

What happened that resulted in the compiling of this book you may ask? Well... here is the tale.. In short bardic form.... (By Lady Deianeira)

It was Pennsic 34 Land-Grab weekend - Lord Po's first Pennsic and although Lady Dei's decade anniversary, her first not limited to the use of a mobility device (i.e. wheelchair, electric scooter, etc) and also her first as an active combatant. The toils of the day were coming to an end, so the campers of Neptune Rising were relaxing around a campfire enjoying the company of friends not seen in a year. Not long thereafter, they were visited by a Gentle who's British accent was quickly recognized as much more than just an aspect of his persona - and it wasn't long before our band of Rapiermaniacs learned that this Gentle was a representative of the Kingdom of Drachenwald, questing to seek warriors to aid his Kingdom in the coming battles.

A "gypsy" finger was pointed towards the Rapiermaniacs, stating that they were all excellent rapierists and when queried about their abilities, each coterie - in turn, offered their erudition. Modestly satisfied with the responses, they were asked what payment they would like for their services and it was at this point— the reality of the discussion became clearly apparent, and our simple band of Rapiermaniacs began giving serious contemplation to becoming mercenaries... IF [for no other reason], than the pure enjoyment and fun. The one unanswered question was 'which side they would be fighting on'... However the response they received was vague at best, as they were informed that Their Majesties weren't due to arrive at Pennsic until the following weekend, when it would be announced.

Lord Po and Lady Dei left on Sunday to return home for the first week of war—as mundane responsibilities prevailed. It was upon their return the following weekend that all were informed that the Kingdom of Drachenwald would be fighting with the East. Giving consideration to the fact that AEthelmaerc was fighting with the Midrealm, they all agreed that they had made a commitment and felt honor-bound to follow through with their promises. Not to mention, war is supposed to be "fun" and there was no way that the three of them could possibly make any difference in the outcome, they may even [due to the overwhelming odds], actually get a chance to cross blades with a larger number of opponents —and "that" is why they all paid the big-bucks to come to Pennsic in the first place.

Word seemed to spread like wildfire, that this small (and inconsequential) entourage of fencers had become mercenaries for Drachenwald and for the most part, the news was met with a smile, a few jocular comments, a bit of poking in fun, and laughter. However, a few took it more seriously and found the actions of Lord Po and Lady Deianeira...well, less than honorable and even apostate. Even so, the war continued throughout the week with the Rapiermaniacs maintaining their alliance with Drachenwald. After being injured in the woods battle on Friday, Lady Dei was accompanied back to the Baronial encampment by Lord Po- where they were called into a discussion with Her Excellency regarding their actions.. And it was here that Lord Po and Lady Deianeira were tasked with this penance - for their actions and behavior during Pennsic 34.

Lord Stefan, being long-known to be interested only in matters of the blade and harboring no court or political aspirations- was not officially tasked to participate in this project by Her Excellency, Nor was lady Morgana Dark - who was at that time considered to be too recently a new-member, to be held accountable.



The Respondents: *(Can't tell the players without a program!)*

The Knights: Sir Cadogan map Cado Rex of Drachenwald, Baron Alonzio of the Peacemakers

The Laurels: Aoife Finn of Ynos Mon, Duchess Dorinda Courtenay

The Pelicans: Mistress Leonora, Lord Brion Donul Gilbert.

The Dons: Don Lodovick, Don Corwyn, Don Iago, Baron Alejandro, Don Donnan, Don Bastiano di Iacopo

The Populace: Baron Robert, Meg the Mad, Lord Eirik, Lord Benedict Fergus atte Mede

The Rapiermaniacs: Lord Po Silvertop the Rogue, Lady Deianeira Carmen Rodríguez y Aragonés, Lord Stefan Le Ges.



Don Lodovick of Grays Inn (Order of the White Scarf)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor-WOW that's a big one. First I guess it only matters if you value it. I believe in it whole heartedly. Something so precious as Love. We all have a right to it, Yet it is so hard to gain back once lost or tarnished. Explaining honor is like explaining love. So Vast and yet so simple. A value that you adhere to no matter what. A thought here that I overlooked many years. Many people play SCA and become a different person then they are in real life. In the SCA they become a person who has no past history of good and bad and can portray what ever they choose. I do not to many degrees. I am who I am. I can not change between characters. Honor is in both these people on and off the field remain the same. Doing right or the best you can at all times. Making errors and correcting them only strengthens honor.

Service:

This is for everyone else but you, or should I say it is what you do for everyone else but you. Payment or thanks is not expected in return.

Rank vs persona-

Hell yes there a difference. My persona is a Peasant. Free to do as you please. Meager in all ways. I get to play this when I get a day off or in camp. Rank has almost eliminated my persona. Burlap just doesn't fit into court well. I am working on this-I will probably lose to rank.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

That will vary for everyone. Most play varies as the event closes or opens. Not in Parallel. Judgement call here. Choose right.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever -did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

To fight heavy combat. It has been a battle. Kind of like growing old. It just happened to me. I can't say lost just changed. might be a better word. First thought I wish I could do it all over again with the knowledge I now have. Back to the age issue. Don't we all wish to be 21 and know what we know now. But no-one wants to do it all over with keeping the knowledge and experiences that have brought them to this point.



Mistress Leonora of the Willows (Order of the Pelican, Order of the Millrind, Order of the Keystone, Order of the Sycamore, Award of arms, Confederation order of the Thistle, Confederation Order of the Wren

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

My persona is the daughter of a Viking and a Celt, who lives in a larger mercenary household and was raised in this household. I am a member of the Order of the Pelican, that is what I consider my rank. Service has no difference to me in either context, you either are willing to work, or keep a promise to get something done, or attend a meeting, or whatever, or you aren't willing. If you aren't willing to fulfill whatever obligation, you aren't willing to serve. Honor is twofold. You carry your own honor by serving in all you have promised to do, or by working or helping when not asked. My persona is a mercenary, but when I promised to serve as a kingdom officer, I had to set aside some of the attitudes of the mercenary and serve the kingdom. My honor dictates that if my house brothers are hired by another kingdom, I must take a point of honor and support the kingdom I serve. Not participating in the activities that my brothers are participating in can sometimes be lonely, but by doing what I feel I must, I honor myself and who I am. By stepping aside, my house brothers know that I am an honorable person and keep my word. I swore an oath of service to my kingdom, and serve it by not only fulfilling my obligations, but by honoring it by not fighting against it. My household motto is "Honor not Honors", there are many thoughts on what this means, but to me it means this, that if act and serve in an honorable way, I am an honorable person, I don't need accolades or cookies to prove that I am honorable, if I know I am honorable, I will be honorable. Yes, I have been blessed with the accolades, but I was surprised when they were awarded each and every time, and believe that I was given these awards not for my political savvy, or my brown nose, but for my service and behavior.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

This is a hard question....I take being a peer seriously, and I take being a kingdom officer seriously but there is a line. An example at present, is that as a kingdom officer I am required to attend curia, but with the price of gas right now, and the cost to travel to NY from WV to attend is out of my budget, so I sent apologies to their highnesses for not being able to attend. The game ceases to be a game when it interferes with my budget, or my life. IF there is a school activity that my child is participating in, well, that comes first, or if one of my family members is ill, that comes first, or if work needs me to be there, that comes first. Political responsibilities and mechanical responsibilities are a fine line. As a minister of the Lists, I deal with paperwork all of the time. that is my main responsibility. Usually this has no relevance in the political arena, but sometimes, when I have to tell a knight, or a prince that their card is expired and they can't play till they fix it, the two lines cross. Sometimes it can be difficult, because in medieval society, a woman wouldn't tell a knight or prince what to do, but sometimes I have to, one of the hardest things to do is to remember not to be angry or publicly vocal about a problem, and keep it private or out of the general populace's eye. I have had to learn the political stuff, and to be honest, I'm still not great at it, but its a work in progress.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever -did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I joined in 1980- There have been a few times over the years that I lost my original zeal due to responsibilities. Autocrating an event when I had pneumonia, that was no fun and I took a few months off. One reign I went

to 13 events in a row, one every weekend, and I took a 6 month break after that, just burnt out because I had let some mundane things slide. My opinion now is that everyone needs a break sometimes, and the older you get, the better you learn how to say NO! It's a hobby and you can't let it get to the point where you don't enjoy it anymore, if you get to that point ,maybe its time to quit.



Don Iago Benítez (Order of the White Scarf, Cornelian, Golden Alce, Sycamore, Keystone)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor is not swayed by rank or persona. Honor is the foundation to all actions. A person acts the way he/she does because of honor/lack of honor. Being fair, honest, dependable, merciful, and encouraging are marks of honor. Service is often a byproduct of honorable actions. If you help someone who is struggling, instruct new people, or hold an office are examples of service.

Often rank is achieved because others recognize honor in a person. I believe all orders recognize honor as a prerequisite for advancement in said order. Those that can prove themselves as truly being honorable are valued over those without such qualities. These people are to be held as models of behavior, and they are seen as good examples of a member of an order.

Persona does not play a factor in honor. I am an honorable person thus my persona is honorable. I have no desire to be dishonorable to the people I work and play with.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

Each individual draws the line between S.C.A. society and life. I must admit that after 16 years in the society I am involved at least 3-4 days a week. However, I don't see it as intrusive. This society is made of my friends, and it is a place I like to be. It is the people in the society that make it such a special place. I go to the movies, birthday parties, or just hang out with these same people. They are my friends in garb or out. Occasionally there will be members of our society that we do not see eye to eye with. It is in dealing with these situations that we tend to see our society as a job and not as a game. We are in similar situations in the real world. We do the same in both areas; work together.

