

Entertainment

Jolly old England alive near Magnolia

By JOHNNIE HENDON

Two cockney wenches in low-necked dresses with ragged hems tease passing men about their love lives.

Stately lords and ladies in richly colored velvets and satins bid newcomers welcome in refined French and English accents.

Scottish bagpipers provide a lively background for jugglers and dancers while the king's fool performs handstands, flips and somersaults for the crowd's amusement.

The theme of the 3rd annual Texas Renaissance Festival is "lift up your cares" and both entertainers and exhibitors help to keep this mood alive.

The festival is held every weekend in October and the first weekend in November. It is located about 50 miles southeast of Bryan-College Station near Magnolia, Texas.

The festival brings the 16th cen-

tury alive by presenting games, drama, music, people and food without the distractions of modern life.

"There is no electricity, no sound system," said Al Casas, public relations man. "People have to get close to the performers to see and hear them."

This increases the feeling of participation that makes this festival different than most fairs in the state, he said.

The festival has many permanent structures, such as gates (complete with turrets), a race track, and a lake on its 250 acres.

Exhibitors rent spaces for six weeks, and build their own booths. Most are elaborate with thatched roofs, stained glass windows and fanciful hand-painted and hand-carved signs.

One exhibitor said he arrived from Minnesota Tuesday night and worked on his display booth until 3

o'clock Saturday morning.

Many of the artisans travel on a circuit of renaissance festivals, starting in California, and going to Minnesota, Illinois and Texas.

Exhibitors dress in 16th century costumes, selling such items as pottery, leather goods, silver jewelry, wood carvings, rattlesnake skins and staffs.

What is a staff good for? "Knocking trolls off bridges, of course," said Dennis Borowicz, staff-maker.

The craftsmen said they like these festivals because of the atmosphere, fellowship and money.

"It's the last hippie convention left in the state," commented one woman.

Along the straw-covered road leading through the village and among the shops, actors, musicians and dancers entertain.

Street actors perform Shakespeare, traveling musicians play their

guitars and harps and sing to people, and jugglers try to juggle almost anything people will hand them.

Two members of the Aggie Players, Kayce Glasse and Chuck McDaniel and a former Aggie Player Tara Whitacre, can be seen at the Enchanted Forest children's theater.

Students from Sam Houston University, the High School for Performing and Visual Arts and several musical and acting groups from Houston perform at three other theaters.

Lords and ladies also participate in knightly games, such as "Lance and Rings," and the "Running at the Quintain."

In the Quintain game, a mounted knight gallops at a wooden figure which he must hit squarely with his lance. This sport replaced jousting because too many good knights killed each other needlessly.

There are also horse races, chariot

races and other game events.

Men in leotards, leather tunics and capes try to entice passers-by to play various games of skill and daring.

"You, lady, how would you like to beat your husband with this deadly weapon?" yells the man behind the "Fight the Knight" banner.

The "deadly weapon" is a large pillow used to knock an opponent off a log.

The street players try their skill at the games, trying to get the spectators to participate. One gallant knight, standing in front of the Greek game Jacob's Ladder, called into the audience, "I'll go only if that macho-looking fellow with his shirt open will follow me."

Some get to participate in a more direct way — being thrown in the stocks by the festival guards. A kiss from a virgin is one way to pay for freedom from the stocks.

Food, exotic to 20th century tastes, adds to the atmosphere. But among the Falafel and Beezel Sandwiches, a sign proclaims "Sir Ed's Tacos."

John Michail, a strolling minstrel, described the mood of the festival with one of his songs. "They only live who life enjoy."



Battalion photo by Johnnie Hendon

Strolling minstrels, such as Lady Sharon Steenbergen, were part of the 16th century atmosphere at the 3rd Annual Texas Renaissance Festival near Magnolia.

