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Local Druids Make Pact With Darkness Cult

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We spoke with cults before it was cool.

Cor and Coinpurse's Surprise Nuptials

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A Lifestyle Paper for the Townsfolk of Maplewood

Steamy Ink Press™ is a division of Steamy Ink Publishing©. Our mission is to provide in-depth news to the people of Maplewood about the most entertaining topic- the People of Interest that flit through town. What are they doing? Why are they here? Are they single? We aim to answer these questions for you!

It is our goal to provide you a perfect conversation piece to share that pairs well with tea and great friends!

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MICAH FILES FOR DIVORCE!

Arbor Left Clueless After Years of Wedded Bliss

In a surprising turn of events, Arbor and Micah have announced their divorce. The news came as a shock to many as the couple had always appeared to be deeply in love, despite almost never being seen together.



"It was inevitable in my opinion. Arbor was always busy doing other things and the only time I really saw them at the courier who

together was at festivals. Their interests got in the way of the relationship" Old Madge said from her porch near the entrance to Northtown, nodding along to the rhythm of her knitting. "I see it all the time with adventurers, they realize that they have nothing in common after being out here. The Freelands change people."



According to sources close to the couple the decision to divorce was made by Micah, who reportedly filed the motion without Arbor's knowledge. Arbor was blindsided by the news and is said to be devastated, having been heard saying "I DON'T WANT THIS MAIL!" and throwing the papers back

delivered them along with her wedding ring, demanding that they both be returned to him.

Arbor and Micah were married for nearly 9 years and were considered one of Maplewood's most beloved couples. Their



divorce has sent gossip shooting through the town and has everyone questioning what could have caused it.

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AGM Divorce continued

"Look, all I know is that he's been hanging around that Audra girl an awful lot since that time his ankle was broken. I watched her slide across a table and whisper suggestively in his ear once." local celebrity impersonator Thaddeus Roth commented. "Now I'm not saying that it's her fault, but the little homewrecker *may* have seen an opening and jumped on it."



In a statement to the press Arbor expressed her devastation over the divorce.

"I just don't understand why he left. What did I do wrong? I thought we were happy. I'm always telling people how much I love[d] Micah, but now I'm alone. What did I do so wrong that he would leave me? Did he not love me this whole time?" she wailed, blowing her nose into a tissue as her fellow Harbingers patted her on the back and offered consolations such as "You can do so much better!" and "Look at you! Who wouldn't want to be with you?!"

"Oh wait, I mean LOVED. Don't put it in the paper that I said I still love him. LovED. With an E then a D." She added, wiping tears from her eyes as Janos handed her a fresh tissue. "He KNOWS I can't read that well, and he broke up with me! Through a LETTER! I can't believe him."

Micah has not yet commented to SIP on the divorce, even though he did promise an exclusive interview in exchange for us delaying the paper delivery and not leaking the news early. This has not occurred at the time of publishing despite several attempts to reach him.

From Strangers to Spouses: Cor & Coinpurse Stun with Sudden Wedding

In them being referred to as "Cornpurse" among locals.

Their journey began unexpectedly, with love blossoming suddenly after Coinpurse caught a bouquet at a wedding earlier that day. Despite initial surprise, they embraced their feelings and embarked on a passionate journey from outside the Spinning Jenny to Northtown that culminated in a profound commitment. On June 1st, 1602, they exchanged vows in an intimate ceremony attended by close friends and acquaintances and presided over by Draug. The atmosphere was filled with laughter and emotion as they promised to cherish each other forever.



Some may question the swiftness of their decision, but for Cor and Coinpurse, it was a natural progression. Their union stands as a testament to the unexpected ways in which love can flourish. It is not a legal Vlenoan union per Evilynn, who was unable to perform the ceremony due to neither of the couple

having stamps on their papers allowing them to wed. Despite that, it inspires others to embrace spontaneity and to trust in the possibilities that life offers.

Congratulations to the newlyweds! May their sudden marriage be a source of joy and inspiration for years to come.

A STUDY ON WASPOIDS AND THE DANGERS THEY POSE IN THE FREELANDS

Wasoids are one of the more obvious dangers in Maplewood. These large black and gray colored insects are often pack predators. They often initially attack by shooting stingers at prey that poison and paralyze from the waist down. Unless one is appropriately prepared to deal with these troublesome pests it is often best to avoid them if at all possible, for numerous reasons.

quickly. People impregnated with these eggs often can sense that something feels off, but cannot place what it is if they are unaware of the danger these creatures pose. If they lay untreated long enough however the developed egg will explode out of the host as another fully formed wasoid, as Lucius himself has explained.

