

OUTLANDS SENESCHALS' HANDBOOK



November AS XLVII (2012)

Kingdom of the Outlands
Seneschals' Handbook
4th edition
November AS XLVII (2012)

First published September AS XXVII (1992) by Mistress Ariel of Lindisfarne, O.P., and Master Giovanni di Sienna, O.P.

First edition comments and contributions by Mistress Katrine Vanora of Maidstone, O.P., Mistress Leonora Kathryn de Provence, O.P., Herr Klaus von Nachtwald, C.S.H., Lady Ayslynn merch Guincatan C.S.H., Mu'allimah (Mistress) Rashiqah bint Azhar, O.L., and Meistre (Master) Louis-Philippe Mitouard, O.P., O.L.

Revised (2nd) edition published May AS XXXII (1997) by Maestra (Mistress) Francesca di Pavia, O.P.

Revised (3rd) edition (draft) published July AS XXXIX (2004) by THL Robert Marchet, O.S.O.

Revised (4th) edition published November XLVII (2012) by THL Thorvald Thorolfsson, O.S.O., and Mistress Maimuna al-Bukhariyya, O.P.

Comments and contributions of 4th edition by Herr Klaus von Nachtwald, C.S.H., Mistress Catriona nic Aiodh, O.P., Mistress Meenakshi da Gama, O.L., O.P., and Mistress Elasaith ingen Diarmata, O.P.

I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element.

It is my personal approach that creates the climate.

It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous.

I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration,

I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

In all situations, it is my response that decides

whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated,

and a person is humanized or de-humanized.

If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.

If we treat people as they ought to be,

we help them become what they are capable of becoming.

-- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832

Table of Contents

Introduction	.....
What is a Seneschal?	
I. Beginnings	.....
A. Becoming a Seneschal	.....
B. Deputies	.....
C. Receiving a Warrant	.....
D. Terms of Office	.....
E. Choosing a Successor/Emergency Deputy	.....
II. Operations	.....
A. Leadership	.....
B. Organization	.....
C. Dissemination of Information	.....
D. Politics, Group Operations, and Interpersonal Relations	.....
III. Legalities	.....
A. The Law	.....
B. Waivers	.....
C. Minors in the SCA	.....
D. Events	.....
1. Kingdom Events	.....
a. Regularly-Scheduled Kingdom Events	.....
b. Arts & Sciences	.....
c. Crown	.....
d. Coronation	.....
2. North vs. South	.....
3. Local Events	.....
E. Insurance	.....
F. Sites	.....
G. Contracts	.....
H. Donations, Contributions, and Gifts	.....
1. From the Outside	.....
2. From the Inside	.....
3. To the Kingdom	.....
4. Gifts	.....
I. Memberships	.....
J. Bank Accounts/Financial Matters	.....
K. Dealing with Local Officers	.....
1. Duties	.....
2. Resignations	.....
3. Problems	.....
4. Removals	.....
L. Guilds and Households	.....
1. Guild Structures	.....
2. Households	.....
IV. Reporting	.....

A. Monthly	.....
B. Domesday	.....
C. Other	.....
D. Discretion	.....
V. Publicity	.....
A. Spokesperson	.....
B. Needs For/Reasons Against	.....
C. Flyers and Publications	.....
D. Dealing with Unfavorable Publicity	.....
E. Demos	.....
VI. Structure and Protocol	.....
A. Corporate Officers	
1. Board of Directors	
2. Board Ombudsman	
B. Crown	
1. Award Recommendations	
2. Crown Visits	
3. Organization of Events	.....
a. Courts	
b. Head Table	
c. Grand Processional	
d. Site Considerations	
C. Kingdom Officers	.....
1. Seneschal	.....
a. Regional Deputies	.....
b. Chatelaine	
c. Youth Officer	.....
d. Media Officer	
e. Waiver Secretary	
2. Herald	.....
3. Earl Marshal	.....
a. Minister of the Lists	.....
4. Minister of Arts and Sciences	.....
5. Chancellor of the Exchequery	.....
6. Chronicler	.....
a. Webminister	
7. Chirurgeon	.....
D. Baronies	
E. Shires	
F. Cantons	
G. Colleges	
VII. Conclusion	.....
Appendices	.....
1. Running Effective Populace Meetings	.....
2. Stuff I learned the hard way	.....
3. Burn-out – A Commentary	.....

4. Thorvald's Three Rules	.....
5. Channels for Complaint and Appeal	.....

Introduction

Being Seneschal for a group is an interesting, sometimes difficult, and frequently rewarding occupation. This handbook, it is hoped, will provide useful information to Seneschals, both those new to the office and those who have served for many years.

What is a Seneschal?

The term “Seneschal” appears to have Germanic origins, akin to the Gothic “seneigs,” meaning “old,” and to the Old High German “scalc,” meaning “servant.” Therefore, a Seneschal was an old and trusted servant of the household, an agent or steward in charge of a lord’s estate in feudal times. The historic Seneschal of the Middle Ages was responsible to the “Lord of the Manor” for the efficient administration of the estate and as senior servant had the authority and responsibility given him by the lord of the estate.

In the SCA, a Seneschal plays the role of a coordinator, organizer, legal representative, contract-signer, cheerleader, advocate, president, teacher, fount of information, listener, and sometimes nursemaid. A Seneschal can be seen as an activities planner, fundraiser, hand holder, arbitrator, and the person “in the know.”

Major responsibilities include leading the group for whom you are responsible, appointing officers to fill the group’s officer corps, guiding event stewards through the process of running an event, working closely with the group’s Chancellor of the Exchequary (Exchequer) to ensure that SCA funds are spent judiciously, and signing contracts for services necessary for the execution of SCA-sanctioned activities.

I. Beginnings

A. Becoming Seneschal

The ideal way to become Seneschal is to have served as a deputy for a period of time. This allows the group to visualize you in the role as well as giving you name recognition to the Kingdom Seneschal. More importantly, it allows you to gain firsthand knowledge of the duties, requirements, and needs of the office.

In order to be a local Seneschal you must meet the following requirements:

1. You must be a paid member of the SCA, and you must maintain your membership for your entire term in office. Any level of membership is fine (sustaining, associate, family), but you should have ready access to the Kingdom newsletter. If you are not a sustaining member (the minimum membership level to receive the newsletter), someone else living in your house needs to be a sustaining member.
2. You must be of legal age to sign contracts, as this is a duty of Seneschals. This can vary from state to state, but is usually age 18.
3. You must actually live in the group you serve. Simply having a post office box in an area does not make you a resident. (I could get a P.O. Box in Miami, FL, but this would not make me eligible to be an officer in the Kingdom of Trimaris: I don't live there.) This does not mean your mail cannot go to a P.O. Box, but the Kingdom Seneschal will also

need to know your actual street address. Your group is defined by the Zip codes it covers. These definitions are maintained by the Kingdom Seneschal, who will check to ensure that you live within the group boundaries.

4. Anyone considering assuming an office should look carefully at the time commitment involved and decide whether they actually have the time to commit. The SCA is a hobby. Modern life must always come first. If you are a student, or if your job requires a lot of your time, you might be wiser to wait until your life calms down somewhat before agreeing to take the office.
5. You must be accessible via usual means of communication, such as the telephone and the mail, as well as in person at regular meetings and events. Email access is not a requirement but it helps tremendously. If you do not have email access, a Deputy Seneschal who will be your online representative is highly recommended.
6. You should be a fairly active participant in the SCA, especially in terms of your regular attendance at local events and activities.

Meeting these requirements, you have been selected by the Kingdom Seneschal to be a Local Seneschal. Congratulations!

It is strongly recommended that all local officers subscribe to their local newsletter. Note that your SCA membership provides you with the Kingdom newsletter, but local newsletters are a separate matter entirely.

Your next step is to get the office files from your predecessor. This is sometimes not easy, but don't give up - you need those files! In these modern times a great deal of "paperwork" and information is kept electronically and they can be transferred through a USB flash drive. Also ask for any stored electronic correspondence for office (if MS Outlook™ was used, this is a .pst file).

As Seneschal, you should have paper copies of three major documents that you should be familiar with: The first is the SCA Organizational Handbook, commonly referred to as Corpora (but also contains the By-Laws, Corporate Polices and Articles of Incorporation) which is available from the SCA site at <http://sca.org/docs/pdf/govdocs.pdf>. You will also need copies of Outlands Kingdom Law and Outlands Administrative Policies. These are available on the Outlands webpage, <http://www.outlands.org>.

Once you have these books, read them. Carry them with you whenever you attend an SCA function sponsored by your branch (including such activities as fighter practice). Develop a working familiarity with them, especially Kingdom Law and Administrative Policy. It is your job to educate your branch citizenry about these rules and policies, and to see that they are being complied with. If you have any questions about the meaning of a law or policy, please do not hesitate to ask the Kingdom Seneschal about it.

Review the rest of your files as well. Familiarize yourself with their contents. If the organizational system does not work for you, change it. You might find it helpful to read old reports from your predecessor to the Kingdom Seneschal, as well as the Kingdom Seneschal's

reports. You may learn some valuable information as well as familiarizing yourself with group and Kingdom history.

Keep well-organized files. You should have a separate file (or electronic folder) for each of your branch's officers, plus files for reports from the Kingdom Seneschal, your copies of your reports to the Kingdom Seneschal, and miscellaneous correspondence. A file for each event your group runs is a good idea. You will probably have additional files specific to your branch's needs. Don't throw away everything old - that's your group's history! (You can make some judgment calls - some old papers probably aren't worth keeping.) Archive old stuff if it's in your way, but hang onto it.

A great resource to both new and experienced Seneschals is the Outlands' Seneschals' list-serv (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seneschals>). It is strongly suggested that all Seneschals join it, as conversations herein provide wonderful learning experiences for all Seneschals and give the Kingdom Seneschal an opportunity to disseminate information that pertains to local Seneschals much quicker than the Outlandish Herald. If for some reason you cannot join the list or do not think that you will regularly participate, it is strongly suggested that a deputy seneschal be named as an online representative for your group.

