

Harvest Faire 24

Harvest Faire, the Peninsula's oldest Renaissance Festival, will return to Newport News, Virginia to celebrate its 24th season October 12-14, 2018. The Faire is held at beautiful Endview Plantation, 362 Yorktown Rd. Come and enjoy medieval combat and crafts, knights on horseback, live music and dance, merchants, food and beverages, and period games. This year's profits go to Youth Challenge.

Times are Friday 5-9pm, Saturday 9am-9pm, and Sunday 9am-3pm.

Tickets are \$20 for an adult weekend pass, \$5 Friday, \$15 Saturday and \$10 Sunday, and \$10 for a youth (6-12) weekend pass or \$5 daily for youth. Discount advance weekend tickets are available at www.harvestfaire.org.

For more information, contact amy@harvestfaire.org 757-358-5412

Website: <http://harvestfaire.org/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/HarvestFaire>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/RenChickVA>





What is Harvest Faire?

Harvest Faire is a renaissance faire that has been held locally for 23 years – this will be the 24th production! Like the big multi-weekend renaissance faires held across the country it has professional music groups playing folk, celtic and rock music much of it using period inspired themes or period instruments. There are knights on horseback demonstrating their skills, knights fighting with swords and other instruments of harm in the field-of-honors, Renaissance-themed merchants hawking their wares, beer/wine and food. Unlike other renaissance faires it has five full encampments of medieval and pirate re-enactors demonstrating crafts and labor of the period, a fabulous line-up of Middle Eastern dancers and - oh yes - the funds raised by this event will be go to Youth Challenge this year! There are also period games you can participate in like archery and bouzkashi (sheep rugby) and drum circles after dark. So whether you want to explore the medieval world nearby, come to one of the best festivals in the area or support Youth Challenge, please come join us October 12-14, 2018 at Endview Plantation. The Peninsula's own Renaissance Faire returns soon for a single weekend and you do not want to miss it!

Harvest Faire is produced by Harvest Faire, a 501c3 publicly-funded charitable non-profit.



Photo by Alison Jones

The Evolving Faire

Originally, Harvest Faire was called Annual Harvest Faire, which sounded a little more generic, but well-reflected the every-changing nature of its presentations. It started in 1995 as a seasonal religious celebration, but from the beginning it also included live music, Middle-Eastern dance, and Medieval encampments.

By the time the Faire relocated to William's Field at The Mariners' Museum Park in 2000, it included a mix of traditional and period games, a small midway and music that ranged from light rock and folk to drumming performances and sea shanties. This period is when a lot of locals remember the faire as something they had heard about, but probably had not attended themselves. It continued to serve as a fund-raiser for the organizing non-profit, but it was changing: becoming a Renaissance Faire rather than the gathering it has started out being and it was starting to take more effort to find the help they needed to put on the event.

Starting in 2005, the organization tried to find another group willing to buy out their interest and continue what was now a well-established tradition for most participants and attendees. By the summer of 2007, no one had come forward to purchase it and the event was about to be cancelled. Right about that time, a couple who had never even attended the event came across the previous year's information on-line and asked why the event website was out-of-date. They were told that the event was for sale.

Experienced with major operations for regional Science Fiction Conventions and a Medieval Festival in the Midwest as well as large business events locally, they decided to "get a new hobby" by purchasing the event and both sides worked fast with the previous staff to bring the event together in just over two months so it could be held on the originally scheduled date. And so Harvest Faire survived its rocky 13th year to become a charity fund-raiser for one local charity chosen each winter.

Now about to celebrate its 24th year, the event has continued to evolve: adding knights on horseback in 2009, moving to larger quarters at Endview Plantation in 2011, adding more Celtic and Celtic Rock performances to the line-up and most recently adding pirates (because if your Faire is only one weekend, it doesn't mean you can't have a weekend theme.) You can meet the re-enactors and see sword fighting, shoot an arrow, eat some food, watch great dances and musicians, purchase beer, wine or mead and buy some really fabulous souvenirs to remember your weekend. You can bring your whole family to this one-weekend experience on October 12-14. But this is more than just your usual Renaissance Festival compressed into a single weekend and brought to life in the middle of an open field: well-behaved pets are allowed to attend, pre-registered attendees can pay to camp on the property during the event and each evening, when darkness falls, once again there will be a fire lit for the drum circle, because it is once again autumn in the Middle Ages and this is still Harvest Faire.



Pumpkin Toss – photographer David Reineri 2015

Playing hard for 24 years!

There are multi-weekend Renaissance Faires across the country that have some fancy attractions but Harvest Faire pulls in a lot of that off in for a single weekend and all for charity. You may be able to shoot some arrows at another Faire, but we have trainers and when lines permit, they will coach you to improve your shot. You can watch a knight on the big screen but at Harvest Faire, you and your child can ask the knight questions in person, see their armor, see how they lived in the field and see how they cooked their dinner.

At Harvest Faire you can play Bouzkashi (sheep rugby) and work harder than you would ever expect to bring back just handfuls of stuffed sheep to the finish line for your team! We tweak the entire festival schedule to give long-time participants a chance at this game many of them play at this event every year. If you have not played Bouzkashi at Harvest Faire, “thou mayest be lacking in thy game.”

You think you are tops at corn-hole or chess or nine-mans-morris? Not until you own all comers at Harvest Faire! There wasn’t any corn in the Western Europe during the Middle Ages, so we call it Toad-in-the-Hole, but if you cannot throw a toad-shaped bean-bag the standard distance, the Games Master/Mistress can reset you to the children’s spacing (but no glory there unless you are, in fact, a child!)

