

TarValon.Net, Inc. Annual Report

2009

Property of TarValon.Net, Incorporated
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State of the Tower Address

Melissa Craib Dombrowski - *Eleyan al'Landerin*,
Amyrlin Seat and CEO

Over the past four years, TarValon.Net has grown and evolved at an impressive rate. During this time, it has taken all the effort we have had simply to keep up with getting things done. We have continued to hold our annual Administrative Meeting and annually and in a timely fashion released those notes for discussion with membership. We've vastly improved our use of Site Announcements and have moved toward more active moderation and use of other communication technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, and RSS feeds. Our *Tar Valon Times* newsletter has had some rough periods in regards to publication, but seems to have finally hit a fantastic stride. However, our last published annual report was in 2006. Despite having what I feel are numerous ways to communicate with our members, the Annual Report does serve a unique function: it is a single document with the purpose of informing members how we are moving as an overall organization. It has also become a mammoth undertaking. What was easy enough to put out in a month when we were much smaller now takes many months and the efforts of many, many people. This year the Department of Administration took on the exceptional challenge of not only compiling and editing the 2009 report, but also compiling reports from 2007 and 2008. While these may be outdated in regards to pertinent information at this point, they do offer a window into our history as an organization and will be a very valuable addition to our Library. I want to thank everyone for their hard work in putting these reports together.

2009 has been an unbelievably productive, landmark year for TarValon.Net, though most of it has been organizational and (for the most part) behind the scenes. We have taken several dramatic leaps, after years of preparation, towards growing from an internet fan site to a viable non-profit organization/corporation. It is most definitely the correct direction for us to go if we want to allow our organization continued growth and longevity, and it has been harder than I think any of us initially expected. There is a remarkable amount of work to be done when changing a company from a sole proprietor owned and operated website to an incorporated 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Deciding where to incorporate, creating Articles of Incorporation, rewriting the "rules" into separate By-laws (rules for the structure of the organization) and Membership Manuals (rules for the members of the organization), setting up a Board of Directors, filling in and submitting a lot of paperwork on both the State and Federal levels, and restructuring the organization so that we can clearly make a case for being a non-profit – and that list doesn't even take into account doing research into what the difference is between a volunteer and an employee, documents that have to be signed in front

of a notary by two different people who live in different parts of the country, setting up banking, taxes, post office service, telephone service; there have been a million things. I think it is a positive testament that most of our members vaguely know that this change has happened but have no idea of how significant a change this is, nor really how much effort it is taking. Through all of this restructuring of TarValon.Net, I believe most members did not notice any change in their membership experience. Our administrative work continued unbroken. Everything else continued to function despite all of the changes happening at the top. It reminds me of a duck floating along as usual in a pond with its feet paddling furiously beneath the water where you can't see it.

We are incorporated. TarValon.Net has grown up. We are now in the end stages of completing our paperwork to be recognized as a charitable non-profit corporation. We will see that happen in 2010. 2010 will be another very big year. In exchange for tax-exemption, we bind ourselves to follow a lot more legislation. We've come a long way, but we still have a lot of work to do.

While all of this happened, TarValon.Net managed to make significant strides to settle into our role as a charitable social organization. We had the great fortune to work with Brandon Sanderson over the spring raising money for Heifer International. With his offer to recognize random donors as characters in *The Wheel of Time*, and with several hundred hours of our manpower, we were able to raise over \$45,000 for the cause. We also were able to raise several thousand more for Doctors Without Borders in December.

We've had several changes to our departmental structure, both in our number and types of departments and also in their functions. I'm excited about some upcoming changes in the future. We've successfully moved our operations to GoogleDocs and have been increasingly using other GoogleApps.

TarValon.Net is an exceptional organization in that we not only operate using all volunteer labor, but that we also have so many volunteers working together at one time. It astounds me that, as an organization, we can have so much fundamental structural and procedural changes while still increasing our philanthropic efforts, holding events, handling membership issues, fostering community, and supporting *The Wheel of Time* fandom in general.

Thanks to all of you who made this happen, and every single one of you makes this happen. Whether you're rewriting our membership manuals or simply being a friend when someone needs it, you make a difference that fundamentally matters.

Yours in the Light,

Eleyan Al'Landerin
The Watcher of the Seals
The Flame of TarValon.Net
The Amyrlin Seat

Melissa S. Craib Dombrowski
President and CEO, TarValon.Net, Inc.

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Annual Overview

Amanda Keen- *Dralyn Montsier*, Keeper of the Chronicles and COO

This year was definitely a milestone year for us. All of the energy and time spent trying to incorporate finally paid off as we incorporated in the state of Alabama. This is one of the single largest changes we've had on the site in our history, even if our members don't see much of a change. We also made the shift into fully recognizing and incorporating philanthropy as one of our four main foci. Many of our Departments saw changes as well, both in terms of personnel and tasks and projects. We also announced our tenth anniversary location - Charleston, SC, hometown of Robert Jordan!

Changes Affecting Our Membership

Several fairly minor changes were implemented with regards to moderation of our forums and chat rooms. Condescension was removed from our rules in Current Events, as it is an incredibly nebulous term that is hard to prove or disprove except in the most severe of cases. A general reminder/warning/banning system was also implemented for that forum, though we are lucky that it has rarely been invoked. The idling rule in our chat rooms, which has caused issues for so many in the past, was loosened. While we still do not want people staying in chat even while they are not actively at the computer, chat operators will be more flexible in kicking someone for idling. Members in chat are also now required to use a recognizable form of their site names in chat, though silly names that exist briefly are ok.

The Department of Community Development saw a few tweaks that affect members. Previously you had to be a member of the Guild in order to start new threads in that forum; it was one of the only perks of being a member in a specific Guild. We are now ready to loosen the rules and allow any member of our community to start threads in any Guild forum. Our hope is that this will boost interest and participation in our Guilds. Guildmasters will also rotate on a 12 month basis on July 1st of every year.

A few clarifications were made for our Department of Membership that minimally impact our membership at large. We have had several requests to somehow denote our members who are underage. We discussed whether to identify those under 18 years of age as such, but we decided to not do so of our own initiative due to concerns of privacy and the risk of inviting targeted harassment of those members. Last names will be required on applications for those joining the Tower itself (so novices/recruits, not Citizens). We discussed creating a co-ed Junior Members forum but have decided against it at this time. It has been tried several times in the past and was always unsuccessful. Junior Members have many places where they can interact with other Junior Members of the opposite gender.

