

Stepping back in time with the ladies and lords of the Renaissance Festival

The Texas Renaissance Festival is an experience for the senses. As soon as you fall under the spell of this magical kingdom, you are overwhelmed with a host of pleasurable sensations that tempt the body and tantalize the mind.

The experience begins before you even arrive on the festival grounds in the piney woods near Plantersville. As you leave your school books and the rest of civilization behind and drive down the curving farm-to-market road that leads to the site, you begin to sense the carefree Renaissance spirit.

Before you even enter the front gates, you see people dressed in unusual attire, with Robin Hood-type hats and capes and tights. After you pay, somewhat hesitantly, the \$12 admission fee, you begin to take in the strange sights that surround you.

But once your eyes make it past the men in tights and the buxom women with dollar bills in their cleavage, you will see before you a whole new world—a Renaissance kingdom.

As in a quaint town in the En-



The muppet-like "What's it" and an inquisitive young passer-by check each other out.

glish countryside, baskets of hanging flowers adorn every corner. And the streets are filled with endless rows of shops where merchants sell crafts of all shapes and variety. The goods for sale range from leather to lace, and the only reminder of civilization as you know it is found in a sign in a shop window that reads "Ye olde Visa and American Express accepted here."

And then there are the people. They, too, come in all shapes and sizes, from royalty to peasant, from wizard to wench. They wear knightly suits of armor with swords at their sides. They wear flowing dresses and wreaths of flowers in their hair, or — to the delight of male festival goers — they wear practically nothing at all.

You see tightrope walkers and sword fighters. You see fortune tellers and jugglers. You see little wooden booths with signs that proclaim "Paint thy face." Your eyes are constantly moving, trying to take everything in.

And just when you think you've finally become accustomed to the Renaissance sights, you realize that there are other sight-seers around you —

Continued on page 10

**Story by Karen Kroesche
Photos by Bill Hughes**