

THE STRONGHOLD GAZETTE

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Mayoral Address

Today's address must begin with the thanking the people of this town for their support, their trust, and their positivity. Gratefully, humbly, I once again accept the position as your mayor.

Much has already happened within our town's borders - much that tries us, that hardens us, and that could destroy us from the inside out. In times like these, where can any of us hope to turn with the burdens we carry? As mayor, as your friend, I strongly encourage you, each and every one of you, to be transparent with your questions and concerns.

If there is a problem that the town's council is unaware of, or one that continues to darken the pillars of your houses and homes, we rely entirely on the voices of our citizens to make this known. It is an agreement - between council and community, between mayor and members of the town - that your concerns will come to us and that we will help alleviate them. My role in this partnership, as with my fellow council members, I take dutifully and happily. And I hope that each of you do the same.

With the election being officially over, the positions of town treasurer and marshal shall be up for vote this coming town meeting. Currently the acting treasurer is Preena Glass, and the acting marshal is Prunella Glass. The vote will be the last motion to cover in the meeting, so please be prepared to stay for the extended event. If you are interested in one of these positions, or would like to nominate an outstanding individual, please be present next town meeting where, as previously stated, each position will be decided by town vote. With the coming election, and with such new faces, I believe it prudent to once again go over the rules of voting. The positions up for election are town treasurer and marshal. To run, you must fulfill three criteria:

Town Talent Show!

Rules to remember about the election for these positions:

You must be present during the meeting, and election in order to run.

Your nominee must be present during the meeting, and election in order to run.

You/Your nominee may not run for both positions.

You/your nominee must be a legal citizen of Oz. At this time, we cannot allow slaves, un-domesticated changelings, or non-citizen storm riders to run, just to name a few.

This of course brings me to my next matter of address.

There are times in life where one must face difficult challenges, where one must reorder priorities and devotions, where one must see what is right and just and strive for the greatest way to attain such things.

Many of you may know that I am no longer a Tinman, and I say to you that though this is true I must emphasize that it is not in shame that I walk away from that chapter of my life, but happily with my head held high ready to better serve the people in this town and the diversity it holds. Without the challenges of anything that would stand in the way of my vocation as your mayor, Horizon Stronghold is my main priority. I choose you, Horizon Stronghold, to be the greatest definition of my character and leadership. As I cast off the uniform of my former venerable life, I step into a new chapter; one that is no less filled with the significant duty, honor and servitude. I choose you, Horizon's Stronghold.

-Mayor Rose Johnson



Greetings to all in Horizon Stronghold! I'm excited to announce the town's newest event, the town talent show! We're also excited to announce our very own MC for this special occasion, Johnny Sapphire! This event gives citizens to show off what they have be it their charming wit, comedic skill, musical talent, or even scientific knowledge in a friendly competition of talent. If you haven't already made myself or Preena Glass aware of your talent submission, you have until 11:00pm on Friday night to have your act approved.

The rules are as followed:

Acts must not exceed five minutes
Language and music must be appropriate for Horizon Stronghold

Acts may not involve permanent injury, death, or excessive violence, and performers must function accordingly within Ozian law.

The talent show will be held within Tea Time an hour after Town Meeting, and town position elections are finished. At the end of the talent show there will be a vote on the winners. Each member of the audience has a single vote, and the prizes are as followed:

First Prize - 10 Emeralds
Second Prize - 5 Emeralds
Third Prize - 3 Emeralds

We hope to see everyone at the show!

-Mayor Rose Johnson

Civil Authority

No articles, advertising, or opinions shall be presented promoting a violent, subversive agenda or actively encouraging and contributing to civil unrest.



Nomes Unite!

By Ragshesh the Nome ~

a reporter for the Nome Kingdom
In the last town election at Horizon's Stronghold a piece of corn was harmed "supposedly" and the Nomes are the ones being blamed! Ha! Seems like the piece of corn should be roasted and eaten to me. Why are the Nomes being blamed? Seems to me like we are being targeted for recent actions that were only necessary to take.

