

MN Renaissance Festival Opening Newsletter for Entertainment 2004

It is hard to believe that the year has spun around a corner and here we are looking down the home stretch and getting ready to do it all over again. The festival grounds are being groomed, rookies are preparing to present themselves on our streets, crafters are making stock and many of us are looking forward to the excitement of opening weekend.

The purpose of this letter is to communicate what we've been up to, what's new, what's different, and what's expected. Please read through the entire letter since there is information here that pertains to all performers, including stage and street, rookie and veteran. Once you've read through this letter and if you still have questions, please forward them to carrh@att.net.

QUEEN-PRINCE-COURT

By now most of you know that Michael Border has stepped down as King, and Lolly Foy has stepped up to be our sole Monarch. She will be the focal point of our royal family. Her experience and talent make her the perfect choice to take on this challenge. She IS our Queen!

John Behr is changing character and will no longer be Prince Phillip. There has been some conjecture around why John has chosen to change his role; rest assured that it was his choice to do so. His new persona is Prince Henry. Henry, unlike Philip is not a bumbling, skirt chasing, and sot. He will be more king like, more of a leader, noble, fierce and gentlemanly. The cast will notice both physical and attitude changes in John's approach to this role. Please, don't ask where Phillip is, or be surprised if John ignores your inquiries should you ask. He IS Prince Henry, give him your respect.

Lynn Kissock is our Court Director, the court Princess. She will also be focused on making the court more regal, while maintaining accessibility. She and Reid Hegland are the contacts for all things in the Royal Court. If you want to work with the Court, interact or engage with them, your access point will be either Reid or Lynn. Remember, if we don't treat them like celebrity and royalty, the illusion is broken and we shortchange our patron's experience.

LEATHER BADGES

This year all entertainers will be asked to wear, or to have visible, stamped leather badges. These badges identify you as a performer working for MAF, and allow our audience to know who is, and who is not, performing with us. There will be a notice in the program showing the badge and letting our patrons know that they can identify our performers simply by looking for the leather badge. This will help us to discriminate between our performers and the patron who come out dressed in costume.

Please make sure this leather badge is visible. It must be worn above the waist. You may decorate or attach it as you wish and you must have your name printed on the back. If



you loose your badge you must pay a \$10 recovery fee. You must have this on during the show at all times.

CHILDRENS REALM

This year we are remodeling the entire Children's Realm. This remodel is coming late in the season, but it will be a perfect opportunity for you to develop and work on material for kids. The Children's realm is a place of magic, song, and laughter. Like the front gate, the Children's Realm is family friendly.

"Wizards" is the theme. We'll be moving the dragon to a place that it can be accessed easier, and where our dragon used to be, up on the hill, there will now be an area for a wizard or another character to have periodic meetings with kids, and where various magicians can do close up magic.

This whole area is being redone to encourage storytelling and music, craft projects, singing and dance. With such a late start, we are looking for leaders who would like to develop material and characters fit for the Children's Realm. What could some of this character work be?

- A Wizard's Apprentice
- Storytellers
- Playing games, inventing games
- Artists and painters (teach kids painting or art)
- Magician and jugglers
- Crowns and Tiaras's (Hey, kids love someone wearing a crown or tiara)

Any other ideas? Talk with us and we'll be happy to help you fit this into your work and development.

GREEN ROOM TRAILER AND PORTABLE TOILETS

The festival management has agreed to provide us with a trailer for a new green area. This trailer is located just behind the first aid booth and the costume shop. Some of you know this area as "Summer Palace" and it is where our Royal Court gathers and takes breaks. This air conditioned trailer is for us to use when taking breaks. There will be a picnic tables and ashtrays outside, and places to sit and rest inside.

These trailers are part of my long-term plan to rebuild our performance support infrastructure. I believe that in order to get the best performance out of our cast, the festival needs to invest in accommodations and programs that give us, the performing company, a sense that we are valued.

