Avacal

Chatelaine Handbook
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Section 1: About Being the Chatelaine

A. Purpose: The Chatelaine/Castellan is the officer responsible for:
- Recruiting new members.
- Acting as a contact for newcomers.
- Educating new members and the populace on the culture and traditions of the SCA, the Principality of Avacal and the local branch.
- Assisting newcomers to assimilate into the SCA and their local groups.
  - Other Kingdoms sometimes refer to this office by the title of Hospitaller or Gold Key. Every local branch (regardless of size) is encouraged to maintain a warranted Chatelaine/Castellan.

B. Responsibilities:
- Familiarize yourself with the SCA organizational handbook and the laws of An Tir and Avacal.
- Familiarize yourself with Principality and Kingdom custom.
- Familiarize yourself with History, both SCA and Period.
- Respond to newcomers’ inquiries.
- Assist relocated SCA members.
- Supervise demos.
- Implement methods for attracting and retaining newcomers.
- Report to the Principality Chatelaine once per quarter (January 15, April 15, July 15 and October 15) and as frequently as needed otherwise.
- Maintain a Gold Key.

C. Qualifications:
- Prior to accepting this office, you should be aware of the responsibilities and attributes of a good Chatelaine. How you choose to fulfill your responsibilities is up to you, however, there are some basic skills that a Chatelaine must possess or be willing to develop. Application of these qualities can make the difference between an adequate Chatelaine and a highly effective dynamic officer that is truly an asset to their local branch, Principality and the SCA. Below is a list that, if applied, will help you successfully perform the duties and responsibilities of your position.

An effective Chatelaine is:
- A Communicator and listener.
  - Your main duty is to talk with newcomers to make them feel welcome, provide them with information and determine their needs and concerns.
- Approachable.
  - Many people are uncomfortable in new social situations. All it takes to attract or repel someone is a facial expression. A smile is more attractive than a frown. Before you enter an event, it is important to put on your “game face”. If you've had a bad day, week, or whatever, let it go. You are here to have fun. If it is obvious that you are having a good time, people will be more willing to approach you.
• Available
  o You must be accessible for newcomers: in person, by telephone and by e-mail. You should also be on any and all mailing lists pertaining to your branch. Any queries made by newcomers should be responded to within 5 calendar days. While you are not expected to attend every group function, you should at least be able to attend your group's business meetings and events. If you can't make it to other activities such as fighter practices, ask someone else to attend on your behalf. No deputy? Encourage all branch members to approach newcomers and help them with their questions/concerns.

• Patient
  o Some newcomers are keen and will energetically source out material and information. Others are more hesitant and may need more encouragement and assistance with finding the information they need. It is important to be sensitive to the needs of the individual. Sometimes, those who are slowest to get involved will become the greatest asset to your branch in future years.

• Creative and Prudent Risk Taker
  o You should be able to tailor activities to your group's local culture, resources, etc. Conceive and develop new ideas or encourage others to do so. Apply common sense and judgment. Bring your ideas to council meetings for approval. This will ensure that you have branch support in your undertakings.

• Cooperative
  o Like communication, cooperation is a two-way street. Playing well with others will help you to reach both your goals and those of your branch.

• Organized
  o You must be able to keep records, respond to newcomers in a timely manner and submit meaningful quarterly reports. Reports etc should be kept in hard copy (and if possible, on a CD (no floppy disks, please)) for at least 7 years. This may mean purchasing a filing box and folders for your office to keep your records well organized. Hard copy can be discarded after 2 years if CD copies are made.

• Knowledgeable
  o A good Chatelaine understands they don’t have to know it all. They only have to know where to direct people with particular question. You should be able to answer basic SCA questions but something more specific (i.e. A&S or combat questions that you cannot answer) should be referred to the corresponding officer.

• Enthusiastic
  o Nothing is more attractive than enthusiasm; both to a newcomer and to members of your local group. If you express your enthusiasm about the importance of attracting, educating and retaining newcomers, members of your group will be more willing to assist you and newcomers will be more willing to stay and play.

• Realistic
  o You must be able to recognize your personal limitations and those of the individuals in your local branch. Self care is first and foremost in any office. If you are getting tired and real life is wild, you do not have to stay in your office until your term is up. You and your family are more important than a game.
D. Obtaining a Warrant: As with all other SCA offices, you must be a paid member of the SCA and, in Avacal, hold a subscription to the Avantegarde.

- First and foremost, there will be a call for submissions of names to take a chatelaine position. Once applied for (branch Chatelaines apply to the area Seneschal and Baron/ess *if applicable*, or, in the case of a Principality Chatelaine applicant, to the Avacal Prince and Princess, current Principality Chatelaine *if applicable* and the Principality Seneschal) and should you be successful, you must fill out a Change of Officer Form. This original form, for all area branch Chatelaines, must be sent to the Principality Chatelaine, with copies going to the area Seneschal and Baron/ess *where appropriate*. If appointed to the Principality Chatelaine position, copies of the CoOF must be sent to the Avacal Prince and Princess and the Principality Seneschal, with the original going to the Kingdom Chatelaine.
- If your contact information changes, please be sure to notify the Principality Chatelaine via email at avacal-chatelaine@antir.sca.org, regular mail (address can be found in the Principality Officer Section for Avacal in the Crier or Avantegarde) or in your quarterly report.
- Your warrant is valid for 2 years from the date of the confirmation and your office should be posted 6 months in advance of your scheduled step-down date. Should you fail to fulfill the duties of your office (this includes failing to report, reporting for 2 or more scheduled reporting periods), decide to step down, or your branch recommends a new officer, a new Chatelaine will be appointed.