KANM album playlist

HITS

Linda Ronstadt "Simple Dreams"
Foreigner "Foreigner"
Rita Coolidge "Anytime... Anywhere"
Doobie Brothers "Livin' on the Fault Line"
Yes "Going for the One"
James Taylor "JT"
Crosby, Stills, and Nash "CSN"
Heart "Little Queen"
Foghat "Live"
UFO "Lights Out"
The Steve Miller Band "Book of Dreams"
Fleetwood Mac "Rumours"

FADERS

Ted Nugent "Cat Scratch Fever"
Jimmy Buffett "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes"
Electric Light Orchestra "A New World Record"
Boston "Boston"
Peter Frampton "I'm In You"
Supertramp "Even in the Quietest Moments"
Firefall "Luna Sea"
Kiss "Love Gun"
Dan Fogelberg "Nether Lands"
Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band "Night Moves"
Grateful Dead "Terrapin Station"

Barbra Streisand "Superman"

RISERS

Stephen Bishop "Careless"
Lake "Lake"
Harry Chapin "Dance Band on the Titanic"
Elvin Bishop "Raisin' Hell"
Little River Band "Diamantina Cocktail"
Be Bop Deluxe "Live in the Air Age"
Pablo Cruise "A Place in the Sun"
Rolling Stones "Live"
Chicago "Chicago XI"
Utopia "Oops! Wrong Planet"
Jean-Luc Ponty "Enigmatic Ocean"
Styx "The Grand Illusion"

NEW ALBUMS

Peter Baumann "Romance 76"
Bob Welch "French Kiss"
Gentle Giant "The Missing Piece"
David Allan Coe "Tattoo"
Richie Havens "Mirage"
Freddie Hubbard "Bundle of Joy"
Johnny Winter "Nothing But the Blues"
American Flyer "Spirit of a Woman"
Shawn Phillips "Spaced"
Billy Joel "The Stranger"
Stomu Yamashita "Go Too"
Papa John Creach "The Cat and the Fiddle"

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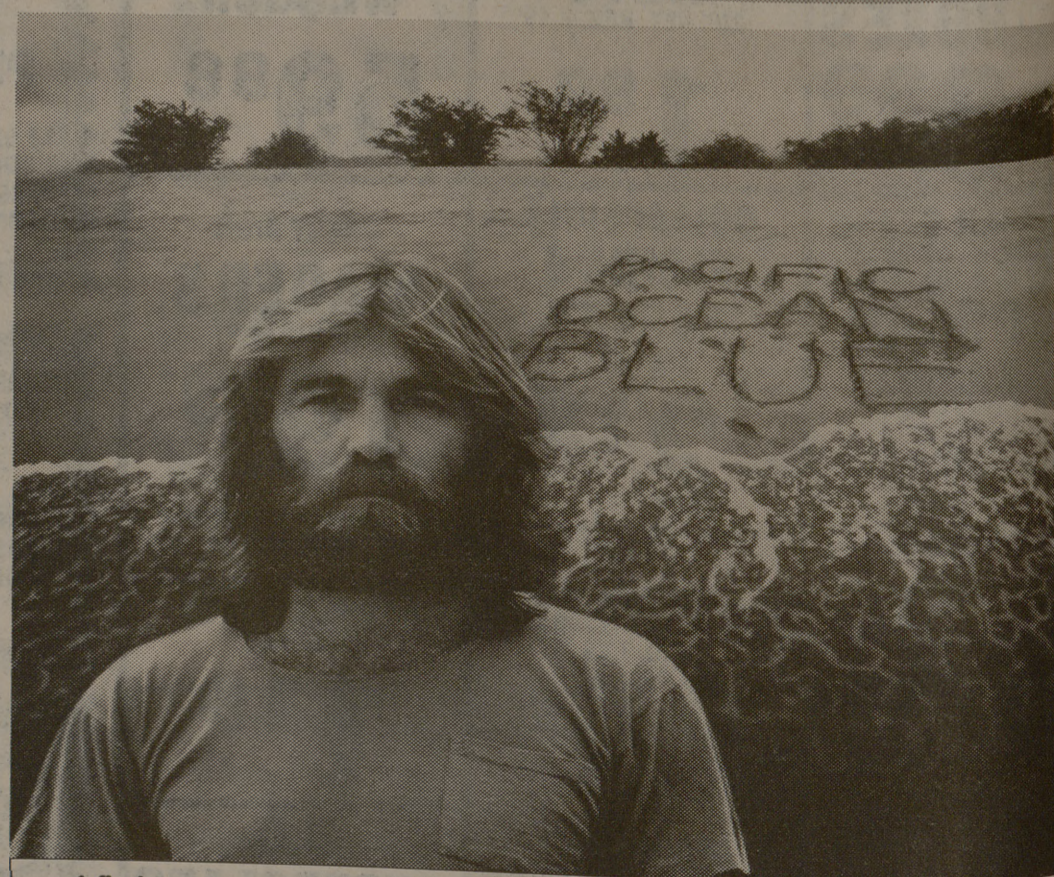
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