

Wren Press
 NEWS OF THE REALM
Minnesota Renaissance Festival



September 26-27

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EDITED BY - Rebecca Stevens





General News



A GREAT BIG THANKYOU

This has been an absolutely wonderful season and I wish I could thank each of you individually, but I can't. Therefore, on behalf of Mid-America Festivals and Castle Kitchens, please accept my heartfelt thanks for a season to remember.

Tim Ruddy
General Manager

Participant Party Tonight

Come join us for awards, thankous, food and drink and dancing to the big band sound of J.P. Jazz. Festivities begin at 8:00 Saturday. Remember you must have a Renaissance I.D. to enter the Blue Barn and a legal I.D. to be served alcoholic beverages.

GOOD BYE--GOOD BYE

We'll miss your bright and shining faces seen through the early morning mists! We thank you for your cooperation, and we'll see you next year.

Gate C - - Denise Segerstrom, Julie Hagen, Vic Hendries
Gate B - - Lois Hendries & "Butch" Folwick

Thank you -- Thank you -- Thank you

Thank you, Randy, for all your hard work and support. You've made this another wonderful year for all of us. Randy, we love you!

Safety Services and Gate Guards

Another thank you is issued for those who participated in the "Flat Tire Party" that took place at the DOT entrance off of Highway 41 last Friday.

Rhonda and the less-than-trustworthy Batmobile

What do you get when you bury a member of the realm?
Peasant under grass!



Safety Services Investigation

Hi Folks,

I would like some feedback on the Safety Services and Gate Guards this year. They did try hard to do their best job. I am looking for ideas on how to improve their quality of work for next year. I cannot add more personnel, but maybe you have some suggestions for the weekday and weekend people. You may have some ideas that we have not thought about or consider a low priority. Please write your suggestions to:

Mid America Festivals
3525 145th Street West
Shakopee, MN 55379
ATT: Randy



Pence to Pounds

Huzzah! The 1587 Minnesota Renaissance Festival is drawing to a close with a general feeling that this year has been a wonderful success. Hopefully, this article has been helpful in understanding what it takes to produce this event. I've only touched on a small portion of what it takes to make this show.

By the time you have closed your shop for the year and had a chance to recuperate, the Festival staff (MAF & CKC) have already begun work for the 1988 show. Throughout the entire winter we continue to work hard on next year's show, with much of our planning completed by March. I would encourage all of you to begin planning now for next year. The staff will be able to better assist you with implementing your ideas if we hear from you EARLY in the year rather than one week before opening. Remember, the early bird catches the worm.

Throughout the season I have received many compliments about the Festival grounds. The people who really deserve the praise are the individual members of the Site Crew. So pass your compliments and thanks on to them. They've done a terrific job throughout the year working to make the site beautiful for all of us.

Brian Huseby
Director of Operations

Site Crew

Arne, Dennis, and Jason Erp, Kathy, Dean, Dennis, and Daniel Totushek, Bill Weinschenker, Jim Deline, Joe Monnens, Jim Hess, Cindy Gess, Bill Dobbs, John Elmer, Joe Smith, Mike and Jeff McCullough, Ron Anderson and crew. And many thanks to Brian Huseby for submitting this excellent column to the newsletter each week. He really figures around here.

REMINDER TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

If you were issued a Photo I.D. in 1987, this concerns you! Your Photo I.D. must be validated for use in 1988. A \$5.00 processing fee will be charged to issue a replacement.

CRAFTERS may turn in Photo I.D.'s at the end of the show or send them in for validation with 1988 signed contracts.

ENTERTAINER passes will be collected when checks are distributed.

GAMES participants, please turn in I.D.'s to Sherry Larson.

FOOD INDEPENDENTS watch for memo from Bonnie.

CASTLE KITCHENS workers are to turn in Photo I.D.'s in accordance with instructions issued by Mark Meier.