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Green Room areas are kept clean by the cast. This means you must take care of your own trash, clean up after yourselves, sweep the trailer and pick up junk. Please, take care of this trailer so that everyone can enjoy them. Here are a few simple rules.

- No smoking in the trailers or near the front door
- ALL cigarettes must be put in an ashcan. If the area becomes littered with butts, smoking will be banned from the break areas
- Do not store your things in the trailer. It is not a storage area
- Do not bring guests backstage to the break areas
- Stay out of First Aid unless you need first aid
- Stay out of Joann's Trailer unless invited, or you need to get cool immediately
- Limit your stay to 15 minutes or less



ENTERTAINMENT AND PRODUCTION OFFICE

We have moved our office out of Bad Manor. Our new office is located next to the coffee shop in 600 from backstage of the inner circle. Our office has a balcony that faces the pavilion.

Office Hours are posted 10:30-12:30 (subject to change) for the first two weekends. We will have expanded hours of operation on the first two weekends, then limited office hours thereafter that will be announced.

A CAST CALLBOARD will be located on the wall next to the entertainment office doors for you to post general announcement and notices. If you have any questions or need to meet with us

There are a few events that are mandatory for ALL performers, unless otherwise noted. In order

1. Cast Call (All performers, stage or street must have a representative here)
2. Front Gate Celebration (All performers, stage or street, must make a visit here)
3. Parade (Street performers)
4. Post Parade
5. Closing Gate (All performers available)

CAST CALL

Cast call is *mandatory* for all members of the performing cast, **including** stage and street acts. If you are unable attend please make arrangements us ahead of time. If you were a member of a large group you may send a representative, however, I would prefer you press for your whole group to come along.

If you are/were unable to make it we're asking for you to check in with Peggy, our Production Assistant. Peggy will be keeping track of all Cast Call attendance. Failure to

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attend cast call without reason may result in revocation of your pass and performing contract.

CAST CALL SCHEDULE

- 7:50 Cast announcements. This is the time for the cast to make announcements of general interest.
- 8:00 Cast notes. Performing tips, special announcements, stories, awards and audience performance tips. With few exceptions there will be no cast announcements to cast during this time. Attending this portion of CC is required (exceptions cleared in advanced if possible)
- 8:15 Swing Low (I've got your back!)

Cast call (CC) is a time for us to stand together and prepare for the day. I am asking that you gather near the Bakery stage and for conversation to remain focused on the stage. I understand CC has a social element to it, however, from 8:00 to 8:15, the focus will be on cast and production notes from the stage. It will also be an opportunity to reward good work of fellow performers.

There will be a brief Q&A at the end of CC if you have any questions about promotions, performance, or other such inquiry. CC is NOT a forum for airing grievances or complaints. If you have other concerns you may see the production manager or me after CC is completed, or fill out a page in the Entertainer request book located in the Entertainment Office.

NO SMOKING! There will be NO SMOKING at CC from 7:50 to completion of the Swing Low sing (8:20). This includes back rows and surrounding areas. There have been several requests from people who have medical conditions that are complicated by second hand smoke, so for twenty minutes during CC please, NO SMOKING!

First Weekend Notice! There will be no cast-to-cast notes on the first Saturday & Sunday (August 14th and 15th) of festival. We are going to need time to discuss the opening gate program and practice the new song.

IF YOU HAVE NOT RECIEVED YOUR ID, COMPS, ETC. YOU WILL NEED TO PICK IT UP BETWEEN 7-7:55AM AT THE BAKERY STAGE SATURDAY Aug. 14th. IF YOU HAVE NOT TURNED IN YOUR CONTRACT YOU MUST DO SO AT THAT TIME!!!!!! We will hold all comps if you have not turned in your contract.

