

Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc.

A Guide to Introduce Our Organization to Site Owners and Managers
for Potential Use of Facilities by the SCA



the society for creative anachronism, inc.



Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the SCA and our activities in relation to our prospective use of your facilities for our event.

What is the SCA?

The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA), is an international, non-profit, educational organization designed as a hands-on, learn-by-doing model to research and re-create European life prior to 1600.

At our events, members strive to recapture the ambiance of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This requires research into such topics as clothing, weaponry, armor, food, music, and innumerable other arts and crafts. We then attempt to practice and teach what we have learned as authentically as possible, by constructing reproductions of medieval artifacts, practicing the arts and crafts we have researched, learning to fight with a sword and shield, and so on.

The SCA began with a small backyard tournament in Berkeley in 1966. It was incorporated in California in 1968 and has grown steadily to a membership of approximately 26,000 paid members, with an estimated figure of perhaps double that number who participate without formal membership. Members can be found in the United States, Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Far East, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

Important Information

- The Society carries its own insurance. Proof of insurance is available upon request.
- The SCA is registered as a 501(3)(c) nonprofit group.
- We are an educational organization. People interested in the SCA are encouraged to come and participate at any level they wish. The only requirement for event attendance is that the person make an attempt at pre-17th-century clothing.
- Unlike the Renaissance Faire, our focus is not to put on a show for onlookers. Our main goal is our own entertainment and education. However, we are most happy to share public sites and chat with onlookers.
- We are a family-friendly organization and have activities for all family members of any age.



Site Needs

Our events generally contain elements of period traditions, pared down in time and scale, to occupy a day, weekend, and on a few occasions week-long (or even longer) gatherings. We attempt to locate sites that can accommodate as many of our needs as possible, including



4/12/2003 - CAID CROWN TOURNEY ©2003 KEVIN CONNERY

- An outdoor area for holding tournaments and games
- Ability to hire for duration of event at cost-effective rates
- Toilets (and showers when available)
- Handicapped facilities
- Kitchen facilities
- Indoor hall and seating for a banquet
- Separate area for meetings/classes/Arts & Science displays/ and or changing areas

If we should be so fortunate as to obtain permission to use your site, we would ask you to clarify your policies on the following:

- Merchants (for the sale of period goods and supplies; no alcohol)
- Bringing alcohol on the premises (personal consumption only, not for resale)
- Open candle flame used on the tables at feast (or enclosed flame if not)
- Animals
- Parking facilities

The Society prides itself on its tradition of leaving any venue we use in as good or better condition than we started with. This includes following all site rules and regulations, maintaining care for the property in use (including following minimum ground disturbance measures), and cleaning up after the event.

Organization

The modern world is divided into “kingdoms” for the purpose of identification and regionalization. They have no political or religious affiliation. At present there are seventeen Kingdoms around the world.

Kingdoms are again broken down to smaller groups such as baronies and shires. It is usually these smaller groups with whom you will contract for use of a site.

Each kingdom has figureheads in the form of a King and Queen, who are selected in a tournament or arms. These individuals run the kingdom with the support of a staff of volunteers called “kingdom officers”, and follow the guidelines set out in the Kingdom Laws, which in turn are governed by the policies of the Board of Directors of the SCA, Inc., and modern law. (A copy of the Corpora is available on line at www.sca.org if you are interested in further information regarding our structure and regulations.)



CAID CORONATION 6/B/2002 © 2002 KEVIN CONNERY

Membership is not required to come and see what we're all about. If someone does decide to join, membership advantages include a discount on event attendance fees and a subscription to the official newsletter of the kingdom of residence.

Atmosphere



Each member creates a “persona,” a personal character from a specific time and place, which the member becomes for events. The goal is to create someone who “might have been” rather than to pretend to be an actual historical figure. The persona is a jumping-off point for research into that time period and place—what the person would have worn, eaten, etc.

Our areas of interest are as varied as was medieval culture: heraldry, knighthood, manuscript illumination and calligraphy, archery, armor making, costuming, jewelry making, needlework and sewing, theater, poetry, dancing, singing, cooking, brewing, equestrian arts, and more...

The SCA also attempts to create an atmosphere embodying those lost ideals that are found in medieval romance: chivalry, honor, and courtesy. Our goal is to re-create the Middle Ages as they should have been, without the strife and pestilence, but with an attempt to preserve the ideals of beauty, grace, chivalry, and fellowship.

