

Autocratting

Permission

- Must be sponsored by an official group.
- Don't sign anything unless you have permission - may have to wait for Principality Bids.
- May need to have your Seneschal sign paperwork.

Site

- Most Critical.
- Get it in writing!!
- If it is too expensive - DON'T USE IT!!!
- Review site sheet - a site must meet certain requirements.
- If people are concerned - invite them to a demo!
- Leave it in great shape.
- Ask around before you need one - it will be worth it!

Finances

- Use the new Exchequer forms.
- Keep the site cheap.
- List all expenses when determining prices.
- Keep the feast separate - both feast and event should break even or turn a small profit,
- My recommendation - plan for the following profits at conservative attendance numbers (so you break even if something goes wrong)
 - \$50 - \$100 for a small event
 - \$100 - \$200 for a large event
 - \$200 - \$400 for a Kingdom fund raising type event
- Keep prices reasonable - or people will be annoyed - or not come!!!!
- Events should not be huge fundraisers - they should be a place for us to gather (and maybe a small fund-raiser).
- Make sure price schedule is clear - sometimes no one can tell how much they owe.
- Off-board/out-board.
- Keep everything as a record and write EVERYTHING down.
- Make sure everyone knows your reimbursement policies.

Event Announcement:

- Get copy of Baron Aaron's sheet.
- Get it in as early as possible.
- Make sure the last one is COMPLETE.
- Send copies to Kingdom, but also local newsletters, AEstel, seneschal's, nearby kingdoms etc.
- Take copies to nearby events.
- Include activities planned.

Reservations and Troll

- Keep all correspondence until the event is over
- Make sure two people work troll if you are collecting money.

- Make sure the system is not so complicated that people are stuck at troll forever
 - Are tokens really needed?? And do they have to be a tangled mass of string?
 - Waivers? Sign in info.
 - For a large event, separate groups - preregistered, on-board etc.
 - Train your trolls!!

Feast

- Hopefully you can keep it separate.
- Break even - charge what you will spend or go cheaper.
- Don't make everything odd - some people like meat and potatoes.
- Test those dishes!
- Get proper serving dishes.
- Make sure there are adequate volunteers.
- Try to get a separate clean up crew.
- Make sure that kitchen crew gets to attend court etc.
- Don't forget to have someone in charge of servers.
 - Separate high table servers.
 - Spot for dishes when return
- Provide hot water for clean up or people will wash their dishes in the sink.
- Save plastic shopping bags for people to take home wet dishes.

Activities

- Schedule
- Marshal
- A&S
- Suitable place (e.g. musical performances need to be segregated).
- Children

Crash Space

- See what you have before you offer.
- Accommodate as many people as possible.
- Make sure you inquire as to pets, smoking, and physical requirements (people with back problems may not be able to crash on the floor, tall people may not fit on your extra cot etc.)

Royalty

- Send an official invitation - even if you know they know you are having an event.
- Provide with a private room (or corner or something) if possible (filled with goodies is a bonus).
- Consider serving them extra meals, especially if they have traveled a long distance.
- Provide them with a retainer if they do not have one.
- Ask early about head table.
- Ask Their input on schedule. When do they want court? Do they have any special needs.
- EVERYONE at an event should be treated like Royalty. The Royalty should be treated even better.

Clean Up

- Map out the site early so you can return everything to its proper location.
- Mess up and you won't be back!
- Have a large crew and make sure they stick to it.

Safety

- Water, buildings - children
- Fires
- Chirurgeon, first aid kit

Autocratting

By Dorinda Courtenay

Autocratting can be a wonderful, rewarding, fun-filled experience or it can be a nerve-wracking tortuous experience depending quite a bit on the level of preplanning done (as well as the weather!) If you are organized and can juggle a lot of details, Autocratting may be the job for you! Here are a few things to think about when preparing for an event:

Authorization/Permission to Hold the Event

The first step in any event is to get the appropriate authorization to hold it! All SCA events **MUST** be sponsored by an official geographical group (e.g. a Barony, Shire, or Canton, etc.) While households, guilds, incipient groups or others may actually run the event; the sponsorship of the official group is necessary. Without it, the event is not official, the Kingdom Chronicler will not publish the announcement, the Royalty can not give awards, and there may be insurance problems. It is critical to have the proper sponsorship before you start any serious planning.

Every group is different when it comes to deciding on events. For many small groups, the Seneschal may bring an event idea to the populace for discussion, and the group then decides whether or not to have the event. Larger groups may use a bid system - groups or households submit a bid to the Seneschal and ask for sponsorship for a given event. However your group does it, make sure you have the official permission to hold the event.

Kingdom and Principality events almost always work on the bid system. Groups will submit bids including proposed site, staff, costs, activities etc. and the Seneschal and Royalty will select the group that presents a bid that best suits their needs. An excellent article on how to submit a bid for such an event was created by Baron Aaron faheud Swiftrunner, and a copy of it is attached to this handout. The most important things to remember when submitting bids are to make them detailed and positive. Sell your group! Don't forget to include detailed financial information including a budget and proposed fees. Pictures are a nice bonus.

Most important - don't sign anything locking you into a site without assurances that you have the permission to hold the event! The Seneschal of the sponsoring group must sign any agreements, and the Exchequer of the local group should handle any funds. Don't set yourself up to owe anyone money should the group not agree to sponsor you!

Site (note: this was written 10 years ago – adjust prices for the current date!)

In my opinion, this is the most critical part of planning the event. If you don't have a place for the event, you don't have an event. It is important to have an appropriate site at a reasonable cost very early in the planning stages of the event if you want to have any chance to get event announcements submitted in time for publication. Ask yourself some questions. What is the site cost? What are the site rules? Is there room for all the planned activities? Are there restrooms and parking? Is the kitchen adequate? (See the back of this package for a site

checklist). Once you have confirmed that the site meets your needs, get everything in writing and have it signed by the local seneschal as early as possible. "Everything" should include the amount of the total site fee and any deposit, the date(s) by which the site fee (and deposit) must be paid, opening and closing times for the site, any rules imposed by the site's owner or agent, and any restricted areas or activities. Remember, if it isn't in writing, it doesn't exist.

Also, if a site is too expensive, DON'T USE IT! There will be more on finances later, but this is often a problem for the SCA, especially for small events. There are many sites out there that are wonderful, but may cost \$400-800. While they may seem perfect, there is no way that you can afford them unless your event has over 200 people or your site fee is very high. Ask yourself, "what is the expected (paid) attendance at this event?" For a normal event, people will probably pay \$3-5 for a site fee without too much complaining. With a normal sized event, say 100 people, you are looking at only \$300-\$500 of income that must cover your site and ALL OTHER EXPENSES! What about food at the side board? Prizes? What if the weather is horrible and you only get 80 people? You should always plan an event to at least break even (under all but the worst of circumstances) - never budget in a deficit.

Some people operate under the philosophy that they can just raise the site fee to cover any site, but there are cautions. Many people are offended if they are asked to pay more than \$5 unless it is a Kingdom or Principality event (a special fund raiser) or a very popular event. While I have seen site fees as high as \$7-\$8, I try to avoid such events. Most likely, if the price is that high, the site is too expensive. There are many sites that can be had for only a token fee or even free if you have good connections. Keep your options open, know your estimated attendance, and keep price in mind!

No matter what the price, there are certain requirements that must be met by any site. These requirements will vary depending on what type of event is being held, but many are common to all events. A checklist attached to this handout lists some of those requirements. Some are obvious: there need to be rest rooms, an area for the activities, parking, etc. Other requirements depend on the event: indoor fighting, a large kitchen, camping space etc. Before settling on a site, determine what your group NEEDS for the event and what your group WANTS for the event. If you find a reasonably priced site with everything, you are the luckiest autocrat in the world! If not, prioritize, and pick the best site you can get.

Sometimes it is difficult to get people to allow the SCA to use a site. They don't know who we are, or what we do. Avoid becoming defensive, explain our purpose to them, and give them some information about our activities. Work with your local Chatelaine if you aren't comfortable with this. Invite the site owner to a local demo, so that they can see the group before deciding. Invite them to the actual event, loan them some garb, and give them a complementary entrance fee and feast reservation. That way, they get to keep an eye on their site, but they still blend in. You might even get a new member out of it! If their beliefs or site rules just don't mix with what you need, be polite, and thank them for their time.

It is critical that you and the site owner are clear on site rules before you schedule the facility. Are candles allowed? Pets? Alcohol? Fighting? Dancing? Are there any areas of the site that are off limits or is there any equipment in the kitchen that shouldn't be used? Most of these items are on the checklist, and should be covered in discussions with the site owner so that there are no misunderstandings after the event.

Make sure that the site is left in the same or better condition as when you found it. Leaving a mess or breaking the site rules is a great way to not be asked back. A good clean up crew is essential, but remember that it is your job to make the final site inspection.

Finally, try to scope out some sites before you actually need one. If the members of the group keeps their eyes open and makes some contacts early, you may have several sites to choose from at any given time instead of none when you are in a bind. If you treat sites well when you use them, and keep looking for good contacts throughout the year, you should be able to find a site when you need it.

