

Special Investigative Press™

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**Blight Prices to Drop
as More Skybeasts
Appear in Varganien**

**Local News:
Church Leader Executed in
Town Square**

**Scorched Earth
Anomaly:
Preliminary Findings**



Special Investigative Press™ is a division of Steamy Ink Publishing®, proudly supported by the Journalist's Guild of Civen. Our mission is to deliver timely, accurate, and accessible information to the Freelands community, while remaining committed to spreading Civen values of knowledge and integrity.

Our unwavering commitment to journalistic integrity forms the bedrock of our work. We provide in-depth investigations into global events with potential local consequences, specifically designed to empower individuals with knowledge that truly impacts their lives and shapes informed decisions. Through robust community engagement, our aim is to foster a more informed, knowledgeable, and discerning citizenry across the Freelands.

All submissions to:
P. Anne Katullin, CEO

Advertising inquiries to:
Lorelei Levanestra, CFO

Legal inquiries to:
J. Titus Marianus, Consul to
the Freelands

Financial Fortress: How One Woman Is Changing the Way the Freelands Banks

The Freelands' financial climate has always been volatile, a reality that favors daring merchants but leaves the common citizen vulnerable. As banditry rises and the encroaching Entity threat incites desperation, securing one's precious few coins has become a paramount concern. Enter Abacus, a member of Sable Company, who is leading not a militaristic but instead a social charge to change the financial landscape for the people who need it most.

Started just over two years ago, the Bank of Abacus has grown into a trusted place to store one's coin and valuables. No longer using their mattresses, citizens have been saying how easy it is to store and receive currency back from the bank.

"All I have to do is courier a letter to Abacus, and I think the longest I've waited for coin to get to me is like an hour," Percy, a merchant who travels



between Evenandra and Terra, said when interviewed on his banking practices. "It's honestly really nice, bandits have stopped targeting me because they figured out that I don't carry it all."

For Percy, it's about avoiding robbery. For many others, the bank's

benefits are far more profound.

"She didn't just give me a loan," said Harmony. "She believed in my business when no one else would."

Harmony is the proprietor of a new chain of bakeries, Harmony's Hearth, that is becoming popular across the country for her Potato rolls. Harmony's sentiment is echoed across the Freelands' new wave of women-owned businesses; the Bank of Abacus has provided low-interest loans to over a dozen new shops and boutiques in the last 6 months.

"She's so nice about it, too." Sasha, owner of the perfumery Sasha's Scents, told us in her interview. "Like one month I was having a really hard time because my sister died and I had to close

The Murder of Pitohui: A Lawless Act in a Lawless Town?

Pitohui Von'Ironsbane, one of the leaders of the Chruuch of the Occulatura- a church set up in Maplewood dedicated to Three worship- was publicly murdered in the town square during Harvest Fest. Having openly practiced Darkness worship since the discovery of Decade worship from Vargainen, it was assumed this was the reason Pitohui was stabbed by Makhno in clear view of many witnesses at approximately 1 p.m.

Eyewitnesses report that immediately following the stabbing, Makhno claimed his actions were a direct consequence of a previous attack by Pitohui. According to Makhno, Pitohui had been attacking innocent Sept followers and, in previous months leading up to the murder, had

attempted to take Makhno's life and the lives of several of his friends.

"It had to be done." Makhno said when asked for statement.

Despite the clear public nature of the crime, the Maplewood constables are not actively pursuing a case against Makhno. This reporter has confirmed that no warrants have been issued, nor has Makhno been detained for questioning beyond the initial interview. The lack of official follow-up on an open-and-shut case of public murder is unsettling and has many in the community wondering what the rule of law truly means in these turbulent times.

A private service for Pitohui will be held this Saturday afternoon. Attendance is not open to the public, and no official statement has been released by his followers from the Church of the Occulatura. The complete silence from a church that is normally very open is perhaps the most telling aspect of this entire tragic affair. It seems that while a person can be murdered in the middle of town, true justice, or even a public mourning, is not guaranteed.

