

NEW GROUPS GUIDE
GUIDELINES FOR
FORMING A NEW GROUP
IN THE
KINGDOM OF
LOCHAC



VERSION 1.3, AUGUST 2010

CONTACT: SENESCHAL@LOCHAC.SCA.ORG
[HTTP://LOCHAC.SCA.ORG/SENESCHAL](http://LOCHAC.SCA.ORG/SENESCHAL)

Introduction	3
Rules to live by	3
About the Current Middle Ages.....	5
How to Found a New Group	7
Step 1 - Are You Sure this is a Good Idea?	7
Step 2 - Getting the Ball Rolling!	9
Step 3 – How to Look Like an SCA Group	10
Step 4 - Becoming an Incipient Group	11
Step 5 - Becoming a Full Shire (or Canton, or College)	12
Discussion	13
Care and Feeding of an Incipient Branch	15
Simple advice for Seneschals of new groups.....	18
Demos, O-Week and Bootstrapping Ideas.....	20
Running Demos and Stalls	20
Related Suggestions and Comments	21
Bootstrapping Ideas	21
About the Kingdom	22
The Governing Documents of the Society.....	22
A Guide to Heraldry for a New SCA Group.....	23
Choosing a Group Name	23
Submitting the Name	24
Choosing the Group’s Device (Coat of Arms)	25
Submitting the Group’s Device (Coat of Arms)	25
Further Information	26
Appendix	27
Useful Forms	27
Other Resources	27
Credits	28

Introduction

Congratulations on wanting to start a new SCA group, and welcome!

First piece of advice: Don't Panic! – there is no need and no point, as there will always be someone to offer advice and help you out of any difficulty.

This guide should help you through the process of first scoping and then forming a new SCA group in Australia or New Zealand.

We'll mainly refer to the creation of Shires, the most common type of new group, but the guidelines hold true for Colleges, Cantons and the less-known variants such as Port or Stronghold.

As you progress you may find you need more specific information – help will be readily available from the Kingdom Seneschal and the Seneschal of your supporting group. Just as importantly, there is a forum -- the College of Seneschals mailing list -- where you can ask questions and try out new ideas: <http://lochac.sca.org/mailman/listinfo/cos>

To find more about Lochac, contact Kingdom officers and so on, go here:

<http://lochac.sca.org/lochac>

And importantly, please also see the **New Seneschal's Handbook** – it complements this Guide:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs.htm#resources>

As far as possible, we've tried to avoid duplicating information from the **New Seneschal's Handbook** in here. Except the next bit.

Rules to live by

Don't Panic! – someone can help: start by asking your supporting group's Seneschal.

“Temperance”, or Restraint, by practicing self-control and avoiding extremes.

“Prudence”, or Good Sense, by making sensible judgments of reasons for actions with regard to appropriateness in a context – both for yourself and others.

“Fortitude”, or Courage, by exhibiting forbearance, endurance and the ability to deal with the fear, doubt, and intimidation of friends, acquaintances and others.

“Justice”, or Fairness, by always doing your best to make a proper judgment regarding individual interests, rights and appropriate rewards.

“Patience”, or Perseverance, by enduring difficult circumstances without becoming annoyed or upset – especially when faced with delay or frustration.

It is also important to remember and remind people of the one SCA rule that always applies – “behave in a courteous manner”. That includes via email!

AND FINALLY:

Human error is common. Slackness too, sometimes. Misunderstanding is easy, especially via email. (And emails can go astray or get overlooked). Whereas deliberate ill-intent is actually rather rare. Therefore, quoting Napoleon Bonaparte:

“Never ascribe to malice that which is adequately explained by incompetence”

All the best, good fortune, and don’t forget to enjoy yourself!

Lochac Kingdom Seneschal

About the Current Middle Ages....

In 1966, a group of history majors at the University of California at Berkeley held a costume party. Its theme was the middle ages. They made and wore medieval clothing and addressed each other with titles and great courtesy. The fighters put on fencing masks and basketball pads, and took up broomstick swords to do battle for their ladies and their honour. Two important things happened - they learned something and they enjoyed themselves thoroughly. So, they got together again for another tourney, and another, and for banquets, and revels and. . . . thus was the Society for Creative Anachronism created for all such folk as do wish to learn about, and enjoy, the Age of Chivalry.

The armour is much better now and it is as authentic as the fighters can make it. The fighting too is as real as can be made safe. The weapons are not metal but are made from rattan, a form of bamboo, and the maces and axes are made from foam rubber (as most of us must return safely to the 21st Century on Monday). Combat is done under an honour system - if a fighter is struck, they know whether the blow is hard enough, and well placed enough, to maim or “kill” them, so they “die” (perhaps theatrically). In most tournaments fighters get to “die” several times before being put out of the competition.

So it is with all aspects of the Current Middle Ages—the Middle Ages as they ideally might have been, rather than as they actually were. We have the thrill of combat without actual death. We have sumptuous clothing, rich feasts, courtly dancing and beautiful objects made from many crafts. . . . all this without the squalor of the towns, or the serfs toiling in the fields. The end result is a miniature of the nobility of Medieval society, and with a scholarly bent. In the Kingdom of Lochac, (*Australia and New Zealand*) the King and Queen rule over all, and their word is Law. The Crown is won in combat, by defeating all other contenders. (They reign for a period of six months and towards the end of Their reign the process of finding the next Crown starts all over again.)