When receiving emails related to the Seneschal's office, make sure you separate your Seneschal correspondence from your personal emails and store them in organized files so that you or your successors may be able to quickly reference them in the future. If your group has forwarding email addresses such as Seneschal@Outlands.org, many email programs will see that address in the "To" field and sort them for you. You don't need to save emails from the Seneschals' list as these are archived on the list. It is also a good idea to carbon-copy (CC) yourself on all emails to keep these for record.

B. Deputies

Having a deputy is quite helpful. There are different types of deputies: the emergency deputy (the individual who will fill in as Seneschal if you are not able to fulfill your warrant); the events deputy (the individual who will liaise with your group's event stewards); the secretary deputy (the individual who will take the notes from the populace meeting and disseminate them); etc. You are not required to have various deputies, but it is strongly recommended that you appoint an emergency deputy. Note: If you assign a deputy to perform a task, follow up to ensure it is being done and being done correctly. Make it concrete and measurable, and specify a definite completion date. Writing down the assigned task for both you and the deputy will help ensure that the assignment is clearly understood by both of you.

C. Receiving a Warrant

The Kingdom Seneschal and Crown determine who should receive a warrant. The warrant is the SCA's legal recognition that you are the legal SCA representative for the group. This is the document that legally grants the ability of a seneschal to sign contracts in the name of their local branch of the SCA (not the SCA in general).

Around the time of each Crown Tournament the Kingdom Seneschal will review the current warrants of Seneschals in the Outlands and post this information to the Seneschals list. This

information should be reviewed by local Seneschals for accuracy to include the appropriate expiration dates. Based on the revised information, new warrants will be signed by the (incoming) Crown at Coronation.

Local changes in the Seneschal's office should be anticipated so that new warrants can be signed with upcoming effective dates. If a change is made at a local level without a new warrant being signed then the incoming Seneschal is considered to be an "acting" Seneschal until a new warrant can be signed. While an acting Seneschal is every bit as official in every other way, it is advised that an acting Seneschal not sign contracts as there is no legal backing by the SCA rather you will be taking personal responsibility for the contract.

D. Terms of Office

A normal term of office, by tradition, is two to three years. Sometimes a Seneschal stays in office longer, but these are exceptions. This time period is based on experience - it is about as long as a person can continue in office without losing effectiveness or their mind. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of "burn-out." One symptom is that only you can possibly hold the office and that no one is able to replace you. In Appendix 3, there is an article that addresses burn-out from a gentle from the Kingdom of Calontir.

E. Choosing a Successor/Emergency Deputy

It may sound strange, but not long after assuming the office, you should seek out a deputy or deputies. The training process for your replacements should start relatively soon after becoming Seneschal. This ensures that you can step down after having served a long and noble time. It also ensures that someone is there to pick up the pieces should you suddenly have to quit the office.

Deputies can help you with the work of the office. Delegating is fine! Just remember that YOU are ultimately responsible for what happens in matters concerning your office. You can have multiple deputies, but it is fairly pointless to have a horde of deputies if there is nothing for them to do. Your deputies do NOT need to be your designated successors. (This knowledge might make it easier to recruit deputies!) You do need to have an emergency deputy who could assume the office at a moment's notice. This person is most likely to be the one who would like to take the office eventually.

When it becomes time for you to resign the Seneschal's office, how do you select your replacement? One very good and highly recommended method is to advertise the coming job vacancy in your local newsletter. Instruct interested persons to send a letter of interest to you, with a copy to the Kingdom Seneschal. Set a definite deadline by when such letters must be received then review the letters and choose the applicant you feel is best qualified. If you need help making a choice between qualified candidates, feel free to contact the Kingdom Seneschal to discuss the options. Once you've chosen your top candidate, discuss the matter further with that person. If you then believe the person would make a good Seneschal, and he/she is willing to take the job, write a Letter of Resignation to the Kingdom Seneschal, stating when you plan to step down and naming the person you recommend as your replacement. In addition, instruct the proposed replacement to also write a letter to the Kingdom Seneschal with an introduction that includes their qualifications for the office, and expressing their willingness to assume the office.

The Kingdom Seneschal will most likely have no problem with your choice. The Kingdom Seneschal will also send a "welcome to the office" letter to the new officer. Be sure to introduce your successor to your populace so they can get used to the idea (and to register complaints if they have any). When you're stepping-down date arrives, turn the files over to your successor. It's nice if you can have a public ceremony of some sort to officially mark the change of officers for the populace. The changeover is then complete, and you're off the hook!

That's the easiest-case scenario. What if problems occur - say, only one person applies for the job, and you don't feel that person is a good choice? Or no one applies at all? One suggestion is to identify someone in the group you would feel comfortable turning the office over to. Go to them personally and ask them if they would be interested in or willing to take the office. It may be that they simply never thought of applying for the job for one reason or another, but discover they are interested when it is offered to them. If this does not work, contact the Kingdom Seneschal to discuss the problem.

One thing to bear in mind is that the SCA is not a democracy. Officers are not "elected" to office in the Outlands and people do not "vote" for them. Officers are appointed by the Kingdom with the advice and recommendation of the outgoing officer. Please do remember that you may not APPOINT your replacement, but only RECOMMEND - the final decision remains with the Kingdom Seneschal.

If your warrant is soon to expire and you decide you wish to remain in office, apply to the Kingdom Seneschal for a renewal of your warrant. The Kingdom Seneschal may have some questions for you about this, but if you have been doing a good job, there should be no problem.

If you are showing signs of burnout, it is time to leave at once. One of the classic signs of burnout is the feeling that you cannot quit because nobody else can do what you do. This is (a) immaterial, since you have the right to leave regardless of what happens when you are gone, and (b) probably very wrong. If you have not gotten a deputy to take over, get one now! Write a letter of resignation, introduce your replacement to the populace, turn over the files, and relax! It's not your problem anymore. **DO NOT OVERSTAY YOUR WELCOME.** A burnt-out officer is an ineffective officer.

II. Operations

A. Leadership

You are in a leadership role as Seneschal. However, "leader" does not mean "boss." Many Seneschals have run into trouble by telling the populace what they must do. Remember that everyone is a volunteer. A good Seneschal uses persuasion and tact to get things done. Sometimes this means "leading from behind." Sometimes it means not pushing, but rather letting things take their course. The temptation to jump in and do it all yourself can sometimes be very great. Resist!

Remember also that, as a leader of your group, you are among the people who will be looked to as examples of proper behavior by your populace, especially newcomers. This is sometimes not easy to live up to, but try to remember yourself and set the best example of chivalry, courtesy, grace, and honor that you possibly can.

B. Organization

Files should be clear, concise, and current in case something happens and your deputy must rapidly assume the office. It is recommended that separate files be maintained for each of your officers (i.e. a Knight Marshal file, a Herald file, etc.), each major event your group sponsors should have a file and correspondence to and from the Kingdom Seneschal should have a separate file. At the end of each calendar year, it is wise to close out old files and start new ones. Do not throw out your old files as they may be needed for reference. Some tips for staying organized:

1. WRITE THINGS DOWN!! Carry a notebook with you everywhere. Have Corpora, Kingdom Law and Administrative Policies at your fingertips at all times. Don't assume you'll remember something someone told you at an event. You won't. Write it down!
2. Have a place for your SCA office papers, files, and other items pertaining to the office. A desk or other place set aside for just this purpose is ideal.
3. Have a calendar handy at all times. Record all meeting dates and other appointments. If you promise to have something done by a certain date, record that date, and also mark intermediate dates for reviewing progress.
4. Keep files in appropriately-labeled folders so you can find them easily.

C. Dissemination of Information

As Seneschal, you receive most of the communications from the Kingdom. It is your responsibility to keep the populace informed of matters affecting or pertaining to them. If your group has a newsletter or a list-serv, use it liberally to communicate with your populace.

Official communications are the resources used to disseminate information to the populace who are interested in receiving the information. The official method of communication from the Kingdom to the local group is through the Outlandish Herald, our Kingdom's newsletter. The Outlands website is also considered official as it is administered by the Kingdom Webminister. The "Outlands List" is not an official means of communication as it is owned by an individual

member of the populace (Duchess Kathryn) with no means of ensuring that SCA standards are kept.

It is highly recommended that your group have an e-mail list or list-serv that can be used to disseminate information from the Corporate Office or a Kingdom officer to the local group. If this list administered (owner or moderator) by an officer of the local group and the SCA standards are kept then the list may be considered as an official means of communication for your local group otherwise it is unofficial.

Local groups should be mindful of those in their membership that cannot or do not read email lists. Official announcements should be repeated verbally at various local SCA gatherings such as fighter practice.

Social media is a new concept with which we have not had to contend in the past. Social media is a wonderful tool to disseminate information, through Facebook groups, LiveJournal blogs, Twitter. It is important to realize that while these are very effective methods of communication, not everyone has access to them and joining the Facebook group, LiveJournal blog, or Twitterfeed does not constitute membership in the SCA and therefore cannot be used to communicate officially with the membership. Also, please see the later section on "Publicity" for more information about official e-mail lists and the use of social media.

Another effective method of communication with the group is to hold a regular, usually monthly, populace meeting. The meeting date, time, and location should be advertised in your local newsletter or list-serv. As part of this meeting, your officers should discuss the current status of their offices and activities being held. This is sometimes called a "business meeting." Sometimes this is a separate meeting from the populace meeting. Though this is an option, it is not recommended. It can seem exclusionary to the non-officer members of the populace, which can breed discontent and division. However, if you've always done it this way, and it seems to work, there's no reason to change it. Additionally, event stewards of upcoming events should attend the meeting(s) and report on progress of their events. Of course, populace attendance should also be encouraged. See "Running Effective Populace Meetings" in Appendix 1 for some tips on making meetings work.

Be sure to respond promptly to any correspondence, telephone messages, and email messages you receive. A reply should be sent to any message within 48 hours of receipt with the exception of weekends that you are away from your computer or phone (such as being at an SCA event). Note that I say "reply." This does not mean that you need to give a complete answer within 48 hours, only that you should acknowledge the receipt of the message. If you don't have the answer right away, let them know that you will be getting back with them with an answer as soon as you can. Don't leave them guessing if you received their message! If someone asks you a question to which you do not know the answer, direct their inquiry to someone better qualified to respond, or do your best to find an answer. The Kingdom Seneschal and the regional deputy Seneschals are resources you may call on at any time for assistance.

