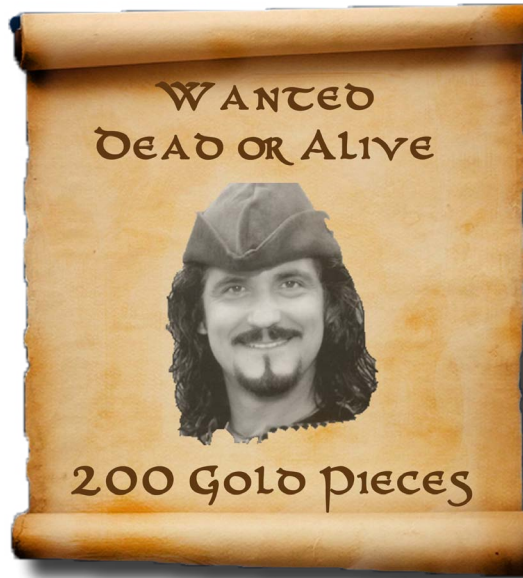


The Sherwood Crier

The Insider Newsletter of Sherwood Forest Faire
Welcome to our Thanksgiving edition!

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What's Inside?

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Hear Ye! Hear Ye! A Notice of Thankfulness!

The Sheriff of Nottingham promises his undying gratitude, at least for the moment, to any and all who assist in the capture of the notorious villain, Robin Hood.

December 2-4 Gathering

Friday

4pm – Campground gates open – come one, come all to set up your campsites!

Saturday

9:00 am – 3:00 pm - Volunteer opportunities (picking up limbs, removing stumps, leveling pathways, painting, planting, etc)

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Job Fair for SWFF vendors

7:00 pm onward - Pot Luck Dinner & Gathering. Please bring a covered dish to share! The Faire will provide water, soda and we'll have kegs of beer (you may wish to BYOB in case that runs out). We will enjoy each other's company well into the wee hours.

7:00 pm – Music begins at the Plum Tree Stage

OPTIONAL – Elgin Christmas Parade

5:15 pm – meet at Memorial Park (full garb, bells, drums)

6:00 pm – parade begins

7:00 pm – Back to SWFF to enjoy the Pot Luck, music, and fun!

Sunday: Site closes at 2:00 pm

Thankful Thoughts in Sherwood

by Mab Middlin

Yes, it's me again... Mab Middlin, risking life and limb to get the latest and greatest news for our beloved Sherwood Crier... this time, to learn for what the dwellers of Sherwood Forest are thankful. Ah, the life of an embedded reporter. It can be dangerous, so only the best are chosen (blush).

I enter the woods near the Jerusalem Pub hotfoot on the trail of Robin Hood, having heard he is in the vicinity. The pub is deserted this early Sunday morning, but the smell of the night's revelry is still heavy upon the air. They must've enjoyed themselves till the wee hours (cough). A scroll nailed to the pub wall flutters slightly in the wind, and Robin Hood's picture and the words "wanted, dead or alive" are clearly visible. "*Oh my*" I think to myself, "*200 gold coins, it looks like he's been very naughty of late!*"

I decide to circle the perimeter of the forest first, thus avoiding detection and allowing for maximum

[cont'd p.5](#)

In the Limelight

Jesse Guerrero and Kimberly Houston Piwetz

As the crowds come up the hill toward the Jerusalem Pub, they are drawn forward by the exotic rhythms wafting from the Elven Stage. Soon, these Sherwood travelers are swaying with the music, but are equally entranced by the graceful, sensual art of two belly dancers: Jesse and Kimberly. Here are their stories:

Jesse

How did you get into belly dancing?

In 2006, while looking for gypsy costume ideas for a renaissance festival, I came across a dance DVD by Rachel Brice. It caught my attention because it fused yoga and belly dance together and

already being a yoga practitioner, I was intrigued. I had no formal dance training, and my experience was limited to dancing recreationally at local clubs. When I watched the DVD I was surprised to see some of my own dance style reflected in the performance. I was inspired by the strength and fluidity of the dancer, and I knew in that moment that I was going to immerse myself in training. Two months later I went to a weeklong belly dance intensive in Costa Rica to study under this amazing artist. I was hooked. I returned to Costa Rica four years in a row to study under her.

