or white. A Celtic bard, as well as the healer, were the only two ranks of their tribe to be allowed to wear a five color plaidie. Not even a chief was allowed five colors in his plaidie. A plaidie is a large, fringed, triangular plaid scarf that was worn over one shoulder with both ends tucked into the belt of the wearer. The colors that the available dyes produced were scarlet, orange, green, blue, saffron, black and purple.

The spells that the Amtgard bard can use reflect on the abilities and privileges that were the bard's right. The "Presence" spell means that no one except for a berserk barbarian may harm a bard. The traditional bard was sacrosanct. The bard carried the history of his land and the clans in his mind. The histories were phrased in bardic lays but they were correct. Because the bard was a historian, he was allowed in war on the field, as a recorder of what happened. To kill a bard meant that some bit of history might be irrevocably lost.

The spell of "Visit" allows a bard to visit the enemy encampment. So long as he does not harm anyone or take anything from the fort, he is to be left alone. In war, the bard acted as a messenger dealing with challenges, treaties and ransoms. Most important to a bard was his honor and staying neutral in wars to receive the most accurate view.

The "Charm" spell will freeze a person who is then required to perform a simple task of the bard's choice. The bard may not place the person in immediate danger. There is a legend about the bard

Taliesin. A king's son who was in his care was kidnapped. Taliesin went to the kidnapping king and challenged him and his bards with a riddle. None could guess his riddle so the answer, the wind, came to his aid. The castle was destroyed but Taliesin and the king's son walked out alive. A bard used his skills in whatever way he could.

With the "Truth" spell, the bard is allowed to ask a question which must be answered truthfully. "Lore" is similar in nature but more questions may be asked. Since a bard was also historian, he asked questions of many people, on all sides, to find the best overall composite for his historic songs. No one wanted to lie to a bard for if found out, the bard would compose a most satirical lay and the person would be humiliated.

With "Legend", the bard enthralls anyone within a range of twenty feet. This cannot be done within twenty feet of a base and during this time, the bard and his audience cannot be harmed for anyone steeping within twenty feet is also enthralled. An ollamh would have had this ability. Most kings' bards were of the rank of ollamh. The bard would bring the history back to life, letting the warriors feel again the danger of war or the feelings of honor and love. So wrapped up in their memories, the warrior forgot where they were, even if among enemies.

The spell of "Controlling Emotions" is similar in power to "Legend". The bard can give a warrior different abilities or a higher level of ability. Before a war, the bard would tell of age-old battles, more than likely those which involved the present fighters' ancestors. This was to give the warriors the notion of keeping up

their clan's traditions and appealing to their sense of honor. A bard may have stood on the hill overlooking a battle, not only to see the war but to remind his lord's clan of what they were fighting for.

When Edward I conquered Wales in 1284, he ordered that all bards were to be killed. The kings and nobles of England knew that the bards could rally and sway people to the oppressed's cause. Recently, there has been a revival of the bardic tradition in Wales. Every fall there is a meeting of all bards and there are competitions as well as new members taking the test for admission to the college of bards.

