



The Althing

A quarterly publication of the
Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands
in the
Kingdom of Æthelmearc

Located in these modern times in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and surrounding areas

From the Seneschal

Greetings Most Beloved Populace,

Please allow me to share a few things with you before I turn the helm over to Our Next Seneschal.

First, the Policy and Law updates. As of April 1, 2024 the Board of Directors has notified us of an Increase in price of membership and the cost of non-member registration. As of April 1st, 2024 the cost of Non-Member Registration (NMR) will be \$10.00. The cost of an annual Membership for a Sustaining Membership is \$55.00 and the cost of an Associate Membership will be \$40.00. Family Memberships will increase to \$15.00 per person per year.

You can read the full article here:

<http://www.sca.org/news/implementation-of-the-april-1-2024-increased-event-membership-rate-non-member-surcharge/>

Experiencing financial stress? The [Signorotti Membership Assistance Fund](#) is available to support those participants who may find it difficult to purchase or continue their memberships. More information on accessing or donating to this fund is available at <https://www.sca.org/membership-assistance-fund/>.

Secondly, I would like to Introduce to You and Officially Congratulate and Welcome our New Excellencies; Baronessa Violeta de Valencia and Praetoria Aurelia Argentia Prima; Ninth in the line of succession to the Baronial Seat.

Their Excellencies have been participating with the Society for many years having tried their hands at vending, fencing, bardic, scribal, moneying, brewing, archery, and teaching of all these arts.

Their Excellencies are committed to serving with joy and working to continue Our efforts to make the Barony-Marche a community that welcomes Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.



photo credit: Schneider Photography

In the coming year, please make an effort to get to know Our New Landed Baronage; seek out Their company and bring your joys and concerns to Them as They are Our voice to The Crown and Our advocates to The Society.



(cont.)

From the Seneschal (cont)

Thirdly, When His Lordship Rónán Ó Conaill passed his family chose to name the Debatable Lands as a charity to which donations could be made in his memory, as such, the Barony has received funds that the Officers have earmarked for "Passion Projects." Why Passion Projects? Because Ronan has his heart and hands in anything that inspired his medieval study. What does a Passion Project look like? This would be a written proposal from the members of the Barony for funds to help advance the group. It could be used for larder, regalia, or gold key; i.e. A new gate for the Pennsic Baronial Encampment, targets to replace the straw mats for the archery program. These funds must be used to enrich the whole of the Barony and not become personal gifts of largess. You must write up a proposal and bring it to the Business Meeting for review by the Officers and the attending populace. Please include your vision, your cost break-down, and perhaps talk to the Exchequer and Seneschal with any questions you might have.

Fourthly, I would like to Welcome the Honorable Lady Ceindrech verch Elidir as the New Debatable Lands Seneschal. Ceindrech has been serving the Barony as a Deputy Seneschal taking over more of the role in preparation for Her new office. Ceindrech has been a driving force for transparency and DEIB in the Business Meetings and in the conduct of Our Barony. I know she will serve Us well and faithfully. She has an excellent spirit of collaboration and cooperation which will help Us continue to flourish. Please, be kind to her and show her the consideration that you have always shown to me.



photo credit: Schneider Photography

Finally, I wish to extend my profound gratitude once more to the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands for allowing me the honor of serving as your Seneschal. The times were certainly interesting but We were able to find our path forward together with compassion, hope, and kindness. I am thankful for the generosity of spirit and the selflessness of Our Populace. I am inspired by Your determination to keep moving the Barony forward to be a safe place for All that come to call Our Lands their home. There are not words enough to thank all of You for the multitude of gifts You have shared with me and each other. You make me proud to call The Debatable Lands my home and heart.

In Service,

**Brehyres Muirgheal ínghean
Dubhgháil, O.P.
Retired Seneschal of the Barony-Marche
of the Debatable Lands**

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies

I. Policies

- a. The Barony's policies must be maintained on the Baronial website. Changes or additions to these policies become official when published and supersede all former Baronial policies. Baronial policy is subordinate to Kingdom Law & Policy, Corpora, and civil law. It may not contradict them and need not duplicate them.
- b. Baronial policies may be created or changed by the Officers. Proposed additions or changes to Baronial policies must appear on the agenda of the business meeting at which they are ratified. In this circumstance the proposed changes shall be in the agenda which shall be "published" to the populace on the Baronial email list at least 48 hours before the meeting.
- c. Within these policies, "published" means posted on the Baronial website with notification sent to official Baronial communication outlets.

