

**Shire of Starhaven  
Business Meeting  
Thursday, Dec 5, 2013**

Meeting attended by:

Adults: 24

Children: 3

Total: 27

Among the attendees were Their Royal Majesties, Yoan Moon Sang and Jung-Mie, and Their Excellencies, Baron Herman vander Brugghe and Baroness Jehannette de Lille

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 pm

Meeting Opened by: Lord Cormac mac Culeon

Meeting Presided by: Lord Takashi Ieyasu

**Officer Reports:**

With the special program to be presented by the Kingdom Hospitaller, Lord Takashi asked if there was anything that the officers wished to add in addition to what was reported in the December *Vair Bell*. With no one having any additions, Lord Takashi turned the meeting over to Baroness Jehannette.

**Kingdom Hospitaller:**

Baroness Jehannette started by saying that this talk about retention is in preparation for the big demo (Space Coast Nerd Fest) in April. Retention is keeping people, keeping them interested and coming back. [NOTE: The following is from the handout Baroness Jehannette passed out. Copies are available for asking. Anyone who attended this class may count it with TRU.]

**The Basics of Retention in the S.C.A.**

By Jehannette de Lille

Two major concepts form the core of retention in the SCA—courtesy and access. We as an organization stand out from the rest of the world for some very important reasons. We provide free educational opportunities in countless subjects, both medieval and mundane, simply for the sake (and passion) of doing them, and we provide a judgment-free and chivalry-driven environment where a family-like and empowerment-heavy atmosphere reigns.

Courtesy is so important for keeping people around. As a completely volunteer driven organization, basic, and not-so-basic courtesy can really make the difference between a good and a great group. A place that has no culture of courtesy is a disaster. Courtesy begins with a welcoming attitude when new participants walk in the door, and continues with a culture of

general social comfort within a group. Every single interaction between people in a group should be done with carefully considered courtesy, as these interactions are, of course, observed by new people coming in. Perhaps even more importantly, this builds levels of social comfort in everyone, because they know that even if there is a problem or a disagreement within a group, everyone involved will behave well through the process of conflict resolution or problem solving. This allows a feeling of security and value in interactions, and is followed by a culture of positivity and a sense of belonging.

Access is a broad concept that really covers everything from easy to reach meeting locations and mentorship, to martial equipment and crafting supplies. Access really deals with what the SCA offers as a group. This obviously varies from local group to local group, depending on the skill sets and prosperity of their members.

Meeting locations are an important core part of access. A meeting should offer a reason for anyone, officer or not, to attend. It should be centrally located to the majority of the geographical group's population, not necessarily to the center of the geography in question. It should be in a neutral location, where anyone off the street would feel comfortable to walk in to meet people who are strangers. And ideally, it would be in a location that makes it easy to hold classes of many, if not all, types. This is a major consideration, because convenience makes it easier for each person who might attend to invest their time and gas money to attend a meeting. The meeting location and time should be as consistent and regular as possible.

The other thing that will draw them into participation is substance. There should always be something of substance going on at a meeting. Most groups do not have enough business for a separate business meeting. Business should be tacked on to some other type of activity whenever possible, unless there is some sort of specific preparation that needs to be done for an event or other major project. Substance revolves around knowledge. Providing substance in a group means teaching arts and sciences classes, having archery practice, or heavy or light weapons practice. The most effective access to knowledge is targeted to what the populace is interested in, but this is not entirely necessary. Consistent offerings of a variety of different subjects keeps people coming back for more, as the vast number of possibilities that the SCA offers makes it habitual for many people to try a number of things before they find those that they are most passionate in. This access to knowledge is the dangling carrot that groups should use to get people in the door, and keep them there.

You might ask, why is it important that people attend their regular local meetings? From an administrative standpoint, good attendance at meetings means that there is a pool of people to provide deputy officers, which also means that there is someone to train. From an access standpoint, it means

there is a broader knowledge base from which to make classes, workshops, and practices available. It also means there is a group of people who are available to tackle projects, pursue goals, and develop camaraderie. All of these things build a higher level of group health than is possible otherwise.

