

Michael Fossbakk

Musings and other things from a 20-something, T.V.-loving, videogame-playing, book-reading guy.

HOME WHO IS MICHAEL FOSSBAKK? CONTACT

Oldroar

Sanctum of Rall: The Story of an MMO Father

© JUNE 22, 2014

LEAVE A COMMENT



This is an article I wrote in 2012 prior to the launch of Guild Wars 2 for ReactionTime.co.uk, a website that has since closed. I wanted to preserve this article for myself in the same way it appeared when Reaction Time closed with all of its shortcomings intact. Without further ado...

Getting the News

On October 4th, 2011 players of the Rift guild known as The Gaiscioch (pronounced Gosh-ki-a) suddenly noticed that one of their most veteran and well-respected friends, Roger "Oldroar" Rall, hadn't logged on for over a week, unusual for someone that played daily. Sensing that something was amiss, one of The Gaiscioch members, Robert Kavanaugh, brought it upon himself to track down the man they called Oldroar, hoping that he was alright.

Robert already had Roger's phone number and quickly placed a call to check up on him, but was greeted by a voice mail recording. He left a message, explaining who he was and that he hadn't heard from Roger in a week. Two hours later, he received a call from Roger's number.

Unfortunately, it wasn't Roger calling, but his wife, Karen. She had received his voice mail and although she had never met Robert, she knew that her husband knew and spoke with a lot of people when he played on the computer and that Robert was probably one of them. Once Karen broke the news that Roger had "quietly passed away one night," Robert stood up and left the room he was sitting in with his wife and son.

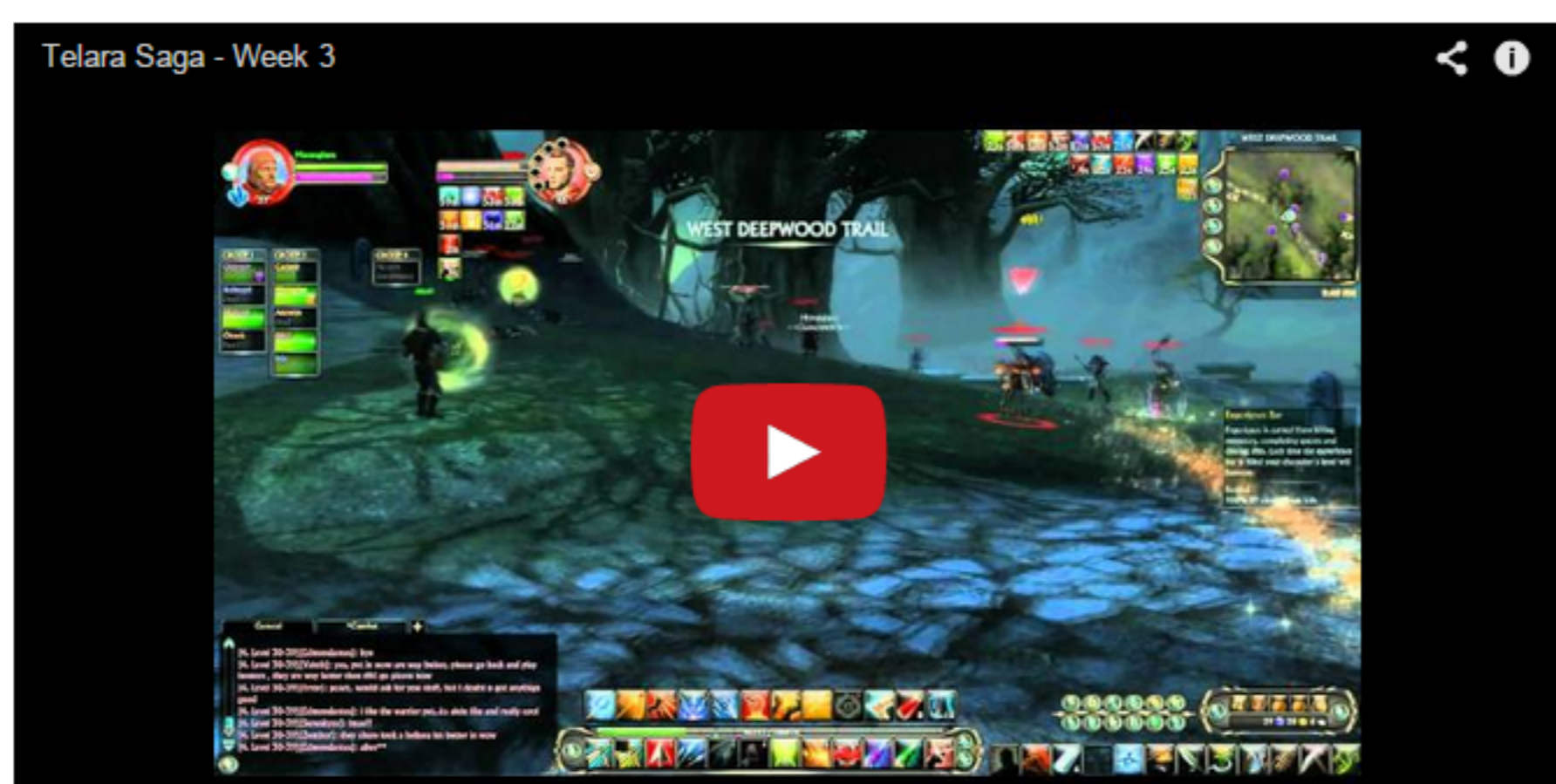
"At that point, my wife knew something was wrong," Robert shared in a Skype call.

