

Warriors, Wives and Wenches invade St. Helens



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Viking hordes, Saxons, Brits and Normans, descended on the Columbia County Event Complex over Memorial Day weekend as members of the Society for Creative Anachronism held a three day event. Event organizers estimate 800 to 900 SCA members and families attended the festivities, camping in authentic shelters and participating in historically inspired events from archery and axe throwing to tilting and jousting. Each participant dressed in costume, dating from any period between 600 to 1600 AD.

According to SCA's local chapter spokesperson, Jerry Barber, or Sgt. Ivon Dreng, as he's known by his peers, the SCA local branch called the Barony of Stromgard sponsored the event. Most members assume a moniker consistent with the period of their character. Dreng is Norse for Warrior, so Barber's name means Ivon the Warrior. They are not actors in a play, they insist, but are reliving a past age, an effort to better understand history. Many members say they participate to escape the pressures of modern life. Society members traveled from as far away as Canada and Colorado to take part. "It's like a big, comfortable community," claims Miranda Brothers, a special education teacher from Vancouver, Washington. "It's like a traveling village."

Local chapters, called Baronys and the national organization hold dozens of events each year. Other SCA events, such as a war called Pensic in Pennsylvania can attract 10,000 warriors.

Earl Edward, or Ed Cartell in real life, is a structural designer for Wrehauser. He has participated in SCA events for 28 years. After a hard fought battle with 'Duke Sven', in the multi weapons tournament, he explained the attraction he feels for the lifestyle. "It teaches honor," he says, "It teaches what it takes to be a knight." Honesty, he claims is more important than winning.

To attain the status of knighthood, a warrior must demonstrate honesty, courtesy and generosity. Competition rules say when two warriors are engaged in combat, the recipient of the blow is the one who decides its effect. There are no judges or referees to decide the winner of a match. A combatant is vanquished, only when he admits his opponent has bested him. Duke Sven, Earl Edward's opponent and match victor, advanced to win the tournament, and collect the handmade Celtic sword offered as prize.

Todd Brothers, Miranda Brothers' husband, and a middle school world history teacher, won the right to be king for 6 months in a similar competition.

In one of the animal barns, Cyriac the Hunter conducted practice for the archery competition. Sporting traditional horn-tipped yew long bows, competitors honed classic archery skills. "No pulleys here," claims one of the participants, referring to the absence of modern compound bows.

Sven Odin-Eye has been participating in SCA events for about a decade. He has learned the skill of medieval bookbinding and barter his services to other vendors. Barter, he says, is an effective and authentic way of exchanging goods and services that are too costly and time consuming to make. The small, leather bound book he displays took about 10 hours of labor, he claims. Toby Thew, who goes by the name of Torfin, is a facilities manager at Toyota. He is also an artist who makes replications of Viking jewelry in cast bronze. Torfin learned his craft from another master craftsman in the same manner medieval craftsmen learned their trade, through an apprenticeship.

The SCA claims over 100,000 members worldwide. It is one of the largest living history organizations in the world. It's goal is to bring the Middle Ages and Renaissance to life through research and re-enactment. This is the third year the Barony of Stromgard has held its encampment at the Event Complex.

Lepers

Lepers begging for mercy. They are new members of the House Daos which is a family that portrays a 14th century zealous missionary. Their leper status is part of an initiation ceremony.



Children Jousting at the SCA event

The children's jousting swing. Attendants haul the knight and horse back, then at the signal release the rope and allow each rider to charge. Lances are of plastic foam.



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