

Who runs the Court? Heralds!

(Court Heraldry 101)

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Being a voice herald is more than wearing a fine tabard and having a loud voice. Voice heralds need different skills for different situations. **Tournament heralds** need to be able to project their voice; observe the signs from the marshals; can read and pronounce names; and know when (and if) announcements should be made. **Announcement heralds** need to be able to work out when, where, and how many times to make an announcement so that everyone at the event knows (in time) what is happening.



Court heralds need the skills of Tournament and Announcement heralds and then some more. In some ways, Court heralds can be more important than anyone else at Court. A bad Court herald can certainly ruin the Court experience for everyone. These notes are designed to help you avoid that. Please note that while this document is written for Royal Court heralds, the same general rules also apply for Baronial Court heralds.

The duties of Court herald can be divided into several timeframes:

1. Before the event
2. At the event, before Court
3. During Court
4. At the event, after Court
5. After the event

From this list it should be immediately obvious that this is more involved than talking during Court. We will look at each stage in detail on the following pages.

1. Before the event

Sometimes you don't know you're going to be Court herald until you are at the event. An experienced Court herald is aware that they might be called on (because they *are* an experienced Court herald) and does this preparation anyway. If you are not aware before the event, you still need to know these steps so you can check that someone else has done the preparation work ... or so that you can back-fill details after the event.

a. Have the ceremonies ready

The ceremonies of the Kingdom of Lochac can be found on the College of Heraldry website. At the time of writing, they could be found under the 'Heralding' menu or at <http://herald.lochac.sca.org/documents/ceremonies/>. At this location are the ceremonies for all the awards and details on how to open and close Court (as well as specific ceremonies for certain special Courts).

b. Have CHAFs ready

CHAF stands for Court Herald Award Form. This is a standardised document for recording the awards given at an event. It is the Crown's discretion if they want to use this method for reporting awards, or if they want to email the details personally. Bringing several copies of the form will mean you're prepared. The form can be found on the Awards Tracking page on the College of Heraldry website (<http://herald.lochac.sca.org/awards/>) or via a link on the bottom right-hand side of Canon Lore (<http://lochac.sca.org/canon/>).

c. Check the event details

The Crown can give awards at any event they are present at. However, awards are only 'official' if the event was announced in Pegasus beforehand. While you don't actively need to check before every event, if you know you're going to be Court herald it would be useful to be able to tell the Crown if the awards are going to need to be reproclaimed (and to let others know – see *5. After the event*).

d. Coordination

If you know you're going to be Court herald, you should ensure that you're at the event in sufficient time to be able to meet with Crown before the first Court ...

2. At the event, before Court

You might find yourself suddenly acting as Court herald, in which case the only answer is ... do the best you can, and fill in the gaps later. Best practice involves a cooperative Crown who works with Their herald to make Court run as smoothly as possible. This needs a herald who is prepared and will also work cooperatively and confidentially with the Crown.

a. Take notes!

You will need to write things down. An A5 book can be useful as a herald's journal, but at a minimum expect at least two pages per Court (not the CHAF pages, either). Plan on re-writing plans.

You will likely need to announce before Court that those with business for Court should approach you ... do this early, you need to take it to the Crown who will decide (and you will then need to let the person know the answer). Get details, there are no secrets (see below). If you can't tell the Crown what it's about, they will not allow it in Court.

Check if there was a recent event where awards were given but the event wasn't in Pegasus beforehand, you will need the list of award recipients to reproclaim them. You will announce the event, then each SCA name and the award given to them. Ensure this is placed in the agenda for Court – the earlier the better (but that's at the Crown's decision).

b. Your role is not just to speak, it is also to be silent

You should always meet with the Crown before Court to find out what you will need to do, and have prepared. The Crown will most likely have other things to manage at the same time – anything you hear is not for you to repeat. All too often, the Crown feels some things cannot be mentioned in front of the herald for fear of spoiling surprises. The only way we can fix that misunderstanding is by proving we are a vault. This will take time. If the Crown

doesn't want you to know – respect that. Just make sure to gently remind Them that if the thing They're not telling you involves tokens or other items that They remember to have *someone* remind them.

c. Find out the Crown's preferences for Court

Each Crown brings different ideas to Their Reign. Do They prefer calling an award recipient up before announcing what it is? Do They wish to have the ceremony read and *then* call up the recipient? Do they wish to have someone speak about the deeds of one who is to receive an Award of Arms? You will need to know this before Court so that you can adjust the ceremonies where necessary. Crowns are becoming increasingly keen to personalise ceremonies, so be prepared. If the Crown has alternative ceremonies, ensure that you familiarise yourself with them before Court begins. Ask for time to prepare if you need it.

d. Get confirmation!

At the end of your pre-Court discussion with the Crown, confirm where and when Court will be. Also run through the final version of the order of events to happen at Court. There might be something that was overlooked, or you might have misunderstood. The Crown is our client, and we need to ensure that we are certain of Their mind before Court begins.

When you understand Court is to start, find the Crown and check that it is time before announcing to the Populace that Court is imminent (“Oy yez, oy yez, prepare for the Court of The Crown of Lochac!”)

