

February 5, 2000



**THE MERIDIAN SENESCHAL'S HANDBOOK
AN OWNER'S MANUAL FOR THE LOCAL SENESHCAL
A.S. XXXIV EDITION
2000**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you are involved in updating a handbook like this one you have this fantasy that it will remain an unchanging monument to your ingenuity and creativity throughout the ages. But truth be told, times change, regulations change, policies change, and the Kingdom's needs change. So to expect a handbook to be static over the years is pretty unrealistic.

To best serve the purpose of this handbook (to provide local seneschals a readable, concise, and accurate resource for the information they need to run an SCA branch) it is designed to fit in a standard three-ring binder. As rules are amended, laws are made, policies are implemented, new problems are addressed, or the chapters are written more clearly, the local seneschal will receive update pages to integrate into the handbook.

Your job in this endeavor will be to:

- 1.) Read the whole book.
- 2.) Integrate updates as they arrive.
- 3.) Pass it on (in good condition) to your successor. This book belongs to your branch, not you.
- 4.) Ask your other local officers for a copy of all their CURRENT report forms so there is always a master in the binder.
- 5.) Let the Kingdom Seneschal know if there are things in this book that are unclear, can be explained better, or are just plain missing. This book is not carved on stone tablets.

The handbook will, hopefully, answer most of the basic questions any Meridian seneschal is likely to have during an average tenure in office. But this book is not intended EVER to take the place of checking with your Kingdom Officers or good 'ole common sense. If you run across a problem that this book does not help you with call the Kingdom Seneschal for advice!

Enjoy your tenure! And remember the idea is have fun at this too!

THE KINGDOM SENESCHAL SPEAKS: A PREFACE

For some time I have wanted to carry out this project and with the help of two very exceptional individuals I was able to see this handbook become a reality.

Mistress Maire Ingen I Cathaisaigh and Baroness Bronwen o Gydweli took my concept and made it a reality. Mistress Maire's creative writing talents and ability to know what I wanted made this a labor of joy (on my part) and Baroness Bronwen's talents in layout and printing enabled me to see that this was published.

I think that you will find this handbook useful. Often the job of seneschal comes with a lot of questions and little in the way of answers. While everything that could happen (and often does) can't be covered here, hopefully, you will find answers to the majority of your questions.

Enjoy your time as seneschal. Do your job to the best of your ability and remember if you have any questions please, do not hesitate to contact your Kingdom Seneschal.

Until we are next in touch I will remain in service to the SCA, Kingdom of Meridies and you,



TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK	i
THE KINGDOM SENESCHALE SPEAKS: A PREFACE	ii
I. JOB DESCRIPTION	1
A.) YOU'RE AN ADMINISTRATOR	1
B.) YOU'RE A COMMUNICATOR	1
C.) YOU'RE AN ARBITRATOR	2
II. HOW TO GET STARTED	3
A.) THE IDEAL SCENARIO	3
B.) THE QUITE A BIT LESS THAN IDEAL SCENARIO	3
C.) OK FOLKS, LET'S GET REAL	3
III. SENESCHAL AS ADMINISTRATOR	5
A.) REPORTS, REPORTS, REPORTS	5
B.) RUNNING THE BRANCH BUSINESS MEETINGS	6
C.) KEEPING THE FILES	7
D.) EVENTS	8
E.) CONTRACTS	9
F.) MONEY	9
IV. SENESCHAL AS COMMUNICATOR	11
A.) INFORMATIONAL	11
B.) ADMINISTRATIONAL	11
C.) REPRESENTATIONAL	12
D.) PROMOTIONAL	14
V. SENESCHAL AS ARBITRATOR	16
A.) WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "ARBITRATOR"?	16
VI. THE EPILOGUE:IN CONCLUSION	20
A.) TOP TEN PIECES OF ADVICE FOR A LOCAL SENESCHAL	20
VII. APPENDICES	21
A.) SENESCHAL'S MONTHLY REPORT FORM	21
B.) LORD HIGH SHERIFFS EVENT FORMS PACKET	22
a.) INSTRUCTIONS	22
b.) EVENT SIGN-IN SHEET	25
c.) NON-MEMBER WAIVER SHEET	26
d.) MINOR'S WAIVER AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE	27
e.) MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION FOR MINORS	28
f.) DESIGNATED ADULT IN CHARGE OF MINORS (NON-PARENT)	29
g.) AFTER TROLL SIGN-IN SHEET	30
h.) CONSTABLE EVENT REPORT FORM	31
C.) INSURANCE LETTER	32
D.) KINGDOM LEVEL EVENT BID FORM	33
E.) CHIRURGEON EVENT REPORT FORM	36
F.) CHIRURGEON EVENT REPORT FOR AUTOCRAT	37
G.) REPORTING FORM FOR LOCAL MINISTERS OF ARTS AND SCIENCES	38
H.) HERALDS REPORT FORM	39
I.) CHRONICLER'S END OF THE YEAR REPORT FORM	40
J.) REEVE'S REPORT PACKET	41
K.) STANDARD LETTER FORMAT	54
L.) WHOS WHO	55

L.) CHAIN OF CONCERN

I. YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION

HELP WANTED--enthusiastic, organized, person with excellent people and communication skills. Must be a self-starter. We're looking for a good administrator, arbitrator, and communicator all in one qualified candidate. If you fit the description AND are willing to put in long hours with no pay, call the Meridian Kingdom Seneschal's Office today to apply for the best job of your life!

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE HIRED!
WELCOME TO THE MERIDIAN SENESCHAL TEAM!

You may have become a local seneschal by appointment, by public acclaim, by election, or by a thumb wrestling tourney. No matter how you got the office, your first question is likely to be "Now what do I do?"

The job of local seneschal has three major responsibilities which in turn can be divided into numerous duties. The details may vary from location to location, but the main ideas remain the same.

A.) YOU'RE AN ADMINISTRATOR. As seneschal you have to help the branch run as smoothly as possible. You are the chief pencil-sharpener and paper-pusher so that the people of your branch can have SCA activities (and FUN!). As administrator some of your duties include:

- 1.) You fill out and send in your monthly seneschal reports so that the Kingdom Seneschal has an idea how your branch is doing.
- 2.) You make sure the branch business meetings are held regularly. It is your job to run these meetings.
- 3.) You coordinate your local officers to be sure they have the resources they need to do their jobs. You keep tabs to be sure their reports are going in on time to their Kingdom Superiors.
- 4.) You supervise the planning of any branch activities like demos, practices, classes, fund-raisers, and events. You DON'T have to run all of them of course-just monitor them for safety, legality, organization, and money handling.
- 5.) You help in the design and submission of Kingdom event bids; get event dates on the calendar, and ensure that event reports are completed and sent to the Kingdom Exchequer.

