

Award Recommendations

-or-

How did she get that funny-looking badge?

Lord Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain
of House Mac an Ghabhann

You see people get called into Court to receive an Award of Arms or some other honor bestowed by Their Majesties Ansteorra, and you wonder to yourself, "Self, how did Their Majesties decide that this particular gentle deserved this award?" Well, people who know that gentle and have seen the work that they do decided to brag about that gentle in the form of an Award Recommendation. Their Majesties consider these recommendations and say "Why, you're right! John Doe deserves to be made LORD John Doe for all of his hard work for the SCA, and Lady Jane Roe should get a Sable Thistle for the beautiful needlework she does."

So what goes into the Award Recommendation that helps the Crown come to Their decision? Read on...

Who can submit an Award Recommendation?

Anyone who believes that another gentle deserves to receive an Award can submit a recommendation. You don't have to be a paid SCA member, or have been playing a certain amount of time, or any other restriction – you just have to be willing to write up the recommendation. (There are exceptions to this generalization, awards that are usually given at the discretion of the Crown from their own observations, or recommended from within the particular Orders to the Crown. These are noted below with an *.)

What Awards does Ansteorra give?

Patents of Rank: These are the Chivalry (Knights and Masters-at-Arms), the Laurel, and the Pelican, and are peerage awards. New members of the peerage are selected by the current membership of their respective Orders, in consultation with the Crown, and spoken for by representatives of the various Orders.

Court Baron and Court Baroness are **Grants of Rank**. These titles are usually bestowed upon territorial Barons and Baronesses when they step down. They are also given to those subjects whose service, ability, deeds, and grace merit such rank in the eyes of the granting Crown. Court Barons and Baronesses rank just below the Patents and above the Grant Orders.

Grants of Rank are also given in conjunction with the following:

Order of the Star of Merit (CSM): given to those who have served the kingdom far beyond that which is normally expected.

Order of the Iris of Merit (CIM): given to those who have consistently shown outstanding work in the arts and sciences.

*Order of the White Scarf of Ansteorra (WSA): given, in consultation with members of the order, to those who have demonstrated exceptional skill and chivalry in rapier combat, service to the kingdom and its people, and a courtly demeanor.

*Order of the Centurions of the Sable Star: given, in consultation with members of the order, for excellence in heavy weapons combat, courtly graces and manners, and chivalrous conduct.

*Order of the Golden Lance: given, in consultation with members of the order, for exceptional skill, leadership, and honor on the equestrian field.

*Order of the Arc d'Or: given, for excellence with the bow and crossbow, service to those who pursue excellence in archery, making of archery equipment, and exemplary conduct. The Crown may consult with the order concerning the qualifications and suitability of a candidate.

An **Award of Arms** (the right to bear and display arms) may be given separately, or in conjunction with the following awards, at the pleasure of the Crown:

*Award of the King's Gauntlet (KGA): given by the king to those who have served him well and faithfully, above and beyond what is normally expected of a citizen of Ansteorra.

*Award of the Queen's Glove (QGA): given by the queen to those who have served her well and faithfully, above and beyond what is normally expected of a citizen of Ansteorra. The above two awards may be received by an individual more than once, in different reigns and/or from different rulers.

*Award of the Sable Talon: given to those who have shown expertise in a specific area of combat arts. This award can be received more than once for expertise in different fields.

Award of the Sable Thistle: given to those who have shown expertise in a specific area of the arts and sciences. This award can be received more than once for expertise in different fields.

Award of the Sable Crane: given to those who have served the kingdom beyond that which is normally expected.

Award of the Sable Comet: given to those who have served a shire, canton, or other non-baronial branch above and beyond what is normally expected. The award may be received more than once, for service to different branches.

Award of the Compass Rose (CRA): given to those who have done exceptional work with the children of Ansteorra, and/or the Ministry of Children.

The following orders and awards are **Non-Armigerous** (do not convey the right to bear arms):

*Order of the Rose: given to those who have served the kingdom as consort.

*Order of the Knights of the Sable Garland: an Order within the Knighthood, patroned by the Order of the Rose, selected by the current membership of the Order, who will petition the Crown to add to their Order.

*Order of the Lions of Ansteorra: may be given a maximum of once per reign, to that gentle who best embodies the granting Crown's ideals of the Society.

Award of the Sable Falcon: given at the discretion of the Crown to those who have striven to further their skill in heavy weapons combat

*Award of the Queen's Rapier: given, at the discretion of the Queen, to those who have striven to further their skill in rapier combat. They shall be exemplars of courtly graces, manners and chivalry.

*King's Archer: given to those who have striven to further their skill in combat and target archery, who are involved in the arts and basic heraldry, display courtly graces and manners, and chivalrous conduct on and off the field.

*Award of the Crown's Grace: given by the Crown unto gentles found to have served faithfully in attendance to the Crown for the duration of their reign.

Golden Bridle: given to those who have striven to further both their skill on the Equestrian field and the Equestrian arts, and who are exemplars of courtly graces, manners, and chivalrous conduct on and off the field.

