



The Osprey azette

The Monthly Newsletter
of the Barony of the Osprey



2010

JANUARY

A.S. XLIV

Calendar of Events

All Times, Dates, and Locations are Subject to Change

January

- 9th - Arenal - 12th Night
- 9th - Glaedenfeld - 12th Night
- 9th - Bryn Madoc -
12th Night Collegium
- 16th - Rising Stone - Menhir
- 16th - Talmere - Collegium
- 23rd - Drakenmere -
Jour d'Amour V
- 23rd - Canton Des Forges -
Diverse Pleasures VII
- 25th - Baronial Business Meeting
6:00pm West Regional
Library
- 30th - *** OSPREY -
TURF WARS ***
- 30th - An Dun Theine -
Winter Collegium

February

- 6th - Southdowns -
Midwinter A&S
- 13th - Phoenix Glade -
All's Faire in Love & War
- 13th - Vulpine Reach -
Glad Tydings
- 20th - Beau Fort - Golden Lily
- 20th - Thor's Mountain -
Black Griffin
- 23rd - Baronial Business Meeting
6:00pm West Regional
Library
- 27th - Glynn Rhe -
Convivium Collegialis
- 27th - Ravenwood -
Meridian Maneuvers



All events listed on this calendar were drawn from Volume 33 Issue #1 of Popular Chivalry.

Unto the Members of the Barony of the Osprey come these grim tidings
from Sir Alexander Brighthelmston, Vicar.

As I send this missive, forces are gathering to the west in large numbers. It appears that our fair barony has been targeted for a full-scale invasion. That marauder of Seleone, Baron Morgan, has set his sights to the east and prepares to invade our lands with forces augmented by the Kingdom of Gleann Abhann. I have it on good authority that King William is planning to arrive with his troops and plans to swallow our Barony whole.

Well.....I ain't having it! To Arms! To Arms! Lords and Ladies of the Barony of the Osprey, build up your levies! War is upon us! Don your war harness and sharpen your swords. Fletch your arrows and prepare to meet this force on the field of battle and drive them back into the sea!

Emissaries have been sent to the four corners of the kingdom and even now stalwart warriors of Meridies have begun moving to our defense. Our good King Boru is coming with his personal guard. Meridies will not stand for this injustice! We must hold off the invaders until reinforcements arrive. Everyone who can swing a sword or pull a bow should be prepared to fight until the very end.

Stand ready should the signal fires flare. Be prepared to defend that which we hold dear. Our barony will not be lost without a fight!

In Service and Preparation,
Alexander

Greetings unto the populace of the Barony of the Osprey from
Yesugai Naran called Ucla.

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and that you were good enough to receive something other than coal from St. Nicholas. Turf Wars is now upon us. Please check your authorization cards and memberships to see that they are in order. I will be checking everyone at the event to make sure it is. If you need to reauthorize please try to make time for it before the event.

Remember that even though this is an event we are running, it is also our war. We are the home team and we need to drive the Magenta Marauder and his hordes back to whence they came. So please make time and fight in the first 3 battles. The fighting will begin with a best 2 out of 3 fight. That's the important one and if we can outnumber them, it should be an easy victory. Then everyone can go back to the running of the event.

I will be bringing the war doors in case anyone needs them. Remember to wear your blue on the field.

In service I remain,
Ucla

Greetings from Lady Brighid of Ferncliff unto
the Populace of the Barony of the Osprey,

Keep recording your artistic endeavors. I will try to have the A&S book with me at meetings and fighter practices or, even better, you can email your information on finished products to me at brighid12@yahoo.com.

Remember, if you need help with anything A&S related, please, feel free to contact me for additional support. If I don't know how it is done, I can point you in the direction of someone who does.

Yours in Service,
Brighid of Ferncliff

Greetings unto the Barony of the Osprey,

Again this group has astounded me with your myriad talents and unfailing commitment to this newsletter. I hope you all had a wonderful and warm holiday season and I look forward to a wonderful new year with you, my friends and family.

Thank you to THLord Mael Coluim for your informative and entertaining persona story. You truly have a gift to be treasured.

Thank you also to Eden Fuller of Redenhall for her contribution of Ben Thompson's article "Leonardo Da Vinci".
It's a great insight into his amazing mind.