B.) YOU'RE A COMMUNICATOR. You are a vital link in the communication chain between your branch members and the Kingdom Officers, as well as between the SCA and the Modern authorities in your region.

- 1.) You help members of your branch communicate effectively with Kingdom Officers and Royalty. When folks in your branch have questions, concerns, or recommendations that involve Kingdom level issues you direct them to the best source and in most constructive way to express their thoughts.
- 2.) You distribute information that comes from Kingdom level Officers to your local branch members.
- 3.) You correspond by mail or telephone as needed to keep your branch members informed of activities within your own branch, as well as Kingdom activities. You also use mail or telephone to keep the Kingdom Seneschal's Office aware of special issues in your branch as they arise.

February 5, 2000

4.) You communicate to the modern public through the media, through demos, and through goodwill community activities. Always keep the SCAs image in mind when dealing, with site owners, members of the media, or Modem authorities.

5.) You are the local SCA welcome wagon for people interested in joining the Modem Middle Ages, members moving into your area from other branches, and members "just passin' through". Remember: many times you might be the first and only contact for someone seeking the SCA in your area. Make sure it is a positive one!

C.) YOU'RE AN ARBITRATOR. You help direct your branch members towards resolution of conflicts through moderated discussions and compromise-WHEN AND ONLY WHEN these conflicts interfere substantially with the administration of the branch (ie the branch can't seem to have any fun).

1.) You can advise your branch members about the most successful channels to use to have their individual concerns addressed on the Kingdom and Corporate level.

Now that you have some clue about what to do, let's examine how to get started on this exciting new job of yours!

II. HOW TO GET STARTED

A.) THE IDEAL SCENARIO

Once upon a time there was a branch run by a wise and competent seneschal. This seneschal had enjoyed his job over the years and was universally beloved by the populace. But he knew that his time as seneschal must end eventually, so he prudently chose a promising young person within the branch who possessed many of the attributes one would seek in a future leader. The Wise Seneschal taught this Promising Future Leader what he knew of being a seneschal --valuable lessons about how to deal with site owners, pushy newspaper reporters, skunks in the kitchen, camp toilets, Kingdom officers, visiting Royalty, wadded panties and noses out of joint. In the fullness of time, the Promising Future Leader learned much from the Wise Seneschal.

When the fateful day arrived for the Wise Seneschal to leave his office and pass it on to another, the populace was called together. He announced his decision to retire from office and suggested the Promising Future Leader as a possible replacement. Although saddened by the departure of the Wise Seneschal, they were comforted by the fact that the Promising Future Leader was so well trained. After giving the weighty matter the requisite minutes of discussion and thought, the populace gave their approval and endorsement of the transition! The Promising Future Leader became the New Seneschal, and the Wise Seneschal took his deserved place in the hearts of the populace as Elder Statesman.

And they all lived prudently and agreeably (though somewhat unrealistically) ever after.

B.) THE QUITE A BIT LESS THAN IDEAL SCENARIO

It was a dark and stormy night when the local seneschal met with a few household members to decide who would be the next leader of their branch. Although Burned Out Seneschal wanted to keep his job a good deal longer, the populace apparently had forgotten the blood and tears he had shed on their behalf. "Oh sharper than a serpent's tooth is this ungrateful lot!", he cried. In the dim flickering light of his dungeon his minions sharpened their tongues and their daggers for the coming struggle. Outside the castle walls, the populace waved their torches and brandished their pitchforks. The forces of We and Them were prepared for bloody battle. And in the morning there would be a new Seneschal, even if it meant that there was no one left to lead...

C.) OK FOLKS LETS GET REAL!

The stories above are meant to illustrate the extremes of the seneschal selection process. Of course they are exaggerated, but I think you'll be able to pick out a few "truths" nonetheless.

Meridies has no real rules about HOW a local seneschal is selected. Each branch has its own particular method, and as long as this method is FAIR and FUNCTIONAL there is no real reason to change it unless a more effective method comes along. It all comes down to the common sense test-is it working and is the populace generally satisfied

Here are a few guidelines which will make the transition easier for everyone involved.

- 1.) Know when its time to leave. As seneschal, know your own limitations. Do not stay on after you have expended your energy and interest. Do not stay on if your personal life suddenly demands your full attention. This tenure is different for everyone--I personally limit myself to two years in any office, but for you it might be five years or one year. It is better to leave the branch wanting more of you than forcing them to pry you out of the job with a crowbar.

2.) Train future leaders. If you want to leave a positive mark on the history of your branch--train, train, train. By sharing your knowledge and expertise with others in your branch, you plant the seeds for improved leadership in ALL the local offices in the future. You will improve the pool of candidates for your replacement (And take it from me, its easier to give the reins over to someone who knows what's going on than to someone who's clueless). Without training, each future seneschal has to reinvent the wheel, relearn everything you spent years finding out.

3.) Involve everyone in the decision. This does not necessarily mean an election. But the selection process for the local seneschal should be known to everyone in the branch, and there should be some mechanism to allow the populace to give their input. It could be as simple as "I'd like my deputy Johann as the new seneschal. How does everybody feel about that ?"

You are not constrained by law to consult the populace. However imagine this: a new seneschal without the acceptance and support of the populace is in a terrible position. It's unfair to the candidate and it's unfair to the populace. From a practical point of view, unless a new seneschal has the backing of the populace, the branch is in an administrative standstill.

Trust the populace enough to make them part of the decision process and the transition will be more comfortable and effective.

4.) Keep your Kingdom Superior informed. OK, now you've decided to step down. You've trained a replacement. The populace agrees to the new seneschal. Surprisingly, lots of folks forget the next part. TELL YOUR BOSS!

That's right, the seneschal stepping down should write the Kingdom Seneschal. The letter should include your SCA name, your mundane name, contact information (address, phone number), the name of the branch you were seneschal of, the proposed date of your resignation, and the name and contact information of the person who will be replacing you. AT THE SAME TIME, the incoming seneschal should also write a letter with the same information accepting the position.

Why two letters? It gives the Kingdom Seneschal the proof that a transition has taken place AND that the two main parties know about it. If the outgoing seneschal's letter is the only one to arrive, it is conceivable that the replacement has not been told, or has not accepted. If the incoming seneschal's letter is the only one to arrive, perhaps the outgoing seneschal has not been informed that they are "retiring". Don't laugh, this happens more times than one might expect!