Robert went on to tell Karen how much he meant to the guild and how sorely he would be missed. She was happy to hear that he had made such great friends online. She had always allowed him to play whenever he wanted (so long as he wasn't neglecting his real-world responsibilities, which was never a problem) because she knew it made him happy to play and socialize with other players online. After all, The Gaiscioch were his family.

Member of The Gaiscioch, Stacy "Moxie" Stipes, shared on her blog that the news of Roger's passing "spread like wildfire in the guild, back to former members/alliance members that had played with him during Warhammer and DAoC, and everyone, even those who had never met him, felt a profound sense of loss."

"To the men, he was a mentor and an example of how to be a great husband & father, and how to balance those responsibilities with gaming," Stacy says. "To the ladies, he was always a gentleman and treated us as equals, with respect and dignity. He was a grandfatherly figure to the kids in the guild, and he was someone that we all could go to for advice not just on game strategies and problems, but real life problems as well."

After hearing his voice in the above video, it's no wonder he was able to lead so well.



After hearing his voice in the above video, it's no wonder he was able to lead so well.

Some History

Those who play MMOs avidly (myself included) will understand that after spending months, and sometimes years, with a group of people online, a bond grows. Over time, anonymity is replaced by friendships and sometimes even familial bonds. Your guild stops being a group of online strangers you hear in your headphones and starts being people you trust, look up to, and care for.

The Gaiscioch had a long history with Roger that began with another MMORPG known as Warhammer Online. Roger was a member of different guild at the time, known as Council of Shenanigan (this guild being in an alliance, known as The Tuatha, with The Gaiscioch), on the same server as The Gaiscioch, The Badlands (a lot of lingo for one sentence, I know). Under The Tuatha alliance, Roger spent a lot of time with The Gaiscioch and after a falling out with the Council of Shenanigan, he saw no better place to go than The Gaiscioch as they were slowly, but surely, becoming his family.

Along with himself, Roger brought one of his closest online friends, Lisa "Doctorfixit", to The Gaiscioch Family and together with their leader, Benjamin "Foghladha" Foley, they made the "Gaiscioch Trinity". Known for their leadership, The Gaiscioch Trinity turned "every day Joes" into competent, skilled players on the battlefield, leading many players to victory. "It was very very rare that I ever rode into battle without Oldroar by my side," Benjamin shared in an email. "In hind sight I can honestly say I think Oldroar was what kept me calm and level headed through some of the craziest nights."

In my exchanges with Benjamin, the characteristic that was mentioned most often was Roger's selflessness. He always put other members of The Gaiscioch Family first, making sure that their needs came before his own. "Find a screenshot anywhere on the web where Oldroar was in front. He always stood at the rear and made sure each and every person was thought of first." Benjamin shared with me. "He passed on loot when he could have used it and gave everything to help others."

"The more you lead and participate in family events the more "Family Honor Points" you earn," Benjamin explained. "At the time an Elder had to earn 75,000 Family Honor Points and earn 25 Tokens of Valor (Which are awarded by lower ranked members as a token of excellent leadership)." Roger's selflessness even went as far as declining the "Elder" rank, the only rank that was second to leader, on the basis that he didn't believe he deserved it and that there were others more deserving of the title. "Roger stopped claiming his participation at 60,309 Family Honor Points..."