How has belly dancing changed your life?

My life is more fulfilled with the sense of freedom that dance has awakened, and I am more able to express the emotion that music inspires in me. My yoga practice has been enhanced as well, and now changes daily to better condition my body for each day's dance practice. I feel younger and more alive when I dance, and crave it on a daily basis. My dance training consists of various DVDs and workshops offered across the country, which I continue to attend to grow further in the foundation and technique of this beautiful dance style.

What inspired you?

My biggest dance inspiration has been The Indigo (Rachel Brice's dance company). I have also found inspiration in the many other women I have met with the same passion. Some have become dance partners and others have turned into life-long friends.



photo by Joe Spitler

Kimberly

How did you get into belly dancing?

My darling husband decided on a whim to sign me up for classes as a birthday gift. I flailed around so pitifully during that first class that I was fairly certain the instructor would ask me to go find another hobby. A couple of weeks later, I added another class, and within a few months I was taking six and seven classes per week.

How has belly dancing changed your life?

Dance has absolutely shifted the course of my life. When I started belly dancing, I'd struggled for years with pain due to the aftermath of a car accident that left me with all kinds of unpleasant spinal difficulties. I'd been advised to cease all significant physical activity, and my specialist wanted to fuse a section of my spine. Instead, I spent the next three years belly dancing; I'm healthy and strong, and I'm confident that my body will hold up to what I ask it to do. In addition to the health benefits, dance has given me a lifestyle that allows me to spend my time surrounded by brilliant, cultured, adventurous women and artists of all kinds.

What inspired you?

Pinning down sources of inspiration is about as simple as identifying specific elements in the air you breathe. Music, of course, figures as a major factor. It was an important source of joy to me growing up, and I loved the study of music so intensely that I ran off to college and got what I expected to be a perfectly useless degree in it. Combining the infinite variety of musical possibilities with movement vocabulary drawn from the more traditional Middle Eastern/Oriental folkloric styles and blended with a variety of other dance forms (including modern, jazz, ballroom, hip-hop, and anything else we run across) allows the two mediums to magnify one another to create a more complete method of expression than I think one medium could manage alone.



photo by Joe Spitler



photo by Justin Piwetz



Vendor's Corner

RenShirts



Frank and April Rippel opened their sewing shop in 1996, but they did not sell at a Renaissance Faire until 1998. In 2000 they officially became “RenShirts” and that sealed the deal for them; they trademarked the name.

Since that time, the Rippel’s have traveled to many Renaissance Faires for inspiration and ideas. Those ideas and inspirations have blossomed into a varied line of clothing that includes shirts, wrap pants, cloaks, women’s chemises, children’s shirts, books (by the renowned artist Chuck Bryan), and RenCoolers (a lifesaver for those famous sweltering Texas summers). Clothing sizes are from 4X to very small children, so there is something there for everyone.

“It’s fun to go to the fair. You can come as you are, you don’t have to dress up,” says Frank. “But when you put on a costume it’s like you become a part of it. It’s like you took a step back in time.”

RenShirts is truly a family business. April does much of the sewing while Frank and his brother, Bobby, cut the material. Frank’s brother helps in the shop during the festivals and April’s mom, Francene L. Smith, is often there with them, as well. Francene created beautiful calligraphic works at Ren festivals for many years as Friar Fran (in authentic Friar garb, sewn by April).



“Sherwood [is] our Home Faire.” Frank says, “We have a true love of this faire and are committed to at life at Sherwood Forest Faire.”

You can find RenShirts opposite the jousting arena and the SkyBirds show, very convenient for a quick pop-in shopping experience between shows!

