

Award Suggestions: Encourage members to include information about how a member prefers to receive recognition/awards when submitting a recommendation. This can include formal court presentation, field awards, absentee awards, etc. Local delivery of an award previously read into court can help to boost morale, especially in small/remote groups that don't get to travel much.

Garb Suggestions: Encourage members to keep their commentary on garb constructive. We only require an attempt at period-appropriate garb, and newcomers will often catch on that their outfit doesn't really fit in with the more seasoned examples around them and will make suitable adjustments when able, so critique from other members may be unnecessary. Negative or unhelpful criticism can damage relationships and retention; try to focus on the positives and give encouraging, constructive feedback. It's okay to acknowledge that we've all been beginners, and many of us have had some pretty questionable garb, over the years. We can help others grow through that without being mean.

Focus area: Chatelaine Support

Key points:

- Chatelaine and newcomer resources are available online, handout is also available
- Everyone can learn to be welcoming
- Be aware of the differences between encouragement and pressure
- Not everyone is well-suited to speaking with newcomers, even though they might be extroverted; some people need constructive feedback and appropriate constraints to keep them on topic and appropriate with new contacts
- Explain jargon without being asked what it means. Volunteer that information up front, to avoid confusion and misunderstanding or a feeling of ingroup/outgroup alienation.
- People are generally less self-conscious when they are helping with a task. If you have someone who is struggling to find their place, give them something appropriate to do while they build contacts and experience.
- If you have members who are struggling with burnout, send newcomers to them to request awesome stories. Having an opportunity to share a great story about a delightful experience can reinvigorate a jaded member and remind them of the fun reasons to stay involved.
- Let people know that they are important! Tell them why you enjoy their presence and participation! If someone has been gone for a while, welcome them back without making them feel guilty. Shame kills participation.
- When greeting a newcomer and introducing them to other members, STAY FOR THE CONVERSATION. This will help ease the pressure on the newcomer and will facilitate connection. You might even learn something new that wouldn't have otherwise come up in your normal interactions with that member.
- Make your gatherings and introductions fun and interesting. This is a hobby; we are here to have fun. Within their first two gatherings, a newcomer should make a thing. They should be actively learning new skills and walking away with something they can be proud of.
- If a newcomer expresses interest in a lofty or complicated goal, ask them what that means to them. Help them understand what drives their interest, and they will be able to think more constructively about developing a plan to achieve that level of participation.