

Duties of the Kingdom Signet as I See Them

THL Hrefna karsefni, Kingdom Signet, Feb 2008 – March, 2010

(Susan Holt)

Duties:

Liaise with each and every Crown of Atenveldt. Provide them with scrolls for every award that they give out during their tenure. We are fortunate to be able to provide scrolls for every award the Crown decides to bestow upon any member of their populace. Some Kingdoms have a very large backlog and it takes years to get a scroll. Over the past six years, Atenveldt scribes have always run in surplus of the desires of the Crown. We are fortunate to have enough wonderful scribes to keep the Crowns supplied with enough scrolls for each reign.

Keep the confidence of the Crown so that the awards they give are truly a surprise to the recipient and their friends and family. This may seem like a small detail, but it is a vital one. If this trust is broken, it can be hurtful to the Crown and they may decide to remove you from office.

If the Crown chooses to not have any calligrapher know the names of the award recipients, then it falls to the Kingdom Signet or the Crown to put in the names.

Liaise with each and every scribe in the Kingdom who chooses to provide scrolls for the Crowns to give out as award documents. Make sure every scribe who needs paper receives some. Be available to every scribe for giving out paper and accepting back completed scrolls.

Keep the 4 Illumination Loaner Kits and two Calligraphy Loaner Kits stocked and available for sign out and use by any scribe in the Kingdom.

Scan and post award scrolls after they have been given by the Crown on Photobucket.

Keep an updated version of a contact list for scribes throughout the Kingdom.

Teach scribes who want to learn. This can be done through collegiums, scriptoria, weekend workshops, class nights, and even through the Aten Scribes and local Baronial Yahoo e-groups.

Encourage all scribes to teach. Every person has different knowledge and it's very good to get different points of view and knowledge about other's interests. Encourage all scribes to learn as much as they can from each other, from period source books, libraries, on-line sources and museums.

Travel to each Barony at least twice in the 2 year duration of the tenure of the warrant. Smaller groups (outside the metro-Phoenix area) are overjoyed when any Kingdom Officer comes out for an event. The scribes are especially thankful about visits from their

Kingdom Signet. This is a great way to meet new people and to see first hand what the scribes there are doing and what, if anything, they need.

Send in award recommendations to the Crown for scribes who deserve recognition.

If asked by the Owner of the Aten Scribes Yahoo e-group, help moderate and accept new members to the list.

This office does not do any kind of monthly or yearly report as the Kingdom Exchequer handles the finances and the Kingdom Heralds handle the Court Reports.

Deputies

Deputies are a very important part of this office. There is one Emergency Designate (EDKS). This person should know the system and be kept in the loop of what's happening. This means in almost everything related to the office. They will need to know where all of the scrolls are kept and what system they are filed under, as well as the Loaner Kits and the scribes contact list. They will need to know who to contact in case the Kingdom Scribe can no longer carry out their duties. Usually it's the Crown, the Kingdom Seneschal, the Baronial Scribes, and the scribes of the Kingdom in that order. The EDKS should have access to a scanner and the web site started by Dame Jennifer Trethewy to add scans of the scrolls to, after they have been awarded.

The Baronial Signets fall under the preview of the Kingdom Scribe's office as per the Kingdom Scribe's charter. They are technically deputies. Not all past Kingdom Signets have utilized their Baronial counterparts as deputies. They are a great resource to keep in touch with as they have good working knowledge on how much of a work load their local scribes are carrying at any given moment.

Choosing a Scroll for the Crown to Give

I have been asked by several people about the process of choosing which scrolls go out. Here are some of the things I, as Kingdom Signet must take into account every time an award is desired by the Crown of Atenveldt.

I try to match up the scroll with the person (persona), time period, country of origin, colors on their Arms, or anything else personal that will connect that recipient with that piece of art.

I look for the space provided on the scroll for the recipient's SCA name to be added as compared to the length of that name. Some scribes leave an inch of room, others leave an entire line. Depending on the size of the paper, the size of the surrounding illumination, and the size of the font, scrolls are sometimes not used right away due to some very lengthy SCA names.

For most awards I choose scrolls from the ones available in the Kingdom Scroll case,

unless specified by the Crown for an award for someone special to them. These are the scrolls that get handed out most. These are usually completed in a scribe's own time and given to the Signet to use as needed. These can be pre-drawns (already have the design on them) or can be designed and illuminated, or even completed with calligraphy (except the names and dates) when handed in.

