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Local Chatelaine’s Job Description

The Chatelaine's primary job within the SCA is to welcome newcomers to our Current Middle Ages and to help them become familiar with our customs and traditions. You are often one of the first contacts that a new member makes and so it is important that you be as welcoming and helpful as possible.

Recruit and Retain Newcomers

- Be proactive about seeking out new members
- Offer to help new members find the information they need to make the SCA an enjoyable experience
- Inform new members about the activities available in the area, introduce them to local members, especially guild heads and officers, and help them borrow or acquire appropriate gear.
- Work with established members of the local SCA community to ensure that newcomers are welcomed and included in the group.

Reference: "Talking to Newcomers" in the Chatelaine Training Manual

Demos

Depending on the structure of your local group, you may also be responsible for other functions involving newcomers. If your group does not have a demo coordinator, you may be responsible for organizing and promoting demos. Even if your group does have a demo coordinator to deal with the logistical details of a demo, you may still be responsible for providing the appropriate materials for interested newcomers.

Reference: [SCA Demo Policy](#)

Reference: [Demo Materials on the Web](#)

Reference: [SCA Media Relations and External Relations Policy](#) and Northshield Media Relations Deputy

Many groups maintain a collection of garb that is available for newcomers to borrow and use until they get their own. This collection is often called the "loaner garb" or "gold key." Some

groups assign the maintenance of the garb to a separate officer (sometimes called the Gold Key), but often this is also the responsibility of the Chatelaine.

Reference: "Demos" and "Gold Key" in the Chatelaine Training Manual.

Deputies

The job of Chatelaine can be a big one! If you are feeling overwhelmed in your position, you may want to consider taking deputies to assist you. This is a great way for someone who is not quite ready to take on an office of their own to learn about being an officer in the SCA.

- Deputies can be either assigned to a specific function (like being the Gold Key or coordinating school demos), or they can be general helpers who assist you when there are too many newcomers to effectively handle on your own at one time.
- Consider sending thank you notes to those people who are especially helpful – it makes them feel appreciated and much more likely to be willing to help you in the future!

Reporting Structure

Local Group

In the SCA, the Chatelaine is a deputy of the local Seneschal. Like the Seneschal, the Chatelaine serves as a bridge between the modern world and the Current Middle Ages. Work with your local Seneschal to get approval for Chatelaine activities like new handouts, proposed demos, and media attention.

You may also be responsible to a local governing body (such as a curia or general meeting) or to the local Baron and Baroness if you are a Chatelaine in a Barony.

Kingdom Level

On the Kingdom level, you are responsible to the Kingdom Chatelaine, who is in turn a deputy to the Kingdom Seneschal.

Requirements

-
- You must file a report on your local activities as Chatelaine four times each year. For details, see the “Reporting” section in the Chatelaine Training Manual.
 - As an officer, you are expected to be a paid member of the SCA. This membership can be maintained at any level as long as you have access to the Northwatch.
 - Review the Northshield Laws, as all officers are responsible for upholding the laws and policies of the Society and Kingdom.

Reference: <http://northshield.org/Resources/PDF/KingdomOfNorthshieldLaws.pdf>

The responsibilities of a Chatelaine vary somewhat from group to group, but the job description above covers the basic expectations of the office. Check with the previous Chatelaine or other local officers if you have any questions or concerns about the Chatelaine’s role in your group.

Kingdom Chatelaine’s Job Description

Just as you have certain responsibilities to your local group and to the Kingdom, the Kingdom Chatelaine has certain obligations to all the local Chatelaines.

The Chatelain(e) is a Lesser Officer to the Seneschal and is responsible for the introduction and education of prospective and new members in the culture, customs, and courtesies of the Society¹.

Newcomer Recruiting/Retention

The Kingdom Chatelaine receives all newcomer requests submitted on www.northshield.org > About > [Request Information](#). If the request is from someone in your group’s lands, the Kingdom Chatelaine will send an introductory email to the local Chatelaine and Seneschal. Please respond to this introductory email within X days if possible.

Resource for Local Chatelaines

The Kingdom Chatelaine is a resource for materials and information.

- You can request educational materials such as this handbook, sample publicity items, newcomer handouts and other publications from the Kingdom Chatelaine.

¹ Northshield Kingdom Law

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- If you develop new materials you are willing to share with other Northshield Chatelaines, please submit them!
 - Likewise, you can share good ideas and success stories that can then be passed along to the other Chatelaines of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom Chatelaine can also answer questions about your position or help you problem solve if any issues arise that you are not comfortable handling personally. If needed, the Kingdom Chatelaine can direct you to other resources to help resolve problems or questions.

The Kingdom Chatelaine will periodically hold Chatelaines' meetings to converse with Chatelaines face-to-face. During these meetings, the Chatelaines will discuss common concerns and strategies for welcoming newcomers.

In addition to these meetings, a Facebook group is available at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NorthshieldChatelaines/> so that branch Chatelaines may use one another as resources.