Be available to your populace as often and in as many ways as possible: at events, at practices, by phone, by email. Communication is your most important duty as Seneschal!

D. Politics, Group Operations, and Interpersonal Relations

Politics can be defined as the process of interpersonal relations. It happens any time you have a group of people working together. POLITICS ARE INEVITABLE. As Seneschal, you are, to some extent, going to be expected to act as a parent to your group. You will be expected to arbitrate disputes without taking sides. So, if there are factions within your group, you must rise above it. You need to take a broader perspective, and you must make every effort to be fair, reasonable and consistent, while acting within the bounds set by modern and SCA law and policy.

If there are problems (and there always are), go through proper channels. These are fully explained in "Channels for Complaint and Appeal," which is found in Corpora and included in this handbook as an appendix. When interpersonal problems come up, the best thing you can do is TALK. Try for a win-win resolution, if possible. Practice good listening skills, use "I" statements, and all of that. (If you are not familiar with these techniques, there are many books and training products available which you might want to check out.) Take deep breaths before making a snappy but tactless remark. Good communication is an art. Practice it.

If you make a mistake (it WILL happen), admit it, apologize, do what you can to correct it, and move on. Don't make excuses or accusations. Take your lumps. You'll be a better and more respected person for it.

Decision-making in a group should be done by consensus whenever possible. Again, everyone is a volunteer. You cannot run the group. You must work with it. If you want something to happen, then the majority must agree that this is something they want as well. Nothing is worse than a Seneschal who is overly demanding. Seneschals should not be dictators. Nevertheless, if it comes down to an argument that cannot be resolved, the Seneschal is the one who has to make the final decision. Remember that everything that goes on in a group is ultimately the Seneschal's responsibility.

III. Legalities

A. The Law

You are the legal representative for the group and for the SCA in your geographical area. One of your duties is to ensure that all federal, state and local laws are upheld. This is very important for the group and the SCA. As we are considered "different" from those outside of the SCA, we must make sure that nothing illegal or too "out of the ordinary" takes place.

B. Waivers

For insurance and legal reasons, the SCA, Inc. requires that anyone participating in certain of our activities sign a waiver stating they understand that these activities may be dangerous, and agreeing not to hold the SCA responsible for injuries suffered. It is the Seneschal's job to enforce the waiver policies of the SCA. These policies can be found in the Outlands Administrative Policies.

C. Minors in the SCA

Minors in the Outlands are persons under 18 years of age residing in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming and under 19 years of age residing in Nebraska. Minors are welcome to participate in the activities of the SCA, subject to the rules set forth in the Outlands Administrative Policies. As Seneschal, it is your responsibility that these rules be followed to ensure the safety of the children along with the organization. Remember the children are our future.

D. Events

As Seneschal, you are accountable for the events that take place in your area. This does not mean that you're the person running the event. While you should be an initiator of activity for your group, you should not be the person running events on a normal basis - you have enough to do! However, you should be satisfied that all laws are being complied with and that the event stewards are able to run the event. This is a prime reason for event stewards to attend populace meetings, you need to stay informed as to what is going on with all events your group is doing.

Your signature is required on all event forms for events taking place in your branch. If your group hosts an event in another branch's territory, or if another group hosts an event in your territory, both Seneschals must sign the form. In such a case, anything happening on-site that is related to the event is the responsibility of the hosting group's Seneschal. Should modern authorities for any reason become involved, then the responsibility falls upon the Seneschal of the group in whose geographical area the event is actually taking place.

1. Kingdom Events

Crown Tournament, Coronation, Kingdom Arts and Sciences events, Stag's Con, Flights of Fury, Kingdom Equestrian, Stag's Bloodbath, Sworded Affair, and Battlemoor are Kingdom events. These events are held on the second weekend of the month known as the "Kingdom weekend (except for Fall Crown, held on the third weekend of September, to give a weekend between the end of Battlemoor and Fall Crown). Usually the local group hosts the event with much input from some of the Kingdom officers.

Local groups are encouraged to host Kingdom events. Available for use by local groups is the Kingdom Event Bid Form, which outlines the details of the event. It is highly recommended that photographs of the site and a layout of the site be provided to the Kingdom Seneschal's office for review (especially if this is a new site that is being proposed). It is customary to donate 50% of the profits from Kingdom events to the Kingdom treasury. Contact the Kingdom Seneschal or the Kingdom Calendar Deputy for assistance.

Some Kingdom events have a list-serv created for them for the use by the event stewards. These lists are not only good means of communication for the event staff but also serve as a information repository about past Kingdom events to include site information, budgets, and expected attendance. Proposed event stewards or local seneschals are welcome to join these lists in order to gather this information. Contact the Kingdom officer in charge of the event to be added to the list.

3. Local Events

It cannot be stressed enough that the local Seneschal is the person legally responsible for the group's activities. The Kingdom Seneschal or his/her representative (i.e. the local Seneschal) has the right to pull sanction on (close down) an event in their area of jurisdiction. This action should only be taken as a last resort. To quote Corpora:

If transgressions occur which seriously compromise the integrity of the event or endanger the health and safety of the attendees, the responsible officials... may find it necessary to remove Society sanction for the event... if an event is terminated in the manner, the person(s) doing so must notify the Society Seneschal, the appropriate kingdom officers, and any other appropriate Society officers as soon as possible. (Corpora II.E.)

In other words, you have the right to close down the event if there is any danger of the SCA being liable in having its name attached to ongoing activity at the event. Should you find yourself in charge of an event where something questionable is going on and you need advice on how to proceed, you may call the Kingdom Seneschal for immediate assistance (even if it's midnight!). In fact, it is strongly suggested you do this before taking drastic action. Please read Corpora and check with the Kingdom Seneschal for more details.

Again, it is the responsibility of the Seneschal to oversee events held within the boundaries of their group. This does not mean that you are running the event. Remember, every new event steward has to start somewhere. It is highly recommended that a mentoring system be set up with experienced and new event stewards working together on events. It is suggested that Seneschals and Landed Nobility not be the event steward; the Seneschal and the Landed Nobles usually have enough responsibilities running a local group to devote any time to running an event.

As stated above, event stewards should be required to attend monthly populace meetings and be prepared to update the officers as to the event's status (money needed, volunteers

needed, site crises, etc.). If an event steward (or representative) fails to attend these meetings, then the Seneschal should contact the event steward for personal updates. However, keep this thought in mind: If an event steward does not have the time to update the officers, does he have the time to run an event?

Available to groups is an on-line payment program called ACCEPS. ACCEPS makes the process of pre-payment for event attendance (both site and feast fees) electronic. There is a small fee, levied to the individual pre-paying, for the convenience of using ACCEPS instead of mailing a check for pre-payment to the identified event staff. This is the only current method in the SCA available for electronic transfer of money. For more information about ACCEPS visit http://acceps.ansteorra.org/acceps_info.php.

The Kingdom Planning Calendar is a calendar on the Outlands' website that facilitates the long-range planning of events and ensures that close-by events are not in conflict with each other. The Kingdom Planning Calendar is coordinated by the Kingdom Calendar Deputy (a deputy of the Kingdom Seneschal). Any Seneschal can add an event to the Kingdom Planning Calendar. The Kingdom Calendar Deputy adds the event to the official Kingdom Calendar once all signed paperwork is submitted.

After an event, the event steward (in collaboration with the gate coordinator) should submit an event report to the local group's Seneschal and Exchequer, detailing what activities were held at the event, what funds came into the group as a result of the event, what funds were paid by the group as a result of the event, and what good and bad occurrences happened at the event. A copy of an event report can be found on the Kingdom website.

E. Insurance

The SCA has liability insurance. SCA events are insured and the certificate which is available from the Kingdom Seneschal should be sufficient for most site owners. However, some site owners insist on being listed on the insurance specifically (usually this is because it makes the process to file a claim easier if filing is necessary). Seneschals may order such certificates from the SCA Office of the Registry. Allow a minimum of a month to receive the certificate. It currently costs \$50.00 to add an "additional insured" (site) to the certificate. Updated insurance certificates are distributed yearly.

Equestrian events have special regulations regarding insurance. For more information, please visit <http://www.sca.org/docs/pdf/eq-insurance.pdf>.

The SCA's insurance is not personal liability insurance. An individual's own policy covers that area. The SCA's insurance serves to protect the SCA, Inc., and its authorized representatives (that's you) from liability for incidents occurring at SCA-sponsored events.

F. Sites

While event stewards may locate sites, Seneschals are legally responsible for them. Make sure site rules are followed (i.e. dry means dry, no fires if not allowed, etc.).

G. Contracts

ONLY SENESCHALS SHOULD SIGN CONTRACTS! As Seneschal, you are the legal representative of your branch not the landed nobles or event stewards. While the local Seneschal has the authority to delegate contract signing to the event autocrat, do this sparingly. This should only be done when a contract needs to be signed by someone in a particular group (i.e. a Lion's club member who is also in the SCA is needed to sign the contract to use their hall). If this is done, review the contract first and then allow for this other signature in writing before the contract is signed. Do not permit contracts extending the name of the SCA to an outside group to include the entire SCA; contracts must be with SCA, Inc. – local group (e.g., SCA, Inc. – Barony of Caerthe). If you have questions regarding a contract, contact the Kingdom Seneschal.

H. Donations, Contributions, and Gifts

1. From the Outside

Your group may accept donations for your work at demos and the like. Your group may also wish to decline the donation in the interest of developing good relations. Note: Local newsletters MAY NOT run paid advertising!

2. From the Inside

You may not require "donations" or "fines" to be paid by the populace. Any moneys donated must be freely given.

3. To the Kingdom

The Kingdom cannot generate the funds it needs to operate without the help of all its local branches. Funds are needed to publish the Kingdom Newsletter, to enable the Crown to travel to events, and for many other purposes. Since local groups and their members benefit from these Kingdom expenditures, it is only reasonable that they contribute to the Kingdom. It is suggested that donations be made to the Kingdom from the proceeds (after expenses are deducted) of every event held. Following are some suggested amounts:

- If your group hosts a Kingdom event: at least 50% of the profits.
- If the Crown attends your local event: at least 1/3 of their travel expenses, or 1/3 of profits from the event, whichever is greater.
- For any other local event: a tithe (10%) of the profits.

