



The Brandel Bugle

Editor: Klaberjazz of Groff

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A confederation begins

Confederacy n. League, alliance, collusion. So says Dr Johnson's list of word definitions in the Brandel language. This is what we are now a part of and this we are told is the new order of things.

Thank the gods! Now at least Lord Wrath is in ultimate control in his role as Lord Protector. This is a very timely decision and so it is extremely surprising that Ferlad was able to make it. In years to come history will recall that it was under Ferlad the Weak's reign that the Bastions were united.

Why do I so readily place about my neck the yoke of a Wrath overlord? This is no yoke, but a platform for the rise of Brandel as the foremost Bastion. Lord Wrath the Great will now be able to see first hand how well we perform in the many trials we all face from day to day.

Lord Wrath now has the opportunity to implement nationwide, for truly we are an independent nation now, many of the reforms so badly needed. A justice system where those accused may speak in their defence before being imprisoned, a more even distribution of wealth, rights for the common man.

Brandel, and indeed all the bastions, need a strong ruler. Now we have been blessed by one. We should mourn the end of the fine dynasty of rulers that hat sat over Kar Brandel for so long, but we should rejoice for the new order.

For those of you who have any further doubts think on this. If Ferlad had died (probably by a knife in his back from Skryme) it would have been his daughter who succeeded him. Can you imagine a woman on the throne? What greater disaster could befall us?

Assassination at the feast

Nowhere it seems is safe from the assassins trade, and it appears assassins are getting easy to come by. At the feast attempts were made on the lives of Lord Terevan, Lord Wrath and Lady Elise.

Lord Wrath, champion that he is, was shocked by the sudden and unprovoked attack of a Terevanii mercenary, a man said to have been hired by a Bhelthorian. Fortunately the man could barely harm the Lord, but Wrath was certainly stunned by the actions of a man o the Bastions.

Both Lord Terevan and Lady Elise were poisoned and this was no mere case of a bad glass of wine. As yet no one group has stepped forward to claim responsibility, but the man or more likely woman, as all know that poison is a woman's weapon, would have to be good.

What would anyone hope to gain from these vile actions. The attack on Wrath is most easily explained. Some in the Bastions, misguided though they may be, do not wish to place themselves under the rule of the Lord Protector. I am sure that these short sighted people will come around in the end.

But the attacks on the other two Lords is not so easily explained. The possibility that these two were not specific targets, but that the poison was intended for all the Lords certainly exists, however any assassin with a wish to live long in his profession would surely know that Ferlad the weak cannot handle his drink and so would not be likely to drink any of the wine so late on in the evening.

Anarchists do exist, and Lords make enemies easily. Lord Protector, be careful we beg you.

Skryme disappears

Lord Skryme Dragonsbane, the Butcher of Brandel, so recently re-appointed Lord Chief Justice has disappeared. The man, of whom Khellessar has said "[he is] dirty vile scum who deserves to die" had been himself the victim of a violent campaign against his continued life. Despite Skryme's undoubted awesome powers, eyewitnesses report that since the Victory feast, to his disappearance exactly 7 days later, Skryme had been attacked daily from elementals of blackness, which professionally I am able to confirm as beings from the plane of shadows. Skryme it seems had been able to banish the majority of these elementals without personal harm, but the given the constant nature of these attacks one had to succeed eventually. An observer said "it was 'orrible. Nasty black 'uge. It came from nowhere, right be'ind 'im. Suddenly 'e was surrounded by a black vortex 'e never stood a chance. Gone 'e was."

Well no loss really. I have it on very good authority that Skryme's first few acts would be to recommend a tax on both adventurers earnings and Turnips.

It seems that Skryme still remembers the Turnip crisis of '93 and wants revenge for the loss of face he suffered then as a result. As for adventurers, it has been said that Skryme just wants the work and does not believe that these people should be paid at all.

Let us take a good look at the appointment of this man as our Lord Justice. A man more interested in personal vendettas than justice; a man who believes himself judge, jury and executioner; a man who's idea of justice is revenge and confrontation. Should this man be in charge. It seems that Darton would not have been such a bad choice after all.

Morias hunts Fraegar

The Victory feast was further interrupted by the actions of one Morias, one time high priest of Pethraine and until now thought dead. Morias appeared at the celebrations deeply cowed and immediately demanded Fraegar as a sacrifice. It was later found that Morias had placed a magical focus within the hall and was using it somehow to attack the assembled guests.

Fraegar had long since departed the gathering, and was returning to Chorovar. Thwarted by this unexpected turn of events Morias took revenge by summoning a wall of black fire that consumed everything organic in its path. The wall then was made to advance upon the assembled nobility with a slow calculated menace.

My correspondent did not manage to see who found the focus, but whoever it was their discovery was most timely. With the quick destruction of the focus the wall of fire dissipated and once again the guests could breathe easily.