The real problem is these aggravating farmers. They won't let us have some of their fertile land so that we can grow and eat our own corn! What did they expect us to do? We are tired of having them brag about what kind of crops they have, we want our share and if they don't give it to us peacefully then we will take their lands by force!

Our kingdom is not taking the blame for damaging the piece of corn (although I personally would have eaten it), and we will not accept the blame for something we didn't do. I think it could have been an internal matter, but I don't know for sure just speculating.

In regards to the farmers, the Nome Kingdom is gearing up and training for a war to break out with the farmers. The king has issued a call to all Nomes who feel they have been cheated out of crops to join the military and fight for the Nome Kingdom against the farmers. We will not show any mercy on the farmers! The time for mercy is over the time for the Nomes is now!

Snickers Bits

Q: What did I miss?

A: The target! You need to practice your aim!

Q: Will you tell me your bosses secret cookie recipe ? He was making a batch as I came across your cabin when I was lost in the woods. Just curious.

A: I cannot simply run around spouting of Skraxxis' secrets, that would make them not secret anymore! So I suppose if you want to know a cookie recipe I can find one!

Q: Did you know? I am asking because I do not. If you know, then please tell me as soon as possible. If you do not know, please find out. I await your response eagerly

A: I know you know I know. I've always known you knew. Don't be so eager, everyone else knows too

Q: What are your thoughts on delicious chicken picnics?

A: My master says chicken is not for us to eat, but he never said anything about playing with it! I would love playing with chicken at a picnic!

Q: What are the fashion trends for this season?

A: Black is all the rage among storm riders these days. I suppose Rthe has been getting progressively more covered in wannabe dark witches

Q: What do things taste like?

A: Like pigs feet, I know a guy who can alter that and make things taste completely different!

SKARAXIS EXPERIMENT

By Thuun

ENDEAVOR
The immortal Skaraxis has gifted many scientific contributions to the good people of Oz and of Horizon Stronghold. His research is always progressing and moving forward, and just recently he was fortunate to emerge with a great breakthrough. During his studies with arcane glyphs and scroll magic, he developed a theory on how to imbue somebody with light magic without scrolls or lengthy studies in witchcraft. After much of his preparations were completed, the town was invited to come and bear witness to his great experiment.

Snickers expressed how excited he was for the experiment, and encouraged the good folks of town to attend.

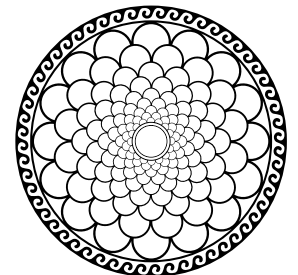
"The last time we attended an exhibition like this it was a huge step forward for science." Commented Preena. "I look forward to seeing the scientific display Skaraxis has in store for us. It will do nothing but help Horizon Stronghold." Said Marshal Prunella. The experiment involved branding one of Skaraxis chattel with a sigil allowing him to cast a white spell that they previously were unable to cast. The use of an electro amplifier was used to empower the experiment as well. Once the process was completed, the subject was successfully able to lay to rest a zombie. The experiment was a success, and those present would not forget the sight they saw for quite some time.

"This is a promising start, and more research will be required. Those who wish to start human trials should come to the laboratory and speak with me. Discretion is my middle name." Announced Skaraxis after his success. The good citizens are excited to see the fruits of Skaraxis's research in the future.

Red Poppy Lounge

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But now we are focused on providing you a more
Relaxing atmosphere with good drinks,
Good snacks, and good fun.

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Mayoral Re election

By Thuun

As the people may already know, the last town Mayoral election had been tampered with. At our last market a re-election was held. There would not be any new candidates allowed to enter, but all candidates who ran before were invited to come back to participate. Guests for the re election were Munchkin Major Doyen and Associate professor Acantha from the Ivory tower. The candidates present were acting mayor axle, an ear of corn, as well as lan-lan. The interviewing process took about an hour, and the people of horizon stronghold were permitted to ask questions, and the ear of corn had an interpreter for those of us who don't speak corn.

