

Northshield Pursuivants Administrative Handbook

Duties of the Branch Pursuivant

Osric of Fayrehope

Edited by Master Richard Morgan of Cumberland

This article describes your responsibilities as a branch pursuivant. How to perform these duties is explained more fully in various articles throughout this handbook. The basic duties can be summarized, in no particular order, as follows:

- Contact your Superiors
- Write Reports
- Field Heraldry
- Book Heraldry
- Court Heraldry
- Courtesy and Precedence
- Teach
- Help with Submissions
- Be Available
- Keep Records

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

The First Responsibility: Contact Your Superiors

It is frequently stated, but it cannot be overemphasized: the very first responsibility of every new pursuivant is to contact your superior officers *immediately* and let them know who you are. They need to know how to send you information about rule changes, fee increases, and so on. So write a letter of introduction and send copies to your regional (or principality) herald and to the Polaris Herald. Don't wait until the next report is due!

What should you write? Well, most important, you must give your mundane name, SCA name, full mailing address, and telephone number, email address if available and state that you are the new pursuivant. Give the name of your group, too. Include a letter from your seneschal confirming that the group has chosen you as the new pursuivant. Finally, tell a bit about yourself. How much do you know about heraldry? What books do you or the local library have?

Write Reports

The senior heralds have to be kept informed about the heraldic activities and level of heraldic knowledge in every group. The way to keep them informed is to write reports on a regular schedule. It is very important that your superiors receive your reports by the deadline; they have their own reports to write, and missing a report can affect your group's status. You'll find more information about the reporting deadlines and what to include in your reports in the article *Writing Reports*.

If your address (regular or email) or phone number changes don't wait until your next report—let the regional and kingdom heralds know *immediately*, in case they need to contact you.

Field Heraldry

The field herald is the one who makes official announcements at events and announces the names of the fighters at a tournament. The local group's pursuivant does not have to do this himself, but he should find volunteers and let the autocrat know who is currently on duty.

Book Heraldry

Book heraldry includes the study of armorial devices and names, and the rules of the Society concerning the registration and use of devices and names.

You should have at least a basic understanding of heraldry.

You should have some understanding of period English naming practices, and be able to help a client find information specific to his or her chosen culture and time period.

You should study the Rules for Submissions, which are included as an appendix of this handbook.

You should know what devices and badges are registered to the members of your group, and discourage people from displaying or using devices that are not yet registered to them.

Court Heraldry

The court herald is the person who plans the agenda for Court and acts as a “master of ceremonies” during Court — calling people forward, reading scrolls and proclamations, etc. Baronial Courts are the responsibility of the Barony’s pursuivant, while the most senior herald present usually handles Royal Courts. This depends, though, on a number of factors, such as the preference of Their Majesties or Their Highnesses, and the senior herald’s willingness to give others the experience.

Courtesy and Precedence

You should be familiar with the rules and customs regarding courtesy, precedence, and awards. You should know how one is expected to behave in the presence of Royalty and Peers, and how they should be addressed.

You should know the various awards of Northshield and the Society, why they are awarded, and what their relative rank is. You should know the correct titles and forms of address for recipients of the various awards.

You must keep track of all awards received by the members of your group, and maintain an Order of Precedence for your group. An Order of Precedence is a listing of people who have received awards, what the awards were, and when they were given, sorted either by SCA first name or by descending order of rank. You can also include the specific reason for each award. The Order of Precedence must be included with your Domesday Report, and must be made available to the members of your group. You may want to put it in the group’s newsletter occasionally.

Teach

Teach your group the basics of heraldry and period naming practices. If you don’t know much about heraldry or names, help them find good reference books. You should also warn people about what books *not* to use. (Can you say “No ‘name-your-baby’ books”? I knew you could!)

Teach people about proper courtesy and precedence, and how to recognize the various symbols of rank, so that they will know when and how to show proper respect to Royalty, Peers, and Nobility.

Teach people about the awards structure of the Society and Northshield, so they will know which awards are an appropriate reward for a person’s accomplishments and thus be able to recommend that person for an award.

Help with Submissions

Help people design their devices and choose their names. Make sure they fill out the submission forms correctly, or help them do so, and help them find proper documentation. (If you draw the device for them, make sure they see the drawing and are satisfied with it before sending it in.)

Don’t just quote the rules — explain *why* it works that way. Use modern examples: point out the color combinations on traffic signs — white on red, black on yellow, etc. — which make them legible at a distance, just as a medieval fighter’s shield had to be recognizable across a field.

All submissions should be sent to the Compass (Submissions) Herald by the submitter themselves, along with the appropriate fees. Be sure to ask them for a copy for your records. **DO NOT** accept money, as the fees should be sent directly to the Compass Herald.

Remember that *you cannot reject a name or a device*. If, in spite of all your arguments, a person insists on submitting his name or device as is, then you *must* allow them to send it on to the Kingdom Submissions Herald. At worst, it will be returned a couple of months later with an explanation confirming your opinion, and you can then work with the submitter in fixing the problems.

If a submission is returned, and you don't understand the reasons, ask your regional herald for help.

