

SECTION IV -- WHAT THE COLLEGE OF HERALDS DOES

4) How to be Herald-in-Charge at an Event (August, XXI)

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Abstract: An informal examination of the responsibilities of an herald-in-charge at an event. Should be used in conjunction with SECTION IV.6.

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HOW TO BE HERALD-IN-CHARGE AT AN EVENT

How to Organize the Heralds at an Event

Master Hirsch von Henford, OL & Master Frederick of Holland, OP (August, AS XXI)

Congratulations - You are the herald-in-charge at an event for the first time. The problem is, you are not exactly sure how to do what needs to be done. You have the vague impression that you ought to be organizing the other heralds. This is true, but before we continue, let us define some terms which will help assist in the understanding of this topic.

Herald-in-Charge

This hapless person (you) is the one who is responsible for making sure that all of the heraldry is done in a proper manner at an event. As the title implies, you are "in charge", for the duration of the event, of those heralds wishing to provide their services. If you are the herald for the branch the event is held in, you will normally be the herald in charge, but this is not necessarily the case. (For instance, if a Principality event is held in a Shire, the Principality herald will normally be the herald-in-charge.)

Duty Herald

This is the herald who is currently "on duty" off the field. If announcements are to be made, they are made by the duty herald.

Field Herald

The herald who is doing the heraldry in the eric (or fighting circle). This person announces the fighters, and performs the litany for starting the fights. During any fighting, there should usually be both a field and a duty herald, but this depends on the size of the event. For a small local event, they may be one and the same person.

Court Herald

This herald is the one who organizes and performs any court that is being held by Royalty or their representatives. Normally a court herald will have a backup herald to assist them.

As herald-in-charge, you should go to the autocrat and/or presiding noble at an event (King, Prince, Baron, etc.), ask what he/she wishes in the way of schedule, when the lists are to start, etc., and find out ALL other details of the event. If the necessary preparations have not been made by someone else, the herald may offer to see to it that they are made. If there is to be an organized lists, then the herald must confer with the lists officer. The lists officer is the person who organizes the lists and knows who is fighting whom, when. You should find out how many fighters there are and whether there is to be more than one fighting area, etc.

You should then determine the number of heralds which may be needed at any one time, and whether or not there will be any need for a coordinating herald. (Generally, as herald-in-charge, you will be the coordinating herald, but if the event is small, such coordination may be minimal.)

Once you have done the above, you should call for all heralds who wish to help at the event, either with field work, duty or whatever, and create a duty roster, making sure as best you can that everyone gets a chance to be of assistance within their abilities, and not overburdening anyone. (See also the article on how to organize a duty roster.) A sign-up sheet should be passed around, with a place for names, and a place to check whether they feel that they can do field work or announcements and whether they feel that they need training (and possibly one for volunteers for court). While the sign-up sheet is being passed around, you, as the herald-in-charge, should make any announcements that may deal with specific aspects of the event. If at all possible, you should give a copy of the duty roster you create from the sign-up sheet to the officer of the lists.

There will usually be a court or other gathering early in the event, if for no other reason than to start the event. As the herald-in-charge, you should discuss this with the presiding noble, autocrat, or other person(s) in charge, to determine if there will be court, and when it will be. If there is court, a duty herald should be sent out to announce that business for court is being taken (giving a place and a person to talk to), and an announcement of when court will be held. (See section VII on Court Heraldry.) Following court, the herald who is scheduled as duty herald should attempt to stay in one location for most of their time, unless they are actually making an announcement. This makes it easier for someone to find the duty herald if a fresh announcement needs to be made.

During the lists at the event, the lists officer will have determined the order of the lists themselves. If the tournament is a large one, there may be more than one fighting area within the eric, and therefore, more than one herald may be required. In a situation like this, a coordinating herald may be needed. A coordinating herald may be used for large lists, to work with the lists officer to make sure that the field herald has the correct cards for the fighters on the field, and for the fighters who are currently arming themselves in preparation for combat. (See section V on Field Heraldry.)

The herald-in-charge should keep an ear out for each herald in the lists, to make sure their voice is not being strained, and if it is, they should be prepared to send in another herald to take over. While it is the duty of the individual field herald to avoid straining his/her voice, and to call for assistance it is easy for them to feel that they ought to be able to continue, and it helps if someone is paying attention.

As can be seen, there is a lot to being herald-in-charge at an event. This is not to say that it is not a rewarding job, just a busy one. If you volunteer, or are volunteered, for this duty, be prepared for a busy event.