These creatures have a limited kind of intelligence that if anything makes them more sadistic in their mannerisms. They enjoy paralyzing their prey and then slowly beating it into unconsciousness rather than straight up killing them. According to experienced local adventurers, such as Lucius and the Consul Titus, these creatures then proceed to lay eggs inside their unconscious and helpless victims. Wasoids know this process hurts and will eventually kill the hosts but this knowledge seems to only make it more imperative for the wasoid to do so.

Accomplished healer Lorelei Levanestra says that "Wasoid infection is a nasty one, but it can be easily handled with proper testing and spell usage." So any suspected victims of a wasoid attack should be quickly looked at by a healer to be sure they haven't been impregnated.

In combating these pests, it is best to use a heavy two-handed weapon to crack through their tough outer shell. If you are particularly skilled you might be lucky enough to pierce through their shell, but it shouldn't be counted on. If you have access to powerful Aegis magic, making yourself immune to their poison stingers is a great boon in quickly

The egg laying process is particularly loud, dealing with them. unpleasantly distinctive and it happens rather

-Shelaz Snowpike

X'Nor Continues Search for Life Partner/ Guildmates

As shown in this artist's rendition, X'Nor has been seen on the prowl again searching for a life partner amongst the adventurers.

OR IS HE?

Rumor has it that this whole thing is a ruse in an attempt to get more people involved in his recently established Craftsman's Guild. You can join the guild by contacting X'Nor via courier or in person.



A local woman recently told me over a drink in the Jenny, "I've been seeing more druids talking to trees lately, or, well, it looks like talking. Same thing with them and fae, seems like they could be planning something," she looked up at me seriously. "Hopefully it's more ways to deal with that nasty goop."

Druids vs Veilwalkers: The Silent Struggle For the Soul of Maplewood's Forest

There has been a lot of commotion with the Veilwalker threat in Maplewood recently, and if you're not close friends with any of our local Druids you may not be aware of what exactly has been going on. Well friends, this writer has been around town getting the latest scoop with the druids themselves, and she is here to tell you all about it.

As some of you know, "the vibes in the trees have been off", but it is not limited to simply the trees. Local druid Sosna was kind enough to help cleanse a dryad's tree when the veilwalker goo plagued it, but theorizes that the Pisceans are now bringing it up from their cities and spreading it around the lake. "I can only assume that's at Draconus's instruction, and let me tell you, I have words for that monster," Sosna said, before excusing herself to go perform the cleansing ritual again.

When asked for comment, Lapis, chosen of Draconus, expressed strong disagreement. "Draconus is actively telling his chosen that he will cure people," and that if people aren't "taking steps" to cure their infection, they need to be final rested to prevent further spread of it.

The druids have been working tirelessly to stop the spread of the infection through the local fauna. Apparently this extends to the vegetation around the lake, as Sosna stated that a Darkness cult is assisting to stop the spread by maintaining the burnt area circling the lake, and performing scheduled cleansing rituals. While their methods may be unorthodox, the druids seem to believe that desperate times call for desperate measures. Sosna herself stated that she has a deal with them to assist in stopping the spread around the lake and helping them. When inquiring with Lapis as to what the details of the deal was and why the druids are resorting to Darkness' help, he stated "While I know some stuff about this, I don't have enough information to comment on this topic."

Another local druid, Lotharwen, is quoted saying "The druids do a lot for Maplewood, but a lot of what we do is quiet work, restoring the balance, bringing peace to the woods. [...] Druids have helped the seasons along, kept the forest healthy, fed hungry creatures to keep them docile, found homes in the dead of winter for other creatures to keep them away from townsfolk. And that's just everyday work for us."

Our local druids have requested reports of infected trees be brought to them. They are doing their best to help us and the town and forests around us, but they do need our help. If you see something, say something. In the

meantime please try to avoid going into affected areas, and if you must do so, protect yourself and do not touch the veilwalker remains. Together we can move past this troubling time and keep our beloved forest safe.

Go well, and **DON'T TOUCH THE GOO!**

-Lorelei Levanestra



Dearest Reader,

Welcome back all of our lovely readers, adventurers and townsfolk alike! We here at SiP hope you have all had a great summer vacation! Just in case you've been in Vargainen all the last two months, yours truly is here to give you a nice little recap on what you may have missed. But, before we start all of that, a special announcement: It is our very own Penelope Katullin's birthday next week! Please, dear readers, if you see Penelope, be sure to wish her the happiest of birthdays. As it is, she recently received a letter from her dear mother, without any acknowledgment of her birthday, merely hinting at plans to come this year. I, personally, cannot wait to see what those plans could be.

Now, down to business. It has recently come to this writer's attention that the local orcs have perhaps gotten somewhat smarter, being noted to be using human bodies to lure potential prey in and going so far as to mimic their voices. This is only slightly alarming, when coming shortly after the fact that they're working together more effectively.

T seems to be growing increasingly paranoid since the acquisition of his new dagger, suspecting a conspiracy against him. This is very unlike T, who has always seemed like an upstanding gentleman, always willing to help this writer out of a pickle or get her into one.