Award of the Rising Star of Ansteorra: given to those under the age of eighteen who have made contributions of worth by works, service, or example to the kingdom.

A Barony is permitted by the Crown to have a single active service order that confers an Award of Arms to the recipients. For example, in Elfsea, this is the Azure Keystone of Elfsea.

Loch Ruadh, being a Shire, has a non-Armigerous (does not bestow an Award of Arms) service award, the Ember. (NOTE: The Ember, being a Shire-level and not Kingdom-level award, is decided upon and awarded by the recommendations of the current membership of Embers.)

(* denotes those awards that are usually given at the discretion of the Crown from their own observations, or recommended from within the particular Orders to the Crown.)

Who should get an Award?

Have you observed someone who puts a lot of time and effort into the SCA, making the Dream more of a reality for everyone who plays? Someone who gives much and asks little or nothing in return? Those who open their homes for meetings and workshops? Those who contribute money and material items that make it possible to do the things we do? Someone who devotes personal time and energy to master skills in the Arts and Sciences that are so much a part of the Modern Middle Ages? Fighters who train long and hard so that they may present themselves on the list field with honor and chivalry? These are

the people we seek to recognize with Awards. If you have someone in mind but are not 100% sure, talk to anyone who has been in the SCA for a few years about it – you know they'll be glad to share their opinion wisdom. Does the gentle being recommended have to be from Loch Ruadh? Not at all. You can recommend anyone who you believe deserves to be recognized, whether they are from Loch Ruadh, our cousins from the Canton of Dragonsfire Tor or the Barony of Elfsea, or from any other SCA group.

How do I know whether or not an individual already has the Award?

Check the OP (Order of Precedence) files available on the Ansteorran web site (<http://heraldry.ansteorra.org/OP/>) or the Loch Ruadh OP, on the Shire website, where you can check individuals under the Our Members tab (<http://www.lochruadh.org/>). These files list which awards people have. If you don't have Internet access, or if you are unsure of what you find, speak with your friendly local Herald and he/she will find out for certain.

How do I write up a Recommendation?

There is an Award Recommendation form that can be used that is found on the Ansteorran web site (go to <http://www.ansteorra.org/forms/award.php>) which is easy to fill out and contains a "Comments" section for you to list why you think the gentle should get the award. Or if you prefer, there is an pdf form that you can print out and fill in with the same information (<http://www.ansteorra.org/publications/forms/>). You can also write up a recommendation in letter form; you can check with any Shire Officer (or just about anyone who has been playing for a number of years) for examples and formats (or look below for examples). In either case, you need to have firmly in mind the reasons why you think the gentle deserves the Award, and state them clearly and briefly. My own preference is to use the letter format; it is more personal, and I think it allows a greater scope in relating why you feel the gentle deserves the award.

Who do I send the Recommendation to?

Recommendations are ALWAYS sent to Their Royal Majesties, the King and Queen, email: crown@ansteorra.org Most Crowns will accept email Recommendations, but it is good form to send them a hardcopy as well; you can find their mailing address in the Black Star. (If you don't get the Black Star, just ask any Officer for the information). If we have a Prince and Princess at that time, remember to copy them on the award by emailing a copy to coronet@ansteorra.org. A copy should also be sent to the Seneschal of Loch Ruadh, or if the gentle is from another group, the Seneschal and Baron and/or Baroness of that group. If TRMs do not know the gentle being recommended (and it's a big Kingdom – no-one knows everybody), they will ask the Seneschal (and/or Baron and Baroness) for their opinions, so the Seneschal (and/or Baron and Baroness) need to know that the gentle has been recommended. So make sure that everyone is kept in the loop. Unless the Seneschal is the gentle being recommended for the Award, **NEVER EVER** forget to provide a copy of the Recommendation to the Seneschal. No one likes being made to look as if they don't know what's going on in their group, and this goes doubly (or even more so) for the Seneschal. You can send email copies to all of these folks without the need for a follow-up hardcopy. If you don't have email access, everyone will happily accept hard copies.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If recommending someone for the Ember, Loch Ruadh's service award, the recommendation needs to be sent or given to a current Ember, who will present it to the other Embers for consideration. For a list of current Embers, go to <http://www.lochruadh.org/?id=embers>. DO NOT submit Ember recommendations to the Crown; this is entirely an in-Shire award.

When Should Recommendations be submitted?

It takes time for Their Majesties to read the Recommendations they receive, check on the gentles being recommended, make a decision, and have the Award Scrolls prepared for the event at which they will be given. Always give the Crown at least three weeks prior to the event you think the Award should be given at to accomplish these tasks.