The prize is the power - and the responsibility - to go with this position. They are expected to preside over as many tournaments as possible within their Kingdom and they must set an example of courtesy for all their subjects. While many in the Society have titles, only Their Majesties may grant those titles. Titles and awards are granted to reward prowess on the tourney-field and in war, accomplishment in the Arts and Sciences, and service to the Society. Their Majesties rely heavily upon recommendations from the populace as to who is worthy of receiving an award. However, everyone in the Society is addressed as “my lord” or “my lady” as everyone is considered to be of at least gentle – if not noble - birth.

You might consider that combatants enter the Crown list for the renown, win for their consorts and rule for the populace.

Our Heralds, like their historical counterparts, make announcements at tournaments and ceremonies, and keep records of all registered names, titles and devices. They help members design their own heraldic devices, (commonly known as “a coat of arms”). All Heralds (and only Heralds) wear a green tabard with crossed yellow trumpets on it. Should you have a question at an event, ask a Herald. If they cannot give you an answer, they can direct you to someone who can.

There are many other Officers who manage the business affairs of the 40 or so groups which make up the Kingdom. They plan and co-ordinate events, organise the combat at tournaments and wars, help with historical research by members, teach skills and crafts of the period, produce the Kingdom’s newsletters, manage finances and do many other things to keep the Society functioning. You will encounter all of these, and several more, in the course of Society life.

There are now over 80,000 paid members in the Society, world-wide, and at least twice that many who regularly attend events. The members range from serious scholars, through to those who escape the pressures of daily life by spending their weekends in the Current Middle Ages, to those who come to local events just for the pleasure of “dressing-up” and being called “my lord” or “my lady” for the day.

A word about the name of the Society: an *anachronism* is something misplaced in time, like a wristwatch on an Elizabethan wrist, a Viking having lunch at McDonalds, or a tournament held at a shopping centre. Just as having our Society in the 21st century is anachronistic, so too is having the 21st century intruding on our Society. Some of these anachronisms might be unavoidable, (like prescription glasses) but some are just careless (like coke cans on the table and obviously modern clothing) and can with a little effort be avoided, enhancing the medieval atmosphere.

Interest in our past, with its fine craftsmanship and skilled artistry, its valour, honour and courtesy, all the fine ideals our ancestors revered (even when they fell short of living up to them in practice), is for us always proper and never untimely.

And so together we continue to learn and enjoy ourselves and (we hope) to grow.

How to Found a New Group

Read the following, and by all means seek advice from the Kingdom Seneschal when in doubt. Sometimes it's better to connect with an existing group rather than form one from scratch.

Step 1 - Are You Sure this is a Good Idea?

This should always be asked of any project or action in the SCA, in this instance there are many good reasons to create a new SCA group. There are also an equal number of not so good reasons, so let's take a look at Justin du Coeur's list of the most common scenarios and some suggestions regarding appropriate solutions.

Scenario 1: I'm already in a group but I mostly play with my friends and we want a group for ourselves.

Usual answer: If this is the case, then you really don't want a new group.

As a formal SCA group is geographically based; it has to include everyone who lives within its borders. If you don't want to be bound by any territorial limitation or be responsible for everyone in your local area what may suit you much better is a household.

There are few rules on the creation of households; they have no formal power but they don't have any formal paperwork either, and it is quite acceptable to form a household by invitation only. This is usually the best solution for groups of friends – remember the virtue of Prudence.

Scenario 2: Well, technically, we all live within a Barony (or Shire/Canton) but the population centre is an hour away and we feel isolated.

Usual answer: This is a borderline case and you really should go talk with the folks in the Barony (or Shire/Canton) about it.

Sometimes, nothing more is needed than improving the communication between the centre and the border areas of the group. In other cases, the sensible course of action is a Canton, which is sort of like a Shire that comes under the auspices of a Barony. Cantons allow you to still be part of the Barony but have a distinct identity for your area within it. Creating a Canton is similar to creating a Shire but generally easier, since you have ongoing help from the Barony.

In yet other cases, when it's a group of friends who all live in one town, the right way to go may be a household, (see the scenario 1). And yes, sometimes, the right answer is to form a new Shire separate to the existing group.

In the case of forming a new Shire, be aware that you will have to proceed carefully as people tend to get defensive or protective about any territory the group already has a claim to, and if you approach them and basically say, “We want it so we are going to take this land away from you!”, it will most likely cause some tension and generally not be well received.

You will need to be very open in your approach to people and be prepared to work closely with the existing group to make sure they understand that it isn't anything personal. Try to make your reasons clear e.g. you just have an area that is too far away to feel that it is part of the existing group. It can be done successfully but be aware of the politics that may occur and be prepared for some serious discussions. Remember the virtue of Fortitude.

With just about any situation involving change, most people will want to have some sort of say or simply express themselves – be prepared to listen and consider what they are saying, state clearly what you are seeking and why. Good communication will aid in any resolution. Remember the virtue of Patience.

Scenario 3: We've looked around and don't seem to be within any existing SCA group's “active” territory.

Usual answer: In this situation forming a new group may be the best way to proceed.

However now we get to the more internal requirements that you will need to give some thought to – remember the virtue of Temperance?

Firstly, do you have the basic requirement to forming a new group, or do you know for sure that you will have it? As a minimum your group will need five financial members and in general to be healthy a group should have ten to fifteen active participants.

Secondly, not only you as Seneschal but at least two of those financial members must be willing to be officers. Being a formal group requires regular paperwork – and while it is not a lot, it is a fixed requirement and like the membership numbers it must be adhered to if your group wants to keep its formal group status.

Thirdly, you need to know what the SCA is about before you form a new group. If your group does not include people who have some prior experience of the SCA then reading everything available may not be sufficient. Justin du Coeur strongly recommends – and we agree with him wholeheartedly – that if you're new, you should try travel to a few events before trying to set up a group yourself.