The only thing that came close to matching Roger's selflessness was The Gaiscioch's sense of family and to everyone in this family, Roger was both a father and grandfather to many. "Even when real life challenges arose for some of our members he was the father that sat you down and gave you guidance," Benjamin said. "Roger changed our family, changed the way we lead, the way we listened, gave us patience, and taught us to lead in kindness. He was the icon of what we should become as fathers and lovers. He loved, he shared, he became legend in all of us."

A New Chapter

Roger's favorite style of play in MMORPGs was Player vs. Player (PvP), so when he had heard that ArenaNet was committed to building a strong PvP presence in Guild Wars 2 with World vs. World (three servers battling each other on an epic, large scale battle) and other structured PvP modes, Roger committed himself to encouraging The Gaiscioch Family to open a chapter in Guild Wars 2 when it released.

"More than anything, he was looking forward to playing Guild Wars 2 and to seeing our super-diverse family grow and thrive there," Stacy wrote on her blog.

Unfortunately, Roger passed away before Guild Wars 2's release this August, but that didn't stop his online family from honoring him by arranging a strong PvP memorial to be held in Guild Wars 2 when it launches. The only remaining question was which server The Gaiscioch's new chapter would call home.

"We wanted to show his wife Karen, that Roger was not just a man, not just a father, not just a husband, he was the mentor and hope bringer to thousands," Benjamin said.

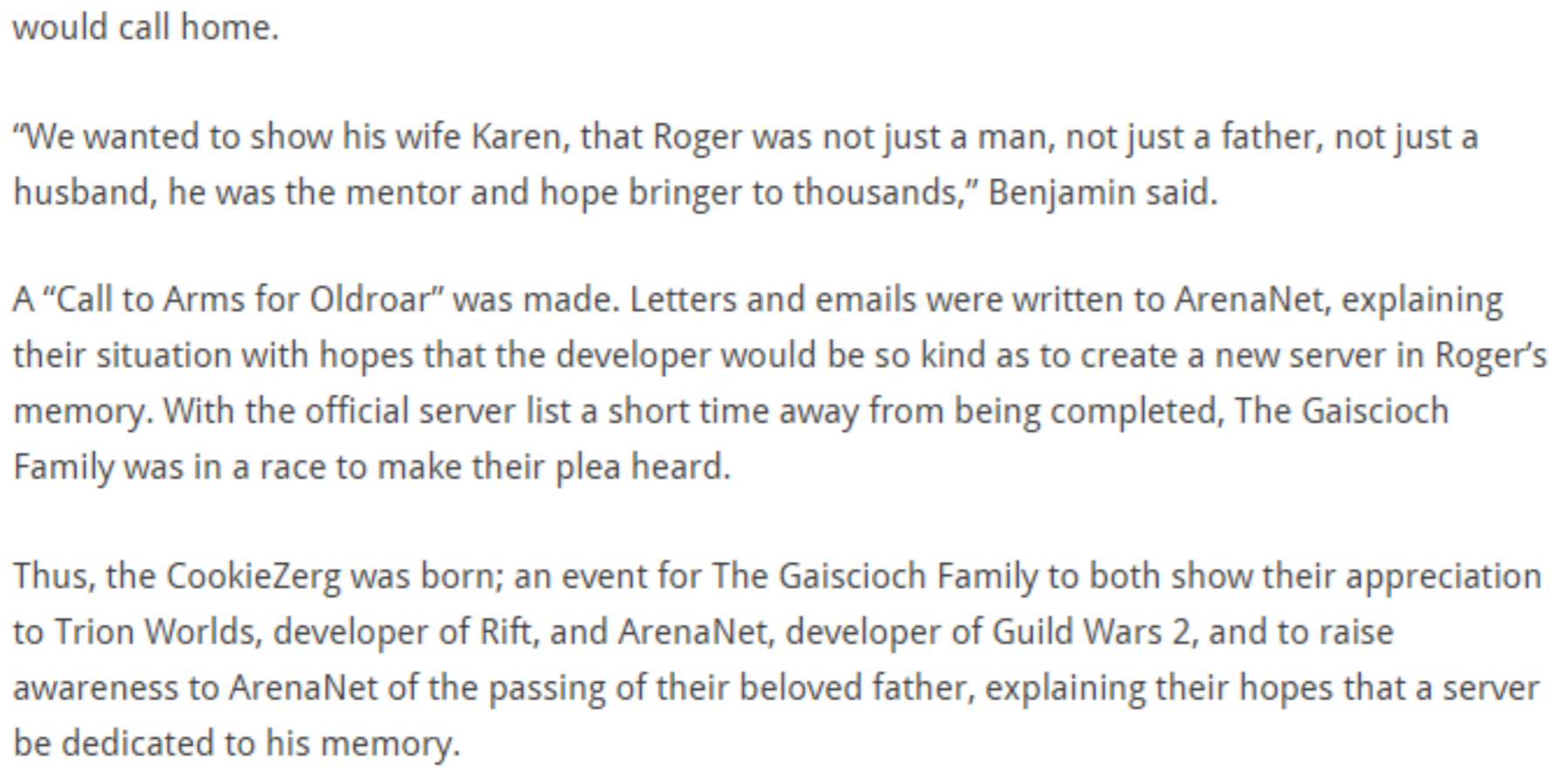
A "Call to Arms for Oldroar" was made. Letters and emails were written to ArenaNet, explaining their situation with hopes that the developer would be so kind as to create a new server in Roger's memory. With the official server list a short time away from being completed, The Gaiscioch Family was in a race to make their plea heard.