Some other considerations:

- a. If the event is a Coronation, make doubly sure you send the Recommendation to Their Highnesses, the Prince and Princess, as well as to Their Majesties. This allows the Royal Family to decide if the King and Queen who are stepping down or the King and Queen who are stepping up should give the Award.
- b. In the of an event that takes place immediately after a Coronation, it is best to send your Recommendations to the King and Queen who will take the Thrones at that Coronation, as soon as possible after Coronation takes place. The outgoing Crown has a lot to do, and there is always the possibility that Recommendations might not get passed along to the incoming Crown. This would never be intentional, but remember that there are many demands on Their Majesties' time, so save them and yourself time and trouble.

Examples:

I have included sample recommendation letters below for an Award of Arms, and for a Sable Comet. You may note that they are similar in structure and tone, with more emphasis in the Sable Comet recommendation on specific ways that the individual has served the Shire. The information you include will depend on the award being recommended; for a Sable Comet, it should be the things that the gentle has done for the group; for a Sable Thistle, the things the gentle has done in a particular art or science. In the second case, the recommendation would read "for the award of the Sable Thistle for" and the particular art or science, be it leatherworking, costuming, brewing, etc.

Generally, the higher up in the rank structure the award is, the more reasons why the gentle should receive the award should be included. But while a recommendation for a Court Barony should have more information than one for an AoA, don't go overboard and write an encyclopedia, either.

If you are an officer, or the holder of an award that entitles you to use the initials of that Order after your name, be sure to include that information in your signature block. We are, of course, a rank and position conscious society, and that information will help give weight to your recommendation.

Last of all:

Don't breathe a word to the gentle you've recommended – sometimes Recommendations don't go through, so you don't want to disappoint them. Besides, when the recommendations do go through, half the fun is the look of surprise on the face of the ~~victim~~ recipient, as they are called into Court to receive their Award.

Contact me if you have any questions.

In Service,
Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain

Example Recommendation Letter - AoA

The 12th day of July, A.S. XLIV

Unto Their Stellar Majesties, Arthur and Guinevere,
doth Lord Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain send
Greetings

It is my hope that this missive finds Your Majesties well and rested after Your triumphal Coronation.

May it please Your Majesties to consider one of Your loyal subjects, John Smythe (modernly known as John Smith), for an Award of Arms.

Milord John is a valued member of Your Shire of Loch Ruadh. He has been active in the Society for just over a year, but is already an important and integral part of Loch Ruadh. He volunteered to be Privy Marshal for our group at Your Coronation, and has already secured the dedicated use of porta-prives for events from a central location convenient to Loch Ruadh, as well as the Baronies of Elfsea and Steppes and their Cantons. An accomplished target archer, he is an active proponent of both target and combat archery. He has also taken on the role of camping coordinator for Loch Ruadh, arriving early at camping events and choosing a suitable camping area for our up to thirty tent encampment. He is always one of the last to leave a site as well, helping others to break down and pack up, and making sure that the area is left cleaner than we found it. He is always ready to lend a hand, and displays an attitude of chivalry and enthusiasm that speaks well of the Shire of Loch Ruadh and the Kingdom of Ansteorra.

If it pleases Your Majesties to bestow this award, John will be attending Lughnasad, August 10-12, at the Canton First Monday Trade Days site in Canton, Texas.

In Service to Your Majesties and Ansteorra,
I remain,
Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain
of House Mac an Ghabhann
Seneschal
Shire of Loch Ruadh
(mka Sam Milligan)
padraig_ruad@irishbard.org
(817)599-4192

Example Recommendation Letter – Sable Comet

The 12th day of July, A.S. XLIV

Unto Their Stellar Majesties, Arthur and Guinevere,
doth Lord Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain send
Greetings

It is my hope that this missive finds Your Majesties well and rested after Your victories at Lillies War.

May it please Your Majesties to consider one of Your loyal subjects, Lord John Smythe (modernly known as John Smith), for the Award of the Sable Comet for service to Your Shire of Loch Ruadh.

Lord John has been active member of the Society for over four years, and is an important and integral part of the Shire of Loch Ruadh. He has served as Privy Marshal for our group for two years, and securing the dedicated use of porta-privies for events from a central location convenient to Loch Ruadh, Elfsea, Steppes and the surrounding area. An accomplished target archer, he is an active proponent of both target and combat archery, and has been instrumental in increasing participation in these areas. He has also taken on the role of camping coordinator for Loch Ruadh, arriving early at camping events and choosing a suitable camping area for our up to thirty tent encampment. He is always one of the last to leave a site as well, helping others to break down and pack up, and making sure that the area is left cleaner than we found it. He is always ready to lend a hand, and displays an attitude of chivalry and enthusiasm that speaks well of the Kingdom of Ansteorra, and greatly benefits the Shire of Loch Ruadh.

If it pleases Your Majesties to bestow this award, Lord John will be attending Lughnasad, August 10-12, at the Canton First Monday Trade Days site in Canton, Texas.

In Service to Your Majesties and Ansteorra,
I remain,
Padraig Ruad O'Maolagain
of House Mac an Ghabhann
Seneschal
Shire of Loch Ruadh
(mka Sam Milligan)
padraig_ruad@irishbard.org
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