Having said that, if you comply with the requirements of Corpora and Kingdom Law, how you go about your version of the SCA is entirely up to you – an important characteristic not mentioned above but equal to the other virtues is that of individuality.

In Australia a group's area is determined by the allocation of postcodes and in New Zealand it is done with telephone area codes, addition to which it is desirable that the area claimed has some recognisable geographical foundations. Features such as rivers, major highways or similar can be useful in identifying where you are.

You will need some sort of expression of support from the SCA people in the area and an in principle agreement from the group who may be currently allocated the territory or part of the area your group wants. This doesn't have to be formal polls or letters from neighbouring seneschals at this stage – but minuted meetings where the support is expressed by a reasonable majority are an excellent record. In determining the area, you will also need to consider future growth, so try to ensure that there is a sufficient population base to give you a good pool to recruit from.

If in doubt try to encompass an area with a population of approximately 200,000 – most local government organisations publish this sort of data on their websites or it can be gained from a simple phone call.

Now, assuming you are still enthusiastic about forming a new group let's go to...

Step 2 - Getting the Ball Rolling!

So you have enough members, you have discussed it with any local groups, a mutual agreement about territory has been reached, you have people lined up to be officers, and more importantly, despite everything you have read you still want to be a Seneschal – excellent!

If you haven't already done so you need to formally advise the Kingdom Seneschal of what you intend to do. The Kingdom Seneschal's role in this is to act as your confidant, adviser, advocate, and in essence determining if establishing your group is in the best interests of the Kingdom and the SCA. So be nice to your Kingdom Seneschal. . . . they are generally over-worked, often under-appreciated and quite important to all this.

For those who do not know, this person is responsible for and in charge of running the day-to-day affairs of the Kingdom – including overseeing the Seneschals of all its component groups. If you do not already have their contact details, they can be found in "Pegasus" (the Kingdom newsletter) and on the Kingdom of Lochac website – <http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/>

At some point the Kingdom Seneschal will be the one to tell you that you are a proposed Shire, Canton or College – this means you're a group in the process of forming. While you don't need to wait for that advice to keep things moving it's a good sign that things are progressing as they should.

You may also want to start advertising your existence to any nearby SCA groups, as they can often provide assistance with experienced friendly people to help you start up

activities such as A&S workshops (like armouring or sewing), and martial activities like fighter training (where previous experience is especially helpful).

Step 3 – How to Look Like an SCA Group

You will need to demonstrate that you are organised and, as you have seen above, there are several things you will need to comply with before you can progress to being a fully fledged group. So let's have a look at the core things.

- ◇ You need five adult subscribing members. Remember you need to maintain that as a minimum level, and more is always better.
- ◇ To be robust and healthy a group should have at least 10 – 15 active people, and once again, more is always better.
- ◇ Officers: you are required to have a Seneschal, a Reeve, and either: a Herald, an Arts & Sciences Minister or a Group Marshal.

More Officers are fine but you don't need to have them all to begin with, especially if you are short on volunteers.

Be aware that the Seneschal and the Reeve cannot live at the same abode, and that if you intend to run any fighting activities then you must have a Group Marshal. Kingdom Earl Marshal: marshal@lochac.sca.org

The officers will need to be deputies of and report to either the appropriate sponsoring group or Kingdom officers.

- ◇ You will need to choose a proposed name for your group and then you should be starting to think about an appropriate heraldic device; only the name of the group is needed to get established as a Shire, Canton or College though.

As with many of the things that affect the group, this should be a whole-group decision, or at least have their majority support. And don't forget to consult with experienced heralds about it – earlier is better than later, to avoid disappointment.

You should also be looking for something that will maintain its appeal and have some decorum or dignity. It is not a good idea to get too attached to the first choice, as the process of registration with the College of Heralds does involve making sure it is a period practice and that it doesn't conflict with something already registered, so it may take a couple of attempts to succeed. Having some back up names just in case might be a good idea

Generally, if you or (preferably) the group herald digs around on the Internet you will find a host of resources to help in choosing an appropriate name, and the

College of Heralds itself is a veritable mountain of valuable advice and support to any new group herald. Kingdom Herald's email: herald@lochac.sca.org

- ◇ Start running some regular activities like workshops and practices. While there are a few sensible limitations on a proposed Group, especially before all of your officers are rostered or warranted, most activities will not require official status (apart from combat-related activities). The Internet has a wealth of printable resources that are easy to present and discuss, and you can look at inviting knowledgeable people from the surrounding groups to help out as well.

Hold some garb workshops, do dance practices, get together and experiment with period cooking – most of this stuff only requires interested participants and someone to run it. The exception here may be if you intend on entering into any kind of formal agreements regarding the use of facilities such as halls, parks etc - if this is the case, check with the Kingdom Seneschal before proceeding.

- ◇ You may want to consider putting together a newsletter or establishing an electronic mailing list to advertise your activities to those within your group's area. This will be of benefit if you are required to demonstrate that you are acting in the way a group should. In addition it will give you something to aid in recruiting and involving new people, as well as ensuring your existing members all feel part of what is going on. For assistance with such things (mailing lists, websites, etc.) the best person to talk to is the Masonry Deputy: masonry@lochac.sca.org

- ◇ We have of course saved the best for last. You will need to find an established group – Barony or Shire – that will be willing to sponsor your proposed group.

A proposed group cannot run events and the like on its own, but the sponsoring group can do so on your behalf. It is usual for the sponsoring group to be the nearest Barony or Shire to you but if you are on good terms with another group which is also relatively nearby, they may fill this role just as well.

Your group officers will also be deputies of the sponsoring group officers until you achieve full status and they will be required to report to them as well as the Kingdom Officers.

