How to be a good consulting herald (for you and your clients!)

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For the sake of your sanity:

You can't know everything, if a client comes to you with an unusual name request, or a strange heraldic charge, or you're confused, ask for help. Lochac Heraldry Chat on Facebook, the Blazons e-mail list, or e-mailing Rocket herald, are all options.

And

You can politely explain medieval practice, and give someone the option of a perfectly "period" name, device or badge. But if they want something that is not 100% authentic but is registerable, *it is their choice*. You cannot refuse to pass on a complete submission (ie. you've been given copies of the paperwork, outline and colour copies, etc.), even if the submission breaks one or more heraldic rules. However, you should inform the submitter of any likely problems, and encourage the submitter to correct them, and not wait until the kingdom herald or Laurel returns them. At the same time, if you're uncertain if something can be registered, submit it, don't say "no" unless you're sure.

Listening:

Hirsch von Henford, and Iulstan Sigewealding, say there are three types of submitter:

1. "Clients who have no idea what they want, but know that they want a name or device.
2. Clients who have some idea what they want, but don't know what's possible. ('I want a unicorn, and I like blue and white; is that legal?')
3. Clients who know EXACTLY what they want."

The important thing is to suggest, and try to steer them towards something that they will be happy with, and is registerable. Do not push them into submitting something they mightn't want.

E.g.. Purpure is vanishingly rare in SCA-period heraldry, but is popular in the SCA. But that doesn't mean you should *refuse* to register any heraldry that uses purple. Or, name frequency lists in Novgorod show the most common male name is Ivan, that doesn't mean the submitter *can't* call himself Martyn.

Explaining:

Sometimes, a submitter will come to you with an idea that is *so good*, it's already registered / protected. They may have a name or heraldry that is too similar to something that's already registered, or they may have created a name that is only a patronymic and no given name.

Make it clear to the submitter which problems you can see, and that you may have missed something.

If their submission is returned, you'll often need to "translate" the reason given from Herald-ese to something understandable.

E.g.. The client's device could be returned with "This device is returned for appearance of marshalling under SENA A6F2c," which would make sense to you, their herald, but sounds like gobbledygook to them.

Documenting:

If you're wanting to submit heraldry with an unusual charge, there really isn't anywhere to put that information on the form, so include it in the text of the e-mail when you submit it to Rocket.

The trick here is to balance what the submitter thinks is important, with what the College considers important. To broadly generalise, heralds care about…

- Does the name/charge/item date to before 1600?
- If it's a name, is it from a place that is covered by SENA Appendix A? Or, does it mix places and time periods covered by Appendix C?
- Is the gender of the name internally consistent?
- Is the spelling of the name (if transliterating into English) consistent?
- Is the language of each name element consistent? (eg. Audreysdóttir)

Heralds aren't worried about …

- The submitter's persona story.
- That the same name element can be found in multiple articles – pick the single "best" source, and submit with that.
- The academic arguments over Swedish rule in early 10th century Danish Hedeby.

As Lochac has moved over to digital submissions, it seems to have also shifted towards relying more on "no photocopy" sources, such as familysearch.org, reports on s-gabriel.org, and appendix H of the administrative handbook. This does mean less work for consulting and submitting heralds, but it also seems some really useful sources can be overlooked. Just because the article or book your submitter found requires scans to be submitted, doesn't mean it should be ignored.

If you're working with a language that isn't mentioned in SENA's appendices, then extra information will be needed, showing the submitted name follows a pattern (be it the mixing of languages, like a man from Swedish Lappmark with the name Henrich Patjiensson, or name element order).

A very brief mention of "stunt-doccing":

Everyone's definition of what constitutes "stunt documentation" varies – the precedents that say you can use late-period English surnames as given names is hotly debated as to if it is legitimately applying renaissance naming practices, or if it is a blatant way for clients to get the name they want.

You're most likely to encounter these sorts of "stunts" when you're dealing with people who have been in the SCA for a significant period, who have decided they want to register their name, and are disinclined to making changes. But their name is a combination that wouldn't be registerable under SENA.

(The window to "educate" and suggest more authentic names has long passed, though if they say they want to have a name from a particular time period and place, you may be able to find something that sounds close enough.)

Personally, I would recommend submitting with "stunt" documentation only if there is no other way. If the client is new and enthused enough, try to show them other options they may never have considered, that they might find more appealing.

Submitting:

Before submitting, try to get in writing (I prefer via e-mail) from the submitter that they're happy with the paperwork, and approve you sending it up to Rocket herald. It gives them a chance to look it over, and have one final think about if it is the submission they want.

When submitting online, why are the heralds so picky about pixel density, and file format? It's ultimately because of archiving. While you are submitting for your client *today*, a decade from now someone may want to look up part of the submission. In the past, physical drawings and photocopies were posted to California and kept in a central archive, but nowadays copies are either submitted as JPG files, or received by Rocket herald and scanned in.

The paper archive has been scanned using the same format and pixel density, so it means your submission can be placed in the archive without any extra work.

For more information, see the May 2011 LoAR cover letter.

If you're not the local branch herald, cc your group herald so they have a copy of the submission, and can include it in their quarterly reports.

Also, include the e-mail address of the submitter in the body of your e-mail to Rocket, not just in the to/cc field.

I prefer to cc in the submitter too, so that they have a record of *what* was submitted, and *when* it was submitted.

Informing

If the person's submission is accepted for registration, **you** helped the submitter do it, but if it's returned then the nefarious **they** (ie. senior heralds, there is always a more senior herald responsible!) did it.

That doesn't mean once a submission is in OSCaR, you can ignore it until the LoAR saying it has been registered, or returned, is released. Nor does it mean that the minute a commenter suggests there is a problem, that you should tell the client that they should prepare new paperwork because the submission is doomed to fail. Ask questions, and try to figure out if it's something that can be fixed.

Keep track of submissions you were involved with, by clicking on the 'Notify' links on OSCaR.

Resources – About the consulting process.

- Hirsch von Henford, and Iulstan Sigewealding. 2002. *How to Be an Heraldic Consultant*.
  Online: http://heralds.westkingdom.org/Handbook/viii_8-HowToBeAnHeraldicConsultant.pdf
  Accessed 7th August 2016.
- Judy Gerjuoy and Elizabeth Brown. 2004. *Drachenwald Branch Herald's Guide. 2nd Edition.*
  Online: http://www.drachenwald.sca.org/sites/default/files/heralds_handbook2004.pdf
  Accessed 7th August 2016.
- Brunissende Dragonette. Undated. *Heraldic Consultation Some thoughts from doing heraldic consultation in diverse conditions.*
  Online: http://heraldry.sca.org/heraldic_consultation.html
  Accessed 7th August 2016.

Resources – Rules and submission tracking.

- SCA College of Arms. 2013. *Standards for the Evaluation of Names and Armoury* (SENA)*.*
  Online: http://heraldry.sca.org/sena.html
  Accessed 7th August 2016.

  SCA Laurel Sovereign of Arms. Undated. *Online System for Commentary and Response* (OSCaR).
  All accessed 7th August 2016.

  - Submission tracking (doesn't require a login): http://oscar.sca.org/index.php?action=181
  - Lochac Kingdom letters: http://oscar.sca.org/kingdom/kingfront.php?kingdom=18
  - Active Letters of Intent: http://oscar.sca.org/index.php?action=101
  - Creating a new account: http://oscar.sca.org/newuser.html
- *The Electronic LoAR Mailing List* (Find out when LoARs are released before they're on the website.)
  Bottom of this page: http://heraldry.sca.org/lists.html