Activities

The events we put on are participatory, rather than shows put on for spectators. Instead of putting on a performance for the public, we strive to learn and live in what we call the “current” Middle Ages.

Combat

There are several types of “fighting” in the SCA, all of which are similar to martial arts. The most highly visible is what we refer to as armored combat, which re-creates knightly combat of the Middle Ages. In many places rapier combat, similar to modern fencing, is also a common activity. At some events we also have archery or equestrian activities (site permitting).

Our armored combat tournaments, whether single combat or mêlée style with multiple participants, are handled under strict safety guidelines. We do not use “live steel” or edged weapons in combat. SCA weapons are made of rattan (a type of bamboo) wrapped in duct tape to keep them from splintering. The winner is determined on the honor of the participants: If in real life a blow would have caused a mortal wound, then the fighter is honor-bound to proclaim himself or herself “dead”.



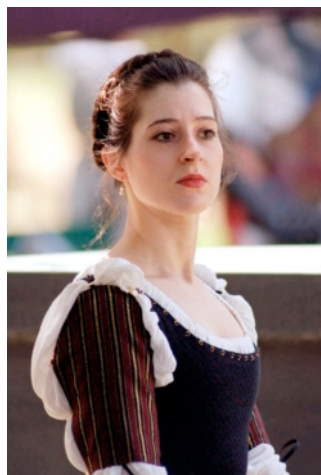
The SCA strives to strike a balance between the look and feel of period combat and modern safety standards. Each fighter’s armor must pass a safety inspection before the fighter is allowed to participate in combat. All combatants must go through training and be determined to be safe before they may enter a tournament.



Marshals are present to ensure that the fighting remains safe to the combatants as well as the spectators. They are not referees; they do not determine who has won a bout. That is up to the combatants themselves. It is also their job to ensure that the fighting stays within the marked boundaries of the fighting ropes. Our First Aid- and CPR-trained persons, referred to as “chirurgeons”, are additionally prepared to handle injuries and general illness on the very rare occasion they do occur. The same strict safety standards apply to all of our other activities as well.

Events

Activities in the SCA go far beyond fighting. There is something for everyone in our Society. Participants research nearly every aspect of medieval life, and we hold a wide variety of “events”. Events are gatherings of persons interested in participating in period activities. The SCA asks that all attendees make an attempt at wearing pre-17th-century clothing. An attendance fee is normally charged to cover the rental of the site and other assorted costs; a small additional fee is charged to non-members. We are a 501(3)(c) nonprofit group and therefore do not aim to make a profit beyond operating costs. All members of the organizational staff are volunteers in the SCA.



The most common type of event is the day-long tournament, generally in a park or other outdoor facility. We set up pavilions (period-style tents) around the fighting field, and consorts cheer on their fighters. At one or more points during the day, it is common for the King and Queen to hold “Court”. This is a formal gathering at which the King and Queen bestow awards and titles on deserving subjects.

The biggest of these tournaments is Crown Tournament, held every six months in most Kingdoms. At this event, the next king and queen are selected by tournament combat. Together with his or her consort, the winner becomes the next royalty at an event called Coronation.

In addition to tournaments, we hold classes where we learn about medieval crafts, skills, and knowledge. We often hold feasts, where volunteer cooks create a variety of period dishes. Events also often involve dancing, music making, and/or bardic recitation; craft displays, competitions, and/or classes; period and modern camping (when appropriate and permitted); lawn games and board gaming; and period pastimes for children.



Children’s Activities

Children are welcome in the SCA under the supervision of their parents, and indeed many families participate in our activities. Most groups have a Children’s Minister who helps organize activities for children at our events.

There is also a style of fighting for children called boffers, which is practiced in many areas. The children wear hockey equipment for protection and use foam swords. Even at an early age, children are learning about courtesy and honor both on and off the field.



Acknowledgements

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Photographs © Kevin Connery, except for the rapier picture on p. 3 © Kate Fey and the archery picture on p. 4 © Steven Block.

This information packet was modeled on one created by Baroness Cathryn of Chester in the Kingdom of Drachenwald. Some of the information in this packet was inspired by an old (circa 1995) Caidan Chatelaine flyer.

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