As the new seneschal, your first duty is to be sure that BOTH letters have made it to the Kingdom Seneschal, with courtesy copies to the Regional Reporting Deputy. In six to eight weeks you should check Popular Chivalry to be sure the new contact information has appeared. If it has not, contact the Kingdom Seneschal (not the Kingdom Chronicler, they can't make these changes without the Kingdom Seneschal's approval).

Once the Kingdom Seneschal has both letters about the office change, the new seneschal's name is added to the warranting roster which is signed once a reign by the Crown. The Kingdom Seneschal also forwards the new name and contact information to the Kingdom Chronicler to be added to the Regnum in Popular Chivalry. A welcome letter is sent to the new seneschal and a thank you letter is sent to the outgoing seneschal. That welcome letter is the signal for the incoming seneschal to fully assume the duties of the office of local seneschal!

In all events--try to keep the transition closer to the Ideal Scenario. But if it seems to be turning into the second scenario remember that you can always contact the Kingdom Seneschal's Office for advice.

III. SENESCHAL AS ADMINISTRATOR

Your chief role as seneschal is as an administrator--the person who makes the trains run on time. It does not sound glamorous but is probably the most vital part of your job. Your branch needs your help in order to get sites, organize local activities, publish flyers in the Kingdom newsletter, run the meetings, and stay in good standing with the Kingdom officers.

A.) REPORTS, REPORTS, REPORTS. These are pesky bits of bureaucracy but they ARE necessary. It is really the only way for your Kingdom Superiors to know the current health of your branch.

1.) The Monthly Seneschal's Report: To make things a bit easier, you'll find an idiot-proof report form in Appendix A. Your monthly report is due to the Regional Reporting Deputy by the 10th of each month. It's considered "late" if it is postmarked after the 10th, and "missed" if postmarked after the 15th. Repeated late or missed reports mean that you are unable to perform the job as seneschal and your branch will have to start looking for a replacement. If you are having a crisis which will result in late or missed reports, be sure to inform your Regional Reporting Deputy as soon as you can. Always keep a copy for yourself and the branch files.

2.) The Domesday Report: Once a year you will be asked to provide a summary of the entire year (following the format of the monthly reports)--this is known as the Domesday Report. Your Superior, the Kingdom Seneschal, summarizes the individual branch reports and makes a year-end report to the Society Seneschal. This report is CRITICAL to the health of your branch. DO NOT MISS THE DEADLINE! Not only will a missed Domesday report mean a job change for you, but it could mean the dissolution of your branch (No report--no branch, get it?). If there is a compelling reason why this report will be late contact the Kingdom Seneschal directly. As with any correspondence as a seneschal, keep copies for yourself and the branch files.

3.) Officer Reports: Once in a while, one of your offices will go vacant or one of the local officers will not be able to keep up with their reporting. Missing any of the greater officer reports could imperil your branch's official status, so it's up to you to be sure that these reports are submitted in a timely manner. Of particular importance are the financial reports--nothing gets you in hot water faster than a late or missing financial report. See Appendix F, G, and H for master copies of three local officer report forms.

Now don't use this as permission to micro-manage your local officers. Allow them to do their jobs as they and their superiors deem fit. You need to intervene only if you have been informed by the Kingdom Superior that the local officer's reporting has not been up to scratch. Each Kingdom Officer has a different policy, but most send the first warning letter only to the local officer, the second warning goes to the local officer AND the local seneschal--that's you; the final warning goes to both the local officer and you along with a request for a resignation. Some Kingdom Officers also publish "naughty lists" in Popular Chivalry. If your branch appears on one of these lists, you and the local officer in question need to find out what the problem is.

Presuming that there is no one available to send in these officer reports, guess who gets to do it? That's right, you do. So for your own sanity, you'll always want to try to keep the main offices filled with responsible people who you can count on to report to THEIR superiors on time.

*****As local seneschal you cannot FIRE a local officer unilaterally. Only their immediate Superior is empowered to do that. If you feel that the officer in question is not performing their job, bring your concerns to them at first, and then if the situation has not improved, their Kingdom Superior.

4.) Event Reports: Normally the autocrat of an event is responsible for getting the Sheriff's report and the Exchequer's event report completed and submitted. But since these reports both involve money, if the autocrat does not submit them, you will. For your own peace of mind be sure the autocrat has the proper forms, knows how to complete them, and knows when and to whom to submit them. For your convenience copies of these reports are in Appendix B.

5.) Special Reports: The Kingdom Seneschal's Office has special projects on occasion that may require some input from you or your branch members. Usually you'll get a mailing from the Seneschal's Office explaining what you need to do. Do your best to complete these special reports by the deadline.

B.) RUNNING THE BRANCH BUSINESS MEETINGS. There would not be much to running a local group if there were only reports to write. The business meeting is where the rubber meets the road. Keep it simple, keep it short, keep it productive.

1.) Write an agenda. Plan out an outline of the topics you want to cover at a particular meeting. You might want to include things like upcoming branch activities, upcoming events in the area, ongoing branch projects, officer reports, event planning, projected expenditures, or items of concern. Some seneschals like to use Robert's Rules of Order for their meeting protocol, but this is not required. Just use a format which is organized and consistent from meeting to meeting.

2.) Involve the branch members in decisions. When it comes to selecting new officers, or deciding on projects to spend money on, or coming up with new events try to guide the branch members to a consensus. Some branches vote, some just nod their heads--whatever the method, find some way to measure how the branch members feel about affairs which will involve their time, effort, and funds.

Remember that you are not made a demi-god, just a seneschal. Do not commit your branch resources to something "because you said so." Getting support from the whole branch (or at least most of it) divides the workload and the responsibilities into easier shares. If you try to "do it all", you'll get tired and unpopular real quickly.

3.) Keep on track. Everyone has something they want to say and some people love the sound of their own voice. While you are running the business meeting, try to keep to your agenda. Occasionally you'll also have to prevent other branch members from repeating information, getting on a soapbox, or going off on an unrelated tangent. Have a firm but polite way to get the meeting back to the business at hand; otherwise it will be like a ride on a runaway stagecoach.

4.) Take notes on the decisions made during the meeting. Branch members will naturally come to you for information about what happened at the meeting. Write down all the decisions made at the meeting and keep a copy in the branch files for future reference. And I mean ALL the decisions: including meeting places, times, calendar dates, job assignments, expenditure approvals, project proposals, officer nominations, and special announcements. If your branch has a secretary or chronicler, they can help you fulfill this duty.