Access also means access to equipment. Every person who walks in the door with an eye to participate has an immediate access problem. They must somehow acquire garb. Gold Key can help, but this is not always an easy or viable option for groups to maintain. So paying attention to this element of access is important, and can contribute to retention. This applies to any activity that the SCA offers, some of which are more expensive than others. Anyone who walks in the door with a specific interest will not return if they cannot pursue what they came for. Helping someone with these elements of access shows both a great deal of generosity and courtesy, but really helps develop a sense of value to the endeavors we pursue as a Society.

This all boils down to being friendly and providing people with something of value and purpose at a convenient location. These things require conscious effort from the people in the local group.

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### **Baroness Jehannette's recommendations for Starhaven:**

Pursue FUN. Make FUN your goal. Invest in it. Roll in it. Advertise it. Share it.

For now, move the regular meetings to the fighter practices, as you have more attendance there than you do at the library.

Then, look for a new meeting location that offers an appropriately neutral and safe venue and also allows enough time to have a proper class time. Most weeknight meetings start at 7 pm to allow people to get off work, pick up their kids, and have dinner before a meeting.

Reduce officership to minimum requirements. Fill deputy positions, and get those people trained. Concentrate on projects, goals, and classes, and make a point of seeing to the needs of the populace. Your first goal should be to make Starhaven a place where people want to stay. THEN, concern yourselves with recruitment.

Make sure that newer people have as much opportunity to take officer positions as your long-time members. Your well-seasoned members should be training people as much as they are functioning as officers.

When you are no longer doing musical chairs, and when you don't have problems staffing your events, and are seeing growth in your membership, and meeting attendance, then begin to fill the other positions.

If possible, do not take deputies who do not attend the business portion of the meetings.

All tasks that revolve around the health of the group should be performed regardless of whether the corresponding officer position is filled. Classes should happen even in the absence of an art-sci officer. Hospitaller duties should be performed by your at-large hospitaliers, even if you don't choose to have an officer in that position. If you need a consulting herald to help multiple people pass their names or devices, book one from a neighboring group.

Look inside your group, and at your neighbors, for people to teach classes that interest the populace.

Look at the people around you and truly see the magnitude of talent within your borders. You have spectacular artisans, performers, and combatants. You have some of the jewels of Trimaris within your borders. Treasure each other. Empower each other.

When planning events for the year, make sure there is value to the event, that there is something for everyone, and that your populace is interested in what is being offered there. Having fewer events is okay, if better events result. Similar to having demos, it is better to not have an event than to have a bad one. This particularly applies to this Kingdom, as we are small and have a very full event season. When planning events, try to make certain they do not conflict with anyone rather than just conflict with relative local groups.

Practice exquisite courtesy and chivalry.

Do conflict resolution when it exists. Give each other a break, and the benefit of the doubt. Understand when others do not share your way of thinking—instead, celebrate your diversity. Choose your battles carefully, and make sure they are over something important.

Don't exclude people. Access is important for everyone.

Don't take yourselves too seriously.

Evaluate where you want the group to go.

**Notes on comments concerning the presentation:**

Basic welcoming attitude with warmth is important. People want to feel comfortable, especially if they don't know anyone. How people already in treat each other is noticed. Takes 6 months for the general populace to warm up to someone new. Need to engage new folks for a while.

Access to knowledge – get people hooked up with what they want to learn. Can find someone somewhere.

Gold Key – be creative. Not every group needs one. Takes time & space to store & maintain. Make garb as people come in until so big you need a bunch of garb.

Meeting sites – everyone having trouble finding a good place. Parking, handicapped access, time frame, need about 1½ hours.

Can't get addresses, but can get member distribution by zip codes. A 45-minute drive to a meeting on a weeknight is too long, 30 minutes is the cap. May need to have meetings north and south.

Officers – very important that every Office in use has an Officer, a Drop-Dead Deputy, and a trained Deputy. Make sure if you have a deputy in one position, that person is not also a deputy in two other positions. Do the same with your event staff.

Starhaven has 71 paid members and more hospitallers-at-large in its borders than the rest of the Kingdom.

HL Eveleen asked how to foster healing in a group that is divided. Baron Herman, as the Kingdom Officer in charge of new groups, replied that you should have fun and leave the petty stuff at home. Starhaven is not the only one with this problem. Baroness Jehannette replied that the Kingdom wants you happy, safe, and productive.