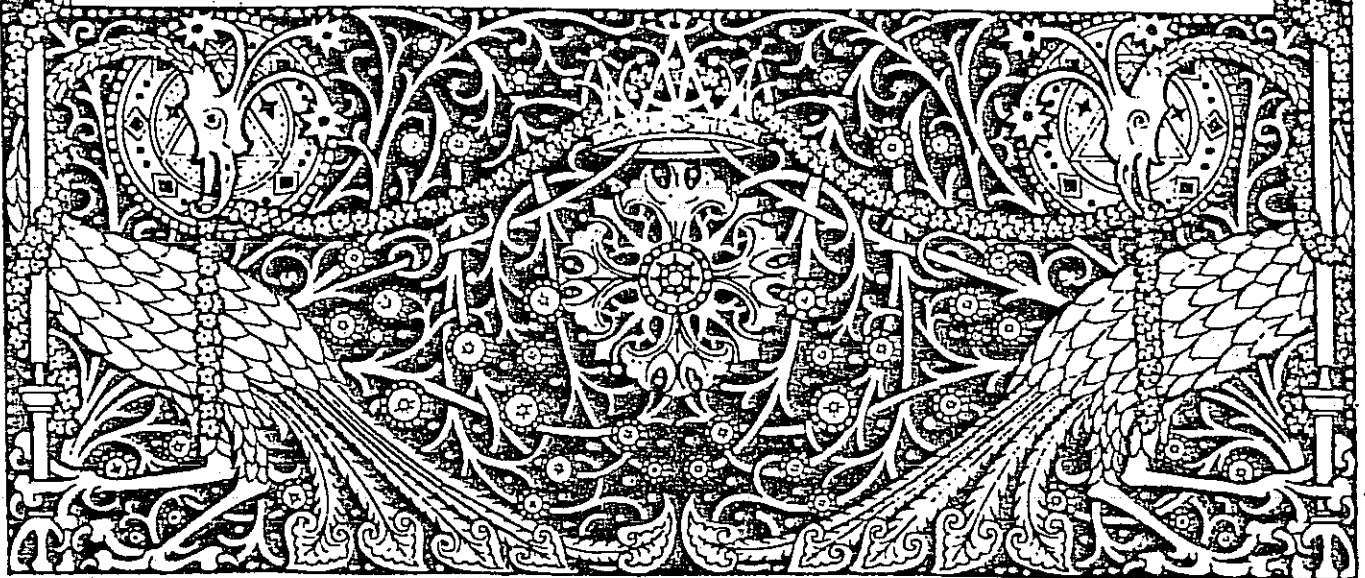
Amtgard has also kept the bardic tradition alive. The spells that are available to the players reflect directly onto what the historical bard was capable of doing. Besides being a magical class, it does have its roots in history which it reflects well.



## The Obligations of Fealty

He who swears fealty to his lord should always have these six words present in his memory: "safe and sound," sure, honest, useful, easy, possible. Safe and sound, because he must cause no injury to the body of his lord. Sure, because he must not injure his lord by giving up his secrets or his castles, which are the guarantees of his security. Honest, because he must do nothing to injure the rights of justice of his lord or such other prerogatives as belong to his well-being. Useful, because he must do no wrong to the possessions of his lord. Easy and possible, because he must not make difficult for his lord anything which the latter may wish to do, and because he must not make impossible to his lord that which the lord might otherwise accomplish. It is only right that the vassal should refrain from injuring his lord in any of these ways. But it is not because of such abstention that he deserves to hold his fief. It is not sufficient to abstain from doing wrong; it is necessary to do right. It is therefore necessary that in the six matters aforesaid, the vassal shall faithfully give to his lord his counsel and support, if he wishes to appear worthy of his benefice and carry out faithfully the fealty which he has sworn. The lord must also in all things do similarly to the vassal who has sworn fealty to him. If he fails to do this, he will be rightly accused of bad faith, just as a vassal who will be discovered to have been lacking in his duties, whether by positive action or simply by consent, is guilty of perfidy and perjury.

—Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, 1020





**W**hy bother learning to dance, anyway? After all, the dances weren't done in the time (place, culture, religion . . .) of *your* persona, and the ones that aren't boring are funny-looking, and it's more fun to carouse anyway . . .

Well, maybe so.

It's true that all the dances we perform are from the fifteenth century or later. That is, alas, insurmountable. Before the fifteenth century, there was dance description, but no (written) instruction; not till then were dance teachers — and manuals, our major source of information — invented. We have to take what we can get.

It's true that an awful lot of the Renaissance dance one sees performed is both boring *and* funny-looking. But most of the time that's because we're all amateurs. We do it for fun, not to meet demanding performance standards. And a lot of the time, even the best of us aren't sure we're doing it right. Although a handful of dedicated scholars have devoted years to deciphering old dance manuals, we can never know what is missing from our dancing that was so common, so taken for granted, that no one bothered to write it down. But the SCA tries to learn by doing, so

the goal of this article is to help make you feel knowledgeable and comfortable enough that you can forget about the technical detail of the dances and just enjoy dancing. Remember that these dances are intended for the pleasure of the dancers — the audience, if any, is secondary.

