



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SCA

Welcome to the Society for Creative Anachronism; also known as the Society or the SCA. Prepare to step into a world of chivalry, art, and camaraderie – a world shared by over 100,000 others who seek the

same dream you do. Armored knights are locked in combat on the list field, artisans under brightly-colored pavilions are painting illuminated manuscripts, and friends nearby put the finishing touches on their newest gowns, all with Renaissance music playing softly in the background.



What is the SCA? The SCA was incorporated in 1968 as a 501(c)3, not-for-profit educational organization. It is part of the "living history" movement, which means that SCA members have a "hands-on" approach to history, engaging in activities

that help them to explore the culture, arts, and sciences of ages past. The SCA period encompasses pre-17th century Western Europe, with an emphasis on the Middle Ages and Renaissance.



The SCA divides its Known World into geographic regions called Kingdoms. The Known World currently includes the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and parts of Asia and Africa. There are 18 Kingdoms, each with its own King and Queen chosen on the field of armored combat. Within each of the Kingdoms are local chapters known as cantons, shires, baronies, provinces, or principalities depending on their size and location. Texas and Oklahoma comprise the Kingdom of Ansteorra.



The most visible focus of many SCA events is our martial activities. Many SCA members recreate the armored chivalric combat of the High Middle Ages, wearing replica metal or leather armor, carrying shields and using rattan weapons that have the balance and handling properties but not the lethal effect of the originals. There are also those who strive to recreate Renaissance fencing techniques using various styles of rapiers and fencing equipment.



SCA fighting is not staged or choreographed. All fights are "live"; the outcome of a list or battle is never pre-determined. Combatants of all types follow a system of rules and extensive training that permit a realistic and energetic sport while maintaining a sterling safety record. Fighters are on their honor to call their blows, meaning they must admit whether the blow received would have wounded or incapacitated them had it been a "real" weapon.

Some meet to test their skills with the bow, either by shooting directly against armored combatants with padded arrows or by shooting at targets on an archery field.



Others practice against targets with thrown weapons, including knives, axes, and spears. In addition, the thunder of hooves may announce the successful completion of an equestrian obstacle course or tilting at rings. Simulated rocks and missile weapons may fly through the air in tests of siege weaponry.

Less immediately obvious to new members are all the other period activities people do in the SCA. The range of arts and sciences, everyday skills, and technical knowledge is enormous. Period activities range from bardic performances (poems, songs, music, or stories) to arts and sciences (cooking, glass work, armor making, dancing, needle work, herbalism, calligraphy, brewing, and vintning, among many others).



In addition, there are a variety of technical and social skills that help establish the ambiance of life in a pre-17th century royal court, including dance and heraldry.

Many members create a persona, the person they “could have been” had they lived in pre-17th century Europe. They choose a name that is appropriate for the time period, and dress and act as if they were their persona. This makes an event seem more like a gathering of a Middle Ages or Renaissance court.

Much like pre-17th century Europe, the kingdoms have a similar system of hierarchy and rank: kings, queens, dukes, duchesses, barons, baronesses, lords and ladies.

Everyone is presumed to be minor nobility to start, but any noble titles or honors used in the SCA must be earned by knowledge, skill, and deed.

The King and Queen are chosen by tournament combat every 4-6 months. These are the rulers of your entire Kingdom. A Crown Prince and Princess are heirs to the kingdom, chosen by combat in the Crown Tourney. Royal Peers are those who have ruled a Kingdom: those who have ruled once are Counts and Countesses while those who have been King or Queen more than once are Dukes and Duchesses. Peers of the Realm are those who have been recognized for exceptional skill in a particular area. The rank of Peer comes with elevation to one of the three Society Peerage Orders—Chivalry, Laurel, or Pelican.



The Order of Chivalry consists of Knights, outstanding fighters who have received recognition for their fighting skills. They strive to be the very models of courtesy and chivalry, and can be recognized by the gold chains, white belts, and gold spurs they wear. Members of the Order of the Laurel are recognized for great skill in the arts or sciences, and wear laurel wreath medallions. Members of the Order of the Pelican are renowned for their selfless and long-standing service in an administrative capacity to the Society and to the Kingdom. Their symbol is a Pelican. Other awards recognize different levels of skill in the arts or sciences, fighting, hard work on the behalf of the kingdom or a local group, or other skills.

What you do in the SCA is largely independent of age, except for combat activities. Those under 16 cannot compete in armored or rapier combat directly against adults. However, many kingdoms presently offer armored, padded sword (boffer) competition programs for youths and teens, and a number are presently establishing youth rapier combat for teens. Children may also participate in equestrian activities and archery, though there is generally a requirement that a parent be present during these and the boffer and rapier activities.



We look forward to getting to know you at our local events and sharing with you the world that is the Society. Interested in learning more about the SCA? We recommend you visit www.sca.org, where you can find the group nearest you.

The Kingdom Hospitaller/Chatelaine is the officer who helps newcomers to the SCA. Visit their webpage at:
or contact them directly at:

For local information call or email: