

THE EVENT STEWARD'S HANDBOOK

BARONY OF STARKHAFN

Revised 11/23/10 by Mistress Aoibheall an Sionnach. This document could not have been possible without the many contributions by members of the Barony over the years. Thanks to all who participated in earlier versions of this manuscript, including, but not limited to, Master Antonius Tesel, Mistress Cred Mongfind Ornardottir, Master Orrick of Romney, The Honorable Lord Conall mac Seaghain, and Mistress Melisande de Frayne.

WHAT IS AN EVENT STEWARD? Some may say that an event steward is a masochist with an overly developed sense of responsibility. After all, who else would take on the many tasks involved in planning and running a Baronial event? But without capable event stewards, there'd be far fewer events – and the events that did occur would be far less fun for all. Events bring us together, offer opportunities for fun and games, bring new people to the Barony, provide a venue for the awarding of Baronial and Kingdom honors, and provide opportunities for combat and A&S competitions. Most of all, they're fun. And to make that happen, we need a good event steward (or good co-event stewards), and a capable event staff.

While this document won't tell you everything you need to know about being an event steward, it will outline the major tasks, as well as a timeline for accomplishing those tasks. You'll find sources for additional information at the end of this document.

GENERAL EVENT STEWARD INFORMATION:
Event stewards must be paid members from the time they are appointed event steward until the final event report is submitted.

Event stewards are considered deputy seneschals, and as such, must give progress reports at both populace and officer's meetings. If an event steward is not able to attend a particular meeting, an INFORMED deputy must attend to give the report in the event steward's absence.

The Seneschal is the only officer permitted to sign contracts on behalf of the Barony. If a site or a vendor requires a signed contract, you must make arrangements with the Seneschal.

No money should be spent without prior approval. The Financial Committee – the Exchequer, the Seneschal, and the Baron and/or Baroness – must approve the event budget and authorize all expenditures in advance. Never pay for a site with personal funds.

No receipt, no reimbursement. Make sure to save your event receipts, and inform the event staff to save their receipts, too. When you submit receipts for reimbursement, write your full modern name at the top of the receipt or on the envelope (if you're submitting more than one receipt). That way, the Exchequer can make out the check appropriately. Don't buy personal items and event supplies in the same transaction. Keep purchases separate so there's no question about how much should be reimbursed.

A GOOD EVENT TAKES ABOUT A YEAR'S PREPARATION. Note that the following timeline details what *should* happen, not what always *will* happen. However, the closer you can follow this timeline, the less stress you'll have as the day of the event nears. And decreasing stress is a good thing.

T MINUS TWELVE TO TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS:

The Seneschal books the proposed date with Kingdom, and begins solicitation for potential event stewards. If you're interested in running a particular event, now is the time to write your *letter of interest*. Outline your ideas for the event, and give a copy to the Seneschal and the Baron and Baroness.

After reviewing all letters of interest, the Seneschal, Baron and Baroness select the Event steward – you. Now the fun begins.

T MINUS NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS:

Review your event ideas with the Baron and Baroness. Make sure that the theme meets with their approval. Will this be a camping event? Will you have a feast? Also, find out what traditional elements need to be included – for example, Starkhafn's Anniversary traditionally requires the new Baronial Heavy Weapons Champion to slay a dragon (pastry, not flesh and blood) without getting any blood (icing) on his/her sword.

Select your key event staff. Don't try to do everything yourself – that's a recipe for disaster. You'll need to have a support staff in order to ensure that all details are handled. Select a feastocrat to handle feast planning, cooking, and food purchasing. Find someone to handle gate duties. If you need crash space for out-of-town guests, ask someone else to serve as crash-o-crat. Look for areas where you can delegate specific duties, then find people you trust to help run those areas.

Coordinate your plans with the Baronial Officers. You'll need to work closely with the other officers throughout the coming months. Get their input now, and you'll avoid problems down the road. Important -- do not assume that the Officers are part of your event staff. For example, you'll need to coordinate all gate issues through the Exchequer. However, the Exchequer is not automatically expected to personally handle gate responsibilities. The same goes for marshalling, lysts, heralding, constabulary and A&S.

