

# The Whetstone

February 2012

## In Memoriam of Don Njall Olaf Hagerson

Editor's note. This story was published in the Pennsic Independent on Aug. 4, 2008. Scott was 48 at the time and overflowing with his characteristic enthusiasm. Rest easy, Njall. Written by Jack Marvell, mka Joel Davis.



Every life is a journey. For Don Njall Olaf Hagerson, formerly of Caid, that journey has taken him from blade master to blade-maker. Njall, 48, began his journey with the Society 30 years ago, encountering the group through members of a varsity competitive archery team at the California State University-Long Beach. "Within the first year, I had become a herald and a marshal," he said.

Njall fought heavy for 10 years before bone spurs in his spine brought an end to his initial martial career.

"The doctor said 'Thou shalt not get hit with blunt objects about the head, neck and shoulders lest you get another compression of the spine,'" he said. "Many years later, I found rapier to satisfy my fighting jones."

Njall did more than satisfy his urge to fight. He was eventually awarded a White Scarf for his skill and teaching during his 15 years of rapier experience. "I like to fully explore everything I do in the SCA," he said. "(Rapier fighting) is physical chess. There is a great deal of physicality and technique, but there is a large mental component to the game. I find joy in being able to analyze the fight as it progresses and adapt on the fly. That is an enjoyable challenge to me."

Don Njall took up blacksmithing in 1999, using welding torches to make swept hilts for rapiers. In 2001, he forged his first knife. "I had been a knife collector and an amateur arms and armor researcher for more than 30 years," he said. "I had been telling myself I could do it and one day, I just said, 'Dammit, you've been telling yourself that-just do it.'"

As a knife-maker, Njall enjoys crafting blades of all types-Viking, medieval, and styles outside the SCA historical period.

"Historical patterns are what drive me," Njall said "the research and the relation of the shape and style for the historical originals.

Historic knives have many unique shapes not found in modern collectable knives." Blacksmithing has paid other dividends, too. "Blacksmithing has probably saved my life," Njall said. "It has helped me build muscle and lose weight. It has fixed

my chronic bad back. At 48, I am physically stronger than at any time in my life."

Watching Njall at the forge is an experience in sound- the staccato of hammer on glowing metal, the hiss of a hot tool being quenched in a nearby bucket.

"There is something primal about moving hot metal," Njall said. "It's exerting your will over what is normally an immovable object."

Currently, Njall's research focus is on reproducing a 1st century Roman gladius. He's been consulting with the curator of European Edged Weapons from the Royal Armory at Leeds in Great Britain. "I get the most amazing people returning my e-mails," he said.

In modern life, Njall has spent a career in technology, with more than a decade as a systems manager in his last position.

"Last year, I started my current attempt to retire before 50," he said. "We are full-time kennel operators. I am trying to be a full-time knife maker."

Njall is now a resident of the Barony of Thor's Mountain in Meridies.

## Do you know Joe?

Next up to be formally introduced to the Barony is Thomas Humburg, is a transplant from the Canton of Elvegast of the Barony of Windmasters' Hill in Atlantia. Tom is known as Tynder Hinn Skarpa in the Society.



**Any story behind your choice of name?** I have done other fantasy things that required a persona. A common name I have used is Tinryn. Tyndr and Tinryn were close enough for me. Plus it is Norse which goes with my persona.

**Were you in the SCA before you met your wife Katie?** Yes I was. In fact, the two first things I said to Pookah were: You look like a girl that likes pumpkin. And, are you a Scadian?

**What made you choose your persona?** Honestly, the ease of getting my Viking/Norse "kit" together. My initial choice, and most likely the persona I will work into long term will be Landsknecht.

**You've volunteered to feastcrat at Holly & Ivy and to check into becoming an Equestrian Marshal (ever heard of helium-hand?). What else are you interested in pursuing in the SCA?** Helium hand is indeed a scary thing in the SCA. One big danger to new people in the society is getting burnt out. In nature, I am a service oriented person so volunteering is not a problem. Other things that I am interested in are: Blacksmithing, Mead making, Cheese making, and siege engines. And as for the Equestrian Marshall, I have offered to research what the current situation in the Kingdom is and move on from there.

## Revision to the rule for the selection of the Daughters of Aduin

The rules for the selection of the Daughters of Aduin were revised in a procedural meetings October 30, 2010. In order to go into effect these rules are required to be published in the Whetstone. These rules will be in effect for the April 2012 selection meeting.