Please send letters, artwork, articles, poems, and persona stories for the Febuary Gazette by **January 15th** to me at ospreychronicler@yahoo.com

In Service,
Nuala Morrow

Greetings unto the Good People of the Barony of the Osprey from Countess Rhiannon, Lady Nuala, and Lord Yesugai called Ucla, Co-Autocrats of Turf Wars - the Baronial Menace. . .now also Turf Wars the Baronial Investiture

We hope you all had a warm and memorable holiday season and are looking forward in anticipation to Turf Wars, which is just a few weeks away.

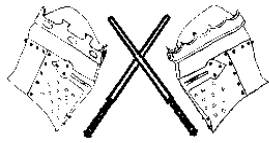
As with all baronial events, this is a group effort. Yeah, sure, you bet. . .there are folks whose names appear on the flyer as being autocrat, feastcrat, marshal. . .you name the job, someone is charged with heading it up. But the bottom line is, this is the group's event and with the inclusion of the investiture it becomes even more historically significant to the barony and her people. Not only does it mark the first 'official' clash with our friends across the border in Seleone, but it marks the occasion of the investiture of our fourth coronet.

However, the biggest difference with this investiture is that it marks the first time we've had an investiture at a primitive site. And yes, Magee Farm has fewer amenities than Ft. Gaines. This will present us all with a number of different challenges/obstacles to contend with. Doubtless we'll handle it with our usual 'can-do' attitude and with the help of everyone in the barony, this little bump won't be anything more than a minor annoyance.

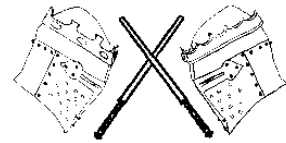
In the coming weeks you'll be seeing posts to the Baronial E-list from the cratting staff of Turf Wars for a number of reasons; seeking input from members of the Barony, attempting to do all we can to assure that everyone is as informed as possible about how plans are progressing for the event and keeping everyone updated as to whom we may be 'entertaining' at the event.

We welcome any suggestions you may have and would like to express to you all in advance our sincere appreciation for the effort we know that you will all put forth to make this a memorable, successful event.

Countess Rhiannon, Lady Nuala, and Lord Yesugai



TURF WARS



THE BARONIAL MENACE

Hosted by the Barony of the Osprey

January 29-31, 2010

Historic Magee Farm, 6222 Highway 45, Kushla, AL 36613

Loyalists of Meridies trapped in Gleann Abhann's borders have informed us of a large scale invasion of Osprey on January 30th. We ask that all Meridians marshal their feudal levies and join us on the field of battle to help end this menace. Come help the brave Osprey loyalists turn back the hordes of the Magenta Marauder from Seleone as the pirates attempt to steal the "One Square Foot of Land" that was ceded to the Queen of Trimarid by King Ailgheanan I. Come join us for the investiture of Sir Alexander Brighthelmston as Baron of Osprey. Throughout the day there will be Heavy Fighting, Light, and Live Weapons. We will have an Artisans' Village and an A&S competition sponsored by the Meridian Apprentices. Travelers' Fare, Breakfast, a Fundraiser Lunch, and finally a fighters' feast will be served for everyone to replenish themselves before Revel. Site opens at 5pm Friday and closes at 11am Sunday. Magee Farm is a primitive site. Hot showers will be available. For more detailed information please visit www.baronyosprey.org.

Pricing	By Dec 31	After
Weekend w/ Feast	\$18	\$20
Weekend w/o Feast	\$12	\$14
Daytrip w/ Feast	\$14	\$16
Daytrip w/o Feast	\$8	\$10

Autocrat Countess Rhiannon of the Isle
1554 Church Street
Mobile, AL 36604
251-478-9385 (no calls after 8:30pm please)

Co-Auto crats Lady Nuala Morrow
(Carolyn Hughes)
251-401-9624
Lord Yesugai Naran
(John Bowman)

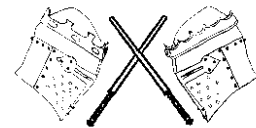
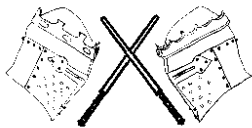
Feast crat Lord Rufus the Fox
(Billy Hyre)
251-243-5546

Co-Feast crat Lady Laren of Farsund
(Bobby Bowman)

There is a \$3.00 non-member surcharge. Children under 6 are half price. Merchants are welcome with no additional fee. Family pricing will be based on Kingdom Law. Please make checks payable to SCA, Inc. dba Barony of the Osprey. Please send reservations by mail to Lady Alessandra di Fiore (Brandy Farrell) 407 Hillcrest Rd., Mobile, AL 36693. This is a camping only event. There is no cabin space on site. Please see www.baronyosprey.org for local hotel information.