PLEASE PLAN ON BEING AT CAST CALL ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, AUGUST 14th & 15th! THIS IS REQUIRED! PLEASE ALLOW EXTRA TIME TO GET TO SITE, CHECK IN, GET YOUR COMPS, ID, ETC. AND GET TO CAST CALL BY 8:00 ON SATURDAY AND BY 7:45 ON SUNDAY.



CELEBRATION!

Last year CELEBRATION was the operative word for entertainment. Our morning gate "curtain" was a celebration of all good things in life. It was a stunningly successful example of creating an emotional experience for our patrons. Celebration was the operating system, not only for the front gate, but also for the entire festival day. We are celebrating LIFE! It was an element we could build upon.

Celebration! - Our festival is built on the premise of a celebration. Our shire is celebrating the end of summer, the cessation of hard work, and the arrival of the Royal Family. It's the operating system behind everything we are doing; it informs our actions, or language, and our attitude.

Celebration! It is at the heart of the transaction with our patrons, it is our exchange with them. Whatever differences we have, whatever we feel about the show or each other, let our approach to our guests be an unabashed celebration of good in ourselves and in them.

For many of us, the festival is a celebration that we can't wait to return to, year in and year out!

WELCOME HOME!

This year we will build on the idea of celebration with WELCOME HOME! This means that everyone coming through our gate is friend, family, neighbor, brother or sister, or a member of our family.

"Welcome home!" you may exclaim. These patrons have been on a year's journey through the troubles of the modern world, and now they've come back to the simple celebration and connection to home.

None are strangers, all are friends, and life is good! WELCOME HOME!

FRONT GATE CELEBRATION

All street characters are being scheduled to participate in our front gate opening and morning celebration. This means an 8:45 (*8:30 on the first weekend*) call to the front gate. The first weekend we will give everybody an idea of the staging areas size and then let you work the area, as you'd like. Don't plant yourself in one spot, move around, keeping mindful of the blocked traffic patterns. Walk with patrons and lead them into the show, then head back towards the gate and escort a few more. We will also be singing (if

we can sing over the crowd noise) a new song, another element in the chorus of welcome. There will be a *lot* of performers in this area, so spread out, move into open spaces, and walk with people.

Theme parks and retailers understand the impact of the first few feet of an experience. It must be strong, committed and overwhelming. When you go to Disney World, the line-up of Disney characters near the front entrance, especially in the mornings, is a way of setting tone and jumpstarting the din. Din is important since it means ambient sound, background noise, and general atmospheric commotion. Creating energy and din at the front gate will turn our front gate entrance into a front gate *experience* and give our audience a special treat.

ROYAL ARRIVAL

"*What happens at the front gate that's so special?*" The Royal Family is going to arrive from the parking lot (actually, they'll be gathering at "B" gate and taking a stroll past the ticket office). They'll gather on a small platform that has been placed just outside the front gate. The Mayor's Entourage will already be in place above the front gate and will welcome the Royals (we are taking historic license here since the King and Queen would never stand below the Mayor!). The Queen will make a toast from the platform, essentially with and part of the audience, and command the Mayor to ignite the canon. BOOM! The Royal Entourage will be *first* through the front gate, after which the rest of the doors will open allowing patrons to follow.

From the moment the cannon sounds our celebration begins with dancing, singing, greeting new friends. It's folly and fun that will create vital energy for our patrons. When those doors open we have a great opportunity to provide an overwhelming "welcoming experience" for our patrons.

The Royal Guard and Royal Family & Entourage will be first through the front gate, after which the rest of the doors will open to let patrons follow. The Royal Family will gather at the small musicians stage for meet and greet, while the rest of us will greet, dance, sing, and welcome each person and family crossing over into our world.

The front gate gives us a divider that will help us provide a truly remarkable experience for those patrons that come to the festival early. We will continue to schedule the front gate for the remainder of the day, but the opening hour will see the biggest investment in talent and focus.

