



the lantern

**the newsletter of
The Gender Alliance of the South Sound**

HALLOWEEN FLIES IN



Witches and Goblins and Ghouls, OH MY!

The 5th Friday Potluck is this month on the 30th at the Rainbow Center in Tacoma.

Last years' bash was well attended with all in costume and too much good food. Join us at 8PM for a **HOWLING** good time!



Black and White Gay-la

Are you going? Get your tickets now for this years major fund raiser for the Tacoma Rainbow Center. Volunteers are needed to meet and greet, help set up, etc. They get in for free and includes dinner!

Saturday, November 7th, 2009 at the Hotel Murano. 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma. 6PM to Midnight, Live Auction with Laura Michalek. Dinner & Dancing, Tickets \$75 253-383-2318 for additional information.



GASS Marches in Seattle Supporting LGBTQ Rights

LGBT EQUALITY MARCHERS RALLY

by Tara Ann Wadsworth

Seattle- Sunday, the 11th, was a beautiful day for a rally and a march as a cool October morning was made tolerable by a bright and sunny sky. We arrived at Volunteer park in the Capitol Hill neighborhood almost an hour early and watched the event organizers and participants set up various tables and banners in the grassy field. The march attendees slowly materialized into a crowd hundreds strong, carrying homemade signs proudly proclaiming their support for LGBT equal rights. Some were brightly dressed in a proud display of color while others wore rainbow stickers or "Approve Ref. 71" signs. They mingled and spoke to one another as performers and speakers took their turns on stage. The energy of the crowd was spilling over into the park as the people were anxious to start the two mile march to the courthouse downtown. Once the signal was given that we were OK to march, the crowd poured out of the field onto the street. The chant, "L-G-B-T, We demand equality,"

OLYMPIA SUPPORT MEETING

Join us this Saturday, October 17th, 7pm, at Fertile Grounds Coffee, 311 9th Ave SE, downtown Olympia. We support each other with dialogs concerning trans issues and current events. The room is cozy with a welcoming feeling located directly behind the coffee house in a separate building. SOFFAs (Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies) are encouraged to attend to support the trans people they know and to learn.

MEETINGS and EVENTS

GASS Tacoma Support Meeting:

2nd & 4th Fridays, 7pm

GASS Olympia Support Meeting:

3rd Saturdays, 7pm

GASS Club Mixers: 1st Saturdays, 8pm

GASS Movie Nights: 4th Saturdays, 7pm

Olympia Trans Discussion Group:

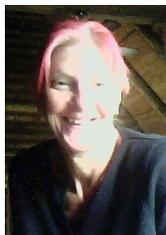
every Wednesday, 8pm

Tacoma T-Men:

every other Wednesdays, 7pm

New Boyz Club:

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7pm



A Message of Hope From Transgendered People to the World by Lori Buckwalter

**We are they who could be you,
and you are who we used to be.
It's not so much what you should do,
but what we hope you'll come to see:
despite the changes of our skin,
beneath the clothing we now wear,
beat hearts that once were trapped within,
but we could always feel somewhere.
We could not let you see them then,
fear held us in its icy hands,
we trembled, ever and again,
to hear society's commands.
But hope has opened up the doors
to futures we despaired to view,
horizons, hid from us before,
are clear as when the world was new.
And so, we offer you this prize,
hard won by souls who dared to care;
that if you look into our eyes,
you might just see yourself in there.**

echoed off the buildings as they passed by onlookers who clapped, waved, and took pictures. A lady even stood outside her store ringing bells as the crowd marched past. The feeling was overwhelmingly positive and people were drawn into that energy.

The march ended at the steps of the U.S. District Courthouse in downtown Seattle where the crowd was greeted with music and additional participants awaiting their arrival. Amidst cheers and clapping, speeches proclaiming solidarity and asking for a yes vote on Referendum 71 were given to the crowd from a flatbed truck parked street-side.

