The Society for Creative Anachronism
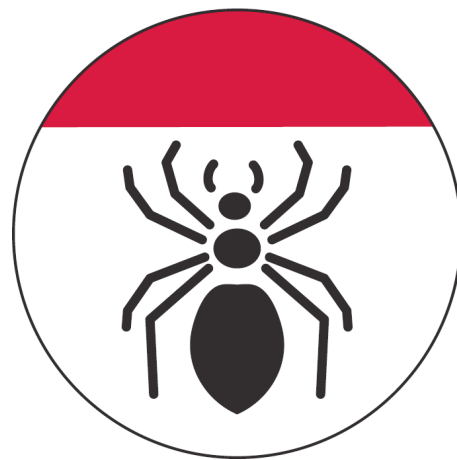
Kingdom of Northshield Webminister's Handbook

Revised A.S. LVI (2022)

Contents

Introduction

The Webminister is an important officer, playing many roles and serving many people. The website represents the SCA to people both inside and outside of our organization. In this capacity, we act as Chatelaines and the pages we design should put our best foot forward. Webministers are also an information source for the populace of the Society. We strive to disseminate information as quickly, easily, and efficiently as possible to the populace. In this respect, Webministers are a special type of Chronicler, and most of the core rules for Chroniclers also apply to this office. This officer serves as the SCA-equivalent to "webmaster".

Definitions

A Webminister is a person responsible for maintaining the content of a web site. This title refers to the person who exercises editorial control over the content of the website, not the person who maintains the underlying computer system on which it resides. While these may be the same individual, the SCA is no more concerned with the regulation of the computer service than it is with the choice of printers for a paper newsletter.

The office of Webminister is closely related to, but not a deputy of the local Chronicler. It is hoped that local Webministers and Chroniclers will work closely together for the good of their groups. Separating the jobs allows groups to have one without the other. A group which isn't required to have a Chronicler may choose to have a Webminister.

The offices of Chronicler and Webminister are separate and equal offices, however there is no prohibition on the same person holding both offices if that meets with the approval of the local group.

Local Webministers

Requirements

Local Webministers must be paid members of the SCA, Inc., and must have regular access to the *Northwatch.* This means that either they should have their own subscription, or that someone at the same address must be a subscriber. They are also expected to *read* the Webminister's column in the *Northwatch* regularly. From time-to-time updates to policies will appear there.

There are no formal requirements other than the membership requirement imposed by Corpora for the position of Local Webminister. However, it is strongly recommended that Webministers have at least some of the following qualifications:

- The ability to create and maintain a web site including experience with writing or editing content
- The ability to create and manipulate graphic images, or have a skilled graphics person available
- Reliable e-mail and internet access

Selection and Warranting

The final authority to appoint and remove local Webministers rests with the Kingdom Webminister acting in conjunction with the Kingdom Chronicler. The recommendation for a new Webminister should come from the local group, following their internal officer selection and replacement practices. Once that person has been selected, they should notify the Kingdom Webminister for final approval using the Online Change of Officer Form found on the Northshield website and the paper Change of Officer Form which contains the appropriate sign off signatures by the local group. Both forms are required. The local officers, including the Seneschal and the outgoing officer, cannot appoint or remove a local Webminister without the approval of the Kingdom Webminister.

Officers are legal agents of the corporation and should be officially recognized as such. The warrant proves agency and standing in office. As an officer, acts performed in your official capacity are covered by the corporation's insurance and the SCA has an obligation to indemnify you. Therefore, Webministers must be warranted.

Does My Group Need a Webminister?

A group that maintains a web page does require this officer. If a group uses only social media such as Facebook, etc. and does not maintain a web page, it is NOT necessary to have a Webminister. It would be more appropriate to have a Social Media Officer. Contact the Kingdom Webminister if your group is not sure if a Webminister is required or it becomes necessary to cancel a warrant for an existing Webminister because a web site is no longer being maintained.

