

# SECTION III - Duties of a Herald

2) Commentary on the Roster Letter Enclosure  
(Spring, AS XXXII; Summer, AS XXXVII)

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Abstract: A paragraph by paragraph expansion on the Roster Letter enclosure that is included with your Roster Letter, explaining to the rostered herald more of what is meant in that description. Specifically covers some recent problem areas.

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## COMMENTARY ON THE ROSTER LETTER ENCLOSURE

Eilis O'Boirne, Frederick of Holland and Alison von Markheim (March XXV)

Paragraph 1: With the exception of Vesper, whose tenure is limited by Kingdom Law, and who is rostered by the Crown and the Laurel Sovereign of Arms, heralds are not rostered by the College for "terms of office". However, a Principality may choose to limit the term for its Principality Herald, or for all branch officers. If you are subject to such a limited term, you are responsible for securing a replacement for yourself and notifying the College. All senior Heralds should find and train a deputy.

With these exceptions, all appointments are "open-ended". Obviously, "at-large" appointments don't need a cut-off date. However, since a branch herald should have some specialized skills, and since there is no guarantee that someone will come along every two years who either has those skills, or has an interest in acquiring them, those appointments have been made open-ended as well.

This does mean that you are responsible for reviewing your own interest in heraldry, your degree of involvement in the SCA, and the needs of your branch (if applicable). "At-large" heralds may resign at any time simply by notifying the College Office in writing.

A branch herald may also resign at any time, but should include in his letter of recognition the name and address of the person who is to take over his position. A branch herald who is of PE or higher rank will be asked to stay on with the College as an at-Large member. Branch heralds who simply disappear without notifying the College create problems for the branch, the Seneschal of the branch, and the College Office, since we will not remove a branch herald without trying to ascertain whether he truly wishes to leave the College.

Paragraph 2: This is mostly self-explanatory. Note that, when you are trying to follow the orders of a King, a Prince, and a superior officer, you may run into cases where the orders are contradictory. If you do, **ask** about the orders you have been given and explain the problem. In general, commands given by

Royalty overrule orders given by a superior officer. However, in cases affected by the Rules of Submission, or in cases involving "routine conduct of the Office", they may not. Above all, in cases like this, COMMUNICATE. If in doubt, contact your heraldic superior immediately.

Throughout this paper, and the "Duties and Responsibilities" paper, the word should is used frequently. Please keep in mind that "should" does not equal "must". If you want to kick back at a particular time, or at a particular event, that's perfectly all right. However, if you find that you are doing it all the time, consider whether you really want to be on the roster. If you will be unavailable to work as a herald at an event, do please inform the herald-in-charge of that fact.

Paragraph 3: Being part of one of the Great Offices means that you must take responsibility for your own actions, and that you will occasionally be taken to task for the actions of other heralds, or of the Office. "YOU (meaning the College of Heralds) bounced my device -- why?" is probably the simplest problem you will have to deal with under this heading. Just remember to always be as polite and as informative as possible, and to refer any questions you can't answer to someone who can. (See **Section XI** for answers to some common questions.)

Paragraph 4: In addition to the requirement set by Laurel that all heralds have a name and device registered or in submission, there is a further requirement set by the Western College. This is that the name and device submitted should be better in design than the average, again to set a good example. This does not apply to those with names and devices registered, but to new submissions only.

"...assist to the best of their ability..." means that all heralds should hold themselves ready to help all other heralds, both at events and at other times.

Herald's meetings fall into several categories. There are the monthly meetings at which name and armory submissions are considered for the entire Kingdom. There are Principality meetings (in some Principalities). There are other regular meetings, like the weekly meetings by various heralds to consider the submissions from other Kingdoms. These meetings are listed in the PAGE or your Principality or local newsletter.

It is recommended that you attend the monthly meetings, if it is within your power to do so. "Within your power" does not mean that you should drive six hours each way every month, or that you should make major sacrifices to attend. However, it does mean that you should explore the possibility of car-pooling with other heralds, or consider staying over after attending a Saturday event.

Heralds' meetings at events have as their primary purpose the creation of a sign-up sheet of those willing to work at the event. (See **Section IV.6**, on Duty Rosters). They are also a convenient time to distribute mail and pass along news which affects the College. Even if you are not planning to work at an event, show up at the meeting and check in.

The request that you increase your knowledge is part of a general feeling that even senior heralds have much more to learn. In addition to improving your own heraldic skills, your striving for heraldic learning may uncover new information useful to us all.

Paragraph 5: The Minutes are our primary means of communication outside of the meetings. They include the information which was discussed at the Sunday meetings, along with all submissions considered, and their disposition (along with emblazons). If you are not able to attend the meetings, or are able to attend only irregularly, the Minutes can keep you up-to-date on the Rulings of the College of Arms and the activities of the College of Herald's. They are also a valuable tool for learning about names and armory, as there is some discussion given on most submissions. In the case of submissions which are returned, the reasons for the returns are given. (You can also color the pictures.)

They are particularly important for branch heralds, as they give the fate of names and armory submitted by the people from that branch. As it often takes between four and five months for a submitter to be informed that his/her submission has been processed by Laurel, the interim knowledge is often useful.

