

# INCLUSIVITY IN EVENT PLANNING

Zahra Tesfaye, SCA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer  
with contributions by Lady Elisabeta Fischer (musidora4@gmail.com)

## DEI MISSION STATEMENT

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Office is committed to promoting the values of inclusion throughout the SCA. This office will identify opportunities for improvement, develop trainings for Kingdom Officers, conduct a comprehensive policy review, promote accountability based on our core values, and support our existing processes to address inequitable actions including discrimination and bullying. The DEI Officer will facilitate the necessary conversations and decision-making that can lead to a more equitable and inclusive SCA.

## Notes

### Me



Baroness Zahra Tesfaye  
(mka Astridr Ymirsdottir)  
Jessica Van Hattem

equity@sca.org  
jess.vanhattem@gmail.com

The Barony of Ayreton,  
Midlands, Middle Kingdom

# THE SITE

## PARKING

- Ensure there is accessible parking. These spaces ideally should:
  - be clearly marked
  - be located reasonably close to activities/gate
  - be wide enough to accommodate mobility assistance devices
- If parking is located further from the gate/populace spaces, consider:
  - an unloading area
  - a shuttle from parking



Do not block accessible parking or ramps.

## TERRAIN



- Are there maps? Signs?
- What is the floor of the site like? (grass, dirt, gravel, etc.)
- Are there roads or paths? How wide are they?
- Note the distance between activities when laying out your site. Will a person interested in both lunch and classes need to traverse from one end of site to another? Is there seating along those paths?
- Are there golf carts, or a shuttle? Is the schedule readily available for these?
- Are there stairs? An elevator?

## CAMPING SPACES

Note that many people use mundane tents because of accessibility reasons, and exclusively placing them in the back of camping spaces for aesthetics may defeat the purpose of access.



Ensure that any electrical access available is described. Charging stations are also useful, as is the offer of a crew for assistance with set-up and teardown.

# THE SITE

## RESTROOMS



Ensure that if there are accessible stalls, a wheelchair can get through the doors. Sinks are also occasionally set back or too high for inclusive access.

If there are showers, note the accessibility restrictions.

Accessible Portapots should be available and centrally located.

Gender inclusive restrooms with image based signs ensure comfort for those outside of the gender binary, as well as those with differently gendered aides or small children.

## UNIQUE SPACES

- Changing spaces/rooms are useful for ensuring that larger/accessible bathroom stalls are not monopolized.
  - Remember to include a gender neutral changing space
  - Provide chairs in changing areas whenever possible.
- A quiet room or space for those who may need a space for prayer or to escape overstimulation may be beneficial at more overwhelming events.
  - This area can be stocked with pillows, blankets, light snacks, glucose tablets, and water
- Note your sites "Areas of Rescue Assistance"

## POPULACE AND GATHERING SPACES



Are there clear walkways that will not be overrun by day camps? This includes merchant areas, which can quickly become densely populated as people shop.

Are there chairs available on the site? What type of chair?

Where are the children's activities located? Safely away from dangerous activities but in view of parents is ideal.

# GATE



Gate is often the first stop people will make on the day of the event. Arm your gate staff for success by ensuring they have access to all of the information that they would need to helpfully direct people around the site and to various activities.

- Ensure gate is located in area with adequate room, even should a line form.
  - Include seating nearby, for those who may not be able to stand in potentially long lines.
  - Offering pre-registration is a good way to keep lines to a minimum
- "Portable paperwork", or forms on a clipboard, are helpful to those who may not be able to bend over a table or may have trouble seeing at distance.
- Include at least a rough map of the site at gate for those who may be planning out a route.
- Offer large-print site booklets, or keep at least one large print site booklet at troll for those with visual impairments.