Step 4 - Becoming an Incipient Group

So you have ticked all the boxes above and the group is really getting into the swing of this whole SCA thing. What next?

Your next step is to move from a proposed group to an incipient group, this is where all that lovely paperwork really starts ☺

To do this you will need to complete a Preliminary Application Form and a Preliminary Petition of your members to show there is sufficient support in the area to proceed; these will need to be accompanied by an Agreement between Groups form which shows you have a sponsoring group. So your checklist is:

- Preliminary Application Form
- Preliminary Petition
- Agreement between Groups

You'll find links to these in the Appendix. These will need to be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal, with copies to the supporting group – and make sure you keep copies for your own files.

You now get to demonstrate that you can function as a SCA group, by running activities and events, meeting the necessary reporting and membership requirements, playing nice with the neighbours and generally showing some stability and purpose.

Step 5 - Becoming a Full Shire (or Canton, or College)

After sufficient time has passed to show all of the above you may move from an incipient group to a group with full status. This time will generally be in the order of 12 to 18 months but in certain circumstances it may be shorter or longer. The determining factors for that will generally be maintenance of membership numbers, maintaining sufficient officers, the group's activity levels (as demonstrated in officers' reports), newsletters and the like, and the support of your sponsoring group.

During the above process, you and the other officers of the group will be expected to obtain deputies (who may eventually succeed you) and comply with a number of other office-specific requirements. It is the responsibility of the officer concerned to ensure they find out what these requirements may be. So not only is it your responsibility to find out what you are supposed to do as a Seneschal, but also to monitor what the group officers are doing as well. Receiving copies of your group officers' reports will assist in this immensely.

Finding out what all the requirements may be is not difficult, as the Kingdom and sponsoring group officers will be happy to discuss this with you and help, and there are a number of online resources such as the Kingdom website. But if nothing else, you should ensure you are reasonably familiar with Corpora, the other governing documents of the SCA and the Laws of the Kingdom. See the *Check out the Resources* section of the **New Seneschal's Handbook**.

When you are confident that all of the above have been demonstrated or exist then you will need to complete the following:

- Official Status Petition

- Application to Become an Official SCA Branch

Links to these are also in the Appendix. They are pretty self explanatory and are really just an extended version of what you already completed to become an incipient group.

Once the Kingdom Seneschal is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the SCA to grant your group full status, they will consult with the Crown of Lochac. Once the Crown acknowledges the establishment of your group, probably in a Court of their choosing, the Kingdom Seneschal will advise the Society Seneschal of the name, location and date of elevation.

You are now a full-status group of the SCA in the Kingdom of Lochac - congratulations!

Discussion

The process from first discussions to full status is not meant to be overly hasty and nor should it be. It will take at least 12 to 18 months, and taking up to 2 years to become a full Shire is not unheard of. These timeframes ensure that the group is stable and carrying on as a SCA group should, which in turn ensures that you will continue to flourish.

Try not to see this timeframe as any kind of a hindrance or a negative – you are able to do a lot in the proposed and incipient stages and mostly it will just mean dealing with an additional level of administration. The sponsoring group is there to assist you, not hinder you, and you will find they will be quite flexible in their dealings with you. If you feel this is not happening, then talk to the sponsoring group Seneschal. If you are not able to work it out, discuss it with the Kingdom Seneschal – remember, they are your advocate.

If your officers are organised, keep good records, communicate well with each other (and the rest of your group), and develop a good understanding of Kingdom Law and the Governing Documents (such as Corpora), you will find the progress through the required steps is fairly smooth sailing.

If you are in a Principality, the process remains fairly constant except the paperwork will need to go through the Principality Seneschal for checking and endorsement on its way to the Kingdom Seneschal. In many ways this should prove to be of benefit to you, because the Principality Seneschal is likely to be closer at hand and more able to help.

As a Seneschal, you should always try to understand the process and the various roles people play in that process, find out what needs to be done and do it. Questions are your tools, and answers will be the reward for your labour.

And remember...

“Temperance”, or Restraint, by practicing self-control, and avoiding extremes.

“Prudence”, or Good Sense, by making sensible judgments of reasons for actions with regard to appropriateness in a context – both for yourself and others.

“Fortitude”, or Courage, by exhibiting forbearance, endurance and the ability to deal with the fear, doubt, and intimidation of friends, acquaintances and others.

“Justice”, or Fairness, by always doing your best to make a proper judgment regarding individual interests, rights and appropriate rewards.

“Patience”, or Perseverance, by enduring difficult circumstances without becoming annoyed or upset, especially when faced with delay or frustration.

And: **“Never ascribe to malice that which is adequately explained by incompetence”**

Care and Feeding of an Incipient Branch

As primary organiser for the proposed group, you should be appointed as a Deputy Seneschal for the area – either deputy to the sponsoring group or, if necessary, the Kingdom or Principality Seneschal. This also equally applies to the proposed groups' officers, who should also be deputies of the sponsoring group or Kingdom/Principality Officers. This arrangement will need to stay in place until you have achieved full status.

Get lots of information about the SCA. Stuff such as Kingdom Law and the SCA Governing Documents are essential and available online. Along with the Known World Handbook, they will give you a good starting point. Beyond those there's almost no limit to what might be useful in a new branch.

There are almost unlimited resources available online – simply visiting the links section of the various groups the Kingdom can be very rewarding, and if you have any doubts about the value or appropriateness of the resource you can check it with your sponsors, You can even ask on CoS (the College of Seneschals mailing list), the Shambles (Kingdom of Lochac discussion list) or on a regional mailing list if you have one. All will be very helpful, promise!