Thus, the CookieZerg was born; an event for The Gaiscioch Family to both show their appreciation to Trion Worlds, developer of Rift, and ArenaNet, developer of Guild Wars 2, and to raise awareness to ArenaNet of the passing of their beloved father, explaining their hopes that a server be dedicated to his memory.

UPDATE: I have since been corrected that the "Call to Arms" was made after the CookieZerg and not the other way around.

ArenaNet heard their plea and came through for them, letting them know a Guild Wars 2 server would be created in Roger "Oldroar" Rall's memory, appropriately named Sanctum of Rall.

(Note: The Gaiscioch will be holding an in-game memorial on the Sanctum of Rall server in Guild Wars 2 on August 29th, 2012 at 6:00pm PST.)



His Memory, His Legacy

The Gaiscioch's stories of their leader, friend, and family member Roger "Oldroar" Rall decorate him as an honorable, courageous, caring, gentlemanly mentor, father, and grandfather, both in-game and in real life. He had a made-for-radio voice that nearly defined his presence on the battlefield and was always around to help out his family that spanned three generations and an entire planet. Those that knew him miss him, dearly. Those that didn't were still profoundly affected by his passing, thanks to the closeness this family shared.

As guild leader Benjamin "Foghladha" Foley put it:

"My Grandmother once told me that a man's legacy is not held in what he owned at his time of death. Cars, boats, houses, all the money in the world instantly evaporates upon your exit from this life. None of it matters. Your Legacy is held within the people you impact in your lifetime. The lives you save, the lives you change, and the lives you bring to this world. Roger has changed many of us. His legacy did not die when he left this world. He passed it on to us, trusting that we would pass it on to generations to come."

In a world where many people might shrug off even the notion of a video game, seeing a family grow and thrive in an online space speaks volume to how the medium of video games has grown in the short time it has existed. I still struggle to just explain to my family what it is I do when I type away at my computer about video games, let alone try to explain that there are people that do that same thing professionally every day, so it goes without saying that this story spoke to me personally, else I wouldn't have written it! So, I would like to end this by saying thank you, Gaiscioch Family, for giving me the time of day and your hearts.

The following are a few testimonials, honoring Roger, taken from Gaiscioch's guild website. Some have expressed their wishes to have either all or part of their name kept anonymous:

"Will not forget all those Warhammer raids, Oldroar the Swordmaster with Musclor the White Lion tearing up with style all over the lands. He was always in the frontline and always looking how to help the team. We drifted a bit in Rift, but I am 100% sure he stayed the same, because I believe, in his essence, OldroarSM is really: Oldroar. You will be missed, friend"

- Musclor, Oct. 14. 2011

"Such a kind and generous man. Oldroar had the heart and courage of a true champion. His wonderful voice, sense of humor and wisdom will be sorely missed on guild vent. To travel down the road with this man, into battle, was a true honor. We all so mourn his passing. His family can take comfort in knowing Roger's life touched so many others—he leaves behind so many, many friends. Oldroar represented the true heart and values of Gaiscioch. "Suaimhneas siorai da acram"

- Katie "Gaelan" Eileen Green, Oct. 05. 2011

"Old has been a great addition and member to the family. His calm demeanor and wisecracks can brighten anyone's day. Great to have you with us."