E. Deputies:

- You are not required to have a deputy for your office; however, there are some benefits to having one. You may find that your branch is very active with demos and this requires a demo coordinator. You can also have people to run Gold Key. These offices come under Chatelaine jurisdiction.

F. Reporting Schedule:

- Reporting is an integral part of your office. You are not only responsible to report to the Principality Chatelaine once per quarter, but you need also to report to your branch seneschal/Baron/Baroness. Your deputies, should you have them, must also report. They submit their reports to you and it is up to you to include your deputy’s reports with yours. Avacal branch reporting dates are January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15 of each year. Principality Chatelaine reports are due to the Kingdom Chatelaine February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1. To submit branch reports to the Principality Chatelaine, you may submit by email or regular post, but regardless of how you report, they must be to the Principality Chatelaine on or before those dates. If you send regular post, you will need to send it early to be there on time. Reports can also be posted online at http://avacal.antir.sca.org/officer/chat_files/chat_branch_report.html
- You should also fill out reports after each demo. This is important so that you can keep track, in writing, of who attended, what was presented and to whom, etc. This facilitates better changes to demos in the future. This is covered more thoroughly in the Demo
Handbook.
Section 2: Attracting, Recruiting and Retaining New Members

A. Developing a Strategic Plan:

There are several ways of attracting new members: personal contact, advertisement through printed and electronic media, demos, or simply by chance. This is a lot of work and it is the responsibility of the entire populace to help.

• Brainstorming session:
  o Ask meeting attendees to make suggestions for demos, advertising etc. At this point, the feasibility of the idea should not be discussed. Simply record all suggestions for discussion later

• Discuss and refine ideas:
  o Once everyone has had a chance to make suggestions, discuss each idea. Consider what resources your branch will need (people, time, money, materials, equipment, site, etc.) for a recruitment activity. Come to consensus on activities that are within your branch's abilities. Make sure you don’t overextend your group to the point of burnout. *Demos are NOT events and should not be treated as such.*

• Develop a plan:
  o For each major activity, your plan should include the various tasks required; the target completion dates for those and the name of the person who agreed to complete the various tasks.

• Get support:
  o Before you put your plan into action, you must pass it in council and have the support of the populace. Discuss your plans at a council meeting, publish the plan in your newsletter, on your web page, and send it out to your branch mailing list. Make sure you provide an opportunity for members to provide feedback. Review feedback and revise your plan as needed.

• Implement the plan:
  o While the Chatelaine *or deputy chatelaine* must be present at recruitment activities, you do not have to be the one organizing it. Your demo coordinator or qualified volunteer may organize an activity. Fliers and handouts can be found on the Avacal Chatelaine Website

• Assessing success:
  o Remember, whenever you stage a recruitment activity that you will not always gain/retain new members. You will, however, give your branch important exposure to your local community and plant seeds in interested minds who may come out at a later date. It is also important to review what worked, what didn’t and why so that changes can be made for future activities.

B. Spreading the Word: There are several ways to help publicize the SCA and attract new members.

• Personal Contact:
  o The best way to attract newcomers is chat up your non-SCA buddies. Many people are introduced to the SCA by a friend. Most come back because they were treated kindly and made to feel welcome by people they met. Many people don't
feel comfortable conversing with strangers because they are shy or feel they have nothing to add to the conversation. Frequently, new members are ignored while we are catching up with long time friends; while you cannot control how people behave, you can certainly encourage everyone to be courteous and friendly. One way to ensure that newcomers are welcomed and make friends is to develop a fostering program that pairs newcomers with established members of similar interests.

- **Electronic Media:**
  - Utilize current technology. Web pages, mailing lists and instant messaging are very useful tools for attracting newcomers and maintaining contact. Use your branch website to provide information and resources to newcomers if you don’t have one specifically as Chatelaine. You do not, as a branch Chatelaine, have to maintain your own website.

- **Printed Media:**
  - Posters, pamphlets, business cards, and bookmarks are a few examples of printed media that can be used to publicize the SCA. Office supply stores carry a variety of pre-cut business card sheets and other items like post cards or pamphlets that can be used in any printer. Printing business cards at a print shop is also cost effective and gives a much higher quality card. Your local library, bookstores, Chamber of Commerce, schools, universities and community bulletin boards can all be used to distribute SCA information. **Make sure you get permission to leave pamphlets, bulletins and posters.**

Sample Business Card:

**Front:**

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Lady Jehanne de Doe  
(Anastasia Beaverhausen)  
Chatelaine, Shire of Veenashnidzoil  
Society for Creative Anachronism  

Telephone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx  
Email: medievallygoodness@avacalrocks.ca

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**Back:**

The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), is an international non-profit educational organization dedicated to recreating the best of the Middle Ages and Renaissance (600-1600 AD). If you would like additional information about the SCA, please contact the person listed on this card.
• Following up on Contacts
  o After receiving a message from an interested newcomer is it crucial that you maintain contact. Respond to messages within 5 calendar days when possible. Poor communication may lead to the alienation of the potential newcomer.
Section 3: Demonstrations (Demos)

For further information on demonstrations, please refer to the Avacal Demo Handbook, and Appendix A of this document.

