

The Renaissance Faire is coming— but what will you wear?

You should all know by now about the upcoming St. Francis Renaissance Faire on Saturday, March 6, 2010. Ah, you're thinking, that's a long time from now, nothing to worry about.

Don't relax! You'll need a costume. Uh-oh. March suddenly seems a lot closer.

Okay, now relax a little. The Planning Guild has done some preliminary research for you, and we've figured out some options that should fit everyone.

Easiest of all: Throw money at the problem. There are a number of costume shops in San Antonio as well as people who will custom-make a gown or doublet for you. You can also check E-bay, or go to another Renaissance festival (like the one in Plantersville in October and November) and purchase one there. Or you can rent, but be sure to reserve the costume months ahead of time, just to be on the safe side.

Second easiest option: Be a peasant. Tunic, hose, and soft shoes if you're a man, simple skirt and bodice for a woman. Not much fun but effective—and you won't have to worry about messing up your clothes if someone spills ale on you. The downside is that you still have to do some sewing, and if you're going to do that, you may as well go to...

Option Three: Study up, decide



on a persona (merchant? nobleman? traveling Venetian contessa?), and start stitching. Here's the absolute best place to start: the Elizabethan Costume Page at www.elizabethancostume.net. This site has history, instructions, paintings, natural dye information, a corset pattern generator, and a general guide to what people who do this call "Faire Garb." For those of you who enjoy manic details, there are discussions of which lacing pattern is most authentic, whether cotton is truly period, and what your choice of headpiece says about you. You can also visit garbmonger.com, which is not quite as obsessive as the Elizabethan Costume Page, but useful nonetheless.

Option Three is the hardest, but it's the most fun. Just remember a couple of things when you start deciding on your costume. Velvet in San Antonio is almost always a mistake, and virtually guarantees us a 100° day even in early March. You'll need to be able to move—we're hoping everyone will be working part of the day and playing the rest. In other words, don't give in to the temptation to hot-glue your garb together. Absolute period authenticity is not necessary, but try to get close if you can. Men in 1565 did not dress like Errol Flynn in *Robin Hood*. Women's clothing did not feature hourglass



silhouettes; bodices were shaped like cones, and the corset created a flat



torso. Also, only prostitutes wore their corsets on the outside. Unless you want to be in charge of the Brothel Booth (which the bishop would probably frown on), keep your underpinnings underneath.

Very best option of all: Do this with a friend! If you have questions or want to be an official Faire Seamstress or Tailor, contact one of us and we'll connect you to people who want Option Three but don't have the skills. Happy sewing!

Holly Zook

(521-0289, hollyzook@sbcglobal.net)

Amy Johnson

(558-6419, ouloulyma@yahoo.com)

Dawn Neumann

(695-4501, neumannrd@satx.rr.com)

Kim Wood

(kimmyandsteve@yahoo.com)

Note: A big welcome to Kim Wood, who brings her historical expertise to the Planning Guild, as well as husband Steve's computer skills—look for our new Web site soon!