Begin looking for a site, keeping your event plans in mind. Make a list of the key requirements, and take this with you as you survey potential sites. (A sample site worksheet is attached.) Check with officers, the Baron and Baroness, and people who have previously run this or similar events. They may have some site suggestions.

T MINUS SIX MONTHS:

Tour the proposed sites with the Constable. Be prepared to find a solution for any problems spotted during the visit.

Select the event site.

Prepare an event budget to be presented to the Financial Committee for approval. Remember that **your budget must be approved before any expenditure is made.** And if you want to be reimbursed, you'll need to keep all of your receipts. If you need help preparing the budget, ask the Exchequer for assistance. A copy of the event budget form is attached.

Finalize the site fee, theme, and general activities. Your site fee should allow you to cover all expenses and make a small profit on the event. Revise event plans if needed, based on budget considerations. If money is tight, you may not be able to rent those ballrooms at the Venetian Hotel as you had planned. Be flexible so you can adapt your ideas to accommodate fiscal realities. Check with the Baron and Baroness to make sure all their wishes are incorporated into your overall event plan.

Determine if your event will have space for merchants. If you decide you want merchants at your event, certain city or county tax regulations as well as specific site regulations may apply. Enlist the help of an experienced merchant to determine if this might be a good event for merchants.

Reserve the site. Site payments (including up-front deposits) must be paid out of Baronial funds for insurance purposes. Remember that **only the Seneschal can sign contracts.** You may need to provide copies of our insurance form and non-profit status to the site owners. The SCA carries a \$5 million insurance policy to cover events. The Seneschal will have these forms.

Inform the Exchequer and the Seneschal of any additional insurance requirements for the site. Some sites require that they be listed as "additional insured" on the insurance certificate. DO NOT suggest this to site owners, since it will add an additional \$50 to the event's overall cost. If equestrian activities are planned, equestrian insurance must be requested. The cost for equestrian insurance is also \$50. All insurance costs should be included in your event budget. Be aware that insurance fees go up as time passes – ordering an insurance certificate within 30 days of an event requires a late fee payment of \$100, on top of the normal \$50 fee.

Inform the Exchequer of any additional up-front fees required. All site deposits and rental fees must be paid by Baronial checks.

Consult with the Exchequer about pre-registrations. If you're having a feast or running an event with limited sleeping/camping accommodations, it's a good idea to set up a pre-registration system. You may wish to offer a discount for registration before a set cut-off date. All funds for early registrations should be given to the Exchequer within one week of receipt. Determine how pre-registrations will be tracked, acknowledged, and, if necessary, refunded.

Draft an event announcement for the Crown Prints, and give to the Seneschal for approval. Check the inside back cover of the CP for instructions as to what must appear in the event announcement. Announcements must be received by the 25th of the month, two months prior to publication date. For example, an announcement received by June 25 will first appear in the August issue. *Remember that publication deadlines and submission requirements change with time – event stewards are expected to know and comply with all current requirements.* Ideally, event announcements should appear in the CP at least three times before the event date, so plan your announcements accordingly! Also remember that **the Seneschal must approve the event announcement**; the Seneschal may direct you to send it to the CP, or may prefer to send it him/herself.

Set up your event notebook. Put all your critical event papers – insurance forms, site contracts, budget, copies of receipts, gate forms, merchant information, contact names and phone numbers – in a loose-leaf binder. Be sure to include a copy of Corpora, Kingdom Law, and any pertinent handbooks, in case any on-site issues arise. You'll use this book to complete your post-event report, and it will become the property of the Barony once that report is completed.

T MINUS FOUR MONTHS:

Provide event announcements to the Chronicler, Webwright, Avant Courier, and Chatelaine. The Chronicler will see that the announcement makes it into the Baronial Banner. The Webwright will put the announcement on the Baronial web page and link it to the on-line Kingdom calendar. The Avant Courier will handle any mundane publicity (flyers, radio, or newspaper). The Chatelaine will make sure that newcomers (especially those who don't have a Banner or CP subscription) are informed.