There are many reasons why we do demos in the SCA. The more obvious ones are educational demos and recruitment demos. Participating in these activities helps you to promote your branch and fulfill our mandate to educate and recreate the Middle Ages for ourselves and the public.

Please use the demo handbook to help you plan and organize great demos.

Important points to remember:

• Be courteous and chivalrous at all times and to everyone
• Leave emotional baggage at home or you stay at home. Problems with another member? Get your game face on or do not attend.
• If you want to visit with friends, step away from the main demo area. Even better, make time after the demo to visit.
• Do not try to sell anything at a demo. This includes promoting private business either verbally or with business cards. The Society is not a business but a non-profit educational organization.
• All blatantly modern items should either be kept out of view or disguised
• Keep your gear contained and unobtrusive
• Bring a period looking drinking vessel
• If your armour is obviously modern, wear a tabard or surcote to disguise it
• Wear your most period garb! Do not wear anything store bought, medieval-esque or peri-
od. If it is an educational demo, HIDE YOUR CLEAVAGE! Fantasy wear that has no relation to period is not appropriate. If you need help finding appropriate garb, ask a friend.
• Leave personal possessions at home, if possible. The demo coordinator and host group are not responsible for loss or theft.
• Fighters: Have fun! Make it look good. It doesn’t matter who wins or loses, just keep the fighting going.
• Don’t want anyone to touch your precious items that are rare and cost a fortune? Please place them in a display box or leave them at home
• Bring small projects such as embroidery or tablet weaving, etc. This will not only give you something to do, but something to talk about.
• For projects larger than ‘lap sized’, check with the host group to ensure the space needed can be accommodated.
• Everyone has a role to play in the demos, even those who are shy. Often, much set up work, waterbearing and clean up are necessary and people who do not want to speak can still add to the ambience of a demo.
• Spectators never ask stupid questions. Be patient and respectful of your audience
• Do not invent ‘facts’. If you do not know the answer, say so.
• Refer media presence, event hosts and other officials directly to the demo coordinator, Seneschal or Chatelaine.
• Requests for information on the SCA should be directed to the Chatelaine
• Be aware of your surroundings and the spectators. Even a child brought up in the SCA will run through an eric if not supervised
• No Live steel at any demo. With many people around, you cannot control who or what happens
• If possible familiarize yourself with the demo site before you go. Find phones, restrooms and nearest water source
• Bring a First Aid kid to all demos where there will be fighting. Having one cell phone on site is recommended for dealing with any emergencies (Turn it off when not in use to call 911)

USE YOUR DEMO HANDBOOK TO ORGANIZE ALL DEMOS. THERE IS NO POINT IN REINVENTING THE WHEEL.
Section 4: Getting the Newcomer Involved

A. Newcomers Welcome Night: The purpose is to welcome newcomers to the SCA and provide them with the basics needed to get started.

• Frequency: If you are lucky enough to have large numbers of newcomers, you should have a monthly meeting. For smaller branches, you may want to have a newcomer event every 6 months with newcomers meetings as necessary.
• Location: Some branches prefer to have meetings at the home of a member, while others prefer a neutral location such as a community center, church, or library. Shy people may be reluctant to show up at someone’s house.
• Context: Some branches prefer to simply have straightforward newcomers’ meetings, while others prefer to make it a more social engagement such as a BBQ. You can even combine the 2 together. Have a BBQ with an informative 20-minute instruction period.
• Content: Provide newcomers with interesting and practical information. Do not overwhelm them with too much “stuff”
• Who can attend: Attendees can include everyone in your branch or can be limited to newcomers, officer and select presenters. Be sure to let you members know what format you are following. Let presenters know was topics you would like covered. Remind members to chat with newcomers, at appropriate times, on appropriate topics

The following list includes some topics that can be covered in newcomer nights.

• Introductions/Welcome: Welcome everyone and introduce all attendees. Ask officers to explain their role in the branch. Explain that the session is designed to get them started and will not provide them with everything they will need to know about the SCA as much of the information will be learned over time
• Do an overview of the SCA and your local branch (Who we are, what we do).
• Information on how to get started
  o Attending their first event
  o Garb and loaner gear
  o Heraldry and persona development
  o Overview of the arts and sciences
  o Overview of martial activities
  o Courtesy and forms of address
  o Question and answer session

B. Newcomers and Their First Event:

Some newcomers are shy about attending their first event -- especially alone. Since you probably won't be able to attend every event, ask for volunteers to accompany newcomers to their first event. Be sure that your volunteers understand what is expected of them. For example, your volunteers should help the newcomer gather all the items they will need to attend an event such as loaner garb and feast gear, may be asked to provide a ride to the event, keep the newcomer company and explain the various activities during the event, sit with them at feast, and introduce them to other members.
C. Newcomer's Point:

A newcomer's point is to provide a place at an event where newcomers can come to ask questions about the SCA and local branch.