I do not see a difference in political responsibilities and mechanical ones, or maybe I do not fully understand the question. However, I will run from the example of a marshal in the list. As a marshal your responsibility is to the rules and safety of the list. You cannot break the laws of the society to fit your own purpose.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever -did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I joined the society because of an interest in the marshal activities and historical pursuits. I was interested in swords/sword play and wanted to participate in heavy fighting and fencing. Yes, I have been in situations where I had to work rather than play. I autocrated/feastocrated events where I never left the kitchen. But, I enjoy giving that meal to our guests. Being on retaining staff for Royalty/Barony takes a lot of my fun time. Yet, it is my job to make sure that our Royals appear Royal, and not like actors striking their own props at the end of a play. Being group fencing marshal puts me in charge of the fencing at events not a participant at the events. However, I have attended my share of events in other groups. I know they also must give up their fun so I can play. I am just taking my turn. It does work better when people take turns. I do consider myself lucky to be surrounded with people who share this opinion. We have developed a group that is willing to help each other out. That is what keeps me going. Knowing that there is someone to catch me if I am weak or need help or need a rest. I am made stronger by their actions, and I hope I do the same for them.



Baron Alejandro Mateo Ramirez y Mendoza (Order of the White Scarf of Atlantia and Provost of the Academie d'Espee.)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor, of course, is a subject that many think about, but I find too few study in-depth. For the sake of brevity, let us say that Honor is bi-partite. The first part involves performing actions that one perceives in oneself to be honorable (I will help this old lady across the street because it is the honorable thing to do). The second part involves one's social group perceiving you acting in an honorable fashion (Look at Po help that lady across the street - he is an honorable man). Many believe that merely self-perception is honor (It doesn't matter who sees me help this lady across the street, I'll help her anyway). This is only partially true - honor is not self-assigned. I am certain that Osama bin Laden perceives himself to be honorable. Honor is also assigned by one's peers and social group. There is a fine line here to be walked - doing things solely to be perceived to be honorable is false, and no honor should be assigned to it. Rather, one should perform honorable actions because one knows them to be honorable, and ensure that those who surround you are the right judges of what is honorable or not (Hey, Deianiera, was it honorable for me to help that old lady across the street? Yes Po, it was, right up until you tossed her under an oncoming logging truck'). Service - there are those who say that service is love given physical form. If one considers the time and energy put forth in serving others, there is truth in this. Consider Mother Theresa - she was considered to have served countless thousands, expanding her love in an ever-widening circle. We all display a small amount of this love when we perform acts of service for others. This includes training of arms. If someone has vested the time and energy (i.e., performed the SERVICE) in training you in arms, you spurn their love and service to you if you turn around and take up arms against them. However, this does not mean you are obligated to serve those who have trained you in arms. You should follow them because they have **earned** the right to have you take up arms in their cause, not because they in some fashion obligate you to. A perfect villain can teach you arms and you should feel no obligation to them because, well, they're villains. However, someone who takes time and energy to train you and shows themselves to be honorable deserves to be followed - they have rightfully earned your time and skill at arms. There is a person who leads a mercenary band in the northern reaches of my kingdom - he asked me once why he should follow me in to battle. I told him he should because I striven to earn the privilege of leading him, not because he felt obligated to be led. However, if I were in a situation (say, at a faraway war in which my Kingdom had no stake) where I owed no man the service of my sword, you'd better believe my killing would go to he who had the most money to offer me. There is no dishonor in selling your sword in a situation where none of your country men has a significant stake.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

This is a difficult question. To an extent, the positive things I learn **in** the Society **must** have a place outside of it. It would be false to be a perfect gentleman in the Society and a complete bastard outside of it. However, I can't challenge the guy who cut me off in traffic to a duel with rapiers. But I can forgive him for his error, as I would in the Society for someone who wronged me (doesn't mean I FORGET a transgression and allow it to happen again - but I **should** forgive him, however difficult that may be). The second question you ask is more difficult. Let me approach it through an example. Let us say I was marshalling the list field, and a Duke is fighting rapier - he performs some type of safety error. Obviously, in the feudal system he outranks me - in the truest medieval sense, he can therefore do no wrong and has, in fact, performed no error. However, in the real world I would be doing a disservice to him if I didn't seek to courteously correct his error. So I suppose the answer to your question is that the mechanical responsibilities are a manifestation in our

Society of the political responsibilities. Friends don't let friends do dumb sh1t.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever -did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first joined the Society 15(ish) years ago because it was fun and cool. Later, it became a method of self-improvement, and still is. If one pursues the Society for a significant length of time, it behooves you to give back to the organization that has given you so much fun, even if that giving back isn't fun (being Kingdom Rapier Marshal isn't too much fun). Each person must determine that for himself so that the positive aspects of the Society can be perpetuated. Of course I'd rather have fun 24/7, but that wouldn't do anyone any good. I give fun to others so that at times I may have my own share of fun.



Don Corwyn Montgomery (Order of the White Scarf with Grant of Arms, the Order for Martial Authenticity in Aethelmarc, the Order of the Golden Alce, the Order of the Keystone, and the Order of the Cornelian, recipient of an Award of Arms, former Queen's Rapier Champion to Her Majesty Meirwen uerch Owein II, former Baronial Rapier Champion of the Barony Marche of the Debatable Lands, and twice recognized by the Ladies of the Rose for honor and chivalry upon the field of combat.) { I am a graduated Cadet of Don Diego Miguel Munoz de Castille, and I have served many years as a liegeman to Court Baron Feliciano Grimaldi and his baroness Mistress Miriam Meggett. I also maintain close contact Duchess Meirwen uerch Owein and am ready to assist her as she may require. While these are not titles granted by a crown or coronet, they are honors granted me by others within the Society and of equal importance to me.}

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Giving a description on the concept of "Honor" is difficult to do in short form as this would require understanding the symantics of the person asking. In two applications, Society "Honor" is better termed as for sake of simplicity as "Social Grace" and "Prestige." Social Graces effect how one presents themselves for the benefit of others in a dignified manner. Many will perform actions of sacrifice in the list field as demonstrative of Honor. Other aspects are the ability to grant theme and spice to public scenarios. This flows into the aspect of Prestige, which is afforded by the title. This prestige grants a platform from which to enact the social graces with the audience viewing the situation from a perspective of the person acting out the graces as being of elevated station. Prestige can be confused with respect as it is a pedestal from which it is easy to fall; however, it can also be a bonus from which one can have an easier opportunity to earn genuine respect as others take it for granted that a person with station is capable of earning this. Another application of "Social Grace" is the "honor" bestowed upon someone by another. This would be more easily defined as "belief in another's worth." This honor is a most precious one indeed. Society Honor is a garment and is far different from true honor. An exploration of true honor is a lifetime study and walks hand in hand with faith, philosophy, truth, honesty, humility, dignity, goodness, and respect as honor is an alloy of these other many components of a powerful soul. A man with true honor recognizes fallacy in himself and is capable of forgiving fallacy in others, seeks to set example for those wishing to better themselves by bettering himself, seeks to cause no ill to another yet brooks no one to seek to cause him ill, accepts the truth of defeat and steals not victory from one who has earned it of him, treasures the threat of any opponent and meets it with full vigor and prowess, values respect for all, brags not for he knows that truly good deeds and worth are recognized within his own soul and need not be recognized outwardly by others, scorns the false limitations imposed by pride yet prizes the dignity of his rights, and seeks only to better himself through his deeds and not by misrepresenting any rivals. "Service" could be re-termed for simple explanation as "Duty." The duties of a Companion of the White Scarf are serious and quite often heavy. Any prestige granted in the rapier community for being granted a White Scarf is more than compensated for by the duties that come with that prestige. The duty begins with the command from the Crown to wear this honorary garment and continue to serve the community and the Crown as has been seen previously and expected to continue with greater fruits. As much expectation as the Crown has of those it has honored, the expectation of the community is far greater and of constant vigilance. The duty to guide and uphold a community are difficult to carry out as one must strive to live up to the unrealistic superhuman status levied by the community on its leaders. The rapier community as a rule of thumb views those who receive the White Scarf as having "all knowledge of things rapier." We do not and must always seek out the information necessary to answer the questions given to us by the hungry soldiers growling at our sides. It is intimidating; however, one rationale for us being given this duty as that we are individuals who have not been noted to shrink back from intimidating situations. We live for it and grow as we live. Some do so more than others. Each White Scarf offers a different gift to the community.