5.) Stay consistent. Try to keep the meeting place and times predictable. Even the best branch communication has limits and flaws. Do not count on the last minute phone roster to announce when and where the next meeting is going to be held because you may miss people. Likewise keep the meeting format predictable. Changes are fine, but keep them gradual and infrequent for the most part. If there are too many variables (new meeting places, new times, new decision

procedures, new meeting formats etc.) branch members get confused and may stop attending meetings. If you hit on a formula that works well for you and the branch members, stick with it. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

C.) KEEPING THE FILES. Since you act as the main administrator of your branch, you also get to keep the branch files. Always have a "Master copy" (a copy from which other copies may be made) of all the important branch papers in the files. A common error is to hand out that last copy because you're sure you can get a replacement later. DON'T DO IT! You can be certain that when you need that particular form you'll have a deadline looming in the near future and no way to quickly get a replacement copy. Save yourself a headache later, keep "master copies" in the files as if they were made of gold.

Ideally your predecessor left you some files which were complete, organized, and current. Realistically though, you may need to "fill some gaps". Here are some examples of the sort of things you'll want to have in your files:

- 1.) Organizational Handbook (Corpora, Governing Policies and Decisions, and Bylaws of the Society). These can be ordered from the Society Stock Clerk's Office. Make sure your branch has least one of these which is current.
- 2.) Kingdom Laws. Keep a current copy of this (they come out every 18 months) and any law changes which appear in the Kingdom Newsletter. Laws can change fairly suddenly and dramatically so keep up to date by religiously reading the Kingdom Newsletter.
- 3.) Current Insurance Letter. The Kingdom Seneschal's office sends copies of these out as new ones come from the Corporation (at least once a year). Check the expiration dates of the policies listed on the letter to give yourself an idea how current the form is. Keep several copies around.
- 4.) The Seneschal's Handbook.
- 5.) Seneschal Monthly Report Forms/ Event Forms/ Waivers/ Membership Forms etc.
- 6.) A Current Copy of the Kingdom Newsletter.
- 7.) A Current Copy of the Branch Newsletter/ Phone List/ Activity Calendar.
- 8.) Copies of All Written Correspondence You Made as Seneschal (reports, letters, meeting agenda, minutes).
- 9.) Copies of All Written Correspondence You Received as Seneschal.
- 10.) Phone Logs, Expense Receipts for Your Office (receipts from postage, copying--anything your branch reimbursed you for as seneschal).
- 11.) Anything Else Which May Be Helpful to the Branch in the Future (site information, recruiting flyers, press clippings, branch policies etc.).

 *****Remember that files do NOT belong to you, they belong to the branch, and by extension to SCA, inc. So organize the files so that ariyone can figure it out-you might not be around in the distant future to answer questions. Also remember that all sorts of people will have access to these files in the future, so keep your correspondence professional and non-inflammatory.

D.) EVENTS. Many seneschals get in trouble with trying to "do it all" when it comes to events. In truth, there are some responsibilities which ONLY the seneschal can assume, like signing the site contract, reserving a date on the Kingdom Calendar, or ordering an insurance certificate. As for the rest--delegate, delegate, delegate. Your role is to MONITOR (watch) to be sure that things are done legally, safely, and with fiscal responsibility. If you work as a team with the autocrat, feaster, and branch members things tend to be less stressful and your events tend to be more successful.

1.) Putting a Regular Event on the Kingdom Calendar.

a.) Get your branch (and your branch's sponsor if you are a canton or are incipient) to agree to host the event at the proposed site and dates.

b.) Six to eighteen months before the proposed event contact the Kingdom Seneschal's Office to see if the dates you have in mind are free on the Kingdom Calendar (you can do this for several events at a time if you like). The Kingdom Seneschal will check for conflicts. The branches hosting events on the same weekend must be at least 200 miles apart to prevent a conflict. This way the branches will not be drawing from each other's possible attendance pool. No conflicts are allowed with Kingdom Level Events.

c.) If there is no conflict your event date is "pencilled in" on the Kingdom Calendar. This only means that you have expressed an interest in the date. To reserve it you must send a letter to the Kingdom Seneschal's Office requesting the date. If your branch is incipient or is a canton, this letter must come from the seneschal of the sponsoring branch. If two branches request the same date and they conflict, the date will be assigned to the letter with the earliest postmark.

d.) After receiving written confirmation of your date reservation from the Kingdom Seneschal's Office, you can send your event flyer to the Kingdom newsletter for publication. Your Branch is entitled to three months of free half-page event announcements--but make sure your event announcements contain all the information needed to be official. Check the Flyer and Submission Information in the Kingdom newsletter for details.

e.) Be mindful of publishing deadlines. For example, if your event is in June and you want the flyer to appear in the March, April, and May issues of the Kingdom Newsletter your first flyer must be received by the Kingdom Chronicler by January 25th.

*****Allow plenty of time for this entire process. The Kingdom Officers will do what they can to help if your schedule gets off track; but poor prior planning on your part does NOT constitute an emergency on theirs.

2.) Kingdom Level Event Bids. The Kingdom Level events are: Spring Crown List, Spring Coronation, Fall Crown List, Fall Coronation, Royal University, Kingdom A&S Competition, Fighter's Collegium, Gulf Wars and Border Raids. You can submit a bid on any of these events as much as two years in advance.

a.) Get your branch (and your branch's sponsor if you are a canton or are incipient) to agree to host the event at the proposed site and dates.

b.) Fill out the Kingdom Event Bid Application Form (see Appendix D) completely

If you open a new account, remember to open it in the name of "Your Local Branch's Name/SCA,Inc." The account should not be opened in any individual's name nor should funds be kept in anyone's personal account.

2.) Be sure that the branch has policies regarding how money is spent and how these expenditures are approved. Include how you and other local officers will be compensated for office expenses like postage and copying. Be sure that these policies conform with Kingdom Financial Policy as published by the Kingdom Chancellor of the Exchequer.

You should keep receipts for all your office expenses and record when the branch reimbursed you for them. Copies of these records should be in the branch files.

3.) As mentioned earlier, you must be certain that the quarterly financial reports and the annual Domesday reports are sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. You do not have to do them personally, you just have to make sure that someone DOES.