Found an interesting plant but don't know what to make of it?

It's possible Kythaela Brownfox can help.

Also willing to process certain plants into useful components for a small fee. Plant identification free of charge, if it is within her ken. (Tips appreciated)

If you cannot find her, messages may be left at the Pheasant Plucker.



Missing Persons Update:

Authorities have no new leads in the recent series of kidnappings. Further people have gone missing, suggesting a serial pattern. The constable's office has released a statement urging anyone with verifiable information to contact them immediately.

Local News

Mysterious Scorch Marks Plague Novitas

Reports from across Novitas indicate a new and peculiar phenomenon: the discovery of large, perfectly circular patches of scorched earth. These anomalies, which range in size from a small stump to a large pond, show no signs of natural fire or recent activity. Scholars and Druids alike are

baffled by the lack of any discernible magical signature, speculating the patches are the result of a single, powerful explosion of unknown origin.

of strange things."

I found one right in my pasture," said Cuthbert Crumble, a farmer in Gardener's Grove. "Didn't harm a soul, but nothing will grow there now. It's the strangest thing I've seen in a long time, and I've seen a lot

The concern, however, is not just property damage but the growing frequency and randomness of these occurrences. While some speculate divine interference and others blame Veilwalkers, the fact remains that no one has an answer. Whatever the cause, it is a mystery yet to be solved, and one that is growing more unsettling with each passing day.

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Skybeast Assaults in Varganien Continue

Our previous reporting on the Tabernacle incident in Kash'Allum detailed an unprecedented attack by corporeal Sky Beasts. Since then the Tabernacle has appeared several more times, each time releasing more skybeats that need to be taken down before irreversible damage is caused. New information, however, reveals these are not random events, but the result of a divine alliance.

Special Investigative Press has obtained a statement from a source, given under the condition of anonymity due to the ongoing investigation into their recent actions. This source has confirmed that a formal pact had been struck between the Seven and the Three to combat the growing threat of the Entity.

The agreement was explicit: the Seven would provide powerful artifacts, while the Three would provide the Seven's followers with corporeal Sky Beast bodies to enhance

Blightfyre production.

This alliance, however, did not turn out as it seemed. According to our source, while the Seven fulfilled their end of the bargain by releasing the artifacts, the Three manifested the Sky Beasts as living, combat-ready creatures. This is a direct contradiction of the understanding that those in the know had that such beings would manifest as mere shells in the Freelands.

This act of divine subterfuge now forces a reevaluation of the war against the Entity. The harvest of the physical Sky Beast bodies, after they were finally slain, did indeed lead to a boom in Blightfyre production. However, this came at the cost of both a devastating attack on a civilian city and the question of how much the normal civilian must suffer. Even the war against the Entity, it seems, does not prevent high-stakes games of manipulation between the Gods, with mortal lives as the ultimate cost.

Banking, con't



for a week because I just couldn't think about anything else, and she said just to not worry about it and pick back up paying next month. Anyone else would have shaken me down for it, but not her. She just understands the common business owner."

This dedication to helping people succeed is also seen in the bank's community lending practices. Those who pay off their personal loans early are often rewarded with valuable bonds or a fee waived on their bank accounts, designed to encourage long-term financial health and further investment in their own futures. This policy, while seemingly a straightforward business incentive, is rooted in Abacus's

fundamental principle, which she explains herself: "I just saw how people in the Freelands were needing to be taught financial responsibility and wanted to create something that would be profitable for everyone," Abacus stated in a recent interview. "I also have a passion for making sure that small, women-owned businesses feel seen and supported."

In a world where chaos and desperation are on the rise, the Bank of Abacus offers a rare commodity: trust. This is the cornerstone of a new financial model—one built on empathy, community support, and security—and is providing a new foundation for the Freelands. Abacus is not merely leading a social charge; she is building a financial fortress, one loan and one grateful business owner at a time. The shift from coin pouch to coffers is a sign of a growing belief that, for the first time in a long time, the common citizen's future is in safe hands.