In terms of my persona, the concept has had changes forced upon from without no different than a man experiences in his choices of mundane life. Allow me to establish that my persona is that of man of the

Scottish/Welsh Montgomery Clan, born an unimportant son who was given leave to seek a career without family guidance who did fall upon the good fortune that his past training granted him the opportunity to find position with a wealthy Baron and prosper in his employ. In the Society, I began my rapier career with the intention of being a rogue, a swashbuckling highwayman and pirate with sly character and questionable virtue; however, my sense of duty to my Shire put me forth as a leader seeking to grant those wishing to learn rapier a teacher and marshal. I rose to the occasion, and for my troubles, the Crown did deem me worthy of being recognized as a noble of their court, issuing unto me an Award of Arms. This was the first change and did warrant a need to fulfill the promise the Crown made to its people of me. Seeking direction, I sought guidance from a good friend who was a Baron of the Court and offered him my service as was acceptable of my station of rapier scholar although generous in comparison with the abilities and knowledge that I then possessed. My view of civilians studying and teaching rapier in period is that while they may be granted respect by the common men for their knowledge of deadly artes but that they are first and foremost servants of the nobles and wealthy merchant princes from whom they earn their living and who grant them recognition for their level of expertise. Baron Feliciano granted me my opportunity to pursue this by being his arms instructor and instructor to his household, his token "swordmaster" as was common of the Renaissance nobility with regard to masters of various arts. My recognition by the Crown and subsequent continuing efforts to fulfill their vision resulted in my recognition as a Companion of the Golden Alce being thrust upon me. Once again, expectations were raised, and I saw my sad inadequacy of knowledge and ability comparatively to merit of the honor bestowed. Already pressing myself to live up to the title of Lord, I now pressed myself to live up to this new honor. I found the pressure to be quite beyond my personal limitations and sought knowledge beyond myself. Those in my local group looking to me as immediate instructor had exhausted my limited ability to teach them and were asking for more, and I had to find more in myself just as the Crown had told them I possessed. I first hired a mundane instructor to enhance my grasp of concept and make the lines of my form more crisp. This was followed by seeking an instructor and guide in rapier within the Society and Kingdom, and I was granted the honor of being a Cadet to Don Diego. Again, with social honors came further duties, and I sought to prove myself worthy of the cadet Scarf while also prove myself to be worthy of the other honors granted me. By this point, the reader can grasp that the process is continuing, each moment compiling one upon the other that has since resulted in recognitions from the Crown and various Peers of the Court, serving as Champion, and as a Companion of the White Scarf. Were I to sit on my accomplishments and the honors granted me, I would be free of further duties being levied upon me; however, what man wishes to be inert? The effect that this has had upon my persona has been the evolution of a boy who dreamed of glory as a swordsman to that of the sword-master of a generous noble who serves to train his swordsmen and serve the Crown. The change in my status through awards has served to fulfill the promise of my persona in a fashion I did not originally envision but by far the better than my limited imagination did conjure.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

As an individual, I have a stoic view of life. The good lessons and character that I am able to build within myself in the Society permit me to have more to offer in life outside the Society. My responsibilities as a Don are easily associated with my responsibilities as a marshal; however, being a marshal must come first as it is a legal responsibility. Carrying out those responsibilities with the dignity and patience of a Don makes my job as a marshal easier to accomplish. In the final analysis of personal and position as an officer, the duties of the officer are paramount as they preserve the Society against the need for repudiation by Corpora or mundane authorities.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I joined the Society at the behest of my former spouse. I saw it as an interesting possibility of experiment for a

man with a penchant for history; however, I quickly grew bored as I was limited in my ability to participate. With a change in life, I found myself needing an outlet and also found a new opportunity in the arrival of other fencers to the area. I found an active niche, explored it, and found myself invigorated, even addicted to the activity and ideas. It is difficult to say what causes the enjoyment to leave an activity. My level of enjoyment has changed. It is not as carefree as it once had been, but then my responsibilities have greatly increased. That was a souring experience, but I cannot say that it was the responsibility so much as an unfortunate circumstance that other aspects of my life were quite unsettled at the same time that those responsibilities were put upon my shoulders. Life settled, but the responsibilities remain. It is different, no different than a man experiences when he is greeted with the responsibilities of fatherhood. There are exciting new possibilities in that responsibility, but it also inhibits what the man can do and say. The only truly sour aspect of the Society is when we encounter the fragile pumped egos of others that cause difficulty for those around them. This can sour the experience; however, we must be persistent in holding to our beliefs and truths until the storm passes. Things then transform to enjoyment once again



Megan the Mad (Marshal, Slayer of the Duck Pond)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Since I have no rank I cannot say for sure, but as far as I'm concerned, rank has nothing to do with it. One should always be honorable and chivalrous no matter the rank, person, or situation. As for Service, I feel the same way - it has nothing to do with rank or persona. I jump in with both feet and make the biggest splash possible.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

For me as long as I'm in medieval clothing it's all a game, except where a person's safety is concerned. If someone's safety is coming into play, it's no longer a game. As soon as I put my modern clothes back on, it's still a game to me. I cannot take anything too seriously as this is just a hobby for me. My attitude may change in the future, but I doubt it.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first joined the society because I have always wanted to play with swords. Now I get to do just that, and I get to meet great people as well. The fun and enjoyment will never become secondary due to my responsibilities. I will make sure never to take on any title that will in any way ruin my fun. And I mean that sincerely. If it comes down to it, I will never accept any award if it looks like my accepting it will make the game stop being a game. I am in this to have fun and meet people. That's all. I do not care about any kind of recognition except for the kind that comes from someone who had fun partying with me.



Donnán MacDubhsíde (Order of the White Scarf, Golden Alce, Keystone, Sycamore, Troubadore (2x), Green Comet)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

My persona is supposed to be a Pirate, so service would not be a issue here :) However, I often find myself in positions of service within the society. I take these as seriously as I do any other commitment.

You specifically asked about rank. I assume you refer to the rank of the White Scarf. There is indeed a responsibility attached to that. No one gets such an honor without having performed a high level of service, both to the Kingdom and the fencing community. Within that context there are certain responsibilities. It has been stated by others that the White Scarves are there to provide an example. That is true, because of the high level of visibility of the order, people in the fencing community notice what we do, if we do well, it is expected of us, if we screw up (and we do) it gets noticed more than others.

There is also the point of commitment to the Kingdom. No, the White Scarves do not swear fealty as do peers. However, many of us (myself at least) feel a connection that comes from the kind of commitment that we had to show to get the Scarf in the first place.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?)

Is there a line? The society is part of my life, many of my friends are friends in and out of the society. Many of the lessons I have learned, leadership for example, in the society have translated well into my mundane life. My persona in the SCA is just another of the masks I wear, but under each mask is the same person. Just as there is some difference between the me that sits behind the reference desk at work and the guy going out to the bar later, there is a difference between Donnán and J.L. but not much, all are me.

I don't believe that I am a 16th century Irishman, but in playing that part, I am just giving expression to another aspect of the whole person that I am. I am not one of those people who would excuse bad behavior by saying "I am just playing my persona." Look deep enough and you will find that such people are bad in their persona and out of it.

Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..)

No not really. Doing the job of the marshal is part of that responsibility, do it wrong and I am not living up to that responsibility.

What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

You mean when the Duke is being a jerk in the list and I have to be the one to tell him to calm down? I have had to do this, and the simple truth is that people's safety comes before hurt feelings and protocol. I can always have a talk with said Duke afterwards and get things sorted out, but if I fail to stop an unsafe situation because he has a bigger title than me, then it is my fault for not living up to the responsibility given me.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

1982. I have served as a senechal. Fun this is not. You get to do tons of paperwork, take all the blame, and then you don't even get paid. Most of the compensation in this job is through sitting back and seeing what happens, and taking some satisfaction in knowing that you had a hand in it. There are definitely times, I found this out as both a senechal and as a marshal, that one person ends up having to work so that the others can have fun. As long as there are enough of these people that one does not shoulder the burden alone and burn out, sooner or later everyone get to have fun.

I look at any position of responsibility this way, the leader is there to make the group work as a whole, the group does not serve the leader, indeed it is the other way around.

Still, some people see the political potential in such a job, and take satisfaction in control. This is where the politicians come in. Some people in the SCA want that control and the ability to exercise it on people. In some cases this is a reflection of their mundane life, in others it makes up for their lack of control in that life.

Being in any position of responsibility in the SCA occasionally puts you in the sights of these people. They can lie and cheat and just generally act like slime. Often their justification for their behavior is "it's just a game". Well yes and no. No the political power gained through the SCA will not get you a real castle, or real money, but the people you are dealing with, and the feelings that are hurt are just as real. This is the real damage that the bad politics crowd can do. By backstabbing and oath-breaking they hurt real feelings and damage the fun for their targets. Get in the sights of one of these people (and I have been) and it can stop being fun.

Like mundane life, one person's ability to have fun ends where another's begins. Think of it in the terms of the Wiccan Rede "in that it harm none, do what thou wilt".

Aoife Finn of Ynos Mon (Companion of the Laurel and Pelican)

Brion Donul Gilbert. (Master of the Pelican, Companion of the Keystone, Companion of the Tygers Combattant)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel > they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Funny you should ask. My struggle has always been between what I saw as my duty and path, and what others saw as my duty and path. Honor and service are not the same thing, obviously. For that part, WORK and service are not the same thing. Work is something you do because you're supposed to. Service is done because it is unthinkable to let something go undone. Service is what you do to further something or some ideal or some person you love or admire or emulate. Work is hard. Service is what you do that's a joy. Funny thing is, we are often rewarded for that which is the biggest service, which appears to be hard work from the outside but is the easiest for us to do because we love it. But we feel slighted when we are NOT rewarded for that which IS the hardest work, and rightly so. After all, Work is hard, and hard work is against most people's nature. It is the duty of those who have the power, to recognize how much harder it is to blindly and excellently WORK, in addition to those who perform good service.

