

11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow

Welcome, Goode Merchant!

The Des Moines Renaissance Faire has successfully completed its ten-year run at Sleepy Hollow Sports Park. The contract between Festivals International (Greg and Bonnie Schmidt) and Sleepy Hollow Sports Park (Rick and Mary Flatt) has come to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties. The two companies have parted ways, and Rick and Mary Flatt are launching the “*11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow*” this year—and we want YOU to be a part of it!

Many of you were with us when this venture began a decade ago. What prompted the construction of a permanent Renaissance festival site then hasn't changed in the intervening years: We believe wholeheartedly in the Des Moines area being able to grow and support a *profitable* Renaissance venture. Our enthusiasm for this project has been renewed for 2016—and a goodly part is because of merchants like YOU!

Our season is the same as always: the first three weekends of September, including Labor Day. This year, those dates are as follows:

- September 3–5, 2016
- September 10–11, 2016
- September 17–18, 2016

Our location is the same, too! But this year, the “*11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow*” is expanding into the southern end of Festival Park. Now encompassing some 30 acres, the wonderful grounds will feature a new castle (complete with stage and modern toilet facilities!), expanded areas for reenactment groups, designated space for merchant tents, and more. The ground was leveled and graded for drainage, and last fall large trees were planted along the new access road. A wide, open field is set aside for large open-air activities such as falconry shows and sheepherding demonstrations.

We're giving returning merchants first crack at their previous booths, though now is the time to contemplate moving to a different location if you have outgrown your space, prefer a different exposure, and so on. Ideally, you'll want to vend all three weekends, but if you're committed elsewhere, let us know and we'll do our best to accommodate you.

If you're a merchant new to the “*11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow*,” we'll find a spot that suits your needs! Feel free to make notations on your vendor form if you have specific requests.

What Fees, Prithee?

For 2016, merchant fees are shown below. Payments and spaces are reserved on a first-come basis, so we encourage you to send in your vendor fee as soon as possible. Fees include electric, water, garbage, and Wi-Fi. *Note:* A substantial discount is given for vending all three weekends.

Space	9/3–5	9/10–11	9/17–18	All Three!
Cart or street stand	\$75	\$50	\$50	\$150 (\$175)
Any tent	\$150	\$100	\$100	\$300 (\$350)
Stall in Guild Hall (small—approximately 100 sf)	\$150	\$100	\$100	\$300 (\$350)
Medium booth in permanent building (approximately 150–220 sf)	\$200	\$150	\$150	\$400 (\$500)
Large corner booth in permanent building (approximately 240+ sf)	\$350	\$275	\$275	\$800 (\$900)

To reserve your space, you may either pre-pay the entire vendor fee by May 1, 2016, or you can make a deposit by May 1, with the remainder due upon arrival at the site for set-up. Please note: This deposit is *not* refundable. A deposit is required for every weekend you intend to vend. Shown below is the deposit fee due, and how much you would owe upon arrival if you vend all three weekends.

Deposit Due by May 1	9/3–5	9/10–11	9/17–18	All Three!	Remainder Due Upon Arrival
Cart or street stand	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$75	\$75
Any tent	\$34	\$33	\$33	\$100	\$200
Stall in Guild Hall	\$34	\$33	\$33	\$100	\$200
Medium booth	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$150	\$250
Large corner booth	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$150	\$650

Make out and mail your check to the following:

Sleepy Hollow Sports Park

4051 Dean Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50317

Payment may also be submitted via Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Credit card charges will have a 3% processing fee added to the total. Call 515.262.4100 and ask for Mary Flatt.

The Demo Discount

At the “11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow,” we want to *show* the arts—not just sell them. Artisans who demonstrate their craft add to the ambience of a Renaissance faire. Demoiing all day long should be rewarded—and it is! Returning merchants who demo their art will see a reduced fee on their application form.

Hark! Another Discount!

Under Rick Flatt’s new guidance, the “11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow” has a new mission: to become a truly immersive event for fairegoers.

Stage performers and street characters will be given an overall story arc for each weekend. Merchants who participate in this storyline will be given an additional discount on their vendor fee.