When donating money to the Kingdom, please do so in the form of a check drawn on the branch bank account made payable to "SCA - Kingdom of the Outlands," specify what you wish the money to be used for (such as the Travel Fund), and send it directly to the Kingdom Exchequer. If you wish the funds to go to help support the Outlandish Herald, make your check payable to "SCA - Outlandish Herald" and send it directly to the Kingdom Chronicler. Funds donated without a purpose specified will be added to the Kingdom's General Fund.

DO NOT hand cash to the Crown at an event!! This would constitute a gift, and the Crown would have to report it to the IRS as personal income. This is not fair to them. Instead, write a check from your group's account and mail it to the Kingdom Exchequer with an explanation of what it is for (often these contributions are meant for the Kingdom Travel Fund). Also, it is preferred that groups not present checks to the Crown in Court, but rather mail the check to the Kingdom Exchequer (or the Kingdom Chronicler if the contribution is to go to the Outlandish Herald). This does not mean you cannot make a presentation in Court! Present a scroll stating

that you are making a donation (and the amount, if you wish), or perhaps a pouch or box filled with fake or chocolate coins and a note explaining the actual donation. However, send the actual check to the appropriate officer. That way there is no chance the Crown will lose it in the shuffle.

4. Gifts

SCA policy prohibits the giving of gifts purchased using SCA funds. (This is so that there are no problems with the IRS, which has strict regulations regarding the reporting of such gifts as income by the receiver.) This includes gifts and presentations to the Crown or ruling nobles, gifts from event stewards to his or her assistants, flowers for a group member in the hospital, and so on. It includes both purchased items and the purchase of materials to make items. This does not mean such gifts cannot be given. They just can't be paid for out of your treasury. Individuals or groups of individuals may get together and contribute their own money for such a cause - but don't deposit that money into the group's bank account!!

I. Memberships

Just as you must be a paid member of the SCA to serve as Seneschal, all of the other officers in your branch must also be SCA members. You have a responsibility to verify that your officers are members. The membership list is available on the Seneschal's list or through the Kingdom Seneschal.

J. Bank Accounts/Financial Matters

Each group is required to have a Financial Committee and an approved Financial Policy. The Financial Policy outlines the fiscal responsibility of the group. The Financial Policy should cover the constitution of the Financial Committee, the terms of membership for each member of the Financial Committee, the purpose of the Financial Committee, the scheduling and proceedings of the Financial Committee, how income is dealt with, how expenses, events, and event finances are dealt with, and how amendments to the Financial Policy are made. The Financial Policy is approved by the Financial Committee and by the superior Exchequer.

SCA policies regarding financial matters have tightened up in recent years. There are several requirements regarding bank accounts.

1. Checks must require two signatures. You may not have a one-signature checking account. (That is, any two of the people who are signers on your account must be required to sign every check that is written on your account. This is arranged with your bank.)
2. There are three people who are **REQUIRED** to be signers on your branch bank account: the Seneschal, the Exchequer, and the Kingdom Exchequer. Others may be included as appropriate to your branch. If you're in a Barony, the Baron or Baroness (not both -- particularly if they are a married couple) should be listed on the signature card. If two other officers are married to each other, only one of them may be a signer on the account. If the Seneschal and the Exchequer may not reside in the same house.
3. As Seneschal, you should receive copies of the bank statement from your Exchequer each month. Don't rely solely on the Exchequer's report; read the actual statements. Make sure all activity makes sense with what you know has been happening with branch expenditures and income.
4. Make sure that your treasurer has informed the Kingdom Exchequer regarding the bank account information such as account number(s), bank address, phone number, etc. Make

sure you have this information in your files also. Some groups also keep track of the treasurers' drivers license numbers.

5. On occasion you may be asked by a bank or merchant whether the SCA, Inc. Has a Federal ID number. We do, and it is: 94-169 8556.
6. The local Exchequer MUST file a Domesday (end of year) report. If s/he does not, you must do it! This report may not be late! The importance of this cannot be overemphasized!!!! Failure to file an accurate, timely financial Domesday may jeopardize the status of your group - your branch could be suspended, or even, in an extreme case, dissolved. Therefore, monitor your Exchequer's progress on the Domesday and be prepared to step in and help if necessary.
7. It is strongly recommended that each local Seneschal have a copy of (and READ) the the Kingdom of the Outlands Exchequers' Handbook and the Kingdom's Financial Policy. It also wouldn't hurt to be familiar with the Society Exchequer's Handbook and Financial Policy.

K. Dealing With Local Officers

It is always important to follow the chain of command when dealing with local officers. It is paramount that a superior officer knows how his/her officer corps is performing. While it seems cumbersome to do this, it is paramount that the superior officer knows how his/her officer corps is doing. An example of including the superior officer in the chain of command can be as simple as copying that officer on communication. Local officers should be including you (as group Seneschal) in communications with their superior officer: ultimately, the local group and its successes and failures are your responsibility.

1. Duties

The local officers should run their offices like their Kingdom counterparts. They need to submit reports to their Kingdom counterpart as required (see Outlands' Administrative Policy for specific reporting requirements for each office) with a copy to you, the local Seneschal. If you live in a Barony, the Baron and Baroness should be provided copies of their reports as well.

2. Resignations

When a local officer wishes to resign, accept their resignation with good graces. The local officer should send a resignation letter in to their Kingdom counterpart with a copy to you. Should the resigning officer have a recommendation for replacement, that person should be named in the letter as well. As Seneschal, your job is to assist in finding a replacement, if necessary, and to supervise the turnover of the office.

The corresponding Kingdom officer, usually with your consultation and on the recommendation of the outgoing officer, will select a suitable replacement. It is most helpful if the outgoing officer has a trained deputy.

3. Problems

If you have a problem with a local officer, address it with the officer. Should that not work, a letter to the local officer outlining the problems is usually the next best step. In your letter be sure to offer recommended solutions to the problem. Finally, should the problems persist, address a letter to their Kingdom counterpart detailing the problem with a copy of your original

letter you sent to the local officer. Be sure to inform the Kingdom Seneschal at this time of the problem as well. Refer to "Channels for Complaint and Appeal" in the Appendix.

4. Removals

This is the option of last resort should the steps outlined above not work. It is not up to you to remove an officer. This must be done by the Kingdom officer of that office. If you disagree with the actions that the Kingdom officer has taken, write to that officer with copies to the Kingdom Seneschal. Any local officer who does not meet the reporting requirements of their office may be subject to dismissal.

L. Guilds and Households

1. Guild Structures

Guilds are groups of individuals interested in a particular activity (i.e., a lace making guild or an armorers' guild) that are formally recognized by a chapter.

2. Households

Households tend to be based on the familial groupings of the Middle Ages. These groups normally camp, cook, and do other activities together. One main difference between a guild and a household is that anyone may join a guild. Membership into a household generally is by invitation only. It is important to understand that households are completely unofficial. They have no standing in the formal structure of the SCA.

IV. Reporting

A. Monthly

As Seneschal, you are required to report monthly. Reporting is an extremely serious and important part of the responsibilities of your office! Lack of reporting may be cause for removal from office. The following is the preferred format and information for monthly reports:

- Seneschal Contact Information (names, email, & phone)
- Past Business (any important information carrying over from last report that the Kingdom Seneschal should be aware of)
- New Business (any new items that the Kingdom Seneschal should be aware of)
- Good Things (what your group has done that you are proud of and personal commendations)
- Problems (Serious issues that you and your group are dealing with)
- Questions (Questions that you need answered)

Reports are due to the Regional Deputy by the 10th of the month following the month the report covers (for example, reports covering activities in the month of January are due by February 10). Email reports are preferred, but hardcopy letters are acceptable.

B. Domesday

This is due by January 15 of each year and summarizes the previous calendar year in your local group. What were the accomplishments and major setbacks? What events did the group hold and how did they go? How many people are there in your group? What demos and other publicity occurred? If you have kept up with your monthly reporting, it is usually pretty simple to summarize them into your Domesday report. This allows the Kingdom Seneschal to start writing his/her Domesday to the Crown and Society Seneschal. The Domesday format will be given by Regional Deputy in December.

One Domesday report you must make sure is completed is not yours! The Exchequer's Domesday report must be completed in a timely and accurate fashion. As Seneschal, you are ultimately responsible for this report. Don't annoy your poor Exchequer about it, but do make sure it is done. If for some reason the treasurer does not or cannot complete the Domesday, it becomes your responsibility to do it yourself.

C. Other Reports

Occasionally an action, deed, or event needs a separate report. This may be a letter describing a problem situation or a report regarding a Kingdom event. If you feel a letter needs to go out sooner than your monthly report, by all means write it. Too much information is far better than too little. Make sure the Kingdom Seneschal is aware of problems or potential problems. Do not hesitate to call or email on matters that cannot wait for your monthly report.

D. Discretion

Please keep in mind that people read your letters years down the road. The Kingdom Seneschal's files are kept current and are passed on to the next Kingdom Seneschal. If you do not wish others to read harsh remarks, reconsider what you wish to say in writing.

Never send a letter that was written in anger. If angry wait a day or two, then re-read your letter. Perhaps a re-write is in order at that time. Remember that this advice especially applies to email communications as people are often too quick to send such messages and then regret them five minutes later.

V. Publicity

A. Spokesperson

You, as Seneschal, are the group's spokesperson to the media, along with the Chatelaine. If you feel uncomfortable talking with the media, assign someone who has been trained to work with both you and the media. Your Chatelaine should have undergone training in how to do this, and is your best choice. Don't let just anyone talk to a reporter! Instruct your populace to funnel reporters to you or your Chatelaine.

B. Needs For/Reasons Against

Publicity can be good, but it also can be harmful. We can be seen as a rather odd group, so make sure that the media attends the "better" events: those that would attract newcomers' interest; those that really show us at our best. Don't accept all offers of publicity. You don't want a reporter to cover a household party! Make sure that reporters understand the group - don't assume that just because you told them once, they know who and what and why we are.

