

SECTION V -- FIELD AND DUTY HERALDING

1) OYEZ, OYEZ
(August, XXI)

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Policy Level: Informational (some WK Policy)

Intended Audience: All voice heralds and interested by-standers.

Abstract: An informed introduction to the theory and practice of voice heraldry in the West Kingdom.

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OYEZ, OYEZ!

Caoimhin o Fiodhabhra (August XXI)

This paper is meant to be something most heralds are not -- short and to the point. The subject matter is that of field and duty heraldry. I hope to cover some of the concepts, duties and responsibilities, and health care requirements of these positions in as succinct a style as possible. Obviously, this is an overview of the subject, not an exhaustive, complete, and therefore mostly useless, authoritative work on the subject. (There are other useful articles on these subjects in the rest of the Handbook.)

CONCEPTS

The first thing a herald should think about when going on post as a field or duty herald is the Royalty. The presiding Royalty should set the tone for the event, and the heralds should follow the style set, whether formal or informal. If you are unsure about this, err on the side of conservatism. For those heralds who would prefer a looser set of guidelines which would allow them to pun unfettered, save the puns for the evening festivities. Your audience will be much more appreciative -- and you won't risk offending Their Majesties while you are on duty.

Secondly, remember that you are speaking as the King's Voice, and that this is quite different from the King's Word. The King's Word is **Law**. The King's Voice is a **Useful Tool**. Being a tool keeps you safe from any undue reprisals that those who do not appreciate loud noises or the accidental mispronunciation of their names might like to send your way. Some refer to this as being inviolate; others call it the herald's immunity; others call it simply unfair. Do not abuse this privilege lest it go away when your back is turned.

Thirdly, remember that field and duty announcements are done as a service for the subjects of the Crown, not for your personal ego-gratification. If someone asks what your announcement was, respond courteously and promptly. If someone asks you to make an acceptable announcement (non-offensive, non-frivolous, non-commercial), make it at once in their presence and then proceed to make it on your rounds. (See the separate note on who can tell you to say what, and suggestions for handling non-appropriate announcements.) If you are a field herald and people are not responding to their arming calls, do not get angry (even if they are). Instead, ask the marshalls for help in locating them. If you know where the individual fighters are camped, you can aim their arming calls directly at them.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The major impetus behind having field and duty heralds is to get the announcements made. All other considerations aside, we could be replaced with a public address system for this facet of our existence. That, however, would detract from the medieval ambiance that we as a Society are trying to create. Therefore, the responsibility of the herald is to be more than just a human PA system. You could do your duty, make your announcements promptly and efficiently, and sound like a race track announcer or information operator -- impersonal, mundane, and modern. Strive for more than that; add to the medieval atmosphere. This does not mean that you should talk fluent "forsoothly" at the top of your decibel range. Just throw in the little bit of style and flourish that makes each announcement your own. Listen to the experienced heralds who are pointed out to you, or the ones that you admire, and figure out what it is that they do that makes their announcements special. Ask them for help in paraphrasing some basic announcements. (See the article on paraphrasing for more help with this.) However, remember that the individuality of each herald, while a good and wonderful thing, does not give you leave to create and use an entirely new style of announcement. Our primary job is being understood, so check with your superiors before taking off on a tangent.

The other major responsibility of duty heralds is screening announcements. This helps keep the frivolous and offensive announcements from getting undue "air-time". If someone keeps pestering you to make an announcement you feel is in one of these categories, refer him to your superior, or to any of the senior Herald's. Another type of announcement which should be screened is the "non-general" announcement. If someone is looking for someone else, and wishes them to come to a certain pavilion, save your voice. If you aren't busy, you could offer to help them look for the individual. This method is usually quicker, as well as being less work for you. Remember, however, to distinguish between true and false emergencies. Someone who is late to dinner usually isn't an emergency, but a missing child may very well be one. There is also a category of "real" announcement which is better done at Court, and a waste of time and energy done around the field. These announcements tend to be fairly complex, and are not generally time-specific. If in doubt, check with the herald appointed to handle the next Court. If Court is long, he may wish you to make the announcement anyway.