Some of you will be scheduled at the gate for 15 minutes, others 45 minutes to an hour. Whatever your scheduled time, treat the front gate area as a zone of celebration, positive energy, and fully welcoming. Please refrain from insults, put downs, in your face shouting or bawdy routines. This is a kid and family friendly area, and a place for all to

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feel like they've come home. AGAIN, NO INSULTS, BAWDY ROUTINES OR IN-YOUR-FACE ANTICS NEAR THE FRONT GATE!

Be conscious of the booths near the gate and do your best to help people move along. Don't plant yourselves in one spot, remain fluid and move around, expanding as necessary, leading the audience further into the festival. If it gets packed, expand, and move out a bit.

You can help make the front gate a real experience for our patrons! Remember, as rookies learned this year, all you need to know to build a successful street character is to start with a simple "Hello!" and "Welcome." If you can do this in period language all the better, if not, just get out there and welcome them to our place! *Welcome them all day long!*

Note to musicians! We hope you'll join us. It's an opportunity to pitch your show, generate some vibe with the rest of the cast, and to make the celebration work. I know some of you are scheduled in other areas at that time, however, if you're not scheduled please come up and have some fun with us!

ROYAL RECEPTION

The parade will start at 2:00 PM and will take its usual route. (Note: On days where our heat is above 90%, we may choose a shorter route) The Royal Family will be at the end of the parade, with our Queen being the very last! *Like the front gate, this is a "must be there" event for every entertainer (save for musicians or stage shows that are scheduled elsewhere).*

The stage is fully blocked, as is the audience area, with each performer having a specific area they will occupy. The Royals will arrive to the committed cheering and adulation of our cast, and upon taking to the stage the Queen will turn to face the audience and cast wherein all will stop cheering and, with a great gasp, take a big humble bow. This is a picture postcard event, so the bow and our response to her majesty, as well as the look upon our faces tell the story of celebration and good times!

The Queen will address the audience, and entertainment will begin. If it's a hot day, the Reception will run about 8 to 10 minutes, on milder days it may run as long as 15 minutes. The entertainment will be a combination of musical groups; stage acts (Puke and Snot will make an appearance), and selected street acts. The Royal Reception will conclude with another toast from the Queen and the cast will sing as the royal family departs. We'll call this the Big Sing, and you'll find a lyric sheet included in this newsletter. We'll be practicing the song each cast call until we all know it.

For this reception to work we must treat it with respect. In order for the Royal Court and the Mayor's Entourage to command respect, we must give it. The Royal Reception isn't

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a time for goofing around and attention grabbing. This IS the centerpiece event of the day. It's regal, royal, and real. If we embrace this event wholeheartedly, we will leave our patrons with an experience that is visual, entertaining and a lifelong memory. Let the Royal Family be regal, hold them up, celebrate their arrival, and breathe life into this big event.

If you are not in the parade for some reason, you will need to be present at the Reception as the Royal Court arrives. We are aware that the site will be quiet for 15 to 20 minutes each day but believe it will be worth it if we achieve our goal of creating a remarkable memory.

Note! After the conclusion of the show those street performers that have not walked the length of the parade will be schedule to animate the streets for 30 minutes. This will allow performers who have done the parade a chance to rest up before re-entering the street experience.

ROYAL FAMILY

We must return to the idea that our Royal Family is Royal! The only way that happens is if the entire cast, stage acts included, stay committed to this idea. That means we must be on the look out for them and intensely hopeful that we'll have the chance to get up close, to actually see them.

Approach the Royal Family with respect. They are the icons of the festival and if we ignore their passing treat them as nothing, and then they are nothing. Bow, show respect, and never, ever, ever let on to patrons that this is anything but our Queen, our Prince and our Princess

Check with Reid Hegland, the Court Herald if you have some routine or "bit" that you'd like to do with the Royal family. You may approach them on the street, but do so with complete humility, without malice or hostile intent.