"Would taxes remain the same if you are elected?"

Axel: "Yes, taxes would remain as they are now."

Lan-lan: "Yes"

The ear of corn had no comment.

"What do you expect as a salary?"

Axel: "I don't."

Lan-lan: "I didn't know it had one."

The ear of corn had no comment.

Who is your favorite member of the Trifecta?

Axel: "Azkadellia, however each is important and serves a purpose."

Lan-lan: "Azkadellia."

Ear of corn: "Myself."

"We live in changing times, as mayor what will you do to protect the rights of slave owners?"

Axel: "As long as they follow the law, I can't speak on it as I'm not in charge."

Lan-lan: "I will protect their fair right."

Ear of corn: "I'm against slavery."

Each candidate was asked 1 question before moving onto their final words.

Please describe a time you experienced conflict and how you dealt with it.

Ear of corn: "There were once crows that came to my field. There was also a scarecrow there who tried to protect the corn. The husks were afraid they'd be eaten, and then the crows flew away,"

Where do you see yourself in 5 years, and if the town was flooded?

Lan-lan: "Still here, but on higher ground."

The old coots guild want to know why you're on their lawn, and why won't you get off their lawn?

Axel: "I must have been mistaken for somebody else. I wasn't ever on their lawn and I'm not now."

Once the interviews ended, the voting began. Local Beurocrat Mrs. Preena SilverGlass went through great lengths and measures to ensure that the voting would be as accurate and process as ethically upheld as possible. At the end of the voting, the winner was announced that acting mayor Axel would remain Mayor.

"Thank you. All of you again for this honor." Said newly elected Mayor Axel. Her emotions and sincerity moved the people and they applauded her. Prunella Glass would take over as Marshal, and Claudette would remain as Judge.

The Ear of Corn Damaged by Nomes!

By Lulu the Mangaboo
a reporter for the Vegetable Kingdom

During the last town election in Horizon's Stronghold a mayoral candidate, The Ear of Corn was attacked, kidnapped and threatened by an unknown group (rumored to be the Nomes but this is not yet confirmed). The vegetable kingdom is outraged that such disregard for the Ear of Corn would take place. One local resident, a Mangaboo commented, "This is an outrage! It is totally irresponsible for the people of Horizon's Stronghold to let such violence happen upon such a valued member of our kingdom! And don't get me started on the Nome problem!"

Indeed there have been more violent threats from the Nome Kingdom. A line was drawn on one road in the countryside where a small skirmish was said to take place between angry farmers and Nomes. There have also been rumors that 2 local farmers went to Horizon's Stronghold looking for help with this Nome problem. No word yet on the results from that meeting.

The Vegetable Kingdom has said that they will be seeking compensation for the ill treatment of the Ear of Corn and will meet with the Mayor of Horizon's Stronghold for payment later this month.

The Nome problem has gotten worse since the first escalation. The Nomes have come through a number of farms claiming the land as their own and kidnapping many farmers as their slaves for house cleaning and trophies. Many farmers have waged a battle between the Nomes trying to protect their crops and their friends the Mangaboos.

In response to the Nome problem, The vegetable kingdom has said there will be no mercy for the Nomes if they continue to fight with the farmers, damage corn crops and claim land as their own. They will fight the Nomes when the time comes. The Vegetable Kingdom is asking for any volunteers from neighboring counties to help them in the fight against the Nomes.

Edesia's Patisserie
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Tea Time Bed & Breakfast
Eclair la Dulce's Cart of Confections



"AN INTRODUCTION TO ALICORN, UNICORN, AND PEGASUS CULTURE"

by Castor Achaius

I have learned a great deal about human culture since leaving the Forest of Gugu, though have found that it is quite a lot to consume. It would seem as though my species' way of life is exponentially different from the customs and mannerisms inspired by Clawdette's wonderful article on swamp rat culture, I would like to provide the narrative of my own sort. Perhaps the mutual exchange of culture will promote further understanding and progressive thought in Ozian society, or so I hope.

