

Event Horizon and LARPs in Slovakia 2019

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Event Horizon, o.z. is a residents' association focusing on development, support and education in the field of cultural, social and educational events. It not only organizes LARP by itself, but also helps other organizers and educates a new generation of LARP organizers. Their art and scientific-research activities include, for example, the professional conference Slovak LARP Talks (Slovenské hovory LARPové), intended not only for organizers of LARP and other role-playing games, but also focused on an exchange of experiences and a diverse professional discussion, social games in cooperation with Connect Coworking and Dungeon Pub, discussions with writers, creative lectures and workshops, how participants can cheaply prepare everything necessary (not only) for their LARP. In 2019, besides Event Horizon, other groups are also organizing as well as participating in several LARPs throughout the whole of Slovakia.¹

At the beginning of April, the fourth part of the *Prešov Watch* (Prešporské hladky) will take place. LARP is situated within the world of books series by Russian writer Sergei Lukyanenko (Night Watch, Day Watch etc.). Despite the continual storyline, LARP is suitable for everyone without need for any special training, besides creating their own character. The same month, *VIC Stolen Lives*, by main organizer Ján “RG” Strašifťák, from the World of Darkness world will also be held, this time in the shadows of Bratislava. In this international LARP, fans of vampires can join one of the vampire clans.

May is particularly suitable for fans of post-apocalyptic themes. From May 9-12, a post-apocalyptic LARP will take place in the village of Mníchova Lehota near Trenčín, that, however, requires thorough preparation according to the instructions of the organizers Ragnar and Lokern. At the same time (May 11), Event Horizon will bring a fantasy battle game *The Border* (Hranica) from the world of the *Kingdom of Wine* (Kráľovstvo vína).

On the first two days of June, you can LARP-hike inspired by the world of J. R. R. Tolkien, the *March of Rangers through the Mountains of the Wind* (Pochod hraničiarov Veternými vrchmi), that will be held for the seventh time. The organizer Bibi Zeliková will once again lead the participants through the beautiful countryside around Trenčín, who will certainly enjoy exciting battles in the Middle-earth. June 21-23 will be promising for superheroes and supervillains, who will measure their powers in Nová Dubnica within the urban LARP *Oakfell City: New Era* by Sára and Michal Fúsik. The core of LARP will not be fights, but the game itself and surviving the conflicts

July 15-22 is planned for the thirtieth year of the *DobrofantH*, taking place in Krásnohorská Dlhá Lúka, where at least one game is hidden every year. This year, the main game, *The Great FantH* directed by Lukáš “Geroja” Levický, will introduce to participants the world of Game of Thrones. The end of July (July 25-28) is reserved for the largest LARP in Slovakia, *Kingdom of Wine* by Event Horizon. It is a humorous game in the style of Terry Pratchett. Traditionally, it takes place in the forests a short distance from the Červený kameň Castle. Kingdom of Wine welcomes many newcomers among players each year, so no LARP experience is required. With the arrival of autumn, the residents' association PanzerHaus will realize *Project Exodus*, a one-day post-apocalyptic survival LARP that will

¹ Remark by the author: More information and a calendar of events are available at www.larpy.sk.

take place in the vicinity of the preserved military observatory in Bratislava Rača. The main motive will be to compete with players for limited resources and food. Participants will experience hunger, winter as well as “primitive conditions” and constant reconsiderations of their survival chances. LARP from another area will be *Mars 2037* by E&H Games, which will take participants to a base on Mars and introduce them to life there. *Mars 2037: The First Run*, from 2017, took place in the Botanical Garden of Košice, and the story was full of secrets, mysteries, and intrigues.

Trnava Game Guild

Michal Kabát

The Trnava gaming community is growing. The regional town of Trnava, which is close to the capital of Slovakia, has been providing good conditions for young creative people in recent years. Students maybe go to vote at their residence, but they live, study, and even more often work in Trnava. Their opportunities are going to be developed also by a new non-profit organization, which responds to the growing amount of young people interested in digital games. The *Trnava Game Guild* is thus reacting to the impulse of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, where the first students of the complete 5-year study program Theory of digital games will be finishing next year.

Regarding Slovakia, some organized game development communities exist mainly in Bratislava or Košice, and there are only a few game studios, which can employ new people. Apart from them, there are indie developers and freelancers, and many of them are also in Trnava. They are the primary target of the Trnava Game Guild that would like to offer them a space for mutual communication and cooperation to support creating and financing of common projects. At present, the Trnava Game Guild is looking for financial sources and a suitable residence, but its members have been already working on various projects. Besides game development, they organize game jams, festivals and game-related events, through which they are trying to strengthen the local community as well as promote the idea that digital games are a valuable part of our culture and a vital segment of the economy, progressing in time, when many others stagnate or disappear.

The main goal of this effort is to spread awareness about job opportunities within this field, in various positions from digital game design, trade and consumption, and other related opportunities related to the area of culture and sport. The next step should be the expansion of gaming education to secondary and basic schools. Primarily, this will be done in cooperation with the Hemisféra association offering courses *Gamecraft* (for children aged 8-12, it has already been offered in Trnava and Bratislava for 4 years) and *LevelUp* (for older students, starting in Trnava this autumn). According to our current experience, young people are not only interested in gaming, but also in the creation of games, and with even greater passion than their older colleagues.

In addition to courses, the Trnava Game Guild will assist its members in grant application processes and provide opportunities for investors' support through planned acceleration and incubator programs. It wants to be helpful also during the promotion of its members' creation and activities at domestic and foreign events. The official opening of the Trnava Game Guild is planned at the beginning of June at the Game Days 2019 festival (www.gdays.sk) in the Little Berlin Cultural center, located in one of Trnava's squares, Trnavské Nádvorie.