Records and Reporting

The Kingdom Chatelaine will maintain a list of the current Chatelaines of the Kingdom. (S)he will review and summarize local reports, report to the Society Chatelaine, and will share a summary of those reports with any local Chatelaines that request it.

Upon Taking the Office of Chatelaine

This is a list of things that should be done shortly after assuming the office of Chatelaine. Note that it is not necessarily inclusive, as there may be additional expectations in your group, or duties that have been added since the publication of this handbook. Likewise, some of these items may not apply to you. When in doubt, confer with the outgoing local officer, your local Seneschal, or the Kingdom Chatelaine.

Take Office

The procedure for taking an office varies from group to group. Some require a vote, others allow the office to simply be appointed as a deputy of the Seneschal. Check with your group so you are certain to follow the proper procedures.

Fill Out the Paper Change of Officer Form

This form is for notifying the appropriate people that you have assumed a new office. Fill out the form and have it signed by the requisite officers. Then make at least three copies. Retain one copy in the local files, give one copy to your local Seneschal, and send one copy to the Kingdom Chatelaine (scan and email or mail). When sending the copy to the Kingdom Chatelaine, it is helpful to also include a letter of introduction. Include your contact information as well as information about your experience in the SCA, other offices you have held, and any questions or goals you have at this time. Make and distribute additional copies to other officers in your branch as local law or custom dictates.

Online Change of Officer Form

Changes in local group offices must also be submitted via the online form at:

<http://northshield.org/Officers/ChangeProcess.aspx>

Before completing this form, be sure that your Northshield profile is up to date. If your email address changes with your new position, consider adding this to your profile. Make sure that your membership date is up to date.

Obtain the Local Files

The outgoing Chatelaine, or the group Seneschal, should give you any files or supplies associated with the office of the Chatelaine. At minimum, this should include copies of the past local reports as submitted to the Kingdom officer. Supplies may also include items such as loaner garb, loaner feast gear, handbooks, publications for handing out or for sale, demo materials, and miscellaneous other pieces of gear.

Review and Update the Local Files

It is difficult to know what sorts of resources you have at your disposal if you never evaluate them! In the first week or so, take an inventory of the materials that have been handed over to you and get a feel for what you have to work with. Try to identify those things that need to be repaired, replaced, replenished, or updated. Read the Northshield Chatelaine Training Manual and Procedure Manual.

Make sure the electronic documentation is up to date.

- If you have a generic 'chatelaine@' email address, be sure you have access to these emails.
- Work with your local Webminister to update the local website with any new information.
- Make sure any Social Media groups reflect current policies, websites, and contact information.
- Sign out of the Northshield website and view your local group page as a newcomer would. Are they able to find your group's website and contact information?

Talk with Your Local Seneschal, Exchequer, and Outgoing Chatelaine

Discuss the local expectations for the office of Chatelaine. Find out what sort of budget you have for replacing or repairing items. Find out what procedures need to be followed to obtain money, develop a new handout, or organize a demo or event.

Prepare Publicity Materials

Update the Chatelaine's handouts to include your information where necessary and double check that all other information on the handouts is current. Make new copies of the handouts as necessary. Print some business cards with your SCA and modern information on them so you can carry some basic information with you at all times. You never know when you might meet someone who is interested in the SCA, and it is both convenient and impressive to be able to pull out a business card. Make sure the card includes at least "Society for Creative Anachronism" (not SCA), the SCA name of your local group, the modern name of the city or county your group is located in, your SCA name, your modern name, your phone number and/or email, and the web page address for your local group, if one exists.

Maintain your membership in the SCA

It is especially important that the local Chatelaine be a member of the SCA. It does not matter at which level of membership you hold as long as you have access to the Kingdom newsletter. The newsletter is an important tool since it lists information ranging from officers' letters to event announcements. This information can be printed and shared with newcomers or made available for them to consult as needed.

Reporting

Reporting is an important part of being an officer in the SCA and Chatelaine's reports are due February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15 every year. The November 15th report counts as your annual Domesday (end of year) Report. File a copy of your report with all the officers as required by Kingdom Law and local custom. In general, you should submit a copy of your report to the following.

- The Kingdom Chatelaine
- Your local group Seneschal
- Baron and Baroness (if you reside in a Barony)
- Baronial Chatelaine and Baronial Seneschal (if you reside in a College or Canton)
- Offer to share the report with the other reporting officers in your group.

When you submit your report electronically, a copy is automatically be forwarded to the Kingdom Chatelaine and your email linked to your Northshield.org profile.

Reports can be filed either electronically or by mail. The Northshield reporting form can be found at <http://northshield.org/Officers/Reports/ChatelaineReport.aspx>. Generally, you should submit your reports to the Kingdom Chatelaine electronically if it is possible for you to do so. You should ask your local officers about how they would prefer to receive the report.