From an elementary perspective, unicorns, alicorns, and pegasi can be considered one group of beings, though it is far more nuanced than that. All three are varieties of magical equestrians: pegasi are winged beings that possess the least magical potential of the three, unicorns are horned beings that are proficient in magic, and alicorns are both winged and horned in addition to possessing the most magical capabilities of the three. In our culture, alicorns are regarded as having a higher status than unicorns and pegasi, and they are far more rare.

Unicorns are the most commonly heard of out of the three species- in fact, there exists the town of Unicorners in Munchkinland, which is populated entirely by unicorns and the blue dwarves who care for them. Roganda, Queen of the Unicorns, founded this settlement and continues to rule over it at present day. Roganda is benevolent and graceful, though also intimidating and immensely powerful so that she may ward off outsiders with ill intentions. The

dwarves mine gems to gift to Roganda, who then keeps them in the Great Treasure Tree of Unicorners. Surrounding Unicorners is the Orchard of Silver Trees; these trees bear silver apples, which prevent hunger for an entire week. Should a famished traveler stumble into town, Roganda is known to provide them with a basket of silver apples before sending them on their way.

To this day, Unicorners is the only official settlement of unicorns, alicorns, or pegasi. Most others reside in either the Forest of Gugu or the Blue Forests of Munchkinland. It is most common for unicorns, alicorns, and pegasi to travel either alone or with one other (typically their mate). It is a great tragedy, though the three species are often hunted due to the high market value of unicorn horns and pegasi wings. Another threat to the three species is being captured and sold as pets to the wealthy, who see the three species as status symbols to own. Some who capture and own them may also routinely siphon their blood, as they contain magical properties akin to some useful alchemical compounds. It is unclear why our blood contains these effects, though is usually explained as being because of our high concentration of magic. Frankly, it is not safe for the three species to travel in large groups or exist publicly in most areas of Oz. Roganda, being as powerful as she is, is able to protect Unicorners and all of its residents (the blue dwarves will also protect the unicorns they care for at all costs).

The Forest of Gugu is widely known as a

safe haven for the three species, given its sheer size and dense woods. King Gugu (also called the Leopard King) is the ruler of the Forest of Gugu and oversees all of the territory. One of King Gugu's advisers, Loo, is a unicorn. Although alicorns take hierarchical precedence, unicorns are more commonly seen in positions of official power so that alicorns may remain out of the public eye. It is unconfirmed, though most say that Loo would consult with the alicorn Olwen before making any important decisions.

As I explained earlier, alicorns are the least abundant of the three species. For those know me, you can probably deduce that I am indeed an alicorn. My circumstances do not match the normal occurrences of alicorns, though. I was born of a pegasus and a unicorn, not two alicorns. Furthermore, I was born alongside a twin brother- equestrian species almost always bear one foal at a time (much like humans).

Although my kind are wary of humans, I would say that most of us are friendly creatures who enjoy living out peaceful lives. I heavily advocate for changeling rights (and encourage you to as well) so that unicorns, alicorns, and pegasi may someday be able to freely and safely live wherever they please among humans and all others alike.

An Interview with Mr. Castor Achius by George Aleister Wright

GAW: "Mr. Achius, thank you for making the time to speak with me."

CA: "It is my pleasure, Mr. Wright."

GAW: "Well, let's get right to it. Inquiring Horizonites want to know, where are you from?"

CA: "I am originally from the Forest of Gugu, in the Northern parts of Oz. I grew up there with my twin brother, Polydeuces. [laughs] Yes, we were named Castor and Polydeuces because of the constellation Gemini, the constellation of the twins. It's a bit trite, I know, but I am fond of my name regardless."

GAW: "How interesting! You and your brother must really be the stars of your family. Tell me, did being named after a constellation affect you growing up?"

CA: "Some may say so. I spent years honing my abilities in the art of tarot reading. The future is never certain, but by examining the paths we've walked and the paths ahead, we can uncover deep insights that guide us onward."