C. Flyers and Publications

Flyers are handy in order to educate both the media and newcomers. However, be sure the information is current and accurate. Listing names and numbers of local contacts are helpful; listing the Registry's address is required. Use modern names, rather than SCA ones, in listing contact information. Your flyers must be approved by the Kingdom Chatelaine's office. Don't run photographs without the photographer's written permission.

D. Dealing with Unfavorable Publicity

Don't overreact to negative publicity. Ignoring a bad situation is usually the best tactic. If you must react to a story, contact the Kingdom Seneschal, who will take action on your group's behalf.

E. Demos

As Seneschal, it is NOT your responsibility to organize or participate in every demo your group does. However, you MUST be kept informed! Be sure your people understand that you must be in the loop any time a demo is proposed or scheduled. As with any other event, any documents connected with a demo requiring a signature must be signed by you. Work closely with your Hospitaller in planning and scheduling demos. It is suggested that the Hospitaller be the first contact for the public in scheduling a demo. The Hospitaller will determine what kind of demo is desired and set up a tentative date. Only the Seneschal can approve a firm date for a demo.

Only demos approved in this way can be billed as "SCA." People may present the Middle Ages to a group as individuals, and they may even advise people who might be interested to contact the local chapter of the SCA, but they cannot call themselves "the SCA" unless the demo has been officially approved by the Seneschal.

As in the case of talking to reporters, not everyone in your group is necessarily a good representative to the public at demos. Consider the audience and choose your participants

carefully. Training in "how to do a demo" is suggested for all demo participants. Your Hospitaller should have training information and information about the different kinds of demos in their office handbook.

Be sure that the Hospitaller, or whomever is actually presenting the demo, works with the officials of the institution for whom the demo is being presented. If "live steel" (swords, rapiers, daggers, or knives of any kind) is to be brought to a school demo, you **MUST** get written permission from the school administration first! We want no unpleasant surprises when we show up with what are in reality deadly weapons.

If there is to be demonstration combat, either armored or rapier, at a demo, there must be people present who can act as marshals to ensure the safety of the crowd and property. These need not be "authorized marshals", but they must be knowledgeable about the fighting arts and safety. This means they must be authorized fighters. All activities at demos must follow the dictates of modern law, Corpora, and Outlands Kingdom Law and Administrative Policy.

VI. Structure and Protocols

A. Corporate Officers

The SCA is a corporation whose "medieval" functions are managed by the Seneschal of the Society. The Seneschal reports to the President of the SCA and the Board of Directors, who, with the Registrar and other Corporate employees, manage the real-world aspects of the Corporation. The other corporate officers correspond with the major Kingdom officers and oversee activities throughout the Known World. As a local Seneschal, any correspondence with Corporate Officers should be done through the Kingdom Seneschal.

Board of Directors

Members of the Board of Directors serve three-and-a-half year terms. Candidates for the Board are nominated by SCA participants, and nominees remain on the list for two years. The list of nominees is published for member commentary in *Tournaments Illuminated* and the Kingdom newsletters. These comments are used by the current directors to aid in selecting new directors.

The Board meets four times a year. The location of Board meetings rotates among the Kingdoms so that members have an opportunity to attend. The exact location is determined based on many factors, including cost and easy air accessibility. Local groups are encouraged to host an evening revel if a Board meeting is held in their area. For more information, contact your Ombudsman.

There are three committees of the Board: the Grand Council (a standing advisory committee charged with providing ideas and proposals on changes to the modern functioning of the SCA); the Grants Committee; and, the SCA Census (a committee that focuses on analyzing and reporting the results of the 2010 SCA Census, an Internet survey created to help the Board identify, address, and work on current issues, and gain a deeper understanding into what makes the SCA what it is today).

Board Ombudsman

Members of the Board of Directors are assigned duties as Ombudsmen for Society Officers, Board Committees, and Kingdoms. They represent those individuals and groups to the Board, and promote communication and coordination between the Board and the functional personnel of the Society. SCA participants with concerns about a particular Kingdom or Corporate office or function should contact the ombudsman responsible for that area. Any individual may write directly to our Ombudsman on any issue. However, it is requested that the Kingdom Seneschal be contacted first in order to allow for the issue to be addressed within the Kingdom before elevating it to the Board. If the response from the Kingdom Seneschal is not acceptable then individuals are welcome to contact the Board (preferably with a courtesy copy to the Kingdom Seneschal).

B. Crown

1. Award Recommendations

The Crown bestows recognition in the form of awards upon its subjects for good works and skills. However, Their Majesties are not omniscient. They do not know everyone in Their Realm and what everyone is doing. Any individual in the Kingdom may recommend any other individual for any of the awards available, up to and including Peerage.

As Seneschal, it is more incumbent upon you than upon anyone else in your group to write award recommendations to the Crown, as you are the leader of your group. Pay attention to what people in your group are doing, and consider it a part of your duties to recommend them for awards as you see fit. This is one of the greatest joys that will have as Seneschal in seeing those that you recommended being awarded for their accomplishments.

Your recommendation can take the form of a letter, or, if you prefer, can be done via the on-line award recommendation form found on the Kingdom website. Note that Kingdom Law requires that all recipients of armigerous awards (awards bearing an AoA or greater) in the Outlands must be paid members of the SCA.

2. Crown Visits

Don't panic! The Crown are just folks and generally are willing to work with you. Talk with them. If the Crown is busy, most Crowns have a member of their retinue called the Steward of the Royal Household with whom you may interact without bothering Their Majesties Themselves. This does not mean you personally have to deal with a Crown visit. Your job is to make sure the event steward is aware these things need to be done. Who actually does them can be decided between you.

3. Organization of Events

- a. ***Courts*** - Should the Crown visit, they probably will want to hold a Court of some sort. If They did not bring a herald with Them, your herald may be asked to run the court. (Your herald may be called upon to assist the Crown's herald, in any case.) Ask the Crown prior to the event (or at least prior to the Court) whether or not They want to hold Court, when They want to hold it, how much time They want, etc. Don't be shy. The Crown will be pleased that you are so courteous and organized.
- b. ***Head Table*** - If the Crown is present at an event with a feast, it is customary for Them to sit at a separate table called Head Table. If there is a Head Table, other notables might be invited to sit with the Crown. Ask the Crown who They'd like to have at Head Table. Also find out if members of the Royal retinue will serve Head Table, or if you should provide servers.
- c. ***Grand Processionals*** - A Grand Processional is a formal presentation of gentles in order of their rank to the Crown or Ruling Nobility. These don't have to be long, drawn-out affairs if they are well-organized in advance. Sometimes this is a good way to introduce all of your populace to the Crown. Have your herald organize the processional.

- d. *Site Considerations* - When the King and/or Queen attend an event, some facilities are necessary. If possible, They will need a private room which They can use as a place to sign scrolls or transact other business privately, to change, or simply to rest. A place where Peers' Circles can meet privately may be needed. Consult with the Crown or with the head of the Royal Household to find out exactly what will be needed for your particular event.

C. Kingdom Officers

According to current Kingdom Law, "duties of local officers should be derived from the...duties of their Kingdom counterparts." All officers should be familiar with Kingdom Law and particularly with their corresponding Kingdom counterparts' section. You, as Seneschal, need to know Kingdom Law and have a working understanding of Corpora as well.

All local officers should have a good working relationship with their Kingdom Officer – this person, most likely, has been in their shoes and has tips and ideas of how to make the job easier or more enjoyable. Correspondence with Kingdom (superior) officers should be done with a regular frequency – most Kingdom officers require, at minimum, a quarterly report, but local officers should feel comfortable with communicating with their Kingdom officer as needed, as issues arise with their office, or before problems are too big to fix!

As a local Seneschal, correspondence with a Kingdom Officer should be done through the local office or through the Kingdom Seneschal.

1. Seneschal

The Seneschal coordinates activities within the Kingdom, much as you do on the local level. In addition, the Kingdom Seneschal is the legal representative to the modern world for the Kingdom (SCA Region). Please contact the Seneschal when you have questions regarding any matter! The Kingdom Seneschal has the following deputies:

a. Regional Deputies

The Kingdom is divided into a northern region and a southern region. The easy line of division of the Kingdom is the New Mexico/Colorado state line, although the Shire of Rio de las Animas (located in the modern-day Durango, Colorado) is considered a southern group, mostly due to its close relationship to the Barony of Fontaine dans Sable (located in the modern-day Farmington, New Mexico).

The Kingdom Seneschal has deputies to help with the administration of local chapters. This deputy is your first point of contact to answer questions or resolve any issues that you may have within your group. You are welcome to contact the Kingdom Seneschal directly but the first question may be: "Did you talk to your regional deputy?"

b. Chatelaine

The Chatelaine is in charge of helping newcomers get integrated into the SCA, for coordinating demos, for group publicity, and for maintaining the group's "loaner" garb.

This officer is a deputy to the Seneschal. The Kingdom Chatelaine is a resource for information on newcomer and publicity matters.

c. Youth Officer

Children are the future of the SCA. Youth officers provide safe, fun and educational activities during scheduled and structured sessions at events, meetings, and/or other SCA functions. Youth Officers are not babysitters, but instead are coordinators or teachers who offer age-appropriate means for learning and involvement within the scope of the SCA. Youth Officers should encourage, organize and/or implement classes and activities and encourage others to include minors in all SCA activities where appropriate. They are also responsible for following the society and kingdom policies regarding minors and ensuring that these things are done in a way that keeps the organization and, more importantly, the children safe.

d. Media Officer

The Kingdom Media Officer is responsible for ensuring that any contact with the media is reported and meets SCA standards.

e. Waiver Secretary

The Kingdom Waiver Secretary is the person who keeps all waivers collected at events and local practices in case they are needed for future legal reasons. All waivers need to be sent to the Secretary in a timely manner (within a month).

2. Herald

The White Stag Principal Herald coordinates a number of Kingdom deputies as well as all of the local heralds. Heraldry is usually divided into several categories: book (name and device research and submissions), field (announcing combatants and victors in tournaments), and court. The Kingdom Herald is the voice of the Crown in Court. The Scribes' guild is governed by the Herald's office.