Changes Affecting Our Administration

One of the major changes this year that affected our administration as a whole was the implementation of an administrative leave of absence policy. We have previously had a very lenient policy with regards to leaves of absence taken by staff and administrators. Or, to put it another way, we didn't have a policy at all - if someone wanted to take a three month leave of absence, they were allowed to do so. This, obviously, has been very detrimental to many positions functioning as they should. We also have had people who have entered into

positions and then disappeared completely for a long time, and we felt we had no real recourse to combat this. While this lenient policy was understandable when we were a smaller site and had few volunteers to go around, we now have many people willing to fill each position that comes open. As a result, we have firmed up and clarified our position about administrative leaves of absence. There will be a 30 day maximum for administrative leaves of absence or non-communication. If after 30 days a staff/administrator still needs to be gone, particularly for an undetermined period of time, then we will begin replacing that person. For staff/administrators that disappear for a long time, we will make an effort to contact them after 3 weeks. If after 30 days we still cannot contact them, we will begin replacing them. Executives can still make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

We also implemented a change with regards to who is invited to our administrative meetings. As the number of administrators and Directors has grown, so has the number of people attending the administrative meeting. Given that we already solicit administrators and staff for their opinions about topics before the meeting, and given that we have people attending from all over the world and so efficiency is a must, we have decided to limit attendance at administrative meetings to the Board of Directors, Officers, Directors, administrators/staff who deal directly with our business aspect of things (such as Treasurer, Mistresses of Revels, etc), and Personal Assistants for Officers.

The Department of Administration saw changes in its goals. Previously, the Department existed to deal with all "business" matters. As we've grown, we've found that this description was simply not specific enough. As a result, we have firmed up what this Department is supposed to focus on. It will take over the compilation of our Annual Reports, including releasing ones from previous years. It will facilitate administrative reviews and exit interviews. It will keep track of all paperwork necessary to keep us legally incorporated and compliant with state and federal guidelines with regards to 501(c)(3) status. It will run our annual membership survey. It will house our legal and financial advisors. Our finances themselves were pulled out of this Department and placed under the Shatayan/Chief Financial Officer, a position created specifically to take on this aspect of our business operations. We also contracted an accountant to help us with our taxes and managing our budget in accordance with 501c3 laws and guidelines.

One big change was the introduction and implementation of two new Departments. When we dissolved the Department of Real Life Services, we did so with the intent to take several months to really think about how we wanted our events and our philanthropic efforts organized, as our previous structure wasn't really functional. After spending those months mulling things over, we finalized our thoughts at the administrative meeting and decided to create the Department of Events & Conferences and the Department of Philanthropy. The Department of Events & Conferences will include all Masters/Mistresses of Revels (including the newly created Mistress of British Isles), Conference Coordinator(s), Property Master/Mistress, Head Marshal, committees, and all other staff who work on our off-site events, including our annual administrative meeting. While the functions of these positions will remain largely the same, this new Department will work to take all knowledge gathered during event planning and apply it to all of our events, resulting in a more cohesive experience for our members who attend our official events. The other piece of our now defunct Department of Real Life Services was our philanthropy. In keeping with our increased focus on philanthropic events such as the *Wheel of Time* charity and our Servants of All competition, we've decided that we need a Department with people whose focus is centered on philanthropy, both inside our community and out. The Department of

Philanthropy will probably include positions that focus on our Feast of Lights Fundraiser (previously called our Christmas Charity Fundraiser), our internal fundraisers, our Servants of All competitions, our annual scholarship, and other philanthropic efforts.

While we created two new Departments, we also disbanded a Department. We decided that the *Tar Valon Times* did not really need to have its own Department. As a result, we disbanded the Department of Communications and shuffled its components into existing Departments. The Tar Valon Radio was dissolved completely; we decided that we need to focus on getting our existing programs functioning smoothly and independently before branching out. The *Tar Valon Times* was moved into the Department of Community Development. We brought back the Tower Voice to handle all *Wheel of Time*, Sanderson, and TOR news and our social media presence, and we placed that position into the Department of Research, which we have renamed the Department of Research and Communications (a previous incarnation of its name). Our social media presence was expanded to include Livejournal, Facebook, and Twitter. At the end of the year, this transition has occurred smoothly, and we are happy with the results of our decision.

Administrative Projects

The last revisions to our By-laws occurred in 2006. In our continuing quest to become incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we updated our Bylaws in the beginning of the year to more closely mimic those we will have upon incorporation. Much of the information in our previous By-laws overlapped with information in the Membership Manual, so we significantly pared down our By-laws to the basics of our operations and left the language in it broader. Our intent is that the Membership Manual will be our most updated document, with changes occurring when a rule or guideline changes within our community, while our By-laws and Articles of Incorporation are documents that will change infrequently.

A more minor project was making a list of all people who currently hold a position in the Tower. Progress on this has stalled, but we hope to have it completed in 2010. Obviously, this is a document that will see frequent change.

We decided to install a system of levelling members within a Guild; however, this project stalled and has seen no real progress. We hope to finish this during 2010.

We also decided to implement a Vendors Hall. As we have grown larger, we have had more and more instances of people who involve the Tower in business transactions between members. We are not involved with our community members' businesses, and getting us involved in disputes served no one. However, the frequency with which community members with business disputes have approached us has been increasing, so we have felt the need to do something that will provide a layer of protection for our community members. This desire has resulted in the Vendors Hall. This will be a list of our community members who wish to use our resources to promote their businesses. In order to belong to the Vendors Hall, the community member will need to prove that they are a legal business, provide a written agreement as to how they will handle disputes, and promise to accept at least one payment method that allows for a third party to arbitrate a dispute. TarValon.Net will still have no responsibility about the products or services involved in these transactions; it is simply our goal to give our members a measure of assurance about the validity of the business practices of those who use our resources to solicit new customers. This project stalled towards the end of the year due to business concerns; we anticipate completion in 2010.

The Department of Philanthropy has been an on-going project this year, and we will continue to firm that Department's goals and positions over 2010. We will expand and solidify our position as the premier philanthropic organization/community for the larger *Wheel of Time* community.

We re-affirmed this year that we will send one Executive a year to our European events, both to assure our European community members that they are a vital part of our community and to help provide continuity of experience. We began sending Executives over to our Europe this year by sending the Keeper to the summer European event held in Driebergen, The Netherlands. This is our initial crossing of the pond, and plans are underway to send the Director of Events & Conferences for our 2010 winter European event.

While we are staying with PayPal at the moment because it is the only viable option we know of to take in and distribute foreign funds, we decided at the administrative meeting to investigate other options, such as DigitalRiver and 2Checkout. This investigation has not taken place as of the end of 2009, so we hope to make progress on this project in 2010.

At our 2008 administrative meeting, we discussed loosening our bonding guidelines. We made no firm decisions that year but brought up the subject again at this year's administrative meeting. There was a wide range of opinions. As a result, we have decided to have a bonding impact study that solicits the opinions of our Senior Members to determine if a change in our rules regarding bonding would be desirable. While the study itself was not completed in 2009, it will be completed in time for our 2010 administrative meeting.