And finally, maybe it's true that it's more fun — or at least less work — to carouse. But the magic of a hall full of dancers is as potent as the magic of a Coronation ceremony, or of a ringing tourney-field challenge. And the magic is what brings us back, again and again.

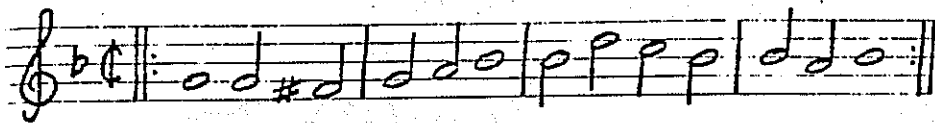
Many different dances are perform-

ed at Society events, from the very simple to the dauntingly elaborate, from the formal to the country to the exotic. But you can participate quite well by learning a handful of the most popular court dances: the pavan and galliard, and the pease, horses', and Charlotte bransles.

These five dances can be done almost entirely with two steps, the single and the double.

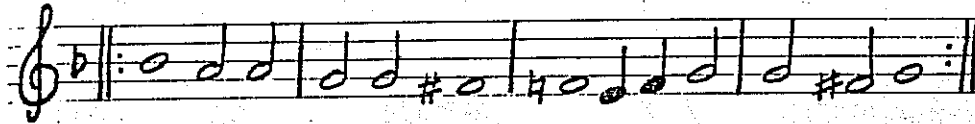
A single is about as simple as a step can get: move one foot — forward, backward, or to the side — then move the other one next to it. A "left single forward," then, means to move your

by  
Isabeau Cameron of Lochiel



## "Belle Qui Tient Ma Vie"

### Pavan



1514



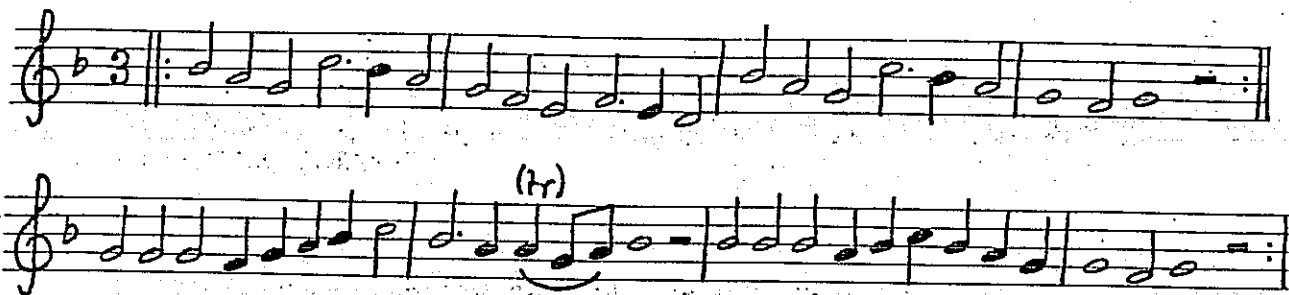
left foot forward, then bring your right foot up beside it. A "right single sideways" means to step right with your right foot, then move your next foot over next to it.

A double is almost-but-not-quite two singles. To go forward or back, take three steps before closing up your feet. For example, to do a "right double backward," step back on the right foot; then draw the left foot back past the right and step on the left; then step back (past the left foot) on the right again; then draw the left foot back beside the right. To go to the side, do a "step-together-step-together." A "left double sideways" is: a step to the left (on the left foot), then bring the right foot over; a step to the left, then bring the right foot over. It really is different from two singles! There's no pause after the first join. After you've danced it for a while you'll get a feel for it, so don't worry at first.

### The Pavan

The pavan is the number-one processional dance, not only of the sixteenth century, but of the Current Middle Ages as well. Its primary intent is to give the dancers an opportunity to parade around and show off their finery. So the steps are very simple, and the dance is performed in a slow and grave manner.

The pavan is danced in a line of couples, either up-and-down or around the hall. The gentleman stands on the left; the lady's left hand rests on his right at about waist height. Before the music begins, or during the introduction if there is one, partners turn slightly toward one another and perform a bow, or reverence. The gentleman does so by drawing his right foot (or left, if it's more comfortable — there was disagreement even then) back of the other, and, bowing slightly from the waist, bending his back knee a bit; all his weight should be on the back foot. The lady simply bends both knees slightly — what dancers call a demi-plie.



