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Student participates in Medieval combat sport

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

When Austin Eighmey was invited to participate in Dagorhir, a medieval combat sport, he initially set out to make fun of those who were involved. Two and a half years later, Eighmey is quite involved with the sport and actively recruits others, including OU students, to participate.

Dagorhir was created in the 1970s as a safe and practical way to participate in medieval combat. Eighmey said there are no points awarded and the when a player is "injured" it's obvious.

"When you get hit in the arm, you drop what you're holding and put it behind your back. If you get hit in the leg, you drop to a knee. If you get hit in the torso, you're dead," Eighmey said, an anthropology and sociology major.

Eighmey's Dagorhir experience started more than two years ago when he was contacted via MySpace by the leader of his chapter.

"He thought that I'd be interested in it, but at the time, I thought it seemed pretty idiotic," Eighmey said. "About two weeks after that I decided to go hunt him down with a friend. We were determined to make fun of these kids. When we got there, they kind of just pulled us in. I've been addicted ever since."

Eighmey participates as Captain Evias Longborough, a pirate, in the unit The Senegal's Finest in the chapter Eryndor. The characters each have a detailed background and some even weave characters together.

"This is a sport in every way. It gives back what you put into it. A lot of exercise and training will pay off in the long run. I used to practice three times a week for about seven hours straight. It's a full body workout," Eighmey said.

The group practices weekly for the big events, which includes hundred of people fighting on the field. At Oakland University, Eighmey has found other students who share his interest in Dagorhir and even practice on campus. The group practices on Sunday at noon in the Recreation and Athletics Center during the winter and during the summer, they practice outside of the north entrance to the Oakland Center.

The large-scale Dagorhir events take place around the country. Eighmey said he has driven up to 14 hours to make a weekend event. Those interested in participating can learn more from the **Eryndor chapter** Web site or the official **Dagorhir** Web site.

Eighmey said it is easy for those unfamiliar with Dagorhir to get involved. He said to visit the chapter Web site for information on the game and practice times and then show up. Newcomers will be guided through the process.

"We really encourage new players. It's a great place to be, and we want to see as many fighters out there as we can," Eighmey said. The group is a social place to meet new people and make friends. "Overall, we tend to have a pretty big sense of cohesion. After all, we all have something strange in common. There are many types of people in Dagorhir. Everyone is here for a different reason."

Eighmey plans to continue participating in Dagorhir. He knows of some participants in their 50s who are still participating and he hopes to make it that long, even if he faces the criticism of others.

"We generally ignore them," Eighmey said of those who mock Dagorhir. "Though, at times we ask them to try it out, if they seem willing. People really underestimate how difficult this game can really be."

SUMMARY

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