

# Attention!!

## Party steps back into history

Two Saturdays ago, I attended a Society for Creative Anachronism party. I went to the party wanting to experience something new, which I did. It was so new that I was totally unprepared for it.

Before I arrived at the party, or "revel," I didn't know much about the SCA except for its name. I did know that an anachronism, as one member of the SCA told me, is something out of place in time, like a chimney on an ancient Egyptian pyramid. I also knew that the SCA had something to do with medieval times. That, however, was about as far as my knowledge went.

I got to the revel by car, a seemingly unorthodox way of arriving into medieval times, yet my only way of doing so. Then, when I entered the party room, I stopped dead in my tracks to stare impolitely at everyone.

All the men and women at

the revel were dressed in clothes from various times in medieval society. I was amazed at the detail of the "garb" — each person seemed to have recreated his/her time period costume with immense care. I saw low necklines, long skirts, veils, pearls, gaudy jewelry and tight bodices on the ladies; the men wore shirts with no collars, lace-up leather boots and open sleeves. I even saw three-musketeer-type outfits.

Noticing my inappropriate dress (striped shirt, jeans and tennis shoes), a few of the nearby medieval ladies dragged me off to the women's restroom to fix my attire. I was given a simple black gown with a wide neckline and a colored rope belt to wrap around my waist. I still wore my tennis shoes, but that couldn't be helped. Now more suitably dressed, I was allowed to make a second entrance to the revel.

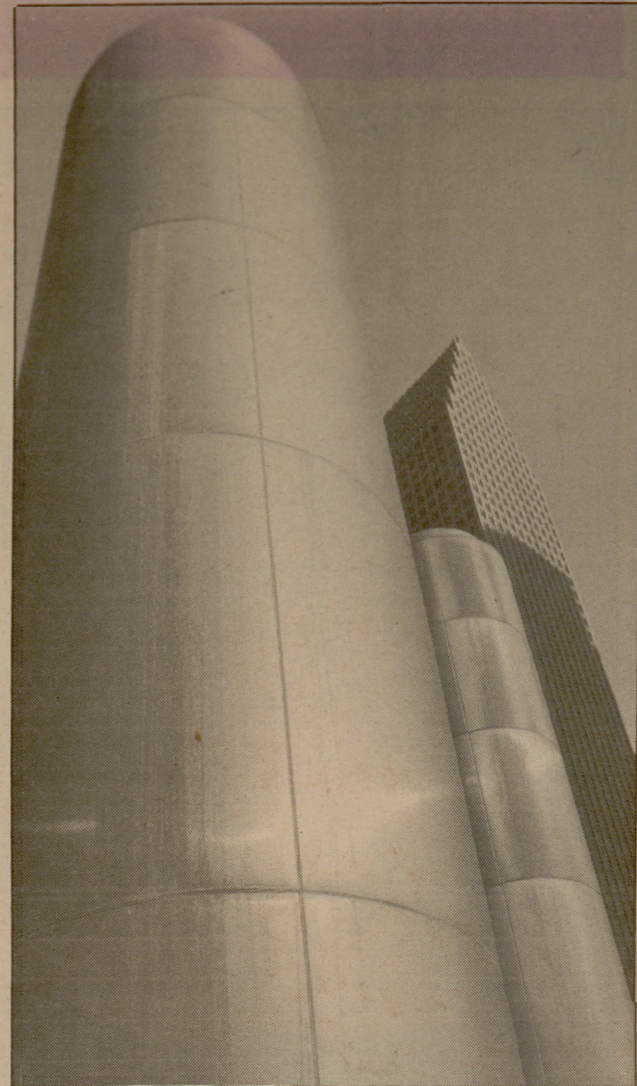
People were standing

around in groups, talking and laughing. I was introduced to a few, but I cannot recall many of their names because they were all of the medieval sort. It seems that each person has a medieval name, time period and personal history to go along with the beautiful garb they wear. I realized that this society was more intricate and historically accurate than I thought.

I learned that the United States (since this is a nationwide organization) had been re-divided into medieval shires and kingdoms, with names to match. Bryan-College Station was named the shire of the "Shadowlands," and it belongs to the kingdom of "Ansteorra." I also found out that within the Shadowlands there are members of rank such as the senechal (head of the shire). I was impressed to find out that some members of the shire practice medieval arts such as pottery, embroidery, juggling, sewing, swashing (light sword fighting) and heavy sword fighting. I was told that somewhere in the kingdom (Texas and Oklahoma) there are jousting matches, but I don't recall where.

The food at the revel was as "period" as everything else. They had several meats, including sausage, along with almonds, raisins, homemade bread, homemade butter and various sliced cheeses. I enjoyed wandering over to the dinner table periodically, whenever I felt the need. The shire members all had period dinnerware, too. I don't know where they found all those wooden and brass plates and goblets.

Soon the dancing began. Medieval music came floating around the room, delivered by a tape recorder that sounded just as good as the real thing. The shire members began to teach the newcomers the old courtroom dances; these consist of repeated sequences of steps and lots of flirting with your partners. You kept eye contact most of the time, an enjoyable aspect of dancing that has been lost in modern styles, and did lots of bowing and curtsying. After stumbling through a few practice sessions,



Julia Jones, a junior journalism major, took this week's Attention!! photo.

we newcomers got the hang of things and began to enjoy ourselves. Then, in our borrowed garb with modern touches (the guy across from me was wearing jeans and ropers under his Medieval shirt), we danced.

Along with having a great time that night, I left the revel with a gift from the duchess: a brass linked headpiece to be worn over a veil. Carrying my new treasure to the car, I thought about all the times when, as one of the kids on the block, I had dressed up and pretended to be someone else. My friends and I had always enjoyed this type of game. It seemed that the SCA was also a place where one could dress up and be someone else. I could have just as much fun with the SCA as I had with the other kids in my neighborhood. And it was something different to do on a Friday night — I was tired of going to the dollar movies.

Editor's Note: This Attention!! page will be used each week as a forum for you, our readers. We encourage you to submit any original work that would be suitable for publication in At Ease.

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Pictures for the Attention!! page should be black-and-white shots that are unique either in content, angle or technique. Columns, essays or poems should be no longer than 500 words and should be either printed or typed.

Don't forget to put your name and phone number on anything you send us. Then drop it off at The Battalion, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building. Be sure to specify that it is for At Ease.



Photo by Lawson Reilly

This week's Attention!! column was written by Jacqueline Catala, a sophomore psychology major.

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