

## Society members forego 'mundane'

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overcrowded, stuffy HouTran bus that showed up a half hour late," he said, "I feel like beating the hell out of someone with a stick!"

Most of the courses in the college, attended by 75 people, dealt with the fighting aspect of the SCA. Weapons and armor construction were the two most popular subjects. All weapons must be constructed of rattan and wrapped with tape.

There are a number of regulations that deal with the size, weight and construction of weapons, and all must be approved by the Knight-Marshall before they will be allowed in combat. Also, a combatant may request that his opponent not use a certain weapon if he feels it would be unsafe.

There are many types of armor that can be made, mostly out of leather, metal, or some combination of the two. Master Godfrey de la Fosse (Jeff Morgan, a Texas A&M student) taught chain mail construction. Chain mail is small metal rings linked together to make a fabric-like material that can then be fashioned into a coat. Master Godfrey said making chain mail takes "little skill and a lot of patience." More common is leather armor or metal-reinforced leather. The most important qualities that an armor maker tries to put into his work is freedom of movement and absorption of blows.

There are a few lady fighters, too. Lady Sharallele of the Curly Locks (Debra Bays of Austin) joined the SCA a year ago, and got into fighting because "it looked like fun. It is." Lady Sharallele wears into combat a set of leather armor that she says cost \$100 in materials and 40 hours of work to make. Even though, she said, "This is a cheap hobby compared to a lot of other hobbies."

Most of the women in the society, and there are quite a few, devote most of their time to craftwork, domestic chores and playing the medieval role of the lady in waiting. Lady Kasilda Kubasek (Donna House of Houston) said she joined SCA because "it allows me to live out fantasies that I've had since I was a little kid. I was always the one in the back reading Sir Lancelot and dreaming of being a lady in

waiting." Mundanely, Lady Kasilda teaches English and history to junior high school students. "They think I'm totally crazy," she said.

All members have at least one medieval costume to wear to events. Lady Kasilda said she has 10, four of which are for formal occasions. Although all fighting is done with weapons made of rattan, most society members are collectors or weaponry, and many a steel dagger, sword or axe was hanging from their belts.

Saturday night there was a revel and feast at the Quonset huts. Everyone was wearing their best outfits, and the candlelight, cloaks, swords and music managed to turn the hut into a grand eating hall. The revelers had brought their own utensils and drinks, and there was about an hour of socializing before the meal began.

Some people, like Lord Clefe Falastra (Martin Catt), brew their own beer or ferment their own wine. Lord Clefe was drinking a wine he had made that was very sweet, very strong, and quite good. Lord Clefe said he joined the SCA "mainly because I like all the people in it. This brings out the romantics, the philosophers. You got to have a little dreamer in you to take part in this."