Directions:

From I-65, take the AL-158/AL-213 exit, EXIT 13, toward CITRONELLE/SARALAND. Go on AL-158/INDUSTRIAL PKWY WEST. Go 2.4 miles. Take the US-45 ramp. Turn RIGHT onto US-45/AL-17/ST STEPHENS RD. Historic Magee Farm is on the right.



"How I became Mael Coluim"

Hello my name is Mael Coluim, but that was not always so. For a large part of my life I was known only as The Bastard, a name given to me by the Roman's Christian church. My new name is one I bear proudly because it is one that I hope to someday live up to. But, I get ahead of myself, let me start from the beginning.

I cannot tell you where I was born or who my father is for I honestly do not know nor have I ever been told such things. For this reason the Black Robes (those who call themselves priests) said I was called a bastard and for some reason the name stuck and from then on everyone called me The Bastard, or just plain Bastard. I only know that I am descended from the daughter of a once great chief of one of the Scotti tribes that can be found in the lands north of the old roman wall. My mother was a follower and priestess of one of the old religions called Druidism, but was forced to keep it a secret because we were living in my great uncle's household in lands where the Roman's Christian faith was the only accepted faith. My mother refused to call me by the name the Black Robes gave me so she called me Mael, which she said meant "follower". When I asked what I was following she would tell me that that was for the Gods to decide and when the day came that I figured it out, it would be the day I found my true name.

My earliest years were spent in my great uncle's household where my mother worked as a servant. My great uncle spent much time with me and ignored his one daughter; who my mother said had been born "touched by the Gods" and that was why she spent her time looking into the other world talking with the spirits which could only be seen by her. The Black Robes said she was cursed by their Devil. During these early years I spent many days being taught things like reading, writing, speaking Latin and learning how to be a good Christian. Most of this was pressed into me through the liberal use of switches and belts across my hands and back along with many other demeaning punishments or different types of labor when my "lowly barbarian brain", as the Black Robes put it, failed to understand the material. At night my mother told me stories and taught me the ways of her faith while always reminding me to continue to learn the ways of the Christians but to never trust them for they were the true form of evil. I would ask why she hated them so. She would always reply, "someday you will see, someday". Despite all of this, I lived a rather comfortable and somewhat peaceful life, until my tenth winter.

My great uncle's wife had failed to supply him with a manchild and her jealousy of my mother and the time he spent with me had reached a peak. One night in a wild torrent she assaulted him verbally and threatened to tell the Black Robes of my mother's demon worshiping practices if he did not cast me out of the house immediately. My great uncle loved my mother for she reminded him of his beloved lost sister. He feared what the church would do to her, so, although he cared for me as well, he did as his wife demanded. I was sent to a nearby village to find Wallace, an old friend of my mother's.

Wallace earned his keep by hunting for the village and selling his sword to other chieftains when there was fighting among the clans. He took me in that first winter and during the spring and the summer started teaching me how to hunt with the bow and live with a sword. Unfortunately for me and somehow to Wallace's amusement, the sword and I had (and still have) trouble working together. He continued to teach me enough sword work so that I wouldn't be completely unable to defend myself but the rest of the time he encouraged me to learn the ways of an archer. When the next winter came around, Wallace couldn't care for me himself so he sent me to stay with a carpenter to earn my winter keep working for him then came and got me in the spring to help him with the hunting. That is how I spent the next years of my life. Hunting and occasionally taking my bow to war with Wallace in the spring and summers. In the fall and winter working for various craftsmen, mostly leather workers as they knew me from the times we traded hides with them. On some occasions I would visit mother in the town she lived in or she would find a way to come out to whatever village I was in at the time to visit me. All this ended one fall when a traveling Black Robe came to the village I was staying in.