3. Earl Marshal

The Marshal is in charge of fighting and safety throughout the Kingdom. Local Knights Marshal report to this person. This person also oversees other martial forms such as fencing and archery. The Kingdom Rapier Marshal, Archer General, Equestrian Marshal, and the Minister of the Lists report to the Earl Marshal.

4. Minister of Arts and Sciences

The Minister of Arts and Sciences encourages research, creativity, and execution of period endeavors, as well as supervising Kingdom Arts events.

5. Chancellor of the Exchequery (Exchequer)

The Exchequer is ultimately responsible for the accurate and timely reporting of the Kingdom's finances. The Kingdom Exchequer works with local treasurers on opening and maintaining bank accounts, helps with finance and accounting questions, and is a signer on all local bank accounts. The Kingdom Chamberlain, who maintains the Kingdom's regalia reports to the Exchequer.

6. Chronicler

The Chronicler publishes the Outlandish Herald, our Kingdom newsletter. The Chronicler also oversees all of the Kingdom publications and acts as a coordinator for the local Chroniclers. Please make sure that your local Chronicler sends courtesy copies of your group's newsletter to the Kingdom Chronicler and the Kingdom Seneschal. The Kingdom Webminister who is in charge of maintaining the Kingdom website reports to the Chronicler.

7. Chirurgeon

The Kingdom Chirurgeon maintains records of injuries in the Kingdom. The local Chirurgeons are warranted "at large" and are independent of the local groups. This helps them to maintain their services within the various "Good Samaritan" laws (these laws provide legal protection for medical personnel who help injured persons in an emergency).

D. Baronies

A Barony is a sub-group within a Kingdom which has the right to select a ruling Baron and Baroness. It must have the membership and an officer corps to support Baronial-level activities. A Barony is required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, a Knight Marshal, a Herald, and a Chronicler.

As a Baronial Seneschal, one of your job responsibilities is to work with the Landed Nobles. While you are the legal representative of the group, the Landed Nobles are the representatives of the group by the Crown. The Baronial Seneschal swears an oath of service to the Landed Baron and Baroness and the Landed Nobles swear an oath of service to the Crown at each Coronation.

Baronies work closely with the Cantons and Colleges within their boundaries. Any communication from the Canton or College leadership should go to you (as the Baronial Seneschal), the Landed Nobles, and the Kingdom superior officer.

The term of office of a Landed Noble is often two years but may be longer (or shorter). It is up to the Landed Nobles in consultation with the Crown to decide when they would like to retire. If you feel that it is time for the Landed Nobles to retire before they announce this, you should have a personal conversation with them about this. If, after this conversation, you disagree then you should discuss this with the Kingdom Seneschal.

When a change in the Landed Nobility is to take place, the Kingdom Seneschal or a designee (usually the Deputy Kingdom Seneschal or the regional deputy) will conduct the Baronial polling at a pre-advertised event. Site fees should not be collected from those only attending the event for the polling. Non-Baronial members and non-members are sometimes permitted to poll (if this is the case, then the polling sheets indicate Baronial paid member populace versus others). It is important to remember that the choice of the incoming Landed Nobility is the decision of the Crown, not a popular vote of members of the Barony present on polling day. It is the Crown's prerogative to select the Landed Nobility they deem fit, not a popularity contest. This is why we use the term "polling" rather than "vote."

The award recommendation process for Baronial awards is similar to the Kingdom award recommendation process. Along with recommending Kingdom awards, it is a Baronial Seneschal's responsibility (and joy) to recommend members of the populace. Remember, by Kingdom Law, all recipients of armigerous awards (awards bearing an AoA), even those given by Landed Nobles, must be paid members of the SCA.

E. Shires

While a Shire is a small local group without Landed Nobility they are no less important than the Baronies. A Shire must have the membership and an officer corps to support Shire-level activities. A Shire is required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, and either a Herald or a Knight Marshal (a Knight Marshal is required if there will be combat conducted within the Shire).

Shire Seneschals should encourage travel to other groups' events so that their members learn more about the SCA and the things we do outside of the local activities. The Shire Seneschal should, if possible, travel to Coronations where they are expected to swear an oath of service to the Crown and meet with the Kingdom Seneschal in person.

F. Cantons

A Canton is found within the boundaries of and is part of a Barony. Cantons are formed to help with the administration of a large Barony and also to recognize a subset geological group within the Barony. Its officers report to their Baronial counterparts. A Canton, similar to a Shire, is required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, and either a Herald or a Knight Marshal (a Knight Marshal is required if there will be combat conducted within the Canton).

Canton Seneschals should report directly to their Baronial Seneschal. The Baronial Seneschal will assist the Canton Seneschal in answering any questions that they may have along with resolving issues. The Baronial Seneschal will include in their reports a summary of Canton news and issues. If an issue or question is not being addressed sufficiently by the Baronial Seneschal then the Canton Seneschal may take it to the Regional or Kingdom Seneschal as appropriate.

G. Colleges

A College is based at a real-world institution of higher learning, and may "go dormant" - have few or no members - during the summer. A College may or may not be part of a Barony. Its reporting structure is the same as a Canton's if it's part of a Barony and like a Shire's if not. A College is required to have a Seneschal, an Exchequer, and either a Herald or a Knight Marshal (a Knight Marshal is required if there will be combat conducted within the College).

VII. Conclusion

Serving as a Seneschal is a LOT of work. It is also a LOT of fun. You get to meet lots of new people. You are in the center of the activity of the SCA. You'll learn a lot. You will get angry and frustrated. You will also feel great satisfaction and happiness. Though a lot of your SCA time is devoted to your job, don't forget the reasons you joined the SCA in the first place. Don't stop participating in the activities that give you joy.

Remember to have fun, and the job of Seneschal won't seem so daunting. And remember also that the Kingdom Seneschal's office exists to support and help you. Please don't hesitate to call when you have a question, need advice, have a complaint, or just need to blow off steam. That's what the Kingdom Seneschal is there for.

Appendix 1

Running Effective Populace Meetings

by Herr Klaus von Nachtwald, CSH
Former Seneschal of the Shire of Caer Galen

Populace meetings. For some Seneschals, the mere mention of this word brings chills to their spines. Some have equated it to giving a speech while being heckled by the entire crowd, or herding cats, or keeping the peace in a playground full of 8 year olds. But it doesn't have to be this way. Below you will find some real, hands-on suggestions on how to run and use this important, vital tool to the best of its ability.

And vital it is. Your primary job as Seneschal is to communicate and coordinate, both upwards (to your Kingdom superiors) and downward (to your officers and the populace in general). This is important to remember because often a populace meeting is the best (sometimes the only!) vehicle you have for passing information back and forth. It gives anyone in the group, big or small, a chance to be heard and give their opinion, and is a quick and easy way to see what the populace in general thinks about a subject. It is also a great breeding ground for new officers. It allows people to see and experience how the group works, and what each office does.

This is why it is vital to keep populace meetings open. You don't know everything, and neither do your officers, and a different point of view can often give you innovative solutions to problems. Encourage this culture of openness by listening and considering any opinions given, no matter how off the wall. Try to step back from proposals and look at them from the speaker's point of view. Encourage them to give further reasons for their points, to support their proposal. This can give you more food for thought, and allows you to easily spot proposals that had little or no thought put into them.

Now, let's talk about the meeting itself. Everyone runs their populace meetings differently, and this is as it should be. Each group of people has a different set of personalities and dynamics. Some groups are very controlled and calm, others are frenzied brainstorm sessions, but when run properly they all share one thing in common: The work gets done, with little extraneous energy spent. This is achieved through careful facilitation of the meeting.

Note I said Facilitation, not Control. Control is commanding people, forcing them to go where you steer, and this is very difficult to do in a volunteer organization. Control tends to turn people off, draining them of their ambition and energy. They tend to keep ideas to themselves, which can lead to stagnation within the group and rob you of people's full potential. Facilitation involves directing people, keeping their thoughts and actions to the problems at hand, making the meeting move smoothly towards problem solving, giving everyone a chance to get their ideas out. This is, without a doubt, one of the trickiest skills you need to pick up, but one that can come quickly with the correct mindset and will serve you in great stead in the future.

One useful and important tool is the use of Ground Rules. I'm not going to write out a set of firm, universal Ground Rules for you, because there aren't any. Ground Rules need to be developed by the group, to fit the group's personality. You'll find that most groups who have a fairly consistent membership have already developed a set of rules within themselves, although not in any

official, written form. Almost any social interaction in a group will develop ways things are done and pecking orders. What you want to do is reinforce those that help you, and eliminate those that hinder you. This can be done by writing them down as a group.

At the start of your next meeting, take out a large sheet of paper and explain to everyone you would like to set down a few ground rules that we all agree on to help things run smoothly. To start out, just begin by brainstorming, ask everyone just throw out suggestions for ground rules. I've included a few good ones below that can help you get the ball rolling. After you seem to have a good list (or no more ideas seem to be coming forth), now read the entire list, then discuss each one, asking for opinions, for and against. Try to get a consensus, because this makes it more enforceable if we all agreed on it at the start.

You'll find that this process can take about 30 minutes to an hour, but its time well spent, and will pay dividends in the future with time saved and chaos avoided. Once you've agreed upon a small list of ground rules, write them down neatly, and bring them to every meeting. Place them in a prominent place, to remind everyone what rules we've agreed to follow.

Ground Rules - Some suggestions:

- Who gets to speak when: It's a good idea to come up with some method of recognizing and giving someone the chance to speak. This can be as complex as Robert's Rules of Order, to as simple as raising their hand and having you recognize them. Be sure to have something, however, otherwise it's easy for one person to steamroll others, never giving everyone a chance.
- Problems, not People: This is a good one. It means that you focus on the problem, not the people that caused the problem. If you focus energy on the problem itself, it saves you from wasting energy on non-productive things like blaming people. If it's necessary to confront or discuss a problem with the person that did it, it's best to do that somewhere else, face to face, instead of hanging a person out to dry before the entire populace. With this rule, as soon as someone starts a "well, Bob forgot to..." you should interrupt them with the statement to focus on the problem itself. This brings everyone back to fixing it, rather than starting an argument.
- Everyone's Opinion has merit, and needs to be considered: Not only does this force you and everyone else to consider every angle, but it has the added advantage that it neatly sidesteps some of the factional problems that can come up. People of opposing factions sometimes try to dismiss every suggestion made by the others, but this gives you the tool to let everyone give their say, show their perspective.
- You vs. WE: This is less a rule and more an attitude. A group works best if it works like a team, all striving together to overcome problems. When you notice some saying "You need to..." Try to turn this into We. "What do WE need to do to solve this? What can WE do?"
- Seneschal can interrupt or choose to re-direct the subject: This can be a tricky one, but can also be necessary. As the Facilitator, you will occasionally need to interrupt people who are just re-stating their positions, or get the direction of discussion back on track. However, you need to be sparing with your use of this powerful rule. By using it when necessary, and not just to further your own desires, you build a trust amongst everyone that you are fair and equitable.

