Modern Design for the SCA

Even though we're recreating the Middle Ages, that doesn't mean that we don't need to make the best use of modern design and printing when the situation calls for it. In the case of flyers and newsletters, where space matters, good design principles can help you design more efficiently and effectively. While we won't be going over the basics of graphic design in this class, there are many resources available that you can look over on your own time.

Here are a few very helpful documents you can print out:
http://www.mscare.org/cmsc/images/pdf/document_design_brown.pdf
http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/live/g2031/build/g2031.pdf
http://justcreative.com/featured-articles/type-classification-ebook/

If you're on Facebook, feel free to join the Design for the SCA (& Beyond) group that I've created https://www.facebook.com/groups/scadesign/ which has even more resources, templates, and links.

Effective Layout

• Set your document size to the size of the final product
   - This will help you visualize the space you have to work with
• Set your margins appropriately
   - Around .375-.5" if full sheet, much lower if it's part of a page (like a flyer or ad)
   - Okay to go down to .1-.15" on a flyer, for example
• Make the most effective use of the space by filling to the edges
• Use a grid and/or tabs to line up important sections
• Use the "Three-Second Rule"
   - If someone glances at this for 3 seconds, will they know what it's about?
   - Most important info needs to be prominent - either large, bold, or set apart
   - Details can be very small. If the person is interested, they will find them.
• In the examples at right, which one is easier to determine the main info?
   - Think: What does my audience need to know?
   - Think: If I were skimming this, what info would I want to find most quickly?
• Remember to use hierarchy - large fonts for important points, small for details
   - Or bold fonts for important points, light for details

Big Summer Event
5432 Scadian Road, Scadia, Scandinavia
June 1-3, 2012
Join us for an event full of fonts, faces, feasting, and fighting! There will be barbecue, beans, bread, and blueberries.

Arial

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Adobe Garamond Pro

Optimizing Your Text

• When you don't have long paragraphs, avoid hyphenation
• Format your text to be readable - avoid widows and orphans by breaking lines smartly
• A big part of design is **not** just letting the program do the work for you
• Just as it's not a perfect grammar-checker, a computer also doesn't know the best layout
• You can play around with scale, leading, and tracking to make the text fit the space
• Find the best font for the job. A font might work well for headers, but not paragraphs.
• What kind of idea do you want to convey with your text?

• Look at the examples at right
   - In the first, I've just let the computer decide where to put breaks
   - In the second, I've broken the segments to make each line about the same length
   - In the third, I've added an indentation on the second half of each segment
      • I've added a bit more space between each segment
      • I've changed it to a serif font - better readability in print, and fits the text better

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through splendid achievements
The folk-kings' former fame we have heard of,
How princes displayed then their prowess-in-battle.

Myriad Pro

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory
through splendid achievements
The folk-kings' former fame
we have heard of,
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Myriad Pro

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory
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Adobe Garamond Pro

Making Fonts Work For You

- Don't mix too many different fonts in one piece - simplicity is key to readability
  - Look for font families - they will have a bold version, a light version, etc.
  - Okay to use multiple styles within the same font family
  - Otherwise try to use only 2 or 3 fonts in one piece
- Create a hierarchy using different weights and sizes of the same font
- Can you read it at a glance or do you find yourself struggling to make out the words?
  - Remember: you know what it says, but nobody else does... yet. Will they?
  - Think: Do I want people to focus on which fonts I used, or the overall design?
- Hard up for space? Instead of changing the size, just change the scale to make it narrow.
- Know your font types and what their best uses are

Serif
- best suited for print
- works well for small or large text
- look professional yet still classic
- (This is Adobe Garamond Pro)

Script
- best suited for print
- never use for large blocks of text
- be careful with spacing between letters/words
- (This is Vivaldi)

Blackletter
- best suited for print
- never use for large text blocks
- use very sparingly
- (This is Old English Text)

Sans Serif
- best suited for online
- works well at any size
- give a more modern look
- (This is Myriad Pro)

ORNAMENTAL
- BEST SUITED FOR PRINT
- NEVER USE FOR LARGE TEXT BLOCKS
- USE VERY SPARINGLY
- (THIS IS ROSEWOOD STD)

At right are three versions of our sample flyer, using three different typefaces.

Same text in each one, but each has a different overall feel to it.

Which is most effective? That depends on your audience, where it's printing, and what kind of "feel" we're going for.

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Finding & Using Fonts

- There are several free font sites out there. Two that are well-liked and easy to use are:
  - www.dafont.com
  - www.1001fonts.com
- Look at designs you like that get across the same message you're trying to convey
  - Do they use serif or sans-serif? Is it traditional or modern? Static or dynamic?
  - Is their message coming across because of the typefaces or the overall design?
- www.identifont.com - Find similar fonts, or find a font's name based on letter styles
- "Shouldn't I try to use fonts that look like they're from the middle ages?"
  - Depends on what your purpose is!
    - If you're trying to make a piece look like it's from that period, sure
    - If you're trying to relate to a mundane audience, not necessarily
    - Think: Does it add anything to the design, or do I just think it looks cool?
- "But ornamental fonts are way more fun!"
  - You can use them all day long, but keep in mind the purpose of your design
    - Ornamental fonts can end up looking kitschy
    - They are usually harder to read
    - Are you just trying to show people that you have a cool font?
    - Or do you want your design to be useful to them and easy to understand?