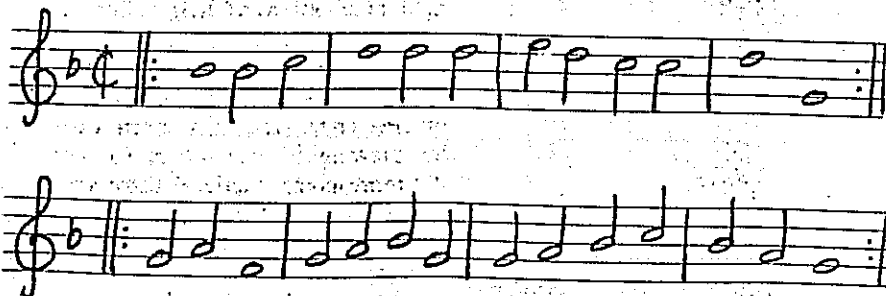
### *Tourdion: a galliard*

A basic pavan "set" consists of two singles and a double, done either forward or backward to a count of eight beats. Although many elaborate variations are possible, one of the most popular is very simple:

Set	Movement
I	single left, single right, double left forward
II	sr, sl, dr forward
III	sl, sr, dl forward
IV	sr, sl, dr backward
V & VI	each man stands still, holding his lady's hand, while she dances in a small circle around him in two forward sets: sl, sr, dr — sr, sl, dr. Hold hands throughout; the man will have to raise his arm over his head. The lady will walk counter-clockwise, passing first in front of, and then behind, her partner.
VII & VIII	ladies stand still while gentlemen dance around them, as above; the only difference is that the gentlemen walk clockwise.

### *The Galliard*

A pavan was invariably followed by a galliard — sometimes, in fact, the music for the two dances was written as a suite. The galliard, unfortunately, is a glaring exception to my generalization about singles and doubles. It is danced to a count of six, as follows:



### *Pease Bransle*

- 1 hop slightly on right foot and kick left foot out in front and a bit to the side
- 2 bring your left foot down and move your weight onto it with a little hop; kick with your right foot
- 3 jump onto the right foot and kick left
- 4 kick right
- 5 hop up off your left foot and pull your right foot back before you land on it; this will delay your landing so that you come down on the second half of the count (the "and").
- 6 put your left foot down in front of the right.

It may be easier to visualize thus:

count	move
1	kick left
2	kick right
3	kick left
4	kick right
5 & 6	hop, land, stand right.

For the second six counts, reverse the sides — kick right, left, right, left, hop and land on the left, put the right down.

That little flourishing leap at the end, reversing the feet, is called a "capriole."

To vary the steps a bit, you can kick backward or sideways; or simply tap with your toe or heel beside the other

foot or across in front of it; or cross your kicking leg across the other (a la the Highland fling); or any combination of steps. One popular combination is called the Bell step; kick your first foot forward and your second foot backward. The effect (especially when done by a lady in a hoop skirt) is of a bell swinging.

You can remain in the spot in which you ended the pavan, holding or not holding your partner's hand; you can drop hands and face your partner; or you can wander out of the lines, around the hall, while you galliard. For the sixteenth-century male, the galliard was a chance to display his grace, vigor, strength and legs to the ladies. Men should show off as energetically as possible, but ladies (whose legs are invisible anyway under those skirts) should dance more demurely — and be properly impressed by the prowess of their partners!

### *Bransles*

Bransles (which the English pronounced, and sometimes spelled, "brawls") were popular for many years and in fact survive, in altered form, to the present. Remember "Little Sally Waters" and "Ring around the Rosy"? They may never have been bransles in the strict historical sense, but they are spiritual descendants. Most, but not all, bransles were circle dances, with some sort of motif or story; pantomimes were very popular. Of the three below, the pease bransle is a circle dance with some mime; the horses' bransle is a line dance with mime; and the bransle Charlotte is a circle dance. They are all done in duple (cut) time.