Work with the Baron and Baroness and their Chamberlain regarding invitations or accommodations for visiting Royals. As the ranking members of the Barony, the Baron and Baroness are the official "hosts" of all events. They (or their Chamberlain) will act as liaison with the Crown and other Kingdom royalty. Special needs such as court times, special ceremonies, accommodations for crash space, eric space, invitation-only luncheons, and/or presentations should be planned in advance and coordinated with Their Excellencies.

Identify the prizes that will be awarded. If youth events are planned, you may want to have prizes for different age groups. If prizes include regalia (for example, the cloak, dagger, and belt given to the Baronial Rapier Champion each year), make sure that the previous year's recipient has been contacted to return the regalia, either by attending or by sending the prize to you.

Advise Baronial Officers of special needs. Will there be fighting? Court? Equestrian activities? Then you'll need marshals, heralds, and lysts. **Do not assume that the Baronial Officers will be available.** Instead, work with them to find or arrange for specialized event staff.

T MINUS ONE MONTH:

Make sure you have event staff in all key positions. Meet with your event team, and reconfirm all your volunteers. Remember that the person who enthusiastically offered support four months ago may not be available now. Think through all aspects of the event, from set-up to clean-up, and make sure you have people to help. You may wish to plan for an "event steward's pavilion" at the event, so members of the event team have a private place to talk or rest.

Let the Lysts Officer and Marshal know what kinds of lysts, if any, are planned. The Lysts Officer will help your event lysts staff prepare the correct forms for all the different combat styles and competitions.

Verify that a Constable or Deputy Constable will attend. Confirm any restrictions on alcohol, pets, smoking, campfires, etc.

Work with the Baron and Baroness to set projected times for opening and closing court. If a late start for opening court or a late finish for closing court would pose a problem, make certain the Baron and Baroness are made aware.

If Royal Presence is expected, provide event information to Their Majesties' Chamberlain. They will probably expect to hold a Royal Court and give some awards. You will need to meet Their needs within the overall plans for the event.

Contact the Captain of the Guard for arrangements regarding the Baronial Pavilion. If it will be used, let him/her know when it should be set up and taken down.

Make arrangements with the Seneschal and/or Exchequer to access items in Baronial storage. Event supplies include directional signs, eric ropes, eric stakes, cooking equipment, hall decorations, and feast/kitchen supplies. Check the Baronial inventory sheets; make a list of the items you will need; and check them out of storage. **Remember, YOU will be responsible for returning or replacing them!**

Make sure judges for A&S competitions have been selected. If you're looking for out-of-Barony judges, you may want to ask the Baron and Baroness for a list of visiting royalty or peers. Then you can send a note to certain guests asking if they might like judge a contest. Express your thanks with a small gift or thank-you card after the event.

Make certain all tourney and contest prizes are in hand. Confirm that there are prizes for each advertised event.

Confirm that site favors are in hand. If not, come up with easy and inexpensive substitutes, such as beads on a ribbon.

If a feast is planned, make sure your feastocrat has the situation well in hand. You may need to help the feastocrat find additional volunteers for decorating the hall, serving, or clean-up. Check to see if entertainment during the feast is needed or has been scheduled. Also, it's considered polite to post complete menu details, along with lists of ingredients to alert people who have food allergies.

If special flyers are to be available at gate, make sure these have been developed and copied. Such flyers may include maps to area restaurants and hotels, notice of site restrictions, volunteer sign-up sheets, directions to any post-event revel, and information about the Barony or upcoming Baronial events. Remember that Gate is also an information booth. People who are not SCA members may be attracted by all the commotion, and want to know more. Events are great recruiting opportunities!

Ask the Exchequer to brief gate staff on appropriate procedures. Even though you've picked responsible people to run the gate, they may not be familiar with SCA financial policies. Plan a meeting with the Exchequer and the gate staff to review all the necessary cash handling procedures.

T MINUS ONE WEEK:

Reconfirm all details with your event staff. Make sure that everyone on your team knows what to do and when to do it. Brainstorm together to help identify and handle last-minute issues.

Assign one or two volunteers to be "runners" if off-site supplies are needed. As an Event steward, you should NEVER leave the site. Make other arrangements in case last minute or emergency supplies are needed.

