

## BARONY OF DRAGONS LAIRE

### KINGDOM OF AN TIR

#### Basics for Local Officers (modified from the Kingdom of Drachenwald website)

This is a short introduction to any type of SCA office at the baronial level. By reading this you will find out the first couple of things you need to do when you step up as an officer and it also directs you on where to find more information. As an officer, you get the chance to influence the work in your group, your work will make it easier and more fun for you and your friends to play in the SCA and it is a wonderful sight to see when your work helps someone to have more fun in the SCA.

So, you have decided to take on an office? Here's a checklist of the first couple of things you need to do and a short explanation to WHY you need to do this.

Contact your superior officers. There are officers at several levels in An Tir. The top level for our barony is the Kingdom level. The baronial officers report directly to the kingdom officer. They need to know that you hold office so that they can make sure that you get new information, that you can get the help that you might want, and also so you can get warranted, etc. Among other things, being warranted means in most places, you are covered by an insurance policy for any official actions you take as an officer in regards to your office.

Read the Society policies, the Kingdom policies and the Kingdom law that concerns your office. The Society policies are located on the SCA website at [www.sca.org](http://www.sca.org). The An Tir website has a library that contains the Kingdom policies at [www.antir.sca.org](http://www.antir.sca.org). The An Tir Handbook will provide you with most of the necessary information. Also read our local Customary and Financial Policy on our website at [www.dragonslaire.org](http://www.dragonslaire.org). Check to see if there is a mailing list for your office, and if so, subscribe to it. They tell you what you should do and what you can't do.

As an officer you need to report to your superior officer. The Kingdom Chronicler for example, bases his or her reports to the Society Chronicler (the chief Chronicler for the entire SCA) on your reports. The reports are important, not only for reporting to the main office for the SCA, but also so that your superior officer knows how you are doing, what you are doing and if you are running into any difficulties that you might need help with. The reports are a tool for improving and making the running of an office easier and more fun! Ask your superior officer if there are any special forms that are needed for reporting, or if there are certain things that must be included in a report. Also ask when the next report is due.

All officers have to report AT LEAST once a quarter – check with your kingdom superior for details. The quarterly reports are due April 15th (for the period January through March), July 15th (for the period April through June), October 15th (for the period July through September) and January 15th (for the period October through December, and a wrap up of the entire year. (**Note: check with your kingdom officer for actual deadline dates**)). This wrap up of the year is called a Domesday Report. If you handle any funds you need to include a financial report at least in your Domesday Report, and possibly more often – check with your kingdom superior for details.

If you are taking on the office as a Seneschal, you need to be listed in the An Tir Crier, the Kingdom of An Tir's monthly newsletter. To be listed in the Crier and become warranted, you need to send your completed Job Acceptance/Change of Officer Form to the Kingdom Seneschal. The Kingdom Seneschal can be reached at [seneschal@antir.sca.org](mailto:seneschal@antir.sca.org). The Kingdom Chronicler cannot make any changes to the Crier except for changes that come from the Kingdom Seneschal. For all other local officers – you also need to complete a Job Acceptance/Change of Officer Form and mail it to your Kingdom superior officer. You also need to make sure that the people in your local group have access to your contact information. This is often done by including it on our local website and/or in our local newsletter, The Flames of the Dragon.

All offices have different type of work. The ideal situation is that you work with your predecessor for at least a couple of months and learn the job. Once you know it – it will be easy to handle. The more you prepare, the more secure you will feel in giving people advice on things concerning your office or performing what you need within your office, Your superior officers are there to help you. They are happy to answer any questions. NO QUESTIONS ARE STUPID! It is also a good idea to ask your predecessor for any materials they felt were useful to them including any files, documents, checklists, forms, etc.

Real life comes first. No matter what. Always. However, if real life interferes, you need to let your superior(s) know so they can take any steps necessary to deal with it. Start at the local level by informing the Seneschal.