He called himself Father Cassius, and when mother, who was visiting at the time, saw him I saw looks of horror and fury cross her face at the same time. She also muttered an old curse so vile at him that even I made a sign of protection in hopes that none of it would come my way. For the rest of the day mother wouldn't speak to me. She spent the day following the Black Robe around the village until he finally settled for the night in the local church. Only then would she go back to the stable I was staying in to rest for the night. The next morning was one of the Christian holy days and for the first time in my memory mother went to the church.. We stood in the back and I listened to the Black Robes read scripture and tell us how we were there to pay tribute to some saint for some reason. Mother just kept quietly muttering something I didn't understand. When Father Cassius came up to speak, mother started to work her way forward towards the front of the church while still muttering. At the last moment she pulled out a stone knife I never

knew she had and charged towards Father Cassius. She screamed that her Gods demanded his blood in return for the lives he destroyed.

Mother never made it to Father Cassius because she was grabbed and pinned to the floor by several men at the front of the church. While being held down she kept screaming curses in the name of the Gods of her faith until Cassius demanded that they quiet her. Mother was not going to be quieted until she was struck unconscious by one of the men. All this time I was trying to get to her but was held back by more men of the congregation.

Father Cassius stood over my mother's limp body and proclaimed that she was cursed by demons and that he would take her to the chapel in one of the bigger towns. There, with the help of other Black Robes or priests he would purge her of the foulness that was corrupting her soul. He ordered her arms and legs bound and her mouth gagged. At this point I became so enraged myself at her treatment that I was also knocked out. I was later told that Father Cassius had mother thrown onto a cart and left with her that night.

For the rest of the winter I did my best to find out where the Black Robe might have taken mother. In the spring when Wallace came for me I told him what had happened. Together we went to my Great Uncle's home and told him what happened and pleaded for his help. He told us there was a large town further south that was home to a lot of priests and that was most likely where we would find her. He gave us food and supplies and even some gold to help us on our trip then apologized that he couldn't himself go for he was very sick at the time.

We traveled to the town and eventually found a convent that was holding mother against her will on the Black Robes behalf. One night I climbed the wall and broke in to the room where mother was being held. Her body was badly broken and bruised and she could barely speak when I found her. She told me what Father Cassius had done to her and I fumed. Then she told me how Father Cassius had killed her mother and how he and other Black Robes had rallied some of the clans together to destroy her village and all those she knew and loved. But this time fury burned in me so great that my blood was boiling. I tried to take mother away from there but she begged me to stop for the pain was too great. She begged me to leave and told me not to worry. She said she was glad the Gods led me to her in time for her to say goodbye and give me her love. She had been told that because she would not relinquish the demons that the Black Robes said dwelled

inside her, on the next day as the sun rose, her flesh would be purged by flame and her soul sent to dwell with the demons she so loved. This made me shudder but mother told me not to worry. She told me she had already been visited by the Great Mother and told not to worry for she is going to be taken to live in peace on the other side where she will once again see her father and mother and be able to watch over me until I came to see her. I accepted her choice but swore to her that I would not come to join her until I had avenged her by spreading Father Cassius's blood upon the ground before the Gods.

Against Wallace's protests I did not stay to see mother burn. I am told that when it happened he went into a rage that can only be compared to that of the berserkers who travel with the raiders from across the northern sea. They say he jumped into the raging fire and cut her body loose from a pole that held her, then, after killing several men, ran into the woods with her scorched body. I will not deny that even today I weep when thinking of mother's fate and Wallace's actions, but my hatred of the Black Robe who caused all of it quickly burns them away. From that day on Father Cassius and any other Black Robe was my sworn enemy.

Father Cassius left that town soon after and went traveling, spreading his foul words and beliefs wherever he went. I spent my years in pursuit of him living the same way that I had grown up. When the weather allowed it, I traveled the land in search of that foul Black Robe. I hunted, traded, and fought when I had to and many times learned I had missed the creature by mere weeks or days but never seemed to be able to find him. When the weather became too bad to travel I would offer whatever services I could as a craftsman to whatever village I came across. My reputation rose and many came to know my name. Almost everywhere I went people knew of the traveler called The Bastard. In the pagan lands where the old religion thrived I hailed as "Bastard the Priest Killer". In more Christian lands I had to be careful for in some areas was called "The Murdering Bastard" and had a bounty placed on my head by the church itself. In the rest of the lands I was just Bastard and was not treated one way or another as long as I kept to myself and caused no trouble.

