

As the 40th Pennsic War approaches you will begin to hear A LOT of folks talking about it. Being an newcomer, you may be saying to yourself...**What the heck is Pennsic???????** Hopefully this will help explain, although, Pennsic is something that really must be experienced!!

According to the HERSTADR-SAGA: An Incomplete History of Pennsic,

"One day, almost 30 years ago, Cariadoc of the Bow, the King of the Middle, got bored with peace and declared war upon the East, loser to take Pittsburgh. The King of the East read the declaration of war, filed it away and forgot about it. Time passed. Cariadoc moved to New York and subsequently became King of the East, whereupon he retrieved the declaration from the file cabinet and said, 'Let's fight.' The Middle won, and Cariadoc has the distinction of being the only king who declared war upon himself and lost.."

Pennsic is the single largest annual event of the SCA in terms of number of people. As of 2010 there have been 39 Pennsic Wars and the number of people annually attending has surpassed 10,000. Campers dress in appropriate clothing and generally act as one from medieval times.

Pennsic is referred to as a war between two large regional SCA groups called kingdoms, the Kingdom of the East and the Middle Kingdom because participants on behalf of the kingdoms fight mock battles. The battles and other activities give war points, a tallied score determining which kingdom wins that Pennsic.

The Pennsic War has been held in the week ending with the third weekend of August since 1972. Starting with 2007, war has been moved to the week ending with the second weekend of August due to the changing school starting times.

The first weekend is dedicated to "**Land Grab**" which is a chaotic period where tempers flare and campsite organizers vie for the best and largest plots of land for their group. (Some consider the fight for land to be the "true" war.) When border disputes are resolved as much as possible, camps are allowed to set up.

The week that follows (sometimes called "**First Week**" or "**Peace Week**") is a wonderful, relaxing time; it is ideal for strolling about the whole campground making new friends. Campsites pop up like mushrooms. Merchants open their doors and "power shopping" begins. Sporadic practice battles get the fighters warmed up.

The **middle weekend** marks the point where most activities begin to take place. Classes of all sorts are held, period dancing in the barn becomes a nightly ritual that goes until 2 AM, and war point activities begin on the following Monday.

During the "**War Week**" (traditionally named this because the actual war takes place the second week) Pennsic is in full swing. Population is at its peak (over 10,000 folks all dressed in colourful clothing); the merchant streets are busy from dusk to dawn with folks searching for one-of-a-kind trinkets and great deals; warriors march to and from the battlefield all day long, either in small groups or long processions (some of them led by music and song!); nighttime merriment is everywhere and everyWhen.

The third weekend is just enough time to say your goodbyes to the hundreds of people you've met during the War, and to rescue your tent from the mud and pack it away for next year.

Since its inception in 1972, the Pennsic War has acquired almost mythic status in the world of the SCA; nowhere else can one see and meet so many medieval hobbyists from so many places, or see so many people engaging in friendly armored combat at one time. Pennsic has inspired a mystery novel, *Murder at the War*, by Mary Monica Pulver. There have been video documentaries made of Pennsic and the battles thereof, the most well known of which is Duckball Home Video's "The Pennsic War: A Video Documentary" produced in 1991 at the 20th Pennsic War. Also, Pennsic has become thoroughly identified with Cooper's Lake. In 2001, SCA members built a permanent wooden "fort" on the site, for use in various battle scenarios and ceremonies.

The War's motto is: "*Annual Enemies, Eternal Friends*"

What can I do at Pennsic????

Pennsic isn't just for the fighters, although if you miss out on the field battles you have really missed a treat! There is a wide variety of Performing Arts, from the Pennsic Choir, theater performances, music, storytelling, dancing every night till 2am, and of course shopping. It is said you could show up at Pennsic with just your credit card/money and purchase everything you need from food, tents, clothing, armor, weapons EVERYTHING.

Pennsic University takes place for 9 days during Pennsic with classes to suit just about everyone. There are hundreds of classes offered! Too many to list them all.

Pennsic has its own official website at: www.pennsicwar.org where you can find tons of information.

Pennsic has its own newspaper the "Pennsic Independent" which is published daily during war week.