

10,000 Year History of McDara's

By Daniel McDara - The First McDara Mohr

For the first 9,982 years of the history, the world was a Grey, bleak and joyless place because there was no McDara's. Then

some stuff started to happen.

Originally Valerie met a lady named Susan Houghtelin and she told Valerie to meet her at the Renn. Faire in Agoura. This was in 1988. Turns out this was the last year of Faire at that site. We found the Houghtelin's at the faire and they convinced us to join Clan MacColin. After a little more than a year with clan, some of us started our own group called Glennatiegh. Glennatiegh is supposed to mean House in the Valley. Turns out, if you translate it from Irish, it really means the Valley in the house. Too late the name couldn't be changed at that point. After a few years with Glennatiegh some of us decided we wanted to do Big faire again and looked at starting a new group there. One of the people helping to organize this was Steve Salenger. Steve was a personal friend of Phyllis Patterson, founder of the "Renaissance Pleasure Faire" We had big meetings and decided what we would need in the way of money to do a great show at the faire. Steve presented it and the faire agreed. Then the faire changed the agreement, more than once. Everyone got upset and decided not to do the faire. Steve talked to me and Valerie



and we said we would still like to do the faire even if no one else would figuring that if it was me at the bow lathe and Valerie making lace we could still draw a group of people and be entertaining. Steve went off and dragged in a co-worker (Chuck) and some others he had done small faires with, and the group Miller/Salenger Crafts was placed on the Faire site map.

While Valerie and I were in Glennatiegh we were given a family/faire name that I thought was comical, but I really wanted something better. I sat down with Robert McLoughlin, a fluent Irish speaker, and he gave me a list of

names, both fact and made up. When I saw McDara I said Hmmm. McDara means, Son of the Oak and since I was the group wood guy, I decided that was the name I would keep.

After the first season at faire, the group wanted to make the group name McDara's, I was touched.

I had a philosophy about doing faire and specifically about how things would be done in McDara's. We were a trade group, meaning that any period Trade would be welcome. Armory and weapons were a trade so even though we were not a military group the trade of Armorer would fit. Making anything period would be encouraged.

Everyone spends a certain amount of time in camp doing their craft per day and everyone has a good time. Also I had a personal philosophy about being in charge of a faire group. I believe the person in charge has the job of making sure the contribution of each person in the group gets noticed and praised. Dealing with hassles and drama is exclusively the job of the person in charge and everyone else is in charge of having fun. If you need to be a bad guy to some person who is causing a problem you don't waste time and you deal with it with as much tack as possible but you deal with it quickly and without reserve. In my four years at the helm, the group was awesome (and as far as I can tell has not lost anything in the following years) and the problems were very very very few.

Chuck, after the first year wanted to make candles. He had met a couple who did candle carving at faire and they gave him enough

information to spark his interest. Chuck and I went through Diderot's Encyclopedia of Trades to get ideas. One of the things we found in my copy of Diderot's was a method of making 6 foot long candles. This immediately struck us as something that would be like nothing anyone had ever seen before. So he moved in to my house (for one week) and I turned him loose in my garage-woodworking. I helped here and there and we (mostly he) built/bought his candle making setup.

We were at RPF for 3 years and then the corporation that had bought the faire decided that even though the surveys said we were loved by the public, we didn't fit into their business plan. So we were out.

I was talking to Shelly Puente (founder of Everything Celtic) and she said I should call Tom Wilson because he was going to start a new faire in Corona and he needed groups like McDara's. I made the call and we moved to Corona for the opening of Koroneburg

I ran things at Corona for the first year then I turned things over to Junior and he has been doing a splendid job ever since.

This is obviously the McDara history (as opposed to the History of Wood) from my perspective. Someone else may remember things a little differently, but their full of ...