MAYOR'S ENTOURAGE

The shire is in the hands of a bumbling, foolish, friendly Mayor, who has an entourage of well-dressed followers that are a little sharper. The Mayor's Entourage must also be shown a great deal of respect. We would treat them as we would our Queen, with respect.

The Mayor's Entourage is loaded with seasoned professionals that aren't afraid to have encounters on the street. Both veteran and rookie performers should interact with this group, since they have all the herbs and spices that might make your encounter work. If you're not certain, check with them at Cast Call and see if you can arrange to work with them in the streets.

CROWNS

Crowns may be worn on the site for every occasion except the Royal Reception. You may NOT wear a crown at the Royal Reception without prior approval from myself. Also, Mid-America Festival will reserve the right to ask any performer or entertainer to refrain from wearing a crown.

CLOSING GATE AND DRUM JAM

These are the last two grand events of the day. From 6:30 to 7:00 performers should plan to be present at one of these two places. There are some options here. Some of you may choose to be inside the front gate saying goodbye to our patrons. Others may opt to participate in the show outside the front gate. Either way you'll be part of a departure experience.

If you opt for the Drum Jam, dress for it. It's a half hour of wild drumming and some rather strange dancing. It builds until the canon sounds the end of the day. If you attend the jam, do your best to invite patrons into the dance, get them to be a part of it!

By 6:30, all of our performers should be out of the back of festival, and should be working areas between the Bad Manor, the Bear Stage, Irish Cottage, and the front gate.

Once the final canon has blown, our day is done and it's time to rest and recover for the next day or the week ahead. Please be aware of you conversation and language until all patrons have passed.

GREEN AREA AND TRAILER

The small green area near Joann's trailer is official break area #1, and the area. There will be Gatorade, water and ice on the hot days, as well as a bulletin board with announcements and notices. If you need to get a hold of someone on the entertainment staff, Jo will have a radio in her trailer and she can summon us. If Jo is not present, you'll need to visit any beer booth or Safety Services personnel. There will a book for notes and suggestions in the Entertainment Office, this to note any problems or concerns. If you have a more serious concern, please contact one of us personally. We ask that you use discretion in contacting us so that we aren't burden with endless calls.

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BAD MANOR

Bad Manor is off limits for the cast unless you are scheduled in the feast, has an assigned space in the Manor, or are musicians storing an instrument. This includes the courtyard, kitchen, Feast Hall, and any area above the Feast Hall.

Note! We can no longer use the balcony in the Manor, so access is absolutely open only to those acts or performers that are performing in the Feast are a musician and/or have an assigned spot. No one may stay the night in the Manor. This is an absolute rule and breaking it will cost you your work with festival!

CHANGING CHARACTERS

Performers may not change characters without prior consent. Whatever character you are contracted to perform is what you'll be paid to perform. Should you choose to change costume to portray a different character, one for which you've not been contracted, you will forfeit your fee for the day.

This of course does not mean that you can't change costumes since most of us have multiple costumes. What it means is that if you change characters (i.e.: royalty moves to belly dancer or beggar, or peasant turns up as royalty.) during the day you cannot expect to get paid. If you have multiple characters you'll need to have each of those characters listed in your contract and provide a photograph of the new character in costume.

If you have any further questions about this please see us.

CONVERSATION CLUSTERS

Though it's been covered a hundred times and in different ways, please be aware of conversation clustering and social circles. This is the quickest way to shut the audience out and, unfortunately, it happens far too often.

When you are on the street you are performing and in character. In fact, you are in character all the time. When you cluster in personal conversations that exclude the audience, you effectively hamper the work of other members of the cast and of the production itself. One performer will create a great moment for a patron, who then walks a few feet away to discover the backs of other performers gathered in a social circle that doesn't include the patron.

I will be working on this with everyone. If you are on the street your only obligation (other than your immediate health) is to the audience. Anything that doesn't include them is just a waste of time and your talent.

Back up and face out! Welcome patrons, greet them, and don't let your social conversations; your gossip, rumor, or other frustrations become your "performance" on the streets.