Be Available

It does no good for your group to have a pursuivant that never attends meetings and is hard to find. Attend local meetings and events as often as possible. Bring submission forms and heraldry books. Wear a herald's baldric or tabard at events so that you can be found.

Keep Records

You must keep proper records and files of everything pertaining to your office, including copies of all reports that you write and all letters that you receive from other heralds. Keep copies of all device and name submissions, whether they have been registered or returned or are still in progress.

Your Final Responsibility

Although there are frequent reminders of an officer's first responsibility, little is said about the *final* responsibility. Someday you will cease to be the pursuivant for your group. Maybe you'll get "promoted" to regional herald, maybe you'll move away, maybe you'll become the new seneschal, or maybe you'll just feel the need for a rest.

When that time comes, you still have one final duty: to find a suitable replacement. A herald/pursuivant is a mandatory position (except for Cantons) and must be filled in order for a group to function officially.

Ideally, you will have had at least one deputy whom you have trained for the duties, who is willing to take over as the branch pursuivant. If not, you'll have to look for volunteers who are willing to learn, and give them whatever training and assistance you can. Make sure your replacement is acceptable to the members of your group — a pursuivant that everybody hates isn't going to get much cooperation.

When you do have a replacement chosen, write a letter to your regional herald and the Polaris Herald to let them know who your replacement is, including his SCA name, mundane name, address, and phone number and make sure your replacement sends a letter too.

Finally, remember to turn over all your records to the new pursuivant, along with any reference books, tabards, et cetera, that belong to the group. They're his responsibility now, and he'll need them in order to do his job properly.

Writing Reports

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Like any bureaucracy, the Society requires paperwork to keep it functioning. All heralds and pursuivants must write regular reports to keep their regional and kingdom superiors informed as to their activities. Missing a report deadline can cause you and your group to be suspended, and your group will not be allowed to hold any events until the suspension is removed. Missing reports can also delay or prevent your group from being elevated from incipient to full status, or from shire to barony. It is vital that your report is received by your regional herald **on or before** the due date. Don't wait until the end of the month—it will already be late. You should email or mail your report to arrive before the due date. If using regular mail, you should mail it at least four weekdays before the end of the month. It might take less than that to be delivered, but why take chances? If your report must be mailed from the U.S. to Canada or vice versa, you must allow more time for delivery—at least a full week—because there are two separate postal bureaucracies involved. Check the postage, too; it costs more to mail a letter to another country. Ask the post office how much postage you need. Addresses can change. The current addresses of all Kingdom and regional officers are listed in *The Northwatch*—check the latest issue before you mail your report. You should also check the latest letter from your regional herald, in case he's told you about a change of address that isn't listed in *The Northwatch* yet.

When and Who?

Quarterly Reports are due at the end of every third month (March 31st, June 30th, September 30th), and must be sent by all Branch Pursuivants to the appropriate regional herald. At the time of this writing, the regions are:

East: Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Central: Minnesota and Ontario

West: Manitoba and the Dakotas

Pursuivants of incipient groups must also send copies of their quarterly reports to the Polaris Herald. (Incipient groups are identified as such in the “Seneschallorum” listing in the back of *The Northwatch*.)

Domesday Reports are due at the end of the calendar year (December 31st), and must be sent by all pursuivants (group and at-large) to the regional herald and the Polaris Herald. Report everything that's happened during the entire year, including everything that was mentioned in your quarterly reports. Remember to include a complete Order of Precedence for your group (see below).

Court Reports are required whenever you have been the herald in charge of a Royal Court including regency courts. Court reports must be written and mailed or emailed as soon as possible after the event. Copies should also be saved and included with your next regular report.

You should also give copies of your reports to your seneschal, so that he can report on the overall status of the group; courtesy copies to your other fellow officers is also recommended.

As mentioned above, mail your report early so that it arrives **before** the due date. If you don't have a computer and printer, you'll have to allow extra time to make enough photocopies for everyone, including a copy for your own records. The Polaris Herald will accept email reports.

If you know that you will be busy or away on vacation when your report is due, then send it early. A report that's two weeks early is a lot better than one that's one week late, and will keep your group from being suspended. If you are going to be gone for more than a few weeks, make sure you leave a deputy to handle your duties and write reports while you're gone; remember to give your deputy notes about what's been happening so that he can include it all in the next report — or better yet, write the first part of the report for him.

What to Report?

First of all, your report doesn't do much good if your superior can't remember what group you're from. Every letter and report that you write should contain certain vital information:

- who you are and the group for which you're the pursuivant; for example, “Lord John of Doe, Group name Pursuivant.” If you're a Pursuivant-at-Large, then mention that instead of the group name.

- your mundane name, full mailing address, phone number and area code.
- your SCA membership number
- the date you wrote the letter, including the mundane year (e.g., “Sept. 14, 2004”); the Society year is optional.

It’s also nice to have page numbers, the date, and your name or title at the top of each page, in case your superiors’ records get messed up. If you’re using a word processor, you can do these automatically using page headers. Quarterly and Domesday report forms can be found on the Northshield Herald’s page at <http://www.Northshield.org/heraldry> or ask your Regional or the Polaris Herald. In the end, however, the form and format are not important; the content is. An incomplete report on the ‘correct’ form might still be counted the same as not having reported at all!