To become warranted, new Webministers must do two things:

1) Fill out the on-line Change of Officer form.
2) Download and print the paper Change of Officer form, have it signed by your group's officers, and send it to the Kingdom Webminister. It is acceptable and preferable to scan and email the form.
3) These forms can be found on the Northshield website under the Officers menu

Take note that the officer change will not be approved until both the online and paper forms are received. The Kingdom Webminister will let you know of your acceptance or explain if there's a problem.

You should include a letter of introduction, and mention any previous officer or website experience.

Your warrant will be listed on a roster which is signed by Their Majesties. The warrant roster normally is signed at or shortly after the start of each reign, and is effective until the end of that reign. No action is required on the part of the local Webminister for a warrant to be renewed for each reign other than ensuring that their membership is current. An expired membership is grounds for non-renewal or revocation of a warrant.

These requirements may change, so check with the Kingdom Webminister for current requirements.

Resignation

Local Webministers may resign at any time. It is expected that they will follow their local group practices or policies regarding officer replacement, or at a minimum give sufficient notice (30 – 90 days) and attempt to find a replacement before leaving the job (circumstances permitting).

Outgoing Webministers are required to turn over all files (paper and electronic); financial records; login names and passwords; and other supplies promptly and in good order.

Removal

A local Webminister may only be removed by the Kingdom Webminister. Should a situation arise which seems to indicate removal of the officer is necessary, the group should make all attempts to handle it initially, preferably following the procedures suggested in the publication entitled "Grievance Procedures" found on the sca.org website. Should these procedures not work, the local group should then forward the matter in writing to the Kingdom Webminister and Kingdom Chronicler for resolution, which may include removal from office. It should be remembered that removal from office is a last resort, and all other attempts to correct the situation should be attempted first.

Examples of acceptable reasons for removal of a local Webminister are shown below. This is not an all-inclusive list and other reasons may exist:

a) Non-performance of their duties including failure to file required reports.

b) Repeated inclusion of inappropriate material, as defined by the SCA publications policy (see Society Chronicler webpage at sca.org) or Society Webminister's handbook.

c) Repeated omission of required information, as defined by the SCA publications policy (see Society Chronicler webpage at sca.org) or Society Webminister's handbook.

Responsibilities

Financial

If there are expenses associated with the existence of a website maintained by a warranted Webminister, they should be handled by the local Exchequer in accordance with the financial policies of the Kingdom of Northshield and the SCA, Inc.

Reporting

Local Webministers are required to report to the Kingdom Webminister annually on November 25th. The report must be submitted using the form found on the Northshield website. Contact the Kingdom Webminister if you are unable to locate this form.

All form fields are required to be completed. On submission, the submitting officer will receive a copy via email as conformation that submission was successful.

Failure to report on time will result in a notice being sent to the local Webminister in question. If no response is forthcoming within 30 days the local Webminister may be suspended, and their local Seneschal informed that they should select a replacement.

Miscellaneous

All Webministers are expected to have a copy of the Society Chronicler's Policies, Society Webminister's Policies, and to have familiarized themselves with their requirements. Copies are available on the Northshield and SCA web sites on the pages of the relevant officer.

There will be issues that from time to time require changes in policy. Read your Kingdom newsletter and maintain regular contact with your Kingdom superior to keep abreast of policy changes and updates.

Website Contents

For an internet site to be recognized as official by the SCA, it must represent an established branch of the Society and must have a warranted Webminister responsible for its content. The Society will not recognize web sites for households. Webministers are responsible for ensuring that all such sites comply with Society guidelines.

Disclaimer

An SCA web site maintained by a warranted Webminister must include the following disclaimer:

> This is the recognized web site for the <branch name> of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and is maintained by <Modern and/or SCA name of Webminister>. This site may contain electronic versions of the group's governing documents. Any discrepancies between the electronic version of any information on this site and the printed version that is available from the originating office will be decided in favor of the printed version. For information on using photographs, articles, or artwork from this web site, please contact the Webminister at <Webminister's email address>. He or she will assist you in contacting the original creator of the piece. Please respect the legal rights of our contributors.
>
> Copyright © <Year> <branch name>. The original contributors retain the copyright of certain portions of this site

Officer Roster

The group's website should include contact information for the local officers. However, you must also respect their privacy and avoid posting addresses or phone numbers which they do not wish to make publicly available. This is covered further in the section "Legal Information".

