A Town Cry System for Large Events
Things to do, big and small, in no particular order

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Make a schedule of cries, and stick to it!

For a large event, you probably should expect to do at least three cries per day. I suggest 8am, 12 noon, and 4pm as a good starting point--vary it as you need to depending on what the overall event schedule is. Crown events will require more frequent announcements, since there's a lot more going on. But expect a limited volunteer pool, and try not to burn out your volunteers (or yourself) if at all possible.

Unless it's an emergency, be firm with people (even autocrats, if necessary) who come to you with a request to make an announcement "right now". The odds are that you probably won't have enough volunteers to be able to send people running at the drop of a hat for a 2pm meeting that nobody bothered to tell you about in time for the noon cry. Make sure your fellow staffers are aware of your schedule, and pray that they have a good grasp of what constitutes an emergency. Serious injuries are an emergency. Lost children (or lost parents) are an emergency. Headlights left on are probably not an emergency. Calls for volunteers are definitely not an emergency.

Volunteers

If possible, line up volunteers in advance of the event. These don't necessarily have to be criers--it never hurts to have someone who can just man the table while you're out making announcements or grabbing lunch.

If you've been to Egil's or An Tir/West War, you've seen the large message boards that Adiantum has made for posting copies of the announcements. You don't have to get that elaborate--the crier posts at Estrella are small wooden posts with a small crossed-trumpets sign and large binder clip attached with plastic cable ties. Either way, it's nice to be able to post announcements in addition to shouting them, especially if not all of your criers have big voices.

Divide and Announce

If the site is large, divide the site into smaller sections so that announcements can reach the whole site in a reasonable amount of time. Make sure each section has a reasonable, logical route that your criers can easily follow. I absolutely *love* the wheel-and-spokes street layout that Shittimwoode has used in their recent Crown events. That site, and most Crown event sites, can be divided in two or three. Buford Park (recent An Tir/West site and former Egil's site) is a three-crier site. The Estrella site was divided into Merchant's Row and four other sectors. (Although when I volunteered there, I usually had to do two sections due to insufficient volunteers. Don't try this at home, kids...)

Office Supplies

Make sure you have sufficient office supplies: pens, pencils, legal pads, index cards, clipboards. If you have a place to actually post announcements, put them in plastic sheet protectors. If you don't have the luxury of a copy machine to copy announcements, then good old-fashioned *carbon paper* is your best friend. For snacks, bring lemon drops, pretzels, and *make sure everyone is getting fluids including you.*

Announcements everyone is sick of hearing

The two announcements everyone is sick of hearing, and which most criers get sick of announcing real fast "We need volunteers!", and "Move your cars to the parking lot!"   Unfortunately, both announcements are invariably

necessary at any large event. Try and stick these announcements at the end of your list--if you lead off with these, a lot of folks are going to think "oh, same old thing" and tune out before you get to less run-of-the-mill announcements.

You'll often need to tell people about cars that need to be moved for one reason or another, but don't let them stick you with a long list. If you read off a list of license numbers, people are going to stop paying attention after about two or three. With regard to cars in encampments that need to go to the parking lot, I try and avoid mentioning the possibility of towing unless it's really, truly going to happen. (And to the autocrats who are reading this: one car *actually* getting towed is more effective than ten thousand *threats* to tow. People simply won't believe the threat until it's backed up with action.)

Crass Commercial Announcements

If heralds are willing to do crass commercial announcements for merchants or others, these advertisements **must *never* be done in conjunction with official town cries**. Furthermore, since CCAs are not official announcements, the people making them should *not* be wearing crossed trumpets when they do so. If someone comes to you wanting to hire a herald for a CCA, by all means pass the word on their behalf if you wish, but in the end, it's not your job and not your problem.

Good Morning

For the morning wake-up announcements, if there are things scheduled early in the morning, **be sure to gather announcements the afternoon/evening before**. For a Crown event, get in touch with the royalty the evening before to find when *they* want the wake-up call and to go over the morning's schedule in case they want to make adjustments.

After the last scheduled town cry of the day, I may keep Herald's Point open for a while longer, but not too long. There may yet be an evening court for which a time has not yet been announced, so make sure you have people left to handle that. But once that's done, I'm usually done for the day, except for announcements done by direct order of autocrats, royalty, or modern public safety personnel. You've probably already put in a 10-12 hour day by that point--get some rest.

Atmosphere

Do your part to help maintain a period atmosphere. Avoid using obvious and regrettably overused SCA-isms in your announcements.

Do Say	Don't Say
Privy	Biffy
Tournament Field **Tourney Field** (if you must) **In Front of the Royal Pavilion** (if applicable)	Eric
Arts & Sciences	A&S
Car ("car" is a perfectly appropriate term)	Dragon

Most Importantly

Avoid using modern terminology where you can, but it is more important to ensure that announcements are clear and concise. Of course, in an emergency, disregard any or all of the above if necessary.