

Increasing numbers of Acrian refugees have fled north in the face of a continued Venkestran incursion. An official proclamation of war on the nation of Venkess by Queen Lira preceded the widespread deployment of Lirian military forces into the Acrian territories to stem the tide of barbarians coming over the Spine. Negotiations have been initiated with the Dolvanni government with the aim of employing several additional mercenary companies for the war effort.

Two men were recently apprehended by the Lirian Guard in the Hounslow borough of Liria for theft of corpses and robbery from multiple gravesites. The men, Gerrard Flim and Donovan Witham, were brought before the local magistrate and formally charged with twenty seven misdeeds and blasphemies, although they pled no knowledge of or involvement in numerous other recent incidents of grave robbing. The magistrate commented that he hoped that their execution, dismemberment, and subsequent traditional donation of their parts to scientific academies would help to discourage the other active "ghouls" within the City.

Exchange Rates	
All prices in Queen's Oz.	
Alder (LA)	0.239
Emir (JE)	1.369
Emperor (XE)	0.010
Kaiser (DK)	0.071

Iron City's premiere scholars Lia Freiheit and Greta Schneider have successfully managed to translate documents written in a language previously unknown to the modern world. The contents have yet to be fully disclosed to the public, but are said to be of immense historical value, detailing a civilization long past. The documents were initially discovered by the agents of Iron Inquiry.

Due to the continued presence of Luen, residents are advised to exercise caution and travel in groups whenever possible.

A large diplomatic envoy from Jhandihar is expected to arrive in Iron City shortly. Delegates from each branch of Jhandihari society will be present, including representatives of governmental, military, academic and mercantile organizations. An official agenda has not been made public, but it is generally understood the party intends to establish closer cooperation with Lirian officials and attempt to address several sources of conflict in the Iron City region. Rumours that the envoy will be accompanied by Jhandihari troops to the Acrian territories remain unconfirmed.

Dr. Adalai Wooster, a researcher with Her Majesty's Academy of Applied Botanical Sciences, has been named a dangerous criminal by Lirian military authorities. A bounty of 200 Qoz. for the capture or proof of death of Dr. Wooster has been announced in conjunction with a list of alleged crimes, including the murder of four Lirian soldiers, embezzlement of research funds and theft of academy property. A military spokesman stated that Wooster is likely to be in the vicinity of Iron City and urges vigilance on the part of its citizens.

Renowned ethnologist Marcus Darwin is missing, presumed dead, following an unusual and disturbing series of events involving a band of Koheczi shamans. A wholly credible account of what occurred has been impossible to ascertain, but several bystanders claim they witnessed Darwin's heart removed from his chest by the Koheczi, and later replaced by an unidentified surgeon.

Violence between Aniyonema tribes has risen to levels unprecedented in recent memory, for reasons that remain unclear.

Infamous Na'ren Cpt. Warren Cove is also reported to be at large near Iron City. A bounty of 200 Qoz. has been announced in the wake of a recent battle with Lirian naval forces, in which the *Daughter of Coal* was destroyed.

After an abortive raid on Iron City, rogue Jhandihari commander Cpt. Rashid Mahret once again eluded capture. His current

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whereabouts are unknown in the wake of the violent confrontation which claimed the lives of many of his few remaining followers.

A gas-fueled portable stove apparatus caught fire after a recent dinner service. No persons were injured, though the device was irreparably damaged. A cooking technician known as Shurik has since been dismissed from the catering group, as operator error was cited as the cause of the blaze.

A vast quantity of rumour and speculation has suddenly arisen around the Iron City mine, particularly following an incident last month where several citizens were found nearby suffering from some form of hysterical delusions. Lirian military geologists have cited a hallucinogenic gas as the source of the malady. What has been confirmed, however, is that the mine is still immensely dangerous and that all persons without official sanction are strongly cautioned against venturing near or into the mine.

An Open Letter to the Community of Iron City

By William Ashley Cole,
Minister of External Affairs in Iron City

This coming weekend, all residents of Iron City are invited to a party of epic proportions: Oktoberfest!

Herr von Liechtenstein and Fraulein Freiheit have brewed, cooked, baked, hammered, wept, and, in one unfortunate instance, bled to bring you a small taste of this fine Acrian tradition, which include beer, both Artemis-brewed and imported from Acria, bratwurst, beer-braised soywurst, homemade mustards, pretzels, spiced cookies and cakes, lawn bowling, target shooting, and arm-wrestling competitions.

During the afternoon of the upcoming Oktoberfest celebration, I will also break out my camera and make myself available to take individual or group portraits. I encourage you to come see this modern miracle of science and technology. Prints will be 1 Qoz. each, paid at the time of sitting, and will be delivered in a month's time.

In other matters, it has come to my attention that a group of Venkestra will be arriving in Iron City in a few days. In light of the recent invasion of Acria and attack on the city proper, it is important for you to know the situation into which you are stepping.

If you come not as a military vanguard, but with the desire to co-exist with the current city and regional inhabitants, all will be well. I respect your culture and your military prowess - but know that there may be a great deal of hostility to overcome due to the recent aggression by your peoples. I for one will be willing to work with you and find common ground if that is what you wish.

When you arrive, please come see me. I will most likely be in the tavern - and others can direct you to me if needed.

The Modest Savage

By "Kilau" Ala Hakaloa,
Of Balihu Origin

It occurs to me that not everyone in Iron City has as passionate a relationship with fruits as I do. I would like to take my semi-annual trip through world of prose to explain why, exactly, I am bananas about bananas. Coming from a more "savage" land in the west, one may think that I have not had the opportunity to be exposed to more modernized food-stuffs.