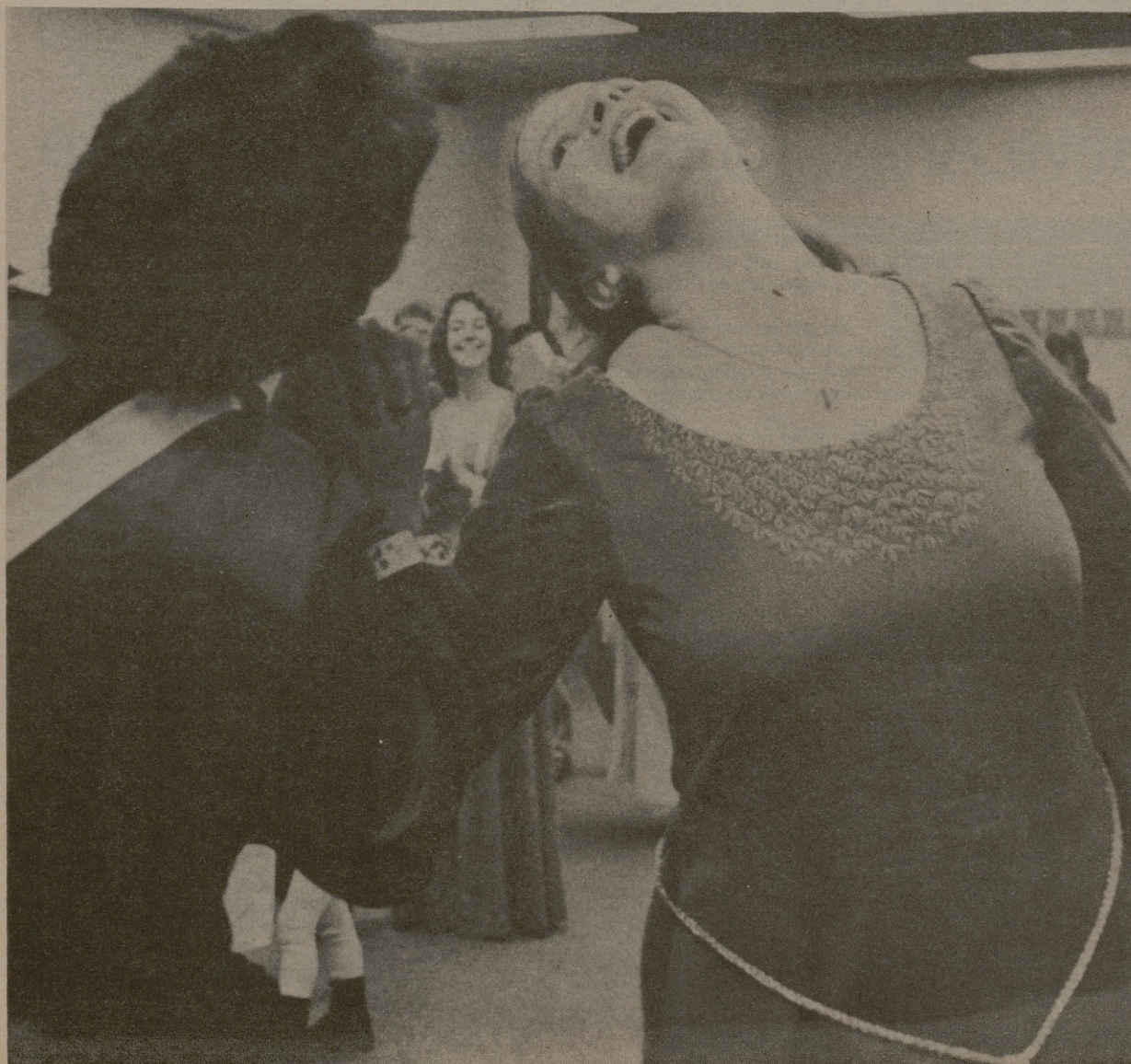
Then the herald, Master Telbyrne Morningstar (James Bozarth of Houston), made the announcement to begin the feast. The food was all supposed to be the kind people would have eaten in the Middle Ages. There was sausage and roast pork, along with a number of vegetables, sauces and "subleties," or desserts. These folks do know how to set a table. After the meal, there was entertainment which included storytelling, harp music and an adequate rendition of the theme song from "Gilligan's Island."

Official business was taken care of next, as the prince and princess of Ansteorra, Prince Sir Simonn of Amber (Ben Lee) and Princess Mistress Tessa of the Gardens (Elizabeth Lee, Ben's wife) held court. The knights of the realm, along with principality and local officials, presented themselves to the throne in a ceremony known as the "Order of the March."

There is a very carefully maintained hierarchy,



Photos by Lynn Blanco



**SIR SIMONN OF AMBER** (Ben Lee), above left, the Prince of Ansteorra, shows body armor made of leather and at least 16- or 24-gauge metal. He worked on this piece of armor for about three years. Left, Lord Sigmund the Wingfooted (Ron Goforth) and Sabia O'Comerall (Therese Honey) are teaching a class in the medieval dance called the Pavanne. A future society member at the age of 11 months, Aaron Edward Douglas Fleming, right, watches the activities out of the corner of his eye while being held by Jaelithe Maurelena (Julie Scott). His mother is known as Elisena Lighthead (Lucy Fleming). Above right is a medieval sword used by members of the SCA. Real medieval swords had sharp edges and were made of steel, but on this weapon the edges are dull and the plumbing tee on the end is used as a counter weight and not, thank goodness, to hit anyone.