The Daughters of Aduin are the ladies who most inspire the men's chivalry, to put it short. It is up to each man in his own heart of hearts and the silence of his soul to determine what it is that inspires his chivalry, and to select the lady who most does so. The most recent member of the Silver Heart presents this order to the lady or ladies elected during baronial court at the May Tourney.

### The Rules

Revised rules  
Original rules November 1, 1995  
Revised October 30, 2010

### Voting Rules

- The meeting to elect members of the Order will be held at the April Business Meeting.
- Nominations may be made by any male 14 years of age or elder who is in attendance at the meeting.
- Nominations must be made in person.
- Each voting member may only make one nomination per year.
- The meeting will be presided over by the newest member of the Silver Heart in attendance.
- The vote shall be taken as a stone vote, with each voter depositing a "white" (or yes) stone or a "black" (or no) stone.
- The list of nominees is taken and then a blind vote for each person is taken. Once all the votes are complete, the votes are counted for each person.
- The nominee must receive 75% or more of the votes to be inducted into the DOA, with only 1 person inducted per year. Unless the following occurs:
  1. If more than 1 person receives 75% or more votes, then a run-off vote will be taken to narrow down the list to 1 person.
  2. If a nominee receives 100% of the votes, then they are automatically inducted into the DOA.

### Procedural Meeting Rules

- Meetings to consider changes to the election process may only be held between September 1 and January 31. Procedural Meetings must be called at least one month in advance, and must be announced at the business meeting and at fighter practice.
  - The quorum at a procedural meeting must be 15.
- To be counted as a quorum voter, a voter must have had his name included on the farspeaker list, and must be 14 years of age or older.
- Changes to the rules for elections require a 75% vote.
  - All rules changes must be published in the Whetstone.

## Dyeing for Dummies by Mistress Marthe Elsbeth of Oak Hill

Natural Dyeing

First, you should make out a will.... Oh, wait, that's **dying**. Let's go to Dyeing..

Okay, so you want to make stuff different colors. Natural stuff to play with includes fiber (wool, silk, cotton, linen, etc.), wood (raffia, reed, etc.), bone, leather, what ever else you want to throw in to experiment. The colors come from plants and animals. The most used in the medieval times, because they work really well, are madder and cochineal for red, indigo and woad for blue, and weld and fustic for yellow. Note that most plants will give some kind of color; most of that color is in the yellow spectrum (beige to yellow to brown).

Most natural dyes require that you leach the dye stuff out of whatever you are using. This is usually done by boiling it in water, then use the water as the dye bath. [Of course, then there is murex, which comes from a sea snail in Mexico or Singapore and requires someone to 'milk' the critter for the dye, resulting in the harvester ending up with purple hands. But that's more advanced.]

So, let's say you're going to use onion skins to dye wool thread. You throw a pound of onion skins in a pot, cover with water, and boil for at least an hour. You now have a dye bath. I recommend you strain the skins out, but you don't have to. They add interesting bits of color in unexpected places.

You have, of course, prepared your fiber by putting it into a mordant bath... Mordant? Oh, that's the chemical [usually a metallic salt] that helps the dye stick to the fiber. You don't have to use a mordant, but your dye will wash out at the first sign of rain otherwise. So you've soaked your fiber in, say, a bath of alum salts for at least an hour. Rinse, dry (to let it set) and you're ready to dye.

I would advise putting the fiber in a cool onion skin bath, then raising the temperature to simmer for at least an hour. Let it cool, then rinse the fiber and let it dry. Presto, you have yellow wool where you once had drab, natural white wool.

Some natural dyes require more preparation than that. Indigo and madder are known as vat dyes, because you have to create a vat with the dye stuff and other chemicals and let it percolate to get the best results. But for the most part, you can take any vegetative matter, boil it, and it will produce some kind of color.

Mordants (metallic salts from aluminum, iron, copper, tin, etc.) can change the color you get from a particular dye. Iron tends to make things darker, copper lends a green tinge, tin brings out the bright side of the color.

Always remember, safety first. Even though we talk about **natural** dyes, there are a lot of things in nature that are not benign. So you should not stick your head over a pot of hot iron mordant or copper, for example. And take all the usual precautions when dealing with heat, especially if you are using a wood fire for your heat source. Once you use a pot, spoon, or measuring cup for dyes, **do not** use it for anything else. Sure, a lot of this stuff is benign, but you probably don't want to ingest it in the concentrations used in dyeing.

Above all, have fun. Making stuff change color is just plain cool. <grin>