The pease bransle (Bransle des Pois) provides all sorts of possibilities for elaborate "courting" pantomime — so learn the steps quickly and have fun! Dancers stand in a circle, ladies on their partners' right. Join hands; double left, right, left, right. Drop hands; men leap into the air (energetically); ladies leap



*Bransle des Chevaux*

into the air (less energetically). Men step left (an uncompleted single), then take three *small* jumps toward the ladies on their left. Ladies leap; men leap; ladies step left and take three small jumps toward their partners. Join hands and start again.

The horses' bransle (*Bransle des Chevaux*), too, provides for courtship play . . . the men as stallions, I suppose, and the ladies as mares. Form two lines, one of men, one of women, facing each other. Partners hold both of each other's hands. Men: double left, then right, four times (ladies reverse the directions: double right, then left); drop hands. Men paw or stamp the ground twice with the right foot; single right; turn in a little circle counter-clockwise in four steps. Ladies repeat; stamp the right foot twice, single right, turn counter-clockwise. Rejoin hands and start again.

The bransle Charlotte is the most complex of the three; unlike the other

two, it does not require partners or even an equal division of the sexes. The pattern of steps is intricate, but it is a pattern, and the music is syncopated to make it easy to follow.

Double left; kick left, right; double right (Repeat).

dl; k l, r

sr; k l, r, l

sl; k r, l, r; dr

Repeat, but with a difference — the music speeds up with each repetition, until either the dancers or the musicians give out.

#### *A Few Tips*

—The lady stands on the gentleman's right almost all the time.

—Take advantage of all opportunities for flirting.

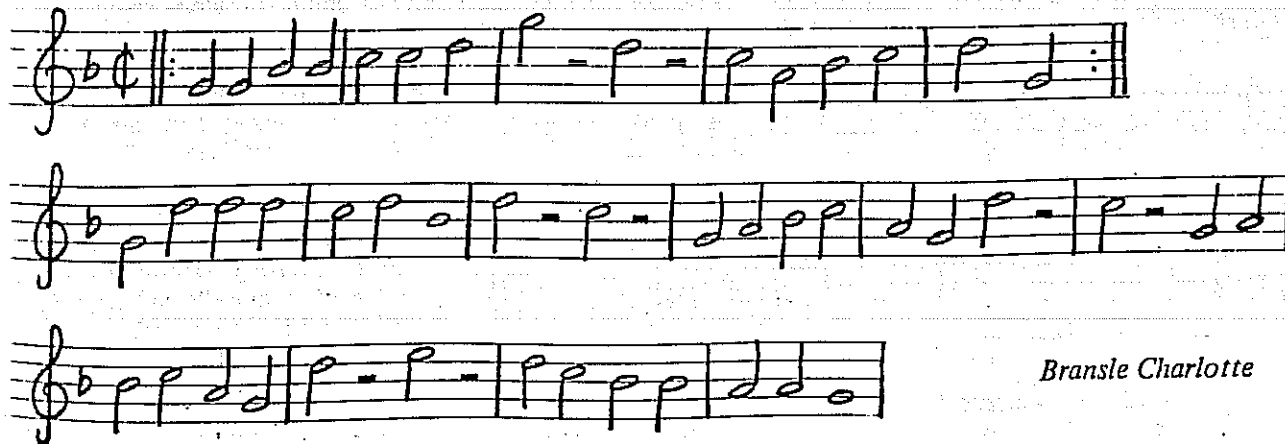
—Don't bunch up! In pavans, stay far enough from the couples before and behind to protect trains. In bransles, spread the circle wide enough that you don't kick your neighbors.

—You'll get a lighter, springier, more graceful — and more authentic — effect if you try to keep your heels a little off the floor (a *little!* — don't go on tiptoes) or at least keep the weight on the balls of your feet, until you join your feet at the end of the step.

—If you're ever confused about which foot to start a step on, 90% of the time it's the foot you brought over to complete the last step — not the one your weight is on. And almost every dance begins with the left foot, at least for the gentlemen.

—No one will laugh at you — they've been through it, too, and after all, they don't know *that* much more than you do.