Paragraph 6: See **Section III.3** for a discussion of heraldic regalia, including how and when to wear it.

Paragraph 7: Some of the things a branch herald may be expected to do as a local officer (beyond his heraldic duties) are covered in **Section III.7**. Please note that these things are not required by the College of Herald's, but that we encourage local heralds to work with the rest of their branch. The duties required of a branch herald by the College are those of voice, book, and field covered in this paragraph, as well as the duties given for all Members of the College. Your primary duty as branch herald is to keep the branch "legal" by your existence, and to make sure that heraldic services are available to those who need them.

The specifics of what may be expected of you as a branch herald will vary widely from branch to branch, and will depend on the needs of the branch. In some groups, a heraldic officer is expected to be very active, attending the local meetings and helping every newcomer to choose a name and design a device. In other groups, there are no local meetings and the herald is expected only to fill the requirement that the branch have a herald. Most groups fall somewhere between these extremes.

Your basic responsibility as a local officer is to be available to the people in the group. This is most easily accomplished by attending the local meetings and/or fighter practices, but it is not the only solution. If meeting attendance on a regular basis is difficult for you, speak to the members of the group and work out other ways to help them. Set up regularly scheduled "heraldic at-homes" or hold local herald's meetings. Note that you are **NOT** required to attend branch meetings, but you should seriously consider how effective you will be as a branch herald if you are out of touch with the members of the branch. If you are not able to be active in the group, consider

letting someone else have the “official” job. This will leave you free to do the heraldic work you enjoy.

Although there can be only one “branch herald” for each branch, it is possible and even desirable for there to be MANY heralds in each branch. Any “deputies” below Principality level are not official, but informal appointments can be made. For instance, if you are a Baronial herald and hate doing Courts, you might wish to appoint a PE-at-large living in the branch to handle all the Courts. If you are considering such an appointment, speak to your Principality Herald or to one of the Kingdom Staff Herald.

**Paragraph 8:** If you live in one of the Principalities of the West, your immediate supervisor is your Principality Herald, whose name and address are given in **Section III.6**. If you live in the Marches, your immediate supervisor is Vesper, whose name and mailing address are given in the same section. If you live in the Far West, your immediate supervisor is the Golden Peach Pursuivant. You can also request help from any other herald you feel might be able to help you. This includes other branch heralds, Pursuivants and PEs-at-large, and Kingdom Staff Herald. Remember that it is always wise to delegate a job you can't handle, and to refer a question you can't answer, and that no one will think less of you if you do this.

**Paragraph 9:** See **Section III.5** for the duties of the Titled Herald, and **Section III.6** for the names of the current holders of the positions. One of the primary responsibilities of a Titled Herald is to serve as a resource for the College, and for the Members of the College. In other words, part of their job is to answer your questions.

**Paragraph 10:** See **Section III.4** on advancement in rank within the College. Note that all advancement is based on willingness to work and on learning. Note also that all heralds, regardless of rank, work for the Kingdom, their Principality, and the College of Herald. To the extent that they contribute, they are valuable and individual parts of a whole that is not rigidly organized along a “chain of command”.

There is occasional confusion about the status of Cornets and trainees. Except for those Cornets who are serving as heralds for their branches, Cornets and trainees are not rostered. They are, however, heralds-in-training, and are to be considered as “unofficial” Members of the College. They perform valuable work and are important to us.

Cornets and trainees do not “belong” to a specific branch, but are the responsibility of all Members of the College. Cornets are under the authority of the herald-in-charge at the event at which they are working. Trainees do not “belong” to a specific herald-teacher, but should seek training from anyone who has something to teach them. It is the responsibility of each rostered herald to aid in the training process as much as he is able, and the duty of every herald to continue his own heraldic education.

**Paragraph 11:** Heraldic titles have been historically granted only to those groups of Baronial and Provincial size and larger. This is because these groups are larger, and tend to be more stable, than Shires, Cantons, etc. Since the number of branches has grown so large, it would not be practical to register an heraldic title for each branch, nor would it be desirable to tie up that number of titles. It is also contrary to College of Arms policy. The branch pursuivant titles currently in use in the West are:

**Marches:**

Tarmist:	Blue Heron
Allyshia:	Sea Lion
Far West:	Golden Peach
Earngyld:	Sea Eagle

**Mists:**

Southern Shores:	Silvergull
Westermark:	Black Mark
Calderium:	Peacock
Vinhold:	Puncheon
Mists:	Nebuly
Darkwood:	Pinnacle

**Cynagua:**

Fettburg:	Bentcastle
Golden Rivers:	Gloria Fjord
Silver Desert:	Snowbound

Oertha:

Eskalya:	Peregrine
Winter's Gate:	Estoille

Those pursuivants and PEs designated as “at-large” are the heralds not attached to a specific branch, although those in each Principality are under the direction of the Principality heralds. They are one of the strengths of the College. Because we use at-large rostering, we are able to keep interested people active in the College.

Paragraph 12: When the Board of Directors set up the Roster System, they mandated that a signed letter of acceptance be on file for each position. This is why we ask that you return a copy to us. (It also guarantees that you have received the letter of appointment.)