My duties have changed as my positions have changed, but my personae has not. I don't really "live" my personae separately from who I am normally. I am who I am no matter which set of clothes I put on. Thus duty doesn't change for me. It is what it is, as I decide it is. I reserve the right to know where my own lines are drawn and when the treatment I receive from others negates my obligation to perform a duty. I suspect a lot of people feel that way.

Honor, now that's a tricky one. That is different to everyone. I wanted to quote a former email I wrote, but of course I deleted it...Hmm. To summarize, nearly everyone agrees what Honor is NOT. We could all point to an action in the news or that we know of and say "Now THAT is completely beyond the pale. Not Honorable in the least." We all have our own codes of honor though, and so to expect others to behave to your own code may be expecting more of someone than they are willing to give. In essence, if you expect honorable treatment from someone, you should give it. If you find yourself in a position where you must question someone else's honor, ask yourself these things: Is the action in response to something I am unaware of (have I got the entire story)? Has the person harmed anyone? If so, did they intend that harm? Did they apologize and offer to make amends? Am I over-reacting? Those are the questions that matter. The who, what, how, etc. are much less important, unless a crime has been committed. At that point it's less a matter of honor and more a matter of law, and thus out of our hands.

**Honor is a very personal thing. I believe honor carries over from the person I am mundanely, into my personae. My rank has nothing to do with my personal honor. Unfortunately I believe a number of persons in the SCA believe that their rank has given them certain honors, and that is not wholly justified.*

Service should be freely given when you want to give it. If you look upon it, it's lost its perspective. It should be fun and what you enjoy doing. If you don't enjoy doing it, DON'T. It then becomes work. And I think people should be paid for work.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (i.e., when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (i.e. the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

Look, life is life, and every moment of it is lived, whether I'm being Lisbeth or I'm being Aoife. We all make decisions about how much we're willing to put into the SCA, how much of ourselves we invest. It isn't anyone's place to say "Hey, you're taking yourself too seriously as Lord High Knock 'em stiff." Believe it or not, this IS real life. It's just under a different sub-heading. Every second counts, otherwise we wouldn't be so bleedin' passionate about our little hobby. It is all important, and everyone who partakes in it is important.

**The bottom line is, your life is YOUR life. You may do certain things your personae wouldn't because you may not have the funds, for instance. The SCA should be fun and enjoyable. If it isn't, it's time to find a different hobby.*

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first found the SCA as a teenager. I was a part of another historical organization (an explorer boyscout troop studying with a stunt troop for a wild-west movie location in Arizona), and I dated a guy who was in the SCA. Later, when my family moved East, I re-joined the SCA in the Harrisburg, PA area, so as to make new friends. That is where I met my husband.

When wasn't it fun? When someone else's idea of what they wanted infringed upon mine (and/or others) in a hurtful way. As the often told story goes, my brother's rights begin at the end of my nose.... We've been in the SCA so danged long that we're seeing these issues come up over and over again with different cast members. Same situation, as everyone learns the lesson others have learned before them. Your right to have fun begins and ends at the border of my fun.

**I joined the Society in 1980. I joined because of my love for the Middle Ages, having lived and traveled throughout the Far East, Mid East and Europe and Northern Africa, and because I was a History Teacher.*

My fun and enjoyment is never lost because I have never taken on responsibilities I did not enjoy. I'm pretty outspoken. Most people know exactly where I stand at all times. That's the same in my personal life as it is in the SCA. Again, if it ceases to be fun, I'll stop going to events. I have taken breaks in the last 25 years. I also belong to other historical groups. And I have evolved from being mostly a fighter to merchanting and craftsman. Most of my former fighting buddies are now feeling their age, and they aren't fighting either.



Don Bastiano di Iacopo (Order of the White Scarf)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

No.. my persona in the society has earned the rank/awards. I have been recognized for what I do... what I do in the society is who my persona is. I don't really think too much about honor and service.. I think about what I do.. and how it affects others.. I do my best to act in such a way that others are encouraged. That is where my honor and service come from.. it is not a separate idea.

3. Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

I am not real good at the game. I am who I am. I will use an example.. or maybe two... I have a friend.. his name is George. we fence every Wed and Sun. We learn from each other.. we get together on Tues to make stuff.. he works with leather.. he works with wood.. I work with leather and wood.. we learn from each other. George has a lot more time to devote to the SCA.. he spends more time working on Society projects than I do. A while ago he decided to run for a local office. He is now the Baron of our group. He holds an office.. he is still George.. but in the society he is Baron Quinn Kerr. What does that mean?? it means at events I check on him.. I salute him.. I bow when he walks by.. you know .. all the stuff that is part of the game... he holds an imaginary position.. so I play along.. just as I fall over and die when someone slides a dull piece of metal against my belly.. I pretend. it is part of the game. It is what makes the game enjoyable in many ways. But George also holds a real position. He is Baron.. he makes decisions for our group.. he is responsible to attend meetings.. to sit in every court.. to represent us in front of others.. that is a lot of stuff to take care of.. I appreciate all his work.. so there are times that I do what I can to make Georges life a little easier... this is not pretending.. this is helping out a friend who is working hard. When there is a conflict.. real life is what matters. If George would act like an idiot and do something that really hurt someone... I don't care if he is Baron.. he is a friend of mine who acted badly.. I would talk to him.. and encourage him to make it right. I would try to do it such a way that would not hurt the game for someone else.. but bad actions still need to be dealt with.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I have been involved for about 10 years... I am pretty careful about only taking on responsibility that I can deal with. I do this for fun.. it is important to keep it fun.



Lord Eirik Haarfager Goransson. (Leaf of Merit, Award of Arms, Defender of the West , Corolla Aulica, Princess' Favor, "The Gull")

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor is to a Viking the one thing that keeps him from being a brigand versus a member of the elite fighting force from the Scandanavian countries on a search for riches and new lands. As such, Honor is foremost in my personas mind.

Service: One does service to their local group, and to their king (kingdom). As a member of the SCA, it is within my power to supply such service as time and ability allows. As my persona, service is a matter of life. If you are not the ruling authority, you are in service to he or she who is. Unless you are a brigand, which I have already discussed above.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

Sometimes the line is drawn with Acid, on a hard bedrock floor. Other times the line seems to be drawn in salt on a water base. i.e. "where the hell is the line?"

Depending on the situation, that line needs to be re-drawn in order to have life, which needs to come first, dictate the requirements of the Society. Within the confines of the Society, there is not really a difference between the Political and physical/Mechanical responsibilities. they are intertwined. If they are not perfectly parallel (aligned), then it's the responsibility of the person who perceives the unaligned situation to bring it to the attention of the others in the situation, so that a better result can be determined.

In other words, if there is a problem, talk it out before taking action if at all possible. This will result in a better understanding of the overall situation for all concerned.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

Why did I join? because I thought "hey this is a cool idea, where do I sign up".

Mind you, my first event was a 3 day event, where there was snow, hail, rain, flooding, a mudslide, a mud bog on the list field, and 95 degree temperatures.

I do find at times that the fun is lost due to responsibilities, but at the same time there are just as many times where I feel that I am "lounging" and relaxing, letting the responsibilities slide. Usually these responsibilities are not life or death, they are of a small enough nature that they can be postponed in favor of enjoying the time.



Baron Robert of Worcester (3rd Baron, Endless Hills, Grant of Arms <with Baron>)

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor and Service are two very different requirements for the position of a landed Baron. One cannot do the job without both, however. Honor without service does not promote the Barony. It is the Baron's job to serve not only the people of his Barony, but also the Crown of Aethelmearc. Service without honor can only harm the Barony. Honor is the most important aspect to promote in the society, above service, above martial prowess, above skill in the arts and sciences. All of these mean nothing if not done with honor. I personally do not feel that there is a difference in these concepts between my position and my persona. They are vitally important to both.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

I draw the line between the society and life out of it when it starts to affect my family and friends adversely. My job, family and friends must come before the society. The reason behind this is honor, however. I have made a commitment to my friends and family to be a good provider and to serve their needs. This goes beyond the fictional world of our personae. In regards to the difference between the political responsibilities and mechanical responsibilities, the mechanical responsibilities always come first. On the list-field, I am a heavy weapons Marshal first, a Baron second. No matter the individual's rank, if I see something unsafe on the list-field, I will do all that I can to make the situation safe as I see fit. Should anyone wish to disagree with me and sanction me for any said actions in the name of safety, then we should discuss it openly. We should never sacrifice safety, however, for any considerations due to rank.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first joined the society because it seemed like a really neat thing to try out. I tried on armor for the first time and absolutely loved it. I then went on to become an archery marshal because I love archery and I wanted to help pass on that love to others. This has gone on to then include a heavy weapons Marshal, chirurgion, and the aforementioned position of Baron. I love the society and all it has done for me. I also took on the responsibilities I have in the society freely and willingly. When the nuts and bolts of the SCA begin to feel like a burden instead of a blessing, I need to remind myself that without work, there is no play. It is like this with all things in life. We must always strive to make the best out of any situation. Apathy, laziness, derisiveness have no place in the society.



ir Cadogan map Cado, *at the time of this writing*; King of Drachenwald, Prince of Insulae Draconis

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Well, I don't actually have a persona per se. Oh, I have a time period and a place that interest me, but mostly I am simply me. I admire those folk who get more into the role playing aspect of the SCA, who speak forsoothly, and who can converse about "happenings" in their medieval village, but I have always been too lazy to put that much work into it. My Lady Wife does it to some extent, but I am normally too concerned with hitting people. L^)

Honor is virtually impossible to define, as it differs for each individual. For myself, it involves doing what is right. That in itself is hard to define, for I also believe what is right for each individual may differ and has little to do with mundane laws or cultural conditioning. For example, people can argue right or wrong about capital punishment all day. Both would be right for themselves.