On the contrary, the Balihu are capable farmers, acceptable horticulturalists, and exceptional fishers. As such, I am no stranger to beef, pork, chicken, various vegetables (including the recent addition to the Hakaloa, the potato, thanks to traveling Aniyonema), and a myriad of treats from the sea. While the Balihu enjoy bass, marlin, bonita, and kingfish as staples of their diet, like many of those who have access to fishing waters, the fruit from the Balihu homeland are wonderfully sacred. These wonderful treats originated in the sun-soaked tropics of my islands. When my people first began to populate these islands, the only natural food product, unique to the area, was the fruit. As such, we treat each delicious bite as a gift from Talus herself since these trees and bushes grew and flourished without human intervention. Since our discovery of the banana, the coconut, the pineapple, and many others, the seeds have since been transported to other environs that can support the growth of these treasures. We Balihu do not take offense to this and are, instead, pleased that something that is so dear to us can be spread amongst all cultures and be enjoyed by all.

As is the Balihu custom, I am more than happy to share bites of any fruit that I am able to bring to Iron City. So, if you see me munching on an oddly colored, exotic snack, feel free to ask me for some!

On the Origins of the Acrian Tradition of Oktoberfest

By Esteemed Scholars
Artemis von Lichtenstein
and Lia Freiheit

The time of the Acrian celebration of Oktoberfest is approaching. The Acrian community within Iron City will be bringing some small portion of the traditional festivities here, for the enjoyment and edification of all. In preparation for our own little Oktoberfest, we present to you a brief history of the grand Acrian tradition.

The Acrian celebration of Oktoberfest has its roots in an ancient festival honoring the legendary hero Sigfried Stark (Siegfried the Strong), also named Sigfried Drachesteiger (Siegfried the Dragonrider). According to legend, Sigfried entered into epic battle with a great dragon, the wyrm Mondwechsel who eats the moon to nothingness and waits in hunger until it grows ripe again. The wyrm had grown greedy and would not wait for the moon's return, instead turning its vast hunger against the sun, swallowing it whole and plunging the world into darkness. The hero Sigfried went against the wyrm and fought him for three days and three nights, until Mondwechsel vomited up the sun. The hero then subdued the great beast, binding its jaws with an unbreakable chain given by the gods and becoming its rider. Since then, it is said, Sigfried has ridden the dragon, chaining its hunger while the moon waxes and loosing the reins to bring the waning and the new moon. Ancient texts contain a record of a solar occlusion event of some type several thousand years ago, during which the sun could not be seen for many days. It is believed that this event is the source of the Sigfried myth. Theories for the origins of the occlusion have been put forward, including meteor impact and volcanic eruption, and scientists and folklorists continue to debate the merits of the various hypotheses.

Drachenfest, an autumn festival celebrating Sigfried's victory, has been observed since the age of legends. Originally, this took the form of a simple harvest festival, occurring over three days at the end of the harvest season and consisting of feasting, drinking, and contests of strength. The rise of cities extended the festival, increasing the length of the festivities to a week or more in some regions. The festival became a marketplace and carnival by day, with artisans, merchants and farmers from the countryside crowding into the cities to experience the festival atmosphere. The traditional feasts and contests of strength remained an integral part of Drachenfest, with the event then renowned beer-makers of Acria vying with one another to fulfill the prodigious appetites of the merry-makers. Though invasions, occupations, and wars have stifled the public celebration of the festival at many points through Acrian history, Drachenfest has always returned.

Two hundred years ago, the character of Drachenfest was changed by the marriage of Prime Minister Ewald Oktober, head of Acria's most powerful political family and newly elected leader of the Acrian National Assembly, to Duchess Catriona Windsor, niece to Lira I, at the end of the military occupation of Acria. The marriage cemented the relationship between the two nations. In celebration of the nuptials, which occurred at the end of the harvest-season, a grand festival was arranged, lasting nearly three weeks. Though the festival incorporated the old traditions of Drachenfest, the new Assembly decreed that the festival would henceforth be known as Oktoberfest, in celebration of the peace between Liria and Acria - solidifying popular favor for the new government while obfuscating the mythical origins of the festival.

A Question of Economics or of Patriotism?

By Emile Sapata,
Concerned Lirian Citizen

I put to my readers this simple question: is it unpatriotic to seek cheaper labor outside of Liria for the production of Lirian goods? As is currently stands, there are many poorer parts of Liria that can only support themselves off of subsistence farming, affording medicine and other modern luxuries if, and only if, they are able to produce a surplus. These farmers are now facing yet another issue: the outsourcing of farming. Recently, Liria has adopted the Yoban Peninsula as a protectorate and, in return for its protection, the Lirian government asks that the Yobansa sell their surplus agriculture products to our country at a steeply discounted price. While many Yobansa jump at the chance to make a few Queens Ounces a month just by selling off their extra food, the Yobansa are reducing the demand for higher priced Lirian-grown crops. If this trend is to continue, it could be possible that the Lirians who once relied on the sale of their home-grown products for spending money could no longer be able to afford doctors, farming machinery, or even seeds to plant in the ground. However, if the Lirian farmers are able to brand their products as being "Made in Liria," it could provoke the conscious consumer to purchase more expensive goods, knowing that they are supporting their kinsmen. I put it to you, ethical reader, which would you prefer? Cheaper goods? Or knowing that your Queens are staying within Liria, helping another good Lirian family get by.

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