



A duo of jugglers entertain visitors with their nimble hands.



Jeff Morgan, a junior, and Nancy Underwood, a sophomore meteorology major, marshal a game of "King of the Log."

## Going back (almost) in time

By SCOTT HARING  
Battalion Staff

There are better things to do, I think as my alarm clock goes off, than get up at 5 a.m. on a weekend morning. When I tiptoe out of the house around 6, I envy my roommates their sleep. But then again, they're not going to the Texas Renaissance Festival.

The drive is not unpleasant, although dull. The oil well at the entrance is a bit of a surprise, though. It seems that for the effort the organizers put out to create a Renaissance "experience", an oil well is not a very appropriate fixture.

It's not like they need the money. At \$7.95 a head, and Lord knows

how many head per day, the oil well is probably pocket change.

As an employee, of course, I get in free. But I'm subject to all the other temptations the TRF puts on your wallet. Food, drink, entertainment, fine wares, all these cost money. A lot of money.

The fact that this is the only place for miles around that isn't forest keeps the monopoly on food and drink going. A few enterprising customers bring picnic lunches, but most pay the prices.

The food is generally pretty good, but not all of it is "period" anymore. At the same stand you get turkey legs you can also get barbecued ribs. A stand advertising a "Friar's Feast" gives you a mixture of beef, avocado and tomatoes — in other words, a soft taco. A good soft taco, but still ...

There is a variety of drinks available, soft and otherwise. A brewer famous for armadillos has arranged to sell "The National Beer of the Texas Renaissance Festival," and they are cleaning up. Wine coolers are sold, and there is even one roving cart selling bottles of imported champagne.

If you plan to sample a few different foods and get thirsty from walking around all day, plan to spend \$10 to \$15 on food and drink.

But the big money is at the artisan's booths. Jewelers, wood carvers, sculptors, artists, glass blowers, hatmakers, the list is practically endless. The most expensive thing I found is a man who will custom design a garden complete with fountains, metal sculptures and little waterfalls for \$25,000.

If you want to take something home from the TRF, bring a lot more money. "Ye Olde Visa Accepted" signs are pretty common. A dedicated shopper could wander through, pick up a few trinkets and spend a couple of hundred dollars without breaking a sweat.

If you've got the self-restraint, there's a lot to be said for sitting back and watching this rather strange world go by.

Countless people in outlandish costumes wander around, adding

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