The condition of the pass is not a concern. It can be relaminated and will look almost as good as new.

We would like to collect as many passes as possible. The check-in system is designed to protect the inhabitants of our Festival Village, and we appreciate your cooperation.



Site Hours

September 28, 1987 to October 30, 1987
8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday thru Friday
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday

October 31, 1987 to May 31, 1988
8:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday thru Friday
CLOSED Saturday and Sunday
(or open by special arrangements ONLY)

CAMPGROUND WILL BE CLOSED OCTOBER 2, 1987
Remove all tents, buses, R.V.'s, cars and trailers by this date.

Anyone staying on site beyond October 2, 1987
PLEASE NOTIFY OFFICE IN WRITING



"Call off the dogs. It's being converted into ninety-three units of cooperative housing."



Chaser's Liquor

*Has doubled their size and wine selection

*Conveniently located on Hwy 212 in front of
Cooper's "New Market"

**Free* bag of ice with liquor or wine



CROWN JEWELS COMPETITION

King Henry and Queen Caroline seek designs for a new set of crowns. Designs or models must be dropped off at the costume shop by 9 AM, Saturday, September 26th. The winner will be announced that evening at final party. Design winner will be commissioned to build the crowns within a \$500.00 budget. Winner will receive 10 comps for the 1588 show and 2 goblets, as well as the commission for the crowns.



Travel Plans

If you need any help with travel arrangements, talk to Pattie Balitz, travel rep, at Pattie Bear Sheepskin Wear Cart near the Pavillion, or call [redacted]

Int'l. Fair
Faire Folk
www.faire-folk.com

Renaissance Fashion Police

Case No.3 "Un-Cultured Pearls"

Fashion Police Admiral Poop-deck Panache threw all of the Sailors into irons for appearing alarmingly *declassé*. "Shiver me timbers," poo-pooed Poop-deck at the slovenly display of seamen, "Someone should throw them back in the ocean- they're definitely not keepers."

Panache ordered all sailors to update their undoubtedly *un-unique* uniforms, and to do so *toute suite*, else walk the plank. "They should all shop the boutique on Promenade Deck for accessories," he advised "But puh-lease, no coral jewelry!"

Case No. 4 "Less is Morris"

Officer Geoffrey Too-Too recently sentenced the Morris Dancers to "30 days of reading Miss Manners" for disregarding the most oft-neglected fashion axiom. "I've heard of Morris Madness," lamented Too-Too, "and they HAVE to be mad for wearing white pants after Labor Day."

The thoroughly chagrined Morris Men promised to put away the tawdry trousers 'till next Memorial Day (NOT Easter Sunday, as many would believe) and leave them to on-duty Hosiptal Orderlies and grammar-school lunch ladies.

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LAST WEEKEND SPECIAL

For Participants Only

Show your participant's pass
and get a

10% discount
on Laird James
Pure Wisconsin Honey

at booth #130

ESPRESSO + CAPPUCCINO

COFFEE



TEA

~ iced beverages available ~

OPEN 7:45AM

DISCOUNTED PRICES

UNTIL THE BIG BOOM • BOOM!

Grey Castle located in Upson Downs

CONFERTEND
Coffee Roaster And Espresso

Amalgam Courtesy Of



Folk
www.faire-folk.com

The Cosmo Quiz:

Are you, or aren't you? Do you faun or frown at a frilly frou-frou? Take this quiz and find out.

Are YOU a Renaissance Trend-aholic?

(Directions) Check the answer that best completes the following questions. Add your score and compare to our evaluations which follow.

Image Courtesy Of
Faire Folk®
faire-folk.com



1. The person(s) I would most likely term my fashion role-model is:

() a. Beau Monde
() b. Prince Andrew/ the Duchess of Bedford
() c. Lord Mayor/ the Queen Mum
() d. the Ratcatcher/ Pastorius

2. I have a new Renaissance costume made:

() a. every year! I wouldn't be caught DEAD in last year's rags.
() b. every other year - though I'd probably go every season if I could afford it.
() c. when my old costume becomes too tattered to piece back together.
() d. I never have a new costume made. I've been wearing the same one for several seasons.