II. Officers

- a. The Officers of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands are those required by Kingdom Law, the Office of the Baronage, the Seneschals of the Barony's nondormant subsidiary groups, and the Webminister. These officers constitute the financial committee of the Barony for the purpose of setting financial policy and approving financial activities. No present or proxied individual may have more than one vote on the financial committee.
- b. Unless otherwise stated, decisions of the Officers are by consensus of the people attending a scheduled business meeting at which a majority of the Officers are present. An individual may cast only one vote. Officers may be represented by proxy. Only the members of the Financial Committee may vote on financial decisions. Any Officer may call for an Officer Only vote, in which case each Office gets one vote, with a simple majority of the votes cast deciding the issue.
- c. Officers serve for a term of twenty-four months from the business meeting at which their appointment was approved. Notification of an Officer's intent to renew or resign must be published at least two months before the end of the Officer's term. This notification must solicit letters of intent for a successor. Letters of intent must be sent to the Officer in question, as well as the Baronial Seneschal; if the office is the seneschalate, a letter must also be sent to the Baronage. Whether an officer decides to serve another term or a successor takes the office, either choice must be ratified by the officers. If no acceptable candidates are set forward, the Office shall remain vacant if allowed by Kingdom Law. Subsidiary groups are not required to follow this policy in choosing their seneschals and officers. In the case of the Office of the Baronage Section V will supersede this.
- d. If an Office becomes vacant midterm, the Emergency Deputy will temporarily assume the duties of the office. The Emergency Deputy may choose to serve out the Officer's term, or solicit letters of intent for a successor. If they choose to serve out the term, they must be ratified by the Officers at the next business meeting. In the case of the Office of the Baronage Section V will supersede this.
- e. A two-thirds majority of Baronial Officers may petition their Kingdom Superior to remove any Officer, though a proposal to do so must appear on the Business meeting agenda, and the Officer must be informed of the proposal in writing. In this circumstance, the agenda shall be published at least 48 hours before the meeting. If an Officer is absent and not represented at three consecutive Business meetings, and does not respond to inquiries within a reasonable time, they will be considered to have resigned. In the case of the Office of the Baronage Section V will supersede this.

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies (cont.)

III. Positions and Deputies

- a. Officers may create or dissolve Baronial Positions as needed by majority vote at business meetings. Each Officer may create deputies as needed and report the appointment at the next business meeting.
- b. In addition to applicable Kingdom reporting requirements: The Baronial Signet reports to the Baronage; Martial Specialist Baronial Positions report to the Knight Marshal; the Steward reports to the Exchequer; deputies report to their Officer in charge; and all other Baronial Positions report to the Seneschal.
- c. Positions and Deputies do not have term limits. When a position holder or deputy wishes to step down, they are responsible for recommending a replacement to the Officer to which the position/deputy reports, and that Officer appoints a replacement if needed. New Position holders must be ratified by the Officers at the next business meeting.
- d. Unless prohibited by Kingdom Law or Policy, Position holders may be removed by a majority vote of the Officers. A proposal to do so must appear on the business meeting agenda, and the Position holder must be informed of the proposal in writing. Unless prohibited by Kingdom Law or Policy, deputies may be removed by their Officer in charge, and the removal must be reported at the next business meeting. If Kingdom Law or Policy requires that a Position holder or Deputy only be removed by a Kingdom Official, then the Baronial Officer in charge of that Position or Deputy may petition the Kingdom Official for removal. Position holders or Deputies that fail to report or respond to inquiries for 6 months will be considered to have resigned.

IV. Non-Resident Citizens

- a. Citizens of the Kingdom of Æthelmearc who wish to be officially recognized as Citizens of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands and who have placed this request in writing (email, letter, fax, scroll; not including personal or baronial social media accounts) to the Baronage, the Baronial Seneschal, and the Baronial Herald for the express intent of running for office or petitioning to hold a deputy position, receiving Baronial recognition, and/or voting in Baronial elections.
 - i. Non-resident citizenship is open to any person within the populace of the Kingdom of Æthelmearc who has demonstrated their desire and intent to be active and vibrant in the culture, activities, and events primarily within The Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands.
 - ii. Non-resident citizenship is at the discretion of the seated Baronage, Seneschal, and Herald but will not be considered invalid by the succession of officers or subsequent Baronial successions without cause.
- b. Non-resident citizens must have received confirmation in writing from the Office of the Baronial, Baronial Seneschal, and Herald that their citizenship has been recognized and their proper address and contact information is on file in the Office of the Seneschal and the Office of the Herald.
- c. Non-resident citizens will be treated as equal to the populace living within the boundaries of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands.
 - i. The non-resident citizen is responsible for keeping their contact information current with the Seneschal and Heraldic Offices for the purpose of official baronial business.
 - ii. A non-resident citizen is not required to maintain a Paid Membership within the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) unless it is their desire to hold an office or deputy position, if such is required by Baronial Policy, Kingdom Law or Corpora.

