

Seehofs donate Elizabethan collection

They clearly weren't peasants, but neither would they be mistaken for Royalty. Her stunning floor-length velvet gown, elegantly adorned with hand-sewn faux pearls and filigree trim, her hair capped with a snood, and his velvet breeches, jerkin, hat and boots identified Jean and Tom Seehof as members of the Nobility. Says Tom, "...anyone on a London street during the Tudor period would immediately have recognized our societal station and status," so strict were the sumptuary laws, or dress codes, of Elizabethan England.

But, the Seehofs were not in London and most certainly not in the Elizabethan Era. The feast of which they were partaking was indeed typical of Tudor England—bread, wine, meat; lots of meat—but it was March 2006 and the banquet hall was the University Club's Orange Grove Bistro. The dinner, says Cindy Ventuleth, Library Development Officer, was to honor "...the Seehofs for their donation to the Library of an extensive collection of Elizabethan books, clothing and other memorabilia." And as is their custom, Tom, Jean and their family came dressed appropriately, in full noble regalia. Minus, says Jean, "...a few of the clothing accoutrements of the time, such as an iron girdle, which I refuse to wear as a concession to 20th century comfort standards."

The Seehof's interest in things Elizabethan began innocently enough with a visit in the 1970s to the local Renaissance Faire. "On our first visit we had a good time," says Tom, but the purchase of a garland for Jean "...seems to have had an almost magical

effect. While wearing the garland Jean decided to visit the Faire again, and we did. But this time Jean whipped up some costumes and we went dressed as peasants." The second visit proved "... a roaring good time" and thereafter for the better part of four decades the couple and their family were yearly fixtures at the Faire, each time dressed in authentic costumes created by Jean. But, peasantry proved a short-lived estate. "Peasants must bow to everyone," says Tom, "so after our first costume-clad visit we joined the Nobility as Lord Thomas and Lady Henrietta of Woodland. We became upwardly mobile in just seven days!"

Their interest in Tudor England piqued by their visit to the Faire, the Seehofs found themselves launched on an intellectual

adventure, collecting and reading book after book about Elizabeth's England. Rummaging through one bookstore after another on their visits to Europe, over several decades they accumulated a treasure trove of tomes—more than 3000 books in all. "We got a great deal of pleasure from the hunt and we bought whatever books struck our fancy. Jean has a



Jean and Tom Seehof