In our desire to better serve our community members, we began the switch to phpbb3 forums. The project is in progress as of the end of 2009 and will be completed in 2010, with integration into Drupal, which hosts our main site. The switch to Drupal was completed this year, though content still needs to be transferred over.

Looking Forward

While we finally incorporated this year, there is still much work to be done before we are legally recognized as a 501(c)(3). The application for non-profit status will be completed in the upcoming year; to accompany that status, a full revision of our Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, and Membership Manual will also be completed. As we continue the shift into making our administration run more as a business, we will see both minor and drastic changes in various aspects of our community and in how we function in order to meet local and federal guidelines and laws. Once we are legally recognized as a 501(c)(3), we will begin applying for credit cards that offer airline miles as a reward, to cut down on business expenses associated with sending Executives to events where their presence is necessary. We will also continue firming the direction that our newly formed Departments are going, and we will begin expanding their projects once their current projects are functioning smoothly.

Department of Administration

The Department of Administration saw a lot of change in 2009. It was originally created to assist with the day-to-day business portion of the Tower. In 2008, some of the administration housed within the Department of Real Life Services transferred to the Department of Administration when it was disbanded, and those administrators left the Department in 2009 when the Department of Events & Conferences was created. This year also saw a restructuring with Arisaema Draconis becoming the Chief Financial Officer and pulling the finances out of the Department and Ubahsur Kindellaer following in her footsteps as the new Director.

Before the restructure, Tinnlin Fundon retired as Treasurer. The position has been subsumed into the duties of the Chief Financial Officer. Leora Oldessroth also retired as Legal Advisor, but she still assists when needed. Also prior to the restructure, Ubahsur Kindellaer was added as Human Resources Adviser. Under the new direction of Ubahsur, additional staff members were added: Kiana a'Jadein and Leilwyn al'Raen for their professional experience (American and International) with surveys, major reporting, Human Resources, and Administrative skills. Atreyu Silverstar is assisting with legal issues and to ensure successful application of federal exempt status, and Mashiara Al'Kama was brought in to assist with all projects and provide her professional analytical experience.

The Department's main goal for 2009 was to complete the incorporation process. This was successful effective September 2 thanks to the years of planning and execution of Arisaema, Leora, Eleyan, and especially Dralyn. TarValon.Net, Inc is incorporated in the state of Alabama. Copies of the Articles of Incorporation are available, but they will be updated to ensure compliance with the application for exemption status. Exemption status is in process and will be moved to 2010 goals. Other related items were banking solutions and obtaining a post office box for TarValon.Net, Inc business.

Additional goals were to provide support and assistance for unemployed members. This is completed and awaiting the move to new boards to be available to members. Other regulatory items were reviewed, such as an Affirmative Action Report which will be revisited in 2010. The standardization of interdepartmental communication, such as the setting up calendars and forms for reporting, was also a goal and was completed. Goals for the year that remain uncompleted are budgets for our events, formalization of vendor plans, and review of international transfer of funds. Currently there is no budget set for the Department, although it is expected to require approximately \$1,000.00 to complete all the intended applications for exempt status. An accountant is being utilized for this on a pro bono basis.

Goals for 2010 include review of Office of Foreign Assets Control compliance; submission of the application for federal exemption status as well as applications for exemption status in states where events are planned for 2010 and 2011; reviewing any other federal and Alabama regulations to ensure compliance and continuation of exempt status once achieved; standardization of the hiring and review processes; completing an annual Membership Survey; publishing an Annual Report for 2009 as well as Annual Reports from 2006, 2007, and 2008; and creating a conflict of interest policy, confidentiality agreement, and other topics that may come up through the year.

Department of Community Development

2009 was an active year for the Department of Community Development, which includes our Online Events Team, Guilds, Chat Activities, Radio, Recognitions, and Avatar group. This Department saw turnover at the highest levels, as well as the usual staffing turnovers of our semi-annual teams. Towards the end of the year, the *Tar Valon Times*, previously a portion of the disbanded Department of Communications, became integrated into Community Development.

The title of Department Director of Community Development was passed twice this year. Yelenia Hyllaren left the Department in June to become the Department Director of Philanthropy. Her vacancy was announced in July, and Ilissa al'Nari was hired to replace her in September. In mid-October Adina al'Mari replaced Ilissa. In May it was announced that Calypsa al'Nicolai had been selected as the new Department Director of Moderators. Her vacancy as General Services Manager was not refilled and the position of General Services Manager disbanded.

June was a busy month in general for position rotations, which was reflected in this Department with the Guild Leaders. This was the first year that the Guild Leader position was up for rotation, and as such, Hilwa Katir for the Innkeepers, Troy Valthaven for the Professors, Arafel al Dama for the Tailors began their shifts. Meilen Gevedon was also hired as the Visual Resource Lead at this time. Lenore Carvoe and Ariana Sulan were hired as Guild Leaders for the Gleemen and Artisans Guilds in July, and Murasaki joined the ranks in August as the Martial Guild Leader. Niere al'Aman was the final Guild Leader hired in October for the Healers Guild. The Online Events Team had their usual staffing changes in January and July.

As the Department of Communications was dissolved, the production of the *Tar Valon Times* was moved into the Department of Community Development. The position of Editor in Chief was created, for which Erin al'Denaël was selected in early December, and the process of hiring a staff for the spring session began shortly thereafter.

There were several goals set for this Department in 2009, the first of which was moving TarValon.Net's Philanthropy section to its own Department. This has been successfully completed. The Tar Valon Radio moved to the Department of Communications, but with its disbanding it was decided to put the program on hold. We created a Department administrative calendar via GoogleDocs that is shared with all administrators and staff; it includes information such as the changeovers of administrative positions, scheduled festivals, planned start dates for such festivals, when Recognitions should occur, when reports are due, and anything else pertinent to the Department, though this is no longer in use. We also introduced a recognitions program where members were recognised for exception services to the community, and we have had positive feedback about this from the membership.

There were also many goals set regarding Guild membership. We aim to set up a system where Guild members are able to "level up" within their Guild by participating in Guild activities and through other methods. This will be tracked with icons/points and possibly in the Who's Who. This goal is still a work in progress, but the new Guild Leaders in 2009 have done an excellent job of creating user group rosters and tracking posting habits.

Looking forward to 2010, we will be working to make administrative manuals for the Guild Leaders in order to clarify expectations of their roles as administrators, and we will be making Google Document forms for monthly reports.

The Department suffered from a lack of an active Director for several months. This resulted in several projects falling through the cracks or being shelved all together; however the Guild Leaders, administrators, and staff did a good job of maintaining status quo. The First Annual Inter-Guild Gift Exchange was held in November/December, and although participation was minimal, it was a warmly received activity. As per usual the Online Events Team did a great job with our four Festivals.

Department of Events & Conferences

Formed this past April, 2009 was the inaugural year for the Department of Events & Conferences. We focused on putting a great team together and learned a lot about how we can provide memorable official events. We still have a lot to learn and look forward to growing together in the future.

Our team includes not only the Mistresses of Revels for North America, British Isles, the European Continent and the South Pacific region, but also relies on the expertise of the Conference Coordinator, Prop Mistress, Master of the Kitchens and Head Marshall. Together, we were able to organize the Tower's embassy to Dragon*Con and our Fall Ball in Kansas City. We are now actively working on our 9th Anniversary event scheduled for March in Wisconsin, the Winter Euro event in Shopshire, UK in April, and JordanCon also in April. Spring 2010 is going to be a very busy time for our group!

Our main objective is to maximize the positive impact of TarValon.Net's official events. We do that by selecting geographically varied locations and by sharing our successes and discoveries with each other in order to plan the best possible events. To ensure that we continue to improve, we have instituted a policy of sending anonymous surveys following each event which have helped provide feedback and direction for the future.

Our focus for 2010 will be to continue to improve events by focusing on standardization where appropriate. Our guide in the short term will be the timeline for all official events from the bid process through closure reports, while documenting regional differences which will need to be maintained.

Attendance at 2009 North American Events

Winter Euro, Slindon, UK: 19 Guests

Anni 2009, Millersylvania, Washington: 70 Guests

Summer Euro, Driebergen, The Netherlands: 26

JordanCon, Alpharetta, Georgia: no one stayed with Tower rooms

DragonCon, Atlanta, Georgia: 24 guests in Tower rooms

Fall Ball 2009, Kansas City, Kansas: 22 Guests

Department of Membership

In 2009, the Department focused heavily on moving all administrative documents to Google Docs. The intention was to have a central location for all official communications logs, procedures, member lists, and any other data or notes that relate to the Department. This also allows for a more seamless transition between administrators. While we haven't yet converted all group member lists to this format, the majority of them have been completed. We also created forms in GoogleDocs for our Quarterly Reports and to track Junior Member contributions. This has allowed for easier sharing of information between the Executive level and other administrators.

The rotation schedule for Membership administrators ending their rotation was re-examined at the annual meeting. It was decided that the positions would rotate on an as-needed quarterly basis as opposed to having the end of the rotation possibly extend to the mid-year or year-end point.

A Department calendar was created and shared with all Directors and with Executives.

Administrative manuals are partially completed. The manual for the position of Mayor is the last to be completed.

An exit interview for outgoing administrators was created but has yet to be given.

Brag sheets will be hosted on the member's profile in the Who's Who but are on hold until we launch the new site.

Looking Ahead to 2010

The Department's focus for 2010 will be to finish the Membership Administrative Manuals, conducting a Bonding Impact Study to be reviewed at the 2010 Admin meeting, re-examining the Who's Who and its structure, and looking for a new solution to our membership database. As always, we will be working to create a sense of community and an enjoyable environment for our members.

Editors Note: Charts, graphs, and lists can be found in Appendix B

Department of Moderators

In 2009, the Department of Moderators saw its biggest transition in terms of leadership. Melana Sedai decided to step down in late February, and in March Serinia Sedai moved from her role as Mistress of Revels to take on the position. However, during the Annual Administrative Meeting in April, Serinia was transferred to head up the new Department of Events & Conferences, and Calypsa Sedai then was appointed to become the new Director in May. Later in the year, Calypsa Sedai was attacked by the 'real life monster' and decided to step down for time constraints and applications were again solicited. In November, Vivianna Sedai was announced as Director and continues in the position at present.

During this time of transition, the Department continued to rotate forum moderators in January and July while Miriya Sedai, the Mistress of Chat, kept chat operators working together smoothly. There were no major changes in policy in 2009 other than the removal of the 'condescension' rule for Current Events participants, since the spirit of that particular rule is already covered under our general Membership Code of Conduct.

In 2010, the Department is looking to once again balance out operator coverage in chat and will look back at the effectiveness of the request-only policy for Current Events as well as its purpose as a discussion versus news information venue. In addition, TarValon.Net will be upgrading to new message boards in 2010, which will also involve evaluating our current forum structure and looking at possible additions and places where we can streamline. 2010 looks like it will be an exciting year!

Department of Philanthropy

Newly created in 2009, the Department of Philanthropy will seek to lead members of TarValon.Net and the greater *Wheel of Time* community in an effort to inspire everyone to truly become "Servants of All." In addition to heading up drives and other activities to benefit worthy organizations around the world, the Department of Philanthropy will also be in charge of all our internal fundraising efforts and member assistance projects.

The Department of Philanthropy was formed in June 2009, with Yelenia Hylraren as Director. Unfortunately, due to off-line commitments, Yelenia was unable to fill the Department Director role and stepped down from this position. Kariada Kunai was brought in as Department Director in December 2009 and given the original task of creating a new Department of Philanthropy. No other staff or administrators were hired to be part of this Department in 2009.

Goals created for the Department to be accomplished in 2009 include:

- bring in staff and begin to create an administrative structure for the Department
- host a Tower fundraiser
- create a receipt for members who donate to Tower fundraisers
- develop a Servant of All point system to track member community service
- host a Feast of Lights charity drive for 2009
- award the 3rd annual Robert Jordan Memorial Scholarship for 2009

Of these, the last two were achieved. The Feast of Lights charity ran for the month of December, raising money for Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières). Together, over 75 people donated a total of \$2,465.00 to this international cause. Prizes were also awarded this year as a random drawing from donors, with awards provided by the Robert Jordan estate, Brandon Sanderson, Dragonmount, Age of Legends, and Encyclopedia-WoT. The 3rd annual Robert Jordan Memorial Scholarship of \$500 was awarded to Troy Valthaven. His essay, answering the question "How I plan to use my studies to become a Servant of All," was selected by the Hall from the ten applications received. We are very happy with the amount of participation for both the Feast of Lights and the scholarship application, and are excited to see how these two projects will grow in the future.

The rest of these goals will be rolled over for 2010, as well as hosting another annual Feast of Lights charity drive and Robert Jordan Memorial Scholarship award. In addition, we are looking for ways to incorporate charity into our real-life events and create more structure for our Helping Hands projects. We also have plans to host another fundraiser within the greater *Wheel of Time* community after the success of the *Wheel of Time* Fundraiser we held this year sponsored by the Robert Jordan estate and Brandon Sanderson.