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies (cont)

V. Baronial Succession

a. Requirements of office: The Territorial Office of the Baronage (hereafter referred to as The Baronage) must meet the requirements stated in Corpora and Kingdom Law, be 18 years of age or older as of the day the votes are to be tallied, and must be a citizen of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands. The Office of Baronage of the Debatable Lands is not subject to a term limit.

b. When Selection of The New Baronage Will Occur: Selection will take place when The Baronage is removed, expresses a desire to retire, or wishes to take a consort.

c. Removal of The Baronage: A majority of the Barony's Officers may call for the removal of a member or both members of The Baronage. The motion must be published at least 48 hours prior to the officers' meeting where the motion is to be voted on and must appear on the officers' meeting agenda. If the motion passes, the result will be announced at the next Barony meeting and published to the populace. At the Barony meeting after that, those attending the meeting will decide, by majority vote, whether to petition the Crown for the removal of a member or both members of the Baronage.

d. The Vicar: If a Vicar is appointed, the Vicar may not give Baronial Awards but may otherwise preside over Baronial Courts and functions.

e. The Selection Committee: The Selection Committee is responsible for overseeing the election process. The selection committee consists of the Baronage (if there is one), the Vicar (if there is one), and enough officers in officer precedence order (as in Corpora) to bring the total to 5 with the Baronage together counting as one seat. If a member of the committee accepts a baronial nomination, if their term is over and they are not planning to renew before the election process is over, or if they directly or indirectly resign from the committee, then they are replaced by the next officer in officer precedence order. The Committee members will elect a chairman from among their members by simple majority vote.

f. Notification of the upcoming election and these policies will be published no later than one month following the appointment of the selection committee.

g. The Selection Process

i. **Eligible Voters:** Any person residing in the zip codes of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands who is 17 years of age or older (as of the day the votes are to be tallied) and is on the corporate membership list may vote or is a Non-Resident Citizen of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands and has their contact information on file with the Offices of the Seneschal and Herald. Under exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may consider a written request for a ballot from a person who would not otherwise receive one. Such a request must be received by the Chair of the Selection Committee by the date of the Nominating Meeting.

ii. Timing of the Selection Process:

1. Announcement of upcoming election
2. Approximately one month later, nominations*
3. Approximately one month later, acceptance of nominations
4. Two months later, ballots counted

*Note: Additional general Barony meetings may be called to facilitate the timing of this process

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies (cont)

iii. **The Nominating Meeting:** A Nominating meeting will be held as part of a general Barony meeting within two months after the announcement of the election appears as outlined in V.f. Candidates will be nominated by petition of the populace, either in writing or by voice at the nominating meeting. Written nominations must be received by the Chair of the Selection Committee before the opening of the nomination meeting. The Chair of the Selection Committee must notify candidates within one week of the nominations. To be considered, candidates must accept nominations in writing to the Chair of the Selection Committee within one month of the nominating meeting. Individuals or couples may be nominated, but no individual can occur on the ballot more than once.

iv. **The Voting:** A written ballot with the list of all candidates (a candidate pair is considered to be "a candidate" in this document) will be distributed by mail to all eligible voters. Each ballot shall be numbered and a record kept of the total number of ballots mailed, but no record shall be kept of which numbers were mailed to which voters. Voting will be as follows:

1. A group status poll will appear on the election ballots; voters will mark their preferred option. Voters will mark those candidates they consider unacceptable as "UA". All other candidates are to be ranked in order of preference, with "1" being the voter's first choice, "2" the second choice, and so on. Any candidate may be left blank (unranked).

2. Voters will have until the beginning of the next general barony meeting at least one month after the ballots were mailed to vote. Voters may return their ballots by mail or in person to the Chair of the Selection Committee. Voters shall not be required to write their names on the ballots. The Chair of the Selection Committee will hold the ballots unopened until the Committee meets to count the ballots.