Eventually the day came when I caught up with Father Cassius. I wish I could tell you there was some great battle or that I had said some epic final words as I struck him down. In reality I found him squatting in the woods relieving himself beside an old roman road. I simply walked up to him and as I looked into his eyes fury overtook me and I reached out and slashed his throat. I then turned and walked away as he thrashed on the ground in

his own filth attempting to get a last breath of air. I had avenged my mother and all those she had sworn to avenge. I no longer had a purpose. I suddenly felt empty and lost. I walked for a long time. I had no real direction in mind and that night as it got colder and began to snow I walked until my feet grew numb. I eventually sat down by the road, closed my eyes and prepared to once again see my mother. Thus is how The Bastard died, but I did not.

I do not remember falling asleep but I do remember waking up. I was wrapped in a wool blanket next to a large fire and across from me was a man wearing a dirty brown cloak with a hood over his head. When I moved to sit up he removed his hood and looked at me with eyes that were kind yet sad as well. He said his name was Columba and offered me some food. He told me how he found me by the road almost frozen but still alive. He had put together a small shelter and that for six days had nursed me as my body burned with fever and I slowly recovered. We spoke for a long time. During this time I swore myself to him as his servant and protector until the time came that I had repaid him for saving my life.

At one point later in our conversation I remarked on his odd accent and he told me that he was from the land across the water called Erie. He had been a scholar over there and had come into dispute with another scholar over who had written a manuscript which had captured the strong interest of the locals. This dispute supposedly became so heated that it eventually led to a war between the sides that supported each scholar and ended in the loss of many lives. As a result of all the bloodshed he swore to leave and not return until he had made right all the blood spilled as a result of his actions. I found this story to be humorous and said so. I did not see how a simple bit of writing could lead to the death of so many. It was then that Columba informed me that this wasn't any normal piece of writing but a holy manuscript written about the Holy Christian Faith. That's when I realized that Columba was one of the Black Robes, those who I had sworn would always be my enemy.

I was conflicted. This man was one of my enemies but at the same time I had sworn myself as his protector. Through our conversation I found myself liking him and thinking of him as a friend, but he was also a stinking Black Robe and even told me how many had died because of him and his belief. My feelings overwhelmed me and started to blurt out my story and how much I hated those of his occupation. He never said a word.

He let me keep talking until I had finished my story and my feelings had been exhausted. When I was done he looked at me and said. "Your Gods have sent you to me and my God has sent me to you. Now we are met in a crossroads of our lives. Shall we kill each other here and shed blood in the name of that which we believe, or will we both hold to the oaths we have made and see where fate sends us?"

I was still conflicted but in the end my honor won out and I chose to hold to my oath. I told him of my decision but added that as soon as my debt has been repaid I can't make any promises towards his safety in my presence. He said he understood and that we would worry about going down that path when we got to it.

For the next several years I traveled with Columba. I watched him as he spoke and taught people. He didn't just speak about his faith. He encouraged people to study and learn and not to blindly do as they were told but to gain the knowledge to make their own decisions. Everywhere he went he was very kind and understanding. He did not try to condemn those who were against his faith. Instead he would learn more about their faith and sometimes enjoy debating the good and bad of each faith with others. There were times when we weren't well accepted and my oath was held as I protected him and kept him safe. At times people had trouble understanding his accent and would mispronounce his name and call him Coluim, which meant The Dove. When I told him this he laughed and told me he didn't mind what name he went by as long as they heard what he was saying. Over time many came to love him and villages almost seemed to celebrate when The Dove came to visit. And I must admit that I found myself to have grown fond of the man I had sworn to protect.

Eventually the day came when Columba said he felt he needed to back to his home in Erie. "I cannot hold you to your oath my friend," he told me. "In fact I feel you have already paid me back many times over in these years we have traveled together. I guess that we are at a new crossroad. What path do we take now?"

I had many thoughts but in the end realized that I could no longer count this man among my enemies. He had become a mentor and friend to me. At that moment I swore an oath to myself. I would continue to follow Columba across the sea to his home. There I would continue to learn from him and continue to protect him from any enemies he may still have. It was at that moment I found my name. I was no longer The Bastard, I was Mael Coluim, The Follower of the Dove.

Leonardo Da Vinci

By Ben Thompson ~ submitted by Eden Fuller of Redenhall
(reprinted and edited with permission, but still may not be
appropriate for young children)



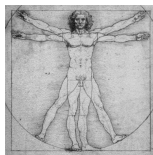
"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing.
Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Being willing is not enough; we must do."