GAW: "And the paths you've taken have lead you to Horizon's Stronghold..."

CA: "Yes. My mate, Mariposa and I specifically traveled to Horizon's Stronghold because we heard that the town was run by a changeling mayor. Alicorns (changeling or otherwise), are heavily sought after creatures, which is what leads the majority of us to reside in thick forests where we may be undisturbed. However, that also prohibits us from gaining much contact with the world around us. I wanted to be able to engage in the society of Ozian life outside of the forest, and so Mariposa and I agreed this could be the very opportunity we had hoped for."

GAW: "I'm glad that the legendary exploits of our former Mayor, Ewenice, the Humblest Sheep(may she rest in peace) have reached far and wide to attract wonderful changelings such as yourself and Mariposa! Horizon's Stronghold is a very progressive town, and I am happy to say that we currently have another changeling in that position, Mayor Axel. And maybe one day, we might even have a mangaboo mayor. There are so many opportunities, especially with the recent move of the county seat. "

CA: "Very much so. I have recently been appointed the new town representative for the Merchant's Guild, and while I am still learning the nuances of the position, I am quite delighted to assume the role. I simply want to make a safe and peaceful home for my mate and I to live in. Thankfully, it seems as though that is what we will find in horizon's Stronghold!"

GAW: "Can you tell us more about your duties as the town representative for the Merchant's Guild?"

CA: "Yes, of course! The Merchant's Guild appealed to me initially because, well, I am a merchant. [laughs] I have begun regularly setting up shop during town marketplaces, as well as providing my tarot services at any time. At marketplace, my mate and I sell an eclectic array of items- gems, perfumes, charms, fortunes, and our popular tonics. We found this town to be quite receptive to our wares, and were thankful to find that the economic interests aligned with our services. That lead me to think further about what the exact economic trends of the town were. To make a long story short: Roman was the current representative, though found that it would be best for the duty to be done by someone else given the sum of his other obligations. I have since been to the Emerald City to be briefed of my responsibilities; it seems as though I've actually come just in time for a change in the guild's system, as the Van Der Gold house has noticed the economy becoming rather tumultuous in recent years. The details of such changes can surely be found elsewhere, though, so I won't take up time here to open up that topic."

GAW: "your tonics are the talk of the town- is it true that they contain actual blood?"

CA: "[chuckles] Yes, it's true. Goodness, Mariposa and I get that question a lot. Simply put, creatures such as myself possess magical qualities in our blood; it is nothing like the red human blood most are accustomed to picturing. If I were to describe it, my blood is more... [pauses] it's a very viscous, semi-transparent fluid with an iridescent sheen to it. It also has little taste to it, with most agreeing that it has a faint fruity flavor. I know this all is very odd to explain and consider, though the blood of alicorns, unicorns, and pegasi hold quite a high demand because of the capabilities. Many of my sort are forced into slavery to be siphoned of their resource, which I find detestable. Thus, it is an act of liberation that I take agency over the extraction and selling of my blood."

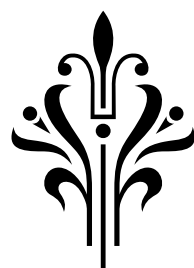
GAW: "I have to ask, is it sanitary?"

CA: "Indeed it is- I cannot stress that enough. [nods head] Part of the cost of each tonic is derived from the expenses of materials that will safely and cleanly extract the blood used in them. No needles are re-used, and withdrawn fluids are handled on clean surfaces so that the transference from my vein to the bottle is uncontaminated and ethical."

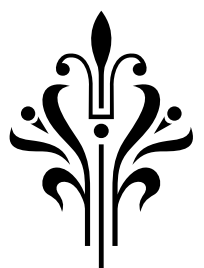
GAW: "Thank you so much for all of your insights; this has been extremely informative. Is there anything else you'd like to say?"

CA: "Thank you for taking the time to interview me- it's a pleasure to share pieces of my story, just as I love to learn the stories of others. I hope that anyone reading this found it interesting to some degree!"

