

1373τη Ροτατιον, 3ρδ μορεμεντ, 16τη ωεεκ

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TAX RELIEF for families with three or more children over the age of six has been announced by the Lords of the Crimson Court.

OMENS

A flock of gulls was found dead on the north shores of Vastengrad, a sure sign of fierce summer storms.

MOVEMENT IN THE STARS

Be forewarned, chroniclers in Streissberg have observed changes in the night sky:

WAKEFUL

FAERIDS

EINVARIS

WATCHFUL

SINEIDS

SLUMBERING

DAEVOLS

VOLEIDS

ATOLS

GOLEINS

KRAENARS

Stars are most watchful in the western spheres.

CRIMES

Dimi and Olya Sovechkin went missing this week while fetching water for their mother from the municipal well near the Inkwell.

Authorities stress that they are seeking CREDIBLE witnesses who may have information on their whereabouts.

A man was robbed at knifepoint on Nvgorny Prospekt by a woman with yellow hair and blue eyes.

A man from Vittenberg was killed outside The Crimson Cormorant this past week: authorities believe that it may have been a disagreement over a game of cards, and that robbery did not appear to be a motive.

A group of children were witnessed conducting a ritual honoring the Old Gods on Nemitskaya Street under the sight of the stars and in direct violation of city ordinances.

VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS

Violence in Vastengrad's streets is a certain sign that spring has arrived, with crews rejoicing in the thawing of ice and warming of the winds, but the violence this year seems more intense than the usual harmless brawls between sailors and ship's crews who've had too much to drink.

An incident several weeks ago left seven dead, including two officers of the watch, and authorities have been unable to identify those who were involved.

Ivan Nadirov, a witness, claimed that the fighters seemed to know each other, that they were not drunk, and that the violence broke out shortly after the two parties spotted each other.

Another incident this past week left two men dead outside The Crimson Cormorant; a man was knifed from behind while urinating, as well as one witness to the assault.

The victim had only just arrived in

Vastengrad according to those who spoke with him in the bar, and all said he was an amiable, kind fellow.

The city watch has shown no signs of making any progress in either of the cases; one of our reporters paid a visit to Semin's to examine the body and observed that the knife wounds were precise, aimed right at the kidneys and lungs—similar to the wounds suffered by one man who died in the violence outside The Toad & Spider a few weeks earlier.

EICHENVAULD HORRORS

Flesh-eating bats have been sighted in the Eichenvauld, some as large as a dog. The bats were first seen two weeks ago when Ilsa Vetrova, ten, was attacked while out gathering firewood before dinner.

Farmers in the area have reported numerous attacks in the days since, and that even larger animals such as cows or horses are not safe.

The bats are aggressive, and there are fears they may be able to break into homes through glass windows.

Travelers are advised to seek shelter at night when traveling in the region of Ostergrad and Pentergoth.

A VICTORY AT SEA

Sources in Helsgrad have received reports of a battle at sea between Lord Ivarr's ship, *Crimson Winter*, and the forces of the dread sea lord Volar Heronson of Niffelash.

Crimson Winter was off the coast to the south of Bosk when it attacked a pair of vessels engaged in piracy, *Harrowheart* and *Dawn's Demise*.

All three ships immediately opened fire, and in the first volleys a shot struck *Dawn's Demise* in the ship's magazine, causing it to explode.

Harrowheart put to flight vanishing into the fog shrouded isles to the south of the Western Reaches, but *Crimson Winter* gave pursuit and ran her aground before she could make good her escape.

The two crews engaged in a desperate battle on the rocks off Rothmorrow Isle, whereupon Lord Ivarr slew Heronson in single combat.

Crimson Winter will head to Helsingrad to refit, repair, and take on new crew before resuming its patrols through the late summer.

PROMISING RETURNS

Early returns from the expanded mining operation in Sprevitich are promising. Reserves of coal, iron, and tin have been found.

Production is set to increase over the next year as state of the art equipment from Streissberg is put to work.

The Iron City's offer to help fund the mine in exchange for an ongoing percentage of the reserves was a matter of some disagreement among the Lords of the Crimson Court, and led to the fatal duel between Lord Tsyplikov and Sir Albrecht Volsigil this past summer, which left both men dead and the talks in disarray.

A LETTER ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the twenty years since the end of the Ostermark Rebellion, the people of Old Volgvarra and the Western

Reach have been forbidden from worship of the Old Gods, a violation of the principles of the free cities, of the sovereignty of her peoples, and a naked attempt by one group of men to subjugate all others by claiming the authority to control what they may believe and how they may worship.

Scholars from Vittenberg have documented correlation between worship under the sign of the Voleids and vastly improved crop yields on farms in past decades. Over the last twenty years we have seen some improvements based on mechanical innovations in farm equipment from the Iron City, but yields are still far short of what was reported fifty or even sixty years ago.

As a further point, few would argue that outlawing worship of the Old Gods has meaningfully improved the safety of citizens in the Western Reach. It was only three years ago that Pentergoth fell to an unnatural presence, an event of unlike any other in recent history. Volgstadt may blame the troubles there on secret worship of the Old Gods, but it is as likely that it was caused by Volgstadt's arrogant edict, which prevented people from honoring and appeasing powers that could protect us.

Every newspaper in the Western Reach carries a reminder of the punishment for worshipping the Old Gods under the sight of the stars, which we are told is necessary to promote public safety. In the south, the Savrathi live free and have not suffered for their continued piety; indeed, the reavers grow bolder every day, multiply in their untold numbers, and spread to the far corners of our world while Vastengraders are denied the protection of our own traditions and birthright.

The people of the Western Reach supported Volgstadt's merchants in

their war against Lord Ostermark; we helped them put down his rebellion, and how have they repaid us? By telling us how and to whom we may pray; by levying taxes against imports; and worst of all, by using Streissberg's unnatural steam ships to steal the livelihood of our sailors and shipping concerns.

We bled for them and called them brothers; perhaps it is high time they stopped treating us like children.

Lord Oster Hasturmark-
Born under the Sight of the Stars
Wed in Salt and Blood upon the Sea

OPEN LETTERS

TO THE SAILOR who stole my heart; next time I will let you steal a kiss. If you are interested, find me at our spot on the shore - blue-eyed J.

YOU WORE BLACK to the funeral, and I kept my distance. I have waited twenty years, I can wait one more.

SWEETEST K - so glad to hear you are keeping busy in my absence; best you keep a close eye on the garden in case any visitors arrive. My time in Ostergrad has been fruitful, but I long to be at your side in Vastengrad. New opportunities call me south to the newly reopened pass at Pentergoth. I will do my best to return to you by summer. Yours always, M.

NOTICES

WORSHIP OF THE OLD GODS, under the sight of the stars, shall not be tolerated. Violators shall be set to sixty days hard labor.