Properly cultivated, your honor will speak to you, and tell you what is right. As King and indeed as a Knight, I tend to weight my thoughts more carefully, knowing that all my decisions, all my actions, impact more people.

Service as King and Knight has become an obligation. You go to fighter practice even when you don't feel like it because it is your duty to train other fighters. Drachenwald is geographically huge and encompasses many countries. We have made great sacrifices in time and money to properly tour the Kingdom, and I look upon this as Service. But, as with all service, the rewards are in the joy you are able to bring others through your efforts.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

I have been fortunate enough to always keep the "game" in my hobby. The SCA can become quite the obsession, but for me it has always been an obsession with the middle ages and the warrior ethos as opposed to any obsession about aspects of the Society itself.

This might sound strange coming from a reigning monarch, but I have always struggled to avoid the political side of the SCA. I don't have fun there, and I belong to this group because it is fun. As King I have of necessity been involved in politics to a degree, but I have operated mostly on a "figurehead" status, and left as much politicking as possible to my officers. That said, rank and such things never enter my mind outside of an event, indeed they fade away as soon as the mundane clothes come on, and then the King is once again simply "Cadogan."

There is a difference between the persona existing within the feudal system and the mechanical responsibilities such as safety concerns, and the mechanical responsibilities must always take precedence. However, I do believe that all situations can be handled with as much "feudalistic" pomp as possible. I had an

occasion during the reign where a group of pirates, er privateers, were petitioning me for a piece of land for a safe harbor. I have a soft spot for Pre-Emptive Marine Salvage Operators, and I was inclined to agree. However, my Herald stepped in and repeatedly reminded me that the "Privy" council needed to be consulted on such weighty matters. Now, unbeknownst to me at the time, there is some law against awarding people real tracks of land! But rather than jumping in my face or making his King look stupid in court, he managed to prevent my mistake while maintaining his feudal obligations.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first read about the SCA in the back of a Savage Sword of Conan magazine about 25 years ago. My friends and I were D&D gamers and fantasy fans, and we thought we would try a version of it in the woods with wooden bokans. (martial arts redwood practice swords – ouch!) We didn't bother with the armor, but we did outlaw head shots! As an adult, I ran across a group in Alabama and played long enough to build armor and attend my first tourney. But, it didn't stick. Maybe five years later, about 1991, I joined again in Atenveldt, and have been a sustaining member ever since.

I simply refuse to lose my sense of fun. The responsibilities I have taken on as a Peer may have changed the focus of my participation a little, but they made me a Knight for what I was doing, and what I was doing was having fun. So, I'll just keep on doing it! Mostly I still participate because it IS fun, and I still get to don armor and slug it out with my best friends – just like I did when I was 16! I have of course, seen people take things too seriously and get caught up in rank and recognition to the detriment of everyone. Bottom line, if you don't enjoy autocrating (or whatever) – don't volunteer for it! If you're doing it in the hopes of some sort of recognition, well, that's the wrong reason, and you will find yourself disappointed and bitter. Do what you do because you enjoy doing it! If politics become too heavy and you aren't having fun, step back, play your own game, and people will see how much fun you're having and will want to play too. Before you know it, you've a gang of like-minded friends all having a good time, and the poison-spitting political monsters can gather together and talk about how miserable they are and how much everything sucks. Just don't listen.



Duchess Dorinda Courtenay, Member of the Orders of the Rose, the Laurel and the Pelican, and a Member of the Order of the Cornelion.

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Fortunately, my rank does not conflict with my persona. Although near the end of the feudal era, my persona is that of a lady in England, and there is nothing inconsistent with my rank and the role I have chosen to play. Now, during the actual era we study, there would certainly be some differences with regards to "honor" and "service" from what I portray. During that time, I am sure a Duchess would not mingle with the "common folk". Sure, there would be courteous and honorable behavior exhibited - to others of my rank. As part of the SCA, I have expanded these concepts to include anyone as we are all supposed to be "of noble rank", even if people choose a persona that is not generally of the noble classes.

Service is also different as in the SCA I sometimes perform services that would probably not be done by one of my rank, although my loyalties to crown are consistent.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

I work hard to not have conflicts. :-) You might note that my SCA name and my modern name are the same. I am me. I can be no one else. If someone within the Feudal system asks me to do something that conflicts with my mechanical responsibilities, I discuss with them why it is a bad idea. It isn't a game to me - it is part of my life and yours. Lives which can not be separated from the world we are in. Yes, we create a subset of the world, but we are us.

But the question is a tough one. What do you do with a person who enters the society and helps the ladies and is loyal to their king and would do anything for a brother in arms but beats his non-SCA wife? Is that "not part of the life within the Society"? Do we ignore it and look at only who he portrays in the "game"? Can a noble knight cheat on his taxes?

But certain burdens we take on (or don't) voluntarily. Burdens such as Baronial fencing champion or Queen's Champion or Queen's Guard or Duchess. If such a role does not suit the person, they can decline. It is hard to do, but I have done it and it is the right thing.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I joined in school in 1986. In 1999 (I think it was - maybe 1998), not 30 minutes after I became a Pelican, I was hit with a political "this is what a REAL peer would do" situation. Those situations came more and more frequent as I was Queen and now a Duchess. But I still have the fun. Yes, there are responsibilities, but never lose the fun.

Alonzio of the Peacemakers

(Companion of the Tygers Cub, Award of Arms, Companion of the Gold Comet (Debatable Lands), Queen's Order of Courtesy (East), Order of the Cornelian, Companion of the Golden Alce, Augmentation of Arms (Atlantia), Companion of the Gage [w/ GoA], Companion of the Comet Gules (Debatable Lands [Mart.]), Companion of the Comet Or (Debatable Lands [Svc.]), Knight [w/ PoA], 5th Baron Debatable Lands

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Define honor: <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/honor> Honor and Service... in my opinion... are mated together. But it is not easily explained. I grew up in the SCA from the age of eight years old (now 35.. almost jan 20). I have been a part of House Bedford, under Duke Sir Michael of Bedford, for most of those years I was not a knight. My Mother, Baroness Serena Lucia of the Peacemakers, also has her house hold. These households are very different and much the same. My knights household is\was predominantly a fighting household with direct service a secondary. My mothers household is\was a household of artisans with direct service a secondary.

On the Bedford side. It was never a question that we fought for him. Our actions reflected upon him and every member of our household. Should a brother carry a ladies things it was a reflection of us... but should a brother say or do something excessively stupid... it was a reflection of us. Our prowess as fighters were compared to our knight. Our service to kingdom and sca were compared to those of our knight. Duke Sir Michael of Bedford is a quad peer.. meaning he is a knight, laurel (armoring), Pelican (service to sca, Atlantia, East, unit tactics, leadership, blah, blah, blah.) and he has sat the throne at least twice (more like he is currently on number nine). We were trained to serve him in the sca as a squire, man-at-arms, page would support a lord in the medieval times. He in turn trained, clothed (his wife sewed most of my early age garb), and armored (made my entire first suite of armor and a number of tabards... at his cost) us. We were there for him in court, cleanup, had cigarettes always at the ready, and generally made sure he look the best. To the point that a bar exists in Atlantia of banners, and service to your knight that is unparallel in any other kingdom. And we enjoyed it because we looked just as good for what we gave the SCA.

On the Peacemaker side>: my mothers household is a household of laurels and pelicans that get together at least once a quarter and have dinner and chat about projects, plans and fun. They have cooks, armorers, seamstresses, Needleworkers, potters, and so much more. These people have cooked events for a thousand, are the exchequers for Pennsic (the whole damn event), they donate fabric and time to make garb for any level of person (those just becoming a member to the royalty and those in-between), and they love to talk and cook and drink and talk more.

This is where I come from. When I was knighted I had no doubt it was deserving... but I also understand that I must always work to show that it is deserving. But that work is what I have done for 25 years and much of it I enjoy. I teach at events and academy about leadership, woods battle, scouting, command, melee spear and spear dueling. I also go to out of the way small events to teach the fighters that do not see "peers of the realm" and get that interaction and training.

I look at this as my honor. It was my honor to hand His Majesty King Alaric of the Middle Two banners in the name of King Malcolm. It was my honor to lead those troops, it was honor to be a part of it, and it was my honor to receive one of the most painful bruises from an Eastern Duke and friend during the woods.

Honor is granted to me. I can not demand it and would expect to be laughed at for making a demand. My knights belt, baronial coronet for the BMDL, all of my very pretty and scruffy garb, and my household... all of it means I still pay a crap load of money for star bucks coffee. Welcome to the real world is what they tell me :)

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

Lots of questions here.

Where do I draw the line between sca and mundane? Garb.

Political and mechanical? There is no difference. Other than I am forced to speak more... and people do not like that on average. As a squire I could go to My knight and say "this is sooo fucked up" and he would deal with it based on our beliefs. Now that I am the knight... I have to deal with it. But ultimately I speak. Example: recent banishments up your way. As a squire I would speak to Michael and the household would have a talk about the situation and then Dukems would do what he thought was best. As the knight... I talked to my household and explained what was done and what the consequences would be to us and our household. "If a member of this household did anything to that level... the household would be dissolved in court and I would be required to turn in my belt, chain and spurs. Not out of demand by any board or majestical requirement... but honor".