Leonardo Da Vinci invented the sniper rifle. Did you know that? No kidding, in the early 16th century Leonardo Effing Da Vinci was standing on the walls of his besieged hometown of Florence, Italy, firing down at enemy soldiers 300 yards away with a custom-built wheelock rifle he had fitted with a homemade telescopic sight designed to improve accuracy and range. He did lots of other totally sweet stuff too, of course, and it's high time we started recognizing this crazy scientific and artistic mastermind for something other than the half-insane notion that he was some kind of ridiculous Knight Templar who enjoyed constructing overly-elaborate puzzles, stealing religious artifacts, and rabbit-punching theology professors in the junkbags when they were least expecting it.

Born in 1452 near a town called Vinci (it appears that "Da Vinci" is more than just a clever epithet), Leonardo was pretty much one of the most brilliant human beings ever produced by our species. In addition to the afore-mentioned 16th century headshot-dealing sniper rifle, he also laid out plans for all kinds of other crazy crap, most of which wouldn't be actually expounded upon by lesser geniuses until a couple centuries after Leo's death. His almost-unbelievable list of inventions includes things like helicopters, bicycles, tanks, pontoon bridges, cameras, solar power, calculators (though evidently not solar-powered calculators), the internal combustion engine, siege engines, a mechanical animatronic lion, a machine that pulls bars off of stone windows, a machine designed to open jail cells from the interior, and a device called the "Aerial Screw", which quite honestly sounds like the name of some kind of insane

inverted pole dancing maneuver. I can't overemphasize how ridiculous it is that Da Vinci conceptualized the freaking helicopter at a time when most people were riding around on donkeys and using a sundial to approximate the time of day. Seriously, the freaking printing press was considered cutting-edge technology in these days, and Da Vinci was one step away from dusting Versailles in an effing Apache Gunship.

Anyways, I guess I should talk a little about his skill as a painter and an artist, even though Art History is generally the sort of thing that causes me to spontaneously break out in hives and start dry heaving into an airsickness bag with the maximum amount of force that can possibly be mustered by my diaphragm. I'll suffice it to say that he did the "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper", and those pieces are pretty famous I guess. I mean, last I heard, the "Mona Lisa" is insured by the Louvre in the amount of something like \$800 million, making it the most valuable piece of art ever created, so I suppose that says something about Leonardo's talent as a painter. The sweet thing is that Da Vinci never half-assed it when it came to perfecting his skills. For instance, this guy wanted to be able to draw horses and humans, so he dedicated his youth to learning everything he possibly could about biology and anatomy – he devoted himself to the point where he became one of the world's foremost experts on the internal workings of the human body, and only THEN did he start really trying to draw and paint people. I mean, the big deal with the "Mona Lisa" was that it was so realistic and lifelike, thanks in no small part to Leonardo's bitchin' application of bump-mapping, cell-shading and 3D texture rendering. Think of it this way... remember the first time you saw a Final Fantasy game on the PS2 and the graphics were so crazy nuts that you were like, "OMG TOTEZ ROXXORZ WTF"? It was kind of like that, only rendered on oil and canvas, and with marginally less androgyny and significantly less crazy stuff going on in the background. In addition to rocking out with a brush, he was also really into sculpting, metalworking, drafting, and drawing, and he did some of history's first intricately-detailed anatomical drawings... the most famous of which was this dude:



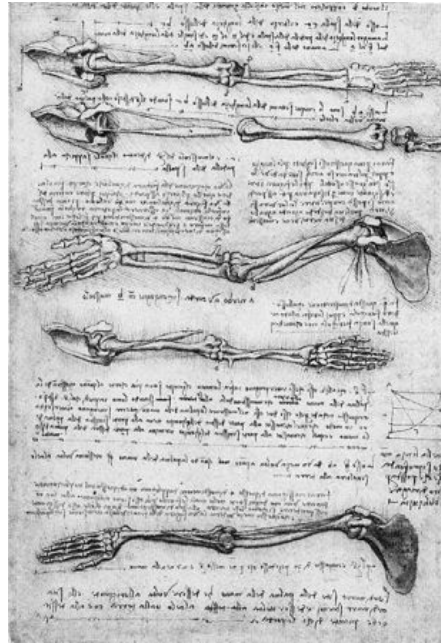
My guess is that you've probably seen that guy somewhere before, seeing as how it's probably the most famous anatomical drawing ever created. LDV also exploded faces with his crazy mathematics, geometry, architecture, and engineering skills, composed a bunch of music, had a beautiful singing voice, played the lyre (WTF who plays the *lyre*!) and taught himself Latin. Yeah, the same Latin language that includes six cases, three genders, three moods, two voices, two numbers, three persons, and six verb tenses and forces most people stupid enough to subject themselves to it to a world of pain and suffering far more sinister than anything the human mind can comprehend. Sheesh, in freaking Latin you pretty much have to conjugate punctuation marks, yet this ultra-brilliant super-genius taught it to himself for fun after he got bored decoding the secret of the universe and figuring out the best way to transcribe the image of God into a five-digit number.