As for what you must report, you should include the following information:

- Name and Device submissions. What submissions have you received during this reporting period, which ones have been sent to the Compass (Submissions) Herald, and when? Have you heard of any submissions being accepted or returned by the Compass Herald or Laurel Sovereign of Arms? Include full names and approximate dates.
- Any awards received by members of your group; who, what, when, where, why, and from whom.
- Did you help do heraldic stuff at any out-of-town events? Did anyone help you at a local event? Who? Doing what?
- Anything else that has been happening heraldically in your group. Did you give any talks? Run a consultation table at an event? Buy or receive any new heraldic references, rules, armorial updates, etc.?
- Questions you’d like answered. If there’s anything you’re not sure about, anything you’d like to know, or anything you need help with, just ask.
- An “Order of Precedence” must be included with the Domesday Report. This is a membership roster for your group that lists all the awards ever received by each person. The preferred method is to list everyone alphabetically by first SCA name, with the names and dates of the awards listed after each name, higher-ranking awards first. You don’t have to bother listing people who haven’t received awards or members who have moved out of your group.

For quarterly reports, report everything since the last quarterly or Domesday report, even if you already mentioned it in a separate letter. For example, if you wrote your last report on March 23rd, and it’s now June 15th, report everything that happened between those two dates. Likewise, the Domesday report should cover everything that happened during the entire year, including everything from your quarterly reports.

If you are not using forms, try to organize your report into sections with subheadings. This makes it a lot easier for your superiors to find the information they’re looking for, especially if they’re reading it for the second or third time to find something they thought you mentioned or asked. It **really** helps to put all of your questions together in a separate section — if you hide a question in the middle of a paragraph it’s easy to miss, but the heading “Questions” is sure to be noticed — and when your regional herald notices it, he’s much more likely to answer your questions.

Plan Ahead

Don’t wait until report time before you start working on your report. It’s a lot easier to write your report if you’ve already got everything written down. Take a notebook and pen with you to all events and group meetings so that you can jot down notes about what’s happened. You can also write down any questions you want to ask, devices or names that people are working on, and take notes during phone calls. At report time, you just have to copy the information from your notebook, reorganizing it so it makes more sense.

If you have a computer, it’s even easier. You can keep your report on a computer disk and update it whenever you have anything to add. When it’s report time, all that remains is for you to email it or print out a few copies of the report and mail it. As soon as it’s in the mail, create a new file for the **next** report.

Keep Copies

Remember to keep copies of all your reports. One of your duties is to keep adequate records of everything you do as a pursuivant, including reports, letters, etc., and to turn over those records to your successor when you eventually

step down as the branch pursuivant. This enables your successor to check what submissions have been submitted, what awards have been received, and so on.

Pursuivants and Money

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As a group herald/pursuivant you should NOT accept money. All submissions, along with fees, should be sent directly to the Compass (submissions) Herald. Likewise, consultation tables should not accept money or submissions. Once a client has the design and/or information they require, they are responsible for their submission.

Buying Heraldry Books

It is hard to help people with submissions if you don't have any reference books. So how do you pay for these books? Well, you can either pay for them yourself or ask the group to pay for them. If you buy a book with your own money, then it's yours to keep (unless you decide to donate it to the group [think tax deduction]). If the group buys a book, it belongs to the group and must be added to the exchequer's list of group property.

The Northshield Pursuivants Handbook should be at the very top of the list of books to buy. The handbook explains the role of a pursuivant and will be helpful in the various aspects of your duties; It is important that a new pursuivant have a copy as soon as possible after he takes the job. The best way to ensure this is to make sure that the group itself owns a copy. Even if you have already bought one for yourself, you should talk your group into buying a copy—or you can donate a copy to the group. Your future replacement will thank you.

What if neither you nor your group has enough money to pay for books? Well, you can try a number of fund-raising techniques. Pass the hat at a meeting. Set out a donations box at an event, with a sign explaining what the money is for. Hold a raffle at a meeting or event to raise money for heraldry books (get people to donate the raffle prizes). However you do your fund-raising, make sure that the group agrees to it in advance. Furthermore, the monies raised have to be given to the exchequer, who will then write a check for any books that the group has agreed to purchase.

Group Property

Nearly all of the stuff that you collect as a pursuivant is the property of your group (shire, barony, whatever): books that were paid for out of the group's bank account, supplies that were donated by other people, copies of your reports and submissions you've processed, letters that were sent to you by other heralds, a herald's tabard that someone donated to the group. If it has anything to do with your job as a pursuivant, and if you didn't make it or pay for it yourself, then it belongs to the group. (Gifts can be a tricky matter — make sure you know whether it's being given to you as a personal gift or as a donation to the group.)

The group cannot buy a personal gift for you using the group's money. That would violate the mundane nonprofit laws under which the Society operates. They can only buy stuff for the group itself, or stuff to be donated to another group (or to the kingdom). If the group buys a heraldry book, they can keep it as group property and let you use it while you are the pursuivant, or they can raffle it off, or they can use it as a contest prize, but they cannot just give it to an individual as a gift.

The exchequer has to keep track of everything that the group owns—at least, anything that might have a monetary value like books or tabards. It is a good idea for you to keep a list of anything you have that belongs to the group, and give a copy to the exchequer once a year at Domesday Report time.

Someday you will stop being the group's pursuivant. You may move away, retire, or get “promoted.” When it happens, gather everything you have that belongs to the group and give it to the new pursuivant. It's his responsibility now. It wouldn't hurt to make a list of everything you're turning over, and have the new pursuivant check it and sign it to confirm that he received everything on the list. Then give a copy of the signed list to the exchequer, so that he can check it against his records and verify that you've turned over everything that belongs to the group.

Field and Tournament Heraldry

Garlanda de Stanas

Field heraldry mirrors the diplomatic and communicative parts of the medieval herald. Historical heralds might negotiate peace, call fighters to war, or publicize information. Correspondingly, SCA field heralds cry court, do tourney work and announce courses at feast. Any announcement at a Society function is the job of the field herald. Specifically, field heraldry is non-mechanically aided, oral communication from an official appointed by the College of Heralds. It encompasses general announcements, the Litany and Call to Arms of tourney work, feast heraldry and court. The coordination of field heraldry at an event should properly be the responsibility of the pursuivant of the shire hosting the event. He should make sure that there are enough heralds to serve the needs of the event, and that they know how to do the job. He tells each volunteer what to do and when to do it, and provides any physical item the herald may need to do the job. Getting enough staff to cover an event is the first job of the host herald. The average event requires one herald for feast, one herald for court, and at least two heralds for announcements (one for day and one for evening). If there is a tourney, then a good rule of thumb is an additional one herald for each ten fighters. If the site is spread out geographically, the coordinator will need additional heralds for announcements. Major kingdom events, such as Coronation or Crown Tourney, may use up to two-dozen heralds.

Where is the host herald to find them all? I'm glad you asked.

In large shires, the host herald may adopt several "cornets of the day." These individuals volunteer to field herald during the event, and are deputized for that event. The host herald should train them ahead of time in what to do and how to do it, perhaps at a mini-event at a shire meeting or fighting practice. The cornets of the day are usually given the simpler jobs of general announcements or tourney work. Pursuivants of small shires can send letters to the heralds of surrounding shires asking for assistance. Most heralds are willing to donate an hour or two, particularly if asked ahead of time. Just be sure to return the favor and help at their events—it's only fair. The third and least effective option is to wait to see who shows up and recruit them. The usual result is too few heralds for too many jobs. Overworked heralds burn out their voices and their enthusiasm: remember that this is a volunteer organization and treat your assistants accordingly.

Perhaps the best thing the host herald can do is to remember to say thank you. A little appreciation makes a volunteer more likely to work again next time. If you notice someone volunteering again and again, perhaps he should become a full herald. Make him your deputy! Warranted pursuivants who volunteer should be listed in the host herald's quarterly report so the College of Heralds can recognize their service.

The first thing you need for field heraldry is to look like a herald so that people will know that your announcements are official. The herald's badge is Vert, two straight trumpets in saltire Or. Most heralds wear a simple green tabard with crossed gold horns appliquéd to it. More complex tabards may have the arms of the shire on it and the herald's badge on the sleeves. These tabards should be made reversible to a plain herald's tabard for when the pursuivant is heralding outside of his home shire. For women, a sideless surcoat can look very spiffy. Another option is a baldric. The baldric is especially popular in kingdoms with hotter climates because it is cooler to wear. It may be worn folded over the belt when off duty. Many pursuivants wear medallions, but these aren't really enough identification when on duty. Anyone displaying our badge—whether on a medallion or baldric—is saying that he is willing to go on duty at any time. If you don't want to work, don't show the insignia. The exception to this is the Polaris Herald, who is stuck between the Crown and a hard place.

The herald who is on duty should behave with the dignity of the office. Shopping, eating and fighting are off duty activities. As a herald, you represent the Crown. Please be an example of courtesy. The medieval herald was supposed to be neutral and immune to attack. As a sign of this, the SCA herald bears no weapons: Swords, battle-axes, bows, period fire arms, etc. are improper accessories to the well-dressed herald. Small daggers, if sheathed and peace bonded, are not considered weapons but rather tools and as such are acceptable.

So now you look like a herald. Yet feeling good is even more important than looking good. If you are sick, particularly if you have a sore throat, do not field herald! You will make yourself sicker while doing a poor job. Even if healthy, it is wise to prepare yourself. Some heralds cry better after eating; some cry better when hungry. If you need food, be sure it is available. All heralds should drink fluids. A dry throat not only produces poor sound, it produces painful sound. If you will be working outside, prepare for the environment. Have a hat and sunscreen for those hot July tourneys, and wear comfortable clothing. Most periods of clothing are okay to herald in. Only those that prevent the expansion of the lungs, like Tudor bodices and cotehardies, are a problem. You will probably be on your feet a lot, so good shoes are the final requirement.

