

Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc.

A Guide to Introduce Our Organization to Site Owners and Organizations for Potential Demonstration of Living History by the SCA



the society for creative anachronism, inc.



Kingdom of Æthelmearc



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. Anachronism is a Greek term which means something from any period in history which is outside of its chronological origin.

Our members strive to recapture the ambiance of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in their modern lives. 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 participates 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.

What is the Kingdom of Æthelmearc?

The Kingdom of Æthelmearc is one of 19 geographical regions within the Society for Creative Anachronism. Our Kingdom represents the Society in West Virginia, parts of Pennsylvania, and Upstate New York.

Our Kingdom, like any other organization, has officers and “figure heads” to help us coordinate our activities and membership. Æthelmearc currently has 35 local groups within its borders, ranging in size from half a county to up to eight counties. Each of our local groups offer demonstrations, hold events, and organize a variety of activities at various times throughout the calendar year. There is always something going on in the Æthelmearc!



Who are Members of the SCA

SCA participants are just plain folks who enjoy doing something fulfilling with their free time. People from all walks of life join the SCA including – students, teachers, historians, writers, secretaries, law enforcement personnel, chemists, and insurance agents. Many SCA participants are involved in high tech fields – computers, aerospace, high energy physics, etc. People who spend all week with highly complex, modern technology can find it relaxing to spend their leisure time using simpler technologies in a less modern setting.

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. The SCA persona can be anything from an inn-keeper's daughter, to a rogue; a baroness to a simple seamstress; a Shakespearean actor, to a knight; a monk; to pirate.

Our areas of interest and research are as varied as life is today. Some aspects of culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods are:

- Heraldry
- Knighthood- armoring and weaponry, combat strategy, virtuous living
- High Arts-Manuscript illumination and calligraphy
- Archery
- Period fashion- jewelry making, needlework and sewing, design
- Performance arts-theater, poetry, dancing, singing, storytelling
- Cooking- recipe translation, primitive cooking, period agriculture
- Equestrian arts- games, barding,
- Craftsmanship- blacksmithing, knitting, pottery, weaving
- and more...



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The SCA also attempts to create an atmosphere embodying those lost ideals that are found in Period 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.

A Note about Martial Activities at Demonstrations

The events for our own members are fully participatory, rather than shows put on for spectators. On the other hand, an SCA demonstration is a mix of participation and educational entertainment activities. Our martial activities require combatants to have significant training before they are allowed on the battle field or



tournament field. SCA members who choose to participate in martial activities must be properly “authorized”. To authorize in the activities of heavy combat and equestrian sports our members undergo intensive safety training so that ‘blows’ (the strength of force with which a fighter is allowed to strike another fighter or target) are carefully calibrated. SCA weapons and armor are highly customized to SCA standards of materials, size, durability, and weight. In addition, the fighters have probably taken many hours to make and tailor their armor and weapons for the individuals use and comfort. While we would not allow spectators to fight in heavy combat or mount a horse at our demonstrations, the SCA does love to show off our skilled athletes for the audience in tourneys, games, and displays. The SCA is *always* grateful for an audience and a healthy “huzzah” for our athletes!

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 demonstrations sites, we may also have archery, thrown weapons, or equestrian activities available.



All martial activities in the SCA strive to strike a balance between the look and feel of period combat and modern safety standards. We do not use “live steel” or edged weapons in combat. SCA weapons are made of rattan (a type of bamboo) wrapped in strapping and 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”. Each combatant’s armor must pass a safety inspection before the athlete is allowed to participate in each form of combat for the day. Safety marshals are present to ensure that the fighting remains safe to the combatants as well as the spectators. It is their job to ensure that the fighting stays within the marked boundaries of the fighting area. Our First Aid and CPR-trained persons, referred to as “chirurgeons”, are additionally prepared to handle injuries for our demonstration participants on the very rare occasion they do occur.

A Tailor-Fitted Demonstration

Each local group in our Kingdom has a diverse population that can offer many types, themes, and topics for your demonstration. Though not all activities are available in every group, there are times when we can “pool” our members and resources, so that your organization may experience the type of demonstration that best suits your individual needs.

Our demonstrations can easily be tailor-fitted to your needs. Some things to consider when speaking your local SCA group are:

- Topics, activities, or themes your participants would like to learn more about;
- Audience size and safety requirements;
- Site space and regulations (what’s allowed by the site owner and their insurance);
- Special audience considerations;
- Age ranges of your participants;
- Amount of time you want to allot for the SCA Demonstration.



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. We frequently provide educational and entertaining demonstrations of history and historical life to many organizations, schools, colleges and universities, community picnics and fund raisers, festivals and fairs, and museums.
- Unlike the Renaissance Faire, our focus is not simply to put on a show for onlookers. Our main goal is education and entertainment for all who participate, whether new to the SCA or as an established member. We are most happy to share public sites and chat with onlookers and audience members.
- We are a family-friendly organization and have activities for all family members of any age.
- Our demonstrations are free. Donations are greatly appreciated to help with our local group costs of maintenance, but donations are not required.



Thank you for considering the SCA for your demonstration needs. Our members are pleased to provide this service to our community and take pride in our demonstrations. The office of Chatelain (newcomer and demonstration liaison) would love to hear from you. Please contact the Kingdom Chatelain of Æthelmearc (ae.chatelain@aethelmearc.org) or your local group Chatelain to schedule a demonstration for your group, class, or organization today!

For more information about the SCA, please visit:

www.sca.org

www.aethelmearc.org

www.scademo.com

This pamphlet was adapted by [Fru Ellisif of the Endless Hills](#), Kingdom Chatelain of Æthelmearc from "A Guide to Introduce Our Organization to Site Owners and Managers for Potential Use of Facilities by the SCA" found at www.sca.org, originally written by Dayle A. Dermatis and Meg Baron. Photos provided by Countess Alys Katherine, Society Chatelain for official use only. This pamphlet is provided for information use only.