4.) After every event there is the "final reckoning" to be dealt with. Now these reports do not HAVE to be completed by the seneschal. They can be completed by the local exchequer or the autocrat or the troll or your personal banker. It is your job, however, to ensure that these things are done on time.

a.) Non-member surcharge. The \$3.00 fee for non-members attending your branch events must be calculated and a check sent to the Member Services Office 7-10 days after the close of an event. Use the event attendance sheet (Appendix B) supplied by the Lord High Sheriff's Office to record the number of non-members attending an event. Multiply the number of non-member attendees by three and you have the amount to be sent to the Member Services Office.

b.) Lord High Sheriff's Event Report Form. This includes copies of all signed site waivers and event attendance sheets. You also include the amount sent in as nonmember surcharge, the date it was sent, and the check number. This is due to the Lord High Sheriff with 30 days of the close of the event.

c.) The Kingdom's Cut. If your branch hosts a Kingdom Level event you give the Kingdom 50% of the profits (profits are what's left over AFTER the expenses are paid). Your branch is expected to have the financial report, with a check to the Kingdom, completed within 30 days after the close of the event. The report and the check is sent to the Kingdom Chancellor of the Exchequer.

d.) Fund-raisers. Any money generated by a fund-raiser at a Kingdom level event must be sent to the Kingdom within 30 days after the close of the event.

e.) Event report. As a habit, your branch should work out the finances of every event and send it to the Kingdom Chancellor of the Exchequer within 30 days of the close of the event. This sort of record keeping can ease the "shock" of the quarterly and year-end report.

IV. SENESCHAL AS COMMUNICATOR

You're going to find that more than anything else, you are going to spend your time writing letters, making phone calls, receiving correspondence of all sorts, and just plain talking to people. You will be the center of the communication network for the internal and external workings of your branch. As such, you will be handling several distinct types of communication.

A.) INFORMATIONAL. How do I become a member? How do I write an award recommendation and who does it go to? How do I get an event listed in the Newsletter? When is the next Kingdom level event? How do we put in an event bid? How can I find out what happened to my device? Do I have to be a member to be a local officer? et al.

These are often the easiest to field, even for the new seneschal. If you know the answer, tell them; if you don't, direct them to someone who DOES know. As you become more experienced you'll learn to use the resources (both publications and people) more effectively.

1.) For starters, read Popular Chivalry every month--and I MEAN REALLY READ IT! The Royalty uses the Kingdom newsletter to communicate with the populace about numerous issues. The Kingdom Officers use it to publish policies. Law changes are published there; event announcements appear there; and there is contact information for all the other scneschals, territorial baronage, royalty, officers, secretaries of polling orders, guilds, and deputies.

2.) Next, read the Kingdom Laws--there should be a copy in the files your predecessor left you. If you can't find one there, contact the Kingdom Seneschal for a copy. And I mean REALLY read it. A common failing of many scneschals is that they make decisions based on what they THINK Kingdom Law says rather than what it actually says. When in doubt, check it out ... with your boss, the Kingdom Seneschal.

3.) Read the Organizational Handbook. You may not need to call upon it often, but it is the rulebook for how the SCA is played. It makes sense to know it and understand it. As with the Kingdom Laws, many inexperienced seneschals bandy the term "Corpora" around when they have an imperfect understanding of what it says or how it works. Once again when in doubt, check it out.

4.) Know what your fellow officers do. If the question falls into their area of expertise, refer the question to them. For a thumbnail sketch of what the officers do, refer to Appendix J.

****NEVER BE AFRAID OR ASHAMED TO SAY YOU DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER!!!****

Misinformation, however well-intentioned, can be very destructive. And once a piece of erroneous information gets "out there" it is impossible to retrieve. Better to admit you do not know the answer right now than to give a misleading or incomplete answer. Don't forget that you can always ask the Kingdom Seneschal's Office for guidance!

B.) ADMINISTRATIONAL. Reports of all sorts, bids for Kingdom level events, letters of recommendation for local officers, site contracts, and so on.

1.) Do it in writing. On the whole, these communications will be more formal and ALWAYS in writing. You may wish to do the initial "groundwork" verbally, but always document the official communication with a hard copy. And COPY, COPY, COPY. Send everyone directly involved a copy, keep a copy in the official seneschal files, and keep a copy for yourself. Time has shown that at least two of these copies will be stolen by pirates, eaten by dogs, recycled by over zealous

eco-terrorists, or just lost in the mail.

2.) Be business-like. If there is a form, use it--no calligraphy, no forsooth speaking, no wax seals. Printing is good, typing is even better. Computer reproductions of the forms are fine. The main goal here is to be complete, accurate, and clear. Put your more artistic and creative impulses on hold for now.

If there is no form, then you'll need to draft a letter of your own. Once again, your aim is to give all the pertinent information briefly, accurately, completely, and clearly. Keep away from flowery phrases and rhetorical flourishes. Some sample letters are provided for you in Appendix I.

3.) Proofread. Check your spelling, check your grammar, or have someone you trust do it. You do not appear very professional in your correspondence if you misspell the recipient's name. Likewise, check your tone (you definitely need another proofreader here). You could "sound" hostile, defensive, uncertain, flippant, or hysterical in your correspondence. Keep your tone as neutral as possible. Do not use sarcastic or inflammatory terms no matter how artfully they are couched. "Flatulent sphincterhead" is still an insult, no matter how many syllables you use to say it.

Make sure that the recipient has all the information they need to respond (that IS the point, after all). Always include your modern and SCA names, address, telephone number, Email address (if any), and the date in modern terms.

4.) Keep it short. By all means be thorough, but if it runs much more than one single-spaced typewritten page it better be a very complex issue. Otherwise, it is time to take out the pruning shears.

5.) Remember your audience. It is particularly important to remember to keep the language of your correspondence Modern when dealing with Modern authorities. The site owner, local school board, pastor, or police department will not take you seriously if you use your SCA name and titles--they'll think you're a flake and you could hardly blame them. Similarly, the Post Office cannot be expected to deliver letters to SCA persona--they are erratic enough with legal names, let's not complicate matters.

When signing a legal document for your branch like a site contract or bank account application use your modern LEGAL name. Modern authorities do not recognize your SCA name unless you have had your name legally changed

When corresponding in a purely SCA capacity with other SCA officials, you may properly use your SCA name, titles, and signature.

C.) REPRESENTATIONAL. Complaints, concerns, opinions, suggestions, and recommendations.

Sometimes your branch members may wish to express their opinions about issues like law changes, Kingdom officer policies, and award recommendations. It's your job to help guide them in the most effective way to get these concerns or suggestions addressed.