Once you look like a herald and feel like a herald, you have to begin to sound like a herald. Some individuals have naturally booming voices. Through practice and proper technique, however, any voice can become a good field heraldry voice. Learning to use what you have is what counts.

Where the field herald stands when he speaks affects how well he is heard. Voices bounce. Thus the field herald has to position in a room so as to bounce his voice across the most people. Most field heraldry during the day takes place around a tourney field, so let's look at the possibilities (figure 1).

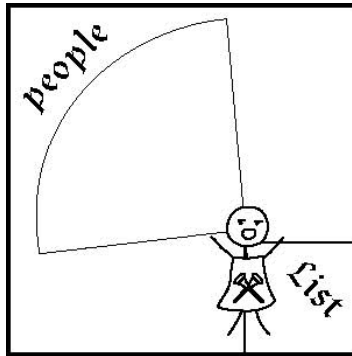


Figure 1a

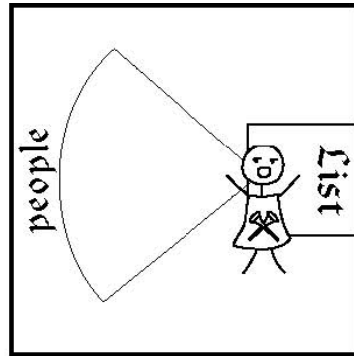


Figure 1b

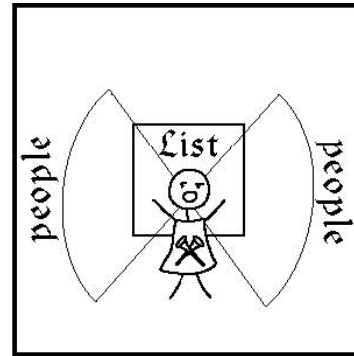


Figure 1c

In terms of sound, arrangement A will be the best for the herald. By standing with your back to corner 1, facing corner 2, your voice will cover most people. In B, face the opposite wall before you cry. The people in the corners may not hear you, but you still cover the majority. Arrangement C is the worst possible one for the field herald. No single cry will cover everyone. Therefore, you must cry twice, one each in opposite directions. The challenge to indoor heraldry is to cry over the noise of the populace. Their noise will be filling the same space your cry must fill. Low ceilings and bunker-style architecture make it worse.

Indoor field heraldry, for all its complexity, is not as challenging as outdoor field heraldry. The pursuivant crying outdoors fights terrain and environment. Yet they too can be friend instead of foe, if used correctly. No matter how loud you are, you cannot force the populace to listen to you. What you can do is use tricks to stand out from the crowd—literally! Stand on the highest point you can find. Stand on a hill, a picnic table, even just a small mound of dirt: if you are taller than everyone else, your audience can see where all that sound is coming from, and that it is directed towards them. If directed towards them, they must need to hear it, right? So they pay attention. Having your audience look up to you also gives you an illusion of authority, so that they are more likely to be quiet when you cry. Standing on the slope of a hill has a second advantage—the hill forms a backdrop to your voice. Hills serve the same function walls do inside a building. They channel the audience into groups (in the valleys) and they form barriers for sound to bounce off. It is easier to cry in a hilly area than a flat plain. The Pennsic Field Battle is the classic herald's nightmare. With no architecture to bounce and concentrate your sound it just drifts away. Not only is your sound dispersed, so is your audience. The herald in a meadow must cover a larger area with less sound. Because of this, heraldry in the flatlands requires significantly more effort.

Wind and weather may conspire against the field herald, too. A heavy breeze is difficult to cry over. It is simply too pervasive. Chilly weather is hard on the throat. Hot weather is dehydrating. And in rainy weather, you sink into the list field. I once sank up to my ankles in mud, and the marshals had to lift me out by my elbows. All in all, heralding inside produces the most consistent results.

Despite crowds, terrain and weather, good sound production is possible. It begins with how you breathe. Breathing for field heraldry is similar to breathing for singing. In singing, you inflate your lower lungs first. To check yourself, place your hand on your abdomen above your belly button and take a deep breath. If your hand is pushed out gently at the beginning of the breath, you are doing it right. To herald, take a deep breath and let it out. Take a second breath and begin your cry. The first breath empties out your lungs. The second gives you enough good air to cry a long phrase without getting light-headed. You want to try to exhale evenly to keep from sounding breathy and yet have enough air to finish your sentence. Occasionally you may be given a long list of names or information to cry all at once. Using a short, deep breath between each item forms a kind of controlled hyperventilation that gives you enough breath support to herald and enough oxygen not to pass out. If you are outside, make sure that you stand with your back to the wind and facing the audience.

Even if your audience can hear you, understanding what you said may be difficult for them. Talking herald-speak is sort of like playing Wheel of Fortune. Contestants try to guess phrases by guessing letters to spell it out. The herald's audience tries to guess what he said by putting together the sounds they heard to assemble words. In both Wheel of Fortune and field heraldry, you will hit the jackpot if you concentrate on your consonants. Consonants define the sound we hear, and if they are indistinct, the audience is left guessing. Most heralds say the inner consonants well, but mumble the beginning and ending consonants. As an example, look at the phrase "Feast tickets may be picked up at the troll." If the consonants are indistinct, the audience will hear "feas ickih ay be ick u ah du tro." Another problem in oral heraldry is word spacing. A short pause between words and a longer pause between sentences breaks up the sounds so the audience can assemble them into words. By leaving a pause between each word, the sound is heard as a clump (one word) instead of a gargle of nonsense. Without distinct consonants and clear pauses, our phrase becomes "Feasickeh aybeeickuh ahduhthro." The herald may know what he said, but if the audience doesn't he failed.