3. When it is cold or raining, I am most apt to:

() a. wrap myself in a luxurious cloak of wool or velvet, with a fur collar (real or fake), often with elaborate embroidery or trim work.
() b. borrow an old cape from a friend.
() c. huddle near the fire in the B.L.T. and pray for a warming trend.
() d. wallow in the mud - if you keep moving you stay somewhat warmer.

4. When applying cosmetics, I include a patch or beauty spot:

() a. always! In fact I sometimes sport three or more!
() b. sometimes - but only when I feel adventurous and naughty.
() c. almost never. And only to mask an occasional pimple or blemish.
() d. I wouldn't THINK of wearing one!

5. If I were a peasant, I would:

() a. dress as grandly as my station would allow - after all, it's not a crime to be poor as much as it is a crime to dress poorly.
() b. don a plain, yet immaculate shirt, clean hose in a neutral color, a somewhat somber, yet subtly elegant skirt or doublet, brightened with colorful accessories, i.e. ribbons, scarves, etc.
() c. shop the bargain-bins at Pier One
() d. wear my old scare-crow costume from last Hallowe'en

6. If I were Royalty, I would:

() a. mortgage my home, if need be, to have a truly fab-u ensemble. The sky's the limit!
() b. determine exactly how much I could afford and have a costumer adhere strictly to my budget.
() c. have my mother sew some trim on my old bride's maid dress - after all it's just hanging there in my closet...
() d. wear my old scarecrow costume from last Hallowe'en.

7. If I (due to some unthinkable catastrophe) HAD to wear the same costume next year, I would:

() a. perish
() b. bite my lip and up-date my look with accessories.
() c. give my costume a good mending and bask in the thought of how much money I've saved.
() d. do absolutely nothing! My costume was good enough five years ago and it'll be good enough next year - so what if it's looking a tad bit tacky?



SCORING YOURSELF

For every "A" give yourself 5 points, for every "B" give yourself 3 points. "C"s give you 1 point, and 0 points if you chose letter "D." Now add your score. If you scored between:

30-35 Congratulations! You are a born-i-fied Renaissance Trend-aholic! Ever dressed-to-excess, you would sooner chop off your be-jeweled pinky than part with your oh-so-trendy French pomander. But wait - do you adhere to your foppish finery a trifle too tenaciously? Your obsession with haute couture may be masking more serious problems.

20-30 You are tres en vogue, but not to a fault. You prefer an understated elegance and classic proportions which carry over into many seasons. You are fashionable but not to excess and realize that clothes don't necessarily make the man or woman.

10-20 A trifle tawdry, you are not altogether too concerned with what you are wearing, and are un-aware of the most obvious trends. You are the sort who would not bat an eye at wearing brown shoes with a grey suit. Strive a tad harder at presenting a more presentable you.

Below 10 There are those caught in a fashion rut, and then there's you - caught in a fashion abyss. Some people dress their age, yet people are a-gog at the age of your dress. Ironically, you believe you are dressing to kill - quelle pity that your tres tired ensemble is already dead. Take heed and banish yourself to fashion boot-camp, with Beau Monde as your drill instructor.





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11:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.

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TO WIN...**



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LAS VEGAS**

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with the purchase of
another hamburger



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This \$1.45 Value Can Be Applied
To Any Of Our Famous Burgers.

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Valid Oct. 1 Thru Oct. 31, 1987

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another hamburger



\$1.45 VALUE

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To Any Of Our Famous Burgers.

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Valid Aug. 1 Thru Aug. 31, 1987

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with the purchase of
another hamburger



\$1.45 VALUE

This \$1.45 Value Can Be Applied
To Any Of Our Famous Burgers.

