

Award Recs: What They Are, Why They Are Done and How To Do Them

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What is an Award Recommendation?

A simple definition of a kingdom award rec would be: A letter to the Crown of your kingdom recommending that someone be recognized for their efforts with an award.

Why Do an Award Recommendation?

Because it is a responsibility. And because it is an opportunity. As a participating member of the SCA, you have both the right and responsibility to let the Crown know of individuals who are doing exemplary work in a craft, skill or service. The reason we have this responsibility is because the Crown cannot be everywhere at once, cannot see everything that everyone is doing. We as members of the Populace have the opportunity to inform the Crown of the activities of our fellow gentles and the reasons they deserve recognition.

You can recommend anyone for **ANY** award, including a Peerage. You do not have to possess that award or have any award at all to recommend others for awards.

Why Deserving People Sometimes Get Skipped

If the Crown doesn't see the activities a person is doing and doesn't get award recs for the person, that person will not be recognized for their efforts. And this has happened to a lot of gentles over the years. Why?

1. They work quietly in the background, doing everything from kitchen scut-work to event clean-ups for a long time. This amount of selfless effort and work deserves acknowledgement, but because they were always in the background, the Crown did not see them to know they needed recognition.
2. Everyone thinks they already have the award. Sometimes people "slip through the cracks". They are known for doing stuff for so long that everyone assumes they have already received an award. This is the reason we should always check to make sure that folks we see doing things do indeed have awards worthy of their efforts.
3. Folks think that someone else will put the person in for an award, so they don't need to send an award rec in for them. The result is that no award rec is ever sent in because everyone is sure that someone else is already doing it. Don't make this assumption...go ahead and write an award rec. It never hurts a person to have another award rec sent in about them.

How Does One Do an Award Recommendation?

There are basically three steps to this. First, you must determine who you want to recommend for an award. Second, you must determine what type of award they should be recommended for and if they have the award already or not. Third, you need to write the award rec.

Step one is fairly easy. Any gentle you see involved in constructive activities within the SCA is either deserving of an award or working toward deserving an award. When you note someone you feel deserves recognition for their skills or service, find out what their name is and where they are from. If they are from your local group this is easily done, as you most likely already know them. If they are from another group you may have to make inquiries either of them or of others who know them.

Step two is also easy. The best way to determine what awards a person has is to check the Kingdom Order of Precedence (OP). Most kingdoms now have their OP on-line, usually connected to the Kingdom Heralds webpage. The Calontir OP currently is located on-line at:

<http://calontir.sca.org/herald/op/index.html> The quickest means of using this is to do a name

search. Clicking on the Name Search link takes you to a search engine page. To use the search engine, simply type in the person's SCA name (no titles) and click on the Search button. It will then present a list of people with that name and what awards they have. Other means of determining what awards a person has include speaking with the person's local herald, the person's friends or significant other. Usually they will know what awards a person has.

Now comes the task of determining what award to recommend the person for. Knowing what award the person should be recommended for will come easier over time as you advance in rank yourself and gain awards. However, anyone can check the on-line article *Etcetera - the Kingdom of Calontir* by Jessa d'Avondale at <http://www.pbm.com/~lindah1/jessa/calontir.html> for information on AoA level awards, Grant level awards and other Calontir specific awards. For information on the Peerage awards, as well as additional information on what is usually expected in order to receive Calontir awards, go to the on-line article

Living in the SCA by Thoman Shadan Secarius at: <http://calontir.sca.org/herald/award-intro.html>

A quick breakdown of the Calontir awards you might recommend someone for:

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| Award of Arms | - recognition of service and/or promise in any of the Arts, Sciences, Fighting or Archery |
| Torse | - continued service to the local group, Kingdom and/or Society |
| Golden Calon Swan | - accomplishment in the arts |
| Leather Mallet | - accomplishment in the sciences |
| Iren-Fyrd | - accomplishment as a rattan fighter |
| Boga-Fyrd | - accomplishment as an archer |
| Eo-Fyrd | - accomplishment as an equestrian |
| Stile-Fyrd | - accomplishment as a steel fighter |
| Grant of Arms, Simple | - non-specific and/or wide-variety of service to the Kingdom |
| Cross of Calontir | - continued and extensive service to the Kingdom and/or Society |
| Calon Lily | - high accomplishment in the arts |
| Silver Hammer | - high accomplishment in the sciences |
| Iren-Hirth | - high accomplishment as a fighter |
| Boga-Hirth | - high accomplishment as an archer |
| Eo-Hirth | - high accomplishment as an equestrian |
| Stile-Hirth | - high accomplishment as a steel fighter |
| Pelican | - mastery in the field of service to the Kingdom and/or Society |

