

2008 SIOUXLAND RENAISSANCE COURT APPLICATION



The Siouxland Renaissance Association is once again seeking volunteers to be improv actors in their Court for the Renaissance Festival to be held **June 7th & 8th**. The SRA is a non-profit organization completely run by volunteers with the goal of educating people about the past in a lively and entertaining way. The 2008 Festival will be at the W.H. Lyons Fair Grounds in Sioux Falls.

New members must complete the application and submit it to the SRA at the address below by April 1, 2008. The SRA will review the applications and select members for auditions or for the court. The primary purpose of the auditions is to approve costumes and test your ability to interact appropriately with the court and patrons of the festival. Auditions will be set up as needed. Court members may

also be accepted based on the reports of returning members of the SRA court or on the basis of previous experience that can be verified.

Returning members playing the same persona *need not* complete a new application, but are required to contact the court committee to indicate their continued interest, and to note any changes in costume or history. Returning members wishing to change personas must complete the application process. The court committee may also ask for an audition for changing personas.

Name:

Preferred time/method of contact:

Mailing Address:

City: | **State:** **ZIP:**

Phone : **E-mail Address:**

Which days and times are you available? (Major characters need to be available through the festival.)

_____ Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. _____ Sunday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

_____ Saturday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. _____ Sunday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

What is your persona's name?

What is your persona's title/job/position

Where is your persona from?

Why is your persona coming to the Shrewsbury Festival?

Briefly describe your persona's history. Tell us a few things about your persona that you can share with visitors to the Festival.

Who are some other members of your family? (Living or deceased, attending the Festival or not.)

Describe your costume. Include details such as parts, fabrics, trims, props, etc.

Do you have any peers, family members, servants, clergy or guards accompanying you? If so, please provide their name, their persona's name and title/rank/position. Attach a separate sheet if necessary. (Each persona should submit an individual application – this information is for grouping purposes.)

Court Training: Each member of the court must attend one training session prior to the Festival. Date, time and location to be announced after the Court is selected.

Deadline for Applications is April 1, 2008.

Court members and townsfolk are unpaid volunteers.

Groups may apply. Groups doing demonstrations are highly encouraged.

Education programs are also needed. Contact us for more information.

Acceptance into the Court will be announced at the end of April.

Siouxland Renaissance Association
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sracourt@yahoo.com

2008 SRA Court Positions & Requirements

Court Positions: A court is composed of many people, and we want and need many people to fill these positions. We do not have specific characters you will be auditioning to fill. Rather we encourage you to do research, be creative and develop your own persona of someone that conceivably could have lived or visited England between 1500 and 1650. You should supply your own costume suitable to your position.

We will consider visiting royals on a case-by-case basis, given appropriate background story and research. But remember, not every member of the court need be noble, let alone royal.

Anyone who wants to be part of the court has choices to make: Remember that if you choose to take part in the Court, your time will be completely taken up by court activities during your scheduled shift(s). There are many possible positions to consider, as suggested below.

Nobility – Whether visiting, or English, members of nobility must exhibit proper clothing from the time span of 1500 to 1650. This includes Earls and Countesses, Dukes and Duchesses and Bishops and Cardinals, and those of similar rank. You are expected to provide your own costume and props. Suitable trims – all but ermine. Suitable fabrics - all. Suitable colors – all but royal purple.

Courtiers, gentry, knights, scholars and titled officials – Same as high nobility, but for those of lesser heritage or appointed title. Gentry were third, or more, generation landowners. Ship's Captains of good standing were sometimes included in a noble's court. The head of the local church was also considered as part of this level. As a court member, you will be asked to escort a member of the high nobility. Suitable trims – no gold or diamonds, silk embroidery is allowed. Suitable fabrics – no silk. Suitable colors – no royal purple, scarlet (royal red) or royal blue.

Merchant Class – It can be argued that the modern middle class began with Renaissance merchants some of whom took great advantage of the age of discovery to increase their wealth until they had incomes much greater than most nobles. To become of higher station they would have to buy land to become gentry, or make a suitable marriage (much the same thing). Sumptuary law prohibits members of the merchant class from wearing many colors and trims, but if they were rich enough they didn't care – they just paid the fine. Merchants can be anything from a poor fish seller or weaver to rich, international traders such as spice traders. Suitable trims – no gold, diamonds, and limited embroidered silks. Suitable fabrics – no silk and limited pure white cotton. Suitable colors – Mostly earth tones but no royal colors such as purple, scarlet (royal red) or royal blue.