- **Location, location, location:**
  - It is best if Newcomer's Point is in a central area and in plain view. Near gate is not necessarily a good place because the area tends to be congested. Conversely, if your newcomer's point is too isolated, it won't attract any newcomers. Speak with the event autocrat about setting up newcomer's point in a place where you aren't in the way, but clearly visible and near event activities.

- **Appearance:**
  - A sign saying "Newcomer's Point" is often helpful in addition to the Chatelaine's banner is lovely. The banner alone is not very helpful if a Newcomer doesn't recognize the office's badge. Make sure that Newcomer's Point is inviting. Remove modern items and/or trash from the area, cover the table with a tablecloth, hang banners -- a basket of goodies/cookies for general consumption is always helpful. Your personal appearance is also important. *Your garb should be as period as possible, neat, clean, and in good repair.*

- **Handouts:**
  - Many branches have been using newcomer's tokens such as tassels, braids, rosettes, favors, etc. to help regular members more easily identify the newcomers. It is probably best for newcomer's tokens to be handed out at gate. Encourage regular members to keep an eye out for newcomers and make an extra effort in welcoming them. Do not to overwhelm newcomers with too much information. A one-page handout with local contact information, calendar of activities, and a brief description of the SCA is usually sufficient. However, if you'd like to give them a folder of information that they can read later, that's o.k. too

- **Your behaviour:**
  - Each individual reacts differently to various approaches. A warm smile, pleasant tone of voice and controlled enthusiasm works best with most people. Some people are "put off" by an overly exuberant Chatelaine. Conversely, if you don't appear to be enjoying yourself, they won't either. Don't do all the talking. Ask the newcomers' questions and listen carefully to their responses. Find out what aspects of the SCA they are interested in, what their concerns are and then give them advice on how to get started. If you don't know the answer to a question, refer them to someone who does or offer to find the answer for them. Be sure to get their contact information so that you may follow-up with them later! A sample form for obtaining newcomer information is in the appendices (Appendix B).

- **Activities:**
  - Newcomer's quests are often fun, educational, and a great way to encourage newcomers to meet as many people as possible. Topics may include Avacalian geography, Avacalian History, pre-1600 history or you can simply ask them to find various items such as a Princess's Knot dangly or a baronial coronet, etc. Award a prize to the winner. Sometimes the less outgoing newcomers are hesitant to participate on their own. Attempt to pair newcomers up to help them meet new
people. Also, encourage newcomers to participate in as many of the day's scheduled activities as possible. If they'd rather sit and watch, that's fine too.

- Results:
  o Don't feel that your efforts have failed if you don't attract too many newcomers to your table. More often than not, newcomers attend events with their friends or family members and spend the entire day with them. This is a good thing! They are still learning about the SCA, being introduced to other people and having fun.

D. Continuing Education & Involvement:

- Regular A&S classes
  o Conduct beginner classes several times a year on a variety of A&S subjects. Beginning sewing classes are especially popular with newcomers.
- Martial activities
  o Encourage interested newcomers to attend regular archery or fighter practices.
- Sponsorship (individual and project-based)
  o Provide newcomers with additional encouragement by assigning someone to serve as a new member's sponsor, "buddy," or "big brother" until they feel comfortable enough to participate on their own. If you decide to establish a sponsorship program in your local branch, do your best to match sponsor and newcomer by geographical location, personality type, and common interests.
  o Individual sponsors should assist their assigned newcomer by:
    - Helping them obtain garb and other items needed for SCA participation
    - Being available by telephone or email to answer questions or refer the newcomer to someone who can help
    - Providing advice on how to get started with particular SCA activities
    - Ask a volunteer to assist a small group of newcomers in completing project to benefit the local branch

E. When Does a Newcomer Stop Being a Newcomer?

- Each individual is different and therefore there is no specific timeline or pattern of behaviour that marks his or her progression to a higher level of participation. Generally speaking, a person who attends activities and events on a regular basis on their own initiative is considered to be a regular member

F. Dealing with Teenagers

- One group that is particularly challenging to deal with is teenagers whose parents are not in the SCA. They are too young to fight or marshal, yet too old for "children's activities." Often, parents are concerned about the type of group that their son/daughter is getting involved with. Here are a few suggestions that can help to keep all concerned happy: parents, teenagers, and the SCA members.
  o Invite the teenager's parents to join him/her. Make sure the parents know they can visit any time they want, even if they choose not to join. This lets the parent know there is nothing secretive going on with their child.
- Have a meeting, perhaps at a member's house, to explain the SCA to the teenager and the parents. Stress the educational aspects and the things that the teenager can do.
- Make a packet for teenagers and their parents. Include the rules for minors, and a list of things that they can and cannot do, and a written invitation to the parents to come join in the fun. You may wish to include information about the Avacal Companie of Pages, and a standard newcomer’s package.
- Make sure you know all the rules pertaining to minors: waivers needed, medical release forms, age restrictions for activities, etc. Be sure the parents know these rules, also.
- Never break the rules to keep the teenager interested. Under-aged teenagers cannot fight at any event or on any property that is being rented, leased, or borrowed in the name of the SCA. No exceptions. If children do not want to participate unless they can do restricted activities, inform them that you look forward to their return to the SCA when they come of age.
- Introduce the teenager to other teenagers who are functioning well in the SCA. Also, introduce the teenager to an adult with similar interests.

Have things for the teenagers to do at events. Then, ask them to participate. (They may need a bit of encouraging.) For examples, they can:

- Join the Avacal Companie of Pages and work through the program
- Help run the children’s activities
- Help serve feast
- Help cook a meal
- Play games such as bocce
- Be a waterbearer (with supervision)
- Participate in arts and sciences activities
- Attend classes
- Help decorate/set up before an event
- Help clean up after an event
- Participate in a quest
- Entertain at a feast

Older teenagers can:

- Fight boffer or practice fighting
- Be a waterbearer (without supervision)
- Be a target archer
- Help work the crowd at a demo

The rules for older teenagers’ participation do occasionally change, so it is best to check with the local or Principality officer in charge of the activity, before the teenager starts any of the restricted activities. It should not need to be mentioned, but remember that the laws of the land supercede those of the Principality and SCA. Never allow a minor to imbibe alcoholic beverages.
Section 5: The Gold Key (Loaner Garb/Feast Gear)

A. Purpose of the Gold Key:

- The gold key is a collection of loaner garb and feast gear provided by your branch for the use of newcomers until they have had a chance to obtain their own items. It is your responsibility, or that of one of your deputies, to ensure that the Gold Key is adequate and in good repair.

B. Content:

- While the size of your Gold Key will vary dependent on storage concerns, below is a list of recommended items for your branch's Gold Key:
  - Garb: There are a number of opinions regarding the purpose of Gold Key garb. One is to provide the essentials only - just a tabard to cover their street clothes and identify them as newcomers. Another is to try to provide garb of different time periods for newcomers of all ages, styles, sizes and genders. It is up to your branch to decide which path to take.
  - Cloaks and Outerwear: Being wet and/or cold will surely ruin someone's day, therefore, it would be nice to have cloaks and hoods in the Gold Key.
  - Accessories: Accessories, such as belts, can be used to dress up some garb or disguise poorly fitting items.
  - Feast Gear: If you chose to include feast gear in your Gold Key, it should include plates, bowls, goblets or tankards or mugs, and utensils. A collection of tablecloths, napkins are nice, but not necessary. Ensure that all feast gear is returned cleaned or cleaned immediately after events.

C. Building Your Gold Key:

- If your current Gold Key is not adequate to meet the demand or is in poor condition, it is your responsibility to solicit help in correcting the situation.
  - Ask members from your branch to donate garb, feast gear, and other items that they no longer use.
  - If you have more of some type of item than you need and are lacking in other areas, sell excess items in an auction, and use the proceeds to buy those items that you need. (Please speak with your local Exchequer before you handle any money.)
  - Ask your branch to designate a portion of the profits from your next event or a paid demo to go to purchase materials and/or items for the Gold Key.
  - Shop at yard sales, flea markets and thrift stores like Value Village. Look for plates, bowls, cups, and spoons for feast gear, old tablecloths and napkins, and fabric.
  - Organize a sewing circle to make new garb/tabards. Try to make versatile items that can be worn by a variety of people.
D. Maintaining Your Gold Key:

- Keep an inventory of all items in your Gold Key. These items must be kept in one location. After each event where Gold Key is used, clean, inspect and update your inventory, making notes of missing or damaged items. Attempt to locate missing items and repair or replace damaged items. If items need repair, host a "mending party." If items are beyond repair, salvage materials such as trim that could be reused on other items.

- Repair and maintenance

- Tracking your inventory: You may occasionally have difficulty with items not being returned in a timely manner or at all. The following are some preventative measures that you may wish to take:
  - Put tags in all garb, labeling them as belonging to "your branch" Gold Key. Permanently mark feast gear and other non-garb items in the same way.
  - Don't loan any items out without making sure that the borrower knows when and how to return them. Keep a record of who has what and make sure you have a way of getting in touch with the person in case they fail to return the items as specified.
  - Take items to the event yourself and have the person return the items before leaving the event.
  - Implement a checkout procedure in which the person borrowing the item leaves a small monetary deposit or other item of value (such as a Driver's License) until the item has been returned. (Please speak with your Exchequer before handling any money.) If necessary, make it a policy that damages will be deducted from the deposit.

- Repair and maintenance
  - To ensure that items are kept in good condition for as long as possible, make sure that they are cared for properly. Below are some suggestions to keeping your loaner items in good repair.
    - Require that all feast gear be washed before being returned. Most feasts provide a wash-up station. It is not unreasonable to expect newcomers to wash their own dishes
    - If a particular item of garb requires special care or must be dry-cleaned, reconsider keeping it in your Gold Key. Dry-cleaning and ironing are unnecessary expenses
    - Check all items regularly to see if they need mending
    - Store garb neatly, folded in boxes or on shelves
    - Air items out before loaning them out
    - Store garments with scented sachets (if moths are a concern, use lavender, not mothballs)
Section 6: Dealing with the Media

Please refer to Appendix C for more information regarding Society Media Policy, and before following the information provided in this section.

A. Responsibilities:

While the preferred media contact for any SCA branch is the seneschal, you are the next best person. In fact, your seneschal may specifically ask you to serve in this capacity... Technically, every member of the SCA is a representative. This is why our behaviour at SCA events and demos is so important. Honorable and courteous behaviour are traits that we hold dear, and all of us are called upon to serve as an example of the SCA to newcomers and the media. You may be required to chaperone reporters at local events. If your seneschal chooses to handle these obligations him/herself, or designate a deputy specifically for this task, that is their right as the head of your branch. No matter what your Seneschal decides, do not assume that you are automatically the media liaison for your branch. This section is intended to prepare you for that task should it arise, not assign it to you.