For almost all high level awards, if there is not a real time crunch, I first ask for volunteers to do a specific scroll, either through private emails, phone calls, by emailing the scribal Yahoo e-groups, or talking to scribes in person. If I don't get anyone to volunteer in a few days, I then email or personally ask specific scribes who's names I haven't seen on scrolls in a while. This gives everyone a chance to participate.

For almost all high level awards (Peerages, Augmentations, Court Baronies and the like), if there is a time crunch, then that recipient will get matched with a scroll from the scroll case. For example, if the Crown asks if there are any Peerage scrolls in the Kingdom Scroll Case, they can give someone that award at Their Majesties leisure. As an artist, I do not want to give a recipient nonspecific Peerage scroll to anyone, but as Kingdom Signet, I have the ability for them to get a beautiful scroll at the time they receive the award at the will of the Crown.

For any scribal assignment I ask for, it also depends on what the local Baronial Scribes are having their scribes do at the time. Most scribes in the Kingdom also do a lot of scrolls for their home Baronies. The Baronial Signets usually let me know if they are having their local scribes work on a large project. I try to give those scribes time to complete their local project before asking them to work on Kingdom scrolls. If something were to come up that a special, higher level scroll was needed, and I knew the recipient had special friendship with a specific scribe in their home Barony, I would certainly ask that scribe to do that specific scroll regardless of the Baronial project as Peerages for friends are sometimes a once in a lifetime thing.

For the higher level award scrolls (Peerages, Augmentations, Court Baronies and the like), if I don't know the recipient, as happens frequently, I try to find a scribe who does know them to do the scroll so it is more special for both of them. If I can't find a scribe who runs in their circles, I'll choose a scribe I know can handle a Peerage-level scroll, or a great work of art.

Ex: In the case of Aelfred and Timmothy, I introduced myself so they knew I would be contacting them about a wish list for their scrolls, if they had one. Both had friends who were scribes standing right next to them when I was being introduced, and those scribes immediately volunteered to do the scrolls.

For King's Sigils & Queen's Cyphers I ask the Crown if they have a preference of any scribe or group of scribes to work on these. If they don't I try to find a scribe or group of scribes who may not have a lot on their artistic plate at the moment, as well as trying to find a group who has not worked on a project like this before or in a long time. I try to give these artists 2 full months to make these scrolls, as there are usually 20-ish each.

In years past, the Arts & Sciences Competition Category/Subcategory scrolls were either assigned to specific scribes by the Kingdom Minister of Arts & Sciences, or as in the case of the 2007 A&S Competition, there were no scrolls. For the 2008 scrolls, the KMOAS and I worked together to reach a compromise between the two offices for scrolls for the 2008 Competition. For the A&S Competition Category/Subcategory Winners scrolls, I try to spread the wealth throughout the Kingdom. These scrolls will be given to the populace of the entire Kingdom, so why should only 1 group have the opportunity to work on them.

For the scribes who get super busy with Stepping Down and Coronation, I take them out of the rotation for the next Stepping Down/Coronation so that different scribes get the experience of doing special scrolls. For all of the Commanders, Sigils, Cyphers, the Lion (unless that Crown wants a specific scribe to do any of these specific scrolls), I like to assign scribes from other parts of the Kingdom to do these specific scrolls for differing reigns. I don't want the same scribes to do the same awards over and over again, I'd like for every scribe to have the opportunity to do as many different scrolls as possible. If they work on one project over and over again it gets a little monotonous.

Near the end of the reigns, I try to use all of the scrolls that are specific to that Crown so they get to give the scrolls that were specifically made for them. To some scribes, this is a very important thing.

There are many artistic personalities and one of the issues that arises is not all scribes will create scrolls for every Crown. Calligraphy & Illumination are very personal things to the scribes that make these pieces of art. If they don't like a Crown, for whatever reason, no one will be able to get a scroll from them for the duration of that reign, no matter what happens, even a Peerage for their best friend. I will give that scribe the opportunity; however, knowing the chances may be slim to none.

Other scribes will create any scroll at any time, as long as they are personally asked by the Kingdom or Baronial Signet. Still others will do scrolls simply because they love it, and as long as it gets given out, they're happy.

If there are any scribes who are feeling put upon, or not included, I'd love to know so I can amend the situation. I really don't want anyone to be overworked, or under worked, or feel unappreciated. Every scribe in this Kingdom deserves to have their names read out in Court and be recognized for the hours of hard work and energy they put into every scroll or piece of art work they do. I'd hate to miss someone who has so much to offer.

I'm sure there are more than just these situation examples that will come up during my tenure. Choosing what scroll goes out really does depends on a lot of things. As Kingdom Signet, I have to be ready for any award to be given to anyone at a moment's notice.