

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Enter the Realm of Fantasy Where Every Day is an Escape from Reality at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire**

Ever wish you could go back in time? Wish you could shed your daily stress load? How about a trip 400 hundred years away? The Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire allows you to do just that even if just for a few hours. Leave your modern-day cares and concerns behind and travel back to the 16 century where mirth, merriment and wonder fill the air.

The escape from reality begins August 8 and continues Saturdays, Sundays and Labor Day Monday through November 1. Hundreds of colorfully costumed characters bring to life a grand country festival at the Shire of Mount Hope, a 35-acre recreation of a lively Renaissance village complete with dozens of authentic Tudor buildings. For one soul-resting day, become a citizen of Merrie Olde England full of royals and rogues, knights and knaves, pirates and peasants, musicians and merchants and Queen Elizabeth Herself.

### **The Northern Rebellion**

It is 1569, ten years into Queen Elizabeth's reign, and the state of the nation is a royal mess. Rumors abound that Her captive cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, is plotting to take the throne. Across the sea, the mighty nation of Spain watches England with a hungry eye and Pope Pious V has excommunicated Queen Elizabeth from the Catholic Church. As fear-mongering and backstabbing abound in Her Court, it is hard to tell which of Her own nobles She can trust, if any.

Hoping to put these worries aside for just one day, Good Queen Bess gathers Her Court and makes Her annual visit to the Shire of Mt. Hope, where Sir Robert Dudley has promised Her a day of carefree laughter and joyful festivity. But even in this peaceful village, a sobering matter of state rears its ugly head and threatens to disrupt the day's merriment. The Duke of Norfolk and the Ambassador of Spain arrive to warn Her Majesty of a growing discontent in the land. A large number of English Catholics, it seems, are unhappy with Her cousin Mary's imprisonment and Norfolk insists that the only way to maintain peace is to release the Queen of Scots and allow her to marry Norfolk himself!

Once again, the Queen's progress to Mt. Hope comes with its share of questions. Is Norfolk motivated purely by love for England or is this just one more attempt to weasel his way into power? Are the loyalties of Queen Elizabeth's people strong enough to weather a potential religious conflict? Why is Spain suddenly taking such an interest in England? And ultimately, will Good Queen Bess finally be able to enjoy a day of glorious festivity or will the people of Mt. Hope find themselves, once again, thrust into terrible danger? One thing is certain, it promises to be a very interesting day.

### **All The Shire's a Stage**

The fantasy unfolds on 13 open-air stages with over 90 shows daily of non-stop entertainment. Marvel at sword swallows, fire breathers, magicians, jugglers and dare-devil tumblers. Sing along with bawdy rogues and flirtatious wenches. Experience Shakespeare's plays on a three-story replica of London's Globe Theatre as they were performed in

the days of old or laugh as the Shire's wackiest denizens perform hysterical Comedia Del Arte loosely based on the Bard's tragedies. Witness the truly amazing display of the Royal Falconer's birds of prey in flight. There is so much to see and do.

Be sure to arrive early for one of the day's most anticipated revels, the Match of Human Chess. Played on a massive 40' x 40' chess board, it is a spectacular stunt-filled extravaganza complete with dashing swords, hand-to-hand combat and fast-paced wit.

The excitements and adventures of the day builds up to the impressive, and always dramatic, Ultimate Joust taking place in the largest joust area in North America. A tour d' force of lance, shield and ultimate equestrian skill, thousands of pounds of man, horse and steel gallop fearlessly toward each other. Lances shatter upon impact and noble knights fall to the ground during this lifelike battle that unfolds live.

The entertainment does not stop at the stage. All along the Shire's streets, the Faire's hallmark form of improvised, interactive theater abounds as the citizens of the Shire carry on their every day "normal" lives entertaining with song, swordplay, mud begging or even an amazing feat of daring do. A whole section of the Shire has become an entire gaming village where the medieval axe throw and crossbow are the extreme sports of the time. Children can take a turn on the Quintaine, a wooden jousting horse widen down a cable-slide to lance a brass ring for accolades and prizes. Man-powered rides, fantastically merry fencing game known as the fight circle and a colorful maze guarantee there is something for everyone.

### **Crafts and Finery All Beyond Compare**

Not only is the Faire a festival of entertainment, it's also a bustling marketplace filled with scores of merchants and artisans in shops and tents set up along the tree-lined lanes. From extravagantly adorned head wreaths to glass works, jewelry fit for a King or Queen to kilts and 16th Century apparel, handcrafted swords to handcrafted pottery, a traveler to the Shire will have no problem finding that certain something. Many of the artisans demonstrate their craft so that passersby can witness the art behind the creation of these finished products. Witness historical glass blowing, wood-turning, coin-striking, marble sculpting and more throughout the day.

### **A Meal Fit For a King or Queen**

Take a break from touring the sights of the Faire to take a tasting tour of the fare. Twenty two Royal Kitchens cook up an endless array of savory 16<sup>th</sup> Century foods and delicious traditional favorites sure to satisfy the heartiest of appetites. Enjoy giant roasted turkey legs, steak-on-a-stake, fish-n-chips, scotch eggs and soup served in bread boules. Feast upon gourmet cookies and brownies, freshly baked pastries, heaping scoops of Italian gelato and more.

At the Swashbuckler Brewery & Restaurant, delightful ales ranging from dark and robust to gold and smooth to complement the hearty foods. The Checkered Knight serves wines and Renaissance honey-mead direct from the cellars of Mount Hope Winery or try them first at Bacchus' Retreat featuring complimentary samples. Select from a variety of soft drinks, freshly squeezed lemonade and frozen fruit concoctions.

### **Come Back Again and Again**

Throughout the season, the Faire offers specially themed weekends in addition to the regularly scheduled activities so there is always something new to see and do. Each themed weekend features headlining entertainment as well as contests and activities that Fairegoers can participate in for prestige and prizes. Among the season's highlights are Chivalry and Romance weekend, Invasion of the Pyrates weekend, Children's Fantasy weekend especially for children, Scottish & Irish Weekend, Oktoberfest Weekend, and, new for 2009, Heroes of the Realm weekend in honor of all heroes and knights, both past and present, who dedicate their lives to helping and protecting others.

## **The Perfect Ending to the Perfect Day**

This playful trip back in time to the 16<sup>th</sup> century comes to a close with Finale In Song, an end-of-the-day extravaganza where the entire cast of the Faire gathers to celebrate the day with song and dance. After the last shouts of “huzzah” have risen from the appreciative crowd, weary yet elated Fairegoers depart with a smile on faces, twinkles in eyes and memories that will endure a lifetime for the mirth and the merriment of the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire creates a very special experience through which one’s cares and concerns can be cast aside, if only for one too brief a day.

The wondrous fantasy of the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire unfolds Saturdays, Sundays and Labor Day Monday for 13 rollicking weekends, August 8 – 9 through October 31 – November 1. The villagers welcome Her Majesty at 11 a.m. and bid one and all a fond “fare thee well” when the last song at Finale has been sung at 8 p.m. Adult admission is \$29.95 and child admission, ages 5 to 11, is \$9.95. Special ticket packages are available. Games, rides, foods, beverages and crafts are additional. Parking is free. Visit PaRenFaire.com for complete show details, advance click-to-print tickets and helpful tips for a fun-filled Faire day. Information is available through the Faire Box Office by calling (717) 665-7021 as well.

The Faire is set amidst the splendor of the formal gardens of Mount Hope Estate & Winery, placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Government. Follow the banners to Route 72, ½ mile south of PA Turnpike Exit 266, 15 miles north of Lancaster and 14 miles east of Hershey.

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