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

Why did I join the SCA?

I was dragged kicking and screaming at the end of the '70s to events where a bunch of men were wearing tights. To an eight year old then... they were all gay and my mother had totally lost her mind. And yes I did spend my first event crying and wanting to go home.

Over the next few events I calmed down and started to enjoy it... oddly to most people.. because of the Tuchux who treated me as a kid to wrestle and play with.

Fun secondary? Many times. Standing guard at an empty camp... sucks. But it was my duty that night (many many nights). Going to demos to me sucks... I recognize they are necessary and that I can "pimp-out" and look really pretty (thanks to the garb) and wow some people. Leading the troops for multiple years at Pennsic.... Meetings, meetings, meetings. I get to fight for about 3 seconds in each battle... if my army is destroyed... in which case I am fighting pretty much alone and about to die a very messy death. Landed baron has perks... but I am at every court now.... I would rather be on the field fighting until dark... but I am the barony, I am a representative of the king and I knew that going in.

How do I feel about it? Like it is a weight that will be lifted off my shoulders soon and I will be stronger for it. And I love how happy people are just to hear me say thank you for letting me, let them help me or the SCA\Barony\Kingdom. People have skills I will never have in so many areas... and many have built walls, made garb, fought battles, been retainers or event staff... because I could say please, and thank you and give people hugs and they felt so much better and appreciated for it. And I do appreciate them for everything... but I feel I am doing the least for their great effort. I loved being Merwin's guard at Pennsic... but it was a lot of work... and I would do it again today even if it meant I had to set my coronet aside and not be a baron... because... no surprise... she appreciated it and me. As landed baron there have been times I have felt pretty unappreciated... head-butting a few folks until their teeth bled... that thought alone would bring a smile to their face. Another annoyance... 20minutes to get to a port-a-john 30feet from my tent... because I am a knight and have a pointy hat.

But now to my points of interest in this. Let me say that I am not offended that you wished to fight on the other side. It could be for the fact of numbers, it could be the fact of friends, it could cash or booty changed hands... but the things that need to be recognized is perception. Truth, I have found in both real world and sca, has little to do with it. The known "facts" are that the baronial champion (and friends) left the

Aethelmearc field to fight against our side... her excellency, his majesty and many peers were wondering and none of those that are supposed to have an answer.. had an answer.

This... in my opinion, is the grievance. I am given to understand that confusion and feelings did not go well after the fact either. But I can speak less on this as I know little (and do not wish to know).

As a Landed Baron I would not be able to release my champion without my kings express agreement (not likely). I would need to be asked and then if I did not see an issue then talk to his majesty for his opinion. If everyone is in agreement then "see ya!" . however if the answer is "no." then the discussion is over.

I have been in this situation as I wish to fight with my patron knight... it has not happened yet since I was knighted... it does not help to be a knight, landed baron, regional rattan commander and AE commander of the woods.... But I have to ask for personal reasons.

Satisfaction: how does one do penance? Each person sees this differently based on up bringing and experience. If it were me and my champion... We (Tatyana and I) would stand in court and offer my baronial coronets to his majesty with my champion standing next to me. I would apologize for those actions taken by my champion. We would be required to explain to those actions in the court what happened and ask their forgiveness also, explaining why it was wrong, where we had failed and how we would correct this in the future should we be allowed. What would happen after that would be based on Their Majesties decision to keep us or let us go. That is where your actions would have put Tatyana and I had you been our Champion. Your actions would then be judged by everyone immediately also... I would personally expect you to do the same for us, explaining what your action was, why it was wrong and how it would never happen again should you be allowed to keep the said position.

After reading this I expect you look at me as a bit of a wacko. Ah well. But understand I do not hold this against fencers or any other group. I fully trust our fencers and have tremendous respect for them. I would gladly trust any of the champions we have had with my personal honor and the honor of our barony.. with out even a second thought.



Benedict Fergus atte Mede, Companion of the Order of the Golden Alce, Companion of the Order of the Keystone, Companion of the Millguard (Baronial Martial prowess award Delftwood) Companion of the Dragons Combatant (Baronial Martial prowess award Rhyderich Hael) Cadet to Don Berhend Von Elmendorf.

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor is both a private and public ideal. It is something we all must strive to serve in ourselves as well as the greater community around us. This can mean the honor of a household, a Barony or Shire, or a Kingdom. Honor is gained through works and reliable service. One may serve their own honor while maintaining that of a larger master. Things such as honesty, reliability, courtesy and service are honorable goals. Honor can be shown by acknowledging blows on the field, or by showing kindness to someone in a parking lot. Each of us has a seed of honor but not all of us cultivate that seed.

A near sighted person may confuse honor and a good reputation for they are close siblings and one should lead to the other. However they are not quite the same thing. Personal Honor is not easily shed and should not easily be laid aside. Unlike a good reputation, true honor can only be smeared by our own actions. One may damage the honor of one that he or she serves, but an insult or lie does not damage our honor, only our reactions to that act can do that.

The honor of something larger than the self should be held by all who represent it to be the highest of duties. Honor often requires that we serve more than our own wants and needs. If one is given an honor and asked to hold up the honor of another, they must do so to the best of their ability. To not do so, is to dishonor that thing.

As a Cadet, I know what I do reflects on the honor of my Don, because he has given me that honor. As a Baronial champion I know my actions reflected on the honor of my Barony. In addition to those specific situations I carry the Honor of my Lady and my Kingdom, as well as that of my friends. Each of these has given me the privilege of representing them in different ways. This is a responsibility I do not take lightly.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

The SCA is a game, but it can be an honorable one. When one serves more than their desire to have a good time he or she is doing more than playing a game. Honor sometimes dictates this and responsibility does so as well.

Fergus is part of Ben now. His honor is part of my idea of who I am and who I will try to be. Ben is also part of Fergus's reality. In this way I wish to try to be an honorable man no matter whether which persona or identity I am presenting at the time. The stories we create for our SCA personas are less important that the people we become or show ourselves to be. If I prove to be a crude and unpleasant person then that is the persona I have created. No story or idea of pirates, peasants or princes will change that and no rank will erase the stain of a dishonorable act.

The duties of a marshal are different from that of a persona in only some specific ways. If I refrain from acting as a marshal because of a political situation, (i.e. if the King were unsafe on the field and I do nothing because he is the King) then I am not doing my job. In martial activities we have to consider safety before anything else. After that we have a responsibility to make certain that all are playing the same game.

No one should be able to outrank the rules or cheat because of their titles. It is a strike against someone's honor if they allow politics to overrule their responsibilities as a marshal.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first learned about the SCA from a fencer, I learned about fencing and the initial interest led to me learning how to use a sword and treating the SCA as something of a martial arts school. As my interest grew I saw a world dedicated to the ideals of chivalry and honor. This was more than the swashbuckling fun that had piqued my interest early on. Here was a society where honor mattered. Here was a world in which my bank account was not a determining factor for my fitness or for my social opportunity. Here was a chance to live in a world where I could love a King and Queen, or a Lady in the way that stories from my youth told me was good, noble and worthy. The SCA was more than a martial arts school now, it was a better world.

While I can not say that I have always enjoyed everything that has happened in my SCA career, I can honestly say that the good does triumph over the bad. I have seen both good and bad politics and have put my foot in my mouth more times than I care to explain. However I have found that this world is made of those same people who live in the "real world" Each Baron or Duchess still pays taxes and considers whether or not to eat at McDonalds. This means that while we play in a rebuilt middle ages we all have twenty-first century problems. This is not all bad, but we must remember that we are continually building a great fantasy from solid material. If we forget that we are dealing with humans we may risk losing that which we are trying to create. If my life as Ben Martin or as Benedict Fergus atte Mede is imperfect then it is this way because it is real.



Lo Silvertop the Rogue *Of the Rapiermaniacs (Award of Arms, Companion of the Orders of the Golden Alce and the Thunderbolt, Endless Hills Baronial Rapier Champion: AS 34.)*

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

Honor boils down to trustworthiness, appropriateness and reputation. While it may be quiet honor or loud and conspicuous.. it really comes back to people being able to say "If Lord X says he will do such and such- then you can depend on it occurring- his word is good.". Reputation comes into play when a person's honor and demeanor become well enough known that those around him or her don't even need to ask verbally - it's already known what the Lord or Lady in question would or would not do.

Service is the effort one puts forth on behalf of people and projects- primarily effort on the behalf of, or focused on *other* people... It doesn't matter if it's not a major undertaking- even the smallest amount of consideration or assistance in something that someone else needs or wants can count greatly. (for instance- the time spent in contemplation that each of our respondents have taken.. to assist us in this project..)

I don't really see much of a difference in these concepts in the varying aspects of my persona, my rank, or my mundane life.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

Hmm.. In some respects, there is no concrete line between "Po" and "Scott"- Considering the SCA as one end of a spectrum- and mundania at the other- I have several other ongoing situations (Renaissance Faires, Theater, even some portion of my writing- among others) that exist squarely in the middle of the spectrum. Does "Po" do anything that "Scott" wouldn't or vice-versa? No. -there might be a matter of *degree*, but "Po" is merely a larger-than-life version of myself... (Yes- that means I *do* tend to kiss hands and act boisterously at the bookshop Mon. - Fri. 9 to 5... and elsewhere... just less often than at SCA Events..)

