

Group creates 'shire' of the past

by Clara N. Hurter

Battalion reporter

In the kingdom of Ansteorra, there is a small town called "the Shadowlands" where dwell many fair folk of gentle birth who participate in feasts, quests, politics, fighting and final exams.

Not a scene from an Arthurian tale, but a 1983 scene at Texas A&M, where students interested in medieval times have joined the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Ron Robertson, seneschal (president) of the A&M SCA, says students who are drawn to the society are usually interested in history and fun.

Society members research a personality from the middle ages and try to recreate and live the personality they've chosen.

"Personalities chosen range from barbarians to American Indian, but most come from Welsh lords and ladies during the medieval ages," he says.

Robertson's own personality is Lord Doyel Mor Ser, which stands for "dark stranger of the sea stars." When he's at society activities, Robertson, like other members, uses his society name.

To have a society name, a member must apply to the national organization. Members can have several alternative names, but only one official name within the society.

SCA is a nationwide, non-profit organization that originated at Berkeley, Calif., in 1966.

Members range in age from toddler to grandparent.

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dents' science fiction organization, decided to start a "shire."

"The society had been going on in Houston and Austin and we thought it would be fun to start up a shire here at College Station," Robertson says.

The national society is organized into principalities, baronies and shires. A "principality" is a geographical area, ruled by a "prince," that can become a kingdom.

The Texas A&M shire, known as the Shadowlands, is a part of the kingdom of Ansteorra. Twenty-five active members and around 60 members have joined the SCA.

"We decided to call ourselves the Shadowlands because we were surrounded or shadowed by the Stargate (Houston), BrynGwlad (Austin), Bjornes-

burg (San Antonio), and Stepes (Dallas) baronies," Deputy Herald Ruth White says.

Robertson says the shire is applying for a baronship but the national organization has been reluctant to grant it.

"They look at us as a bunch of transients," Robertson says. "Most of our members are here for up to four years but then they graduate and move elsewhere."

Robertson says only three of the original members still are in the shire.

Members of the shire come from a variety of majors and classifications and have varied interests, he says.

"We get a lot of military people because of the fighting aspect of the society," Robertson says. "We also attract people interested in the ancient ways of sewing, vinting (wine-making), brewing (ale and stout) and the ancient sciences (stargazing)."

Some members of the shire work at the Texas Renaissance

Festival in Magnolia. They do it to raise money for the shire and to gain experience, Robertson says.

Working at the Renaissance Festival and participating in other fairs around the state can help a member earn his or her title.

Titles, such as knights and laurels, are earned through service in the society, he says.

The Shadowlands has a number of guilds — societies of merchants or artisans — ranging from the Heavy Weapons Guild and Swashbuckler's Guild, where members fight with rattan weapons and homemade armor, to the Stargazing Guild, where members study the heavens on clear nights and discuss how ancient astrologers interpreted the stars.

The Shadowlanders will celebrate Martinmas day, named after Saint Martin, on Nov. 12 and 13. Martinmas day activities will begin at 1 p.m. at the Brazos County Arboretum and will in-

clude a quest, something like a treasure hunt. Other activities include workshops on dance and chain mail making, a feast with scattered entertainment, and a wine and ale competition. The feast will be held at the quonset huts. Nov. 13 activities will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a fighter's seminar (heavy weapons and swashbuckling) and later there will be more dancing and workshops.

The Shadowlands usually has two or three big events a year depending on the funds, Robertson says.

At the events and even at monthly meetings some members dress up in the costumes of their characters. Robertson says the best way to emulate the medieval lifestyle is to recreate and live it.

White, known as Lady Aleana Seroggyodd, suggests that medieval life wasn't as easy as depicted by Hollywood.

"It's not like an Errol Flynn movie," Robertson says.

Broadway show begins Sunday

Linda Ronstadt did it. Then Andy Gibb did it. Now Maria Muldaur is doing it, on the road.

What all three of these people have done is perform roles in the Broadway hit, "The Pirates of Penzance." Although "Pirates" was first performed over 50 years ago, it was revived just two seasons ago and ended its successful run of performances with three Tony awards.

The biggest change in this version is its score. Whereas the original libretto by Gilbert

and Sullivan was light operetta, the 1980s rendition is set to rock music. That's why people like Linda Ronstadt and Maria Muldaur were asked to hit the Broadway stage for this swashbuckling adventure.

"The Pirates of Penzance" will be staged in the Rudder Auditorium Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. each night. "Pirates" is the first performance this year in MSC Townhall's Broadway series. Tickets for both performances are on sale at the MSC Box Office.

Albums

(continued from page 4)

knew I was in for trouble. I was right.

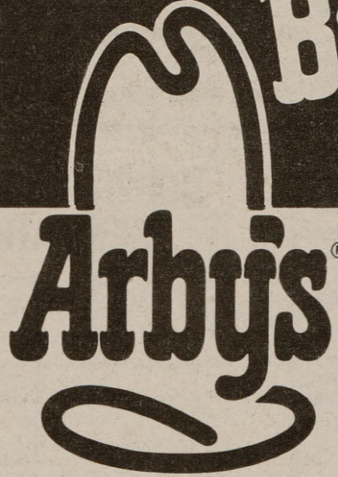
The first single, "Mama," is perhaps a little overzealous in its use of drum programming, but it is really a very adequate start to the album. "That's All" is a good midtempo track which is very reminiscent of the most recent Alan Parsons Project material. Genesis functions quite well without the Phenix Horns of Earth, Wind, and Fire that

added so much to *Abacab*.

But after these two singles, little else is new on this album. A couple of mellow numbers on the back side are enjoyable but not at all comparable to the level of quality that the group is capable of producing.

Reviews by Cary Stegall.
Albums provided by Hastings Books and Records.

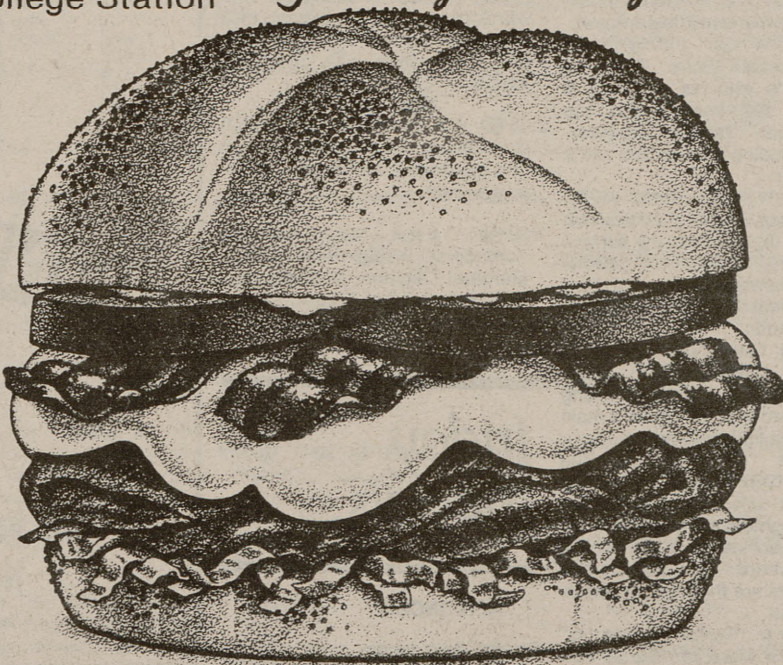
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