You can also shop from their website RenShirts and some custom work is available, too, at Build a Shirt



unClassifieds

Sherwood Forest Faire now hiring sanitation professionals to join expert crew cleaning accumulated dragon droppings from the faire grounds. Climb to new heights in the field of sanitation engineering. Shovels provided. Bring own hip waders.

Under the weather lately? Can’t afford health insurance? Come see Doc Faustes. He has big friends in low places and can cut a deal for you. And for only a few shekels more he uses only the finest leeches. Bleed until you’re better or your next of kin gets your money back. Guaranteed!!

Medieval Moments

Edelweiss, (pronounced a-del-vise) is a small white flower primarily found on the rocky mountain sides of Austria, and occasionally in other parts of Europe.

For centuries it has been known as a symbol of courage. Young men would risk their lives on the steep rocky slopes of it’s habitat to retrieve this flower for their true love. Some fell to their death!

The flower propagates by seed only. Each time the flowers are picked... no new flowers can form. In

Elf's Corner

Tamuri'l the Avarial Elf

the Elf enters from the quiet Woods while unrolling a beautiful orange scroll



HERE YE!! HERE YE!!

I come forth to inform the Court of Sherwood Forest of our continued success, this time at the Goulsh festival of All Hallow's Eve in the kingdom of Bastrop. Our Lords and Ladies didst come together once again to spread good Word of our Woods and win the hearts of all.



the Elf looks into the Woods that now emanate an aura of special Magic

Ye cannot forget the wee-ones and the candies that made their bags jingle with treats, instead of tricks! We hadst a puppet show, our beloved Unicorn Lady passed out Unicorn kisses and our own Robin Hood was in attendance to wow the crowd!

T'was a Magical night with many joining our mini Sherwoodian Parade through the center of town! This Elf and our Privy Counsel continues to be amazed by so many of us able to make this a yearly event and the passing of information of our upcoming 3rd season.

Ye can look forward to many such nightly parades in the coming holidays!

the Elf bows low and turns on her heel, snaps her fingers, and magically disappears



Austria the flower is protected now. They have dissappeared from the hiking trails from over-picking.

Edelweiss can only be found on the forbidding rocky slopes, where most people cannot get to them. However... the flower is not forgotten... it still remains a symbol of courage and un-dying love to any faire maiden whose beau can present them to her!



article contributed by Harriet Crockett



Archery competition at the December gathering

This competition is open to all Sherwood Archers who have and bring appropriate equipment (Self bows and Long bows only, please). Loaner equipment may not be available. Distance to target will be 15 paces. Arrows must be wood with target points, however plastic knocks will be allowed. Archery range will be at Tom's Archery location behind the Kings Swings. Spectators and archery fans are encouraged to attend to root for their favorite archer.

Practice

Noon – 3:00 Practice session.

Competition

Competition begins promptly at 3:00

First round is three arrows...Total score

Second round is one arrow...Score

Winner will be the highest score of the two rounds of four arrows

Tiebreaker will be a shoot-off of one arrow shot in volley by competing archers until a winner is determined. submitted by Cecil Rupe



unClassifieds

Turkey Brethren. Arise!! Throw off the yolk of the human oppressors who invite us for Thanksgiving dinner and then serve us as the main course. Help fight the ugly featherless ones who subjugate our race. Is it our fault we have no opposable thumbs? Is it our fault we taste good with gravy. No!! No!! Join with me and we will overcome---we will---wait is that corn on the ground over there? Just a minute---I'll get back to you.....

snooping. Turning, I head away from the tavern at a brisk walk. “Whoa...what’s this?” I gasp in astonishment, “I’ve not seen this before!” Towering above me is a massive castle gate. Turrets rise on either side with arrow slits up it’s height allowing for archers to take aim from safety. The portcullis is raised at the moment, indicating safe passage through the gate... for the moment. I walk, warily, through the gate, my eyes constantly searching for any movement, for the glint of an arrow peeking through a slit.