Get all necessary gate supplies from the Exchequer. Supplies include the cash box, change, receipt books, gate reconciliation forms, waivers, and minor's waivers.

Review your list of supplies, and make sure you are fully stocked. Will you need paper, pencils, trash bags, duct tape, toilet paper, or paper towels? Will you need a flashlight, batteries, or candles? Use your event team to brainstorm, just to make sure everything's covered.

THE DAY OF THE EVENT:

Be the first on site. Make sure the site is clean. Note any problems (i.e., broken equipment) with the caretaker before taking possession.

Let the herald know if you'll have remarks for opening court. Be brief but informative. Make sure the populace knows the schedule of events and any site restrictions. If volunteers are still needed, ask for them now.

Delegate. Don't try to do everything yourself. No matter how carefully you've planned, something is bound to go wrong. Let your event staff and volunteers deal with the small crises so you can concentrate on the event itself.

Check in regularly with your event staff. Stroll the site and monitor each activity. From time to time, you might want to move people around so they don't get burned out at one activity. Make sure to allow everyone time to take a break, eat, and enjoy the event. That goes for you, too.

Relax, breathe, and smile.

Let the herald know if you'll have presentations or announcements at closing court. Determine who will be presenting awards to contest and tourney winners, and make sure the awards are in place. Remember to publicly recognize all those who helped run the event, especially waterbearers, pages, kitchen help, and others whose contributions often go unnoticed. If additional volunteers are still needed for clean-up or tear-down, ask for them now.

Be the last to leave. Look at the site critically and make sure it's in better shape than you found it. Turn off lights, lock gates, return keys, and leave the site secure and clean.

T PLUS ONE WEEK OR LESS:

Turn in all monies received, gate forms, and supplies to the Exchequer.

T PLUS TWO WEEKS OR LESS:

Hold a post-mortem meeting with your staff. Discuss what went right and what went wrong, and make notes for future events. Also use this meeting as a deadline for turning in all event receipts for reimbursements. Remind the staff that no reimbursement will be made for expenses for which there are no receipts.

Turn in all remaining event receipts and unused cash advance balances to the Exchequer.

T PLUS SIX WEEKS OR LESS:

Attend the Officer's Meeting to give the event report. Discuss details from the staff post-mortem, and make recommendations for future events. Give your completed event notebook to the Seneschal.

Attend the Populace Meeting to give your final event report to the Barony. Include event highlights and recognize those who assisted you in running the event.

FINAL SUGGESTIONS: Remember to offer some personal thanks to those who supported you during this process. If you can afford it, you might want to give small gifts to members of your event staff. Thank-you notes are an inexpensive way to show your appreciation. You may also wish to write a short article for the Baronial Banner, recapping the highlights of the event and including your personal thanks for assistance.

It's also a nice touch to send a thank-you note to the site owners. By doing so, you may be making things easier for a future event steward.

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

First, *talk with past event stewards.* People in the Barony have been running events for years. They can give you valuable insight on good sites, good themes, and good feasts. They can also tell you about spectacular disasters. Learn from their experiences.

Look for information on-line. The "Library" page of the SCA website (<http://www.sca.org/docs/library.html>) contains a lot of important information for event stewards. Here you'll find information on SCA insurance and links to necessary waiver forms. There's even a short handbook about the SCA designed specifically for owners of potential event sites. Advice on how to handle all the various financial issues that may/will arise can be found in the Exchequer's Handbook, available on-line. One excellent reference is "Event stewarding 101", from the Fall 2001 edition of *The Compleat Anachronist*. A variety of articles on planning and running events have appeared in *Tournaments Illuminated*. Back copies of *The Compleat Anachronist* and *Tournaments Illuminated* are available for on-line purchase through the SCA Marketplace at www.sca.org.