Big Summer Event
Birch Std

Big Summer Event
Bookman Old Style Bold

BIG SUMMER EVENT
Castellar

Big Summer Event
Deutsche Zeirschrift

Big Summer Event
Medieval Scribish

Big Summer Event
Pharmacy

Artwork

- Is artwork necessary? Depends on the piece.
  - When you've got limited space, consider just using typography in your design
  - For more complex or larger pieces, artwork is usually important and should mesh well

- Sometimes it's easiest to just avoid using it entirely
  - New regulations surrounding artwork usage in the SCA
- Make certain that the art is in the public domain or that you have permission to use it.

- What is the best kind of artwork to use for flyers?
  - Black and white vector line art (EPS, PDF) is best
  - Grayscale vector line art is usable but may look a bit muddy
  - Black and white or grayscale pixel line art (JPG, GIF, PNG) will be somewhat muddy
  - Photos or detailed images will often be muddy unless very large or high-contrast

- Where do I find artwork?
  - www.karenswhimsy.com
    - Fairly high-res artwork from the Middle Ages and many other time periods
  - www.vecteezy.com
    - Free vector site that posts new artwork on a pretty regular basis
    - Older artwork rotates out, so save the ones you like!
  - www.morguefile.com
    - Thousands of photos that are free for personal or commercial use
  - www.fromoldbooks.org
    - scanned images from books
    - royalty-free, for non-commercial use only, requires usage credit
  - Wikimedia isn't an acceptable source for SCA publications anymore
  - MS Office comes with a lot of royalty-free clipart

- In our examples at right, which works best?
  - We can use no artwork at all - lots of room for text, but maybe a little bland
  - The common way to add art is by putting one piece on either side of the header
    - Does it really add anything or is it just there for the sake of adding art?
    - Does it make it harder to tell what the event is?
  - We can split the difference and come up with a layout that allows for art and text

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Saving & Sending Files

- Always check with the person you're sending the file to
  - Sometimes they may need to make revisions, so the original file is best; they can convert it after the revisions are made
  - When in doubt, send the best-quality file you can. You usually can't go wrong with PDF. Be sure to click "optimize for print", not for screen.
  - If you do send a pixel file (JPG, PNG, etc.) be sure you are both creating and saving at high resolution - at least 200dpi, preferably 300dpi

Creating Flyers for Popular Chivalry

- Always go through the list of required items on the Guidelines page - http://www.meridies.org/chronicler/Event-Flyer-Guidelines.pdf
  - Scheduling must go through the Kingdom Calendar Deputy (calendar@meridies.org)
    - If it's not on the **Extended** Kingdom Calendar, it will not run in PopChiv!
  - Kingdom Level Events get two full-page flyers. Local events get one half-page flyer. Usually they can be fit in earlier, too!
  - All flyers must be submitted by the first of the month preceding the publication month - by June 1st for the July issue, etc.
  - If you use art, you must have permission to publish - please include any info about this in your email.
  - Please double-check the size of your flyer! There are new sizes due to the new layout.
  - All flyers must include certain information. If your flyer is missing any of these things, you will need to redo your flyer - avoid unnecessary revisions!
  - Be sure to include information about the $5 non-member surcharge
  - If you have room, please expand on the usual statement of "Family pricing per Kingdom Law" as it may be confusing for those not familiar with policy
    - "Per Kingdom Law, no family shall pay more than three adult member prices for event admission as long as the children are under 15 and all family members have memberships."

Quick! What's the name and date of the event in this flyer? Does it pass the 3-second rule? What issues can you find? Our margins are way too large, wasting a lot of space. The event name is tiny! We have orphan text. Does the art add anything, or is it just "there"?

The Barony of Lion Rampant presents
Kitty Cat Wars
June 1-3, 2012
Eiffel Tower Park, 5432 Scadian Road, Scadia, Scandinavia

Join us for an event full of fonts, faces, feasting, and fighting! There will be barbecue, beans, bread, and blueberries. I bet you'd love to see rapier fighting. We've got rapier fighting! How about some heavy tournaments? We've got heavy tournaments! Whatever your medieval needs, we aim to please. There's even stuff for the artsy-fartsy folk! It doesn't get much better than this. Be there or be square.

Event Steward
THL Marion of Wodenville
(mka Woden Marion)
8876 Laney Lane
Lanesville, AL 35353
marion@marion.mar

Feastcrat
THL Martian of Martia
(mka Marsha Marsha)
8876 Laney Lane
Lanesville, AL 35353
martian@martian.mar

Reservationcrat
THL Martin of Wodenville
(mka Ville Martin)
8876 Laney Lane
Lanesville, AL 35353
martin@martin.mar

This is a dry site.
No water allowed; pudding only.
Pudding vendors welcome.

Fees		
	with feast	without
Adult Weekend	$20	$15
Adult Daytrip	$15	$10
Kids Weekend	$10	$8
Kids Daytrip	$8	$5
Little Bitty Ones	Free	

Non-member surcharge of $5 and family pricing per kingdom law.

Make checks payable to the Barony of Lion Rampant or maybe just Martin of Wodenville.

Directions: From I-65, go until you can't go any more. Then stop. Turn right at the big fluffy yellow dog. If he's not there, turn right at the flock of birds. Once they've flown away, drive over the river and through the woods. Watch out for the gingerbread house and the muffin man, and listen for sleigh bells ringing. When the ringing stops, you're probably there but you might want to check your brain.

Quick! What's the name and date of the event in ***this*** flyer? Does it pass the 3-second rule? Even though the art is much larger, we still have plenty of room for a huge event name and date, and we were even able to fit in the full family pricing text.

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(mka Woden Marion)
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8876 Laney Lane
Lanesville, AL 35353
martin@martin.mar

Feastcrat
THL Martian of Martia
(mka Marsha Marsha)
8876 Laney Lane
Lanesville, AL 35353
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	feast	no feast
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