

## 12<sup>th</sup> Night 2013 Event Report Notes

### **Merchants Area:**

**The Good:** The décor was well received, so much so that two SCA groups and the Royal Rosarians have expressed interest in renting/borrowing the décor items for use at their own events. Please note that the vast majority of the décor materials were donated so the budget does not reflect the actual costs of the décor. The merchants reported that they liked the space and that it was well attended. The combination with the A&S and Guild displays gave the displays a lot of foot traffic. There were some last minute changes and they were dealt with so everyone ended up with a nice space to work with. The window clings pulled in some people curious about us. We had a large crew that cut set up time from twelve hours to only six, and tear down time to from four hours to under two. The Family Activities minister reported that it was nice to have lots of indoor space and lots of volunteers eased the workload with entertaining an above average attendance of children.

**The Bad:** The Event Steward needs to have a deputy (someone in charge) at all times even during court to deal with issues. The Merchants Area needed carpets to cover the taped down electrical cords that disrupted the ambiance and also for safety concerns. There were minor issues with over zealous help for the merchants load out, which could be alleviated by signs for merchants to use (“Please help me move/I don’t need help at this time, Thank you”). We also needed a plan for Chatelaine activities, as they were last minute and not organized. We could have given some flyers to the hotel staff/concierge as well.

### **Gate:**

**The Good:** We had great staffs at gate. They were all well organized and efficient. Gate shift switchovers were smooth and without incident. The gate had a great central location, with wonderful décor and good signage. Tours were a great bonus feature.

**The Bad:** Gate closing at the beginning of court cut into our profits as a lot of people “ghosted” gate. I would recommend that Gate stay open through Coronation, then close. ACCEPS was not a good choice for this gate. Canadians cannot use it unless they have a US credit card and the correlation between the ACCEPS and the Gate sheets is nearly impossible. Pre-registration is a great idea, but perhaps it should be done locally next time. Viscountess Lenora does a pre-registration service for Grand Thing, and pre-registration, T-shirt sales and class registration for Sport of Kings also is local, so there are options. Should carefully consider a detailed transfers and refunds policy. Gate staff should be trained on how the local Exchequer wants to have gate correlated, as different branches run them slightly differently and the systems are not always compatible, especially with the Kingdom reporting. We should have gate set up and ready to go well before gate opens (the night before?) to reduce the initial queue as everyone rushes gate when it first gets staffed, even though it may not be “Open”. Staff Booklets\* at Gate and Volunteer Point would have been extremely useful. Need to have a full first aid kits at Gate and Volunteer Point.

### **Volunteer Point:**

**The Good:** It was fully staffed throughout event and was a central information point. Good centralized location made it easily accessible and very visible. It became an information booth as well.

**The Bad:** We need better communication with the staff leads on when they need more or no more volunteers and make clear when the volunteer raffle is going to take place and don’t change it. We needed better/more complete information to disseminate to attendees when asked (Staff Booklets\*), especially after gate closes

### **Grand Court/Masked Ball/QRC:**

**The Good:** The Ball was extremely successful and well attended. The décor was commented on repeatedly and the backdrop/dais setup was great, even though the arrangement was different from planned due to the unexpected attendance of Royalty from the West Kingdom. Having a microphone for the Dance callers was excellent and there is discussion on asking Their Majesties about microphone options for court so that it can be heard to the back of the hall. Widening the center aisle to 15 feet in the first 8 rows made it easier to get people closer while still facilitating oaths and elevations. The limit on retinue was also good. The Hotel staff did a wonderful job on quick changeovers of the hall from one set to another.

**The Bad:** Too many people in the back of court made it too loud to hear anything past midpoint in the hall. Should not have standing room only space at the back of the hall since there were a lot of empty chairs in the middle of rows. Having “side aisles” so that there are runs of only 5 chairs maximum and the middle aisle needs to be 8 feet wide, side aisles only need to be only 3 feet wide. Check on dais access to ensure that it is safe and well positioned for retinue access and does not get moved. The nice baronial eric flagging did not get utilized for the QRC, though it was on site. This was an oversight by the Event Steward in not communicating properly with the persons running the QRC.