One Coupon Per Person-Not Valid With Other Offers
Valid Sept. 1 Thru Sept. 30, 1987

9817 Dorset Lane

\$165 Gift Certificate



Leather Sale Sunday Only
10 - 40% Off
Shop 139
Frederick Ruff Leather Artisan

A Victorian Christmas Underway

Final plans are being made with Riverplace for the 5th annual "A Victorian Christmas." Last year 300,000 people visited, and this Christmas season looks to be even better than last year. Please contact Becky or your monitor if you are interested in participating as a crafts vendor. We also will accept consignments for the Victorian Parlor; Please contact Tim Rudy if you are interested in entertaining. More details to follow in next week's newsletter.



Lady Claudia's DESSERTS & DELACACIES

No Price Increases Since 1983!

NEW FOODS

Hye Rollers • Hot Biscuit Pockets
Claudia's Own Preserve and Sauce Line

STILL FEATURING

Giant Chocolate Truffled Strawberries
Fruit Sandwiches
Chocolate Decadence Cake

Lady Claudia's CASH ONLY
Very Good Guy Discount Coupon
Faire Folk
COSTUME PARADE IS ONLY
Receive 25% Off Any Beverage Purchase

One Coupon Per Beverage Purchase Only
Coupon Must Be Exchanged at Time of Purchase

..... DO YOU..... WHOLESALE?

- West coast representative
for professional
craftspeople
- Established (12 yrs.) prime
double booth at Beckman
handcrafted gift show in
Los Angeles.
- Contact now for
• JANUARY SHOW •
- CAMILLE KILMER
FOUR ACRE LAKE
MANHATTAN BEACH, MN
5 6 4 6 3
- OR
- STOP BY PEDDLER
THE SPINNER OF PORCELAIN
FACING THE BEAR F-4

Entertainment

Last Weekend Notes

It's going to be a great weekend for weather and a great weekend crowd. Let's give them the best theater of the year. With all the pre-season activities, Academy, and the Festival, it has been a long and fun season. Many new faces have joined the cast this year and have shown us new and exciting theatrics. Keep up the good work.

Don't let all the good ideas you've had this season slip away- write them down, save them, EXPAND on them and bring them back alive for next year.

If you change your address in the off season, please let the office know.

We don't want to lose you.

Remember most of all:

Stay in Character

Stay in theme

Leave a good impression

Have fun, Fun, FUN!

Attention Entertainers Attention

In an effort to ease the administrative nightmare of photo I.D.'s, we will follow this procedure on Sunday, Sept. 27:

1. All entertainers must report to the Yellow Pages Station in the Bad Manor Courtyard according to the following schedule:

A - L 3:00 to 4:00

L - R 4:00 to 5:00

S - Z 5:00 to 6:00

2. Turn in your photo I.D. and sign a temporary I.D. card which will be your I.D. for the rest of the day.

3. If you have a paid contract, you can also pick up your check at this time. Group leaders should report at their earliest convenience to pick up their group's checks so they can distribute them.

By doing this we will be able to distribute photo I.D.'s with contracts next year. Thank you for your cooperation.

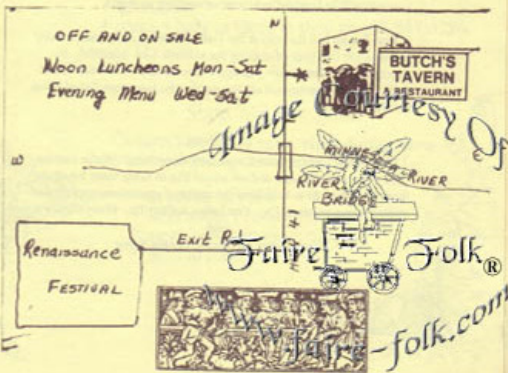
Richard Antley, a member of the Body Puppet Troupe, had an emergency appendectomy on Wednesday. He sends his regrets at not being here this last weekend and says good-bye to all his friends. He's recovering in Northfield City Hospital in Northfield, Minnesota.

CAPTURES: RUPTURED CAPTIONS



Will Jones made THIS???

New Kingdom rules, y'know. Here's my specimen!



Crafts

Thank you to YOU

The crafters in this show are such a wonderful group of people! I really want to thank all of you for helping create a truly fantastic show and a wonderful season. It's your enthusiasm, creativity and energy that make this such a success. Thank you all for being here and have a great year.

Until we huzzah again,
Becky

More Congratulations!

Ruben Prodahl, iron worker at the Festival, was featured on the cover of "Country Sampler Magazine."

Jaclyn Garlock, of Laird Mac Norman, has one of her Santas in the current "Better Homes and Gardens Christmas Idea Book."

Cheers and kudos to you two wonderful crafters. If you or your craft item wins special awards, are featured in a magazine or newspaper article, let us know. We love sharing the good news.

Closing Notes

Shop Closing: After October 1, 1987, anything not within the physical confines of your shop will be cleaned up and trashed. You will be charged \$25.00/hour labor, as well as equipment and dumping fees, minimum charge of \$50.00. If the junk is spread behind, in front of, around shops, the charges will be split between shops. Materials may be left inside structure at shopkeeper's risk.

Carts: Any Carts left on the site after October 1, 1987, will be disposed of or become property of the Festival. If you intend to leave it on the site, arrange with a shopkeeper who will let you store the cart inside the shop for the winter.

Hall of Masters

This last weekend the Festival Masters will be featured at the Hall. So be sure to bring your work over if you are a Master.

Votes will be coming in this weekend for new Masters and Artisans. Those elected will receive notice in the mail with their contract and will be honored next year on opening weekend.

Lirne Jensen and the staff at the Hall of Masters have done a really fantastic job this year of making the exhibits look beautiful. So stop by and let them know you appreciate all their hard work and efforts. They've appreciated all the people who have contributed items for display.

Monitors

How about them monitors, ain't they something? We've had the best crew ever this year and we would like to thank them for all the hard work they do to help keep the craft and entertainment programs rolling along so smoothly. You ladies are terrific. Many thanks to you!

Gary Parker and Becky Stevens Kirby

Advance Payment of Fees and Space Reservations for Next Year

This year we will again offer a 5% discount for 1988 peddler or shop space fees paid in full by September 30, 1987. The shop space fee will remain at \$30.00 per frontage foot; therefore, prepayment for an average 15' space would generate a \$22.50 saving.

If you applied for dollar demo credit for 1988, please wait until the last weekend to pay. We may have your credit amount ready by then and can deduct it from your total. If not, we will refund your demo credit at a later date.

Payment of 1988 fees and space reservation deposits will be taken at the Gate B Participant Booth on September 19, 20, 26 and 27. Reservations must be accompanied by a \$50.00 per 15' shop space deposit. (If you have 2 shop spaces, a \$100.00 deposit is required, 3 spaces means a deposit of \$150.)

This is in accordance with the Show Rules and Regulations which are a part of your Craft Participation Agreement.

Plastic Earring Cards 1" x 1" \$.02 each

Have several thousand
call Ms Lock

Attention Jewelry Makers and Wood Workers Headed for Texas

See Stony in shop 503
Bargains Galore
Whirley Gigs, All Sizes
Cabachons

Tax Man Cometh

Wayne Souwold of the Minnesota Collections Bureau will be out to collect taxes on the last Sunday, Sept. 27. He will be here all afternoon and will need to see those of you who are from out of town.