Laurel	- mastery of an art or science
Chivalry	- mastery at armed rattan combat
Defense	- mastery of steel combat
Queen's Chalice	- for younger SCA members in recognition of service above that normally expected of them
Keeper of the Flame	- demonstrates exceptional honor, courtesy and exemplary efforts in creating a medieval aura
Sword of Calontir	- dramatic deed of combat or military science
Falcon's Heart	- given to groups who have provided service above that normally expected
Court Baron (ess)	- exceptional service to the Kingdom; only given about once per reign

Step three is the actual writing of the award rec. Perhaps not the easiest part, but still relatively simple to do. Most kingdoms now have an on-line award rec webpage where you can fill out the recommendation and send it electronically. The on-line Calontir Award Rec webpage is at: <http://www.calontir.info/award/index.html> You can also send an award rec to the Crown via e-mail or by regular mail. (Check your kingdom newsletter for blank award rec forms to photocopy and the address to send the award recs to.) But no matter what means you use to send the recommendation to the Crown, there is key information that needs to be supplied on the award rec. This includes these 12 things:

1. Name of the award being recommended
2. Area of Endeavor/Reason for award being recommended (i.e. service, leatherwork, fighting, research, heraldry, etc.)
3. SCA name of person being recommended
4. Gender of person being recommended
5. Local group of person being recommended (if at all possible)
6. Modern name of person being recommended (if at all possible)
7. Modern address of person being recommended (if at all possible)
8. Events the person being recommended will be attending in the future (if at all possible)
9. Your SCA name (as the recommender)
10. Your SCA group
11. Your contact info (phone and/or mailing address and/or e-mail address)
12. Explanation of why the person deserves the award.

If you are not using one of the on-line forms that prompt you where to insert what information, write your recommendation in a structured manner so it is easy for the Crown to understand who you are recommending and what you are recommending them for. A sample award rec letter follows:

Unto Their Royal Majesties of Calontir, <King's name> and <Queen's name>
From <your name>

Greetings.

I am writing this letter to bring to your attention someone I believe is deserving of a(n)
<name of award>.

This person's SCA name is <person's SCA name> and his/her modern name is <person's modern name>.

He/She lives in <name of person's SCA group>.

I believe they deserve this award because <give information on why this person deserves the award you are recommending them for. Be specific/detailed and give as many examples of their skills, service, etc. as possible. If you are recommending the person for an Arts or Sciences award, try to include information on the degree of the person's skill, what classes they teach or one-on-one teaching they do of their art, note if they have published articles in any SCA newsletters or on any webpages>.

He/She has been in the SCA for <length of person's time in the SCA> and demonstrates the type of activity deserving of recognition.

I think they will be attending the following events <list upcoming events the recommended person may be attending>.

<Signature>

<Your SCA Name>

<Your modern name>

<Your address>

<Your phone number & e-mail address (if applicable)>

<Your SCA group's name>

Notes on Writing Award Recs

Write one letter per person per award rec. Don't send a letter for multiple people to get an Award of Arms. Send a separate award rec for each person. Don't recommend the same person for multiple awards on the same award rec. If you feel they are deserving of more than one award, then send a separate award rec for each award, even though it's for the same person. (The Crown will need to separate award recs out into individual recommendations.)

Each person who wants to recommend someone should send in a separate award rec. Separate award recs show the Crown that there is support for this person because people have taken the time to write individual award recs. Several people signing one award rec gives the impression that people are willing to sign off on it, but it's not important enough to the people to write one of their own.

Type or neatly write. Do not use calligraphy. Communicate in clear plain English. Don't speak foresoothly or with flowery speech.