For field heralds, there is a different set of rules to follow. In general, at large events, you are helping to run the Lists. You should not be making general announcements. If anyone asks you to make one, politely direct him to the herald on duty or to the herald's pavilion. This is actually less confusing to the general populace than if you were to switch from field announcements to general announcements and back again. Of course, if there are no separate duty heralds, you should make any acceptable announcements brought to you.

Both field and duty heralds are responsible for the regalia they are using on the field. When you are on post, you should wear a baldric, tabard, or cloak with the arms of the College of Herald's prominently displayed. (Pins and buttons do not count.) It is required for field heralds and highly recommended for duty heralds that you carry a staff. The custom is that you raise the staff when you are speaking so that other heralds will not speak in competition with you. Keep an eye out for other raised staves, so that you don't talk over other heralds. Using the regalia lets the populace know where to find you if they need a repeat of the announcement, or want to ask for further details. Most of us have found it convenient to have a clipboard, both for holding announcements and lists cards, and for referring back to announcements made earlier. It is also handy to have a watch somewhere on your person (not necessarily on your wrist), as people will expect you to know what time it is. While it is recommended that heralds eventually acquire their own regalia, there is usually some available at the herald's pavilion.

HEALTH CARE

One of the most neglected aspects of heraldry is the proper care and feeding of the working herald. Field and duty work use an incredible amount of calories and fluids without any apparent effort. The most important thing to remember is to keep your voice WET. This means drinking a lot of liquids. The preferred liquids fall into four categories: water, non-sticky fruit juices, gatorade, and diet sodas. These should be taken cool or warm, not ice-cold or hot. Very hot or cold liquids will cause your throat to tighten up, increasing the risk of damage. Eating while on duty is ok, but some caution should be taken in what you eat. Recommended foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, pickles (for replenishing lost minerals), salad, soup, antipasto, and very moist breads. It is best to stay away from dry breads, chocolate, any heavily sugared or salted food (like salami), chocolate, all dairy products, chocolate, and of course, alcohol. (Did I mention chocolate?) The sweet, salted, and dry foods will irritate your throat; chocolate and dairy products will coat your throat; alcohol will numb your throat. They all heighten the risk of damage to the vocal chords. I usually stay

away from meat on duty, but this is a personal bias. If you do need meat, eat light, lean meat like chicken, rather than heavy, greasy meat like beef.

Wear sunscreen -- preferably sunblock -- an addition to a hat. You will be exposed to ultraviolet even on misty or overcast days. Don't try to talk non-stop. Break up your announcements and take a few deep breaths between them. Use any shade available on the field, and sit when you are not actively working or walking to the spot where you will make your next announcement. Make sure that you know when you will be relieved, and who your relief is going to be.

If you don't think your voice is capable of covering the campground in three or four announcements -- or even if you do -- relax and make more frequent, less intense announcements, each covering a smaller area. This is supposed to be fun, and a sore throat after every event will cut down on the pleasure factor after a while. If you have a hangover, don't try to serve as a herald immediately. Ask whoever is doing the scheduling to put you on a later shift, and use the time to replenish your body fluids and electrolytes. If you are suffering from a cold or hayfever and there are other heralds on hand, take the day off. These are all sane and sensible precautions that will keep you enjoying events and providing the Kingdom with valuable service. We do appreciate the help, and want you to be able to help again.

AND SO FORTH

This collection of thoughts and practices is meant to encourage those who enjoy or would like to try the public-announcing aspect of heraldry. There is, of course, a great deal more to it than is contained herein, or even elsewhere in this Handbook. If you wish to learn more, there is no better way than to show up at an event and volunteer to work. There will be events at which you will be worked until you drop, and others at which you will be asked to do only an hour of duty or a round of field work. This is the natural way of the office, and in no way reflects upon the quality of your work. Once more, we do appreciate your help, and wish to encourage you in your pursuit of heraldic knowledge and experience.