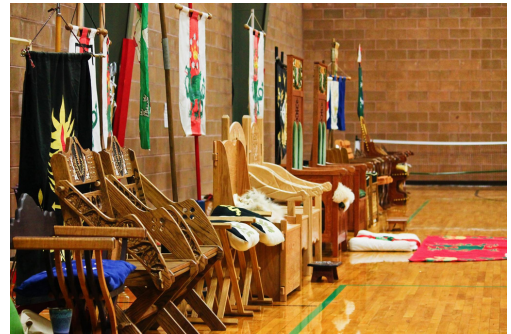
# NEWCOMERS

- Offer a Newcomers' Point or similar area where newcomers have a space to ask questions about the SCA and the event itself, should they be interested.
  - Keep this area in view of Gate.
  - Ensure the staff for this area is knowledgeable and friendly.
- If possible, give contact info for this area out before the event, so that newcomers may ease any worries or ask any questions about attending the event before arrival.
- Maintain a Gold Key, or Loaner Garb, that spans a variety of sizes, and if possible, a variety of persona locations and time periods.
- Keep basic information on hand regarding what to expect during varied activities/court, titles of address, sumptuary laws, and other SCA info.
- Keep a stash of loaner feast gear and cups - even disposable! Many newcomers will not know to bring these ahead of time.

# WEBSITE AND ADVERTISING

Good communication leading up to an event is paramount to managing expectations, giving people information, and empowering people to make decisions for their own health and safety.

Ensure that any communications, including Facebook events and websites, are as up-to-date as possible in the time leading up to the event.



Accessibility information should be easily acquired. Consider dedicating a member of your staff to accessibility and answering questions.

Information listed should include:

- general site layout, whether with a diagram or with generic description ("a two-story school", "a recently renovated church with basement", etc.)
- information on stairs/elevators/railings
- information on bathroom/shower availability
- any unusually narrow hallways or doorways
- accessibility to public transit (if applicable)
- any other relevant site information that would be useful in helping folks plan out their event

Learn how to incorporate accessibility in your mindset for site evaluation.

For websites particularly:

- Type everything out, especially if your text is on an image. Text to Voice programming cannot read embedded text.
- Use alt-text for all images.
- Use easy-to-read fonts and color choices.
- Be aware of your language choices ("Good gentles" rather than "Lords and Ladies", or "differently abled" or "people with disabilities" rather than the "disabled" or "handicapped").

# COURT

Court summons may be useful in allowing those with anxiety the opportunity to prepare or reach out to the Crown in advance of court.

Assess the environment for court - will it be held on a stage or dias? Consider having a person near to the stairs to assist people on and off the stage.

Reserved seating for those with auditory or visual needs, as well as those who are using mobility assistance devices, can be of great benefit.

Particularly for outdoor sites, assess the ground itself. Walk along the path that someone getting called up in Court would take. Are there divots or holes in the ground? Other safety hazards? Adjust accordingly.

Sign heralds in the society are heralds who express auditory information into visual and/or tactile information. Sign heralds use sign language, lip movements, facial expression, gestures, and body language to convey what they hear.

For more information, contact the SCA Silent Herald Deputy: [silenthald@heraldry.sca.org](mailto:silenthald@heraldry.sca.org)

## SILENT HERALDS



# FEAST

Have your Feast Steward publish information on the upcoming feast or dayboard as soon as possible, including:

- any potential common allergy triggers
- recipes and lists of ingredients
- any dishes that will be inclusive of any special diets (kosher, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, etc.)

If possible, ensure contact info for the Feast Steward is available so those with dietary restrictions may reach out.

Note: if it is not possible to accommodate dietary restrictions, including offboard seating where people may bring their own food is an option.



# EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE SCA

Several events have offered a "quiet room" (or tent/space) - a low-sensory area that can be used by those who may be overwhelmed by the volume or crowds that are often present at events. This is also a good spot for those who would like to engage in prayer or meditation, or those parents who may be breast-feeding.



Baron Decius Felix of the Barony of Three Mountains (Portland, OR) debuted this: Instead of a kneeling pillow, there is now a "convertible" stool. People will be given the choice whether to stand, sit on the stool, or flip the stool "upside down" where there is a kneeling pillow (and the legs of the stool can be used to lever oneself up gracefully when the ceremony is done.) It has been tested to hold up to 600 pounds of weight. The credit for the design and construction of this piece is attributed to Drusa Saturnina.

Sport of Kings utilized several strategies in 2019 to make the event more accommodating and inclusive. These included creating an accessibility staff position, designating a charging station for medical devices, providing respite benches at regular intervals throughout the site, offering large print programs, and including heraldic language on color-coded signs for those who have color-identifying visual deficiencies.



Things add up. It is important to remember to not let perfect be the enemy of good when improving inclusive practices - Something as simple as a large-print program may be the thing that makes an event special and enjoyable for someone.