3. Tallying the ballots: The Selection Committee will meet during the general barony meeting of the voting deadline to open and count the ballots. Only ballots that remain unopened until tallying begins will be valid. Ballots will be tallied in the following sequence:

a. Ballot numbers will be checked off on the master list. If any duplicate ballot numbers or numbers which are not on the list of those mailed are found, those ballots will be discarded. The group status poll will be counted first. If a majority of the voters choose not to remain a Barony, then the Baronial election process will be terminated and the election ballots will not be tallied.

b. A valid ballot will include an unambiguous and legible ranking of listed candidates as directed in section V g iv 1, including UA or blank responses. Invalid ballots will not be counted.

c. Any candidate receiving "unacceptable" (UA) votes from more than 33% of the valid ballots shall be eliminated from consideration.

d. The Selection committee shall tally each ballot as a single vote for the highest-ranked active candidate on the ballot. If any candidate has a majority (more than 50%) of the received ballots, that candidate shall be declared the winner. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated from consideration, and the votes for that candidate will be redistributed to the highest-ranked active candidate on each ballot. (Any ballot that does not include a numeric rank for any active candidate will not be considered a "received ballot" for the purpose of calculating the number of votes needed for majority.) Repeat this sequence until a majority candidate is found. The majority candidate will be declared the winner.

e. If there is a tie between two (or more) active candidates for the fewest votes in a round, all tied candidates will be eliminated from consideration. If there is a tie between the final two (or more) active candidates, the candidate with the fewest number of unacceptable (UA) votes on ALL valid ballots (not just those that have ranked an active candidate) will be declared the winner. If there is still a tie, all tied candidates will be presented to the Crown as acceptable, and the Crown of Æthelmarc shall be asked to choose between them.

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies (cont)

f. General Summary of Tallying. The voters rank candidates from most favorite to least favorite. Take the ballots and make a pile for each candidate, based on just the first-place votes (ignoring all the other rankings on the ballots). Then eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and re-distribute those ballots to the other piles, using the second-place votes. Keep eliminating the candidate with the fewest votes until one candidate is left. This is a summary only; actual tallying process will follow steps a-e.

v. **The Petition:** The Chair of the Selection Committee will produce a petition in accordance with Kingdom law.

vi. Special Elections

1. If an existing solo Baronage desires to take a consort, a vote on the Baronage's chosen consort will be held. The announcement of the vote shall be published within one month. The vote shall be held at the scheduled General Barony meeting within two months after the announcement of the vote is published. Should the consort be accepted by the populace, a petition will be prepared as in Section v. above.

2. If one member of a couple serving jointly as the Office of the Baronage resigns, is removed or is unable to serve, the remaining Officer must announce their desire to continue within 6 months from the date of vacancy. They must then pass a vote of confidence from the Barony. The announcement of the vote shall be published within one month. The vote shall be held at the scheduled General Barony meeting within two months after the announcement of the vote is published.

3. In either case, written ballots will be distributed, collected, and counted by the Selection Committee at the Barony meeting, with the results to be announced that night. The proposal will be decided by majority vote of those attending the meeting, plus proxies. Written proxy ballots will be permitted.

Financial Committee, Events, and Baronial Property are covered under the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Financial Policies. See page 10.

Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Financial Policies

I. General Financial

- a. The Officers of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands are those required by Kingdom Law, the Office of the Baronage, the Seneschals of the Barony's nondormant subsidiary groups, and the Webminister. These officers constitute the financial committee of the Barony for the purpose of setting financial policy and approving financial activities. No present or proxied individual may have more than one vote on the financial committee.
- b. All expenditures must be approved by a simple majority of the Financial Committee.
- c. The Officers of the Barony and/or the Financial Committee reserve the right to accept or refuse any donation. Non-monetary donations (e.g.: equipment, supplies, items for resale) with a value over \$100 require the approval of the Exchequer, who will issue the receipt. The donor is solely responsible for setting the value of the donation. No non-monetary item should be accepted prior to seeing the item.
- d. Event refunds requested before the event report is completed will be considered but not guaranteed. Refunds requested after the event report is completed will not be issued.