- Don "Donaliam" Rush, Jun. 17. 2010

"You will be missed buddy. Thanks for always being a truly classy guy even when surrounded by us foul-mouth degenerates."

- Mike "Reclis" Spieles, Oct. 04. 2011

"Oldroar, Gabe and Gill were the first Gaiscioch members who adopted me when I joined the guild. Oldroar was always supportive and encouraging and protective, giving advice and standing tall whenever things got uncomfortable for others to do so. His sense of honor and proper treatment of others, to always put those you are leading before yourself and your own personal desires, were some of the many characteristics he taught by example. Oldroar's leadership style and advice is what convinced me I had found a long term gaming home in Gaiscioch. I am so very sorry Oldroar is gone now and that I did not get to spend more time with such a terrific person. I will miss him deeply."

- Michelle "Wildflower", Oct. 04. 2011

And many, many more...

Categories

Musings

TV Writing

Videogame Writing

Recent Posts

Media Consumption

The Leftovers: "Two Boats and a Helicopter"

The Leftovers: "Penguin One, Us Zero"

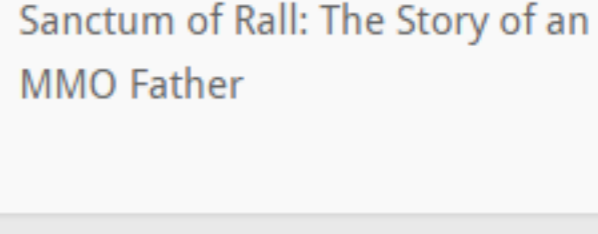
The Leftovers: "Pilot"

Sanctum of Rall: The Story of an MMO Father

Michael on Twitter

Tweets [Follow](#)

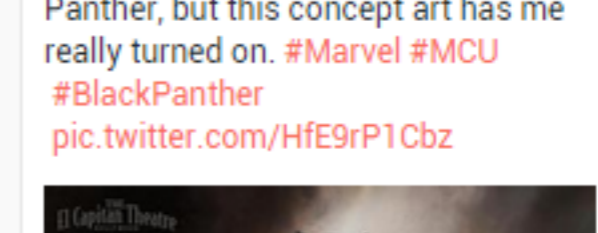
Michael Fossbakk @michaelfossbakk 23h
I don't know anything about Black Panther, but this concept art has me really turned on. #Marvel #MCU #BlackPanther
pic.twitter.com/HfE9rP1Cbz



Expand

Michael Fossbakk @michaelfossbakk 28 Oct
Another great cover by @malukah. Times Like These - Foo Fighters
Cover: youtu.be/45ENkrisNw
#BlackPanther
Show Media

Day For Night Games @day4nightgames 27 Oct
The Black Glove's Cribbage by Last of Us/BioShock Infinite storyboard artist Dan Milligan
kickstarter.com/projects/thebl
pic.twitter.com/DonQK7mFh
Retweeted by Michael Fossbakk



Expand

Michael Fossbakk @michaelfossbakk 27 Oct
Started watching Psycho Pass. Interesting ideas re: the criminalization of mental illness.

Expand

Michael Fossbakk @michaelfossbakk 27 Oct
Are there full episodes of #UpAtNoon on the @IGN PS4 app?
@GameOverGreggy

Tweet to @michaelfossbakk

Build a website with WordPress.com

Follow "Michael Fossbakk"
Get every new post delivered to your Inbox.

Enter your email address

SIGN ME UP

Build a website with WordPress.com

Media Consumption | ... on Tissues, Netflix and the Cold...

Media Consumption | ... on Tissues, Netflix and the Cold...

Recent Posts

Media Consumption

The Leftovers: "Two Boats and a Helicopter"

The Leftovers: "Penguin One, Us Zero"

The Leftovers: "Pilot"

Sanctum of Rall: The Story of an MMO Father

Recent Comments

Media Consumption | ... on Tissues, Netflix and the Cold...

Categories

Musings

TV Writing

Videogame Writing