I turn as I pass through the gate, and walk backward toward the smooth ground beyond, keeping a sharp eye out for anything amiss. I hear a giggle from the trees at my left just as my heel catches on a small root protruding from the ground... and I fall straight back and land ignobly on my, er, um, butt in a huge puddle of muck. “Ewwwwww,” I cry out, “where did this come from???” I press my hands down into the muck to get leverage to stand, but they slip out and away, and now I’m lying flat on my back in this goo. The giggles from the area of the trees now develop into outright guffaws. “Great” I say, loudly enough for the giggler to hear, “this is a *perfect* look for doing professional interviews” my voice dripping with as much sarcasm and my body is dripping goo. Still grumbling to myself, I turn over to steady myself to stand... wait, this smells kinda chocolaty! Somewhat sheepishly, I lick all my fingers...“hey, this is Nuttella!” The laughter from the trees bubbles forth again as I rise to my feet. I brush the front of my dress and I glimpse the small faery, Hazelnut Nuttella, winking at me just before vanishing into the trees, still giggling.

I sigh and reach down to continue brushing off the Nutella, but all the mess is suddenly gone... the puddle is gone and so is all the sticky Nuttella that had covered me from head to toe.



“It’s going to be another interesting day here at Sherwood, I can tell that already!” I sigh to myself as I start off again in the direction of Once Upon a Time, the Children’s Quarter. As I pass the giant chessboard, I see yet another new construction. It’s a new Castle Playground! The children will be thrilled... oooooooo... I wonder if I should try this out myself? Dare I? It would be so childish of me, but... oh, I must! The entrance is too low for me, so I crawl through on hands and knees, giggling with the fun of it. The opening is small, but my shoulders pass through easily... but wait! The entrance narrows suddenly as I move until it holds me snugly by my waist. Astonished, I realize I’m completely stuck. I look about me suspiciously.

“Madam, you are in a pickle, are you not?” a deep masculine voice addresses me. I squirm around to see that it’s none other than Robin Hood! “Oh, thank you, kind sir!” I exclaim with relief, “I don’t think I can get out by myself.” Robin clasps both my hands and pulls. Nothing happens. I am stuck. He glances over his shoulder for a moment, “Nuttella, you’ve teased her enough, please let her go.” A soft melodious voice wafts from the trees, “only if she swears to respect the forest!” Nuttella answers. “I swear, I swear,” I gasp as the opening suddenly widens and I slide through it so quickly that Robin barely manages to stop me from landing on my head.



photo by Joe Spittler

“Kind sir, I am thankful for many things, but you are at the top of my list just now,” I sweep him a deep curtsy and give him my hand. “Milady, I am honored to be of help,” Robin replies, “however, this lovely ring of yours will be the toll.” Robin deftly slips the ring from my finger; he turns on his heel and bounds into the forest to his waiting steed. Just before he disappears into the foliage, he lifts his hat in salute, and then he is gone!

“Well, I never!” I splutter angrily. I stomp after him in high dudgeon, determined to retrieve my shiny bauble. I’ve not gone 4-5 steps when I hear the thunderous sound of horses arriving. Five men on horseback come crashing into the clearing, and their captain, Sir Guy of Guisbourne slides off his horse almost before the majestic creature has come to a halt. “Milady! Have you seen the likes of Robin Hood around these parts?” Guisbourne shouts as he strides toward me, “we ride to arrest him and bring him to the swift and terrible justice he deserves.” I am somewhat taken aback by his vehemence. Robin Hood has taken my ring, but this sounds like far worse punishment than his crimes deserved.

“Um, no sir, I’ve not seen anyone at all,” I lie smoothly. Mindful of my original purpose in these woods, I ask “Sir Guy, ‘tis the time of Thanksgiving. Prithee tell, for what are you thankful?” This stops Guisbourne in his tracks momentarily, his face goes blank as he considers what is in his heart. Brightening suddenly, Sir Guy answers, “I am thankful first for my position at the right hand of the Sheriff,” his chest puffs out a bit at this, “second for my company of able men who will fight to the death at my slightest whim, and finally, for my strong steed that carries me faithfully and without question.” Sir Guy takes my arm and leads me out of earshot of his men, “well,” he adds, “I’m also thankful for Maid Marian’s love.” My eyes widen at this admission. “She loves Robin!” I exclaim. “Ay, so it seems, but she looks upon me with kindness sometimes, so I always have hope. I am thankful for that hope,” his face softens as he thinks upon this. Then, his head jerks back and his eyes are, once again, flinty hard “and if you mention any of this to the Sheriff or my men, I’ll have your head!”