ZONES

We have discontinued our use of neighborhoods. This year the neighborhood schedule has been reduced to colored zones. We will inform you of those zones when they have been established. You will be asked to cover certain zones, at your discretion, throughout the day. We really need your help with this, and rather than returning a mandatory and "policed" system of scheduling, we are asking you to be accountable for working these areas. Remember, the edges of our festival never see the kind of entertainment exchanges other areas do. Street acts seem to gravitate towards the center of the festival, leaving outer areas void of din, excitement and energy. Explore, look for and create energy in our outlands!

While you are working your zone, get to know and include the crafters in the area. We had a lot of positive feedback last year from crafters who claimed a new connection with many new performers. They love what we are doing, greet them, make connections and build relationships, browse their shops, praise their works, and most of all include them in the celebration and fun. Inclusion is a lot more fun than exclusion whether you're a member of the audience, or you're a crafter.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The festival is special to each of us, for reasons of our own. For me, this show has been a life long love. My mother passed away one week after the show ended last year. The festival was her love and she was a tireless advocate and promoter. What I remember most about last year was her awe at the energy of the front gate in the morning, and the new color and energy on the streets. She noticed that street performers weren't just walking by, but greeting more, engaging more, and generating more energy. She loved the post parade show, the color and excitement the PAGENTRY of it all. She was mostly wheelchair bound by then, and for a few short hours she felt that she could walk again, dance, and be part of this place the way she loved to be.

I will miss her more deeply this year, for it will be the first time in my life that she has not been to show, worked it, walked about, or made an appearance. But I want to honor that legacy by reminding all of you that what we do is create some magical and beautiful. Every encounter has an embedded possibility for something extraordinary. Perhaps our work will help someone to find laughter in tough times, levity through personal pain, and joy through loss. Perhaps it will bring a couple together, children to be inspired, and families to bond. Perhaps someone like my mother will believe in miracles, that they can get up and walk, to dance again with us.

You are part of a long tradition of performing that stretches back through time. We are all connected to the jester and fool, the vagrant performer, and all performers who have



created magic and joy on street corners everywhere. In short, we create beauty through laughter; through our music and dance and through the words we speak into the warm summer breeze.

Embrace this heritage of magic, step up, and celebrate the goodness in humanity while allowing our patrons to leave the darkness in the world outside our gates.

I am proud to be associated with such remarkable people and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to create, multiply, and exchange joy and energy with our patrons and each other.

Lastly. Just have fun and enjoy yourselves all!

Cheers!

Carr Hagerman
August, 2004



THE REVELRY SONG

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Music: "Se Ome Feyer" from *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, c.1252

As the sea-son waxes to-win-ter, gath-er with your friends most-dear. May we har-vest smiles and-laugh-ter, may our hearts burst forth-with- cheer! Hail most noble lords and lad-ies; Hail be-loved roy-al-ty! In this vil-lage, all are wel-come, join us in our re-vel-ry! Step ye li-vely, hey non-ny non-ny; bright and bon-ny, we-shall-be! Step ye li-vely, hey non-ny non-ny; join us in our re-vel-ry!

1. As the season waxes to winter,
Gather with your friends most dear.
May we harvest smiles and laughter;
May our hearts burst forth with cheer!

2. Young or old it matters not,
The magic of the revels abounds.
Bring forth all thy joy and splendor;
Drink in all the sights and sounds!

CHORUS:

Hail most noble Lords and Ladies!
Hail beloved Royalty!
In this village, all are welcome.
Join us in our revelry!

Step ye lively; hey nonny, nonny.
Bright and bonny, we shall be!
Step ye lively; hey nonny, nonny.
Join us in our revelry!

(CHORUS)

3. Leave all troubles as you enter,
Leave all thought of sorrow and strife.
Take the hand of friend and neighbor,
Join the revelry of life!

(CHORUS)

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