

REVISITING THE Renaissance



Amy Browning, THE BATTALION

Two knights battle it out at the Texas Renaissance Festival in Plantersville.

Festival celebrates medieval culture

By Amy Uptmor
 THE BATTALION

For two months every fall, knights can be found jousting, and fairies can be seen in the woods of East Texas, along with wizards, jesters and magical animals.

For the last 21 years, the Renaissance Festival in Plantersville has brought a little of the magic and culture of the English Renaissance to thousands of visitors from Texas and beyond.

More than 130 cast members, ranging from students to grandparents, transform into witches, nymphs and medieval maidens as part of the recreation.

Stephanie Budenstein of Houston becomes Oblivious the Jester every weekend at the festival.

"We have a multi-acted stage and a huge audience," she said, "so it takes a lot of people and practice to put this on."

Budenstein, who has acted before, said she has enjoyed being part of the festival for the past three years.

"I do it because it's fun," she said. "If something more were to come out of it, that would be great too, but that's not why I do it."

Participants rehearse for two months prior to the event to make sure the festival is as authentic and fun as possible. Budenstein said the rehearsal is necessary because of the sheer magnitude of the Renaissance Festival.

"People don't realize how much work goes into this," she said.

Visitors to the festival are treated to many stage performances, ranging from juggling acts to belly dancing, from across the country.

One of this year's acts, the Flaming Idiots, is a juggling trio from Austin. The group has been performing at the Renaissance Festival for the past four years, and members said they enjoyed returning from their extensive touring to the yearly Texas festival.

"Texas audiences are fun," Jon O'Connor, a member of the Flaming Idiots, said. "They're easy to whip into a frenzy."

Kevin Hunt, another member of the trio, said the group, like most acts, performs five times a day every weekend for the two-



Amy Browning, THE BATTALION

Audience participation is a big part of the Renaissance Festival. Men from the audience are selected to hold a rope for the performer while he juggles three sticks.

month span of the festival. Although it is a strenuous schedule, Hunt said it is definitely worthwhile.

"We pass the hat after every show to cover our expenses," he said. "This is very lucrative for us."

The Flaming Idiots' hour-long juggling act involves acrobatics, audience participation and, as their name implies, juggling with fire.

But the festival offers more than entertainment. Visitors can purchase "Renaissance" items ranging from shoes to magic dust or have their palm and tarot cards read by fortunetellers. Close to 200 vendors are present at the festival to offer their trades and crafts.

Large crowds attend the Renaissance Festival, even if people are going for their hundredth time.

Katy Null of Houston said she and her friends have made a tradition of going to the festival at least once every year.

"They create such a unique atmosphere here," she said. "It's a fun way to escape and play for a day."

Kathleen McCullough of Dallas visited the festival for the first time this year and said she was impressed by the festival directors' efforts to recreate the Renaissance.

"I was expecting everything to be made out of cardboard," she said. "I didn't think they had an actual Renaissance village built out here. It's very impressive."

Society for Creative Anachronism re-enacts medieval traditions

By Katharine Deaton
 THE BATTALION

An anachronism is something out of its place or time.

Crystal Bennett, Society for Creative Anachronism president and a senior civil engineering major, said SCA recreates the clothing, food, fighting and arts of the Middle Ages.

"Just about everything they did in the Middle Ages, we do," Bennett said.

SCA is participating in the Renaissance Festival Nov. 3-5.

At the festival, the group has a booth to display dancers, arti-

sans, singers and fighting demonstrations.

Sandra White, a senior ocean engineering major and SCA recruiter, said the group enjoys the Renaissance Festival.

"It's a lot of fun," White said. "The artisans set up their specialty areas which include embroidery, calligraphy, weaving and bead work. They also show off the costumes they've made."

The main event at the festival is the fighting demonstration, Bennett said.

"We show two different combat styles," she said. "We recreate the chivalric fight and rapier combat."

The chivalric fighting consists

of armored knights on the ground with long swords and axes. The rapier combat is compared to street brawling with daggers and knives, Bennett said.

Joe Simpson, an employee with the chemistry department, is the knight marshal for the group and is in charge of the chivalric combat.

"I make sure that when we fight, it's safe," Simpson said. "I also teach the new members how to fight."

Sometimes, melees will happen at the festival, Simpson said.

"During a melee, two teams fight each other," he said. "There can be up to 4,000 peo-

ple fighting."

Research is required for the group to effectively recreate the Middle Ages, Bennett said.

"Our main point is education," he said. "Everyone does research. We have our own library of books people have collected over the years. Eventually, someone becomes the expert on a subject and teaches everyone else."

Bennett said they want to educate all students, not just those active in SCA.

"We have two goals," Bennett said. "One is to let people know what SCA is if they want to be in it. The second is to educate people about the medieval period."



The Best Pizza In Town, *Honest!*

FAST FEAST BUFFET SPECIAL

Mr. Gatti's FastFeast Buffet
 Specially Priced Just For You!
 All You Care To Eat!

HAPPY HOUR SPECIAL
 Mon.-Fri. 2-5 p.m.
 Your choice of any small pizza plus all you care to eat salad.
\$2.99 plus tax

- Pizza (lots of different kinds!)
- SpaGatti (with Mr. Gatti's rich 'n meaty sauce!)
- Fresh 'n Healthy Salad!
- Desserts (including Mr. Gatti's Dutch Apple Treat and Very Cherry Dessert Pizzas!)

Weekday Lunch
\$2.99
 Plus Tax

served M - F
 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Dinner & Weekend Buffet
\$3.99
 Plus Tax

served M - F 5 - 9:30 p.m.
 Sat. - Sun. 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

107 South College • 268-8888



Thomas Jefferson said, "We are not afraid to follow the truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it." It is in this spirit that we pursue the question, "Quae res veritas?" -- What is truth?

THE VERITAS FORUM IS COMING!

COFFEEHOUSE!

Fright-day the 13th...

...the guitarrror begins at 8:00 postmortem

Rudder Fountain



THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE THEIR EYES!

THEY COULDN'T ESCAPE THE CHEESE!

AND NEITHER WILL YOU!

in **CINEMASCOPE** and **TERROR-COLOR** by DE LUXE

Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.