Another common problem is the use of accents. Accents can be fun, but make field heraldry difficult to distinguish. If you don't speak that way outside of the SCA, don't speak that way while crying.

Before starting to speak, we must know exactly what we want to say. Either "Good Gentles," "My Lords and Ladies," or "Oyez" preface every cry. Less formal announcements, or those that need to be heard by only a few people, are prefaced with the less formal phrases. These informal openers are appropriate for a personal announcement such as someone has lost his car keys or the Litany. "Oyez" is reserved for announcements that everyone needs to hear, that are ceremonial, and that signal an important event. It is appropriate for the Call to Arms, the start of court, and the announcement of a course at feast.

Unfortunately, "oyez" has become overused and even abused. In some areas, it has become equivalent to "shut up" and is spoken with the same courtesy. If a herald does not receive instant silence when he cries "oyez," frequently several members of the audience will belt it out until there is an overwhelming mass of sound. No one can understand what is being said, and everyone becomes irritated. Yet we have to remember that they are only trying to help. Speak to them privately and thank them for their willingness to help. Then explain that if everyone cries "oyez," the audience can't hear the announcement, so it would be better if they didn't do it. If they insist on it, try to teach them when it is appropriate by recruiting them as a cornet. After all, we can't beat them, so we might as well join them up.

Because the herald is the communication system for the SCA, the populace expects us to know everything. Therefore, when you make an announcement, make sure you know everything about it. Use the Five W's and H (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How) as your guides to getting all the details. You may need to question your informant extensively to be sure you know exactly what they want you to say. Be aware that what they tell you to say may not be what they mean you to say. It is the field herald's responsibility to be accurate.

The Herald's Role in Tournaments

The job of the tournament herald is one of the most complex and intricate in the SCA. Its combination of communicative, ceremonial and administrative duties touches the populace directly and in a very personal way. Other than feast or court, more people take part in a tournament than in any other activity at an event. Unlike feast or court, the participants relate to each other in a one-on-one fashion, and it is the herald who guides their interactions. A good herald can make a tournament run smoother and be more enjoyable for everyone involved.

Tournaments are controlled by the day's marshal-in-charge: He has the final say on all decisions, but usually concentrates on the combat itself. The Listmistress (or Listmaster) organizes the participants into a progression of fights until a winner is selected. She also provides the herald with most of the information that will be cried to the populace. The herald's job is threefold: we tell the fighters who will be fighting and when; we remind them of the philosophies behind fighting; and we serve as an administrative assistant to the Listmistress and a liaison to the marshal.

Tournament Structure

Since the Listmistress is the person who tells us what and when to cry, if she gets bogged down we won't have anything to do. Therefore, it is to our advantage to help her in any way we can. To do this, however, we have to understand just what she does.

Prior to the beginning of an event, the person selected to be the Listmistress will find out what sort of tournament she will be running, usually from the autocrat or the marshal. Most tourneys in Northshield are a variation on the

standard double elimination tree. There are other forms of course, such as the “bear pit” or the “Warlord”, and they have different heraldic requirements. But if you understand the double elimination tree, you will have a good base to build from. For further information on how to run other types of tourneys, contact the Crown Listmistress or a local Listmistress in your area. Be aware that this is just one way to do things, and I have chosen it because it is one of the simplest and most straightforward—there are regional variations. Always sit down with your Listmistress before the tournament and find out how she wants things run. Remember that what you don’t know will goof you up.

The Listmistress will make sure that she has all the equipment she requires when she arrives on-site. At minimum, she needs paper and pens, a pack of 3" x 5" cards and a table and chair. Tape, list tree forms and a few assistants will make her life even easier. The list table needs to be close to the opening of the list with a clear view of it. If the tourney is outside, it should be shaded as best as possible, with a nearby source of water.

The Listmistress will initially arrange the tournament by putting out a sign-up sheet for the fighters. As each fighter signs up, she will check his/her authorization card to ensure that it is both complete and current. If the fighter does not have his card with him, he will not be permitted to fight. The fighter will also fill out a 3" x 5" card that will later be used by the herald during the call to arms. These cards should be filled out clearly with the fighter’s name as he wants himself to be announced—“Finn Rhydderi Herjolfsson” versus “Finn,” for example. Before sign-up closes, the Listmistress will direct the herald to announce that the list will be closing, and how long before it does. No one else will be able to sign up after this time.

