

What Makes A Good Retainer and Why?

Written by: Baroness Vanora and Baroness Simone – Please do not republish with out the consent of the authors. – Residents of the Middle Kingdom – Barony of Roaring Wastes.

Discretion – Ability to keep all the insider information quiet and too your self. Nothing ruins someone's event or time in the SCA like finding out before hand what kind of award they are going to get at a specific event then not receiving it.

Loyalty / Commitment – Committed to their Majesties as household members, friends or in whatever way you are associated. They come first and foremost before anything else. Ability to keep all promises made during the reign, such as staying diehard to the end of the reign, making all the events you promise to (barring real life emergencies).

Familiarity / Knowledge of Kingdom – Read your laws and read corpora!!!!!!
– Knowledge of the Society as a whole.

Enthusiasm – Speaks for itself.

Willingness to Work – Retaining is a hard demanding job; you must be willing to sacrifice your personal fun at an event to do this job. However, retaining is fun in itself, just a new kind of fun.

Travel – Must be able to travel with Their Majesties for the entire reign.

Appearance / Wardrobe – A must, we are the backdrop. Have at least one good court type outfit and one good everyday outfit. Depending on Their Majesty's whims, they may request specific garb (i.e. 14th Cent.) Are you able and do you have the clothing that you need, can you make it or have it made for you?

Organized – A must, you have to remember everything they need to do, make copious notes, lists, and timetables if needed. Get the information they need to write thank you notes.

Detail Oriented – Like being organized; can you remember every detail that needs to happen. For example at feast, do not forget to have all the royalty toasted.

Common Sense – Ability to judge right from wrong with out the book knowledge. If you know your Majesties despise someone, keep him or her away from him or her so problems do not occur.

Etiquette – Do you know how to set a table? Kindness and courtesy come first. If you do not know someone's title address him or her as Gracious Lord or Lady.

Who's Who by Hats – Know your Kingdom's Sumptuary Laws. Learn others. ☺

Tools of the Trade

Thank you notes

Lunch Kit

For yourself and for their Majesties.

Sandwich

Meat

Bread / Crackers

Cheese

Water

Soda (Pop/Coke)

Coffee / Tea / Sugar / Creamer

Fruit

Things in your bag or basket

Checklist:

Notebook with Pens/Pencils

Gifts Received Sheets

Painkillers

Antacid

Glucose Tablets

Special Medication for your Royal

Small sewing Kit

Baggie with safety pins

Extra ribbon (black/white) for emergency lacing.

Kleenex or handkerchief

Hard candy or mints (altoids or something similar like gum). Breath freshener.

Lip balm or her majesties favorite lipstick that she always wears.

Sunscreen

Small snack (crackers, raisins or chocolate)

Watch

Goblet and Water

Fan

Wet Ones individually wrapped.

Umbrella (rain poncho where applicable)

Small garbage bag.

The list of things happening that day!

Overall Knowledge:

Know your charges:

Food Allergies

General Allergies

Whims

Quirks and Phobias

Likes and Dislikes

What is their boiling point and how to diffuse it?

Know when to back off.

What is the signal?

Know your majesties, highnesses, heirs, etc for toasts; keep them written down for feasts. Write them with phonetic spellings.

Always consult the feast-o-crat / Herald before arranging toasts.

Know how to set up the presence!!!!

Know how to set up head table.

Ladies always ask the Lords for help carrying items. "We portray Chivalry not Women's Lib".

Your charges never carry items except gifts and or personal items (don't take away their wobbie.).