Links

Local websites must include at minimum links to the Kingdom website and the SCA, Inc. website:

> http://www.northshield.org
>
> http://www.sca.org

It is the responsibility of the local Webminister to notify the Kingdom Webminister of any changes in the local group's URLs.

Group websites may include links to other SCA-related websites, but should differentiate clearly between those which connect to other recognized SCA sites and those which connect to other pages of interest. You are free to have as many of the latter as you like, so long as it is clear when someone follows a link off your page, onto something with which the SCA has not agreed to have its name associated.

The following disclaimer must be displayed prominently above any links to non-SCA websites:

> All external links connect to sites over which neither SCA, Inc. nor *<group name>* has any control and is not responsible for content on those sites. The *<group name>* does not accept paid advertising. Inclusion of a page or site here is neither implicit nor explicit endorsement of that site. The appearance of links to merchants in this page does not represent an approval or endorsement of the merchandise by *<group name>*.

Webministers should make every effort to ensure that links on their web sites are up to date by testing them at least annually. Broken links should be removed as soon as possible.

Inappropriate Material

A group's web site must not contain any material that is forbidden or inappropriate in newsletters or web sites, as detailed in the SCA Corporate Publications policy and the Kingdom Chronicler's Handbook. These documents are available on the Kingdom Chronicler's page on the Northshield web site under Handbooks.

The Webminister as Editor

It is important to remember that your page represents the ideals and goals of the SCA and your local chapter or guild, not those of any one individual. Also, a good page is supposed to support the individuals who are viewing it. These people may be local members, SCA members from around the world, or non-members looking for more information about the Society. So, when designing a page, keep the ideals and tenets of the SCA in mind: truth, honor and chivalry.

There is no way to anticipate all the types of material that may be objectionable; what follows is a representative list:

- Personal attacks on individuals or groups
- Harsh criticism of the behavior of individuals or groups
- Copyrighted material used without permission
- Use of racial or religious stereotypes
- Offensive words, phrases, or images

If there is any concern that specific material may be questionable, consult with the Society Webminister.

Tone

The content of a web site is primarily of an informational nature and should represent facts only. Sections that represent a group or activity should be in a positive light, avoiding the 3 D's (deception, derogatory comments, and distasteful content) at all costs. This should also be used as a rule of thumb for what links to put on your pages to other pages on the web.

Content

Make sure the contents of your website are grammatically correct and readable. Avoid poor wording, incorrect spelling, and vague, inaccurate, or hard to understand sentences. A group's web site should be clear, concise, and to the point. Another important factor to consider is the color scheme. The colors and fonts used on a website should be easy to read.

Editorials

An editorial is the opinion of the writer related to perceived problems with proposed solutions. It can also simply be the musings of a person who wants to talk about his or her SCA experiences.

Since a website is the voice of the group and not a single person, editorials generally have no reason to be on group web sites, unless they are informative, accurate, and consistent with the tone that the group's web site should portray. Also, since the website represents the SCA at all levels to the public, it is not good to air one's laundry for all to see. Personal opinions may be expressed on personal websites or through normal e-mail channels. If a prospective author has problems with these rules, refer the person to the Kingdom Chronicler or Webminister.

Accessibility

As a non-profit educational organization, the Society for Creative Anachronism should be concerned that its electronic publications are as accessible as possible to persons with disabilities. This policy sets the minimum accessibility guidelines for SCA-recognized Internet sites.

Web Accessibility standards are currently being addressed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Their Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 should be reviewed (http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/). All SCA recognized websites should strive to meet level A conformance. Higher levels of conformance are encouraged.

General Standards

There are certain standards one should keep in mind when generating a website. Here are a few items to keep in mind; be aware that this list is not all inclusive.