With that, he leaps upon his horse and is off into the forest, but in the opposite direction that Robin had gone. His four henchmen thunder past me on their horses and in a moment, nothing was left of them but a large cloud of dust that settles slowly on everything.. including me. Sighing, I brush myself clean again as best as I can and continue on my way.



A little further down the path, I notice yet another new building here at Sherwood. This is a wonderful new stage for one of the many amazing entertainments offered during the spring season. The sign states this is the Horseman’s Stage and it is beautifully built. I’m sure many magnificent shows will be enjoyed here! I walk around this structure, marveling at it’s design.

Movement in a bush near the trees catches my eye and I step closer to see who or what it could be... it’s the faery Hazelnut Nuttella again, sitting atop a small tree stump; a little, gray squirrel sleeps at her feet and several small birds and butterflies flutter about her shoulders. Her head is cocked to one side and she’s watching me quizzically. “Have you been following me?” I ask. She jumps off the tree stump and steps close to me, a tiny creature, she stands just taller than my elbow. The squirrel awakens when she moves and takes a flying leap, catches himself on her fluttering skirts and runs up her back to perch on her right shoulder. He looks at me very steadily and wraps his tail about her neck protectively, “Yes milady, I watch all intruders into our fine woods,” Nuttella answers. “Intruder! Why, I’m not an intruder!” I exclaim, my chin rising in defiance, “any and all may pass through these woods!” There is a sudden rustling in the underbrush and in response to my angry voice, vast numbers of grey squirrels rush to Nuttella and gather around her feet and jump, clinging to her skirts, until she is nigh covered and surrounded in fur. “You may think you pass at your will, but it is truly by our will, the will of the fae, that you pass freely through here. AND, let me tell you,” she draws herself as tall as possible, “if we feel you are a danger to nature and these woods, you’ll find yourself elsewhere in an instant.” Though I am considerably taller than she, I get the distinct feeling she is looking down her nose at me (or at least at people of my kind).



"I apologize if other folk have given you cause to mistrust those of us not of the forest." I say with as much humility as possibly, "I promise to treat the forest and all its creatures with the utmost respect." Hazelnut Nuttella relaxes a bit at that. "This is our mundane season of Thanksgiving. Prithee tell me," I ask, "for what are you thankful?" "My friend," Nuttella responds, "I am thankful for the life in these woods, the life that comes from the earth, and the plants, and the trees, and I am thankful for all the creatures that make their home in these woods and take their comfort from them. I am part of them and they are part of me... we are inseparable." "But most especially," she adds, "I am thankful for the squirrels. Without the assistance of the Sacred Squirrel Centurians of Sherwood, guarding the Grove would be a difficult, if not impossible, task. So above all else, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of the scampering, bushytailed denizens of the forest for their vigilant assistance to the fae."

To my surprise, I realize Hazelnut Nuttella is now hovering just about the ground and more and more little flying creatures are whirling about her and the squirrels are scampering round and round, both upon her and below. I take a step closer, and the fluttering, scampering swarm dissipates; Hazelnut Nuttella is no longer there. I turn and continue along the path through the forest, and think to myself with a grin, *"Hmm, I think I might almost be getting used to the way people appear and disappear around here."*