This joint fundraiser was our biggest accomplishment in 2009, and in fact the reason the Department was formed. For the 2009 fundraiser, members of the *Wheel of Time* community worked together to raise money for Heifer International, a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating hunger and poverty through the donation of farm animals to those most in need. We held both a silent auction and general donation drive. The highest bidder of the silent auction will be memorialized as a character in *A Memory of Light* with a name and character description based on the donor. Donors in the general fundraiser were entered into a drawing, to have characters named after them in *A Memory of Light*. In addition, *The*

Wheel of Time community voted on a group of characters to represent themselves in the Final Battle, choosing between Aiel under Rand's Banner, Cha'Faile/Two Rivers Men fighting for Perrin, Aes Sedai/Warders from the White Tower, and Guardsmen/Guardswomen fighting for Andor.

The drive ended on April 10, 2009, with winners being announced at Jordan Con on April 17. We collectively raised \$44,619.94 for the charity, making us the second largest fundraiser that happened in this time frame. The truly amazing part, however, is the number of people who donated. We had over 830 people participate, which makes us the largest team of donors at Heifer in this time frame (in comparison, the higher earning group had only 13 donors). The winners of the general fundraiser were Tina Wagner and Anthony Aziz. The winner of the silent auction was Brian Neff, with a bid of \$15,200. All members will be represented in the Last Battle as Aiel under Rand's Banner, which had 1,889 votes. A total of 4,345 votes were recorded for this poll.

After the success of this event, the administration decided to create the Department of Philanthropy in order to continue the growth of our philanthropic activities and to further promote charitable giving within the greater *Wheel of Time* Community. It is our hope that having several people dedicated to promoting our philanthropy endeavours both internally and in the *Wheel of Time* Community will result in greater results for everyone involved and will see us come closer to becoming Servants of All.

Department of Research and Communications

This year has been a busy year for the Department of Research, which is responsible for overseeing and maintaining our library and historical records. It has also taken on the responsibility of communicating news about *The Wheel of Time* to our members through our website and social networking pages. The year began with Ismene Gillandred as Department Director and Toral as Assistant, with Shara Nevan and Vivianna L'antreau in the two other named positions, those of Headmistress and Historian respectively. In April, Ismene stepped down from the role of Department Director to that of a researcher and Toral was promoted to the position of Department Director. Eniara Kisherad joined the staff as Assistant Director. With Vivianna taking the position of Department Director of Moderators, it is envisioned that we will require a new Tower Historian. The position of Tower Voice was revamped and reinstated to promote *The Wheel of Time* or site related news to our members on both the site and through various social networking outlets. Stasia t'Andrei took this position and runs it from this Department. The Department of Research was renamed the Department of Research and Communications as this involves communicating news to members, and the Department of Communications was dissolved.

The prime goals set for this year were to expand the library and update for *Knife of Dreams*, in an effort to have entries for all major groups and terms and to ensure every character and place had an entry. The secondary goal was to create community pages for each of our membership groups so that visitors and members could easily learn about the history and profile of each group. It was also decided to transfer the Senior Member Interviews to the library. Thirdly, we aimed to have archived the threads from the Robert Jordan memorial forum that was on our forums after his death. Finally, at the Administrative Meeting it was also decided to expand the library usage by opening up the wiki editing so that any Senior Member could have access.

The first goal has been partially met, as we have entries for every character, place, object, and term, plus lists for every significant group. However there are around a hundred pages that are either stubs (placeholders) or considered incomplete, and about fifteen of the lists are just basic lists without any information other than the actual characters or places. The updates for *Knife of Dreams* are almost complete, with just fifteen entries specifically requiring updates related to the novel.

The second goal has also been met. We have a page for the membership groups linked from the main site, which has had over a thousand visits, and each of the groups has its own headquarters. The majority of groups, the Red and Yellow Ajahs being the only exceptions, also have subpages for their members - history and other things they feel may be of interest. The Green and White Ajahs in particular have built up a significant presence.

The third goal was also met, with a page created to organize the various memorial threads and linked from the main page. The final goal is ongoing, but so far we have added around fifty new users to the library, with the intention that each Department Director, membership leader, and Guild leader should have their own log in. With the availability of a personal log in for each SM, the guest log in has been disabled.

The library now consists of two broad sections. As of the time of writing, there are an estimated total of 4300 pages excluding talk pages and redirects, with total page views of 2.2

million. The most viewed page is the main page with 145,768 views, the most viewed article is the Strike on Shayol Ghul with 11,422 views, and the most viewed original content pages are those for Rand with 5,989 and The One Power with 4,707.

Each character and place named in the first eleven books has its own entry, and there are at the minimum simple summary lists for each major group. Each chapter of these books also has its own summary as does each book itself. Updates for *The Gathering Storm*, the newest novel released in the series, are underway. Each new character either has an entry or has been assigned to a staff member, there is a book summary (with over 700 views already), and the chapter summaries have been started.

The General Tower Information section had been greatly expanded to include details on all the Departments and their histories, with links to the Membership Manual on each page where the MM has a corresponding entry.

The Membership pages have been a successful addition and have seen continued growth throughout the year. Pages contain both content directly related to the group and content related to the members, such as their contributions and Tower parties they have attended. The Senior Member interviews have been expanded into Senior Member pages, with avatars, information on joining and Tower involvement added. Pages have also been set up so that the Guilds can also keep a record of their activity. This is to be more limited than the Membership pages - strictly Guild-related content. So far, the Innkeepers Guild has expressed interest in this, along the lines of a "recipe of the month," which is something they were thinking of for their forum.

There are a number of plans for the upcoming year; the extent to which we are able to complete them will depend on how active the library researchers can be and the extent to which other members can contribute. The move to the new forums and the opening up of the Research & Communications office will hopefully encourage more people to contribute.

Goals for completion in 2010;

- *Knife of Dreams* updates.
- *The Gathering Storm* Chapter summaries
- Character updates for *The Gathering Storm*
- All stubs to be expanded to at least an "Articles to be expanded" category
- Character group lists to be written and updated for each list

Additional goals for 2010 and 2011;

- iSeries summaries - A "story so far" for each book
- Annotations - notes on each chapter of mysteries, first appearances, significant things we learn, general themes throughout the books. (This may be too ambitious for all books, but I would like to have *The Eye of the World* done as an example of this.)
- A flash map about the geography of the world in the *Wheel of Time* - Eniara is heading this project, part of which should be that we can improve many of our individual geographical articles
- Articles to be expanded so that all character and other pages are complete before the release of the next book.

Further planned improvements;

- Chapter summaries - Add non spoiler notes from the annotations, such as plotlines featured
- Character summaries - Add details of first time we see/hear them, separate physical appearance from the general section, which can be expanded to give a 1-2 paragraph summary of the character, re-do timeline to include year/dates when possible and merge information in miscellaneous section into the rest of the article
- Book lists - I have prepared a basic list for each book that includes no spoilers of all characters who are mentioned or seen, grouped according to "First mention", "First appearance" and other - this is underway for *The Gathering Storm*
- Plot summaries for several major plots
- Improvements to the book summaries so they include details of which plots are featured and advanced and a link to the character list for that book

Department of Technology

The Department of Technology is responsible for the continued support of the community infrastructure. While the main focus is maintaining availability for the two primary domains, tarvalon.net and tarvalonforums.net, the members of the Department are often included in other projects and provide a vital role in the collection and management of information.