Mandatory:

- Maintain easy to read, uncluttered pages. Providing too much information on a given page only obscures the page's true message
- Do not abbreviate anything without explaining the full term first, keeping in mind that the website may be the first point of contact for people otherwise unfamiliar with the SCA and its attendant specialized vocabulary.
- Keep all your pages as uniform as possible; nothing confuses a visitor faster than obscure navigation and drastic visual changes from one page to the next

- Do not use flashing text, overly large fonts, overly small fonts, or other such items that are deemed inappropriate for a professional website. When in doubt consult with other officers, or the Kingdom Webminister
- When navigating away from your website, either notify the user that they are leaving with a redirect page or visually indicate external links in some way (specific icons, font changes, or warnings that a link will open in a new browser window or tab)
- Obfuscate all e-mail addresses by placing spaces between names and "at" "(@)" signs, spelling out "at", or any other method which prevents automatic e-mail address farming
- Never use embedded sound, music or movies on a main page or the site in general. Give the user the option to "opt-in" by making a link to a page with the media content and allowing them to hear and/or see the content. Use of content appropriate media is encouraged, but allow the users to choose when and what to experience.
- Use both grammar and spell checkers on all site content
- Maintain a high contrast between text and background

Suggested

- Avoid the use of frames
- Choose a favico.ico appropriate to the SCA
- Try to minimize external links to specific pages. If links are required, try to link to the root of any given site
- Do not assume that everyone has a broadband connection; limit the number of graphics on any given page, especially the main page
- Check your links regularly and ensure they are not broken
- Attempt to use compliant hypertext markup language (HTML) and cascading style sheets (CSS)

Document Publication Standards
All documents available for download must be provided in Portable Document Format (PDF) format. The Webminister may provide other formats as a supplement to the PDF.

Legal Information

Privacy

Local Webministers must follow the corporate privacy policy as set forth in the Society Chronicler's Policies. This policy states, in part:

Personal information will not be published on any SCA-recognized Internet site without first gaining permission from the individuals involved. Permission must be received in writing. Use of e-mail is acceptable to document permission.

Personal information includes modern names, home and work addresses, phone numbers, and personal e-mail addresses.

You don't need permission to post an officer's SCA name and office-specific email address (e.g., "seneschal@castelrouge.ca"). You would only need permission to include the officer's real name, personal email address, or other personal information.

While the Board of Directors has indicated that an e-mail exchange asking for permission and receiving an affirmative response back is considered "written" for the purpose of this policy, you are strongly encouraged to use the form in the back of this handbook instead of e-mail. It is recommended that you keep this "permission slip" on file until 3 to 6 months after the individual's information has been removed from the site.

Publishing on the web potentially has a much greater exposure than in a paper or electronic newsletter, and the privacy of those officers should be respected.

Local group address books should only be made available on the web if all persons whose information is listed have given their permission. Individual Webministers are free to implement more restrictive policies in regards to privacy of personal information, but must meet the minimum standards laid out here.

Copyright Law

It is imperative that we respect copyrights. Placing copyrighted material on your group's website without permission is a very serious matter. Reprinting material by someone with a litigious temperament could result in very serious legal charges, both against the offending local officer and the SCA itself. As such, if copyrighted material appears on your group's website without the appropriate permission from the author, you will get one warning. If it happens a second time, your warrant will be immediately suspended, and your group will be asked to select a replacement.

Although the following information was researched from SCA and other resources, it is not necessarily SCA policy. Please always double- check any legal information.

It is strongly suggested that you study US and Canadian copyright law. It does pertain to not- for-profit organizations. You can find guidelines in almost any style manual, in articles written for *Tournaments Illuminated* and in some of the sources listed at the end of this handbook.