I've heard rumors swirling around town that anyone looking to speak with Draconus can obtain an ordeal to get a cure to the veilwalker infection, and you do not in fact need to find one of his chosen- you merely need to express the wish to talk to him. We have not been able to independently confirm this. Please, face the veilwalkers at your own risk. We here at SiP do not take any responsibility for infections/injuries that may occur from attempting to fight a veilwalker, or from speaking to Draconus for an ordeal.

Septa E has been very busy recently, seen giving pre-marital advice to a young elf and her life partner. It's so sweet to have been privy to hear of so many joyful occasions lately, it gets my hopes up for my own upcoming nuptials. Unfortunately, my beau and I have a few differences to work through before we can set a date.

Speaking of nuptials, the blacksmith's apprentice has been seen spending a lot of time with the baker's daughter recently. While this appears to be all above board, this writer did see the two sneaking upstairs at the Jenny one right after the other a weekend or two ago. And the nerve of them, betrothed to others!

There have been whispers of a local tavern owner watering down their drinks. While this writer has not been able to get any good first hand information, I do request you come to me if you feel as though your drinks at the Jenny are being watered down so that SiP can do a proper investigation.

While I have no updates on A's service to the fae, I do have it under good authority that he has recently joined forces with the Lightsworn. Surely A will receive some good, septonly advice from this band of knowledgeable adventurers. I look forward to reporting on the doings of this recently expanded group in the year to come.

It has also come to our attention that L has been heard stating that she doesn't hold SiP to a very high standard. We do apologize that our pedestrian prose couldn't quite reach the lofty heights she apparently demands of her reading material. However, we remain ever-optimistic that one day she might develop the refined palate necessary to appreciate the subtle complexities and nuanced observations that we strive to deliver.

I am overjoyed to announce that beloved druid S has completed her quest with her spark seeds. They have been with her for some time, but she has taken them as far as she can, and now they must thrive on their own. We are all very proud!

Yours truly,

Madam Mapleleaf

Varganien Commissary - Current Offerings

Blightfyre Items*

- 1 credit: Blightfyre Tonic
- 3 credits: Blightfyre Dose
- 5 credits: Blightfyre Trap
- 5 credits: Blightfyre Vial
- 28 credits: Blightsteel Balm

We are also able to trade Ritual Essences, Intents, and other scarce items in exchange for magical items of significant value. Seek out or send a letter via courier to Ashud or Abraxi with details of your item and what you are seeking.

***Eligibility:** Open to all participants actively fighting the Veilwalker threat. One (1) credit awarded per month per participant. **Redemption:** Credits are redeemable exclusively for items listed as eligible for this promotion. Credits can be combined by multiple participants to acquire higher-value items. **Restrictions:** Non-refundable. No cash value. Not applicable to any other Commissary Items not explicitly listed as eligible. **Additional Terms:** Management reserves the right to modify or discontinue this promotion at any time. By participating, you agree to these terms and conditions.

Are you struggling to control your use of the Memory Loss spell? You're not alone.

Many individuals find the temporary relief from painful memories or unwanted thoughts to be alluring, but excessive use of the Memory Loss spell can have serious consequences. If you're experiencing any of the following, it's important to seek help:

- Difficulty remembering recent events or important information
- Feeling disoriented or confused
- Strained relationships due to forgetfulness
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Writing incoherent ramblings to your local paper
- Using the spell to avoid dealing with problems



There is hope for recovery. Many resources are available to help you regain control of your life and memories. Reach out to your local Septon or Spell Addiction Clinic for assistance.

HAPPY HARVESTFEST! Yes I said it. It's a tradition we celebrate in this town. If you don't like it you can leave. I've got it on good authority that there are dark forces at work that want to attack our way of life.

They think we shouldn't be celebrating with the veilwalker

threat and all that's going on in the world, but I say that means we need to celebrate even more! Harvestfest is about putting aside our worries for an afternoon. It's about community! It's about harvesting things! We need to come together and say "I'm going to sit in the sun and drink my Barnes Apothecary Relaxation tea made

with all natural hops and rosemary. I'm going to take my Barnes Apothecary Mind Expanding Elixir (100% all natural, not like that swamp water those other apothecaries in the bazaar sell) and win a few games. Maybe even fight in the Championship of M a p l e w o o d tournament, and win because I take a Barnes Apothecary Male Vitality potion every night with dinner and it lasts all through the day. SiP would again like to remind our readers that we do not promote the use of Emeric's supposed natural alchemicals, he just keeps paying us the exorbitant advertising fees we are charging him.

Battle Tidings

With Emeric Barnes

Several bystanders in the inn report that the Civen Consul Titus was getting uppity with some legionnaires last month, reportedly stating "Bring me your general or I will strip him of his title, his land, and everything else that he owns". SIP of course could not overlook this scandalous piece of gossip, especially when this writer had a front-row seat to the entertainment.

