

# Era of festival was difficult for church

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

STERLING — This summer, Queen Elizabeth I will visit the 16th-century village of Warwick, England, located right here in the Diocese of Rochester.

The queen's visit will actually be performed by actors who annually transform a plot of land in Sterling, Cayuga County, into the venue for the annual Renaissance Festival. This year's fest runs from July 4-Aug. 16.

Since its inception in 1977, the festival has transported visitors back to Elizabethan England by using the pretext of the queen's annual visit to Warwick. Actors take on roles ranging from farmers and craftsmen to minstrels and nobles.

The actors create an atmosphere that harkens back to an era when England's medieval, feudal structure was giving way to a new society created by such phenomenon as the Protestant Reformation and the growth of the middle class.

One medieval institution experiencing attack from several sides was the Roman Catholic Church with which Queen Elizabeth's father, Henry VII, had broken.

Elizabeth was more even-handed with English Catholics than her father, noted Michael J. Reilly, a staff instructor with the festival. However, Catholics — especially clerics — had to keep



Actors portraying Elizabethan characters will perform at Sterling's Renaissance Festival this summer.

a low profile lest they rouse the queen's wrath, he added.

"It was like being in a communist country," Reilly told the *Catholic Courier* in a telephone interview from his Orlando, Fla. home. "A person might find themselves having a communist party card, but they weren't a communist at heart."

Catholics still loyal to the pope might have paid lip service to the Church of England by attending its services, but then they would worship at Catholic services celebrated clandestinely by underground priests, he said.

A variety of factors led Elizabeth I to heighten her repression of Catholicism, among them her desire to break with

the papacy and the struggle against Catholic-led rebellions against her rule. She was eventually excommunicated by Pope Pius V, and she spent much of her reign securing Anglicanism among her subjects. A large minority did keep the Catholic faith or turned to Puritanism.

In the village of Warwick, Catholic priests, fearing official harassment, would have remained as anonymous as possible, Reilly stressed, whereas Anglican clerics would have ingratiated themselves with the queen's court and nobles loyal to her.

For the average villager, religion was part and parcel of their daily lives, Reilly said. They might have invoked such Christian figures as the Virgin Mary or the saints in their daily speech, he added, and generally they looked up to and respected church officials.

On the other hand, the average Englishman did not pay as much attention to the church's official teachings as did other Europeans, Reilly said.

"Religion for him was insurance policy in the afterlife," he said. The church was seen as necessary to keep the excesses of the nobles in check, Reilly said, adding that it gave peasants "a sense of identity."

Paul Kiernan, who currently works with a theater group at Walt Disney World in Orlando, played a Franciscan friar at the festival from 1986-91. In a phone interview with the *Courier*, Kiernan said his "begging friar" character would have lived alone in a hut most of the time. He would also be solicited for spiritual and practical advice by the villagers from time to time.

Kiernan chose to play a begging friar rather than a high church official because he noticed that visitors to the Renaissance Festival tended to interact more with common characters.

"It's easier to deal with the audience that way," he said. "If you're lower and quieter and below them, you'll be easier to relate to."

EDITORS' NOTE — For information on the festival, call 315/947-5783.

p.m. July 4th  
Labor 1 & 3 p.m. weekends  
ES  
ES  
Is!  
78 bl. occup TAX  
144-3800

144-3800

040 '15

315-942-4593

Courier

## Conesus Lake Bed & Breakfast



Located Lakeside

Bedrooms with private balconies overlooking the lake • Private beach with picnic area  
• Free use of paddle boats • Double whirlpool tub • Overnight docking • Full breakfast  
Private bath available  
2388 E. Lake Rd., Conesus  
(716) 346-6526

## Jay-Ve Fishing Tackle Co. Inc.

ROCHESTER'S FISHING HEADQUARTERS SINCE 1952!

- Rods
- Reels
- Lures
- Depth Finders
- Clothing
- Down Riggers
- Marine Radios
- Reel Repair
- Trolling Motor Repair
- Depth Finder Repair

NYS HUNTING & FISHING LICENSES

266-0880  
24 Seneca Ave.  
(corner of Norton St.)

