



# Paragon Keep

## What We Expect from Household Members

### **I. Household Participation**

Being a member of our household is a relationship, not an award. It does not move you up in the order of precedence. We take our responsibility to our household members very seriously. We consider our household members to be family. We expect the same level of commitment in return. You do not have to be a household member for one of us to assist you on a project, to train in a skill, or develop a friendship. Being a member of our household will only give you the benefit of companionship, camaraderie, and direct support.

Your responsibilities to Paragon Keep should come before any other households. This means that you should generally plan to eat and camp with the household as well as plan to participate in activities the household has organized or volunteered to do. You will also be expected to participate in any household alliance activities that we may be affiliated with. We're not saying that you can't ever eat or camp with other friends or groups, but let us know first.

Relationships with the other household members should be one of give and take, and hopefully, of friendship. That is certainly what we strive for. Half of the responsibility for this relationship is yours. Projects, activities, parties, letters, phone calls, and events are all things that you can do with your household.

Remember that part of the burden of organizing, setting up, and taking down is yours. It is especially important to keep lines of communication open. Misunderstandings are most likely to happen when people don't talk enough. If you have a problem, discuss it with one of us. You'd be surprised how understanding we can be.

### **II. Deportment**

Don't embarrass your household or yourself. Your behavior is under observation by others--both peers and the populace. Try to set a good example. Be courteous, helpful and friendly, especially to new people. Try to keep your temper under control in public, and think before you speak. If tact is not your strong suit, don't say anything.

Malicious gossip (talk that is meant to hurt, or even recklessly does so) will not be tolerated. Nobody deserves to have things said behind their back that you wouldn't say to their face. Repeating other peoples' words out of context or in an unfair manner is just bad form. It will also get you a bad reputation in the SCA faster than anything else. Repeating other peoples' confidences is unacceptable behavior. Most SCA gossip is out of actual interest and concern, but learn the limits, and learn not to pass them.

A certain level of authenticity in your garb, equipment, presence, and general deportment is expected. If you haven't had the time or money to have all your stuff "medievalized," follow the two easy rules for hiding mundanities--put it in something else or throw something over it.

### **III. Dependability**

If you make a commitment, live up to it. Don't make promises that you can't keep just to be polite, or because you think it is expected. People prefer to hear that you don't have the time, to finding out later that something has not been done. If you hold an office, do what is required in a responsible manner. If it gets to be too much, give it up. Keep confidences. If you are told something that is in confidence, don't repeat it. On the other hand, if you are told something that involves a potential for physical danger to another person or some other terrible thing, by all means tell someone. Use your judgment.

### **IV. Motivation**

A word about ambition--we approve of it. There is nothing innately wrong with ambition, especially if it motivates you to excel. The thing to beware of is hidden motives. Do you want an award because having a lot of letters after your name is the only way you can feel good about yourself? That is bad ambition. Do you want an award because you think that doing the things it will take to get it will be fun and rewarding? That is the ambition of a healthy person. Unfortunately a lot of people have the first kind, which is motivated by low self-esteem. If that is what drives you, no award will ever be enough--you must also work on correcting the problem in yourself, which is the most worthwhile endeavor you can undertake. It can even be done while you are working on other things, and especially with the help of friends. Just don't lie to yourself about it.

### **V. Politics**

Politics in the SCA differs from real medieval politics in one very important way. The consequences of declaring war are much less permanent. You can't really kill your enemies. The one you stab in the back today will be standing behind you tomorrow. If you make enemies (and trust us, you will) they will be around to plague you forever, unless they drop out of the SCA--not something to bank on. So don't go out of your way to make enemies. That is not to say that you can't disagree. Just do so in a reasonable way. Don't be the one to declare war.

Sooner or later you will find that you are having a conflict with some person or group. Here are some rules to live by when this happens:

- 1) Don't develop an "us vs. them" attitude. This is counter-productive almost all of the time.
- 2) Don't take it personally. Chances are good that the conflict has nothing to do with you as a human being. It is probably about a difference of opinion, a different way of doing things, etc.
- 3) You don't get to have your way all the time. Even if you think your way is best, you have to give in some of the time. You might even be surprised to find out that other people can be right too.
- 4) Compromise is good for the soul on all issues except moral and ethical ones.
- 5) If you cannot solve the dispute, get both sides to agree to be bound by the decision of a neutral third party arbitrator.
- 6) Remember that there are people out there who don't have the social skills of a goat. Be patient with them. Most of these folks want to get better.
- 7) Others have not had the benefit of this wonderful advice, and as a result may violate all of these rules. Gently, tell them that you did not intend any personal affront, etc. and guide them back to the real issues.

## **VI. Power in the SCA**

The power of influence is a mighty thing in the SCA. Those people who have had the most "power" for the longest time are generally those who have good ideas that people want to listen to. Generally, they are the reasonable people who are fun to be around and who lead others without seeming to. Good leaders are the ones who empower others, rather than trying to wield power over them. Yes, there have been (and, alas, will continue to be) Machiavellis, but their descents from the heights are generally far swifter and more painful than their ascents. No one likes a jerk for very long, and sooner or later, they fall.

## **VII. SCA Participation**

We are both strong supporters of Service, the Arts and Sciences, and all Martial Activities. We encourage participation from household members in all three areas and are willing to assist you in either an area of our expertise, or help you to find someone outside of the house that may be able to guide you with your skill and/or research.

We believe service is extremely important in all its forms. Service to the Kingdom, local group, household, and the household peers can be an important part of your SCA participation. It also teaches you respect for the service given to you by others. These days, however, we have to warn people not to do too much. Be true to yourself-- Kyppyn used to have a button that read "I am a squire, not a civil servant" and another that said, "I am a squire, not your squire." Always be helpful where you can, but know your limits. Too many commitments can lead to burnout. Too much doing for others can keep you from having a good time yourself. Balance your commitments. Stay sane.

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(Some of this was written by Magistra Rosemounde of Mercia, for her apprentices. We have utilized some of her information as good advice for anyone in the SCA and have added additional info for our Household).

**Kyppyn**



**Sabine**