SITE SELECTION WORKSHEET

Event: _____ Dates: _____

Type of event (camping, feast, etc): _____

Usage: _____ Indoor _____ Outdoor _____ Combined

Site Name:	
Address:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Hours:	
Contact:	
Phone:	
Major cross streets or directions:	
Fee(s):	
Deposit(s):	
Terms:	

Indicate available amenities and make notes as necessary:

Toilets	
Showers	
Kitchen/cooking	
Classrooms	
Feast hall	
Tables/chairs	
Parking	
Fire pits	
Tourney area(s)	
Revel area(s)	
Campsites	
RV sites	
Potable Water	
Trash	
Security	

AUTOCRAT'S CHECKLIST

Event Name: _____

Date: _____

TO BE COMPLETED SIX MONTHS PRIOR (by _____ date)

Site: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Site Contact (name/title): _____

Site Cost: _____ Deposit required: _____ by _____ (date)

Final Due: _____ Refund Expected: _____ by _____ (date)

NOTE: Payment for site MUST come from Baronial account

Insurance rider required? YES NO

Equestrian insurance required? YES NO

If YES, insurance form(s) given to Seneschal on _____ (date)

Proposed budget given to Exchequer /Seneschal on _____ (date)

Proposed member site fees: *(Adult non-members \$5 additional)*

Adults \$_____ Children under 12 \$_____ Children under 5 \$_____

Family cap \$_____ Feast fee (if additional) \$_____

Cash advance requested: \$_____ Received: _____ (date)

Site tour with Constable on _____ (date)

Notes from site tour: _____

Theme: _____

Activities: _____

Event announcement written and given to Seneschal on _____ (date)

Approved announcement sent to Crown Prints on _____ (date)

and sent to _____ Chronicler _____ Webwright _____ Castellan/Chatelaine

Determine staffing requirements with Baronial Officers, as follows:

EXCHEQUER

Gate staff: _____

Merchant coordinator: _____

HERALD

Court _____

Field _____

Consulting heraldry _____

MARSHAL/LYSTS

Marshal of the Day: _____

Rapier: _____

Archery: _____

Equestrian: _____

Thrown Weapons _____

Other: _____

Lysts: _____

Fighting scenarios planned: _____

ARTS AND SCIENCES

Contests (People's Prize, Laurel's Prize, etc) _____

Judges: _____

Classes/teachers: _____

Other A&S activities: _____

FEAST PLANNING

Feast-o-crat: _____

Cooking staff: _____

Hall steward: _____

Proposed theme: _____

MENU (attach recipes)

First Remove: _____

Second Remove: _____

Third Remove: _____

Fourth Remove: _____

Fifth Remove: _____

Budget for feast: \$ _____ Estimated attendance: _____ Cost p.p \$ _____

Feast fee – Adult \$ _____ Child \$ _____

_____ Vegetarian foods included in each remove

_____ List of ingredients prepared to alert those with potential food allergies

_____ List of ingredients given to Webwright to post on event web site

_____ Supplies and decorations obtained from Baronial inventory

Hall Set-up Staff: _____

Serving Staff: _____

Clean-up Staff: _____

TO BE COMPLETED FOUR MONTHS PRIOR (by _____ date)

Consult with Baron/Baroness regarding:

Court time(s) _____

Royals (Crown, baronies) and special needs _____

Awards and special ceremonies _____

Baronial traditional activities _____

___ Finalize all event staffing

___ Confirm site token design

TO BE COMPLETED ONE MONTH PRIOR (by _____ date)

___ Inform Constable and staff of site rules and restrictions (fire, pets, alcohol, etc)

___ Contact Captain of the Guard regarding Baronial Pavilion set-up

___ Contact Chief Lady-in-Waiting regarding royal guests and their on-site needs

___ Contact Chatelaine/Castellan regarding information for newcomers on site

___ Prepare site layout

___ Ensure that any additional equipment (portajohns, water trucks, etc) is ordered

___ Procure all prizes

___ Procure supplies for contests, children's activities, and Gate

___ Reconfirm use of site facilities; make arrangements to pick up keys

___ Make copies of all waivers for Gate

___ Review event timetable and prepare staff schedule

___ Reconfirm all staff positions and review their on-site needs

___ Prepare "event book" and make copies for gate

___ Arrange to obtain site supplies (signage, banners, etc) from Baronial inventory

___ Have Exchequer brief gate staff on required money-handling procedures