

The Society for Creative Anachronisms

by Rick Gaigneur



Picture if you will a green field encircled by colorful pavilions, pennants flying in the breeze. Lords and ladies in medieval garb stroll about, engaged in pleasant conversation. A minstrel strums on his lute, softly singing a love song. On the field, armored knights strive with sword and shield for their kingdom's highest honor. In the royal pavilion the King and Queen confer with their officers. During a lull in the fighting a green-cloaked herald steps forth and announces a Royal Court. The people in all their finery begin to gather around the throne...

Is a scene from a medieval romance? In this case, no. This is the Society for Creative Anachronism, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to recreation of the Middle Ages, as they were, and as they might have been. It is part of the "living history" movement, which means that members try to reproduce various aspects of the culture and technology of their period, as well as doing more traditional historical research. The SCA sponsors events such as tournaments, revels, and university sessions where members dress according to medieval and Renaissance styles, and participate in activities based on the civil and martial skills of the period.

The main focus of most outdoor events is a form of combat based on the tournaments of the High Middle Ages. Participants wear replica armour, and use weapons made from rattan, which have the balance and handling properties - but not the lethal effect - of the originals. They fight on foot, as was done a good part of the time after the mounted courses were run, following a system of rules which permit a realistic sport while promoting a very high safety record. Extensive training is required, all combatants must be tested and authorized before fighting, and all participants sign waivers of liability.

There are two main types of armed combat in the SCA - tournaments and battles (or wars). Tournaments usually involve two fighters in one-on-one combat, following a single or double elimination system. Battles, however, involve mass combat - often hundreds of fighters on the field at one time. The largest of this type of event - the Pennsic War, held annually in Pittsburg, PA. - usually has upwards of two thousand armored men and women's upon the field. And beyond the simple field battle, there are woods battles, bridge battles and dozens of other variants.



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Besides costume dancing, music, cooking, and social skills which society events are of history rather than an attempt to preserve dress and behavior. gear to loan out, and prepared visitors.

Other than tournaments, these include feasts, classes in medieval garb, eating, music, and dancing, brewing, needlework, or to while away a few areas as possible: p

Integral to the personal character of a historical figure, not wanted to be a six