

Who said knighthood is dead?

ATLANTA (UPI) — The driver of the gold Chevrolet didn't believe what he had seen in an Atlanta park early one morning, the scene the second time around was the same. About two dozen people appeared to be caught in a time warp. Armored men were beating each other with clubs and sword-like sticks while several women clad in flowing medieval gowns sat calmly embroidering.

Ignoring the Georgia heat and the weight of his costume, John Johnson — also known as "Sir John" — delivered a hard blow with his wooden sword to Alexander Steele's legs. Steele, mandanly known as Alain Fitz Wallace, fell to his knees as if struck by a real sword.

The Society for Creative Anachronism was having its final

"fighter practice" before some of its members headed for Pittsburgh for the Ninth Pennsic War. There, they joined some 600 other devotees of the times when knighthood was in flower to do battle under the banners of the Middle West and the Eastern States.

The annual "war" is to settle a dispute over the boundaries of the East and Middle Kingdoms and "the loser gets Pittsburgh," according to Richard Wallace, a knight in the society.

Society members include serious medieval scholars and specialists in the period's arts, attire and cookery. They adhere to the caste system of that long-ago period — squires wait on knights and all are subservient to the king.

Their conversation is sprinkled with "m'ladies" and "go

yons" and Berta Fuller, also known as "Berta of the Southern Isle," sips her chocolate milk from a silver goblet.

Wallace says the fighting is "basically just pretend." But the power behind the blows from the wooden weapons — swords or axes — could cause injury if the fighters did not wear metal armor, which can weigh between 25 and 100 pounds.

"When they hit you in the arm, your arm is cut off," said Gordon, a student at the University of Georgia studying geology, explaining the scoring. "When they hit you in your leg, your leg is cut off. To kill a person, you hit him in the head or torso. You win a battle either by killing him or disarming him."

"It all very heavily depends on self honor," Wallace adds. "You could win by refusing to admit a good blow but there's a pretty strong emphasis on honor."

Hold the greasies — bring on the salad

Salad restaurants — offering a variety of light foods including sandwiches, soups and quiche — are multiplying across the country like rabbits nibbling greens in the garden.

Weight, health and penny-conscious workers are discovering they can eat healthy foods without a "health food" label and come out

well-fed without spending their last penny.

The growth of the salad-based eateries parallels a change in American eating habits noticed by restaurateurs providing meatier fare.

More restaurant-goers are ordering seafood, salads and vegetables instead of the usual heavy meat and potatoes, according to a Gallup telephone survey of 521 restaurant owners nationwide.

The big-city success in recent years of restaurants with menus built around green plants and light woods has given birth to another type of fast food franchise.

The American Entrepreneurs Association, based in Los Angeles, claims the potential in the salads-only restaurant business is staggering and for a fee will send you their analysis and manual on how to start your own.

One of the most prolific "fast fresh food restaurant" franchisers is Salad Bar Corp., based in Phoenix, Ariz.

Founded by Robert L. Drake in 1975 with a \$17,000 loan, the chain has 70 locations across 17 states and will post sales of \$10 million this year.

Drake says his franchisees chopped six million tons of lettuce last year alone and he claims they are "the largest single user" of lettuce in the country.

"People are not entirely satisfied with fast food and fried foods. They want a place where they can sit down and relax. That's our basic concept," Drake said in an interview.

The restaurants attract the "health and diet conscious, from medium and higher income brackets," Drake said, noting many of the customers also tend to come from higher education levels.

His restaurant managers find an even split between men and women customers.

The greens and fruits are served in garden-like settings, decorated with hanging plants, large airy windows or skylights, wooden furniture, with table service by waitresses instead of the more common fast food cafeteria line.

The salad restaurant itself is inexpensive to run and can be started with a minimal investment — about \$120,000 compared with the estimated \$750,000 to \$1 million outlay for other fast food chains, Drake said.

"There are no chefs, no stoves, no ovens and no grease," Drake said. Any cooking necessary is done in a microwave.

Sal Alamia, 33, operates a Salad Bar franchise in the heart of Manhattan where he does a booming lunchtime business with a wide range of customers from young professionals and secretaries to retirees.

The restaurant features a standard eight-salad, nine-sandwich, three-soup menu and appeals to people "who'd like a change from the hamburger stand, the bar, the deli or the Chinese place," Alamia said.

"But some say that there's too much salad. Others say it's light enough so they don't get sleepy at work in the afternoon. And some just like salads."

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