II. Events

- a. Event bids must be submitted by a member of the Debatable Lands who wishes to autocrat an event. Event bids must be submitted by members of other local groups who want the Debatable Lands to sponsor their event. Event bids must be presented at a business meeting (or, in special cases, at a regular Barony meeting, by pre-arrangement with the Seneschal) in order to be approved. Ideally, all event bids should be submitted six to twelve months in advance. All event bids must include a completed Baronial event bid form (or equivalent) and proof of SCA membership for the autocrat (must prove membership at the time of the proposed event).
- b. Officers will not approve expenditures for proposed events unless they are presented with a written event bid which contains, at a minimum, the names of the autocrat and the head cook, a site, a date, a break-even analysis, and a budget (if Baronial funds are to be used). The event budget shall include estimates for income and for expenses by category based upon expected attendance, rates charged and any free admissions. After-budget expenditures are to be approved or disapproved at the Financial Committee's discretion. If an event bid is declined at the Kingdom or Society level, the event bid is void.
- c. The autocrat of an event may require any person behaving disruptively to leave the event. If a minor is behaving disruptively at an event, the autocrat may require the adult(s) responsible for that minor to leave the event as well.
- d. The Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands does not serve alcoholic beverages.

III. Baronial Property

- a. Baronial property includes any physical item that was bought by or was donated to the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands, including but not limited to Gold Key, Iron Key, other loaner gear, regalia, and larder items. Baronial Property does not include items held by non-dormant subsidiary groups.
- b. Anyone that holds, stores, or maintains Baronial property, not to include files, must inventory it at least once per calendar year. The report should be given to the Chamberlain or Exchequer during the first two weeks of November. The report shall contain at the minimum: the name of the item(s), quantity on hand, a statement about the condition of the item(s) and location of where the item(s) are stored.
- c. If a holder of Baronial property does not hold a Baronial Office or Position, he or she will provide full mundane and SCA name, and full contact information to the Chamberlain or Exchequer.
- d. Loaner gear (Gold Key, Iron Key, etc.) is generally meant to be loaned out and returned within the same day, at a Baronial meeting, practice, or event. However, the holder of loaner gear may, at their sole discretion, choose to loan items out for a longer period of time. In that case, the holder will record the borrower's full mundane and SCA names, full contact information, and date of return.
- e. Whenever an Office or baronial position changes hands, the outgoing Officer is responsible for transferring all files and baronial property related to the office to their successor in a timely fashion. An inventory report must be filed with the Chamberlain or Exchequer at this time so the change of property can be verified. In the event of a vacant office, the Officers shall determine which Barony member shall temporarily take possession of the files and property of the vacant Office.

Baronial Governance Policies, Officers, Positions and Deputies, Non-Resident Citizens, and Baronial Secession are covered in the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands Governance Policies. See page 6.

DEI Statement

We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and ensure that all voices are valued and heard. We're committed to modeling diversity and inclusion within the Barony-Marche of the Debatable lands, the Kingdom of Æthelmearc, and the Society for Creative Anachronism.

We wish to create a welcoming atmosphere for all of those with a love of learning and fellowship. We wish to enjoy the fullness of Our Society putting first the virtues of Courage, Justice, Mercy, Generosity, Faith, and Hope. And in doing this to create and promote a safe and respectful environment for all SCA participants regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

We stand against discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, and hate speech or actions. We will also take action to keep all social media under the control of the Debatable lands, Æthelmearc, and the SCA free from the same.

We, as the Officers of the Debatable lands, will focus on equity. We also aim to provide just and fair inclusion to the Noble Populace and Our Guests while attending activities and events within Our Lands both in person and virtually.

Exchequer Report

The new exchequer is Hara Kikumatsu. I have experience from previous terms for this barony. I am also still regional exchequer for region 2. What that means is that I have to submit my reports to a different regional exchequer. That keeps all the checks and balances in place so my reports are properly reviewed.

Inventories are due in November: Need a list of items, location, and general condition for the following collections of barony property: larder, ironkey, fencing marshal, thrown marshal, archery marshal, gold key, and the baronage.

There are smaller tokens of office or other barony property held by Seneschal, Herald, Knight Marshal, A&S minister, Exchequer, Web Minister, Chatelaine, Chronicler.

Donations on behalf of Ronan: There were donations submitted to the barony on behalf of Ronan O'Conaill. There is agreement that these donations should be directed to activities that he loved. There will be further discussions on how this will work.

Their Excellencies of the Debatable Lands

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Praetoria Aurelia Argentia Prima
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Their Royal Highnesses of Æthelmearc

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* - second term; cannot renew

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DISCLAIMER

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PUBLICATION

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SUBMISSIONS

Any gentle wishing to submit articles, artwork, poetry, etc. to the Althing is invited to do so. Please send your work to the Chronicler. All material in the Althing is copyrighted to the individual contributors. The Chronicler reserves the right to edit, refuse, or reprint any submissions. The Althing's submission deadline is generally the 15th of the last month of the quarter (March, June, September, December). Send your contributions to chronicler@debatablelands.org for inclusion in the next issue.