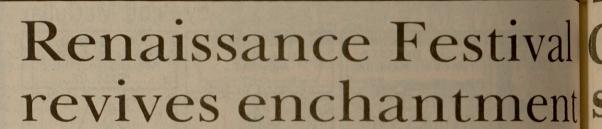


Photo by Jay Janne

Lady Susan Griffin holds the mirror for Jonathan Salas. 4, so he can see the balloons she painted on his check



By Fiona Soltes
Staff Writer

Come, Milord and Milady! The King doth bid your presence at the 14th annual Texas Renaissance Festival.

His Majesty King Henry VIII began welcoming visitors to Sherwood Forest last weekend. He was joined by his royal court as well as jugglers, magicians, belly dancers, mud wrestlers, tightrope walkers and many other servants, all wishing to share new delights with visitors.

This year, the festival has several new exhibits, including Noble House, a Greco-Roman structure displaying the treasures Marco Polo brought back from the Orient, as well as a post office and a bank where visitors can exchange checks or credit cards for pound notes to be used at the festival. Also new are six new food buildings and two new stages for entertainment.

Many more street characters are new to the festival this year, too. The people who play these parts are as diverse as the characters themselves. Some of the workers, like Paige Hunt, are locals who enjoy working at the festival just for fun. Hunt, who is from Conroe, works for

Chrysler Credit Corp. during the week and sells flowered hair wreaths at the festival on weekends.

"This is my third year at the festival," Hunt said. "I do it basically because it's extra fun for several weekends during the year. I'm definitely planning on doing it again next year." Hunt said she is paid a base rate, near minimum wage, plus a commission for each wreath. The wreaths, made by an outside company and shipped in for the festival, are available to visitors for \$8 to \$20 each.

Visitors can have their faces painted by "Lady" Susan Griffin, who participates in the festival as an exterior of

Visitors can have their faces painted by "Lady" Susan Griffin, who participates in the festival as an extension of her real-life career. Griffin works for a performing arts costume company in Houston during the week, making costumes and doing make-up for actors in feature films. Griffin said she is willing to paint any design.

"The most common designs are uni-

"The most common designs are unicorns, dragons and free-form," Griffin said. "But the customer is king; I'll do whatever he likes." She said she will paint bodies as well as faces. The artwork ranges from \$5 to \$8.

Elaborate costumes abound at the festival. Eulice Vial, who portrays Lady Anne, Duchess of Somerset, makes

many of the costumes visitors

during the festival.

"I am a specialist in the Elizatime period," Vial said. "I make tumes out of my home, one at the have made about 80 of the costs, this year's festival." Vial said at the performers own only one costs since prices usually start at a \$1,500.

The characters are responsible in plying their own costumes, the Some of the lesser characters, those who are not members of the court, buy theirs at the Reas clothing shops at the festival.

Many shops are on the lesser of the state of the shops are on the lesser of the shops are on th

Many shops are on the agrounds. They sell just about each including clothes, armor, harm woodwork, paintings, mirror at statues of wizards.

David Dawson, apprentice to led derhill of Underhill Pavilions, he and Tents, said he takes enough for Renaissance tents and bannan festival to keep him in business d

"We really enjoy making them,"

See Renaissance Festival,



Photo by Jay Janne



Photo by Jay Janner

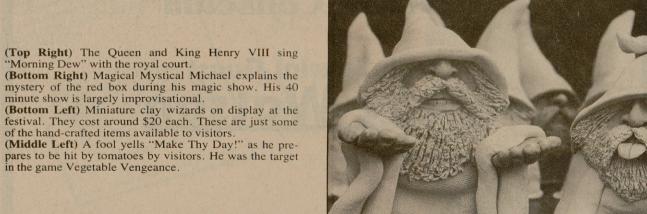


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