B. Advertising:

Obviously, you must deal with the media when you advertise your branch’s existence and activities. This aspect of media contact is covered in Section 2. This section is intended to cover face-to-face contact with media representatives.

C. Pursuing Media Coverage:

Having the media at an event or public demonstration is a double-edged sword and should be carefully considered before you actively court such attention. Sometimes a member of the media will contact you without any encouragement. On one hand, with prior planning and forethought, it provides excellent public exposure for both your local branch and the SCA. On the other hand, careless behaviour and poor planning can result in an embarrassing display that will reflect poorly on both your local branch and the SCA. Always discuss this coverage fully with your seneschal, the autocrat of an event or demo coordinator. You should always discuss a media presence with your entire branch before any invitations to the media are issued.

In the case of an event, media coverage should probably be discouraged unless the event is of a fairly large size such as a major war or charity event. For more typical SCA events, the media can be an unpleasant intrusion, disturbing event organizers and attendees equally. Remember, events are staged primarily for the benefit of our membership. The major focus should not be on advertising your branch, but on providing an opportunity for SCA members to exercise their hobby by creating a period atmosphere.

Demonstrations are the most comfortable venue to court media attention and may even be set up in advance by the organization for which you are holding the demo. In this case, make sure you
know in advance that media coverage has been planned, so you can be sure that your demo volunteers are informed and prepared for this type of exposure.

Should your branch actively pursue media coverage, you may wish to arrange either a specific interview or a “media day” at a meeting, event, or demo. There are three main groups to approach: newspaper, radio and television. You could also consider contacting various magazines. Dealing with any one of them can be intimidating, but a little advanced planning can make it easier and more effective for you.

1. Define your goal.
   • It should be nothing more elaborate than getting a reporter to show your branch and the SCA in the most positive light; reporting what YOU want them to say about your branch. Preparing written background information (such as a press kit for the media representative) will help you achieve this goal.

2. Send out a press release and/or invitation to a specific media representative.
   • It is unwise to send a press release or invitation to cover an SCA activity to “the editor”. Call ahead and get a name for an actual person such as the Calendar Editor, Community Affairs Editor or Features Editor. Calendar sections in magazines are usually published months in advance, so be prepared. Newspapers and cable stations have much shorter lead-time.

D. Preparing and Issuing a Press Release/Press Kit:

The Press Kit:
   • A press kit serves as an introduction "information package" intended to provide information to the press about the SCA and can serve as a basis for any public relations campaign. Press kits are normally kept in a folder with a press release, a fact sheet, a photo and any pertinent background information that you wish to include etc.

Timing:
   • Send out your first press release/press kit approximately 4 - 6 weeks before you want the media to attend. Too early and you may get lost in the shuffle, too late and you miss the deadline for coverage. You may want to send another release about two weeks later if you have any new information to impart.

Follow-up:
   • A week or so after the release is sent (or a second release if one is sent) or a few weeks prior to the event, call and ask if they received the release and confirm their attendance. **Remember to run all press releases by your Seneschal, and the Autocrat/organizer prior to release.**

E. Hosting the Media at an Event:
   • If you have arranged to host people from the media at an event, meet them at gate at a predetermined time. Be sure to find out ahead of time just how many people will be in their party so you can be sure to have sufficient garb available. The garb can be as simple as a tabard, but **garb is required in accordance with Corpora.** Be sure to let them know
ahead of time that they are expected to wear garb and that you are willing to provide loaner garb for them. Explain that the attempt to create a period appearance in our populace is one of our primary mandates. Also, be sure to have them sign a site waiver and let the event registration staff know in advance that there should be no site fee for members of the media.

• One of your primary goals when escorting a member of the media around at an event is to make certain that the SCA is putting our best foot forward. If you think it will enliven their visit, you may consider asking additional people to interact with the media representatives. Choose people who are personable, knowledgeable and responsible. Remember that religion is a private matter and does not fall within our organizational parameters. **Also, avoid discussing personal SCA politics!** For interviewing purposes, try to expose the media only to people who you know will focus on the positive aspects of the society. Be sure that the individuals being interviewed actually want to be interviewed. Clear potential interviews with the interviewees ahead of time!

• Never leave a media representative free to wander at an event site alone. While this probably won’t be an issue at most SCA events, it does allow the potential for some embarrassing situations for you and your branch.

• When speaking with media representatives, you must always remember that you are acting as spokesperson for our organizations. As such, your private opinions are just that: private. Stick to the facts about the SCA, its goals and structure. Try to avoid statements that need clarification. They are the easiest to have misquoted. Keep in mind that while you are accustomed to the SCA and its practices, members of the media are not. After the event/interview, send a personalized thank you note.