You have the more hospitallers-at-large in your borders than the rest of the Kingdom. You have the highest level of artisans and fighters. You should be able to heal it by letting things go. All of your reporting can be done through the Seneschal. If classes are held at a business meeting, the arts & sciences are handled. Look inside your group and neighbors for classes. Contact Master Iefan for classes; he will come, just put him up. If you need fewer events of higher quality, do it. You can put traditional events on hold until you can do a spectacular job. Do conflict resolution soon and in person, not on Facebook. Don't exclude people for anything; don't put artificial things in place that make people feel less. Don't take yourself too seriously. We're an imaginary group doing imaginary stuff. Evaluate where you want your group to go and what you need for your group to get there.

## **General Comments:**

At a recent Fighter Practice, Duchess Larissa suggested that the Business Meeting be held at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Fighter Practice in Titusville. Lady Eleanora recommended tabling that suggestion until next month with advertising that it would be on the agenda to get people to come. Lord Takashi, as Seneschal, has a work conflict and would need to start earlier, perhaps 10 am, in order to preside. Yoan suggested that the Deputy Seneschal could handle the meeting in his stead. Sir Trude, out of her long experience, recommended that business meetings should be held out of the earshot of the public and of new folk. Discussions can sometimes get loud and heated.

Lady Eleanora requested that notices to the populace be placed on Yahoo as well as Facebook. Baroness Jehannette reminded that Yahoo Groups has the advantage of hosting files.

With the April demo coming up, Lord Takashi asked for clarification about moderns touching armor and weapons. Baroness Jehannette said that armor and weapons cannot be out where the public can reach them without supervision.

## **Events:**

Cattleraid will be held at Fox Lake Park on Jan 11<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Future Events:***

We need bids for our future events. Please submit your ideas for new events and bids via email to [Seneschal@Starhaven.Trimaris.org](mailto:Seneschal@Starhaven.Trimaris.org).

## **Old Business:**

Mor, on behalf of Duchess Larissa and herself as Autocrats, thanked everyone who helped with Bungle in the Jungle and who came.; Lady Eithne for being the ClassCrat and Laird Kelvin, Lady Catherine, Lady Alane, and Lady Eithne for teaching; and Sir Trude for a delicious lunch. HL Eveleen reported the proceeds from Bungle - \$495.

## **New Business:**

Sir Geoffrey read a letter from L'Bet'e deAcmd concerning a Renaissance Faire to save Dragon Point.

Greetings Starhaven,

I apologize that I could not make the meeting; a scheduling conflict arose with the fair.

To keep this as simple as possible, I am reaching out to cousins of like-minded interests rather than a defined organization. More specifically to citizens of Brevard whom this fair would have a greater bearing on. Individually, we are looking for cast to add to the ambiance of a medieval fair. Light-hearted and fun is the motto. As some of you know, there is a difference between the experience of fairs and recreation and we are focusing more on the show. We are also looking for exhibitions (educational). Vendors are welcome, and there are good rates. As for my brothers and sisters in arms, the fighting style is live steel. To which are presented as shows. This does not mean the opportunity to mix it up a bit and perhaps swing some sticks will not be available, but it will be in no way guaranteed. I have had the honor to fight with many combatants of Starhaven and am more than willing to bring such people into the fight show. Armor requirements would have to be met, to which Geoffrey or I can assist with guidance.

Though we are looking for more individual involvement than organizational, this in no way means that we do not wish members not to promote Starhaven or the SCA experience. Such is truly encouraged and welcome. If the SCA, Inc. wishes a more official promoting presence a vendor space can be procured, just contact me with the request.

Please feel free to contact me with interest or questions at [caderivi@aol.com](mailto:caderivi@aol.com) or 321-914-6582. Information on the festival can be found at <http://www.thedragonfestival.com>.

Thank you,  
Anthony Derivi

The fair will be held at Wickham Park. What is mostly wanted is atmosphere. This is the first year, perhaps it will continue. Some interest was expressed for artisans or perhaps a group to attend. Question raised if there was an organizational meeting that those interested could attend. Question raised as to period of garb. Answer was: this first year pretty much anything goes, think elf ears, Hogwarts, boat show, any time period.

Meeting Closed: 7:55 pm  
Notes Taken by: Lady Eithne ingen Muirgein