HOURS  
Mon 9-5  
Tu-Fr 9-9  
Sat 9-5

## SAIL EXPERIENCE

SAIL and POWER  
INSTRUCTION/CHARTERS  
Custom Designed Cruises



Call (716) 621-5353  
or write:  
Captain Dane McDorland  
109 W. Commercial St.  
E. Rochester, NY 14445

## Callahan's

Lunch - Dinner  
(Tuesday - Sunday)  
Friday Nite Fish Fry \$5.95  
Sunday Brunch \$6.50  
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
346-6160  
I-390 South to Exit 9  
Route 15, Avon  
Catering Service: All our dinners are available for take-out.  
Your Hosts: Jack and Lori Callahan

Journey through the wilderness to...

## Stillwater

Fine Dining & Lodging  
Enjoy the tranquil beauty nature has to offer any season of the year. Due to our remote location, we appreciate reservations. Located 28 miles north of Old Forge. Your hosts... Walt and Marian Stroehmer.  
STILLWATER, BOX 258-M, LOWVILLE, NY 13367  
315-376-6470

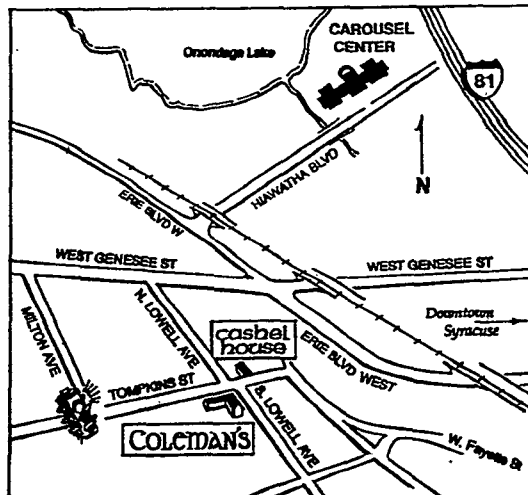
## LOST TROLLEY FARM Bed & Breakfast

Offers clean, comfortable accommodations in a pleasant, old farmhouse and a home-cooked breakfast in a smoke-free environment. Our 95 acres of fields, woods and wetlands provide a peacefully scenic respite before or after a busy day of sightseeing. Located on Route 28, just 4 miles from Cooperstown.  
Hosts: Frank and Martha Wenner  
Phone: (607) 547-5729

## When you visit Syracuse be sure to see the famous Irish pub and unique Irish gift shop on Tipperary Hill

... just 2 minutes from the Carousel Center.

Before or after you shop, relax at Coleman's Authentic Irish Pub and Restaurant. We have the most remarkable dining room decor in Syracuse and our historic bar is fashioned after Jury's in Dublin. Our menu offers delicious Irish, Continental, and American cuisine and we serve lunch, dinner, and Sunday breakfast. A pub menu is also available.



Cashel House, Agent of Irish Imports, specializes in unique gift items for every occasion. Our wares include Waterford crystal, Belleek Parian china, Donegal tweeds, Royal Tara china, Irish Dresden, Celtic jewelry in gold and sterling silver, Irish dolls and music cassettes. We have gorgeous sweaters including Aran knits; hats and ties, and so much more. Whatever the occasion the perfect gift awaits at Cashel House. Beautifully gift boxed with our compliments.

Must see! Free parking just steps from our doors.

An Authentic Irish Pub and Restaurant

## COLEMAN'S

Tompkins at Lowell • (315) 476-1933



cashel house  
agent of irish imports

Clothing • Crystal • Gift Items

224 Tompkins St. (across from Coleman's) • (315) 472-4438

## NYS Woodsmen's Field Days

AUG. 14-16, 1992

BOONVILLE, NY  
PHONE (315) 942-4593  
FOR MORE INFORMATION

HELP SUPPORT THE FOREST INDUSTRY OF NYS