The past year proved to be a challenge with regards to system uptime. In previous years, the balance of downtime was logged on the forums server, while the “main site” was available. Unfortunately, 2009 tipped the scales in the opposite direction. The forum server had a handful of small outages due to the aging of data center hardware and random SQL session errors, but overall was well within the scope of expected performance. The main site bore the brunt of downtime, with extended outages caused by a viral infection of the aging ASP/SQL code. The ongoing problems with the legacy code and interface pushed the release of the partially completed Drupal CMS site in the fall. Additional staff was brought on to provide necessary expertise in the new platform and they have proven themselves to be a welcome addition to a generally lean operation.

Doom and gloom aside, the past year was a success overall. There were well over a hundred documented support tickets processed through support@tarvalon.net, not including those handled in Ask the Senior Member or via private correspondence. The staff has doubled, if not tripled (not an easy task), and this wealth of fresh faces and blood into the group will provide a higher standard of service. The migration from the previous custom-coded website to a highly supported content management system, complete with a beautifully designed front end, has marked the completion of the first phase of integrating our services into a “one-stop shopping” environment.

The Department focus for 2010 will be completing the transition from PHPBB2 to PHPBB3 and integrating the forums with the existing Drupal CMS on TarValon.net, thus eliminating the separation of the two domains. We will look at managing the transition from the old membership database and integrating it with the combined systems. We will continue to provide support to all Departments as needed in whatever capacity time and technology permit.

Appendices

- Appendix A Executive Branch
- Appendix B Members Data
- Appendix C Moderators List
- Appendix D Members of the Year



Appendix A

Executive Branch

Officers

Amyrlin Seat (CEO)

Melissa S. Craib Dombrowski– *Eleyan al'Landerin*

Keeper of the Chronicles (COO)

Amanda Keen– *Dralyn Montsier*

Shatayan (CFO)

Virginia Harmon– *Arisaema Draconis*

Department Directors

Department Director of Administration

Jessica Beaushene - *Ubahsur Kindellaer*

administration@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Community Development

Amie Conrad - *Adina al'Mari*

community@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Events & Conferences

Shannan Lieb - *Serinia Edoras*

events@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Membership

Jennifer Halbman - *Serenla Tamowith*

membership@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Moderators

Kristen Bowersox - *Vivianna L'Antreau*

moderators@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Philanthropy

Karen Campbell - *Kariada Kunai*

philanthropy@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Research & Communications

Greg Shelley - *Toral Delvar*

research@tarvalon.net

Department Director of Technology

Nicole Davaris - *Zhareen Narelle*

support@tarvalon.net

Appendix B -

Changes in Personnel & Statistics

Hall of the Tower – Spring 2009

Blue –	Nyarin al'Batera, Alessandra Estelle
Brown -	Sela Narian, Rinwyn Sihrena
Gray -	Melisande Arneil, Elays Saeryn
Green -	Cealestis al'Dyren, Wen Chang (Jan 1 – Mar 2), Muirenn Lina Alianin
Red -	Katherine Avery, Calypsa al'Nicolai (Jan 1 - May 20), Leora Oldessroth
White -	Natalya Laragan, Melaine Thayet
Yellow -	Cimorene Traconnen, Liana Ceana
Dai'Mhael -	Paxam Leratharn, Vashanka Val'rus
Mahdi'in d'ma Dieb -	Al'Cary Mandoragon, Aves Keynes
San d'ma Shadar -	Darian Coralis, Anigrel Tavadon (Jan 1 - Apr 25), Mazarin Ashinar
Val'Cueran -	Tinnlin Fundon, Toumas al'Ahar

Hall of the Tower – Fall 2009

Blue –	Kerna Shedrian, Willow al'Meana
Brown -	Keara Careen, Rinwyn Sihrena
Gray -	Niniel al'Morales, Jordan Rayne
Green -	Muirenn Lina Alianin, Aryawnah Federov
Red -	Leora Oldessroth, Feon Ceseth
White -	Isarma Maracanda, Lyara Tieran
Yellow -	Khisanth al'Danya, Alyssa Letherio
Dai'Mhael -	Jaim al'Bearach, Yngrot Draconiann
Mahdi'in d'ma Dieb -	Gwynidon Camyrin, Ciaran al'Trystan
San d'ma Shadar -	Darian Coralis, Esteban Diego
Val'Cueran -	Cursor Wrathwind, Rodi Leg'na'Krad

Junior Member Administrators

Captain of Recruits -	Darim Pelegro (until April 8), Emp Orer
Mistress of Accepted -	Valadilene Aldieb (until June 29), Eireann Namar
Mayor -	Kyla Sterling (until June 26), Alyria Savoinya
Mistress of Novices -	Zashara Da'sainne (until July 21), Neisa Alibrylla
Captain of Soliders -	Azrael Letfier (until October 7), Lucas al'Baine