Get in contact with the Kingdom Deputy responsible for new groups and/or the Kingdom Hospitaller (hospitaller@lochac.sca.org) to help deal with the needs of your new group. In conjunction with the Officers of the sponsoring group, they will help your new group over any hurdles and help you avoid having to re-invent the SCA and ensure that you are heading in the right direction on things.

This does not mean you have to imitate the groups around you or be a carbon copy of any other group in the Kingdom. It just means you may need to be mindful of the broader SCA rules, customs and culture so that your group and the members therein can more easily mesh into the Kingdom proper – especially when they go visiting.

Consider the sponsoring officers and those assisting you as guides: they get to show you all the well-trodden paths and readily available sources of information and material that your group needs. They will also provide advice on whether what you want to do will fit into the SCA parameters we all have to observe. They are not there to tell you exactly what you should do or exactly how you should do it, but rather give you a heads-up on any existing rules, laws and guidelines that are pertinent to what you want to do or achieve. A good habit to get into is to ask those helping you why something is the way it is – if nothing else it will help you sort out the actual requirements from the good opinions. (Everyone has opinions – many of them are right, but feel free to seek a second opinion if it isn't adequately backed up by a quote from the rules).

An incipient branch need not be exclusively sponsored by a single established group and, if practicable, different events of an incipient group can be sponsored by different nearby groups. This not only spreads the work out, but it also enables the incipient group and its

new members to become acquainted with all its nearest SCA neighbours. Always remember that only a branch with a Marshal can sponsor a fighting event!

While proposed or incipient branches may not sponsor Society events, as deputies-for-the-area, your officers can hold local meetings and workshops. But to put events on the Kingdom Calendar, you will need the confirmed support of a sponsoring group.

Sponsors and sponsoring groups need to offer more than just their name: if you do not have any experienced members, where possible they have to provide a person to cover the event and make sure it follows SCA rules and procedures. They may also be in a position to offer some financial support as well, whether directly with a donation or by underwriting such things as hall hire and deposits.

While a Kingdom or Principality can be the sponsor of a new group, the incipient status period is intended to give your group a training period and this will work best if you have someone on the spot to offer support and guidance.

Of course you not only need to be concerned with setting up the new group, but also keeping it going. Working with your existing membership and officers, you will need to be looking at events and/or activities to keep people enthused and give them a reason to be active. These activities and such will also play a big part in giving new members something to do, and if your schedule includes some public activities or demos there will be new members as well.

While word-of-mouth is great – quite possibly the greatest recruiting tool in your toolbox – one of the resources the sponsoring group or kingdom Hospitaller can help you with are either copies of handouts and posters, or ideas you may want to include in your own publicity.

Notice boards in shopping centres or your local libraries are usually free, and if you work with your local government to find out what community events are happening you can plan your own compatible activities accordingly. Weekend markets (such as those run by the Rotary club and similar organisations) are also a great venue - the cost of bays is minimal, and you'll have a regular flow of possible local recruits.

With new members, try to remember that they will want to get involved as much as the people who were there at the first meeting. So as Seneschal, one of your roles is ensuring there is always space for them to participate and contribute as much as anyone else. The *best* way to get someone committed to your group is to give them something useful to do!

A website and a mailing list are standard and effective ways for new groups to communicate and become accessible to a greater number of people. However, be aware of those who cannot readily access these and ensure alternative means of communicating group news are available. Depending on the make-up of your group, it may be wise to not make any decisions online, since it may result in some of your members being excluded. The best judge of this of course is the person who feels excluded, so try to make sure to

touch bases with all your members as often as possible. Sharing this task out amongst the other officers may be best. Remember, if this all starts seeming like too much of a chore: choosing to establish a SCA group means you have accepted responsibility for being the gateway to everyone in the area who wants to get involved in the SCA.

The incipient period for new groups is not intended to be long, and your group shouldn't be left hanging any longer than necessary. Generally it is a good idea to look at what is going on every 6 months and discuss or review your status with the kingdom New Groups Deputy and/or your sponsoring group's Seneschal.

If your group is not ready to go to full status after two years, without good cause, it may be appropriate to call a meeting about what they want to do. Subject to any outcomes of that meeting, you should enter into a discussion with the sponsoring group Seneschal and the Kingdom Seneschal about the best way forward.

As Seneschal, you will need to work closely with your group officers to ensure they are meeting the requirements of their offices: these requirements can be as important to your group's elevation or advancement as all the paperwork and petitions combined. Regular (e.g. monthly) meetings to discuss the group's business are a good way to involve all officers as well as any of the populace who are interested or otherwise want to contribute.

Make sure you keep a good record of just about everything, and encourage all officers to do the same. Getting copies of their reports helps to keep a record, and many groups table them at their regular business or officers meetings.

One more important thing:

It's all about the group, and how well it works to set and achieve its goals. Aim to build something that you can one day let go of and see it work successfully without you. If you manage that, you will have accomplished a remarkably rewarding and satisfying task.

Finally: always check and double check what is required at every stage and make sure it is done in a timely manner. Remember there are no dumb questions, and attention to detail is your friend.

Simple advice for Seneschals of new groups

Since this advice applies to the Seneschals of *all* groups, whether new or established, please refer to the **New Seneschal's Handbook** available from here:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs.htm#resources>

There's a *lot* of good and necessary information there — don't overlook it!

Recruitment and Growth

From day one, recruitment will be an essential part of what you do. It may be easy to get the first four or five friends involved. But thereafter, you should really be building to the 10-15 it requires to ensure survival, and preferably more for a more capable and stable group. Always remember you need to allow for people getting tired, or moving away.

