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Steve Hill/Daily Nebraskan

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Group focuses celebrations on Medieval society, culture

By Chris McCubbin
 Staff Reporter

Count Jehan de la Marche, Knight of the East Kingdom, Master of the Laurel is not a figure from a medieval romance novel, nor a character in a fantasy adventure novel. He lives in Lincoln. He's a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, an organization that recently has been

approved as an official campus organization.

The SCA celebrates the Middle Ages Middle Ages. SCA members take on medieval "persona" and become that person at society functions.

The SCA celebrates the Middle Ages selectively he said. That is, they reenact tournaments, feasts and the code of chivalry, but not rats, plague or superstition.

In real life, Count Jehan is Dr. John Leland, a visiting history professor at UNL. He has been with the society since Oct. 31, 1968. Although Count Jehan has no official office in the local SCA, he is active in society activities and is the senior SCA "noble" in the area.

Leland said the SCA was organized in May 1966, at a party thrown by Diana Paxton. The party had a medieval theme, and everybody came in costume. Several of the guests had been experimenting with ways to recreate medieval sword and shield combat. The party was such a success that the group decided to meet every month for tournaments, where people could wear medieval clothing and fight mock battles.

The name "Society For Creative Anachronism" was coined by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Leland said.

Diana Paxton and Marion Zimmer Bradley are authors familiar to fans of

fantasy and science fiction. Many famous fantasy authors have been involved with the society for a time, including Catherine Zurtz, Lester del Rey and Paul Anderson. Leland said creative people come into the society, burn out and then turn their experience into books.

Leland said he enjoys the society because it gives him a chance to live by a different social code than in real life as Dr. Leland. However, he said, he thinks most college students are attracted to the society because of an interest in fantasy or because of the athletic opportunities at the tournaments. He said the society throws great parties, always a priority with college students.


Leland said the society can and should be an educational experience. Some people come to the SCA because of an interest in learning a medieval craft like calligraphy or madrigal singing.

Every summer the society pairs off its kingdoms for a mock war, Leland said.

Leland said he takes Count Jehan's obligations seriously.

"I have never missed a war. I am a knight of the east kingdom. One week out of the year I am there fighting for my king," he said.

The society meets Wednesday nights in the Neihardt Residence Center Pub.




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