Image Courtesy Of
for Sale

122 Donna George	521 Chris Holmquist
124 Den R. Kuehnemund	636 Becky Schmitt
127 Judy Hurd	653 Kathy Geiger
139 Frederic Ruff	654 Don Mahieu
226 Pam Hall	734 John Manning
330 Dick Brown	743 R. Kelly
420 Evelyn Letch	743 R. Kelly

Fair Folk
www.faire-folk.com

Renaissance Real Estate

Shop #139 for Sale
Frederic Ruff Leather Artisan
post and beam construction
parking in back
upstairs room and storage
\$7,000.00
stop by or call [REDACTED]

Shop 122 for Sale
20 x 20 sales floor Vaulted ceiling
2 1/2 stories plus balcony
1585 Shop Design Award
Coveted behind-shop parking
See George during show or call [REDACTED]

MY ERA ENDS - YOURS BEGINS
Shop 636-37 For Sale

- * Prime center circle location
- * Excellent Natural Light
- * 15 year prime customer traffic pattern
- * In the most beautiful area of the Faire!

\$5000.00
Contact Becky Schwalm [REDACTED] or in person
weekly at the Faire.

Colorado Renaissance Shop for Sale
post and beam construction
secure storage
parking in back
\$4,500.00 value, will sell for \$1,500.00
stop by shop #139
or call Rick at [REDACTED]

Shop For Sale
* prime front gate location
* oak beam construction
* tongue and groove pine interior
* brick floor
* native limestone fireplace
* sky lights
#226
\$12,500.00

Shop 330 331
For Sale
or trade for a smaller shop and \$.
30'x 20'
Large open space
Heavy construction
Near children's play Village
Versatile for many types of crafts
Dick Brown [REDACTED]

Shop for Sale
Large open front
storage room
5 years old
17 x 20
\$3000.00
Don Mahieu Shop 654

Spacious Double Shop for Sale
Parking in Back
Close to Witchwood and Museum
\$2,500.00 Shop#521
Stop by and see Chris or Sue Holmquist
or call [REDACTED]

FOR SALE: SHEPHERD'S HURD #127

- * 2yrs old. built to code
- * 20' frontage
- * clerestory windows
- * good traffic location
- * good back access
- * \$5,900.00
- * contact Judy or Gene at shop or [REDACTED]

Shop 743 For Sale
Contact Ray Kelly at the shop during show
hours or call during the week at [REDACTED]

- * in prime location
- * next to the Feast of Fantasy
- * new, only two years old
- * built to code

Faire Folk
faire-folk.com



The Comedy Troupe

-PRESENTS-

HAUNTINGS



OR

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And Other Assorted Creatures Of The Night To Terrify And Delight You !

At St. Anthony Main

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays Beginning October 8th Thru Halloween

Thursdays 8PM

Fridays 8PM and 10PM

Saturdays 8PM, 10PM, and MIDNIGHT

For Reservations Contact Daytons Ticket Office

For More Information [REDACTED]

Sponsored by: The Cities 97 and City Pages

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CKC would like to thank the following 1987 award winners for their outstanding performance and effort.

Bob Erlandsen
Craig Rauen
Dick Kling
Ann Hennessey

Paul Dymit
Scott Bradley
Marlene Novak
Leslie Gilbertson
Brenda Lee
Brigid Kelly
Ben Reed
Kay Norish
Mary Stark
Bobbi Jo Leiverman
Toni Martin
Sean Carse
Tanis Voibel
Nicole Nelson
Pam Quist
Karl Storms
Craig Boroaviak
Eric Larson
Guy Locke
Al Petersen
Mark Brose
Ernie Klockeman
David Bryce
Kristin Beise
Clyde Roberts
Chris Herrmann
Al Felmalce
Gera Townsend
Alex Wokal
Jerry Noferman
Terry Prokes
Brad Richardson
Tracy Beise
Heather Lagelm
Kathy Wadsworth
Carla Anderson
Karen Ekstrom
Mike Walsh
Mark Branberg
Brenda Stuart