Find yourself a deputy. Or even more than one deputy. Having deputies means spreading out the

**And for when it's time to leave: (as modified from Copyright 1996, Susan Carroll-Clark. AKA Magistra Nicolaa de Bracton, Kingdom of Ealdomere. All rights reserved)**

You first need to know whether there is a set term. For instance, in Dragons Laire the custom is to serve for two years, but you can ask for an extension through the Baron/Baroness. These term lengths decrease the likelihood of burnout, ensure that "new ideas" are always coming in, and decrease the likelihood that a particular office will become associated with one person.

The first duty of any new officer is to start thinking about who might succeed them. Whether this is through a formal deputyship or through less formal training is up to the officer. There should be no secrets in the way SCA offices work. Never assume that when the time comes to step down, there will be a line of qualified applicants just waiting at the door. If you want qualified applicants, you've got to make them happen. How to find these people initially? Ask around. Keep your eyes open for people with good administrative skills, an interest in what the office does, and enthusiasm. Don't necessarily look for little carbon copies of yourself -- there is rarely "one true style" to being a good SCA officer. At the local level, a good place to look is amongst the newer members who have been coming around long enough to decide they want to stick around, and are now keen to really "get involved" in the group. Taking on such people as deputies -- and, most importantly, giving them duties--can really pull them in and make them feel valuable. Also, don't overlook more established members. Just because Lady Jane has been in the group for six years and never been an officer doesn't necessarily mean she's not interested. A new responsibility like an office can sometimes rejuvenate someone. Officers who zealously seek out potential successors have a lot less problems finding their replacement when the time comes.

Here are some warning signs that it might be time for you to pass on your office. If one or more of these applies, you should seriously consider it:

--"Real Life" concerns are causing you to neglect the duties of the office. It is far better to step down from an office early (even after only a month or two) and deal with your difficulties than to continue the charade that you can get along just fine when you really can't. Chances are, what will happen if you do not is that your successor--and depending on the office, half of the group/kingdom/entire SCA--will have to devote

their term to fixing the problems. There is no dishonor in stepping down because you simply no longer have the time for the office--in fact this is quite honorable and commendable.

--You've held an office so long that no one can remember anyone else doing it. "Officers for life" are generally not a good idea-- if something happens to you, your group could be left not only without an officer, but without any idea of how to run the office. **NOTE: Depending on the office, baronial status could be affected.**

--You're starting to feel indispensable. "What would the group do without me?" "I know what's best for the group". "I'm a stabilizing influence, and I know the position inside and out". Are you starting to think this way? Be alert! It's nice to feel needed and that your group would be lost without you--but is that best for the group? If you really are indispensable, what often happens is that the group assumes you'll always be there, no one--even those with promise-- ever gets trained to take your place, and all of a sudden things fall apart when you're suddenly transferred to a different location, take ill, or simply have to deal with job or family concerns. Only someone on a serious power trip would find this amusing, which leads to.....

--You see the position as a source of "influence" or "power" which you don't want to lose. To be quite blunt, there is no room for power trips within the SCA officers' structure, because that kind of thing generally hinders, rather than helps, the SCA as a whole. Being an officer in the SCA is a responsibility. It can be an honor, but it isn't a title and should not be the source of your self-image in the SCA. You serve an office - it does not serve you.

--You're no longer having fun in the SCA. Although there is a lot of work involved in making our hobby fun, if the SCA has become pure drudgery for you, that's probably a sign that it's time to step down.

### **How to step down:**

The baronial Customary contains the policy for how to leave office and how the new candidate is selected.

Now that you've left office sit back, and enjoy yourself, but remain available. Some folks will immediately jump into another office, but try to enjoy the fact that you've been freed of certain responsibilities and duties (even if you've replaced them with new ones). Don't expect things to be the same as they were when you held the office. Do resist the urge to publicly comment on the performance of your successor, unless it's to heap praise upon him or her. If your successor seems to be making mistakes, take them aside and offer to chat in a non-threatening way; it may do some good for you to tell them what mistakes you made when you were new, and how you solved them. Be a mentor and a resource, not an adversary.