1.) Address the concern at the lowest possible level.

a.) LEVEL 1. If the issue is personal, it needs to be addressed with the persons directly involved.

b.) LEVEL 2. If the issue affects the whole branch, it should be handled by the appropriate local officer with proper notification of the local seneschal.

c.) LEVEL 3. If the issue concerns anyone outside the branch (another branch, Modern authorities, Kingdom Offices), it should be handled at the Kingdom level with proper notification of the Kingdom Seneschal and the Crown.

d) LEVEL 4. If the issue concerns anyone outside the Kingdom (Interkingdom treaties, Modern Authorities, Society wide issues), it should be handled at the Corporate Officer level with proper notification of the Kingdom Seneschal, other Kingdom Officers involved, the Crown, the Society Seneschal, and the appropriate Ombudsman to the Board.

2.) Don't play leapfrog. You should not wind up on LEVEL 4 without having passed through LEVELS 1, 2, and 3. "Going over someone's head" or going "straight to the top" creates bad feelings with the people you passed over. It does not impress the "people at the top" either. You end up looking like a hothead who is more interested in making a scene than you are in finding a reasonable solution.

3.) Make courtesy copies. Every person who is directly involved in an issue should receive a copy of your letter(s). Sometimes you'll go through several levels before the issue is resolved. Continue to send courtesy copies to people you wrote to on lower levels, even if its now outside their jurisdiction. It is only fair that they be kept up to date on the issue as it progresses. Even if the Officers or Royalty change, keep sending courtesy copies (to the new officeholder, not the individual unless they are personally involved in the issue in some way). If you are uncertain who to include (or exclude) in your list of courtesy copies, ask the Kingdom Seneschal.

4.) Be discrete but not secretive. Do not involve every Tom, Dick, and Henry in an issue unless it concerns them. The idea is not to use official channels of communication as some sort of sanctioned gossip network. By the same token, remember that you should not withhold information from persons who ARE directly involved in the issue.

Award recommendations are the only notable exception. It is much better to wait for the potential award recipient to have the scroll in hand before mentioning the letter writing campaign. No award is a "done deal" until it is actually distributed --and nothing hurts more than hearing from your friends that you would get an award at an event, and not getting it. Avoid hurt feelings, keep your mouth shut until AFTER an award is given.

5.) Keep cool. Sometimes you may have to respond to criticism, or comment on an issue or person you feel very strongly about. Never mail a letter you wrote while angry. Let it set as long as you usually take to "cool off"--at least 24 hours for most of us. Call in that friend who proofreads your work. Have them check your spelling, grammar, and syntax. And especially have them watch your tone--you don't have to sound like a robot; but be sure emotion does not obscure your explanation of the events or your rational arguments. Remember that the purpose of the letter is to convey information, ask questions, give opinions, make suggestions, or seek solutions. Do not allow your feelings to make the letter's purpose unclear.

6.) Follow through. Once you have reached the right party and they act upon your correspondence, don't forget to finish the project. You may owe your correspondent another letter to acknowledge receipt, give them a status report of the problem, or simply to thank them for their time and work on your behalf. In any case, just a short note is probably all that's needed.

D.) PROMOTIONAL. Press releases, speaking with the media, demos.

As seneschal its your duty to be sure that your branch represents the SCA in a positive light. Whenever your branch is meeting the public through newspaper articles, television spots, or demos you will need your communication skills.

1.) Beware the "flake factor". Let's face it folks, we have an unusual hobby that some people in the Modern world have difficulty understanding. There arc some preconceived notions out there that can be damaging to our public image--"The SCA is some strange religious cult" is perhaps the most common one. When interacting with the public keep the focus on our positive qualities. Talk about how family-oriented our activities are; how we encourage personal research; how we work to keep our fighting activities safe and responsible; how we hope to enjoy history by living it.

Keep away from talking about drunken revels and scantily clad dancers, fighting injuries, or anything that could be construed as religious. Folks with preconceived notions will jump on even an innocent reference with BOTH feet. Do not add fuel to their stereotypes.

The message we want to convey is "We are not just a bunch of flakes. Our members are teachers, plumbers, and such, who have an interest in the Middle Ages. Our club is a valuable asset to the community."

2.) Listen for the "angle". Members of the media don't come to our demos to do us a favor. They have a job to do. The story must be interesting. Sometimes we are interesting enough just as we are. But sometimes a member of the press may be hoping for something meatier.

For example we once had a newspaper columnist come to a demo. At first we thought he wanted to just do the usual "Check-out-this-weird-hobby" story. But as I escorted him around the campsite I noticed that he kept asking questions about what women were supposed to do in this hobby. One of the questions made my alarms go off, "Weren't women mostly sex slaves during the Middle Ages?". ACK!! It did not take a rocket scientist to see where this was going. I had a long talk with him about how our club offers a wide range of activities for women that were not gender related (I even pointed out a female fighter) and none of these activities promoted sex OR slavery. He never wrote the article--which in this case was a blessing.

Most of the time the media has been fair and supportive--but be vigilant because we know that there are less reputable media representatives out there.

3.) Be a good host. When anyone comes by to ask questions about our club, be friendly and informative. Do not stare at them like a collection of Easter Island statues. Remember that even if they do not look like a potential recruit, your hospitality can help the SCA's image in the local community. Every person who realizes that we are friendly hobbyists is one less person who thinks we eat our young.

If a Modern person comes to an event, demo, or meeting, make sure that they have an escort who can guide them around and explain things. If they are reluctant to look closer at what we are doing, be sure that they feel invited to ask questions. Keep a simple flyer with contact information around so they can take some information about the SCA home with them.

4.) Know your audience. When in doubt, err on the side of conservatism. Watch your language and your dress code so that it would be acceptable in a rated G movie. Demos are not the place for chainmail bikinis, loincloths, foul language, dirty jokes, erotic food eating, cloven fruit, or bawdy ballads. Be especially mindful of demos which involve children! Be sure that the activities and displays are appropriate for their age and interest.

February 5, 2000

5.) Pick a good mouthpiece. Whenever a member of the press wants to talk to someone in your branch, YOU should pick who it is. If you leave a member of the press to their own devices, they will unerringly pick the most inexperienced chatterbox in your branch. It never fails. Do yourself a favor and find someone reliable and well-informed to be your media contact on a regular basis.