The forest is more thickly wooded here and I pick my way through the trees carefully. Suddenly, I see a small clearing ahead; a tiny house stands within, its thatched roof in disrepair, the door hangs broken on its hinges. "Aha!" I exclaim to myself, "and now I regain what is mine!" An old man, bent with age and sorrow stands in front of the tiny house and that man is speaking to none other than Robin Hood. I edge closer to hear what they are saying. "No Robin, I cannot take such a valuable item, there are others in need!" says the old man as he holds up his hands in refusal. Robin gently takes his hand and presses *my* ring into the old man's withered palm, folding his fingers around it. "Ah, but you must!" Robin replies, "it will feed thy family for a year and pay for the medicine you need to save your sweet granddaughter." The old man seems to crumple in upon himself for a moment as he thinks of the ailing child. "Ay, it is as you say, then, I must accept," the old man says softly, "I give thanks to thee, Robin Hood, for always doing what you can, at risk of life and limb, to help the poor folk of the forest. We are all thankful for you." He drops to one knee as he speaks, but Robin quickly grasps his elbows and raises him. "Nay, sir, bow to no man save the king, and certainly not to me!" Robin exclaimed. "I shall return soon to see how the wee babe fares."

Robin turns and strides to his waiting horse and leaps up into the saddle. "Farewell, good sir!" he calls to the old man and rides directly toward where I hide. As he passes into the forest, I step suddenly in front of his horse. "Good lady, are you completely daft?" Robin shouts at me in alarm, "you will easily come to harm with such reckless acts!" I stand my ground and look up at him, but without anger. "I came to claim what is rightfully mine, yet now I find I cannot ask for its return," I tell him, "that man surely needs it more than I." Robin smiles down at me, "why, then, have you stopped me?" he asks. "I am here in Sherwood to learn for what the dwellers of Sherwood Forest are thankful. If you answer my question, I am willing to say no more about the ring."

"Ah, that's an easy answer," Robin says with a wink, "I am thankful for slender fingers that give up rings so easily." I blush a little at that. "I am thankful for the fat, pompous nobility who dare to pass through MY forest and without proper



escort for their equally fat riches,” he adds. “I am especially thankful for Maid Marian,” Robin’s eyes soften and a smile plays about his mouth, “and the way her gown clings to her body... mmm.” Robin stands silent, his thoughts far away. I cough, and Robin’s eyes quickly refocus on me, “I beg pardon,” he says with a mischievous grin. “I am thankful for my friends, and for my band of merry men who risk all to help those in need,” Robin adds, “and I am most thankful for my beloved family, and for the chance to serve my King!”

“And now, milady, it is getting late.” Robin says, “I shall escort you safely to the edge of the forest so you may be on your way.” Robin leaps onto his trusty mount and I curtsy my thanks, only to be whisked off my feet as I rise, and land, none-too-gracefully, behind him on the horse. We arrive at the Jerusalem Pub post haste, and I realize, sadly, that my day’s adventure is done. I slide to the ground and wave as Robin rides back to the sheltering trees of Sherwood Forest. Turning, I walk quickly to the pub, remove the Wanted Poster and drop it into the small fire burning in the hearth. *“I am thankful for Sherwood Forest, and for all those who dwell within,”* I think to myself as I hurry home in the gathering dusk.

Happy Thanksgiving to all our Sherwood Friends and Family



Help Wanted

I am looking for help to work my shop this coming Sherwood season. I have been with Sherwood since its beginning, but this is my new permanent shop, a life-size fairy house, #310. I sell fantasy art, fairy houses, fairy figures, and custom designed hair garlands, hair ornaments & feather earrings. Check out the October issue of the Sherwood Crier.....shop is still getting finishing touches.

Email me if you are interested; I shall be at the Dec. 4th gathering, all weekend. (no gender preference ... all are welcome)
[Arielle](#) of Misty Worlds Gallery

Got something to say?

If you have something you’d like to submit for the Crier, [email](#) me!

Click here if you’d like to [subscribe](#) to the Sherwood Crier

Heartfelt thanks to:

Harriet Crockett, Jesse Guerrero, Kimberly Houston Piwetz, Cecil Rupe, Les Snyder, Tamuri’l the Avarial Elf, and Kimberly Wright

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