Now the Listmistress can begin to draw up the tree. Most tourneys are fought using 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128 openings. If more than one but less than another of these amounts have signed up to fight that day, enough “ghost fighters” (called “byes”) will be added to bring the total up to the next level: i.e., if 27 people have signed up to fight then there will have to be 5 byes. Byes are placed on the tree first to ensure that they will be well spaced. They have to be distributed evenly throughout the list tree because the fighter paired with a bye will be automatically advanced to the next round (and may not even have to fight in the bye-round, although many times he will, since this means that the combatant will then have fought just as many bouts as fighters who didn’t have a bye—it keeps things even. Frequently, the Crown, the Chivalry or someone who did not manage to sign up in time to get into the tourney will volunteer to fight byes.) After the byes have been placed, it is time to draw the tree. Every Listmistress has her own way of drawing the tree to ensure that the order of participants is truly random. One of the easiest ways is to shuffle the herald cards since every fighter will have filled one out. After they have been shuffled, the Listmistress can take each card and fill in the name in the next open spot on the tree. Using the herald cards to fill the tree also means that the cards will be in the same order as the tree, so they will be ready to go when the tree is full.

The Listmistress’s next job starts when the first bout ends. The two combatants will report the results of the fight to her and she will advance the winner to the next level of the “winners’ tree” and put the loser into the “losers’ tree.” The herald cards for each will also be separated into two piles. The second and subsequent rounds are run almost exactly as the first; however after the first round any fighter on the losers’ tree who loses again will be eliminated from the tourney and their cards will then find their way into the garbage. But even though the second and subsequent rounds are run the same as the first round, they can still become quite complex—and sometimes confusing! Winners advance up the winners’ tree; losers from the winners’ tree must be placed into the losers’ bracket. In Figure 2, Sven, Jamie, Isolde and Tristan won the first round and advanced into the winners’ bracket. In the second round, Isolde beat Jamie, so she continues to advance. Since Jamie lost, he is switched into the losers’ bracket and has to fight Gerta (who lost in the first round). Gerta beats Jamie, Tristan, and Sven (who lost his third-round bout against Isolde) in order to get to the finals. Note that the losers’ finalist will have fought four or five times to the winner’s three times, which means that climbing the losers’ bracket is a lot more work.

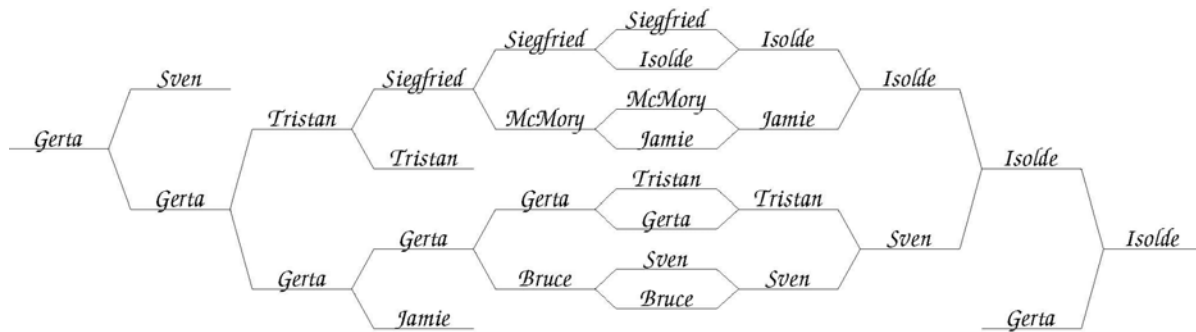


Figure 2

Eventually the tree is reduced to two finalists. In the case of our tree, Gerta has lost once and Isolde hasn't lost at all. In the traditional double elimination tourney, Gerta would have to beat Isolde twice in order to win the tourney whereas Isolde would only have to beat Gerta once. Sometimes the finalist from the winners bracket will offer a special kind of point of honor. He can "forgive" the losers tree finalist his one loss, and state that the tournament will be won by whoever wins just one bout; another often-used alternative is that the final round consists of three bouts and the winner would have to win two of those bouts.

When the tournament is over, the Listmistress will check her paperwork to be sure that it is complete. She will then sign it and give it to the marshal-in-charge, and her job is done for the day. The marshal-in-charge, in turn, has to send copies of the report to the Earl Marshal or his designate.

The Call to Arms and the Litany

The Call-to-arms is the first thing that most heralds will cry during a tournament. The Listmistress will give the herald the first three sets of herald cards. The herald then enters the list, faces the majority of the fighters and gives the cry. It is vital that all fighters hear the Call to Arms since this is usually their only warning that they are about to fight. They use this time to put on the rest of their armor and to begin to focus on their upcoming bout. If a fighter doesn't hear the Call, he will probably not be ready when his turn comes, and this will delay the tourney while everyone waits for him to finish preparations.

The Call consists of three phrases, and before the first bout in our tourney example, it would be:

"Will Siegfried and Isolde report to the List?";

"MacMory and Jamie should be arming themselves"; and

"Tristan and Gerta should be preparing to arm."

Additional phrases may be added, such as the fact that a bout is a bye fight, that it is the last fight in a round, or that there will be a short break after the current fight. This is also the time to add announcements of interest to the general populace. After finishing the Call, the herald waits in the list for the two fighters to enter.