—And finally, if you want to do the more vigorous dances such as the pease or Charlotte bransles — or especially a galliard — get rid of swords, daggers, spurs, fragile jewelry, and anything else that might be painful or get damaged in all the jumping.



*Bransle Charlotte*

# QUALIFICATION RESULTS

November 17-18, 1990

## CULTURAL ARTS

Athisdane - 1st 146.75 pts.  
Exzenon - 2nd 118.50 pts.  
Bloodmoon - 3rd 98.30 pts.

Overall Winners      Athisdane - 1st 174.75  
                         Exzenon - 2nd 133.50  
                         Bloodmoon - 3rd 107.30

## WAR EVENTS

Lorn - 1st 48 pts.  
Hrog - 2nd 37 pts.  
Tunear - 3rd 33 pts.

## CHESS

1st Ivan  
2nd Exzenon  
3rd Darkbow

## LITERATURE

Qintahr/Xenos  
Xavier  
Bloodmoon

## COURTYARD

Selina  
Dawnshadows

## FIGHTING GARB

Athisdane  
Elionwy  
Gnot

## COOKING

Dawnshadows  
Elionwy  
Xavier

## WEAPON CONSTR.

1st Xenos  
2nd Cain  
3rd Taldak

## ARMOR CONSTR.

Ivan  
Gnot  
Darkbow

## SHIELD CONSTR.

Tunear  
Xenos  
Ivan

## PASSIVE CONSTR.

Athisdane  
Ivan  
Ivan

## FLAT ART

Athisdane  
Exzenon  
Exzenon

## 3-D ART

Athisdane  
Athisdane  
Dawnshadows

## SINGING

1st Cinza  
2nd Kathryne  
3rd Ivan

## STORYTELLING

Elionwy  
Qintahr  
Xavier

## POETRY

Xenos  
Tyranny  
Bloodmoon

## INSTRUMENTAL

Ivan  
Cain/Tyranny/Hrog  
Bloodmoon

## ARM WRESTLING

Cain  
Bloodmoon  
Lorn

## SINGLE SWORD

1st Lorn  
2nd Kendrik  
3rd Sam

## FLORINTINE

Mythrallacous  
Athisdane  
Arvid

## SWORD/SHIELD

Lorn  
Tunear  
Kendrik

## FLAIL/SHIELD

Hrog  
Garath  
Tyranny

## DAGGER DUEL

Ivan  
Lorn  
Bloodmoon

## OPEN CLASS

1st Tyranny  
2nd Morluk  
3rd Hrog

## 2-MAN TEAMS

Lorn/Kendrik  
Cain/Morluk  
Exzenon/Tunear

## WEAPON SCRAMBLE

Kendrik  
Tunear

## MISSILE MASTERS ARCHERY & DAGGERS

Athisdane/Taldak  
Tunear/Hrog  
Garath

CULTURAL EVENTS  
QUALIFICATIONS FOR NOV. 18, 1990

	Flatart	Poetry	Story- Telling	Instr.	Singing	Fight- Garb	3-D Art	Passive Constr.	Weapon Constr.	Armor Constr.	Shield Constr.	Cooking	Court Garb	Literature	Chess
146.75	Athisdane														
34	Arvid	22	12	5	22.80				3					9	
98.3	Bloodmoon														
96.75	Ivan			9	13.25			23.5	3	14	4				3
11	Gillian														
37.5	Jasmine	15	9.5		10										
118.5	Exzenon	10							7						2
65	Xenos	14							14		11			15	
18.5	Hrog			7.5											
10.5	Casey														
19.5	Taldak	3							10						
9	Morluk														
48.5	Xavier	9	13.25		8.25							3		12	
24.5	Tyranny	13		7.5											
9	Danner	9													
28.5	Gnot	5				7.5				13					
7	Mythrallacious	7													
47	Qintahr		27												
68	Elionwy	15			24.50	10.5						11		15	
26	Katheryne		10		14										
23.5	Cain			7.5					12						
17.75	Cinza				14.75										
40.5	Darkbow				23.5				3	11					1
24.75	Selina				12.25										
38	Dawnshadow						10					15	9.5		
8	Khal												7	8	
	Tarod														
	Ozzy														
22	Tunear								7		12				