We don't know a whole lot about Da Vinci the man, though the stuff we do know is pretty interesting. Depending on who you ask, (and, if you're interested, Sigmund Freud has *plenty* to offer on the subject) the enigmatic Leonardo was either completely celibate or a heavily-closeted homosexual... though the fact that he was once incarcerated for sodomy probably provides you with the quick and easy answer. He was also a hardcore vegetarian and animal lover who was known to go around to pet stores, buy a bunch of caged birds, take them outside, and set them free. (This of course was back in the day when being an artist actually provided you with enough money that you could afford to go around doing such things.) Other than that, we don't know a whole heck of a lot about the guy, and his enigmatic life really only serves to make him more badass in the long run.

Leonardo also rocked out on some sweet adventures, traveled on campaign with notable tyrant/evil person Cesare Borgia, went out and chugged ales at the taverns with Niccolo Machiavelli, traded snarky verbal jabs with Michelangelo, and served on the committee that forcibly moved Mike's famous sculpture of David (against the great artist's will - take *that* Michelangelo!). Another interesting note is that Da Vinci actually coined the word "nards" – according to the legend that I just made up he originally intended to use the term as a one-syllable nickname for "Leonardo", but during the 16th century everybody just associated "Da Vinci" with "giant junkbag", and over the years "nards" became more synonymous with balls than with the actual

artist himself. I guess that's just how it goes sometimes. Anyways, 'nards lived in the Vatican for a while, painted some towering works of artistic genius, created an impractically-large sculpture of an 80-ton bronze horse, and was so mind-flayingly hardcore that King Francis I of France paid him a huge stipend just to sit around in a dark, foreboding castle and think about stuff that was awesome.

Another totally sweet aspect of Leo was that almost everything he ever wrote or drew was put down into several massive, sprawling notebooks filled with an unending stream of brilliant stuff. These *Tomes of INT* contained tens of thousands of pages scrawled with drawings, musings, inventions, etc., all compiled in a giant leather-bound journal that somewhat resembled Henry Jones Senior's Grail Diary:



Basically, LDV's journal contained a bunch of masterfully-drawn pictures accompanied by line after line of small-lettered text written completely backwards... in cursive. People like to blame this crazy eccentric writing style on Da Vinci being a lefty, but I'm a lefty as well, and the last time I checked you don't need to hold your

computer monitor up in front of the bathroom mirror just to read my website. Instead, I prefer to think that Da Vinci was just one of those Tesla-esque mecha-geniuses who was just too earth-shatteringly brilliant for his own good. Writing this mind-bending insanity in backwards cursive was probably the only way that this dude could actually challenge himself intellectually.

Either way, Leo updated his crazy Renaissance LiveJournal daily, adding all sorts of cool stuff to it, and it now basically represents the dude's entire life work. He only really completed a few paintings, never published any of his over-the-top inventions (he was probably just so far ahead of his time that the prospect of building a Sherman Tank in 1520 would have just exploded most peoples' brains) and left most of his work half-finished. And yet he's still considered to be one of the most brilliant men to ever live. That's pretty darn sweet, if you ask me.

Leonardo Da Vinci died at the age of 67, and his legacy is preserved today in art museums and other snooty places across the world. Perhaps more importantly than that, the leader of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is named in his honor, which is totally radical.

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If you enjoyed this article, please consider purchasing Mr. Thompson's book *BADASS: A Relentless Onslaught of the Toughest Warlords, Vikings, Samurai, Pirates, Gunfighters, and Military Commanders to Ever Live* (available in bookstores and at www.amazon.com).

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