There can be no question... as a rogue, a wandering thespian and swashbuckler, my persona has little or no power/responsibility/political accoutrements (and in fact, historically, all three of those facets would be considered anathema) and as a Rapier Marshal I have responsibilities galore... and as Rapier Champion I had more responsibilities than I had been originally given to understand. But in the long run: within the society I'm now a Marshal *FIRST*- and then whatever else, second. As "safety officer" for my local fencers, my primal responsibility has to override persona. Cases in point: Practically before I was issued my Marshal's Warrant I was informed that one of my local fencers was using unacceptable armor on the listfield (a prominent local fencer, My Baron, in fact...)- and it was my very first action as a Marshal to see that the situation was dealt with. Another case: When a local Member of the Chivalry wished to make multiple fencing authorization attempts, I and my fellow attending Marshal had to decline several forms we felt were not adequately and safely demonstrated. In each situation, I tried to be as polite and courtly as possible, but had to stand my ground. In one of these two cases, the Gentle was quite understanding and the matter was settled to everyone's satisfaction..

Obviously there is no formal setup to apply in situations that would make it easy for someone to step back and say "Time-out! Let's address this out-of-role, fix it and then resume the scene"- though I sometimes think that it would be beneficial. When the aspects of the *role* do not dovetail with the aspects of the *office*, then conversation, deliberation and contemplation must ensue.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I had seen the SCA *way* back in the 80's as a boy in high school.. and never participated seriously. I next encountered the Society in '90 when I cast 2 local SCA fencers in a production of "Macbeth"... they got me back into fencing (I had gone from sport fencing to stage combat) and then into SCA-style fencing.. and then tempted me into attending events and getting my auths. When it became apparent that what I and all our local fencers needed was an *active* Marshal, I took it upon myself to provide one. Just about every thing I have accomplished in the society to date has been due to Swashbuckling- even something as simple as my membership (which I did not get around to formalizing until it became necessary to do so for the Warrant)

To date, the only instances I've had where the enjoyment factor was overwhelmed were some brief interconnected periods during the whole "Pennsic Mercenary" situation- in which *responsibilities that I did not know I had accepted* caused concern, and during one of the previously mentioned "Marshal dealing with a nominal superior" moments.

Bottom line: Do I feel I have learned from this project? Has my Penance been fruitful? The conversations I've had have made me think.. broadened my views.. allowed me to speak and befriend people I never would have before..

Was I Wrong/Were we wrong in what we did? Yes. At least in HOW it came to pass.. and how it was accomplished. But I still do not repent the WHY... Coming to the assistance of another- and getting more swashbuckling time in.. were not wrong (in and of themselves).

I feel it would have been far less honorable to swap sides a second time, and play "banner in the wind" following the path-of-least-resistance back and forth. I might have been a mercenary- but I was an honest one, who stayed bought.

Would I do it again? Well- if asked, I would at least now know to make my request up the chain of the hierarchy - and to work within the system.

Until and unless the non-enjoyable moments far outnumber the enjoyable ones, I'll keep at it. Diligently trying to improve the environment for the Endless Hills fencers (in general), and my fencing (in specific).



Lady Deianeira Rodriguez y Aragones

Award of Arms (2004), Companion Order of the Golden Alce (2005), Baronial Order of the Zule (2005), Baronial Order of the Thunderbolt (2005). Axes and Ales Rapier Champion (2005), Aethelmearc Light Rapier Novice Champion (Pennsic 2005), Baronial Championship Tournament winner (Fasching 2005), member of Her Majesty Isabeau's Royal Guard (2005).

Please touch upon the concepts of "Honor" and "Service" as you feel they pertain to your rank and persona. Do they apply differently between your rank and your persona?

First of all, 'Honor' is a two-fold beast – and I call it a beast because, for as many words that exist in the English language alone, so there are, individual interpretations, whether good, bad, or indifferent. First and foremost, there is internal Honor – a system by which we judge and measure ourselves [and how we act, interact, and react] against our surroundings. It is a personal code of integrity. However, in as much as the term is internal, it is also – by societal expectations and many times – demands, external. Right or wrong, we each are also judged by our peers and by their expectations and self-defined interpretations of Honor. In this case, judgments of respect, integrity, merit, and reputation are based upon and measured by, how we are perceived by others.

As for 'Service' – again, it is multi-level and interpretive and can incorporate anything from devotion to duty – which depending on the individual definition, may not be mutually exclusive of Honor. The question is; how does one measure a level of service? Albeit it should be measured against the individual ability, more often than not, we tend to measure [just like Honor], against our own self-imposed guidelines and expectations.

How do these pertain to my rank and persona? First of all, my rank is a Rapier-ist, and no matter how many awards are hung on my belt, I will always be a warrior first. My persona is Spanish – with a privateer flare and as such would have learned a seaman's code of honor that due the lifestyle, would have been a bit more harsh than a 'landlubbers'. First and foremost to this code, would have been Honor, loyalty, and Service to ship and crew (after all, you do have to live with all those scurvy dawgs on a ship). The key here is that, what is considered service and honorable in my persona's lifestyle, may not necessarily 'measure up' to someone who's persona is that of an English or German Noble... as "lifestyle" can (and does) have a direct impact on these same-said self-defined interpretations and perceptions.

But let me add to the mix a term not included; Duty. Just as environment and lifestyle affect perceptions, duty can also be a key element – and again – like the aforementioned, it is interpreted at many levels. One thing to remember though – is expectations of another can be your best friend or worst enemy, and without solid communication between parties, misconceptions, misunderstanding, and misdirection can be the ending result.

Where do you draw the line between life in the society and life out of it? (ie. when does the game cease being a game?) Do you perceive a differentiation between political responsibilities (ie the persona existing in a feudal system) and the mechanical responsibilities (example: the safety concerns of a marshal in a list-field situation, etc..) What happens when these two responsibilities are not perfectly parallel?

There is fine line between Deianeira and Lynda. Albeit Lynda doesn't sail the seven seas in a Caravel – however through the Society, she travels those waters by way of books and people. As a general rule, what is ethical, moral, and honorable to Deianeira stands true for Lynda – and short of donning a sword on my hip, there's really not much difference (even spiritually speaking) between the two.. if anything – Deianeira could almost be considered the ID of Lynda.

To answer the question of responsibilities is a bit more difficult because more times than not – when

contrasting mechanical vs. political, they will not be perfectly parallel and its here when you must scrutinize those 'inner' values previously addressed.

I am not a marshal, however I am an MIT and as such I have as much a responsibility on that field as any marshal. In my time as an MIT I have had to voice my opinion against an authorization - many of those times, that fencer is my friend. However a very distinctive line must be drawn here because the bottom line is, I don't want to see my "friend" or anyone else injured... and as an MIT, it IS my duty to base my decisions on safety first and foremost. In cases such as these, friendships can be strained - and though they may be clear-cut, no-doubt decisions, they are not / never easy to verbalize. When the parallel line becomes hazy or cut, it is no longer the "outer expectations" that should take precedence, but the "inner" ones.

Why did you first join the society? When, if ever - did the fun and enjoyment become secondary or even lost due to the responsibilities you accepted? How do you feel about this?

I first joined the SCA in 1995 - where initially, (after serving my 'watch' time) was accepted into House IronWolf and subsequently moved on with several IronWolf members to form ShadowClans. Shortly thereafter I moved to Pittsburgh but was just never able to really get in the swing of things there - so after much deliberation, created my own Clan - Clan IcePhoenix - which is still active. There are only three times that I can really say - the enjoyment was lost. First was my "introduction" to the SCA before I found IronWolf - second, when I moved to Pittsburgh, and third when I felt my offers of 'Service' were being pushed aside and ignored.

I don't ever remember saying - well, enough is enough and walking away from it... if anything, I just changed my focus, wherein the first case, I just kept looking for a "home" - in the second, involved myself in a Clan where it "was" fun again - and third, returned my focus from outwardly serving, to the enjoyment of the 'game' - and my perception and interpretation of fun.

This brings us, full circle to - Final Jeopardy. Did I learn anything from the experience of being a Mercenary - and the resulting penance, from those actions? Would I repeat it? Were the actions we took wrong?

In actuality, I learned quite a bit. This penance has afforded me the opportunity to witness firsthand the vast and diverse mindsets that exist in our Society. It affirmed my own belief that there are no right or wrong answers, just personal opinions based on individual experiences and perceptions and more important, it allowed me a better understanding of that handful of people that participated, to better understand - "who they are" both in persona - and out. Ultimately, this experience has given me some very thought provoking moments and fond memories - not to mention, new found friendships.

Would I do it again? To come to the aid of a Neighboring Kingdom and Cousin whose numbers aren't even countable? in a heartbeat! To jump at the opportunity to not only be out on the field - but also have more swashbuckling time? Sure would! To be enthralled by the intrigue, enticement, and inveiglement - to actually "live the dream"? Isn't that why we're all here anyway?

So was it wrong? In of themselves, the actions - no, however the means by which those actions were achieved [now that I understand this] could have been handled differently.

Do I feel that my Honor has wavered? No, for one simple reason, I made a commitment, a promise and even against the odds, stood by my word. It would have been far less honorable to "jump ship" when the going got tough.

Was there malice in my actions? ABSOLUTELY NOT! When the opportunity presented itself, I (as we all did) saw this as a chance to truly have fun - to not just 'play the dream' but 'live and be' - the dream.

