

SCA Demo Preparedness

(I.e., How to Run a Demo!)

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2016

SCA demonstrations (demos) may be organized for several reasons. As a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, we may be presenting demos for educational purposes. We may also be utilizing demos to bring more visibility to the Society, with the hopes for new member recruitment. Whatever the underlying reason behind the demo, it is important to be prepared, to organize well ahead of time and understand any particular rules that might impact the participation at a demo.

Demo Policy

http://www.midrealm.org/chatelaine/docs/Chatelaine_Resources/MidrealmDemoPolicy.pdf

This Midrealm specific demo policy was written by the Kingdom Seneschal, the Kingdom Minister of Youth, the Kingdom Earl Marshal, and compiled and finished by the Kingdom Chatelaine at the time. It is based upon the Society Demo Policy, which is available here:

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chatelain/demopolicy.html>)

Waivers

Whenever there is a question, always side on conservative and have the public sign a waiver. See the Midrealm Demo Policy for more information regarding this. Obviously we want to have public have fantastic, engaging hands-on experiences, but we also want to protect ourselves individually, as well as our organization as a whole.

Midrealm Waiver Policy: <http://www.midrealm.org/seneschallorum/WaiverPolicy2008.pdf>

Waivers can be found here:

- <http://www.midrealm.org/seneschallorum/adultwaiver.pdf> (adult waiver)
- <http://www.midrealm.org/seneschallorum/chldwaiver.pdf> (minor waiver)
- <http://www.midrealm.org/seneschallorum/famwaiver.pdf> (family waiver)

Advertise your Demo!

If you have a demo coming up - let people know about it! A great way to be successful at your demo is to have a lot of SCA members there, showcasing as many of the activities, arts and sciences that our organization encompasses, in engaging ways to the public. But this means people!

Set up a Facebook event page for your demo! Put it on your local group's webpage. Make sure you have information including set-up and tear-down, what types of activities you would like to see represented, and any other important information. Advertise your Demo! Try to do this as far in advance as possible, because activity calendars fill up quickly! Some radio stations and newspapers allow not-for-profit organizations to place small ads at a minimal cost, which could

give you another avenue to advertise in!

Obviously you are going to be reaching out to your local group for assistance. But do not be afraid to reach out to neighboring groups as well. Don't be afraid to look outside your region, as well. We suggest drawing a circle on a map of about an hour drive time (50-60 miles), and contact all groups in that area! In addition, you have Regional Chatelaines who are also great resources and can assist you with your upcoming demos!

How to Interact with the Public

Demos are meant to provide the public with a range of information and should hopefully be as hands-on and engaging as possible. You can ask yourself, "what do you want the public to walk away with?" What are the goals of your demo? What do you want your public to experience? This can allow you to plan accordingly with the types of activities, youth projects, brochures, etc., that you might need.

Most likely you are giving visitors information about Medieval and Renaissance history, arts and science, or multisensory information regarding martial activities. If possible, give potential newcomers opportunities to do hands-on things!

It is sometimes difficult at demos not spend time with friends and other SCA members. However, at demos we should be focused on the public, as this is our intended "audience". It is important to present a friendly face, someone willing to be approached and answer questions, instead of sitting back away from the public and only being present to "hang-out" with other SCA people.

Do NOT give the public information on everything about everything related to the SCA! They do not need to know all the things! **Particularly not related to anything political or questionable or negative.** If you have to think about whether what you might say would have a negative impact, it's probably best to keep it to yourself. Find out instead what they are interested in. **Listen** to them. See what they know already. Avoid the phrase, "Well, actually..." SCA members often like to talk about what they know or what they do. Which is great! But giving the public too much information often causing eyes to glaze over, which isn't what we want. We want to make sure they know that any information they have has value as well, because it makes them feel like they are contributing!! We want the potential newcomers to come back for more! They want to have fun and be interested and learn as they go, and that's what we want for them! As they grow, we all grow!

Handouts/Branding

It is good to have information for the public to take away with them that relates to the SCA and in particular, to your local group; in case they are interested in learning more or in joining! There are a variety of ways you can create these information "take-aways". You could have business cards, brochures, flyers, bookmarks, wooden tokens (with the group's website on one side and the heraldry on the other), etc. You could have small cards that have all your info and

illumination, and let the interested folks fill in the calligraphy with your local info! (Also, even tracing, they are writing it, and implanting it into their heads.)

<http://www.sca.org/docs/library.html> - about halfway down this page is a variety of recruitment materials. Feel free to use these and add in your local group's information. Your Kingdom or Regional Chatelaines may also have information you could use.

Important information to have on these handouts include the name of the local group, website, email address to the Newcomer Officer and possibly the Facebook page, if it is forward-facing and would have appropriate information. If you know the technology, you could use QR Codes:

<http://www.qr-code-generator.com/>

This allows interested parties to just simply scan your code, and it immediately pulls up your website/information!

http://www.midrealm.org/chatelaine/docs/Chatelaine_Resources/Info%20Cards_fillable.pdf - Fillable business card that can be printed on card stock and folded.

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chatelain/pdf/trifoldtemplate.pdf> - Tri-fold brochure

Not everyone is a Chatelaine

It is often said that "Everyone is a Chatelaine". And while it is true that everyone should be welcoming and friendly to newcomers, not everyone in your local group should necessarily be the public's first point of contact. There may be several reason for this. As as Chatelaine, you probably know some of the strengths and weaknesses of local members. And know how to address those strengths and weaknesses while planning your demo. Find your most charismatic and empathetic members to be the most likely to interact with the public.

Demo Follow-up

It is likely that visitors to your demo will want to learn more about the SCA or be interested in joining. Therefore, you will want to have some type of information gathering form, which will allow you to collect names and email addresses. From here you can send these interested parties more information, including links to your local group's website, event calendar, and the contact information for your Chatelaine, or other responsible Officer/Deputy.

Newcomer Workshops

Once you have some newcomers, it is vital for their retention that you give them enough information/orientation so they can confidently get started. One of the best ways to do this is through workshops/classes that are geared towards getting started in the SCA. Again, you should be careful not to give them TOO much information all at once. Find out what they are interested in and then plan accordingly.

Some of the workshops you might consider include:

- What to Expect at Your First Event
- Garb 101
- Getting Into Armor

- Persona Development

Resources

- This is the Chatelaine Handbook for the Midrealm. It was last updated in 2010, but it is very well written and still has a wealth of information that is valuable. In particular there is a lot of great information regarding demos!
http://www.midrealm.org/chatelaine/docs/Chatelaine_Resources/Chatelaine_Handbook%202010.pdf
- The Midrealm Chatelaine website, which contains information for both the Chatelaine as well as for the Newcomer. If there are additions you would like to see here, please let the Kingdom Chatelaine know!
<http://www.midrealm.org/chatelaine/>

Thank you!

Giovanna

If have feedback or more ideas, please contact me at:
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