Be sure that when a member of the press appears on site, your branch members know that they should inform you immediately. Stay with them, if at all possible, so that you can dispel any negative misconceptions they might have and so you can take the opportunity to point out positive things about the SCA.

6.) Do your own press package. Have a few photos (black and white are best, usually), a good general flyer, and a short article about the SCA and your local branch available. A "loaner copy" of the Known World Handbook is also helpful for a television spot or an in-depth article.

7.) Keep your boss informed. Send copies of any articles or television spots to the Kingdom Seneschal's Office. Good articles about the SCA are real morale builders! But if the articles do not show us in a good light, the Kingdom Seneschal needs to know in case it requires further action.

In any manner of communication, use your common sense. And if you have any questions be sure to ask the Kingdom Seneschal's Office for help.

V. SENESCHAL AS ARBITRATOR

This is a part of your job that is mentioned the least frequently in handbooks of this sort. There are no real hard and fast rules about how to handle disputes in your local branch, there are only suggestions from those of us who have dealt with these problems in the past. Most of the time its "seat of the pants" and you have to rely on your own negotiating skills and common sense. This chapter is meant to give you some ideas about human nature and basic elements of dispute mediation--that's all. But I hope that you'll find the suggestions may help you to see interpersonal problem-solving in a new light.

A.) WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "ARBITRATOR"?

The word "arbitrator" is used very deliberately here. Branch members may at times call on you to help handle their disputes. More times than not they do not want to negotiate a compromise. They want you to judge who is RIGHT and who is WRONG; reward the RIGHT and cast the WRONG into never-ending darkness (or at least throw them out of the SCA, which is about the same thing). They have unconsciously cast you in the role of Judge, or at times TBM (The Big Mommy). No matter how tempting it might be to play such a powerful role, for your own sake, refuse it!

You are not a Judge. You are not a Therapist. You are not Mommy. You are the Seneschal, and as such, your job is to help the branch run right. That means everyone in it, as well as their motivations and actions, should be of equal concern to you. In your role as arbitrator you'll be called on to **MEDIATE** conflict resolution and to **DEFUSE** harsh feelings.

Here are some thoughts to help develop and maintain the skills you'll need to mediate conflicts.

- 1.) Everyone has an agenda. Over the years "having an agenda" has come to have a negative connotation which it does not really deserve. We all have our own individual opinions about how the ideal SCA should be. Weve all played the philosophical game of "If-I-were-God-Empress-of-thc-SCA-I'd-do-it-THIS-way". The thing to remember is that EVERYONE has an idea about how to improve the SCA. Their opinions and actions are directed towards making the SCA more like their ideal. We all think that we are acting to benefit the SCA. We MEAN to do the right thing.

But sometimes incompatible ideals collide within a branch, and the local seneschal faces a factional conflict. In these instances remember, whatever the agendas, most folks THINK they are doing the right thing. You personally may not agree with their vision of the perfect SCA. You may not agree with their methods of reaching that SCA utopia. But if you agree that all sides HAVE an agenda, and that agenda has VALUE, you have taken the first step towards establishing a rapport with the conflicting parties.

- 2.) Remember you have an agenda too. Keep in mind that you're human and you will have your own opinions about how things should work in your branch. There are people in your branch that you like better than others. There are issues that really "push your buttons". Being neutral does not mean that you do not have opinions or feelings or agendas of your own. It means that you know how to avoid inserting them into the arbitration process so that the conflicting parties can reach their own compromise.

- 3.) Know when the problem is too big for you. Sometimes a conflict is just not your jurisdiction. It may involve violations of Modern laws (domestic abuse, assault, theft etc.), in which case it is

an issue for the Modern legal system to handle. Perhaps the issues extend outside the borders of your branch and effect the whole Kingdom, or even the whole Society. Perhaps one of the parties has called in lawyers, or Peers, or Kingdom Officers into the conflict. Perhaps YOU are one of the main parties in the dispute. Perhaps the problems persist despite repeated attempts to reach a compromise. In any of these instances DO NOT attempt to arbitrate the dispute yourself, contact the Kingdom Seneschal RIGHT AWAY!

4.) Listen for the emotion. People sometimes talk about an "action" when a "feeling" is the real issue. Y may be angry because X keeps forgetting to put her name on the telephone roster your branch publishes once a month. Y feels hurt and thinks X does not like her. X, in reality may like Y just fine, he is just very forgetful. The roster is not so much the issue here as how Y feels hurt. The root of most problems which require mediation seems to be emotional more often than procedural. Remember, just because an emotion is not easy for you to understand, it is no less valid as a cause for concern--it still hurts the person involved.

5.) Stop the negative cycle. Try to keep people focused on the solution and away from passing blame around or calling for reinforcements. When people have an issue they often look for others to validate their viewpoint (take their side). It usually starts with immediate family and friends, then household members, then possibly their peers or Kingdom Officers or Royalty. It is all a search for people who are willing to say "You're absolutely right. That person is absolutely wrong. You should be applauded for your righteous stance and they should be thrown into the pit of eternal despair." When possible, intervene with a suggestion for mediation before the issues completely polarize your branch.

6.) Mediation is the key. You want to stay away from playing the role of Judge and TBM since both these roles "IMPOSE" a solution. Ideally you want the conflicting parties to reach a suitable compromise themselves. You "mediate", guide them to their own solution.

a.) Solve it at the lowest level of intervention. If one person comes to you about a problem they are having with X, find out if they have taken the problem to X yet. Most times the answer will be "no" or "X must know about it". Encourage the person with the problem to talk about it with X before doing anything else. There can be no solution if X does not know there is a problem. Before letters are written to Kingdom Officers, Royalty, the Board, or Santa Claus--X must be told there is a problem and given a fair chance to respond directly to the person who has the problem.

Many folks will resist this suggestion because, quite frankly, it is unpleasant to confront someone. But trying to "solve it" behind their backs only heightens bad feelings and reduces the likelihood of an amicable solution.

Sometimes you'll run across folks who really don't want a solution to the problem. They want to vent. Its the way some folks handle anger, as long as it is in private and does not hurt anyone, let them vent.

b.) Setting the stage. Assuming that the parties cannot resolve the problem themselves after their first encounter AND assuming that they have asked for your help, find a mutually convenient time and neutral territory to have an informal meeting with the main people involved.

Once it is clear that the conflict requires your mediation to be resolved, do not delay setting up the meeting. If the parties have not reached a compromise by now, the additional time will only give them more time to grow angry and resentful. The earlier the intervention, the more willing the participants will be to compromise.