Whoever that adventurer or noble was, the Brandel salutes you. I ask you to inform me of your name, or as modesty is probably another of your many virtues, I ask any Brandel citizen to send me his name, at my new home in Kar Wrath, so that he can be given the praise he is due.

The Brandelball league

The Brandelball league is beginning to grow. Lord Brandel's Guards, Armorians and Militia Brandel have agreed to submit teams, and Arena Brandel, home team of Old Tref Ford, have already joined. This is good news for the league executive whose prayers have certainly been fervent this month.

There is however a lack of response so far from the Guilds. The Scouts Guild were runners up in the last league competition and both the Warriors and Clerics have traditionally fielded strong teams.

Come on all you adventurers out there - get into groups of eight and submit your teams. Its great fun and the risk of injury these days is small. The Bugle will sponsor the first team submitted to the executive (this is for real!!)

Your letters

To the editor,

Sir - having seen several editions of your esteemed organ since my arrival in Kar Brandel, I have been moved to write by the persistent vendettas that you seem intent on waging against certain Brandel adventurers, for reasons singularly trivial. Firstly on the question of the recently apotheosised Yramaer - this gentleman has saved us all from a fate to horrible to comprehend. In common with the rest of the populace I suffered from the insidious mind control of the hideous Kronos and was forced to participate in acts of violence quite outside my character. I can only presume that this control has permanently addled your wits, master Klaberjazz. Surely it is time to lay aside these prejudices this noble adventurer had to suffer when mortal, and to cease to blame him for being deceived by the monster Kronos as we all were? Secondly, regarding Cepulia and her tutor. I have had the pleasure of Cepulia's company and was not turned into anything. Alrik's behaviour was outrageous, as anyone who witnessed the altercation would inevitably conclude. Provided Cepulia is treated carefully and respectfully and we retain our senses of humour, no problem will exist. Surely lime jelly is not the greatest social problem facing the bastions citizenry? Personally I would far prefer to be covered in unusual confectionery than to fall into the clutches of the footpads that infest our alleys.

Yours respectfully, Nemo

Dear Nemo,

I do not pursue vendettas for trivial reasons. I rarely pursue vendettas at all and when I do the reasons are not trivial.

As regards Yramaer, yes he did suffer, which was unjust; yes he was misled; and yes it is time to lay aside prejudices. The charge that you level that carries the greatest guilt is that of prejudice. Yramaer was a truly noble creature and one I regret not meeting on better terms, but unfortunately he would always be judged by the actions of his race, a race he was as like as you or I to our ape ancestors. Yes he was misled, but we all were not. Duncan, the lamented high priest of the celestial host, proclaimed Pearce true and rightful Lord, yet others

did not believe him, and even the gods were tricked. I and my mentor both knew that Pearce was true and rightful Lord (Bugle passim). I am sure there were others. But prejudices must be put aside, for Yramaer is a god and has a right to our worship, and I shall be the first to bow at his altar; indeed if I am asked I will even help build one, although unless guaranteed safety I shall not return to Kar Brandel.

As to my 'vendetta' against Darcovar and Cepulia it does not exist. I regard Cepulia as undisciplined and impetuous and in my judgement she should not be allowed to interact with others except in a very controlled environment. I do not say this out of malice, but because I care for the lives of those she speaks to and for her should her temper lead her into problems with something she cannot handle. After all, if my advice had been followed, she would not have spent her time as a slippery, slimy, squirmy wormy. But Cepulia is a promising child and I believe whole heartedly that she does have a place in society.

Darcovar Well I have had differences of opinion with him, particularly about endangering others' lives but he is the head of my order. It is true that I poke fun at him, but I hope that he does not mind, and indeed since my cartoon strip applications to join the mage guild are up considerably.

Alrik? Yes here I am absolutely biased, but with good reason. Alrik is not an evil man, and his grasp of theology may be good (see Altar-cations), but he is domineering, over bearing, egocentric, zealous and intolerant. I think that his actions at the feast against Kheslessar speak for themselves. If a person wishes to worship a different aspect of the god, then it is for the god to show his displeasure not a man. Kheslessar was a great man and should be respected; nobody deserved the display that Alrik put on.

In short Nemo, I respect life and I believe that others should too. I will campaign against injustice and persecution wherever I see it. If people think my reporting biased then they need to write and I will publish their letter.

Klabejazz in exile



Altar-Cations



If Alrik is to be believed Rhiathale is our new god of Survival and Rincewind was merely an aspect of his holy power. Whoever Rhiathale is he certainly has power, as demonstrated so forcefully at the feast.