For example, a French scallywag may be doing his best to evade the Queen's Men. He beseeches you, a kindly merchant, to let him hide out in your shop. Naturally, if you are in the midst of making a sale, all you need to do is give him a quick "Be off with you, knave!" and return to your customer. But if you only have a few lookers in your shop, feel free to interact with the French scallywag: Hide him beneath a table, or throw a blanket over him. Or, if you are so inclined, bellow out for the Queen's Men: "He's here! He's here! Come quickly, guards!" (Don't forget to shout out the name of your shop for good measure!) The guards will come and haul away the French scallywag—all the while creating a brief but memorable scene for the fairegoers.

Ta da! Two wonderful things have happened here: First, the patrons have witnessed a little bit of Renaissance magic. Second, you have just made a connection with your customers—people who will remember this interplay for years. They will linger in your shop and return there every year thereafter, thus driving future sales.

We encourage all merchants to take part in this interactive approach, though of course respect those who prefer not to. Just check the appropriate item on your vendor form. How much of a discount on your merchant fee can you receive? That's hard to say, especially this first year. Discuss it in person with Rick Flatt!

The Starving Artist Option

We want to showcase the best arts and provide a truly magical shopping experience at the "11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow." We recognize that many artists are so new to their craft that they have yet to establish their business—and a vendor fee may be a bit daunting, especially if they've never even sold their wares before!

If you're new to the Renaissance Faire circuit and think the art you make may appeal to our patrons, please contact us. We're looking for quality, handmade craftsmanship as well as unusual art. We will find a spot for you! If you can afford a small vendor fee up front, terrific. Or if your sales are good, you can pay a vendor fee at the end of the event. We're pretty easy here. We just want good artists—so show us your best stuff!

The Bottom Line

We here at the "11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow" are committed to producing a wonderful experience for both fairegoer and merchant alike. We want to create a unique shopping experience, much like the one provided at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival in Shakopee, Minnesota, for example. It will take time to build that kind of magic, but we can with merchants like you.

Make beautiful goods of strong, natural materials; avoid plastics, please. While there isn't currently a jury process for the "11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow," we do reserve the right to reject potential vendors if their product line is deemed sub-par, pornographic, drug paraphernalia, etc.

To create an enchanting Renaissance ambience for your shop, please remember the following:

- Make a banner for your shop! Ideally, it should mount somewhere near your space and be removable so you can participate in the daily parade.
- Decorate your booth or tent or stand. Make it festive! Avoid plastics, hide shiny chrome, and so on. Add banners, ribbons, and flowers (preferably real or dried, or nice-looking artificial ones). Use wooden shelves; if you must use plastic, try your best to disguise them somehow.
- Hide anything modern (coolers, plastic boxes, etc) beneath fabric or inside wooden boxes. Disguise your garbage and remove it every day!
- Use a mug, horn, or tankard for your beverages. Try not to eat right in front of your patrons, if possible.
- Supervise your children and your pets. *Note:* All dogs must have a current rabies tag. (Optional for children!)
- Everyone who works at your booth or is part of your operation (including children) must be dressed in period attire.
- Smoking is strictly forbidden inside booths and in any public space accessible or visible by patrons.
- Likewise, avoid cell phone use in public spaces—it's unprofessional. No one wants to see a pirate constantly checking his or her phone.
- Show courtesy to the queen if she pops into your shop or you pass her in the street. Bow or curtsy; if male, please remove your hat. This show of respect may seem old-fashioned, but it adds to the ambience of the faire.

Campfire Camaraderie!

We want to encourage the development of a strong Faire community. One of the best ways to do that is to gather after hours—so we offer overnight camping for *free*. We have spots for RV trailers as well as tents. There are also showers available to merchants and entertainers. (Please note: Due to city ordinances, campfires must be enclosed and feature a grate suitable for cooking.)

And Finally . . .

We look forward to working with you in making the "11th Annual Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow" the best and most **profitable** festival in the region!

Welcome, goode merchant!

Merchant Coordinator
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