Senior Member Administrators

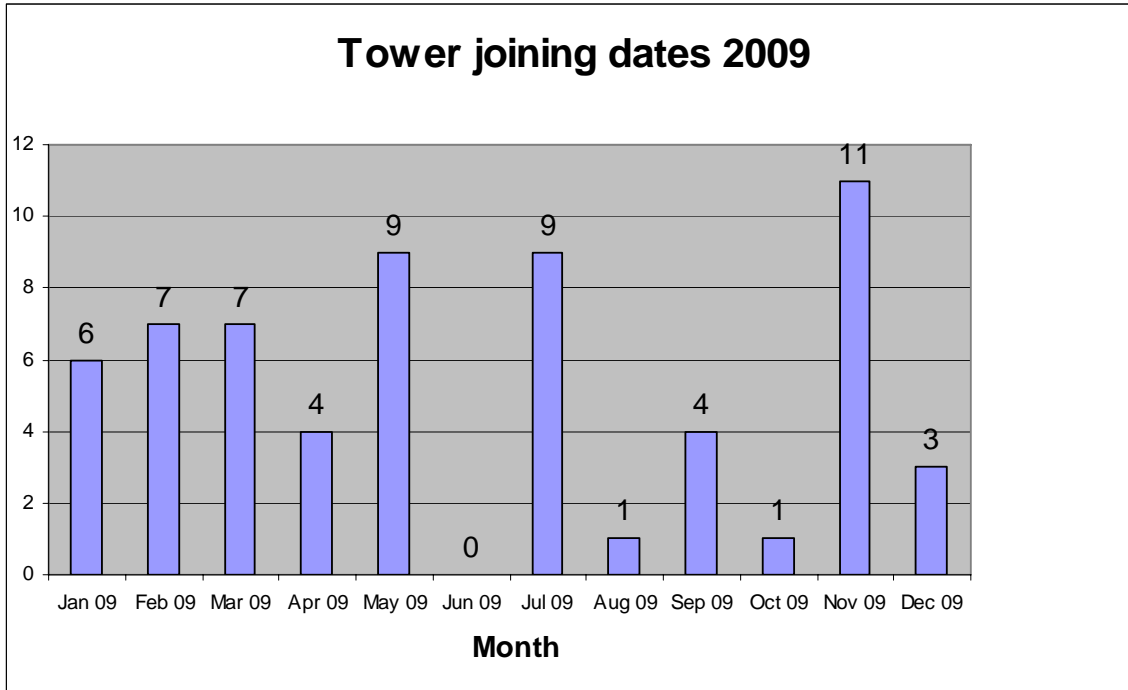
Blue –	Manora al'Sara (until May 31), Yveva Orer
Brown -	Cassie Dainar (until October 9), Adolla Ceryia
Gray -	Magdalenna t'Zai (until June 26), Velaris Ly'enn
Green -	Lireina Domerus t'al'Bearch
Red -	Anirfyan Dayen
White -	Rehtaeh al'Navi (until June 26), Natalya Laran
Yellow –	Estalia Walburga
Dai Mhael -	Naeris Vell'sean
Mahdi'in d'ma Dieb -	Jalen te'Kreg (until September 15), Azrael Letfier
San d'ma Shadar -	Soronhen Ciryaher
Val'Cueran -	Cieon Maralyn (until June 13), Valorian Edoaras

City Membership

As of August 15, 2009, the department had processed 333 applications for Citizenship. After that time, our automatic application process was down. We will be discussing whether to repair this automatic application process at the 2010 Administrative meeting. During calendar year 2009, we approved 190 applications, which averaged about 15 applications a month or .52 applications per day. As in previous years, we retain a nearly even distribution of men and women. As of the beginning of 2010, 67 of our Citizens had petitioned for and been granted Resident Citizenship and have 200 active Citizens on our rolls.

Tower Membership*

Of the 62 new Novices and Recruits who joined in 2009, 29 of them joined TarValon.net in the same year. The number of applicants to the Tower dropped by 24% from the previous year's 82. These numbers do not include members who became inactive during the year and were removed in a membership clean up.



Rank*

Rank	Apr 1, 2003	Apr 1, 2004	Jan 1, 2005	Jan 1, 2006	Jan 1, 2008	Jan 1, 2009	Jan 1, 2010
Novice	81	37	44	68	27	67	48
Recruit	40	21	22	47	27	50	52
Accepted	20	36	48	71	73	70	70
Soldier	21	17	14	35	48	46	41
Aes Sedai	65	90	104	142	192	242	253
Gaidin	37	54	61	69	88	108	124
Total	264	255	293	432	455	582	588

Despite the lower number of applications, the number of overall active Tower community members has remained almost the same in the last year. A clean up of members was begun in late 2009 to be enacted in early 2010. This will lower the numbers slightly as a result.

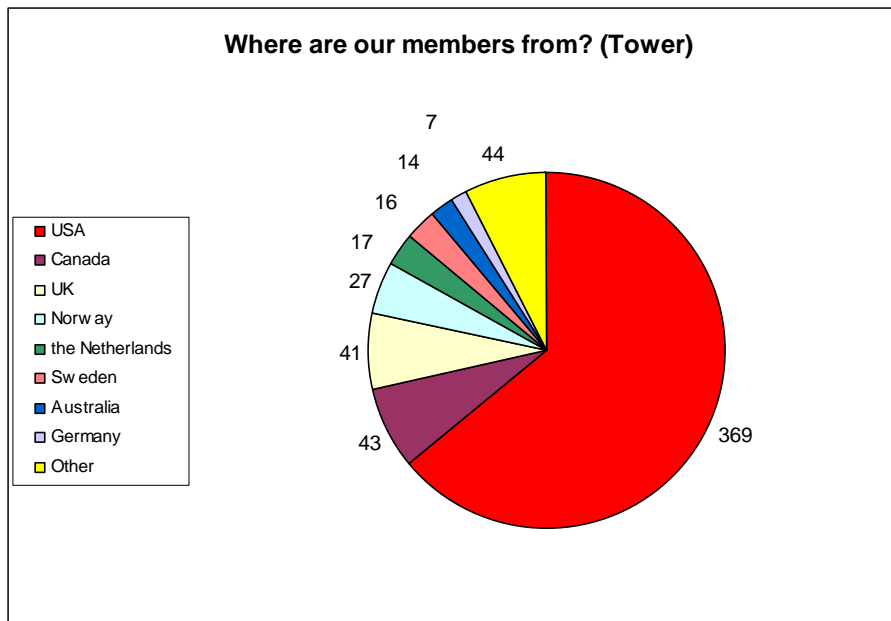
Ajah & Company Membership*

Ajah	Apr 1, 2003	Apr 1, 2004	Jan 1, 2005	Jan 1, 2006	Jan 1, 2007	Jan 1, 2008	Jan 1, 2009	Jan 1, 2010
Blue	13	24	31	39	45	43	52	56
Brown	19	21	20	27	30	26	31	34
Gray	7	15	16	26	17	23	26	28
Green	16	25	28	37	41	37	43	45
Red	11	8	14	21	20	16	26	23
White	11	17	23	30	32	28	34	36
Yellow	9	17	18	28	28	27	30	31
Total	86	127	150	208	213	200	242	253
Company								
Dai M'Hael	22	26	27	34	38	31	36	44
Mahdi'in d'ma Dieb	0	0	0	14	18	15	22	22
San D'ma Shadar	11	19	23	24	22	19	21	26
Val Cueran	22	23	21	28	28	23	29	32
Total	55	68	71	100	106	88	108	124

The division of females to males has stayed at the rate of 2:1 as it has through most of our history.