3. During Court

The main event has begun! This is your moment to shine! Well, not exactly. The Crown is the centre of attention, as are the recipients of the Crown's largess. Your role is to be heard, not noticed. Ensure you are standing between the thrones, as you will need to be able to murmur in the Crown's ear(s). Be strong, but polite, on this point if a member of the Royal Household objects – everyone has their own role during Court and not all realise what others need.

a. Don't assume

Before each item, quietly – a word here which means only the Crown should here you – remind the Crown of what piece of business is next. They might have last minute changes, or need to remember what they are going to say.

b. Speak clearly ... and aim for your audience.

Don't rush, but don't drone either. While the Crown and award recipients might speak conversationally, you must always remember that while the Crown is our client, the Populace are our audience. Don't yell, but aim to speak so those in the back can hear you when announcing the Crown's words. Of course, if you're prompting the Crown on Their part in a ceremony, then pitch your volume for Their ears only.

c. Keep to the script

Keep track of the running order agreed before Court. Use the words in the ceremonies that have been agreed on. Some experienced heralds know how to change up words for a little more flavour ... and more importantly when it's ok to do so. Don't presume you are one of those people. Even the same experienced heralds can be asked to knock it off by the Crown.

One exception: if you are nervous about calling a name wrong (again) when calling for three cheers, it might be more comfortable to call "for the newest member of the order of the ..." rather than use their name.

d. Patience!

Don't rush. Give people time to settle at the start; give people time to come forward before calling for them again or moving on; give people time to 'huzzah' when going through three cheers ... and particularly for cheering the Crown at the end of Court. The exact length of a pause is hard to tell, and judging it precisely comes with time and practice.

4. At the event, after Court

You're done! It's all over! You can relax, right? Not exactly. While the word of the Crown is enough for an award to be bestowed, the rest of the Kingdom needs to know it. This is where the CHAF comes in. If the Crown wishes to

manage this Themselves, consult with Them, however if a CHAF is used it needs to be signed by the herald and at least one of the Crowns.

a. Be accurate

Don't pre-fill the form before Court because sometimes people aren't there and we don't want to announce awards before they are given. The absolute minimum required for documentation is the event, the SCA name of the person and the award given. This can lead to problems, so it's usually better to get all the details the form asks for. **FOR AWARD OF ARMS IT IS CRITICAL TO GET ALL DETAILS.** This is likely the first time they've been recorded in Canon Lore. Go and ask the person how to spell their name, and what their mundane name is. The Crown might not have accurate information.

b. Be timely

Don't wait until after the event to fill out the CHAF – you need the Crown's signature. If you don't get it, there is a back-up (see *5. After the event*), but we would rather it was not needed.

For multi-day or multi-Court events, don't wait until the end either. You might not be able to find the people you need. If you do it right after Court, the odds are they're likely still around.

c. Be discrete

Don't announce that you're trying to follow up on information. Ask quietly and privately "may I confirm some details?"

d. Be solicitous

Thank the Crown for asking you to herald for Them. Find out if there is anything else they need ... for example, heralding a later Court. If so, go back to step 2 and start again. If you are truly finished, ensure you return anything you borrowed during your duties is returned to the person who loaned it to you. Thank them profusely – they have done you a great service.

5. After the event

Nearly done! In fact, if the Crown is taking care of letting Crux, Canon Herald and Pegasus know about the awards there's very little left. Just in case though ...

a. Replenish supplies

Did you lose a ceremony? Did you have to write all over it because of changes? Ensure you have replaced it in your book of ceremonies (if you have one), you don't want to get to the next time you're heralding Court to find that you hadn't put a needed ceremony back.

b. Send in the CHAF

The Court Herald Award Form is expected to Canon Herald within seven (7) days of the end of the event. The standard procedure is to scan and email the document to Crux Australis, Canon Herald, Pegasus and the local group herald (if that's not you). Some Crowns also ask They be sent a copy for Their own records. If the CHAF was not completed and signed at the event, you will need to include the Crown and ask They "reply all" to confirm the accuracy of the completed form. Everyone needs to follow this process ... even if they're Crux or Canon.

c. Follow up

If the event was accidentally not announced in Pegasus beforehand you will need to let Canon know, and ensure that the Crown has a copy of the CHAF to give to the Court herald at the next (announced) event to reproclaim the awards. You should also check about two weeks after the event to ensure that the awards are shown on Canon Lore (the front page has a "recently published awards" section).

d. Keep your own records, but maintain privacy

The records we collect are subject to rules of privacy. You can keep your own records (and should, in case something goes missing elsewhere and you, as

Court herald, are the final chance for clarity), but make keep them safe and private.

In conclusion ...

That seems like a lot of work ... but as Court heralds we're responsible for a lot. It becomes easier as you have more practice at it, and generally if you do things in a timely fashion it's not as onerous as it sounds. It's when you put off what should be done that you make extra work for yourself.

If you have questions, concerns, criticisms or complaints, feel free to contact me (while Crux) at herald@lochac.sca.org or (when I'm a private Herald once more) at sorle.sca@gmail.com. You can also ask any other herald ... we're in this together and want to help! May your voice be ever lubricated.