Xhellesar would have us believe that Rincewind is a god and is to be worshipped, but who is right? According to Alrik "Rhiathale is a defender of the weak not a coward. He came to all the servants of Rincewind to explain. It is blasphemy to worship the old aspect [Rincewind] of our god." Scepticism certainly seems the order of the day, after all as Fraegar put it "The cult of Rincewind does exist, I should know it's resurrected me 3 times!" Certainly we may not dismiss Xhellesar out of hand, he has been right to many times before.

Another interesting occurrence is that of worship of Bezique. The peasant populace have set up shrines to and gathered 'holy' relics of my former mentor. Worship of him is now more common in some villages than that of any other god, and the movement is spreading. I confess that I am a convert myself. The aims of the sect are to promote peace and understanding to all, to cherish and nurture growth, to solve disputes by mediation and to send any goblins and other evil creatures screaming to hell as quickly as possible. A happy coincidence (or maybe not) is that since the worship began the crops have done remarkably well. The land is drying quickly, more quickly than is natural, and numbers of pests has dropped to almost nothing. If our Lord Protector can prevent any more invasions we shall have a bumper harvest this year.

This column cannot finish without reference to his holiness high priest Vetch, new High Priest to the celestial host. May Pholtus guide you with his light through the darkness forever!

Foreign News

Kar Wrath

Wrath has been celebrating in style this week with the appointment of their Lord as Lord Protector. I have been to numerous street parties and still the celebrations continue. I can say only one thing for sure; when the festivities stop there isn't going to be much ale left in Kar Wrath.

Kar Terevan

Lord Terevan has returned to his bastion under a veil of secrecy following the attempted assassination at the victory feast in Kar Brandel. Such secrecy is much needed as my sources indicate that there will be more attempts on his life and that of the other bastion lords in the very near future. Perhaps the removal of Skryme was just a beginning to a new wave of evil preparing to sweep our lands. For now we can only watch and wait, but if anyone can prepare then do so.

Kar Chorovar

My reporter in Chorovar is suggesting that the election pundits have got it all wrong and that Lady Arquelle is now

most likely to win the race for the chair of the council. It seems that her statesmanship at the victory feast is enough to convince a large number of mages that she is just the woman for the job. Magery has always been a more equal opportunities profession than many others, but this rise of one so young and a woman is causing waves in Chorovarian society. Although her appointment is still by no means certain the bastions I think have moved one step closer to having their first Lady ruler and some would say the disaster that would follow. Good luck to you Lady, I think that prejudice may overtake you yet, and Molk is not novice campaigner.

Kar Dernath

Rumours abound here as always, but one in particular seems to occur in every conversation. Lady Anarchica may well be freed soon. Information is still difficult to come by, but we will keep you informed as we are able. Perhaps we are finally seeing a change of attitude by the Pact, as the worst of their leaders are thrown down into the hell that spawned them and a new order takes over the reigns of power. One thing is

for sure - Dernath is still little more than a murky outpost of oblivion

Kar Bhelthor

My correspondent in Bhelthor, I must assume, has disappeared off the face of this planet. My last report from him concerned only the terrible silk wasp and its destruction of a major source of revenue for Bhelthor. However perhaps the turbulence is to be expected. Maskelyne the furrier, self-proclaimed rightful ruler of Bhelthor, has vanished from Brandel as far as I can tell, and Lady Elise, the representative of Chancellor Elewesh is still too ill to travel, following her poisoning at Brandel. I have received rumours of even more fell deeds, but most of these have to be discounted as too fantastic to take seriously.

Tirondel

Ambassador Octavia Aernelia Aureliana is still in Brandel after her attendance at the victory feast. One wonders at the presence of an empire ambassador and what the capital will make of the bastion's implied declaration of independence and formation of confederacy. It is not that long since the murder of Marshal Lawe and his replacement by the more xenophobic Kal. It is also not that long since the empire sent one of its legions to the region. I for one hope that the Lords are aware that their actions affect more than just our own kingdoms. We would be truly sorry if we were placed under direct empire rulership once again. The news from the capital itself is of a much better nature. Raislin, fifth and only surviving son of the current emperor is still alive and still shows no signs of the hereditary family disease. His father, the emperor, has ordered that the boy is secluded from all other people save only the emperor himself. Apparently the emperor has all the food for the boy tasted and then serves it himself. The most powerful enchantments have been scribed by loyal mages, and the might of the gods has been prayed for and granted in the child's protection. It seems that the emperor is leaving nothing to chance. Some though seem none to happy with this turn of events, most notably the emperor's daughter. Her temper is said to have taken a turn for the worse at the continued good health of her beloved half-brother. Even the most daring odds merchant is not laying odds

EDITOR IS TONGUE-TIED!

