



Archive
from the February 02, 1999 edition

Society of Creative Anachronism keeps royalty alive and well

James Turner, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

As Mel Brooks once observed, "It's good to be the king." But in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA, www.sca.org), an organization devoted to re-creating European culture between the years 600 and 1600, the crown also carries a lot of responsibilities.

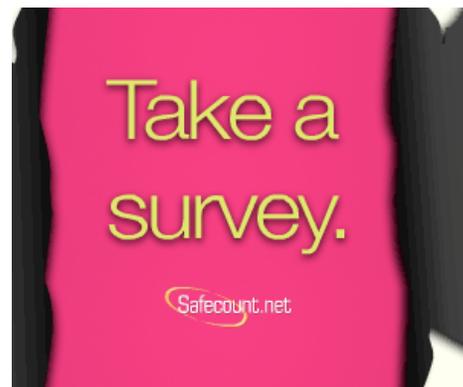
With some 20,000 members throughout the world, the SCA is a major force in preserving and researching the arts and sciences that preceded the Renaissance. Members who show skills in specific areas or make unusual contributions to the group are rewarded with society titles, and it is up to the kings and queens of the 15 geographic kingdoms to make sure these honors are doled out to the right people.

The SCA fosters research into such diverse areas as illumination, fletching (arrow making), bardic arts, costumemaking, fencing, and armormaking, many of which have their own orders of merit. In addition, there are the ultimate honors of knighthood (for combat and chivalry), the Order of the Laurel (for excellence in arts and sciences) and the Order of the Pelican (for outstanding contribution to the society.) Thus kings or queens spend a lot of their time polling the various orders, seeking candidates for inclusion.

With a typical kingdom containing several thousand members, this creates quite a workload. The current queen of the East Kingdom (eastern Pennsylvania to Newfoundland), Her Majesty Anna Ophelia Holloway Tarragon (her neighbors know her as Donna Martinez of Hudson, Mass.) spends about 12 hours a week handling SCA-related paperwork. "I probably spend about another hour and a half to two hours a night on the phone talking to people about different situations," she says.

As in days of old, these royals also have to travel to the far reaches of their kingdoms. This can mean traveling seven hours or more to a one-day event, then sitting through several hours of "court" as the titles are awarded, complete with hand-illuminated scrolls.

Watch a video with Editor John Yemma: Who we are, what we stand for



But there's one traditional perk that Elspeth Keyfe Neddingham (Elizabeth Needham of Providence, R.I.) longed for during her reign. "Sometimes we all wish we could just say, 'Him? Off with his head!' "

30

LINKS OF INTEREST

[Chinese toy recalls show need for stringent quality control](#)

[Crisis summit aims to save Iraq's Maliki](#)

[South African AIDS activists criticize firing of Madlala-Routledge](#)

[Hizbullah marks Lebanon war anniversary with pomp and piety](#)

[Democrats gain among US voters, but support is soft](#)

[Like the look of a traditional newspaper? Try the Monitor's Treeless Edition](#)

MOST VIEWED

1. [Was Iran's election rigged? Here's what is known so far.](#)
2. [Flight computers at heart of Air France crash?](#)
3. [Chinese waitress freed after killing official – and winning nationwide support](#)
4. [In amazing show of athleticism, Obama kills housefly in mid-air](#)
5. [Iran and Russia nip at US global dominance](#)
6. [The private health industry's time is up](#)
7. [Blacks abandon San Francisco](#)
8. [For Gitmo Uighurs, new life is no walk on the beach](#)
9. [Air France crash: What is known so far](#)
10. [Why Israel and Hamas are meeting with Jimmy Carter](#)

[Home](#) | [About Us/Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archive](#) | [Print Edition](#) | [Text](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights & Permissions](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Monitor Mall](#) | [Today's Article on Christian Science](#)

www.csmonitor.com | Copyright © 2009 The Christian Science Monitor. All rights reserved.