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into a non-profit educational society which now boasts more than 13,000 members and a million-dollar budget.

Working with the historical period between 600 to 1600 A.D., SCA members attempt to recreate every aspect of medieval life, from language to geography. They have divided the United States and parts of Canada into "kingdoms," which are then divided into baronies (areas with 20 or more members), shires, cantons and colleges.

The Eugene area is known as the Barony of Adiantum (Latin for maiden-hair fern) and is part of the kingdom of An Tir, which includes Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alberta and part of Idaho. The Eugene city group became a barony in 1974 and the campus chapter was reorganized last October.

Each member of SCA chooses a character from the Renaissance or the Middle Ages and assumes that persona in name and function. Members can become peasants, nobles, knights or even blacksmiths. Once members decide on their characters, they make costumes appropriate for that persona.

For example, one person may choose to be a herald and then becomes responsible for researching and designing coats of arms for each member. The coats of arms are then registered with a British historical society.

Not only do members make and wear period clothing, they also study medieval cooking,

weaving, metalwork, calligraphy, brewery and a number of other arts and crafts. One member translated a period cookbook from the original Middle English.

Baronies host regular events for members to exchange crafts, teach new skills and celebrate medieval "revels" or feasts. Large events will last for several days and are often staged in the country, complete with pavilion tents and fighting tournaments.

Fighting is a major component of SCA activities. The players in SCA tournaments simulate medieval, one-on-one battles using replicas of dark age weaponry made of rattan to make them safe. Fighters wear armor and all fighting is dictated by a specific code of honor.

SCA members admit to restricting historical recreation to the more romantic aspects of the Middle Ages — rats and dysentery are not invited. As one campus member put it, "We recreate the Middle Ages as they should have been."

The University has had an SCA group on and off for the past several years, but many of the group's current members stumbled across SCA through informal channels before the campus chapter was reorganized.

Marta Smith says she walked into an SCA tournament by accident at Fern Ridge Reservoir. She says she was intrigued by the costumes and amazed at being addressed as "M'Lady" by total strangers. After this first experience, Smith decided to

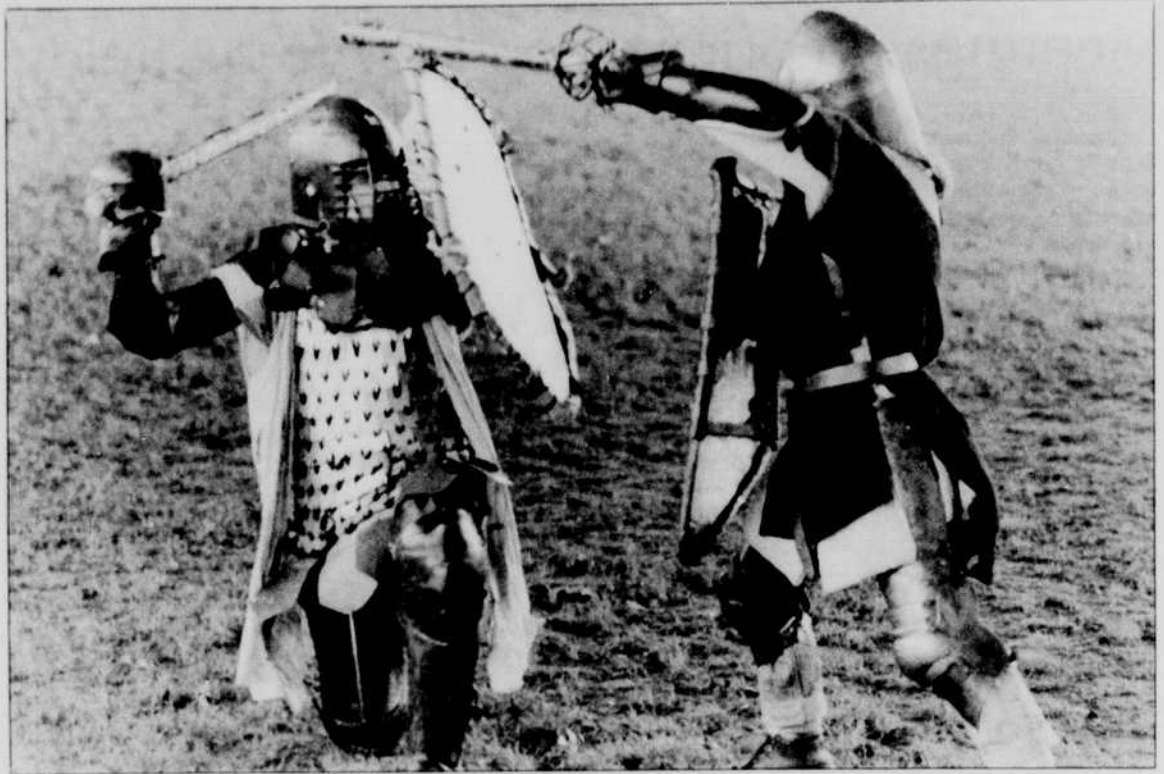


Photo by Kate Joost

University student Dana Lucas (a.k.a. Signy ferch Morgan, right) gets the upper hand against Ambrose Blackrose, a member of the Eugene kingdom of SCA.

revive the campus group, which now has about 30 members.

Science fiction and fantasy writing is a common interest among SCA members, in addition to role-playing games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*. Others have backgrounds in medieval studies or history.

However, Mary Johnson, a member in Corvallis since 1978, says SCA encompasses a wide range of people — doctors, lawyers, accountants and many computer programmers. Johnson's husband, Mark, is a research and design engineer

for Hewlett-Packard and is on the SCA board of directors.

Campus members say SCA is appealing because the group forms strong bonds between members and a sense of trust that is fostered by the romance, idealism and chivalry of the time period they study.

Members also said they learn far more by "living history" than from sitting in classroom lectures. The SCA is often invited to do demonstrations and presentations at secondary and elementary schools.

A common misconception of SCA is that it is a *Dungeons &*

*Dragons* game taken to the extreme.

"We are not D&D," Davis says. "There are people within the society who are interested in gaming and we do role-play, but we act out a historical persona. We don't do magicians or sorcerers. It's a very different kind of role playing."

Perez said people are constantly accusing him of involvement in witchcraft, satanic worship and black magic because he is in SCA.

"We're weird so we get lumped into that category," Davis says.

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