Queen's Award--for overall performance by an area supervisor
Queen's Award--for overall performance by a commissary supervisor
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a booth supervisor
Queen's Award--for outstanding performance by a "rookie" booth supervisor
Knight's Award--for hawking
King's Award--as the Turkey King
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by an area supervisor
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a commissary supervisor
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a runner
Knight's Award--for hawking
Knight's Award--for hawking
Knight's Award--for hawking
Duke's Award--for endurance in the face of adversity
Knight's Award--for marvellous overall performance
Queen's Award--for exceptional customer service
Duke's Award--for excellent personnel management
Princesses' Award--for Renaissance spirit
Princesses' Award--for Renaissance spirit
Princesses' Award--for Renaissance spirit
Queen's Award--for superior product control
King's Award--for "Realm Renowned" hawking
King's Award--for "Realm Renowned" hawking
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a booth supervisor
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by an area supervisor
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a commissary supervisor
Queen's Award--for a special performance by a commissary clerk
King's Award--for outstanding achievement
King's Award--for outstanding achievement in the face of adversity
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a booth worker
King's Award--for Renaissance spirit
Queen's Award--for overall performance by an area supervisor
Knight's Award--for superior hawking
King's Award--for "Realm Renowned" hawking
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a booth supervisor
Queen's Award--for superior product control
Queen's Award--for overall performance by an area supervisor
Princesses' Award--for fantastic performance by a booth worker
Princesses' Award--for fantastic performance by a booth worker
Knight's Award--for superior hawking
King's Award--for outstanding achievement by a booth supervisor
Queen's Award--for Renaissance spirit
King's Award--for "Realm Renowned" hawking
King's Award--for "Realm Renowned" hawking
Knight's Award--for superior hawking

The following booths receive special recognition for hawking, spirit and overall performance:
237 Turkey -- Bryan Peterson, Lara Leuck, Jason Laxen, Bill Connell, Tiffany Robb, Sean Holt, Katie Wokal
621 Wine -- Audreen Verede and Joan Locke
714 Lemonade -- Deane Sutter, Kim Norkie, Jodie Miller, Bill Clinton

Congratulations to Scott Bradley on the 10th anniversary of his association with the Renaissance Festival.

Many more of you could easily be recognized for your work, but we feel these people must be awarded. We would like to thank all CKC employees for their effort in helping to make 1987 a very successful and profitable year.

PLAQUE AWARD WINNERS.





IN THE SERVICE OF ISABELLA
BY
ROGER BRIAN LEESE

I met the Priest at an inn where we had agreed it would be possible to converse without members of the court seeing us together. We knew that the only Phillip who would be seated near Lucretia would be the Ambassador of France, Phillip de la Roche Martin. We speculated that it was a sure sign that the King of France was weakening and that shortly after the Swiss armies of the Pope marched against Ferrara, the King would also sicken and die. Since we knew that the poison would be introduced into Lucretia's drink from a hollow cavity of the Ambassador's ring, our plan was laid out in a simple manner. It only depended on our vigilance so as to note the moment when the poison was used.

Our plan complete, I turned to the problem of the Humanist Bembo's attempt to take control of my acting troupe. I presented a coded message to the Priest that pleaded my cause to Marquessa Isabella. I also asked the Priest to add his voice to my petition. I reminded him that without my troupe to lead, I wouldn't have a means to stay employed at the court of Ferrara. Moreover, should I find a new manner to secure my daily bread, it would not likely have such a convenient excuse for me to travel among the royal court. The Priest listened to my arguments and considered them carefully. He cautioned me that Bembo, as philosopher, had little reason to complain should he not have an acting troupe at his disposal. The Priest chuckled at this and remarked that perhaps Isabella might enjoy seeing her Bembo taken down a peg.