For one who has never dealt with copyright, the laws can be confusing and discouraging. To make it easier, follow these guidelines:

- Do not copy material from other web sites, mailing lists, or publications. **All published material is assumed to be copyrighted, unless specifically stated otherwise.**

- Do not trace, modify, or "Photoshop" someone else's photo or artwork. This is referred to as a "derived work," and can't be used without the original artist's permission.
- Do not assume that a medieval work of art is public domain. The current owner may have legal rights over reproductions.
- There are clip-art and font collections available for use on web sites. These are often copyright free, but you should always read any legal information or license agreements accompanying it, in case there are restrictions on its use.
- If you use artwork, photos, or written material which were submitted for inclusion on your web site, you should have the authors/artists sign a permission-to-publish form. Attach a printed copy of the submitted material, and keep it in your office files.
- All articles and artwork belong to the creator, as do the rights to that work Even when the permission form is signed, the creator can allow his or her work to be published elsewhere
- **If you have any doubts, don't publish it!**

Photographs

Photographs are subject to the same copyright laws as written or artistic material. You cannot use a photo unless you have the permission of the owner (usually the photographer).

Photographs can also raise concerns about privacy. The standard rule in journalism is that journalists gain access to private sites at the discretion of the person controlling the site. In SCA terms this would be the site owner, the seneschal, and/or the autocrat. The person controlling the site may set rules limiting what may be photographed.

If the site is a public place, you do not need the permission of the site owner or anyone else to take pictures. As an invited participant you also do not need permission to take pictures at a private event, although you should respect the wishes of others and use some common sense; for example, no flash photography around the list field or during court.

However, before you publish or post any pictures, you may need to get the permission of anyone who can be identified in the picture.

In 2005, the SCA's legal committee concluded that permission is not needed to publish a picture of someone taken in public place, such as at an event. This does not apply in circumstances where they may have some expectation of privacy, such as in a tent or private encampment.

You should avoid using photos or captions which may harm someone's public image, regardless of where or how it was taken. If it could expose them to public humiliation or scorn, you should not post it.

When in doubt, ask the people in the photo if it's okay to post it. If they say yes, ask them to sign a permission form with an attached copy of the photo, and keep it in your records.

Web pages containing photos must contain a notice clearly stating how people depicted in the photos can contact the Webminister to request their removal. The Webminister must comply with all such requests; or, alternatively, alter the photos to render the person unrecognizable, if the photo's copyright holder has given permission for such alterations.

Web Hosting

It is required that recognized SCA web sites be hosted on an account to which more than one person has access, rather than on a personal website owned by one of the members. This will ensure that a recognized website does not go down or go stale if an individual member moves or quits the group. Administrative access (login IDs and passwords) for SCA internet sites should never be kept by a single individual. At a minimum, at least two group officers should have access.

The best option is for the group to pay for a web hosting service. There are many such services, offering a wide range of pricing and features.

If the group can't afford to pay for web hosting, there are a number of services which provide free web hosting. These usually insert advertising banners, web rings, or other content; such insertions are allowable if they are a condition of the service. However, great care must be used to ensure that any such third-party insertions will not cause a negative image for the group, appear to associate the SCA in any way with a third party, or cause anyone to question our tax-exempt status. If your site requires such links, consult with your Kingdom Webminister for assistance in determining whether the requirements are acceptable.

If web hosting services are donated by an ISP (Internet Service Provider), you may give credit at the bottom of the opening page as shown below:

   "Server space for this site provided by *<ISP's name and link>*"

If you have trouble finding a suitable web hosting service for your group, contact the Kingdom Webminister for advice.

Password Guidance

Current (2022) guidance from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has changed from what many are accustomed to using for passwords. Current guidance may be found at www.nist.gov and searching for publication 800-63B, section 5.1.1.2.