• Should some sort of “disaster” occur while the media is present (i.e. a combat injury, false alarms, etc.) escort them away from the area and tell them that an official statement will be prepared for their information. Keep apprised of the situation and report it as best you can. DO NOT dramatize or embellish. This includes using 'forsooth' language. Move on to the next activity as quickly as possible.
Appendix A: Society Demo Policy

*From The Society Seneschal’s Handbook*

**Appendix E: Demo Policy**

1. A demo (“demonstration”) is an organized educational effort to teach and/or display activities of medieval interest in general, and SCA interest in particular, to the general public. They are the primary way of introducing and finding new recruits for the SCA. However, not all demos are the type that results in new members. An elementary school demo is fun, but the likelihood of recruiting new members is low. A university or Renaissance Fair demo is more likely to attract new members, but does not necessarily contain the educational information of a school demo. Both are important, and a group should find a balance between them.

2. In order to be covered by SCA insurance, demos must be approved by the sponsoring group’s Seneschal and the branch may restrict who may represent them to the public. Restricting participation should be done with extreme caution and care. A demo may also be an “event” if it meets the requirements for an event as outlined in Corpora. At any demo, a paid SCA member must be present and in charge of the demo.

3. Demos where there are no combat-related activities do not require waivers unless they are held as part of an SCA “event.” Therefore, if there is no combat, and the demo is not held at an SCA event, waivers are not required. Waivers may be completed individually, or a roster waiver may be used. It is not required that spectators at demos sign waivers, as long as they don’t become participants.

4. As with all martial activities, an authorized marshal of whatever forms are being displayed must be present if there is fighting at a demo. SCA combatants must be authorized in that weapons’ form/style in order to perform at the demo.

5. Demo organizers should pay particular attention to site/host restrictions regarding SCA and live steel weapons. In general it is not a good idea to allow the general public to handle live steel weapons at a demo and live steel weapons must never be left unattended. SCA weapons (non-live steel) must not be left unattended and in plain sight and access of the public. (They may be stored unattended in tents, trucks, etc.)

6. Since observers of SCA demos are generally not familiar with SCA combat activities, special care for safety must be taken. Boundary ropes are strongly recommended, and sufficient safety personnel must be provided to ensure safety of combatants and observers.

7. A member of the SCA may not hit a member of the public with any weapon regardless of whether the member of the public is in armor and gives consent. Adult members of the public who wish to try armored combat should be referred to the nearest SCA group for instruction. (Note: target archery is not considered a “combat-related activity,” and so waivers need not be
signed for that activity, but be certain that all appropriate safety procedures are taught and followed.)

8. With specific safety restrictions, *supervised children age 12 and under may hit an armored SCA fighter with boffer weapons only, not rattan weapons*. Waivers are not needed from the parents of children who take part in “fight-a-knight” activities. Minimum safety standards include keeping unarmored observers at least 10 feet away from the armored fighter and child. Individual Kingdoms may make more restrictive policies.

9. Whenever a demo is done with children present, a minimum of two unrelated adults must also be in attendance at that demo. “Children” refers to anyone under the age of legal majority.

10. No one may bring weapons of any kind onto the grounds of a school without prior knowledge and consent of the school officials.

11. There is no SCA policy that prohibits an SCA group from charging a “demo” fee to the organization requesting the demo. However, most groups accept donations rather than charging a set fee. With either a donation or a “demo” fee, all monies should be in the form of a check, payable to the “SCA, Inc., [group name].” Under no circumstances should an individual receive cash or a check made out to them personally. SCA site fees may not be charged at a demo unless the demo is held as part of an SCA event.

12. Assuming appropriate safety precautions are in place, and with any necessary instruction, participation is a highly effective method of educating the demo guests—and fun for both the SCA member and guest.
Appendix B: Newcomer Information Form

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Contact information:
   Telephone number: ___________________________________________________
   Email Address: _______________________________________________________

How did you find out about the SCA?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What are your interests?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Would you like to be contacted with information about upcoming events and activities?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________


Appendix C: Society Media Policy

From Society Seneschal’s Policy

“Media Relations and External Publicity”

1. General Policy. It is the policy of the Office of Society Seneschal and Vice President of Operations that specific guidelines pertaining to interactions with modern media organizations and staff will be set forth in this document and subject to regular review in accordance with the needs of the Society and our ever changing modern environment. This policy crosses into both the ‘game’ side of the Society, and into modern era operations. The General Policy is to have a unified, professional approach to informing the Media of our purpose, activities, and when necessary, a position on relevant topics and events. To this end, the Society Seneschal and Vice President of Operations will appoint via formal warrant a deputy Society Seneschal and Assistant Vice President for Media Relations. Duties of this deputy include, but are not limited to:

- **Maintaining and monitoring the Media Relations Policy** to ensure it is within the confines of customary modern era public relations Best Practices.
- **Monitoring Media Relations Activities**—as defined below—to ensure that the best possible image and ‘face’ is shown to modern era, organized news media.
- **Assisting the Society Seneschal** in ensuring that qualified persons fill a similar role within each Kingdom level branch.
- **Assisting the Society Seneschal** in ensuring that each Kingdom level branch has sufficient policy in place to ensure that each is in compliance with Corporate media guidelines.
- **Assisting the Society Seneschal** in developing for the President and the Board of Directors official statements that best meet the current and long-term needs of the Society.
- **Developing Publicity Materials and Basic Press Kits**—as defined below—for use by local, Regional, and Corporate officials when interacting with media, site owners, educational facilities, and governmental entities.