Recruitment succeeds if you combine the right efforts with the right atmosphere. Atmosphere *really* matters – people need to know they will be welcome, appreciated and even needed. The range of recruitment tactics you can use is legion – if you type *SCA Recruitment* into a web search, you'll get a host of ideas. But for now, start in these places:

- The CoS mailing list archives. Recruitment is a common theme there, and you'll see ideas, reports of how they worked – and also how they didn't
- The Lochac Hospitaller's website – <http://lochac.sca.org/hospitaller> - some articles and lots of resources there, and don't overlook the Hospitaller handbook there, e.g. Chapter two!
- <http://scademo.com>

Hot ideas – ones that provide good bang for the buck:

- Your single, biggest, easiest and most promising recruitment ground: friends, associates, family, work colleagues and acquaintances of existing members. Never forget this. A “we all recruit” policy and atmosphere is the best way to get them all in.
- Introduction cards – print some and give them to *all* your folk and encourage them to use them. See examples on the Hospitaller site that can be adapted.
- Tying demos or presentations into themed events run by other organizations – they'll appreciate the support, you'll get the numbers looking at what you do
- Media exposure – see <http://sca.org.nz/media.php> for information on how to manage media folk wisely, realistically and effectively
- A good website – see the “Luring Newcomers” article on the Hospitaller site
- Library window displays and similar – easy to set up and move around. Make sure you have a website URL very visible in these, and *lots* of good photos.
- Try to site your combat practices where they can be readily seen by passing members of the public. SCA combat and gear is exciting – it *will* attract people.
- Atmosphere – recruitment is everyone's responsibility, as is making people feel welcome, useful and engaged when they turn up
- Give newcomers something to do – preferably something social, like helping in the kitchen, rather than a task they have to do alone. Plug them in to the group's regular activities, and you're most of the way there.

Demos, O-Week and Bootstrapping Ideas

Below are some notes from various Seneschals on their experiences with public demos or stalls – very useful for College Seneschals, but generally useful for anyone. Plus a few bootstrap ideas for groups when they are just starting out.

Running Demos and Stalls

The most important thing is having all the paperwork there - in particular, forms for people to sign up on, and flyers for people to take away with them. In the past, our College has done a small flyer, 1/3 of an A4 page, and double-sided. On one side we have information about the SCA and the College, and on the other we have the times of the term 1 meetings and practices, and the first event(s) of the year. Have enough of these that you can give them to **everyone** - you never know who is going to go away not really enthused, but then actually read it and decide to come along!

After that, there is of course the Stuff - list ropes for the tourney area, a big range of stuff for the table - calligraphy, embroidery, garb (wear it!), armour, archery gear (but not a strung bow **and** arrows!) feast gear, a nice leather pouch, a pretty candlestick, etc - and also a flag or banner or two - they really draw the eye and evoke a medieval feel. Arrange everything in an attractive manner, but recognise that people are going to be picking things up and having a look at them - and should feel comfortable doing so!

Once you have all the stuff there, just make sure you have people there. Having 4-5 people at the stall for the whole day probably won't help much - 2-3 is usually quite enough. However, if more people want to help out, that's excellent. Get them to stroll around in garb, talking to people who look interested and handing out flyers. When you're actually talking to them, make sure there's interaction - you're not just reading off a spiel about your club, or overloading them. Describe in a basic form the kinds of things we do in the SCA, and then *listen* to them. It always helps to get both men and women, and young and attractive is a plus. ;) Put on your smiles, and tell them how awesome we are!

For the fighting demo, you will of course need the usual safety measures - list rope, in particular. If it's not too noisy, a loud and confident herald can draw interest and evoke a great medieval feel, but there's no point if nobody can hear him/her. Note that lots of people will stop and look at the fighting, but not many will want to go look at the stall - try to get people in garb wandering around talking to people who look especially interested, and again, handing out flyers.

After the fighters have had a bash, it can be a good idea to get a couple of interested people into the ring to have a go. Make sure you always have a handle on the safety aspect, and don't get them to suit up or anything, but some people (especially girls, actually, but don't aim specifically at any one 'type' or gender) will really, really enjoy bashing one or two of the fighters a few times. If you have a decent audience, you can

even offer prizes if they can get past the fighter's defence in ~5 blows. Often the people who hang around talking to you and hitting people after the demo will stick around.

Related Suggestions and Comments

Photos!

Beg/borrow/steal a pinboard and stick up photos of everything you can't show them in person at O-Week - wars-in-progress, courts, Agincourt runs, medieval encampments.

Also get photos that feature the people you've got on the ground and behind the table, so the newbies can connect the two and (perhaps) start asking questions. ("Hey, is that you? What was it like inside that massive tent...?")

Cluttered desks seem to have more appeal - the more stuff you show, the more people you attract. But I think its best to keep some room for being able to write down names and collect membership fees.

What also seemed to work a treat was a "wall of photos". Simply take about 40 or so ordinary photos (rather than large A4 prints) - arranged in a collage of overlapping pictures pinned to a felt board - all showing people actually in the College smiling, fighting, dancing, drinking, having fun.

It has an ad-hoc appearance and there is no generational gap which might turn prospective students away.

Things I would do better next year would be to bring less stuff along, so as not to over-clutter the stalls and ensure everything arrives back at their various homes in exactly the same condition, and to encourage the university to advertise the fighting demo better.