The following standards based on NIST guidance and best practice are currently recommended for Northshield Webministers:

1) Never walk alone. Make sure at least one other person in your group knows or has access to the logon ID and password for your website. This is important in case an unfortunate event occurs and the information is lost. This could result in loss of access to the website for your group.
2) It is not required to change the password on a regular basis unless you become aware that it has been involved in a breach or is otherwise compromised. NIST currently recommends changing it no more than annually. It may also be good practice to change it when the office of Webminister changes.
3) The password should be a minimum of 8 characters but no more than 64 and ideally should be easy to remember or stored in a password manager designed to securely store passwords. Password length is considered by NIST to be more secure than complexity because a long and complex password may be difficult to remember and result in an insecure storage method such as writing it down. A long password takes more time to crack and a hacker is more likely to move on to an easier target than take the time to do so.
4) Avoid using guessable words or phrases, dictionary words, and multiple repetitive characters or sequential characters such as "aaaa" or "abcd". Simply taking a word or phrase and substituting a $ for an S or an @ for an A is no longer considered by NIST to be a secure method. That said, use of special characters in a password is still recommended, just not in this manner.
5) Securely store the password in a Password Manager if you cannot memorize it versus writing it down or otherwise saving it in an unsecure method. Tools of this nature are widely available from reputable software companies.

Finances and Ads

It is important to remember that Webministers do not spend or receive money in the name of the SCA or their local or regional groups without approval from the group's financial committee.

Sites run by a warranted Webminister as part of their office must not contain any advertising banners, webrings, or information inserted by a third party, unless required as a condition of service by a "free" web server being used to host the site, or unless the inserted material is maintained as part of another sanctioned SCA web site.

SCA Resources for Webministers

The Kingdom Chronicler's and Kingdom Webminister's pages on the Northshield web site contain many of the forms you will find helpful. There are also "Resource" sections with links for fonts, artwork for devices and officer badges, etc. to help you dress up your web site.

http://www.northshield.org/

The Society Chronicler's Copyright Deputy is meant to be a resource to Chroniclers at all levels. Questions about copyright law can be sent to [copyright@sca org](mailto:copyright@sca.org).

Web Design Resources

Here are links to a few web sites about the design and creation of web sites, including some free online tutorials to help you get started

World Wide Web Consortium: The W3C creates and develops web standards and guidelines Their site includes the official HTML specification, HTML and CSS validators to test your web site for coding errors, articles and tutorials

http://www.w3.org/

The Bare Bones Guide to HTML: A concise reference which lists all the HTML 4 tags

http://werbach.com/barebones/

HTML Code Tutorial: A tutorial on HTML http://www.html.com/

W3 Schools: Free tutorials on HTML, CSS, XML, JavaScript, PHP, MySQL, and other web technologies Also has some articles about web hosting options

http://www.w3schools.com/

HTML Goodies: Another site with free tutorials on HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, etc.

http://www.htmlgoodies.com/

Web Pages That Suck: Covers the aesthetics of web design, with articles & discussions about what makes a good web site and critiques of badly designed web sites

http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/

<u>Required Release Forms</u>

What forms do I use for our website?

• The SCA Creative Work Copyright Assignment/Grant of Use Form is needed for all articles (not officer letters or event notices), poems, artwork, etc.

• The SCA Photograph Grant of Use Form is needed for all photographs.

• The SCA Model Release Form is needed when you are posting portrait-style images, and photographs taken at either private spaces at events or at non-public venues.

• The SCA Model Release Form is *not* needed when the images are taken at a public place and in a public forum, including any SCA contest or competition, merchants' row, court, class, etc. where there is no expectation of privacy.

The following release forms and FAQ are available online in a PDF format at the locations listed below:

[FAQ about Release Forms for Webministers](#)

Creative Work Copyright Assignment / Grant of Use Form

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleaseModel.pdf

Creative Work Copyright Assignment / Grant of Use Form (PDF with fillable blanks)

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleaseCreativeFillable.pdf

Model Release Form

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleaseModel.pdf

Model Release Form (PDF with fillable blanks)

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleaseModelFillable.pdf

Photographer Release Form

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleasePhotographer.pdf

Photographer Release Form (PDF with fillable blanks)

https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ReleasePhotographerFillable.pdf

Handbook Approvals

This Handbook was reviewed and approved by the appropriate officers as follows and is

effective as of the date of final approval:

Northshield Webminister: June 1, 2022   Bâro Iohannes Glenfidanus

Northshield Chronicler: July 1, 2022   THL Arnbjørn Karlsson

Northshield Stallari Council: May 16, 2023