And there you have it loyal readers. Mr. Castor Achius, a wonderful new addition to our town!



It is Always Tea Time
Tea Time B&B





Town Schedule

Saturday

Noon -2 p.m. Market
Hildy Hall

2 p.m. .
Town Meeting\
Marshal & Treasure
Election
Tax collection

Talent show
one hour after
Town Meeting



HORIZON STRONGHOLD TOWN MEETING

By Thuun

Our town meeting opened with acting mayor Axel announcing the menace of mayoral candidate Miraxis. His constructs had been spotted around town making treasonous claims against the people while advertising for him. At our next town meeting in August, there would be a grand talent show for the people of horizon stronghold. The county seat invites everybody interested to come display their talents and skills and enjoy the hospitality and warmth of Horizon Strongholds first talent show! Lastly, Judge Claudette made an announcement to the good citizens that sometimes laws will overlap with one another and when they do it is her job to sort it out. As a servant to the good people of OC she takes her job very seriously, and no one should hesitate to come ask her for help or advice. Dora Honeyleaf of Weather-vane college stopped by with an open invitation for the good people of Oz who are interested in history to come learn of Oz's history and it's guilds.

During the middle of the town meeting,

Sing it high, sing it low, Miraxis is dead

By Thuun

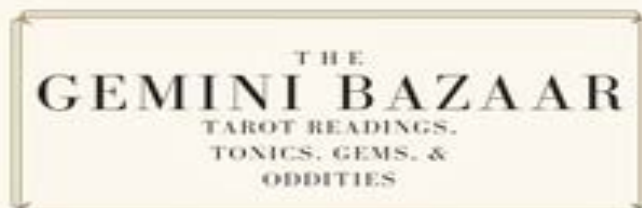
The people of Horizon Stronghold do much traveling and business, while coming together for community events only as often as they're busy schedules allow it. One Friday evening as the good citizens of Horizon Stronghold were getting settled into their homes and hostels, a rather strange entourage assembled at the tea house. Wicked witches and thugs arrived to demand the towns support for mayoral candidate Miraxis, the Wicked Witch. As a result of the recent news that the mayoral election had been tampered with and a re-election would be taking place the next day, Miraxis was advertising that he was the rightful mayor of Horizon Stronghold and owned the town. Throughout that weekend there were several attacks against the citizens until finally Miraxis himself arrived to terrorize the citizens and subjugate them into submission. Through the skin of their teeth, the good people managed to push through the hordes of undead and slay the Wicked witch.

there were two farmers who showed up most distraught. Rebecca corn and Ribald Turnip arrived hysterical claiming that to gnomes no more than 30 minutes ago popped up out of their field in the middle of their farmland and planted a flag for claiming that their land was now territory of the Gnomes. The authorities are currently looking into the incident and will release a statement when they have more information.

Tantrums from the Civil Authority

by Roman Blake

It is widely known that the Civil Authority works in mysterious ways, however, last May they came to Horizon Stronghold with a fury. These consisted of giving our legal elected officials ultimatums, corporal punishments, harassing local businesses, and even attacking citizens. All of these actions have gone with assumption that the targets should know why the brutality was done. Not so. Most, if not all, of the townsfolk of Horizon Stronghold were left confused and angry of such a barbarous display of violence. Random violence without explanation has been used to invoke fear since the dawn of time. Fear is the tool of the bully to gain power over the weak. No one would assume the Civil Authority would resort to such terror tactics on the very people they have sworn to protect, but without answers who can say. This citizen, however, has discovered a common thread leading to all these incidents, words. Words spoken in both private and public has caused these atrocities. The civil authority seems to feel threatened by the simple act of people talking. It is frightening to think that by simply talking can invoke such violence, and moreover, why are they so scared they need to react this harshly. Again, this citizen, wished to extend help to he Civil Authority so assure them they need not fear the general public. This citizen would also like to remind them, they are here to serve our needs not oppress those who support them.



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