

# Storming the Castle *continued from front page*

lously researched and created for these weekend events. They will compete in martial activities like armored combat, target archery and fencing; display their skills in period arts, sciences and crafts like weaving and spinning, cooking, needlework, and leatherworking; and regale each other with song, dance, storytelling, poetry and literature reading. All this will be done as authentically as possible, based on research participants have done into life during the Middle Ages—the seventh through the seventeenth centuries.

Me? I am really just a lowly scribe working for *Vernonia's Voice*, eating a grilled cheese sandwich with french fries and gathering information for a newspaper article.

For members of the SCA, the re-creation of medieval times is a very serious hobby. They are in sense amateur historians, and some of them are real historians. "We are an educational society," explains Morello. "Our primary focus is on re-creation and research. Everything we do—our combat, arts and sciences and performances—are based on research."

These folks don't own a boat and go fishing every weekend, race a stock car at the dirt track on Friday nights, or play on a softball team in tournaments and then go drink beer at the local pub.

No, these folks don chain mail, helmets and shields, learn and practice ancient forms of swordsmanship, spend hours and hours doing research to uncover long lost information about food recipes and how to create clothing in traditional styles using period techniques and hold in their own style of tournaments--on a battle field with swords and other weapons to crown their royalty and champions.

Unlike a Renaissance Faire, the SCA is participatory—no one is simply a spectator. All the attendees play a part, helping create an atmosphere by reenacting aspects of the Middle ages that are of interest to them. That's why they create the elaborate personas for themselves—it makes it more real when they enter an event and leave modern times behind.

About these personas--because the scope of the SCA is so broad, spanning a thousand years in history, choos-

ing a persona provides a focus for the participant when learning about the culture of their interest. It narrows down the field for research. "About half the

a sense of what these guys do for fun on their weekends. (Yes, they aren't completely stuck in the Middle Ages and do use the internet.)



SCA members enjoying a feast.

people look to their own ancestry to try to re-create their own history when they create their persona," says Morello.

The genealogy they create can be very intricate and detailed. "They give really good reasons why they own the equipment they have and dress the way they do," adds Morello.

The event that will be held in Vernonia will be the Dragon's Mist annual tournament and include a large feast, a Bardic competition that includes song, dance, and other performances, activities and competitions for youth, some equestrian events, a large campfire at night, and of course, some good old fashioned combat, which will include heavily armored combat, period fencing, and target archery. Their Arts and Sciences competition for Defender will be held at a different event later in the year.

In addition to one-on-one fighting, they also hold what are called skirmishes or wars—large groups of people fighting each other. "It is chaos!" says Pittman. "That's what I like to do. It's a lot of fun."

If any of this is starting to sound interesting, especially the part about combat, you might want to hop on YouTube and search for SCA. Plenty of videos will be available where you can get

know how to use those tactics will win," says Morello.

Some of these large annual events will include thousands of fighters on each side.

The SCA, as stated before, is an international organization with a multi-



Fencers wait for instructions for their competition.

layered governmental structure. Like we live in the United States, in the State of Oregon, in Columbia or Washington County, and in a town; very basically, SCA members are part of a Kingdom, which is broken into smaller branches called Principalities, Baronies and Shires. Each level has a governmental structure that runs the administrative functions—finance, safety, new members, arranging for classes in the arts and sciences, logistics at events and more.

There are nineteen Kingdoms worldwide. Morello and Pittman reside in the Kingdom of An Tir, which

includes Oregon, Washington, Northern Idaho and all of Western Canada. Their Shire, called Dragon's Mist covers Washington County and has over 100 active members.

The legal representative of each branch is called the Seneschal; Morello, or if you prefer O'Briain, is the Seneschal for Dragon's Mist.

There is also a King and Queen of each Kingdom. This position is mostly ceremonial and is earned on the field of battle—the winner of the bi-annual hand-to-hand combat competition holds the royalty position for the six months following their coronation. Men and women compete against each other—if a woman were to win the tournament she would be named Queen in her own right and her consort would be her King; if a man wins he is the King and his consort is his Queen.

As you can see, it's all a bit complex and complicated and believe me, there is much, much more. Suffice it to say that these folks take this pretty seriously, and yet seem to have a lot of fun while doing it. They hold weekly

practices, regular meetings and events, travel to participate in other branches activities and learn interesting and practical skills. Awards are given for exemplary work in research, mastery of skills and volunteerism. "The level of mastery or research will determine the level of recognition they receive," explains Morello. "Honestly, the best part about being part of this group, for me, is watching other people be recognized for their hard work."

At events, a minimum standard for attendance is an "attempt at pre-17th century clothing." Morello and Pittman referenced the "ten foot rule"-- "If it looks real at ten feet, that's acceptable," says Morello. "Some semblance of effort is all we really require."

Participants in Period Fencing often study and practice the techniques they have learned by researching fencing Masters. Archery is done without the use of modern compound bows. The armor is often made of metal and leather. Training is provided for the hand-to-

*continued on page 19*

**KLS SURVEYING**

**Owned and Operated by Don & Kim Wallace**

**DON WALLACE, PLS**  
Professional Land Surveying  
1224 E. Alder St.  
Vernonia, Oregon 97064  
Phone: 503-429-6115  
FAX: 1-866-297-1402  
Email: DWallace\_KLS@msn.com

CORPORATE MEMBER

**THE BLACK BEAR & BEAR CREEK PUB**

- ❖ All new state-of-the-art espresso machine
- ❖ Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- ❖ Outdoor patio seating
- ❖ Rotating beer on tap
- ❖ Open daily at 6 AM
- ❖ Happy Hour
- ❖ Free Wi-Fi

**Stop by this Summer**

**831 BRIDGE ST. (503)-429-0214**

Just Suck It Up!

**Natural Path Health Services**

**DR. CAROL MCINTYRE**  
NATUROPATHIC & CHINESE MEDICINE

503.481.4096  
ccmnd@yahoo.com  
naturalpathhealthservices.com

786 BRIDGE STREET  
VERNONIA, OR, 97064