**For the Hotel:**

**The Good:** Staff was prompt, professional and very responsive to requests throughout the entire event. They were helpful in setting up and taking down and went out of their way to make us welcome and comfortable. All the staff dealt with issues quickly.

**The Bad:** Th restaurant ran out of food on Saturday night. We ate ALL the meat they had. It is impossible to estimate this, as it is fickle, but using Friday night's food consumption as an estimate is not a good idea and this information should be shared with any large indoor event steward and the site. The second bank of elevators was not well known until too late in the event so the main elevators were over-used to the point of breaking one on Saturday night. The over-weight alarms never activated. Signage with a lower than normal capacity is recommended (10-person limit). We may wish to suggest that the Hotel have an elevator tech on call. Also, the use of the service elevator (The silver bullet) for the event staff would have been useful. A large bell staff and utilization of many carts/trolleys for the mass exodus on Sunday are a must. The hotel bell staff needs to plan for busy season/summer type crowds for Sunday. There were some reported billing problems after the event dealing with persons who had reserved multiple rooms, which are being handled individually.

**Notes for the Event Steward:**

Have an Event Steward bag on you at all times. Include protein bars/chocolate and cheese to give to "cranky" people, a lot of the time they are just hungry and don't realize it and 5 minutes after they eat the world will be a better place for them. Then talk to them about their concern/problem. If the activity that is "supposed" to happen hasn't had any thing going on it by 60 days before the event, CANCEL it. Remove it from the schedule/website/site copy. Make a Staff Booklet\*, make copies for each of yourself, your department heads, gate and volunteer point. Check to see if radios work EVERYWHERE in the hotel. If not, make a cell phone plan. Make a plan to ensure that all your staff gets fed and watered regularly. We had the advantage of having the Virgin Countess Inn providing a food share for the staff, and it worked wonderfully. Keep your time in court really brief, make any announcements you need to make and a brief general "Thank You" but leave the detailed, personal "Thank You" speech for your local council meeting.

**\* Staff Booklet:**

- Event Staff – SCA and modern name, picture, cell phone number, room number and job description.
- Site copy – All the info in your site copy and webpage
- Schedule – In table format so it is easy to read and share
- Hotel Map – Large format so it is easy to read and share
- Radio Channels - If using radios. Cell phone plan/expectations if not.
- Emergency Sheet - Local ER and Urgent Care, First Aid Kit location, Chirurgeon contact info, policy.
- Local Amenities – Local banks, restaurants, grocery/liquor/convenience stores

**Notes for Contracting with the Hotel:**

When negotiating for the room blocks, we need to set up a clause that sets a strict 60-day cancellation date and publicize it clearly from the start. At 60 days before the event, there will be penalties for canceling rooms, equal to the difference between the room block rate and the "going" rate for that room. Any rooms cancelled within 60 days, still stay in the block, at the negotiated prices, to facilitate resell. Also, limiting the number of rooms that attendees can reserve to 3, excepting the Event Steward who should have at least 10 large rooms for their dissemination. (It seems a lot, but they will get used!) Setting up a local wait list with the hotel and have the local number for the hotel published (in addition to the hotel's call center/reservation line) will facilitate reselling cancelled rooms.

**Notes for Kingdom:**

We needed better communications with the Royalty regarding scheduling. Schedules change, so please contact the Event Steward so that they can be changed in the site copy handout and website. (Site copy isn't printed until a day or 2 before the event, and websites are easy to change.) Kingdom Officers need to be more responsive to requests from and supportive of Event Stewards in regards to their offices. Smaller groups need help with manpower and the Kingdom Officers should be a resource on nearby persons to help with staffing events. As it stands, only large Baronies or groups that are closely tied to several groups can effectively pull together the manpower needed to run a Kingdom event. We need updated Chatelaine flyers, as the ones available are outdated and tired. We should also consider having the Exchequer's Office review gate sheets and Kingdom reporting needs. The gate sheets in use aren't easy to correlate with the Kingdom report requirements. Lastly, scheduled meetings should not begin earlier than scheduled, there were many complaints that Curia started twenty minutes early on Sunday without any notice so people who had reports and had interest in the meeting came in "late" and missed the majority of the meeting as a result.