The banquet was a large affair. The evening began with musical recitals. Alphonso de Este led the musicians through a number of modern pieces. Although Alphonso is a cousin man given to associate with his foundry men in low class inns and brothels, he is a fine musician. Listening to the music he writes and performs, one is convinced that under his coarseness beats the heart of a poet. Couples danced to the music and even the dour Duke Ercole de Este smiled when Alphonso and his bride Lucretia took a turn across the dance floor. The Priest and I kept an uneasy observation of the Ambassador. We both feared that he would have a chance to introduce the poison before our plan could be put into action. Discretion was needed if we were to succeed in more than saving the life of Lucretia.

The preliminaries of the evening passed slowly. There were long and overly complex speeches in Latin that praised the families of the bride and groom. As the speaker would be eloquent over the anointment of the Borgia clan, attention of the audience would begin to wander. As he left Spain with the Borgias for Rome and eventual power, whispered conversations began to grow louder. By the time the speaker had placed the Borgia Pope in the Vatican, the speaker could scarcely be heard over the muttering of the assembled households. As the speaker turned to the Este family, the din had grown so loud that finally the Duke Ercole himself stood and shouted for all to be silent out of respect for the speaker and the houses being discussed. At this the hall became so silent that I seemed to hear only the blood pounding in my veins. I watched intently as the Ambassador took glass after glass of wine. He would absently drink a bit and place the remainder of his goblet on the tray of a servant. Though he drank small amounts from each serving, I could see that he was becoming increasingly intoxicated. The tension of the wait caused my muscles to begin to cramp. I withdrew to a corner of the hall so as to stretch and still be able to intercede should the ambassador act before dinner. At long last the speaker moved from the 11th century to contemporary times and spoke of the living members of the family. As he compared the Estes to the Greek gods, I thought I should scream with impatience. Finally, the long-winded speech being concluded, the Duke stood and announced that dinner was to be served in the adjacent dining hall. All the guests gratefully streamed into the room and took their places. At last our plan could begin.

Lucretia sat between Isabella and the Ambassador. Across from her sat her husband and the Duchess of Urbino. The Priest signaled the servers to bring wine. I climbed onto the table and began to juggle flaming torches as I walked its length. Taking oil in my mouth, I blew flames over the heads of the guests, bringing huzzas and applause which I gratefully acknowledged. At the Priest's orders, the servers had placed the goblets of Lucretia and the Ambassador close to each other and near the Ambassador's hand. The Ambassador, now quite unobservant from his intake of wine, did not notice the Priest behind him as he introduced the poison into Lucretia's goblet.

I had just placed my torches in a brass urn filled with sand when I saw the Priest remove his kerchief and wipe his brow. At the signal, I began a series of flips down the length of the table. Stopping at the opposite end, I measured the distance, and taking two steps, executed a cartwheel that seemed to disintegrate in mid-air. My body tumbled over the two goblets sitting side by side and into the arms of the Ambassador. As the Ambassador and I tumbled backwards, the Priest deftly secured the two goblets. The nearby guests rushed forward to aid us. The Priest quietly returned the goblets to the table but exchanged their places. I apologized profusely as the Ambassador spluttered his indignation. He was helped to his feet and placed back in his chair. I was roughly deposited on the table, and crossing over, I regarded the scene. Had anyone realized our action?

The Ambassador had not. He tried to regain his composure and portray joviality as he took his goblet in hand. I quickly scanned the guests, but none seemed to realize our action. Isabella regarded the Ambassador kindly, as did Lucretia. Lucretia raised her goblet and regarded me. I saw by the look in her eye that she had observed our ruse. I nodded my head and she paused for a moment and then proposed a toast to the very good health of the Ambassador. He visibly started, and regaining his composure, raised his glass, accepted the toast, and drank his glass as he watched Lucretia drink hers.

I was banished from the dinner for my unseemly behavior and so withdrew from the hall. Julia met me outside the door and began to express her sympathy. She could scarcely understand nor could I explain why I was giddy with relief. I explained that in spite of my performance (or because of it) I felt that the future of our troupe was secure and we would surely be welcome in the court of the Estes.