# WAR EVENTS

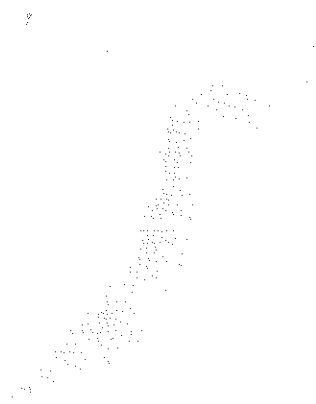
## QUALIFICATIONS FOR NOVEMBER 17-18, 1990

SS	FLOR.	SWISH	FLAIL/SH	OP/CLASS	DAGGERS	2-M TEAMS	MISS/MASTER A&D	AW	WS
10		10		1	5	8	13	1	
7		6	1	2		8			3
3		2	9	5			18		
		1		3	1	6	7	6	
	3		4	8	1		10	1	
3	9	1		2	1		8		
	3		8				15		
				7		6			
		9				2	18		2
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	6						8		
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		1				1			

Iorn  
 Kendrik  
 Hrog  
 Cain  
 Tyranny  
 Myhrallacous  
 Garath  
 Morluk  
 Tunear  
 Athisdane  
 Ivan  
 Bloodmoon  
 Nevton  
 Taldak  
 Exzenon  
 Arvid  
 Sirrakhis  
 Sam  
 Xenos  
 Xavier  
 Gnot  
 Cedric  
 Cinza  
 Dougan  
 House  
 Jasmine  
 Ozzy  
 Septu

TOTAL POINTS SCORED  
QUALIFICATIONS FOR NOVEMBER 17-18, 1990

	CULTURAL	PLACINGS			WAR	PLACINGS			DUELING RECORD		OVERALL TOTAL
		1st	2nd	3rd		1st	2nd	3rd	WIN	LOSS	
Athisdane	132.75	4	1	0	23	1	1	0	6	9	174.75
Exzenon	113.50	0	2	1	14	0	0	1	4	8	133.50
Bloodmoon	95.30	0	0	3	6	1	1	1	4	6	107.30
Ivan	82.75	3	1	3	7	1	0	0	7	6	106.75
Xenos	58.0	2	1	0	5	0	0	0	5	7	70.0
Elionwy	61.0	1	2	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	68.0
Brog	16.5	0	1	0	31	1	1	1	15	10	55.5
Tunear	19.0	1	0	0	24	0	3	1	8	9	53.0
Tyranny	20.5	0	2	0	21	1	0	1	12	9	49.5
Xavier	45.5	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	3	7	51.5
Lorn	--	--	--	--	36	3	1	1	23	7	48.0
Arvid	34.0	--	--	--	13	0	0	1	5	5	48.0
Gain	19.5	0	2	0	19	1	1	0	9	10	47.5
Qintahr	42.0	1	1	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	47.0
Taldak	18.5	0	0	1	24	1	0	0	7	9	46.5
Jasmine	37.5	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	7	41.5
Darkbow	38.5	0	0	1	--	0	0	0	--	--	40.5
Dawnshadow	32.0	1	1	1	--	0	0	0	--	--	38.0
Mythrallacious	7.0	0	0	0	21	1	0	0	13	10	31.0
Gnot	25.5	0	1	1	8	0	0	0	0	4	36.5
Garath	--	0	0	0	23	0	1	1	9	4	26.0
Katheryne	26.0	0	1	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	26.0
Kendrik	--	0	0	0	18	2	1	1	18	7	27.0
Selina	21.75	1	0	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	24.75
Morluk	9.0	0	0	0	9	0	2	0	9	3	22.0
Cinza	14.75	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	19.75
Nevron	--	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	8	7	14.0
Gillian	11.0	0	0	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	11.0
Casey	10.5	0	0	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	10.5
Khal	8.0	0	0	0	--	0	0	0	--	--	8.0
Sirakkhis	--	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	5	6	6.0
Dougan	--	--	--	--	6	--	--	--	2	1	6.0
Sam	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	1	4	2	5.0
Cedric	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	3	5	3.0
Mhouse	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	2	5	2.0
Septu	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	2	1.0



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