In closing, I have spent most of the past 20 years either on crutches, walking with a cane or using some

variation of a mobility assist device (to include a wheelchair). Over the course of 10 Pennsic's, for the most part, I've never walked any of the paths and have seen very little of what Pennsic can offer (however, I know Odyssey Coffee very well as that is usually where I ended up spending my Pennsic's)

During the past year and a half - I fought my way out of a wheelchair, started fencing and went to my "first" Pennsic with legs under me... my only thought (in all honesty) - albeit altruistic - was to have fun and enjoy myself for the first time in years. To my way of thinking, I wasn't upsetting any delicate balance as I was not any kind of 'secret weapon' for anyone, and to my way of thinking, my presence would not even be missed. Add to that, not only was I helping someone in need, but the fundamental thought of being a "Mercenary" for someone was exciting and intriguing. In many ways, I was a SCA'dian newbie - an infant given a big toy box and allowed to go play.

All in all, I have no regrets of my actions at Pennsic last year. I made decisions, I stuck by them - and I accept the consequences because of those actions - moreover, for all that has transpired, I can still - even today - say one basic core fundamental thing - last year was the best Pennsic I have ever had!

(The following is transcribed from a 10 page handwritten letter from Lord Stefan Legas. As the person responsible for beginning the process of taking a sport-fencing, Renaissance-Faire-performing, stage-combat-choreographer and not only introducing him to the SCA but also teaching him period SCA-Style fencing- babysitting him through authorization attempts and camping events- it would take FAR more than 10 pages to detail the esteem in which I hold him... or the debt that I, and every other Endless Hills fencer, owe Lord Stefan. More than any local marshal, Lord Stefan has inspired, taught, acted as Baronial Rapier Champion multiple time and holds the first Endless Hills Baronial award for combat/fencing.)

Lord Po, My Dear Sword-Brother-

You ask questions such as “what is honor” and “what is service”? This rambling letter is an attempt to help answer these questions.

Lord Stefan La Ges: AoA, Order of the Thunderbolt & Order of the Golden Alce. I joined the SCA in 1992.

When I first started out I tried just about everything: Heavy fighting. Archery, Fencing, Bardic, Kitchen slave, etc.

My persona developed over the years into:

Bard: *Poet, Teller of folklore, Puppeteer & sometime Actor.*

Swordsman: *Free-scholar of the Blade, Provost: BloodRose Sword Academy.*

Headmaster of House Neptune Rising.

Service: A useful result, that which one is morally or legally bound to do.

I support my friends; I may not agree with their religion, politics or sexual flavor, but when asked I back them to the hilt. and do whatever needs doing- because I know in my heart they would do the same for me.... And back in the early part of '05 I was dearly blessed with friends and their supportive deeds. It is said that a friend in need is a friend in deed- but a true friend helps you dig the grave and cover over the body. Thank you, All.

When I was needed in the Shire/Barony I served as Kitchen Slave, Table Server, A&S Officer, Captain of Fence and thrice Barony Fencing Champion. Know this: When the job is no longer fun {It can become an unpaid job} -Back Away!

If need be, find something else that is fun to do- it is only a hobby and hobbies are relaxing and fun-not stressful.

Do not worry. The emptiness of your leaving will be filled in time by another service-junkie. After all the SCA is only a live-action role-playing game.

If you do not like the role thrust upon you, or you have done all that you can in a particular position/marshaled art or craft; move on- re-invent yourself and play on.

The play is the thing to catch the eye of others, for we are but actors strutting our stuff on stage- How well we do our jobs is how well we are paid- in food, titles, awards or just the warm, fuzzy feeling of a true humanitarian.

Honor: *Strong sense of what is right. Keen moral judgment*

Personal Honor: My word is my bond, my sword arm is an extension of it. I do not give my word lightly. A

lot of thought and effort- examination of facts and feelings- happen before I pledge my word (ie. self. ie. sword) to a friend or a cause, but once given it stays given- until the recipient by action or voice states: "By your leave, it is done, you are released from your bond."

Feudal system/Free-scholar Swordsman:

In these times I would either have my own sword-school, or be a private instructor to Royals or be an officer in the military. I would be paid well for my knowledge and skill as well as being respected for my craft. Being an honorable man chained by right of birth to a nation/land, flag or Royal- I would fight and die for them.

Separated by culture, language and custom by others not of my blood-line:

Swordsman: French/Polish fighting for the Kingdom of Poland.

Bard: Welsh/Scotish fighting against the cursed English.

Modern day: just a swordsman. SCA: A live action roleplaying game. The Kingdom of Aethelmearc located partly in NY, partly in PA, all of West VA, in the nation of the USA.

Who do you root for, Yankees, Phillies or Bruins?

If you are an army brat, born to second-generation Americans of Polish/Welsh blood in a naval hospital in Chelsea (a suburb of Boston, Mass) but live in PA- it's a tough sports question.

What makes you who you are; the place where you were born, or your culture or your language? Nature or Nurture?

In this context: Who or what is a citizen of Aethelmearc: Someone who lives in its boundaries? or someone born there?

Remember: Not so long ago we were once East Kingdom citizens...

In the SCA, in the Kingdom of Aethelmearc- I am just a swordsman, forged in steel, taught by USFA instructors/Penn State Champions/ a Hungarian [foil & epee] Master- not made by "SCAdian hands".

I passed on my knowledge and love of the sport by instructing most of those who wanted to learn the blade in my Shire/Barony- thus providing many good fencers, a few Baronial Champions and a Marshal.

I served my Barony as Captain of Fence and thrice as Fencing Champion, Awarded both the Orders of the Thunderbolt and Golden Alce.

Fencing/Swordplay is generally a single-opponent contest- This is why I say I fight for myself. It is the pure joy of steel on steel. By the ringing of the bells one knows what weapons are being used. It's physical chess: mind. body and soul. One becomes a living, breathing extension of a steel blade.

I fight for myself, my Lady, my House, my Friends and (when Champion) my Barony.

Honor in the blade, and the dance:

One: Before the fight, let your heart decide why you should fight- loyal to who or what is your own right. The heart is love, who returns your love is worth fighting for...

Two: Head and Body, Fight clean in form, fair in sport and in dueling show mercy in the drawing of blood- If your enemy is of like heart. If he is not, then be as ruthless and cunning as he or she and make them die first so you may live.

Three: Soul. Fight with everything you have- every ounce of your being. Fight and if need be, Die, so that others may live- but try your best to get your opponent to die first.

Remember well the fencing woods battle of Pennsic XXXIV:

It is a tale of Honor and Service.

We happy band of sword-brothers and sword-sisters- we proud few 66 against 200. Oh, what a target-rich environment in which to dance and play.

We fought and died with skill, style and grace until one of our own swords-women was unfairly struck down by a mighty blow that actually broke her collar-bone- struck down by an unchivalrous-acting opposing fencer.

We looked after our own wounded;

by carrying the fallen-one's gear,

by our hopes of a speedy recovery on the wings of the [EMT's] valkyries.

by holding our fears and our anger in trembling hands, praying all would be well,

by seeking justice and not revenge.

I am proud of my friends [all students of the blade], proud of their noble deeds, proud of who they are and who they developed into, proud of the friendships born of battle and proud of the new-found friends who battle for us.

That day truly we came as close to recreating and living a violent history as we can achieve in a time of peace. I saw honor live and breathe that day, in service to each other and to a noble cause; which is the dream that is the SCA.

Henceforth: Recreating the past and in so doing honoring our ancestors who made this all possible.

Think on these things that I have written. I hope they bring some understanding to the quest you are on.

Be one with the blade. Live and die well (with a wench and a can of Redi-whip)

Your Sword-Brother,

Stefan La Ges

(#74928 01/21/06)

Afterwords...

(By Lord Po)

... and THAT, Dear Readers, was the essential story of my **first** Pennsic.

In the days and weeks and months that followed, we all received every conceivable reaction and response (both to our actions and to this penance book)- ranging from “Cool, did you have as much fun as I think you did?” all the way to “Off with their heads!”.

There were those who allowed themselves to put it behind them (not **forgive** per se- but to see it as a one-time mistake out of ignorance, once past and now to be relegated TO the past)- and those who made it quite clear that this would negatively affect their dealings with us for eternity.

We certainly did not, with malice aforethought, conspire to go to Pennsic 34 and create this situation.

It took almost 6 months to put this project together- asking the participants, corresponding, collating, etc... in that time we made new friends, attended new events, continued to grow as swashbucklers....

Lady Dei healed- and with her once-broken Collarbone adequately protected, went on to win (on points) the Endless Hills Baronial Rapier Champions Tourney and to receive a Baronial-level award for her Fencing. Beyond that, she spent 6 months acting as Royal Guard to Her Royal Majesty, Queen Isabeau de l'Isle.

I went on to be elected Endless Hills Baronial Fencing Marshal- the final step in my original self-imposed task to provide more **active** Marshalling for my local region.

All three of the Rapiermaniacs were called before Her Majesty at Fasching and bestowed Companionship in the Order of the Golden Alce, recognizing our fencing abilities. (*maybe a *little* notoriety isn't always a detriment.*)

Obviously there are a great many people we need to thank.. from each and every one of our participants, to those who advised and taught us over the years, and each honored opponent who allows us to learn something new about ourselves every time they meet one of the Rapiermaniacs on the listfield.

Thank You-