After both fighters have entered the list, the herald cries the Litany, which also consists of three phrases:

"Salute the Crown of Northshield?";

"Salute the gentle who inspires you this day"; and

"Salute your honorable and worthy opponent."

While the exact words you use may vary, the order is always the same. Each of these salutations is a bow to some of the ideals of the Middle Ages: The salute to the Crown acknowledges a society that is led by the King and Queen. This is not necessarily a gesture of fealty; rather it is an acknowledgment of the hospitality of the Crown. Since the use of weapons in a tournament takes place on royal lands and by royal leave, it is only courteous to thank the Crown for the privilege of testing one's prowess. This is why individuals from other Kingdoms as well as members of groups like the Dark Horde are expected to salute our Monarchs.

The herald should gesture in the direction of the Crown when calling the royal salute. If the Crown is present, the fighters should bow either in the direction of the Sanctum or, if the King and/or Queen is in sight, toward the Royal Presence. If no royalty is at the event, the fighters may salute a banner bearing the kingdom badge; or in the

direction of the Monarchs' home group(s), or as the herald indicates.

Saluting one's inspiration is an acknowledgment of Courtly Love, one of the guiding principles of the High Middle Ages. It means the fighter competes not just for himself but also for the glory of someone he cares about. The belief that we fight not just for personal honor but for the honor of someone else is one of the things that makes SCA fighting something more than pretending to kill one's friends. While in some circumstances the Litany may be suspended, any fighter may request it for this very reason. The salute to one's opponent is a gesture of good sportsmanship and is a public acknowledgment that the fighters will follow the honor system in judging blows and deciding the bout's victor.

The Litany is cried just before the bout starts. This is often the time when the fighters are focusing their concentration so that they may fight well. It also signals to the audience and the marshals that combat is about to begin. The herald should wait until both fighters are in the list before beginning the Litany. In an ideal situation, the marshal will indicate with a nod that both fighters are ready to go, so that the heralds can give the Litany at the appropriate time. If no signal is given, wait until the fighters have entered the list and stand facing each other.

After crying the Litany, the herald should tell the fighters to give heed to the marshals and take three steps backward, then turn and leave the list area. This tells the audience that the ceremonial parts are done, and gets the herald out of weapons range. The herald then returns to the Listmistress' table. Sometimes the Listmistress will ask the herald to wait until the end of the fight and place the winner's and loser's card onto the respective piles. If the Listmistress is running a straight tree without interchanges, the cards will then be set up for the next round; however different Listmistresses manage the cards in a different way and you must check with her to find out what she prefers. At this point, the herald will get the next set of cards and be ready to once again give the Call to Arms and Litany.

Overall these vocalizations are easy enough, but they are really only half of a good herald's job. In most tourneys, the Listmistress never leaves her table and the marshals never leave the list. Yet the herald is constantly running back and forth between the two. Thus, the field herald is in a unique position to discover problems and help fix them before they become major ones. For example, the Listmistress must know who won each bout to advance the tree. The fighters are supposed to report to her to tell her this, but frequently they forget or get delayed by other things and do not report. Then the tournament grinds to a halt. An alert herald will have watched the fight and may know who won. At worst, she can go to a marshal and ask who won or lost and then tell the Listmistress. Another frequent problem is a delay caused by broken or missing pieces of armor or weapons. The herald is inherently more mobile than the Listmistress or the marshal, so she can much more easily grab a roll of duct tape or a gauntlet and hand it to the fighter. This is much quicker than if the fighter has to leave the list to get it himself. It also enables the fighter to keep his concentration on his fighting and not his armor.

A really alert field herald can also be aware of ill feelings and act to defuse them. If the Listmistress is working on a problem with the tourney tree, she may be delayed in other aspects of the list. Neither the marshal nor the fighters may be very patient—they are there to fight and they want to get on with it. If the herald tells the marshal that there will be a short delay while the Listmistress fixes a problem, the marshal can insert a short filler to distract the fighters and give the Listmistress the time she needs to fix things. The fighters are happy (because something is happening, and they aren't just waiting around), the marshals are happy (because they know what is going on and can do something about it), the Listmistress is happy (because she has time to fix things and no one is getting mad at her for "screwing around"), and the herald is happy (because problems are getting fixed and no one is mad at anyone else). As a herald, I have fixed armor, dressed fighters, borrowed weapons, set up list poles, constabed, fetched water, arranged shade, untangled list trees, figured out who won and lost, created the proper forms from scratch when the real ones weren't available, and subbed for the Listmistress while she ran to the bathroom. The field herald can help in other ways, too. She can be prepared to direct the populace to a surgeon, the troll, a source of water, etc. Because the herald's job is to communicate information, the populace frequently expects us to know all the answers to their questions. You can save yourself a lot of frustration by getting this information ahead of time. It is easier to answer the questions than to say "I don't know—go ask the autocrat." Additionally, it's good public relations for the College of Heraldry. In fact, there is really only one thing a herald may not do: No one who is fighting or being fought for in Crown Tournament or Coronet tournaments may have anything to do with the running or heralding of the list. This is to prevent accusations of a rigged list should you actually end up as the heir or consort.