Location*

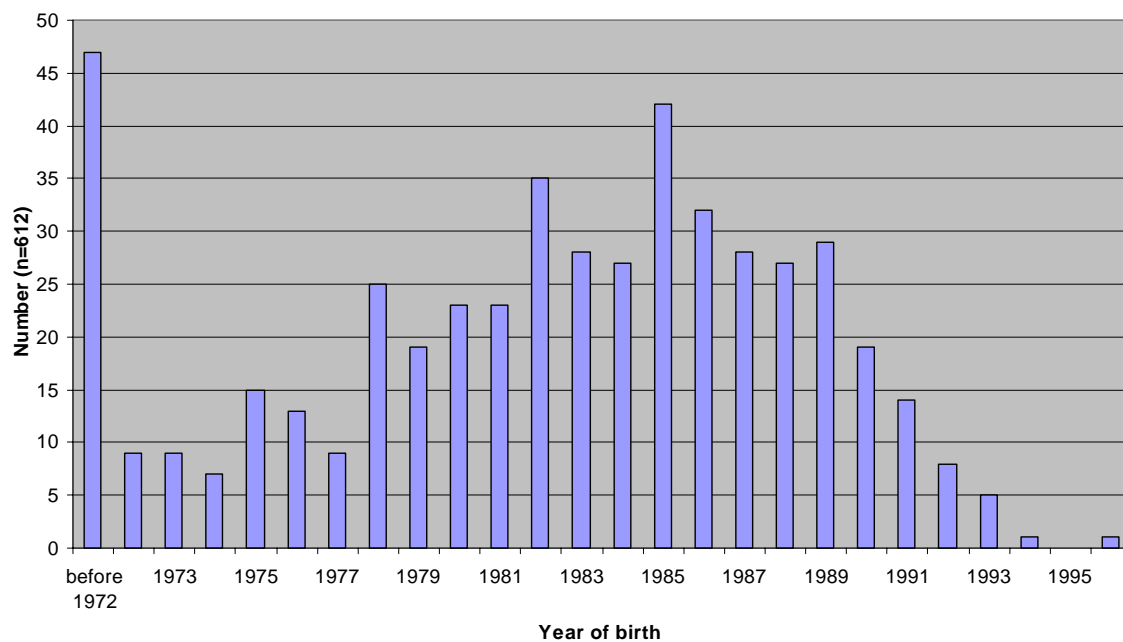
The bulk of our members continue to reside in North America. We do maintain a strong presence throughout the United Kingdom and Scandinavia as well.



Age*

As in previous years, the bulk of our membership was born between 1978 and 1988. However, we still have a large number of members that were born before 1972.

Year of birth of Tower members



Distribution of Members

Rank	April1st 2003	April1st 2004	January1st 2005	January1st 2006	January1 st 2008	January1 st 2009
Novice	81	37	44	68	27	67
Recruit	40	21	22	47	27	50
Accepted	20	36	48	71	73	70
Soldier	21	17	14	35	48	46
Aes Sedai	65	90	104	142	192	242
Gaidin	37	54	61	69	88	108
Total	264	255	293	432	455	582

Appendix C

Moderators

First term:

Loira and Sorcha - **General**

Rinwyn and Nyavene - **Mundane World**

Wen, Gidgiddoni, Paxam, and Niere - **Current Events**

Braedan and Jadar - **Games, Quizzes and Humor**

Vealdan and Emp - **Technology and Media**

Arafel and Ark'Chios - **Olde Warder and Hen**

Second term:

Ajailyn and Avery - **General**

Aleita and Tai' - **Mundane World**

Ayendra, Nyriane, Atreyu and Nymeria - **Current Events**

Lijena and Marivea - **Games, Quizzes and Humor**

Sela and Dvorak - **Technology and Media**

Loira and Lugh - **Olde Warder and Hen**

Appendix D

Members of the Year

While we have several ways that we recognize members at TarValon.Net, there are a few unique annual awards that are given for superlative service to the community. These are awarded by the Amyrlin Seat personally, and are the highest honors we bestow.

Volunteer of the Year - Toral t'Simoua Delvar

The Volunteer Award recognizes exceptional achievement in volunteerism to the community. This may be achieved by volunteering through an official position, or by going above and beyond regular duties. Toral clearly deserves this award for his work in both arenas.

Toral has not only served with distinction as a Membership Admin, but also has stood out as one of the most prolific writers and editors in our Library. The exceptional achievements the Library has made in the past year or so are directly linked to Toral's hard, consistent, and above and beyond work.

Unsung Servant of the Year - Riley Maconnar

The Unsung Servant Award recognizes exceptional achievement in providing essential (though not necessarily visible) service to the community.

Riley has served in many positions over the years... Membership Admin, Hall member.... But he is being specifically recognized this time for his consistent service to us at our North American real life events.

Riley has served in two very important function positions several times now: Camp Nurse and Head of the Food Committee. As Head Nurse he has been there to help during real emergencies, and has shown exceptional patience when the emergency is nothing more than someone needing their head held over a toilet. We can all agree, that's some dedication there. But his role as Head of the Food Committee has been heroic in its own right. This is, by far, the most difficult committee to chair. It has the largest amount of volunteers to corral, a menu to create that feeds a brood with very different needs, he's been in charge of the food shopping as well... and he has always come in under budget. Moreover, we've always been fed well, fed enough, and had much less waste than any of us expected.

It's a role that has directly affected many of us, and it's not one that gets a lot of recognition.

Member of the Year - Defen Estrator

The Member of the Year Award is the highest honor we have to bestow upon a member, and this year's recipient is someone who not only went above and beyond in his duty, not only took on and assisted in additional projects-- we simply could not have stayed online without him.

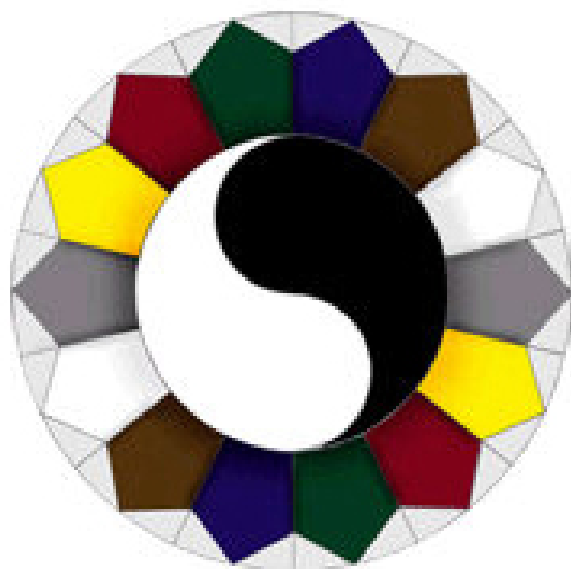
Defen's amazing work with the site affects all of us. His willingness to be there 24 hours a day when needed is astounding. The fact that he not only says he'll be there, but is, is inspirational.

Philanthropist of the Year - Ubahsur Kindellaer

The Philanthropy Award recognizes exceptional achievement in assisting the communities and its endeavours through tangible giving.

Ubah has, in her many years of membership, taken a very consistent route towards giving to the community. She has regularly participated in each of our fundraisers, and consistently gives towards special projects that aim to help members or the community at large. She has also consistently given goods or provided other material help to members in need.

Editor's Note: Text for Members of the Year directly taken from Site Announcements.



THE WHITE TOWER
TARVALON.NET