Solidarity is Paramount to LGBTQ

Solidarity was the theme of the day for the rally participants. It was to show not only a unified voice for local issues like Referendum 71, the Washington state initiative to preserve the domestic partnership law, but to also show solidarity for national concerns like the Matthew Shepard hate crimes bill, inclusive ENDA, and the military policy of "Don't ask don't tell." The marches in Seattle and other cities were in support of the larger, high profile march in Washington D.C. on the same day. Solidarity is paramount to the success of the worldwide LGBTQ community. It shows that hate and bigotry will not be tolerated. In one voice we can overwhelm the shouts of the self-righteous that would call us perverts, degenerates and freaks. By standing together, we can reveal as fear mongers those who try to derail important non-discrimination legislation. Most importantly, when we stand and show the world that we are neighbors, co-workers and friends, then the rest of America will notice that we are people deserving of the same rights and liberties they enjoy.

The Seige of Vanguard Keep: A Warcraft Tale

An original story by Tara Ann Wadsworth

The moonlight capped the tops of the dark waters with pale silvery light as Northrend laid dark and ominous beyond like a slumbering leviathan. Althaea stood at the bow of the Raven and let the cold northern wind blow through her long black hair. It was a biting cold, nothing like when she was a child and her father brought her to the bow on his many missions of state. She remembered the warm salty breeze off the Westfall coast and the sounds of gulls and dolphins escorting the ship as it slid along on its course. The north sea was nothing like that, it carried no sounds of life and the air had a metallic tang to it. The stinging cold only served to keep her awake, which was a blessing she was grateful for. The day had been a long one as the crew of the Raven worked diligently to evade the Lich King's naval blockade upon Valiance

Keep. The ship was fast, easily able to outrun any of the dreadnaughts that enforced the blockade and she was well armed as well, her magical defenses could handle any of the smaller vessels able to keep up with the Raven. Nonetheless, they worked to avoid any direct confrontation. Theirs was a mission of relief for the besieged Valiance Keep which had been cut off from the alliance for nearly two months. Her ship had men and supplies that needed to get through. A message to the brave defenders of Valiance Keep that Stormwind had not forgotten them.

continued below. . .

from above. . .

As the ship rounded the point, Valiance keep came into view. The stronghold was dark save for the occasional passing torch of the night watch. The surrounding land beyond was ablaze with the campfires of the army camped there. The undead needed no warmth, the campfires only meant there were also living things in the forces gathered here; Death knights and other traitors looking to please the lich king and gain favor in his unholy army. Althaea pulled her hair into a pony tail and called for the colors to be raised then made her way to her cabin to don her armor.

The crew sprang to life as they prepared to dock and the Alliance colors were raised upon the mast along with the banner of House Hawkhaven. The banner signaled to the Keep that a member of a noble house was aboard and to prepare to receive them. It was protocol and Althaea never cared much for the protocol but endured it out of necessity. It was difficult for a woman in Stormwind's military so her nobility gave her some advantages that she was not afraid to use. It was a lesson her father Lord Markus Hawkhaven had made sure she understood once he found out that she would follow in his footsteps and become a Paladin.

Althaea stood in her cabin and donned her full regalia piece by piece. It was a quiet ritual that she had done so many times before. She paused in front of her wall mirror and stared at herself. She had black hair and dark tan; the smooth lines of her face and dark, full, lips made her an image of her mother but her light green eyes were a stark contrast to it all and were clearly inherited from her father. She stood there and sighed, she missed her parents dearly. Their assassination was a blow to House Hawkhaven that left Althaea and her twin sister Satrina heirs to a great house before they were fully prepared. Her sister took after their mother and had taken easily to the politics of Stormwind while Althaea took over the house's military, much to the debate of some in the Alliance military. From the start, she needed to prove her worth to her critics and in the process had made many enemies. Enemies that sent her to Valiance Keep to watch her fail. She was not willing to give them the satisfaction. Althaea steeled herself and finished putting on her gear.

As she emerged from the cabin in her plate mail, she was greeted by another Paladin dressed in full regalia. She smiled and joined her friend as the ship's crew was putting the gangplank in place.

"Crusarn," She said with a bright smile, "well here we are!"

"Aye lass, here we are at the spearhead once again," he responded with a hint of Arathi highlands accent. His blue eyes twinkled in the light of lanterns. His blond hair and beard were impeccably trimmed and complemented his sharp strong facial features well. Sir Crusarn Amariss, was as loyal to the house as they come and was an excellent lieutenant. Althaea relied on his wisdom and advice for a great many things and was glad he was by her side tonight.

Crusarn gave Althaea a discerning glance and was satisfied that his commander was fully presentable. He had no doubt that she would be, but he felt a need to protect her from any scrutiny however small. He then smiled and asked, "Shall we visit the natives?"