See also Gillian Atwood's blog, specifically the *St Basil the Great Orientation Day* entry for 20th Feb 2010: <http://scananigans.blogspot.com/>

Bootstrapping Ideas

- To create a financial nest egg at the outset - a sausage sizzle – if the venue suits and you can get support from a nearby group, add a fighter auction!
- How to find the halls in your area: your local library, council community centre or Citizen's Advice Bureau may have a list. Or try schools, the web, etc.
- For recruitment woes consider your local TAFE or polytechnic for a poster with contact details (students or staff as appropriate)
- See the recruitment discussion and ideas on this web page: <http://jducoeur.org/Justin/provhand.html>

About the Kingdom

Lochac is an international SCA Kingdom covering Australia and New Zealand and their Antarctic territories. Its earliest SCA groups were formed in both countries in the early 1980s. The Australian groups combined to form the Principality of Lochac in 1983.

Lochac became a Kingdom in 2002 and the New Zealand groups joined it (after over 20 years as part of the US Kingdom of Caid) in 2003.

The name *Lochac* comes from the writings of [Marco Polo](#), where he catalogs the lands to the south. Lochac is described as a land south of Java with a [sovereign king](#). Late [sixteenth century maps](#) can be found with Luchac, Beach and Maletur forming part of a large mainland area in the position of [Western Australia](#).

As of mid-2010, the Kingdom of Lochac had around 1200 subscribing members and perhaps double that number who attend at least one SCA event a year, e.g. Rowany Festival, Canterbury Faire or Great Northern War. There were around 40 groups, including 11 Baronies and 10 Shires, the rest being Colleges or Cantons attached to the parent groups.

More details of Lochac's early history:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/SCA+2+History+of+Lochac.pdf>

The Governing Documents of the Society

This guide explains in practical terms how to go about forming a new SCA group. But for reference you can read the Society's new-group requirements in raw form in "Corpora", the basic governing document of the Society:

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/govdocs.pdf>

You'll find the relevant information starting in section III.A and, for smaller and newer groups, III.C.6 in particular.

You'll note these are a *framework*, providing much room for creativity and variation, so long as you maintain good and inclusive governance and keep the lines of communication and reporting clear. For a full set in priority order of all the rules which apply in the Kingdom of Lochac, including Corpora and Lochac Kingdom Law, go here:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/book-law.htm>

A Guide to Heraldry for a New SCA Group

With thanks to the office of Crux Australis (Lochac Kingdom Herald).

One of the more daunting activities for a New Group can be registering a name and device with the College of Heraldry. This article is designed to answer some of the more commonly-asked questions and prevent the most common mistakes that are made in the process.

Choosing a Group Name

In order to be officially recognised as an SCA Group (Branch), you will need to register a Group name. Just like personal SCA names, Group name submissions require supporting documentation showing that the name could have been (or was) used as a real place-name in pre-1600 Europe, or known to Europeans of that period. Although this is not the place to delve into the complexities of medieval place-name formation, here is some basic advice:

- Look for reference books specifically on place-names.

Highly recommended are:

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names, by Eilert Ekwall,
A Dictionary of English Place-names, by A.D.Mills,
Place-names of Scotland, by James R. Johnston,
A Dictionary of Irish Place-names, by Adrian Room,
Dictionnaire Etymologique des Nomes de Lieux de la France, by A. & R. Dauzat.

- Books on medieval history (or translation of medieval documents) can also be suitable for documentation but it must be remembered that not all such books are as well researched as others. Often, place-names are modernised or Anglicised to make it easier for the reader, and do not reflect the actual name recorded in the primary sources. The better books usually have a note somewhere stating the approach the author(s) has taken to personal names and place-names.
- If the name sounds like it came from a fantasy novel, (eg. “Valley of the Purple Unicorn”, or “Dragons’ Eyrie”) then it’s probably not medieval in style!
- Do not base the Group’s name solely on the interests of the founding members - for example, just because everyone happens to be interested in brewing now, that may not necessarily be the most common interest in the group in five year’s time, in which case the name will no longer be relevant to the majority of the Group.
- Do not hesitate to consult the Crux Australis Herald (and other senior heralds) early on about the name(s) the group is considering, and be prepared to make changes if

advised to do so. Note that being told “it seems OK”, by a passing herald, should NOT be taken as good evidence that the name is medieval or can be registered. On-the-spot opinions are no substitute for solid research!

- Submit early. The worst thing a Group can do is choose a name assuming it will be ‘registrable’, use it for several years, then find it cannot be registered. It is also easier for a Group to change its name when it is still young and there is lots of enthusiasm, rather than later when changes become more difficult.
- Have one person as the coordinator for the submission of the name and/or device – ideally this should be the group herald.

Submitting the Name

Once a name has been chosen and sufficient evidence gathered to support it, you then need to get the paperwork right so as to submit the name for registration with the SCA-wide College of Arms.

You will need to forward the following to the Crux Australis Herald – see the College of Heralds website here for the forms: <http://lochac.sca.org/herald>

- TWO copies of the “Name submission form for Society Branches”.
- TWO copies of all supporting documentation, including the title pages of any books used (and the pages on which the evidence appears). If you have used a website, make sure the full URL is somewhere on the page.
- A petition showing “evidence of support” from your group members.

This is NOT the same petition as used for requesting recognition of your Group as an official SCA branch. It must show the name being submitted, the legal and SCA names of all active participants in the group, their signatures, which office (if any) each holds and whether or not they support the submission. Plain writing in biro is much preferred to calligraphy. A standard form is available from the Crux Australis Herald’s website should you require one.

Also, make extra copies of everything for your Group’s files and, if appropriate, your supporting groups Herald’s files. No payment is required - branch name submissions are always free. If possible, get an experienced herald to look over the forms before you send them, to ensure that everything has been filled in correctly.