2. Execution of Policy. The conduct of Media Relations at Corporate, Society, Kingdom, and local branch levels will be performed in accordance with the Media Relations Plan, at Appendix 1 of this handbook.

Appendix 1 - Society Media Relations Plan

1. Definitions:

- Deputy Society Seneschal and Assistant Vice President for Media Relations. An official representative of the SCA, Inc., warranted by the Society Seneschal and the Board of Directors for the purpose of accomplishing the duties outlined in Section One of this policy document. This official reports directly to the Society Seneschal, with matrix responsibilities to the President and the Board of Directors.
- Organized News Media. This includes but is not limited to major television news networks and local network affiliates, published newspapers, periodicals, print and online media outlets and syndicated publications, radio stations and their networks, and local free press...
and/or college outlets.

• Media Relations activities. Activities involving information gathering and distribution through organized news media, whether the SCA, Inc., is approached by a media representative or the media participation is sought out by our organization via an individual, branch, or other Society representative.

• Reportable media event. Any event or happenstance in which one or more of the following occurs:
  i. Media representative contacts the SCA for the purpose of doing a news story, column, or media presentation.
  ii. SCA Branch or representative wishes to publicize an event or activity in modern media venues.
  iii. Unfortunate occurrences that might result in media coverage, such as
     1. Severe Injury or fatality
     2. Incident resulting in official law enforcement being summoned to an SCA activity.
     3. Negative news resulting in the organization being displayed in an unfortunate light—e.g. destruction of property, prominent member retained on criminal charges, etc.

2. Image to the outside World. The image we wish to portray to the outside world should reflect our goals, purpose for existence and the finer aspects of achievement. To this end, people asked to speak to the media should show the best of:

• Clean-cut image
• Professional style
• Knowledge of the rules, purpose, and policies of the Society For Creative Anachronism.
• Skill at avoiding unfortunate topics.
• Skill as a public speaker
• Use vocabulary that is both meaningful and palatable to the public.
  i. Avoid the word “Mundane.” Never use it with the media—its patronizing and insulting. A better term is “Modern-era.”
  ii. Never discuss the following topics with the media
     1. Religion
     2. Lewd behavior that can be perceived as a form of sexual harassment.
     3. Alcohol making, preparation, studies, distribution, sale, etc.
     4. Households.

3. Media relations at the local branch level.

• Materials to be used. Basic press kits will be created, maintained, and distributed to Kingdoms and the Corporate office by the Deputy Society Seneschal for Media Relations and be made available for download online. It is always acceptable to obtain and distribute these to the media and any interested body.

• Additional, Event/Occurrence based materials. Additional materials may always be requested to better meet the specific needs of an Event, occurrence, or particular media interaction. At a minimum these must be approved by the Kingdom-level media representative. If the interaction is with major mainstream Media venue, such as CNN,
History Channel, etc., then the Deputy Society Seneschal for Media Relations is the approving authority for content and format.

**Reporting.** Local individuals, branches, or other entities should report within 7 days a media interaction to their Kingdom representative and the seneschallate whenever one or more of the following is true.

i. Outside Media Venue requests material for a story.
ii. Outside Media Venue arrives unannounced at an SCA event or activity.
iii. Outside Media Venue contacts the SCA regarding an ongoing news item.
iv. A story—positive or negative—regarding the SCA appears in an outside media publication.

4. **Media Relations at the Kingdom level.**

- **Kingdom level Media Relations representative.** Each kingdom will have a designated representative responsible for compliance to this policy. This person may or may not be an already-existing officer—that is left to the Kingdom to decide and manage. This person should meet the criteria contained in *Image to outside world*. When appointing this official, the Kingdom Seneschal should route the candidate information to the Society Seneschal and Deputy Society Seneschal for Media Relations. In the event a Kingdom has no appointed representative, the responsibility for compliance lies within the office of Kingdom Seneschal.

- The Kingdom level Media Relations representative will be responsible for distributing press-kit materials to local groups and individuals.

- The Kingdom level Media Relations representative will ensure all reportable events are communicated to the Seneschallate as well as the Deputy Society Seneschal for Media Relations.

- Kingdoms will ensure that events projecting either attendance in excess of 2000 participants, or known attendance by major media organizations, are covered by the Kingdom level Media Relations representative.

5. **Reporting.** The Media Relations deputy will report through appropriate supervisory channels as follows:

- Quarterly report of all media relations activity
- Incident reports whenever there is an occurrence of an incident involving items in or similar to the list under Reportable Media Event of this Policy.
- Copies of stories, articles, newscasts, and/or televised features should be forwarded through channels to the Deputy Society Seneschal for Media Relations for retention in the Knowledge Base. As appropriate, these materials will be added to the press materials available to all branches via hard copy or the Society Seneschal Website.
Appendix D: Newcomers Handouts

These handouts have been designed by a former chatelaine in Montengarde, Onora ingen Tomais (Dianne Put). Some of the images in them have been graciously approved for use by Milesent Vibert (Grace Vibbert) of the Barony of Cleftlands in Midrealm.

There has been space left in these brochures to add your contact information as well as your branch’s website information.

You will find the brochures attached as separate .pdf files from this book. If you have received this as a CD, they will be on your CD. If you have downloaded this from the Avacal website, they will be available for download there as well.