Here are the facts from Civen: There is a Legion that has not reported back to their posts and is considered to be MIA. Led by General Gaius Augustus Crassus, this Legion was very large and consisted of several auxiliary units, including a support branch. They were sent to the Frelands to fight off a "Monster Rush" that was headed towards Civen. Their numbers were reduced substantially prior to communications with Civen ceasing.

What we know from the Frelands: There is an increased Civen military presence in the Frelands that so far appears non-hostile. There have

Missing Civen Legion: Actually MIA, or Hiding in Plain Sight?

been notes of several engineers that are studying the road structures, and some armed units stating that they are in the Frelands to "enforce Civen justice" (entertaining, considering there is someone in the Frelands who already does that). Whether these legionnaires are linked to General Crassus' Legion is unproven, but rumors that Civen is allowing a Legion to continue to be missing in order to gather military information to get around the Treaty of Pinedale cannot be ignored.

What does this mean for Maplewood? Only time will tell, as once again our little town somehow becomes the center of a potential international incident. It is suggested that any Civen military personnel be directed to Consul Titus to check in with him to report any findings or concerns.



Path Walkers: at your service.

A new local organization, called The Path Walkers, have begun making a name for themselves! When asked what they stand for, one replied:

"We are here to help guide and counsel those of good intent on their paths in life, be they physical or metaphorical, until they discover their natural place in life and, or after, death."

Recently this has included counseling ghosts, helping people with relationship matters, and helping lost travelers find their way through the local woods.

"Depending on which Path Walker you talk to, you will find different levels of help that can be provided. More experienced Path Walkers might be able to assist with the most aid, while a newer Path Walker might seek help, or handle less-complicated matters."

Don't expect them to fight for you though- their goals lie in shedding the least amount of blood possible.

If you are in need of counsel, aid, or guidance, seek them out! You'll know them by the spiral they wear and their introduction to you.

POLL: Have You Heard About Makhno's New Sword?

Yes

39

No

30

An Adventurer Got a
Sword That's Not News.

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Harvest Fest : Saturday Schedule of Events

Northtown

Medium Summit- 10:30am

A gathering for Mediums (and those curious about the skill) to discuss their experiences and share relevant information with each other.

Chosen Summit- 12:30pm

A gathering of Chosen (and those interested in the skill) to share experiences, resources and to plan for the next year in Maplewood.

Annual Meeting of Pathwalker Members-

2:30pm

The Pathwalkers will gather briefly in North Town for their annual meeting.

Druid Summit- 3:00pm

A meeting of druids/ those Chosen by the Elemental (and those interested) to discuss what's been happening in the forest since February, different methods of dealing with issues, and planning for the future to protect and heal the forest.

Craftsman's Guild

Meeting- 6:00pm

Meeting of the Maplewood Craftsman Guild to discuss current operations, future endeavors, and Member projects and research. The meeting is open to all but Guild Operations must be respected.

Bazaar

Lucky Impersonation Contest- 11:30am

Contestants will have a short amount of time to perform their best Lucky impression.

Knivesies- 2:30pm

Two people sit on opposite sides of a table and try to get coin/consumables/gems in their cup while clasping one hand. Game ends when a player stabs the other in the hand with a knife on the middle of the table. Whoever has the most value in their cups wins.

SIP Says- 4:30pm

A simple game of Simon Says, with increasingly confusing and incriminating prompts.

Creative Creations

Judging- 6:30pm

See "Creative Creations" below for more details.

Main Field

Find the Treasure-

11:30am

A pile of numbered envelopes will be on hand with clues to where the treasure from the Court of Lambs is buried. Groups present will alternate digging holes until the treasure is found.

Fighter's Tournament-

1:00pm

Fight for honor, glory, and the Maplewood Championship Armor.

May I Hit You With My Fish?- 3:30pm

Participants take turns trying to hit each other with a fish while blindfolded.

Musical Chairs- 5:30pm

A Firekeeper classic! When Lotharwen stops playing music, contestants must sit on one of the available stumps or get shot by Catori.

Throughout the Day

Harvest Hunt

Seven Velveteen pumpkins have been hidden all throughout Maplewood, players will need to find these pumpkins and bring them back to the Night Shepherds to receive a prize. The group that has gathered the most pumpkins will receive the grand prize.

Garb/ Stuff Swap

Anyone who has extra items that they want to give away may bring it to a designated table in the bazaar. People in search of items are welcome to give them new homes.

Creative Creations

Contestants, using appropriate tools, can go out into the woods to find any material to build something of their choosing. Creations will be judged after the Craftsman Guild Meeting.

Potluck

Food provided by various adventurers in the bazaar, beginning at 12:00pm.