By Alrik, High Priest of Rhiathale

In a dramatic but welcome incident during Lord Ferlad's Unification Banquet, the editor of this publication, the 'worthy' Klaberjazz, was arrested for his libellous activities by Skryme Dragonsbane, newly appointed Lord Chief Justice. Klaberjazz himself vigorously protested the charge, but his pleas fell on deaf ears, as the foreign dignitaries were stunned by the thunderous roars of approval of the Brandel guests. It turns out that many of the prominent personalities in Brandel consider their treatment at the hands of Klaberjazz to be grossly slanderous, while several consider him strongly biased as well. While nobody could dispute his right to hold any opinions he chooses, his position as

editor clearly dictates that he must be unbiased, fair and truthful in his coverage, something which has been sadly lacking over the past few issues. It would be unfair and irresponsible to repeat any of Klaberjazz's lies here, as this would give them credit they do not deserve. Instead, it is to be hoped that the public response to future issues of the Bugle will now be watched cautiously by the current editor, in case he should suffer his predecessors fate.

One issue that may affect the outcome of Klaberjazz's pleas of innocence concerns the late lamented Lord Pearce Brandel. The editor had always pledged, and shown, complete support for the Lord, which occasionally extended to

ensuring that nothing ill was said of him. As such, Klaberjazz may claim that he was merely being loyal, doing his duty to his Lord as he had always done to all who knew him.

This contributor begs to differ - these are worthy traits in a soldier, not a newsman, whose first responsibility is always to the truth. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that Klaberjazz should submit a public apology to all who consider themselves offended by his biased reportage. However the problem with this is getting enough pages in the Bugle to print all the victims' names, let alone attempting to print corrections to Klaberjazz's slanderous semi-fictional stories.

It only remains to be seen what sort of justice will be considered suitable, but only a light punishment is expected

Dear Brandelers,
It was hard, but I forced myself to refrain from using a one-word answer to sum up my feelings about the above article.

I hope that here I can finally set the record straight. The Bugle IS NOT BIASED! I admit to bias, that is my right as a free man. When will you understand Alrik, and others, no articles praising you are printed because nobody writes them (except yourselves). Nobody writes them because they would have to be lying. Get a life. Do something other than challenge your betters to violent theological debates in front of the assembled representatives of the Bastions, and arresting innocents without trial, warning or indeed justice.

Cepulia is a slightly different case. I believe she has great potential for good, but her temperament leads me to believe that for the greater good, she should be careful where she goes and what she does. It is not for a free citizen of Brandel to have to take care, but for Cepulia to learn to control her great powers.

The actions of Skryme speak for themselves, and here history does him no favours. It was Skryme, Darcovar and Bezique who had Khellessar boiled in oil at a past banquet; without charge and an act I admit Bezique regretted in the cold light of day as foolish in the extreme, for Khellessar was a good and

honourable man. It was Skryme who fled just as Lord Brandel was murdered by poison, a crime which is still unsolved today. It was Skryme who organised the ascendancy of Kronos, firstly by freeing Darton from the just course of the law, and secondly by tricking and conspiring with Brandel nobility to place Kronos, masquerading as Terrance, on the throne. It was Skryme who arrested me with no legal reason, but only a selfish reason of petty jealousy. Good riddance to him I say, I hope Talen's creatures hold him for a long time.

Alrik you have the tact of a warthog on heat, the intelligence of an earthworm and the charisma of a slug. If you can find any falsehoods in reports in the Bugle which I have written then I will grovel at your feet and beg forgiveness.

I have always been loyal to the current Lord Brandel whomsoever he might be. Loyalty is not just for soldiers, but for all Kar Brandel citizens. I have sworn an oath of service and I shall fulfil that oath. A newsman's duty is not first to the truth, but is first to his liege lord. The Bugle did not always report the whole truth during the Shadowpact war - examine the casualty figures. I do however undertake never to lie. If an article cannot be printed because to do so would mean I would have to lie, then it will not be printed. So submit your articles and have the courage to sign your name on them. Klaberjazz.

I have here made a rare exception to my normal rule and included an article that was submitted anonymously:

The Unification Banquet was a fantastic occasion, and will undoubtedly be remembered for ages to come, not least for the impressive appearance of the young adventurers of Brandel, our future heroes. These worthy men and women are rightfully recognised by our new Lord for what they are. It has been a sad fact that the valorous adventurers of these young bloods has been somewhat overshadowed by the brat pack previous generation. Indeed successful adventurers such as Fabian and Cheradian, Taston, Kathros, Hogweed etc. have distinguished themselves in Brandel service.

The scale of the biased reporting has got so great in fact that an entire adventuring party has been only recognised for the unfortunate fate suffered by one of their members, Valadran [ed. surely this is the party that released Imix into the world and killed Bezique! Not something the Bugle has missed!], who is reported to be recovering well, and attended the feast in person. Fortunately a major shake up of the adventuring groups means that our true adventurers, the ones who have not forgotten or forsaken their craft or skills in the bluster of politics, will have their day in the new Unified Marches, faithfully reported by an honest press [ed. as always].