

Journey to another time



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Sword play is a common sight at Shrewsbury Ren Faire.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

A knight responds to hecklers in the crowd during a jousting performance on Sunday afternoon at Shrewsbury.

“You dare mock the knights of Britannia?!”

Shrewsbury Renaissance Faire in Kings Valley shows a glimpse of life in a village 500 years ago

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-ObsERVER

KINGS VALLEY – Katrina Shortridge looks nothing short of displeased with her daughter, Logan, as she was forced to bark and howl.

Shortridge, of Corvallis, has been thrown in the “jail” at the Shrewsbury Renaissance Faire by said daughter.

For what crime?
“Everything,” Logan Shortridge said with a mischievous grin.

Katrina would only earn bail if she gets on her hands and knees and barks like a dog, but not before taking some harassment from her captors, the “jailers” at Hangmans Acre.

Many actors with the group, based out of Gig Harbor, Wash., are military veterans, and they mildly humiliate people at Renaissance fairs for a good cause. About half of the proceeds from the “warrants” and “bounties” they sell go to groups assisting veterans.

They put on a good show, poking the most fun at themselves when not holding a civilian captive.

“On the count of three, we will all point at this drunken bastard and laugh at him,” said Troy Nary, the group’s scribe, imploring the gathering audience to make fun of one of his fellow players dur-



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Katrina Shortridge, in the cell, jokes with her captors as her daughter, Logan, looks on with amusement. Logan had her mom jailed on a warrant for “everything” on Sunday.

ing a lull in business Sunday afternoon.

This is the third year the group has been on the Ren faire circuit, said Cody Nelson, the “warden” and one of the originators.

Inspiration for Hangmans Acre seems fitting, given the nature of their act.

“Really it was a drunken Monday,” Nelson said, smiling. “We said, ‘Hey, wouldn’t it be fun if we did this?’

“The next year, this happened,” he said gesturing to the mock jail with two cells.

In full Renaissance-era outfits and characters, the jailers at Hangmans Acre fit in perfectly at Shrewsbury, which took place over the weekend in Kings Valley. The annual festival recreates a Renaissance village, complete with a tavern, merchants, a jousting ring, and now, a jail. A good portion of

the people who attend dress the part and become part of the ambiance.

Members of Hangmans Acre’s cast are managers of The Washington Midsummer Renaissance Faire, so the trip to Shrewsbury gives them a welcome break from responsibility.

“We’ve had a wonderful time,” Nary said. “It gives us a chance to play and relax throughout the day.”

They have plenty of fun with Katrina and Logan. After suffering her fair share of embarrassment, Katrina was finally released from jail.

Logan disappeared in a flash once the door to the



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The jousting tournament emcee kept the crowd entertained during the mock competitions at Shrewsbury.

cell opened. Her mom followed with determination in her steps.

This was the first Renaissance fair Katrina had attended in 20 years.

“The kid had never been to one,” she explained while scanning the crowd for Logan. “So far she loves it.”

As for revenge, the wheels were turning in Katrina’s head.

“I don’t know yet, but I will think of something appropriate,” she said.

When Logan returned, she was greeted by her mom throwing a cup of water on her. That would be just the beginning of her penance, but she didn’t seem to care.

“Oh my god, it was amazing,” she said. “I’m going to die. But it was worth it. I couldn’t stop laughing.”

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