Be sure to take into account various other issues that are specific to your group. Perhaps the Baron/ess would like to be able to interject their opinions where needed, or if you have a limited time limit for your site, you might need to reserve the right to speed things along and skip discussion. Or limit stories and jokes to after the meeting, etc. Whatever seems to fit.

As the facilitator, you need to keep the ball rolling, keep the meeting moving forward, solving problems that can be solved here, delegating others for later resolution. Encourage people who agree with previous points to just say so, not re-iterate what has already been said. One of the biggest clues that you are beating a dead horse is if you have heard this exact point before. If you have, interrupt the speaker and ask if they have anything new to put forward, because right now you're saying exactly what Tom said. Don't be afraid to speak up and do this; it's your job. However, if they do have a different point, say, similar to Tom's but with a different twist, be sure to allow them to continue. Just try to cut out the stuff we've already heard.

Another technique that can help is to summarize. When you think you've heard several different people repeating different positions, interrupt the discussion, and summarize the various points you have heard. Try to break them down into a few differing elements, and then ask everyone "Is this it? Is there another point of view I've missed?" If not, you can now tackle this smaller, concise list. When you have come to a solution to a problem, be sure to summarize it again for everyone, so they all understand and they can catch anything you have got wrong.

Try not to take sides, especially if your group is fairly faction-oriented. As Seneschal you need to represent your whole group, both to the rest of the Kingdom and to all the populace. You need to be approachable to everyone, you want people to trust your judgment, to feel that they can come to you for fair treatment. This can be critical when it comes to arbitrating conflicts. If you show yourself to have a fair, even hand in populace meetings, you build trust in all sides that when you are wearing your Seneschal's hat, they'll get a fair hearing. This doesn't mean you have to submerge your own feelings and attitudes, however, far from it. You need to speak out about whatever you think, but be certain that people understand when an opinion is just your personal one, or when you are speaking as Seneschal (and thus the representative of the group).

Finally, let's look at the members of your populace. Many of them will undoubtedly have more experience in the Society than you do. Be sure to consider their opinions thoroughly, as they will have specific insights into the workings of the group and the society. In addition, don't forget that new people not only can bring in fresh insight, a new way of looking at things, but they also may have a huge store of experience in the modern world that is very relevant to the Society. I guess the moral here is to be sure to consider each person's skills and abilities, not just their time, or lack thereof, in the Society.

A smooth, effective populace meeting is joy to attend and be a part of. They really do give everyone a feeling of community, of accomplishment, and a sense of progress. I hope some of the above suggestions can help you in utilizing this tool to its fullest potential, and make your life as Seneschal a little bit easier.

Appendix 2

Stuff I learned the hard way (or Elasait's Helpful Hints)

by Melissa Beaty-Schraer (Mistress Elasait ingen Diarmata)

From the Calontir Seneschal's Handbook

1. The 72-hour rule: If someone contacts you and describes a major problem, particularly one that's clearly interpersonal in nature, you don't have to act right away. Take time to mull it over before you do anything. Half the time, the crisis will blow over in a few days. (This doesn't mean it won't resurface later, under a different form.)
2. Distinguish between calls for action and a desire to vent. Lots of people who contact you just want to vent at someone. Vents don't necessarily need action on your part, beyond listening.
3. Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity. Never attribute to stupidity that which can be adequately explained by poor communication. Always assume communication failure, even if it looks unlikely. (Elasait's corollary to Hanlon's razor)
4. Never let your boss be surprised. If you think it might come to the attention of the Kingdom Seneschal, be the first to contact them—or, at the very least, contact your regional reporting deputy and let them contact the kingdom seneschal!
5. Burnout can be insidious. I didn't realize how badly I wanted out of the local seneschal's office until I found myself, immediately after turning over the office, skipping out of the feast hall shouting, "I'm free, I'm free, I'm free!"
6. Kingdom and regional officers are resources; use them. They don't bite, and they're there to help.
7. It is more important to fix problems than blame. Or, to use the dead fish analogy created by Mistress Hilary of Serendip, long-time Steward (now called Seneschal) of the Society: When you have a dead fish lying on the carpet, if you spend all your time trying to find out who left it there, it will only grow more and more smelly. Your first order of business is to appropriately dispose of the fish.
8. Don't reinvent the wheel. It's likely someone else has had the same problem you're having. This is also why you shouldn't hesitate to consult your superior officers.
9. Some people just live to complain. There will be a small minority of folks who won't be happy no matter what course of action is decided upon. They won't offer suggestions (constructive or otherwise) or express their opinions when given the opportunity, but will wait until a decision has been made and then complain about how they weren't consulted, or they could have told you it wouldn't work, or the powers that be have to have everything their way.

10. Anytime anyone begins a statement with the phrase, "People are saying...", it usually means that's what that person is saying. Take it with as much salt as needed.

11. Beware the prophet who preaches the One True Way. The SCA is a broad organization, and there are many, many ways to play the game. This doesn't mean you have to tolerate elf ears, vampires, or showing up in a spandex Civil War outfit; but as long as someone's version of the game isn't in contradiction with the governing documents or kingdom law and policy, it's to be permitted. Other people will either flock to that version of the game, or they won't.

12. It's worth trying to regard problem entities as people with misdirected energy. Sometimes your problem child is actually someone who cares passionately about some aspect of the organization, or really wants to make a contribution, but doesn't know how or feels ignored. Cast about and see if you can come up with a project for your problem child. This won't always work, but it's worth a try.

13. Don't assume. Anything. A close look at the word tells you what it can make out of all of us.

14. Perceptions, even erroneous ones, look like reality to some people; and left unchecked, they have a way, over time, of becoming reality. They are more important than you think, which is unfortunate, but true. Don't ignore them.

15. If you must use an iron fist, put a velvet glove on it if at all possible. You really will go farther by being pleasant and agreeable, and demonstrating interest in people's concerns.

16. While it may be gratifying, in the short term, to give in to the impulse to tell someone exactly what you think of their intelligence, personality, parentage, etc., or to indulge in backbiting and innuendo when those around you are doing so, it's rarely worth the cost. Ultimately, this game is won on what, for lack of a better term, I call graciousness points. This is doubly true of officers, and quadruply true of seneschals.

17. Never suppose you're too unimportant for somebody to take what you say as an Official Pronouncement...and always at the worst possible moment.

18. If you're not (mostly) enjoying what you're doing, then you're not doing the right thing. Yes, this is true even of officers. Holding office is a big responsibility, and can be a burden, but it can also be a delight. If doing what you're doing causes you no joy, arrange to stop doing it.

19. Being able to make soothing noises over the phone is an invaluable skill.

20. When (not if) you make a mistake, the best approach is to swallow your pride and own up to it readily. Apologize where appropriate, take whatever beating you've got coming with as much grace as you can muster, do what you can to make things right, fix it, and file whatever you've learned for future reference.

21. If someone comes up with a really stupid idea, assign them to carry it out. Nine times out of ten you will never hear from them or the idea again. (Thanks to Master Stephen Ironhand, first seneschal of the then shire of Three Rivers, for this valuable and time-tested rule!)

Appendix 3

Burnout—A Commentary

From the Calontir Seneschal's Handbook

Sometimes an officer will avoid giving up an office when it appears that it is time to do so to everyone except the officer in question. A burned-out officer often feels that no one is capable of doing the job except him or her. Usually the quality of the officer's work begins to deteriorate during this period. In addition, there is also a general lack of interest in starting projects or seeing them through.

The SCA is a hobby, and it's supposed to be fun. While holding an office does carry with it certain obligations, and not all of those obligations are going to be fun (few people, for example, look forward to the end of the quarter because they're thrilled to have an opportunity to write a quarterly report), in general the rewards should exceed the frustrations, and the parts of the job you enjoy should exceed the parts you don't. When this ceases to be the case it is time to leave office. In fact, it's better to leave while you're still enjoying the job. Usually if you're enjoying the job most of the time, you're being effective; and isn't it better to leave office while you're still effective, so the rest of the group is sorry to see you go, rather than relieved?

If you have pangs when you turn over the office, don't worry; that's natural. Particularly if you have put a great deal of yourself into the office and done it well, it's normal to identify closely with it and feel a little "lost" when you prepare to give it up. But give yourself a chance to try some other things you haven't done before, or haven't done in awhile, both in and out of the SCA. Soon life will be full again and you'll find other projects to occupy your new-found spare time. And, not to worry, opportunities to hold local offices come around quite regularly in most groups, and it's relatively rare for there to be a large pool of applicants. Eventually, your number will come up again in the office lottery if you want it to, particularly if you're remembered as a good and effective officer by those in your group. It's in your interest as well as the organization's to leave office while you're still relatively "fresh" instead of when you're reduced to crisp cinders.

It is sometimes possible to "step back" from the office briefly, and return with new enthusiasm. This is particularly true if it's relatively early in your term, and a bothersome but solvable problem came up that occupied a lot of time and energy for awhile. If something like this happens, you might consider a couple of possible solutions. If you can arrange it, take a weekend "off" from the SCA—either go on an out-of-town pleasure trip that has nothing to do with the SCA, or just stay home and devote yourself to non-SCA pursuits—preferably while letting your answering machine deal with the phone. If this isn't possible, perhaps you can carve out one night a week when you don't do SCA business—then stick to it, religiously. Or if there's a particular aspect of the job you're really tired of, see if you can delegate that to another person for a time.