As with personal names, once submitted, it will be considered at the next monthly Crux Australis submissions meeting. If it looks ‘registrable’ it will be forwarded to the SCA College of Arms. After several months of discussion by the College it will either be

registered or, (if there were problems not spotted at Crux's meeting) returned for further work.

If a problem is found at Crux's meeting then a letter will be sent shortly afterwards explaining what the problem is and some possible solutions.

Choosing the Group's Device (Coat of Arms)

Unless your group is considering becoming a Barony, Province or Principality, there is no requirement to register a device (arms) for your group, especially when a badge may do just as well for people to show their allegiance to the group.

However, if your group does need, or greatly desires, a device, then the following points should be borne in mind.

- Look at some medieval civic heraldry for ideas.
- The device needs to prominently feature a laurel wreath. That's a circular wreath, not a couple of crossed sticks with some leaves on them. Nor does it have to be green. . . it can be any heraldic tincture. Finally, you are not limited to just one wreath.
- Don't try to display everything that everyone is interested in, eg.: a rapier, because you have fencers plus a barrel for the brewers plus a quill for the calligraphers plus. . . etc. It is impossible to combine so many elements into a design and still have it look medieval.
- Choose at most three colours and three types of 'charge' (including the laurel wreath).
- Avoid the combination of "a whatsit, plus a thingamijig within the laurel wreath", as this arrangement can, depending on the charges used, be illegal by the SCA's rules of heraldry, (technically, it's called "three types of charge in a single charge group" and is a big no -no).
- Get some senior heralds to help design the device, or review it, before preparing the submission forms. And be prepared to accept constructive criticism and make changes if necessary.

Submitting the Group's Device (Coat of Arms)

You will need to forward the following to the Crux Australis Herald (again, see the College of Herald's website for the necessary forms):

- **FOUR** coloured copies of the 'Device Submission Form', and **ONE** outline copy, (ie. a line drawing).

- A petition showing “evidence of support”

This is **NOT** the same petition as used for requesting recognition of your group as an official SCA branch. It must show the Group’s name, the legal and SCA names of all active participants in the group, their signatures, which office (if any) each holds and whether or not they support the submission. ***It must also have a written description of the device, (in blazon or plain English) and/or a drawing of it.*** Plain writing in biro is much, much preferred to calligraphy. A standard form is available from the Crux Australis Herald should you require on.

Also, make extra copies of everything for your Group’s files and, if appropriate, your supporting groups Herald’s files.

No payment is required - device submissions for branches are always free.

If possible, get an experienced herald (e.g. one from your sponsoring/parent group) to look over the forms before you send them, to ensure that everything has been filled in correctly. As with all devices, once submitted it will be considered at the next monthly Crux Australis meeting.

If it looks ‘registrable’ it will be then forwarded to the SCA College of Arms. After several months of discussion by the College it will be either registered or, (if there were any problems not spotted at Crux’s meeting) returned for further work.

If a problem is found at Crux’s meeting, then a letter will be sent shortly afterwards, explaining what the problem is and some possible solutions.

Further Information

If you require any further information or assistance then do not hesitate to contact your nearest group’s Herald or the Crux Australis Herald, who can be reached at herald@lochac.sca.org

Appendix

Useful Forms

Group Proposal Application (to form a *proposed* group sponsored by another):

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/ProposalApplicationForm.pdf>

Send this to the Kingdom Seneschal with the next two before getting far along!

Group Proposal Petition (proposed group):

See “Official SCA Group Petition forms” below. You can use these for this stage also.

Agreement between Proposed Group and Supporting Group:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/AgreementBetweenGroups.pdf>

This really matters. You and your officers need to be on good, clear terms with your sponsoring group’s officers from the word go.

Application to become an Official SCA Branch (Group) in Australia/New Zealand:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/OfficialApplicationForm.pdf>

Send this to the Kingdom Seneschal with the next two after your name is registered.

Official SCA Group Petition forms:

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/NewGroupsProposalPetition-Member.pdf>

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs/group/NewGroupsProposalPetition-NonMem.pdf>

Other Resources

See the *Check Out the Resources* section of the **New Seneschal’s Handbook:**

<http://lochac.sca.org/seneschal/docs.htm#resources>

Credits

This handbook has been developed in Lochac over several years and includes work from:

Justin du Coeur (Mark Waks, East Kingdom – *much original content, see below*)
Master Delbert von Strassburg (Del Elson)
Don Emrys Tudur (Matthew Mole)
The Office of Crux Australis Herald
Mistress Finnabhair an Einigh ui Binnech
THL Artemisia da Quietto d'Arzenta (Leonie Kirchmajer)

and

Sir Peter du Gaunt Noir (Peter Fryer – *most v1.1 revisions, 2009-2010*)
Mistress katherine kerr (Vicki Hyde, *who extracted much content into the New Seneschal's Handbook*)
Lady Esslyt verch Edenevet (Hannah Mason – *Running Demos and Stalls*)
Lord Gilligan of St Bartholomew (Stephen Drane – *Related Suggestions*)
Sir Andre of Montsegur (Andrew Leitch – *Related Suggestions*)
Salah al-Alamut (*Related Suggestions*)
Lady Gillian Atwood (*Related Suggestions*)
Lady Frida of Castelburn (Vivienne Hanan – *Bootstrapping ideas*)
Master Bartholomew Baskin (Peter Hyde – *final revisions to v1.1*)

Finally, thanks to all those who have contributed but whose efforts remain unidentified and, in particular:

We wish to express our acknowledgement and grateful thanks to Justin du Coeur (*Mark Waks*) on whose good works this guide and the information contained draws very heavily, if not in places duplicating outright – and whose common sense approach to SCA administration is an inspiration to any successful and well-liked Seneschal.