Reports do not simply disappear once they are submitted! They are carefully read, tabulated and used to improve resources and identify goals. Even if you do not receive a personal response to comments you make in your report, those comments are important to the Kingdom as a whole. Remember that the reporting periods are not the only times you can contact your kingdom officer! Whenever you have a question about your office, feel free to contact the Kingdom Chatelaine for guidance.

Suggestions for a successful and meaningful report

Please make every attempt to get the report filed on time, or even a little bit early!

It is difficult for the Kingdom Chatelaine to adequately review the branch reports before reporting to Corporate if a significant number of reports are received after the deadline. However, it is understood that sometimes life happens, so please contact the Kingdom Chatelaine promptly if you need an extension. Often, late is better than never, as long as the Kingdom Officer knows the report is coming!

Make filing easy on yourself! Don't try to sit down four times a year and wrack your brain for all the Chatelaine activities your group hosted over the past year! Keep a calendar, notebook, or an electronic document where you record activities as they occur throughout the year. Then when the report is due, you only need to open the calendar/book/file and transcribe or cut-and-paste the information into the form and add a little commentary.

Make reporting useful to your group, the Kingdom, and the SCA. Some officers have asked, "Why do we have to report when the reports are just busywork?" Reporting is what you make it - if you only send in your contact information and perhaps the dates of one or two demos, there really isn't much the Kingdom Chatelaine can do with that information other than update the Chatelaines' Roster and check off that you have reported. However, if you provide details and add some commentary about your reported activities, the Kingdom Officer can get a better idea of which strategies work and which do not. It allows the Kingdom Chatelaine to make suggestions that may improve your results or share your successes with groups experiencing similar challenges. Many of the files on the Northshield Chatelaine's website are a direct result of requests from other Chatelaines for information or suggestions for specific topics. Use the report to ask for help, report new ideas that you have tried out, or share new informational materials that you have developed!

Once you have filed your report - keep a copy for your local files. This creates a resource for future Chatelaines in your group and ensures you have a copy of the report should you need to re-submit it for any reason.

Filing Your Report

The following suggestions about reporting are based on the online form available at <http://northshield.org/Officers/Reports/ChatelaineReport.aspx> but they can be applied to mailed-in hardcopy reports as well.

This form will be submitted to the Kingdom Chatelaine.

This means that you do not need to mail or email a copy of the report to the Kingdom Officer if you submit it through the Northshield website form. However, you should still submit a copy to your local Seneschal as well as to other officers, as necessary. As with all electronic documents, things can go awry, so please keep a copy for your own records (see below under "email address").

Upon Leaving the Office of Chatelaine

Once you have decided to leave the office of Chatelaine, you still have several important duties. As with the taking office section, this may not be a complete list, so check with other local officers if you have any questions about local customs and expectations.

Find a Successor

While it is not always possible to find a successor, ideally you do not want to leave the office vacant. In the best case scenario, you should find a gentle interested in doing the job approximately six months before you intend to step down. You then have the opportunity to train your successor in the duties of the office, including how to report and how to most effectively communicate with newcomers. If you are unable to find a successor in advance, it is helpful to make some suggestions to the local Seneschal as to who you think might be a good candidate for the job. If possible, it is considerate to let an incoming Chatelaine know they can contact you with questions even if they did not have a formal training period with you. If you need to suddenly leave a group for any reason, remind the group and any prospective new Chatelaines that the Kingdom officer is also available to assist in the transition.

Hand Over the Office and File the Change of Officer Form

Follow your group's procedure for an office changeover. Don't forget that the incoming officer needs your information on the change of officer form! Make arrangements to fill it out together

or to provide the new officer with the necessary information. You may also want to submit a letter of resignation to the Kingdom Chatelaine, especially if the office will be vacant after you resign. Include the effective date of your resignation and your successor's information, if possible.

Turn over the local files

You should turn over all the local files and supplies (including loaner materials, Chatelaine's records, etc.) to the incoming officer as soon as possible. If the office is going to become vacant or if you need to leave the office suddenly, give the items to the Seneschal.

Continue to be a Chatelaine!

Remember that all members of the SCA have an obligation to help newcomers feel welcome in our Society! While you may no longer hold the official office of Chatelaine, it is still important to be considerate to newcomers and to offer your assistance to the current officer, if they desire.

Credits & Disclaimer

Please remember that this Handbook is only a guide. It is impossible for this document to cover all possible groups and situations. Please feel free to expand on these ideas and customize them to meet your group's needs. This handbook is a printed document and so is possible that this edition is out of date – please check with the Northshield web page or the Kingdom Chatelaine for updates or corrections. Also, remember to check on your group's policies regarding activities such as planning events or producing handouts and adhere to those specific policies. If you ever have questions about your position, remember to use the resources you have in your local and regional officers! Please feel free to contact the Kingdom Chatelaine with questions or suggestions for additions, clarifications, or corrections to this handbook.

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This handbook was updated by THL Kate de Mallow in AS LII

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