The burnout victim may not be you. Sometimes, as seneschal, you're the one to realize that a local officer is crispy. Some signs of burnout are noted above; others include failing to do routine

duties, such as returning phone calls or doing minor paperwork (especially if the person has been fairly efficient in the past); finding fault with every proposed replacement; coming up with excuses not to turn the office over at a certain time; and lessened attendance at group functions. Beware the person who says they want to stay in office until they finish Project X, particularly if Project X is a large undertaking with no definite timetable.

If you suspect you're facing an officer who's burned out, try to talk to the officer about the problem in a friendly, nonthreatening manner. Do this in private, and try not to put the other person on the defensive — although this can be difficult. It's best to start out by expressing general concern about the person; then work up to what you think is the specific cause of any problems. If you don't think you're on good enough terms with the officer to do this yourself, try to enlist a friend of his or hers to do it, or else a trusted neutral party. If necessary, discuss the problem with the Kingdom Seneschal or the person's superior officer, and get their advice on how to proceed.

And, if somebody approaches you and suggests that you may be burning out, pay attention to their words. They may not be right—sometimes a stressful but decidedly temporary problem, in or out of the SCA, will cause a person to act burned out when they really aren't. Also, sometimes it's possible to take a brief “step back” from the office and return with a fresh perspective. But do consider whether the burn-out monster is attacking you, and whether it might be time to look for a replacement or speed up your plans to turn over the office, keeping in mind that it's best to leave 'em wanting more.

Finally, a bit of personal philosophy: Sometimes personal or work life makes it impossible to continue to perform your duty as an officer. When this happens, it seems very difficult to give up the job. Please remember that there is nothing wrong with giving up your office early. It's better to do that than to continue to hold the office and not be able to do it well. It is all right for your personal life to supersede your hobby.

Appendix 4

Thorvald's Three Rules

By THL Thorvald Thorolfsson

Note: While this article was written to apply to being an Event Steward the same rules can apply to holding an office such as Seneschal.

Over my years in the Society I have come up with three simple rules to follow when being an event steward.

1. Delegate!

Being an event steward is a much more enjoyable experience if you draw together a good team of people that you can trust to handle the various aspects of the event and not have to do everything yourself. Many hands make light work!

Another good reason for this is an experienced event steward should be sharing their knowledge and experience with others. Find those new service-minded people that want to help and find them a job; either a small piece or a deputy to a larger part of the event. This way those new people can gain the experience needed to become leaders and event stewards in the future.

However, the most important reason for delegation is that the head event steward is in charge of the entire event so the event steward should not get bogged down in any one particular aspect of the event. At the event itself, the event steward's main job is to put out fires - those last minute emergencies, big or small, that always pop up unexpectedly. Even at this time, if it is a small fire, the event steward should be prepared to delegate putting out that fire in order to be free to be available for other fires that happen.

2. Communicate!

An event steward cannot simply delegate all aspects of the event and walk away. While you should delegate major tasks to those that you trust to completely handle them this trust should be based upon knowing that there will be open communication. With this open communication you can also know early on if someone on your team is heading in a direction that is not within your vision of the event. Without micromanaging the actual position, insist on updates of progress and any issues that arise so that you aren't surprised when they come to your attention. You can then communicate your thoughts and work to solve any problems early on.

One good method for this is creating a mailing list (i.e., a Yahoo Group) for the event. On this list people can communicate about the event and share ideas. This list can also be a great knowledge repository for future events. So often an event is run spectacularly one year and so-so the next year. This is because there was no communication from one team

to the next. In this knowledge repository the bids, budgets, and lessons learned can be kept for many years creating continuity between events. Also useful is to pass on all the files you used planning the event to the next year's event steward via a thumb-drive.

3. Have Fun!

Remember that when two or more SCAdians get together at an event we have a good time. It is the event steward's primary job to arrange for the site and provide the infrastructure. At the event you should be relaxed and ready to handle any issue that arises. However, don't completely stress out since no matter what happens the attending group (not just your staff) will help fix the problem and find a way to have a fun time regardless. Remember to breathe and have fun yourself. A positive attitude goes a long way and will help you be a better event steward.

So remember - Thorvald's three rules of being an event steward are: Delegate, Communicate, and Have Fun! Follow these and you will have a much easier and enjoyable event steward experience.

In Service,
THL Thorvald Thorolfsson

Appendix 5

Suggested Channels for Complaint and Appeal

(This is taken directly from Appendix A of the SCA Governing Documents)

The Society is devoted to courtesy, trustworthiness and personal responsibility, and it sometimes seems that these ideals should be enough to permit members to work smoothly together. After all, virtually everyone agrees it is desirable to foster the Society's goals of encouraging research and recreation in its chosen period and to promote the welfare and prosperity of the organization and the education and enjoyment of everyone in it. Unfortunately, tensions and disputes develop anyway.

The Board is the final court of appeal for disputes that have escalated beyond the ability of the participants or the officers to handle. However, it is reluctant to play that role because its rulings affect the entire Society – often by restricting everyone's freedom and reducing their enjoyment of the organization. Corpora provides an unlimited right of appeal to the Board, but members should make every effort to work out their disputes at as low a level in the organization as possible.

While it is not possible to prescribe a specific list of things to do or people to consult that will serve in all disputes, the general procedure outlined here should be adaptable to most of them. If you are directly involved in a dispute, please go through a process at least as comprehensive as this one before asking the Board for help. If you are asked to intervene in someone else's dispute because of the office or title you hold, please don't rush in. First urge the principals to try all measures recommended for attempting to reach a settlement without involving your level of the organization. Then, if you do intervene, make every effort to find a resolution the participants can accept, instead of escalating the dispute to higher levels of the organization.

Principles

1. Avoid trouble. There are many valid approaches to Society activity. Members should make room for each other to explore anything that supports the Society's goals, abides by its rules, and does not actively interfere with the environment it attempts to create. In many cases, the best way to deal with a minor problem or disagreement is to act as though it doesn't exist. HOWEVER, the advice about ignoring problems in the hope that they'll fade away does not apply to breaches of the law. If you encounter illegal activities, your obligations as a citizen are the same as in any other aspect of your life. Please keep the officers of your branch and kingdom informed if you decide to invoke the assistance of outside authorities in ways that may require them to answer questions about the matter at hand or about the Society itself, but do not hesitate to exercise your civic duty as you see it.
2. Look for ways around hard choices. It may be possible to break a dilemma by taking up both alternatives, either together or at different times, instead of wasting energy arguing over which to choose. It may also be possible to find a third approach that both sides prefer to their original ideas.

3. Try to keep a sense of perspective. Just because you're unhappy, it doesn't mean you're right! Make an effort to listen to the arguments of the other side with good will and honesty, and look for a solution everyone can live with.
4. Go through channels. If you can't solve the problem yourself, your requests for assistance should follow a line of authority without skipping anyone, and without spreading laterally through the organization any more than absolutely necessary. For example, when you reach a level that has royalty or royal representatives, include them on your copy list, but don't start out by copying all the royalty in your corner of the Known World on your initial complaint. Try to involve as few people as possible—the less you embarrass your opponent, the likelier you are to get a solution you can live with and not simply bury the dispute until it can resurface on different grounds.
5. Be patient. Allow each level time to try to deal with the situation, and avoid the temptation to attack the people you've asked for help if they don't seem to be moving fast enough to suit you.

Procedures

1. Try to work things out face to face. When someone does something that interferes with your appreciation of the Society in a way you can't ignore, or that seems to be contrary to the rules, talk it over. Explain the problem as you see it, and listen to the reply. (Likewise, if someone comes to you, listen carefully before you frame your answer.) With luck and good will, the problem will go away. You'll find ways to reduce the level of irritation, you'll stop real rules violations, or you'll come to understand why things you thought were violations were actually legitimate activities. If you can't communicate, ask someone you and the other party both respect to help, either by relaying messages or by moderating a meeting between you. Try not to go to an officer in charge of the area in question, as such an officer may be tempted or compelled to make a ruling instead of letting you reach an informal agreement.
2. Write to the person you're having difficulty with. Describe the way you feel you're being damaged, without indulging in insults or threats. Ask for the action you feel would set things right, and indicate how long you feel you can wait for a reply before making further distribution of the complaint. Keep a copy of the letter, but do not send it to anyone but the addressee at this time. The written word is often more effective than the spoken word, so there's a good chance that this letter, or a series of direct letters and replies, will eventually lead you to a solution. As long as you feel you're making progress either in understanding or in getting your way, do not go on to step 3.
3. Write a more formal letter to the other party. Outline any new points you may have thought of and refer to your previous correspondence. Send a copy to the officer in charge of the area in question, or to the royalty or royal representative nearest the level where you have a dispute. Depending on the situation, it may be a good idea to send copies of the letters you've already written or received on the matter with the copy of the current letter you send to the superior; if you are doing so, be sure to mention it in your letter. (It is very important to proceed openly as you pursue your complaint; things are tense enough already without adding a new—and justified—charge of sneakiness to the general dispute!) Again, set a reasonable time for a reply, and consider it carefully when it arrives. As with step 2, continue at this level as long as it looks like there's any progress.

4. Write directly to the officer in charge of the area in question, with copies to the subject of the dispute, the next higher officer, and the appropriate royalty or royal representative, if any. Explain how you feel you're being mistreated, and ask for specific help. Include the entire previous correspondence; if you have not already shared it with the officer—and mention the enclosures in the text. Evaluate the reply or replies before you decide to go forward.
5. Repeat step 4, moving up the organization and including everyone you've involved on your copy list. Follow your correspondents' advice as to whether or not anyone else at or below their level needs to be consulted. Eventually, you run out of levels.
6. If no one else has managed to find a solution, the Board will do so. However, there is no guarantee that you will like what they come up with, and there is nowhere else to turn. Even if you get something resembling what you originally asked for, the effect on the Society may well be regrettable, as the Board finds it almost impossible to deal with a specific situation without touching anything else.
7. While it appears cumbersome, this technique should reach some sort of resolution in a matter of months. The greatest number of levels between you and the Board is five, assuming a dispute between members of a canton whose barony is part of a principality. The important thing is getting a solution, NOT getting to the Board, and the approach outlined in this article will probably let you settle the matter without involving the corporate administration at all.