Althaea nodded and replied, "let us hope the natives are still restless."

The two paladins walked down the wide gangplank and were received only by the chief of the watch and a handful of guards. It was obvious that the chief of the watch was not accustomed to performing any protocol, nor was he accustomed to treating with a noble. The chief shifted from one foot to another nervously as he greeted the paladins with a, "welcome to Valiance Keep." When he noticed that Althaea was a woman, the chief began to get what protocol he brushed up on confused and half saluted, bowed and kneeled while adding a rushed, "m'lady," to the greeting.

Althaea heard a chuckle come from Crusarn and stifled a laugh of her own. Instead she returned the salute and asked, "Where is Commander Grimsmith? why have he and Lieutenant Norquist not met with us?"

"H-he is dead sir...umm...ma'am," he nervously responded, "lost two nights ago when we were attacked by flamespitters."

Crusarn raised an eyebrow, "and the lieutenant?"

"He is in the keep, sir," the chief looked dismayed, "he... umm... had a little much to drink."

Althaea knew of the lieutenant by reputation, he was more of a political hack than an officer. His competence never inspired anyone. Althaea felt her temper rise, and she shot a quick glance over to Crusarn who returned her gaze with a furrowed brow. She made effort not to direct any anger at the chief, after all he was doing the best he could, but she felt like screaming. "Take us to the keep... now... please," she managed to spit out with as little venom as possible, a skill that her sister had always been able to do better than her.

Finally given some chance of escaping the scrutiny of the paladins, the chief of the watch stood bolt straight and saluted. "Straight away! Come this way M'lady."

The chief led Althaea and Crusarn through the courtyard area with some haste, though he had to stop on occasion as the paladins stopped to assess the state of the keep. He wanted to be rid of the responsibility of escorting the paladins, but was afraid to hurry them along so he stood and waited.

In a low voice, Crusarn spoke first, "This keep has seen better days."

Althaea nodded and looked about. The men that were watching them walk past had a defeated look upon their faces. Their morale was nearly gone and it showed clearly in their eyes. Their armor was showing signs of neglect and they all moved about like they were being led to the gallows. The keep itself smelled rank of too much of smoke, sweat and fear. Althaea said with a hint of quaver in her voice, "These men are nearly broken, Crusarn."

Crusarn frowned, "you have a more positive assessment than I, lass."

"Light save us, we brought far too few men to completely replace this garrison," she stated, "I was hoping we had more to work with here."

Crusarn looked over at Althaea and placed a hand upon her shoulder. Though she could not feel his hand through her plate mail, the gesture was a gentle reassurance. "Now lass," he said, "we knew that it would be bad. So don't you go behaving like them. The light brought you here to turn things around and that is exactly what you are good at."

Althaea smiled at Crusarn. "Yes, it does seem we came by the Light's providence."

"Aye, we did," he grinned with a crinkle at the corner of his eyes, "I am sure of it."

The paladins followed the chief into the keep. The smell of sweat and fear was replaced by candle wax and outright despair as they walked the halls of the keep proper. The moans of injured soldiers were heard from an unseen infirmary and the guards she passed barely looked up from their hands. A fire seemed to ignite in Althaea's eyes and she picked up her pace to find the commander's office. She burst through the door to find a startled lieutenant sitting behind a large oaken desk with a nearly empty bottle of bourbon resting upon a map of the greater Borean tundra region. The guards in the room reacted to Althaea's sudden entry by standing to attention, more out of startled reaction and trained reflex than an acknowledgement that a ranking officer entered the room.

The lieutenant looked up through alcohol hazed eyes and blurted, "Oh great, we ask for reinforcements and they send a woman... or three."

Now was Crusarn's turn to look angry. He approached the seated lieutenant and placed his hands down on the desk as he stooped over to face the man just inches from his face. "That 'woman' is Lady Althaea Hawkhaven and a commander in the alliance army, her victories in the battles of Alterac Valley prove her competence as a commander," Crusarn leaned in with menace, "Now, you will treat her with the courtesy and respect owed to a ranking commander and to her station."