Do not have it at one of the involved parties' houses. That gives them a "homecourt advantage" and puts the other party on the defensive from the very first moment. Try a public but quiet place, like a private meeting

room, an isolated park bench, or a corner booth at a restaurant.

Try to limit the participants in this meeting to the MAIN persons involved in the conflict. Sometimes people will want to trot along household members and friends as "moral support" or "fair witness". Once again this may give an unfair perceptual advantage to one party or the other. Encourage the parties to leave the cheering sections at home. Usually, the fewer participants, the faster a compromise can be reached.

c.) Lay the ground rules. The rules for mediating a dispute are pretty straightforward (notice I did not say easy). Each party gets a turn to tell their story without interruption. They must tell the truth. They must be willing to listen to the other party. They must be willing to agree to compromise. If the parties do not agree to these rules, you cannot help them. Go home and take an fizzy for your headache.

d.) Get the whole story. Give each party involved a chance to tell their version of what happened. Each party gets a turn while the others are silent, and hopefully, listening. Your part is to mediate. Once in a while you may need to ask the party to be MORE accurate. "Did you see X do that?" "Did X tell you that or did you hear it from someone else?" If something is unclear you may want to restate it. "So you feel left out of the decisions in the branch because X keeps leaving your name off the telephone roster?" Keep away from judgmental comments like "Boy, X was being a real butthead to dish you that way!" Similarly, do not allow name calling or threats to be drawn into the discussion. If tempers get hot, call a five minute cool down break, restate the ground rules and try again. Sometimes (but fortunately rarely) multiple cool down breaks still won't work. When this happens, tempers are too hot to hope for a solution. Just go home and have two fuzzies.

e.) Explore the parameters of compromise. At this point all the parties have given their version of the story. Now comes the tricky part for you. Give each party a slip of paper and ask them to write whatever they want the other party to do to resolve the conflict. (Don't be too surprised to discover that the most frequent answer is just a simple apology.) Then ask them to write down what THEY are willing to do to resolve the conflict.

I think most people would agree that compromise is the cornerstone of a fair resolution of a conflict. But it is not the easiest or most gratifying way. In compromise everyone gets something, but everyone has to give something up also. The "giving up" part is the hardest aspect of this sort of mediation. This will also be the time when the parties will pressure you for a judgment. They may want to shift the responsibility for solving the problem to you. Don't do it! You are not a judge and you are not their mother.

f.) Discover the solution. Read the slips of paper you have received from all parties. (I suggest you read them BEFORE reading them aloud in case one of the solutions is blatantly inappropriate, like "have X kiss my @\$\$.") Many times the solution is just as they wrote it! Other times it will take a few more tries to get an agreement (repeating step e). But eventually you should get something like: " X will apologize to Y at the next meeting and have the contact information in the very next telephone roster. Y will apologize to X for leaving strange messages on his answering machine and will contact him right away next time she has a problem instead of telling everyone else in the branch about it." Restate the solution to be sure everyone is understanding it the same way. Ta da! Success! Now you can go home and have an ice cream sundae instead of those fuzzies.

7.) Keep in the right channels. Sometimes despite the best-intentioned efforts of everyone involved, some issues will go to a higher level. Your job now is to ensure that the parties involved take the

February 5, 2000

issue to the right people. As we mentioned before, strive to intervene at the lowest possible level. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at that level THEN proceed to the next level. Always encourage the parties involved to go to the people who can help them (not every member of our Society will be able to provide guidance for every issue), to seek compromise at each level before going on to the next, to keep things in writing, and to send courtesy copies to all parties involved (that includes everyone contacted at lower levels of intervention). See the Chain of Command in Appendix K for an idea of who to contact and when. If an issue cannot be resolved within your branch, contact the Kingdom Seneschal!

8.) Be fair to your self. Dealing with disputes inside your own branch can be the most troubling and draining part of the job. Don't be too hard on yourself if things do not come out the way you hoped. Sometimes people do not want solutions, they want to be angry. Sometimes you don't have the "magic wand" to fix their problems. Sometimes they won't take reasonable suggestions. In any case, you are not responsible for the conflicts of others. You are not responsible if the parties fail to reach a compromise. Do not accept blame from the parties involved and most importantly, do not blame yourself.

By the same token, every resolved conflict is a success for the parties involved and for you as mediator. Allow yourself the privilege of feeling good about it. After all, mediation is hard work! Have another sundae!

Once again, if the conflict has become too large for you to handle, even on just the emotional level, call in the Kingdom Seneschal!

I. EPILOGUE: IN CONCLUSION

TOP TEN PIECES OF ADVICE FOR A LOCAL SENESCHAL

- 10.) KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS. Don't push yourself to do everything, know everything and be perfect all the time. It's OK if your Modern life is stressful--family, health, jobs, and education take priority. Just be aware of the symptoms of burn-out and tell someone.
- 9.) PLAN EARLY. It is never too early to start planning a project. The more organization and time you put in at the beginning of a project, the better result (and less pressure) you have at the end.
- 8.) LISTEN TWICE, TALK ONCE. Nature gave us two ears and only one mouth for a reason. Try it out, I think you'll find that it works.
- 7.) COPY, COPY, COPY. You can't have too many copies. Always have a copy for yourself, the branch files, and anyone else directly involved.
- 6.) READ, READ, READ. Know your publication resources. Read the Kingdom Newsletter, read the Organizational Handbook, read this handbook, read the Kingdom Laws. This way you come to know where to find the REAL answers.
- 5.) DELEGATE. Know the manpower resources in your branch. Trust others to help keep the branch afloat. SCA is not a spectator sport--let everyone have a chance to get off the bench and get in the game, Coach!
- 4.) TRAIN. Know the leadership potentials in your own branch. Help to develop future leaders by sharing the work, the responsibilities, and your experience.
- 3.) USE COMMON SENSE. Sometimes you are going to have to make a decision without all your resources available. Rely on the knowledge and experience you have already acquired. Use your common sense.
- 2.) WHEN IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT ... WITH THE KINGDOM SENESCHAL'S OFFICE. The Kingdom Seneschal's Office exists to help you with your duties as local seneschal. Don't be shy. Better to ask one question than handle a hundred problems.
- 1.) HAVE FUN! That's right, almost forgot about that didn't you? All this sounds like a lot of work, but it is rewarding to watch a branch grow and improve, handle challenging projects, overcome adversity, and enjoy itself! And YOU have a great deal to do with it! So set aside those fizzes and break out the sundaes--you deserve it!

February 5, 2000