House servant to a noble or gentry – House servants are privileged, well respected, and well compensated. Your clothing is better than many of your peers in lesser households, as your Lord or Lady will outfit you to impress those around you. Your job – accompany and serve a member of the nobility. You will not be treated like a slave and we promise not to humiliate you (unless you ask for it). If you have a particular Lord or Lady you wish to serve, please note it on your application, else we will assign you as needed. Suitable trims – grosgrain ribbon, wood, leather, possibly some metal buttons (brass, pewter or bronze) or clasps. Suitable fabrics – cotton, linen and wool in plain, courser weaves. Please limit your use of pure white cotton. Suitable colors – anything natural; avoid bright colors and jewel tones.

Guard – Can you stand as an imposing presence at your lord's side? Do you help little old ladies across the muddy street? Then, you should be a guard! These positions are in addition to and separate from the "Guard of the Realm," our official security staff. As a guard in the court, your job is to make your Lord or Lady look impressive. Sorry ladies, this position is only for men.

Herald/Town Crier - Do you like to shout "MAKE Yee WAY" as your noble walks the realm? Do you wish to introduce and announce an august personage? Do you have a loud, clear voice? Would you like to ring a bell and lead a parade? Then consider being a town crier or herald. Again, sorry ladies, for purposes of historical accuracy, this position is only for men.

Musician or poet – If you have the musical talent to serenade the court, the court would love to hear you! Stopping by the patrons pavilion and singing a few songs for the court is a great way to garner attention (and perhaps tips) for thyself. Poets can and should take poetry of the era (Shakespeare, Bacon, Mary Sidney) and have poetry readings for the ladies of the court. Poetry can either be

memorized or written down and read. You can make occasional appearances or spend the day with your Lord or Lady. Both men and women can fill these positions. If you so wish, you could also apply to the entertainment committee to be a street performer.

Member of the clergy –In the Elizabethan setting, most clergy were of the Protestant Church of England, male priests; there were very few Protestant nunneries. There is much bad blood between Protestants and Catholics. Be aware of this as you play your character.

Court Member –As a full member of the court, there are certain responsibilities you must fulfill. Specifically you must be part of the court, with other members of the court a certain amount of time. You must also dress and deport yourself in certain ways and you must have a persona.

Possible working shifts:

- 4 hours one day
- 4 hours both days
- 8 hours one day
- 8 hours both days

Expectations:

- Nobles' Court volunteers will be required to attend training sessions commiserate with their station, prior to the Festival.
- In addition to the required sessions, we will be having a number of optional workshops on persona development, courtly manners, interaction, dancing and/or other topics to help you feel comfortable in your role and really shine in front of the public at the Festival. (These courses will be open to all SRA members, not just those interested in being part of the Nobles' Court.)
- Court members must submit a short character history.
- Court members must have their costumes and props approved prior to the Festival.
- Court members will be identified at the Festival by a badge or similar device.
- Court members are expected to interact in character with the general patrons, volunteers, merchants, and entertainers at the fair.
- During their shift, court members will have a number of well defined duties and will be asked to be in character with their assigned group, except during scheduled breaks.

Court members that are accepted but are not able to meet the requirements of their station, will not participate as part of the Nobles' Court during the Festival. Being a member of court is a serious commitment of your time before and during the Festival, as well as a great deal of fun!

Have a costume but no persona to go with it? Not sure where you fit in? If you are a little shy about being in persona, you could still be a court member to watch and learn noble ways as you support your noble as a servant. Want to learn more about becoming a court member? Speak to a member of the education committee to see where you can fit into the court. Court is not just for the nobles!

Court Member Compensation: This is a volunteer position. You will receive the same compensation as other volunteers working the same length of shift. Failure to meet expectations may result in loss of volunteer compensation and/or not being asked to join the court in the future. As we need many costumed volunteers for other parts of the Festival, the number of court members will be limited. We ask those who are not selected to join the Court this year, consider volunteering their time and talents elsewhere and hope they will apply again next year.