Crusarn's rebuke seemed to sober the lieutenant considerably. He stood up with such haste that he knocked his chair over behind him and saluted. "Lady Althaea, my apologies, I wa-

"Spare me the excuses lieutenant," Althaea snapped, "why is it you sit here and drink while your men sit at the brink of despair and your keep looks to be falling into ruin?"

The lieutenant stared at the bottle of bourbon then looked up and said, "it's good bourbon."

Althaea fumed, the anger in her was rising like a dragon ready to breathe fire.

"Lady Althaea, ma'am," the chief said timidly, afraid to have her anger directed at him.

Althaea closed her eyes and took long breath then turned to the nervous man flanking her. "Yes chief what is it?"

"We've been under heavy rations for weeks," he said apologetically, "we try to stretch it out with what we can catch but all that's really left is grain for bread, and the alcohol from the inn."

The chief's words quelled the raging fire within Althaea considerably. She had been sent to a fine mess here at Valiance Keep but she was determined to turn it around, her ship arrived just in time. Althaea turned to Crusarn and simply said, "the Light's providence indeed."

Crusarn smiled at her and replied, "aye, lass."

She turned to the Lieutenant, still standing and eyeing the bottle of bourbon like it was an Azerothian Diamond. "Lieutenant Norquist, as the ranking officer at Valiance Keep, I hereby assume command of the garrison," she paused briefly to allow the lieutenant time to comprehend then said, "guards, escort the lieutenant to the stockade so that he might sleep off this night's excesses."

The guards sprang to life and escorted the lieutenant out with little complaint. Althaea turned to the chief and said, "Chief of the watch, please sound an alert and assemble the men in the commons. I wish to address them."

The chief saluted and said, "Right away, ma'am."

"Chief," Althaea asked as he turned to walk out the door, "what is your name?"

"Wesley, ma'am."

"Thank you, Wesley," she said with a smile.

The chief's eyes met hers for the first time and he appeared to be caught in her exotic gaze. The young man just stared.

"Hurry along laddy," Crusarn barked, "you act like you've never seen a beautiful woman before!"

The chief jumped and hurried out of the room.

"A beautiful woman in full plate mail," Crusarn laughed, "by all rights, he should be afraid."

Althaea blushed.

Althaea looked about and surveyed the assembled men, the courtyard was full of soldiers and each had an unkempt look and sullen eyes. Their despair hung over them like a cloud ready to melt them into nothingness. They appeared more of a mob than soldiers of the alliance, especially when standing at crisp attention nearby were Althaea's own men. The contrast was apparent and it was troubling to her.

"Men," she called out. "I am Commander, Lady Althaea Hawkhaven and I have assumed command of this garrison." She never really liked adding, "lady," to her title and only did so if she absolutely had to invoke some noble privilege. This time, it was a necessary evil to lend weight to her words.

"I came here assuming I would find Alliance soldiers ready to fight by my side and what I find is a house of scared little boys. Your keep and your equipment lies in disrepair and you drink yourselves into oblivion." Althaea's green eyes were ablaze as she paused and looked at all of the men. "You each gave an oath to serve the Alliance and protect your homeland so stop feeling sorry for yourselves and act like men."

There was a brief stirring amongst the men as her words struck them, Althaea was not one for inspiring speeches and favored a more honest approach.

"As of tonight all men who are not resting from their watch is to work to repair the keep. Each man is responsible for maintaining their gear, and I will not see you bring shame to yourselves and the alliance by your appearance. We have food supplies aboard the Raven, your days of filling your stomachs with ale are over. Save that for celebrating the end of this siege. Any man caught drunk while on duty will live to see court-martial."

A lone voice called out, "what do you have planned to end this siege?"

The question started waves of mumbled words from the men. Althaea searched but did not know who had spoken so she replied to everyone, "The Alliance navy sails to break the naval blockade. When they are successful, we will have reinforcement."

"What of the siege? They attack daily, and we lose men daily, we will not last until the blockade is broken," another faceless voice asked.

Althaea glanced over to Crusarn, his face was stoic as he looked out at the soldiers. "The Light will provide for us an opportunity, have faith."

The men stirred at her response but none dared ridicule a paladin's faith. Althaea waited until she was satisfied there were no questions. Their despair was replaced with a fear of her and a renewed sense of duty. For now, that was good enough for her.

"Very well then," she said, "we start tonight on repairs, and everyone who is able will assist."

The men started to filter out and Althaea turned to Crusarn who was staring at her with intense blue eyes. His face was still a stoic mask but his eyes betrayed tenderness.

"You are indeed your father's daughter," he said at last.

Althaea let out a breath and replied, "he would not have felt like fainting."

"Perhaps not, but he could not have handled it better. He would have been proud."

Althaea smiled and resisted an urge to hug the paladin in front of the men, not to mention the act would be somewhat awkward in plate mail.

"Let's get dressed for work, she said, "we have a lot of repairs to make."

Crusarn sputtered, "do you ever rest?"

"We will rest when we are dead, now slip into something more comfortable."

The paladin let out a hearty laugh and escorted his commander toward the Raven.

The night went long but without incident from the enemy, allowing Althaea and her men to repair much of the keep's battlements. Althaea was thankful for the dawn even though the sun's weak light brought little warmth. She paused from her work to survey the land, it was a cold, grey and barren place and held little appeal to her for its lack of color. The enemy encampment was splayed out before her, their tents like barnacles upon a ship and the rising smoke from their dying campfires like the tentacles of some lurking sea monster waiting for its moment to reach out and crush the keep to rubble. Althaea sighed, how was she to combat this threat at her doorstep? Her thoughts were interrupted by a light touch upon her shoulder, it was Chief Wesley with two cups of coffee. The chief had been with her most of the night, showing her the keep, introducing her to men and helping her with the repairs. In the process, Chief Wesley had also overcome his initial nervousness.

"Thank you," she said with a tired smile.

The chief smiled back and asked, "might I sit with you m'lady?"

Althaea patted a spot upon a crate beside her and nodded. The chief handed her a cup then quietly took the seat and sipped at his coffee. She held the warm mug in her hand, the aroma reminded her of warmer places; it was a Stranglethorn Vale blend that Crusarn insisted to be loaded upon the Raven. To be someplace warmer was already a distant memory for Althaea; she might not see the warmer climates any time soon if at all. She looked up to notice that all of the men had stopped working when she did, many of which stole glances at her when they thought she was not looking. Althaea had been noticing that all night. She looked over to Chief Wesley and asked. "Chief, why is it the men only break when I do? They also look at me as if I am some strange beast."

"They are surprised that a noble... a lady is working amongst them, ma'am. No noble or officer had ever done that. It is different."

Althaea was stunned, none of her men react this way when she joins them. Her father had always worked amongst his men and Althaea followed his example. "Chief Wesley, when the enemy's catapults rain their bombs upon us, we are all the same to the bombs, noble or not. Likewise, when the work of our survival is needed to be done, we all have a stake."

The chief sat silently looking at Althaea and in his brown eyes dawned a growing admiration for her. He gave her a smile and went back to sipping his coffee.

There was a commotion amongst the watch that caused Althaea to peer out at the field as a rider approached the keep from the enemy camp. His dark armor was adorned in stylized skulls and thorns and his skeletal horse was barded in a manner that seemed a mockery of a paladin's charger. Upon the horse behind him appeared to be a body, though Althaea couldn't tell if it was night elf or human, it was mangled so. The rider stopped and rolled the body off the horse. Its bulk hit the ground with a loud thud and it lay motionless. The rider rode around behind the corpse and called out for all in the keep to hear.

"Here lies your spy, we were kind enough to return him when we were through," the death knight yelled. His blackened cloak blew behind him like a storm cloud as he sat looking up at the men on the battlements. "Here I am looking at men who cower behind their walls! Is there none among you that would face me?"

"Who is that," asked Althaea.

"That is the commander of the death knight's, he calls himself Karshas," the chief replied, "He loves to make his challenge before he begins the day's attacks."

Althaea was puzzled. "He makes a challenge of what sort?"

"Commander Karshas enjoys dueling." Chief Wesley glanced down at the death knight then looked back to Althaea with a pained look, "at first some of our men took him up on his challenge... he took them all apart for the keep to see."

Dueling was en'vogue amongst the nobles of Stormwind, and she wondered at who the death knight might have been before he became traitor. The men, if not trained for dueling styles, would just be slaughtered before this man. Althaea placed her hand on the Chief's shoulder. "I see now the roots of the despair here."

"Are we going to all die here?" Wesley's face was a tormented mask, searching Althaea's for some hope.

to be continued next issue. . . stay tuned!

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