Special Things to Remember for Wars

1. Forgo vanity for comfort of your feet; Do not lock your knees when you stand for long periods.
2. Take care of yourself so you can take care of your Royals. Eat properly, get enough rest, know when to say when, (with your own stress level and your goblet).
3. Use good judgment as to when your Royals may need some down time, food, water, sunscreen, etc. (with gentle, not pushy suggestions).
4. Do not wear baldrics unless you are currently retaining.
5. Always watch your mouth and do not comment on anything unless necessary. Do not speak ill of anyone. Do not even agree with someone who is speaking ill of someone. All it can do is hurt the Royals.
6. Know the chain of command. If you get yourself into a situation where you simply cannot or should not give an answer or make a decision, know who to go to above you. This is rarely the Royal under which you serve. It may be the chamberlain or the Head Retainer for the day, but it may also be the autocrat of an event (or war). Try not to bother the busy Royals with details/problems better left to the retainer staff (us) to handle for them. Of the flip side, do not make decisions you do not have the authority to make.
7. Make sure your Royals look good. There are little things you can do, like pick the lint off the garb before they go out in public. Straighten a crooked hem or seam. Have the Royals readjust their crowns or coronets because they are crooked.
8. Pay attention to how you look too. Comb your hair. Use a damp cloth occasionally to wipe your face. Check for lint and crooked veils on your own person. Brush the dust off your skirts and tunics occasionally.
9. Presents for Each Kingdom – needs to be done way ahead of the war. Think 3 months where possible. Request gifts from the Laurelate or Populous.
10. Are the Royals hosting a Known World Royalty Dinner, Queens Tea, Known World Party, or other engagement? Arrange these way before the war. Think 3 months when possible. Request help from the populous, Laurelate, Pelicans, or Barony's for hosting.
11. Make sure that all the regalia gets there and is in good order and clean.
12. Never let the Royals out of your site (except when they are in their own pavilion) – especially when they go to the rest room. If gentles see them unattended they might take the opportunity to interrupt their trip and yak their heads off. (Royals – it makes your

retainers look bad too so please do not play the “Let’s see if we can sneak away from the retainers without them noticing game).

13. When accompanying to Royal Dinners and other invitations – You may have to arrange for the thrones to be delivered, gifts and dishes ahead of time so they do not have to be carried in procession.
14. Opening Ceremonies – Arrange the procession, thrones for a Dais?
15. Battles – bring umbrellas, cushions for field chairs, fans, sunscreen, and WATER!!!!
16. Remember you are always “On-Display” even when you do not realize it. People are always curious of what is going on in a Royal Encampment, even the first week of Pennsic. If you do not think you can handle this aspect...really handle it...then you may want to rethink your involvement at a war. How you act directly reflects on the Crown. This also goes, although more diluted, for when you are off duty...out doing the party circuit.
17. Learn to recognize other kingdoms and Principalities by not only their arms and colors, or their crowns and coronets, but also by pictures of the reigning royalty where possible. This is very hard. Very very hard. But for certain, if you do it will save your butt and make your royals look fabulous.
18. Be courteous in your interactions with other kingdom and principality retainers. Big happenings sometimes at War so NO GOSSIP (the war is full of scouts).
19. The Encampment
 - a. You need an experienced camp coordinator and deputy coordinator to help with the initial layout and camp set-up and teardown.
 - b. Think about having a Royalty Encampment Book to organize schedules of the Royals, Guards, Peer/Ppod on duty (Ppod- is a member of the staff who is not a peer but filling in for the Peer on Duty in case there is not one on duty. They need to know how to deal with the worst of the happenings that can befall a royal encampment and will sit at the gate to talk with visitors, inquires, etc.) gifts received, pages schedules, maps with all the royal encampments marked, daily duties, etc.
 - i. Set up schedules before the war where possible.
 - ii. Even if you have a group in charge for the day, you still need someone in camp to help and know what is going on.
 - c. Make sure there is a good division of responsibilities through out the encampment.
 - d. Always keep the encampment visibly clean and tidy. This goes for those whose pavilions open into the courtyard. If you are not going to be tidy and clean, close your doors. It makes a bad impression if your slob.
 - e. There should be an official open and closing of the camp. (Close the gate!).
 - f. Meetings and parties – arrange ahead of time so that areas to be used are tidy and refreshments and servers are available.

Event Lists – See attached.

SMILE AND HAVE A GOOD TIME!!!

Q & A Time

Copious Notes: