

Why do you wish to be Baron and Baroness?

The SCA community has long been close to our hearts, and we have found the people of Innilgard to be most welcoming since we arrived on its shores in 2023. We were considering formal leadership roles in the Middle Kingdom before we moved, and we feel a strong desire to return the warmth of Innilgard through this offer of service. We feel that our experiences in the wider Knowne World could be a benefit to Innilgard, and we are excited at the chance to help grow and inspire the barony we now call home.

Having lived under several different Baronial reigns, we recognise the great importance of this role. It is often the first and most consistent leadership position the populace interacts with, and the B&B support the aspirations and honour the achievements of members in every aspect of SCA life. The very purpose of the Society comes to life in its courts, events, and gatherings. It is with full knowledge of this responsibility and duty we wish to serve.

What is your vision for the Barony? What would you like to achieve in your time as B&B? Do you plan any changes for the barony, and if so what are they?

We have crafted our vision following three core principles: Pageantry, Play & Positivity. With these in mind, we would like to combine smaller events into larger, longer events with many activities in hopes of building community, bringing everyone together in one place and time. We all benefit from knowing each other and seeing each other's strengths and pursuits. This would also make our events more appealing to travel to, whether locally or from afar. The following paragraphs outline specific ideas of what our vision means in practice.

The B&B set an example for Pageantry—the performance aspect of the SCA—as the King and Queen do for the Kingdom. Beyond attractive garb and the appropriate demeanour, we would invite others to join in as retainers, pages, heralds, performers and the like to help create a full sense of Medieval courtly life and cultivate investment in the Barony and the Dream of the SCA.

Similarly, Play is all about crafting fun and interesting storytelling and facilitating many forms of participation in events. On one level, this means drawing on historical inspiration in the theming of melees, tournaments, dances, and other activities. For example, combat events could be themed as Viking village raids, conflicts between historical rivals, or duels escaping the alleys of a crowded city. Having three children ourselves, we are also interested in fostering more activities for children to make sure that the families in our SCA community are fully included at events and that there is plenty of fun for everyone present. Young Scandians can participate through activities like Youth combat or simpler ways like scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, or pirate pickpocket games. Events are so much more than the tournaments and A&S displays; these are a given. What we would add to those iconic activities is attention to the whole experience, and we hope that a multi-option approach to inclusion can bring together the whole Barony, even if they are only observing and socializing at an event.

Positivity is often taken for granted, but it is the most valuable of the three principles for us. The SCA is a volunteer organization that is essentially a collection of related hobbies, and it should be a no-brainer that participating is fun. But unfortunately, it is all too easy for the competition, pursuit of achievement, and hierarchy to supersede the fun for folks. We want to

avoid this as much as possible. We recognise that conflict, tension and complaints are a given within any group of individuals, but we can maintain a positive attitude and emphasize the kind of serious play that makes the SCA great. Our experiences in the SCA and in our work lives have well prepared us to listen openly and address concerns. We are both formally trained in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as well as in conflict management and resolution as part of our positions as educators, and we believe these skills will assist in creating and maintaining a sense of Positivity across the Barony if we are selected to hold the position.

How long do you plan to be B&B for?

Three to Five years. We are flexible in this timeline and would be responsive to the changing interests and needs of the Barony. In the last 18 months of our reign, we would begin guiding and mentoring interested folks in their quest to take up the mantle next.

Have you considered whether you will have a Baronial household and what form it might take and what it might achieve? What role will the Baronial Guards play (Huscarls and Courtiers)?

We do plan to form a household as we strongly feel that allowing people who wish to formally serve the Barony have the opportunity and support to do so. This means we having roles such as open retainer positions which might only last an hour alongside more long-term roles planning events or activities at events. We also think it would be great to support positions for kids so they can be engaged with court and find fun playing in that space.

In terms of the Huscarls and the Courtiers as both of us are rapier and heavy fighters, we would spend time working with the Baronial Guards and others on small unit tactics for war and empower them to teach others within the barony to improve our presence on the war field. This unity and structure would also help as we seek to make our events more enticing for interstate members.

How do you plan to recruit new members to the group? What are your thoughts on ways to recruit new members to the group and encourage, nurture, mentor early participation? How do you plan to encourage the existing members to continue playing in the group?

For us recruiting new members comes down to two key points: inclusion and engagement. Making people feel included, seen and heard from day one, means speaking to them as soon as possible to welcome and orient them and having a wide variety of activities at events and practices so when they arrive, there are plenty of options and many forms of participation. The second is engagement, meaning both socially and facilitating their active participation. If they want to fight, it means always having loaner armour, helmets, fencing masks and swords so that they can try combat at their first practice. Every activity won't always be happening at every event—certainly not at practice—but being able as much as possible to let them try things is crucial to making them feel welcome and interested.

Existing members also need to feel included and welcome. Acknowledgement of people's efforts through baronial awards is an important aspect of this, as well as simply thanking people for their hard work and contributions. Existing members need to feel they have a purpose and that their presence is valued and makes a difference to the group. One way to accomplish this is encouraging mentoring from the middle, which means having experienced people mentor those who are just starting. It should not fall to knights alone to train fighters; anyone who has been fighting for a while may be able to help new fighters, running drills or

working one-on-one with someone. The same goes for A&S; if we become aware that someone is interested in learning a new skill, connecting them with whoever can help them or making time to facilitate their learning is key. This is a great way of building relationships, which strengthens the community as a whole. Giving everyone—not just Laurels and Knights—opportunities to share their knowledge and skills with others makes them feel valued and gives everyone many people to learn from as well.

What would you see as a means to encourage enthusiasm, continuing participation and retention of people in the group? How would you reach out to those members who do not attend Sunday training?

We would like to hold a monthly Baronial BBQ (potluck) at the park after practice. Sharing food is a natural way people bond. This would also create more reasons for people to come to practice and give them more leisurely time with each other, which is key to building a sense of community.

We would also like to support/host weekly or fortnightly armouring/A&S crafting nights as opportunities to share knowledge, get help, and be together in community. To support the Colleges, we could host them on campus regularly so collegians wouldn't have to travel.

What do you believe is the role of the B&B in regards to the College? How involved do you think they should be in the College? What do you see the role of the College to be in the Barony? There is a pattern whereby when the College has low numbers, it relies on the Barony for help, and those members tend to stay with the SCA after they finish Uni; when it has high numbers, the College tends to play independently of the Barony and those members tend to leave the SCA when they leave Uni. Do you think this is an issue, and if so, what do you think you can do to help break the pattern?

We think the first step is to never think of the Colleges as separate from the Barony. The people who play with the Colleges are members of our community, too. Including them more intentionally means making the same effort to be at College weekly practice as Baronial. It means making sure that the College has the same support as the Barony does. Facilitating relationships between members of the Colleges and other Baronial members will make for better retention of collegians into the SCA after they graduate. They will have established ties and will be more likely to see themselves as part of the Barony, wanting to stay. If they are interstate, we hope that they may join up with their local groups back home and visit us when they can! Improving the appeal of our events for interstate travel will help with this as well.

What do you see as some of the underlying issues with the difficulty in filling group Officer positions, and what would you do to encourage and support newer participants to take up key roles?

We see two core issues with this problem. Sometimes, people remain in a position until they are completely burned out, and thus there is a scramble to find someone to replace them and the replacement has to scramble to learn the new position. Supporting deputies for every office is one imperative, as it creates a system of mentorship and sets up a potential successor for every role. Creating Officer guidebooks is key and can be helpful even for experienced SCAdians. It is also important to be proactive when it comes to looking for people to step into deputy positions so they are prepared to take over. Lastly, be open and upfront about what each position does. This means being very clear things such as hours per week required,

and what 'crunch time' looks like for a position if it has such a thing. The more clearly people understand the skills required and the time needed to do a position the more comfortable they are taking on said role.

How often and to what events (or types of events) do you plan to wayfare? What value do you see in the B&B attending interstate events? What are your views on importance (or not) of the B&B wayfaring to other groups or interstate events other than Festival or Crown events? How would you plan to achieve this? Do you plan on acting as advocates for members of your Barony when interstate; and if so, how do you plan on achieving this?

Travel is an important part of the SCA. We travelled regularly in our time in the Middle Kingdom, and while the Kingdom of Lochac is much larger, as newcomers to Australia and New Zealand, we are excited to have additional reasons to explore our new continent! In terms of the types of events we will travel for, we as a couple play in all spaces of the SCA including armoured and rapier combat, A&S, and archery/thrown weapons, so for us it is more about looking at calendars and finding events that fall during school holidays and semester breaks as much as possible. We intend to travel at least once a quarter, including to events such as Crown and Festival as well as any other events that time out well. We believe it is a key part of the role of B&B to build interstate and international relationships with other baronies as well as with the Crown so that we can advocate for the members of the Barony and know what is going on generally.

What do you think are the healthiest aspects of the Barony at present? What aspects of the Barony do you feel need to be worked on/improved?

The community of the Barony is strong both socially and in the skillsets of its members, and building on that to grow is something we are keen on doing. Really we just want to create opportunities to show that our Barony a shining example in the kingdom of what the SCA can be.

Do you see a need for a support network for yourselves, and group as a whole, when travelling? If so, how do you hope to achieve this?

We intend to have a Baronial Household, which will help a great deal with support in general. We do not require travel support, but would more than welcome others to come with us when we travel interstate or internationally. In the wake of the pandemic, it is important to reestablish ties to other groups in the kingdom, and we would be open to working with others who also want to attend events away.

What will you do to encourage people to visit Innilgard (not just royalty or flying in Laurels & Knights)? How do you see the importance of attracting interstate and international visitors to our lands, and what plans would you have in encouraging this?

This goes back to our vision of Pageantry, Play and Positivity. By making our local events into grand affairs, we make them events that are worth travelling to. This is a process that takes time, but word of mouth does wonders to draw people in. Making sure that our events have something on offer for everyone and making events exciting and unique through theme

and storytelling sweetens the pot for members to travel to our events. Additionally, travelling to events ourselves will help build connections and relationships and will entice others to travel in return.

How will you make yourselves available to members of the Barony wishing to discuss Baronial issues?

We make every effort to attend both Tuesday and Sunday fighter practice as well as most events. We are both available via social media platforms for regular contact for the members of the Barony.

The Barons/ Baronesses of a group are normally expected to lead and inspire their people. How do you plan to inspire the barony above and beyond the current status quo?

We both value playing the role of the B&B very greatly, and the Dream of the SCA is something that we deeply treasure. We aspire to inspire through our personal presentation of garb and hospitality as well as in our encampment, which will help to inspire others to do the same and thus the whole Barony will shine brighter. We will take an active hand in leading and participating in activities ourselves as well as delegating this work to our passionate community when appropriate (i.e. a lot of the time!).

People by nature tend to change what they don't like, so what within SCA – Innilgard, game play don't you like? A baron and baroness lead by example in their group – what do you believe are your best virtues that you display to the group and what do you believe are your weakest? How do you plan to overcome your less virtuous behaviours so they don't negatively affect the group?

We love the SCA. Even when we have had a negative interaction, it hasn't dulled our enjoyment of playing with the SCA. We are both hopeful, optimistic people who try to see the best in others, and even if we don't always connect with everyone, it is a strong value for both of us that we always validate the humanity and feelings of others. We are adept diplomats, able to navigate hot tempers, listen carefully, and come up with fair, reasonable, and equitable solutions. We have cultivated this through our time in the Star Wars community (Godfrey served in many leadership roles for the Mandalorian Mercs Costume Club, including on the Council, and created the Education Team in that organisation) and as educators at the university level. We believe that everyone who gets upset about a hobby does so from a place of deep care about it, and we respect that and understand how to get to the bottom of why something is a problem for someone.

In terms of our own less-than-virtuous behaviours, after 17 years of marriage, we are very skilled at calling each other out when we drift into bad habits. We balance each other's weaknesses and share a lot of strengths, and we are open to hearing criticism and making changes. We want to hear how people feel about us and what we are doing, and we would invite meaningful comments through anonymous surveys as well as honest conversations.

How do you see the B&B position with respect to leading the great variety of diverse and passionate people that are attracted to such a group as this, the SCA? What would you put in place, or how would you handle, situations that differ from the basic premises and goals of the society, group or individuals?

While people from all walks of life are drawn to the SCA, everyone playing with the SCA has a shared love of what this organisation is and what they can do in it, and it is easy to lose sight of that at times. Maintaining a positive outlook and approach is key at all times, as the B&B set the tone for the local SCA community. Remaining focused on that shared love and handling things with positivity and inclusivity is central to avoiding a negative spiral. When people disagree, we see this as an opportunity to learn from each other, and at our core, everyone wants the same things: to feel valued and included, to have a strong sense of belonging, and to see our efforts pay off in accomplishment and the validation of our community.

It is a common experience of the B&B for there to be different factions within your barony and many of your friends are often concentrated in one faction. If two factions in your group disagree and one faction has many of your friends in it, how can you ensure that you are seen as impartial and fair to all of the members of your Barony in helping them to resolve their dispute?

It is important to be able to set personal relationships aside when handling interpersonal conflicts and ensure that all sides are being heard equitably. Doing so helps to not only remain impartial when resolving such conflicts, but it also helps to mend those interpersonal wounds. At the end of the day, we are all part of the same community and enjoy similar activities and each other's company. We have experience with this from over 20 years of running tabletop role-playing games, resolving conflicts among friends and family members.

If someone wants to run an event that practically needs to be small, or if an event has lower bookings around or below the break even, will you support that event going ahead? What sorts of things would contribute to your decision?

We believe that ideally focusing on making events larger affairs is ideal. Not only does this help to bring in more people from the Barony, it also helps to draw in interstate members as well. Hosting many smaller events can fracture the community, burn out organisers who see little return on their efforts, and people may only come to the event that directly relates to themselves, which can undermine a strong sense of community.

Are you familiar with Corpora and the Governing documents of Lochac?

Yes, we are familiar with both Corpora as well as the Governing documents of Lochac.

Some see the ability to billet visiting royalty or other guests as an important part of the B&B role. How do you feel about this and do you think you can comfortably host guests of this nature?

We believe that being good hosts serves the interests of the Barony, and we see the value in being known to Royals and other significant guests, but we do not think that Royal attendance is paramount. Hopefully, the goals we have discussed above would be enough to garner the attention and interest of Royals and other significant guests, but we would be creating those experiences first and foremost for the enrichment and enjoyment of our own local group. We do believe that our ideas would have broad appeal, and we would be honoured and prepared to host prestigious guests.

How will the nature of your jobs affect your activity in the SCA, for good or ill?

For good. We are both academic professionals. Alina is a university professor and Godfrey is a PhD fellow, which means that our schedules are flexible. Our experience as educators helps us to handle a variety of different situations, as we are both used to dealing with classrooms of students and are comfortable with public speaking.