If you think you are fit, you will still need to hope for a fit or deeply committed partner if you want to receive the Pumpkin Crown in Pumpkin Toss! Pumpkin toss starts in-the-round but people who drop the pass are removed and as the pass continues, everyone takes a step backwards and the pumpkin becomes more flexible as it starts to break down, making it harder to throw and to catch.

So – are you game? Because if you are – be ready for board games, one-on-one games and field games at Harvest Faire!



Royals of Cornucopia – photographer Chuck Thompson 2016

Court is in Session

Havest thou a grievance? Harvest Faire has Kings, Queens, Dukes, Duchesses, Princes and Princesses in attendance – why miss this opportunity to seek their wisdom? Faire attendees, for an additional donation to Youth Challenge, may bring their case before one of the royal houses and receive a non-binding opinion on their case. It is best to bring both sides of the debate before the court, otherwise a devil's advocate may be selected!



Punch and Judy Performance by Improper Puppetry – photo by Sara Sims 2011

400 years before South Park

Centuries before anyone “killed Kenny” on South Park ... there was Punch. A murderous prankster from the earliest ages of marionettes and hand-puppetry in Europe, Punch and Judy and a regular cast of “victims” emerged from Italy to take England by storm and spread their irreverent performances around the world. A forefather to Sweeney Todd, Punch is a bad apple – just remember, he is only a puppet. Spoiler alert: Punch kills just about everyone with a big stick. Unexpectedly, kids love this. In the end, does he get away with it or does he pay for his horrible deeds? Only the puppeteer knows the outcome of a given performance for certain.

Professor Amy of Improper Puppetry will perform Punch and Judy daily at the Faire. Shows range from the traditional “long show” to “a series of traditional bits” to some skits performed by the puppet cast. As Punch likes to say: “That’s the way to do it!” You can follow the strange activities of Improper Puppetry in the off season via their Facebook Page or by checking out their Youtube posts where they parody popular music videos.

Come visit the Middle Ages during Harvest Faire!

Once upon a time, back in the Middle Ages, there was a beautiful village on the shores of a the Warwick River. The people there were happy and independent and they danced and sang all day. Then, dark times befell them and the villagers were threatened by ogres, social conformists and The Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue. So they called upon the spirits to protect them and a powerful spell was formed. Now, every year during their harvest celebration, the whole village appears for a single weekend in the middle of October at Endview Plantation! And, if you pay the toll, you may enter the village and join the villagers as they sing, dance and play period games. There might be some sword-fighting (there usually is when there are knights about) and there is a chance you might see a dragon! Over the centuries the villagers have also been joined by Middle Eastern Dancers and even time-traveling pirates!

So, if you want to visit Medieval Encampments, watch some knightly combat, drink beer, wine or mead, eat some faire food, listen to live music and watch some great dancers, come on out to Endview Plantation October 12-14, 2018! You can buy some really nice souvenirs from the merchants in the market and if your pet is well-behaved, you can bring them too! You don't have to dress up, but it's fun if you do!

Harvest Faire is a festival, a medieval encampment, live performances, Morris and Middle Eastern Dance, Archery, sword fights, knights on horseback, puppets, an evening drum circle - all in one place for just one weekend a year. Please come out and take a trip through history with us!

Your entry fee also helps support Youth Challenge, which gets the profits from this year's event. For more information, please visit www.harvestfaire.org. And if you see a ghost, remember to wake up Joey!

Come be surprised

Most people hear the wings before they see him. Sigfried, the flying dragon that roams the property at times during the day, makes a dramatic entrance with his wings flapping and head snaking around to pick out any tasty morsels in the crowd. At 10' above the ground, sometimes he flies low enough to touch, other times he is just spied in the distance, flying farther out on the other side of the tents.

Join the Faire without running very far away from home

It takes a village to make a village. Harvest Faire, the Peninsula's Oldest Renaissance Faire, crams all the entertainment value of a multi-weekend Faire into one and we do that with a team of incredibly talented and hard-working volunteers.

Musicians, dancers, story-tellers, drummers, jugglers, stilt-walkers, actors, porters, tent adjustment, site pick-up, set-up and strike/packing, registration and safety patrol – we need help in all these areas (and more) every single year in order to make the event a success. We also have volunteers put up fliers, post on community bulletin boards across the region and staff booths to promote the event at other local events or attend them in costume to spread the word about the Faire.

Harvest Faire provides an opportunity to lend your unique talents and skills to a unique local charity fund-raiser. Would you like to join our team?

Meet the Past!

When you bring your family to attend Harvest Faire, they are not just watching the knights and ladies, craftsfolk and characters – they can talk to them! Some people go through the entire event without realizing that it is OK to talk to the participants. The Faire is not a TV show or a movie, the people who are here to create the event have a wealth of knowledge about the time-period they are re-enacting and often a number of period skills. Do not be afraid to speak to our Renaissance men and women, many of them are members of groups that participate in re-enactment activities all year long. Whether you want to learn more about part of the event or how to join some of the groups, get Medieval with us October 12-14, 2018 at Endview Plantation.

The Faire with Two Names

Harvest Faire or The Warwick River Renaissance Faire – which is it? Well, the Faire is actually both of them, circling each other like a binary star!

First, there is Harvest Faire, the seasonal celebration more ancient than written history. There are games and other amusements performed when the harvest has been put away safely and there is a break from the seemingly endless toil of tending crops from Spring through the intense heat of Summer.

Then, there is the Renaissance Faire, a seemingly magical outgrowth of Harvest Faire, where the older traditions gave birth to some additional merriment as well. It wasn't enough to simply celebrate the season, it was time to gather and dress up, trade our surpluses and hold contests.

During the daytime, The Warwick River Renaissance Faire is in progress, with merchants, knights, ladies and competitions. During the nighttime, Harvest Faire is about being out in the world, in nature and feeling all of that together as we sit by a fire, tell stories, sing songs – and dance.