Find out what name the recipient uses and how to spell it. If they go by a nickname or shortened version of their registered name, be sure to give both names in the award rec. The Crown may know the person by their nickname but not their full name. If the person is from another group but you don't have their full name, be sure to include what group they are from.

The higher the award you are recommending the person for, the more examples you should cite of the person's work. Talk with others about the person to find out details and information.

Indicate how long the individual being recommended has been in the SCA.

Detail the accomplishments, offices and other factors that cause you to believe this person should be recognized. What have they done and for how long? How many people have been affected by this person's deeds?

Realize that people can be deserving of awards because they have contributed to the SCA in many small ways over time. Don't overlook ways in which they have been helpful. Also remember that if the person has come into your area from an outside branch or another kingdom, you may need to research what they have done prior to you having met them.

Keep a copy of the award rec for yourself, in case you need to re-send it, or to use as an example for other award recs.

Some Award Rec Etiquette

While it is important that we make sure all deserving individuals receive recognition for their efforts, there are some things to be aware of. Now, while these things may seem pretty obvious, it is surprising what has occurred over the years.

1. Do not put an award rec in for yourself.
2. Do not put an award rec in for your significant other.
3. Do not put an award rec in for the Crown (wait until after they step down).

I Sent in an Award Rec, But the Person Didn't Get the Award. Why?

Many times someone says they sent the Crown an award rec for a person but that the recommended person didn't get the award. And the person who sent the award rec in wants to know why or how this happened. There are several reasons that may contribute to this.

1. The Crown usually likes to receive more than one letter so They can get confirmation on the recommended person's achievements. Did the recommending person see an isolated occurrence or is there a "history" of the recommended person's skill and/or activity level? The more letters the Crown receives about a deserving person, the better...so this is why it's important that each of us do our part to send in award recs.
2. Some awards come from Polling Orders. This means the members of the Order for that particular award are polled by the Crown to get the members' opinion of the recommended person's skill and activity level. If there is some concern about the recommend person (such as needing to teach classes, travel more, etc.) then the Order may suggest to the Crown that They wait to bestow the award. In such cases, members of the Order tend to seek out the recommended individual and encourage them to do what is needed to overcome any concerns brought up.
3. The Polling Order did not have enough members at the meeting to form a consensus for the Crown concerning the recommended person. If this is the case, then the recommended person will be discussed at the next meeting of the Order...but this could be some months later.

4. The recommended person did not show up at any courts where the award could be presented. The Crown always prefers to present an award to the recommended person Themselves. When the recommended person never shows at a court, then things can get problematic. If the award is a first-level award (Award of Arms, Leather Mallet, Golden Calon Swan, Torse, etc.) the Crown *may* decide to allow someone else to accept the scroll on behalf of the recommended person. It would be extremely rare that the Crown would present a Grant Level award “in abstentia”, and doubtful that a Patent Level award would ever be given without the recommended person being present.

5. Not enough time has passed since the recommended person’s last award. Many times the Crown likes to “space out” awards for individuals. This is done so the individual has time to enjoy and appreciate the award they have received before another award is bestowed. This also helps prevent someone from getting multiple awards in a very short period of time, then going for a LONG time without any more awards and thus becoming disheartened. It also helps prevent someone from “topping out”; that is getting all the awards possible early in their SCA career and never getting any other recognition in court.

6. The award rec did not have all of the information the Crown needed to make a determination on the award. If there is no complete name information for the person being recommended or only one example of their work is mentioned or you forget to identify yourself as the recommender, then most likely the award rec will be considered invalid and not acted upon.

If you feel someone deserves an award, you sent an award rec in and they did not get the award, resend the award rec during the reign of the next Crown.

What **is an Award?**

An award is NOT a merit badge. It is a symbol of the level of skill one has achieved in an activity or the level of service one has given. But it is not meant to be a reward for an activity that one has finished. It’s a recognition of the level one has achieved and there is the expectation that the level will be maintained with the hope that the recipient will advance farther. With the top level awards, it is expected that the recipient will not only maintain the level of service, skill and activity that earned them the award, but that they will pass on to others their knowledge and be an example for others to emulate.

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