Finances (Again – please adjust prices for current times!)

The first step in looking at the finances for an event is to list all of the proposed expenses. List out everything the group can possibly need (or want) - site fee, insurance waiver, prizes, decorations, equipment, food for the side board etc. (Note that I didn't mention feast - more on that below). Look at the total, and divide by the minimum number of people you expect will attend the event. Compare that number to your proposed site fee. Did you break even? If not, you need to either raise your site fee or cut some expenses. As was stated above, it is best to keep the site as low cost as possible, as this will probably be the biggest single expense for the whole event. It may be possible for someone in your group to donate prizes, food or other things that will help keep costs down. The most important thing is that you not slide past this part of the planning without ensuring that your event will at least break even (even if bad weather cuts down on attendance). With an average number of participants you should even plan a small profit. If you get great attendance, you can then have a great profit! There is an exchequer form that really helps in the preplanning of events, and if your Exchequer isn't requiring you to fill it out, I would advise that you do so anyway.

Different groups have different philosophies on event profits, but my view is that events are places for us to gather together and share in the dream - not huge fund-raisers. My recommendation is that you plan the following profits into an event:

- \$50 - \$100 for a small event
- \$100 - \$200 for a large event
- \$200 - \$400+ for a Kingdom fund raising event

Please note that these are planned with average to low average attendance. These profit margins give you a little room in case of really low attendance or extra expenses, and will give you a nice profit with average or good attendance. If your feast makes money, or you have great attendance, you might make even more profit. Keep prices reasonable - or people will be annoyed - or not come! I know there are always rumors about the group that makes \$2000 or more at every event, but the people who just paid a \$7-\$8 site fee rarely say complimentary things about the host group. Just think about a married couple with two teenage children - will they really pay \$32 just to get in the door? Add on an expensive feast, and they are up for a \$72 day! If you can make a huge profit and keep the site fee around \$3 - great! Do it! However, if you need to raise the site fee over \$5 just to fill the coffers of your local group, something is

probably wrong. Always remember that there are some people who skip events because they don't have \$4 - it IS a lot of money to some people.

Make sure that the event announcement clearly indicates how many people owe. Some of these fee schedules can confuse a mathematics professor with site fees, late fees, on board, off board, out board, nights of camping, price breaks for kids, membership discounts etc. Let someone else proofread your announcement, and see if he can figure out how much different people might owe. Also, ask people who pre-register to itemize their reservation, so that you can be sure to give them credit for their funds.

Other activities need to be budgeted just as carefully as the site fee. For every person who sub-autocrats a part of the event, there should be a budget. Most of these can be \$0! However, if the archery coordinator wants to buy targets, you need to budget it. If the children's coordinator wants crayons and paper, you need to budget it. People then need to be told, if you haven't requested and received approval for a budget, you will not be reimbursed for the expense. One year I even instituted forms for requesting funds that had to be submitted to the Exchequer with the receipt. However you decide to do it, make sure that people are fully aware that they can not spend money without your approval.

In my opinion, the feast should be a totally separate financial situation from the rest of the event (even though the autocrat is responsible for reporting on both at the end). The event contains costs that will not change with the number of attendants, but the feast can be much more easily controlled. As reservations come in, the Feastocrat will have a good idea of the number of people who will be eating. One way to handle this is give a discount for people who reserve by a certain date before the event (a week or two). Also, feel free to state in the event announcement that feast reservations are limited, and cut them off a reasonable time before the event. When does the last big item need to be purchased? At that time, the Feastocrat should buy food for the number of people registered, any Royalty or other complementary reservations, and perhaps one extra table (maybe two at a large event). Then, cut off reservations! Extra food is a cost that you can not afford, and it must be kept to a minimum. Just because you said you would limit the feast to 125, does not mean that you need to buy for 125 if you only have 65 reservations. The feast should also break even or turn a small profit.

It is critical hear that you communicate well with your Feastocrat. They NEED to know how many people have reserved for the feast and how many complementary spots have been handed out in order to keep their finances in order. Don't keep them in the dark. They also need to know their budget. I have no problem telling people that they will not be reimbursed if they go over budget without authorization.

Most importantly, keep a good record of everything you spend, watch your spending, and make sure that everyone in your group understands your reimbursement policies (usually "no refunds without a receipt!"). You also need to set refund policies. I usually will refund site fees without complaint - no matter the reason the person didn't show up - since the site fee is usually set and not dependent on the number of people who attend. However the feast is different. A reservation means that we expected that person and bought food for them. Whether or not they attended, we spent the money for them. If we sell all the excess reservations and their reservation, I will usually refund their money. If we didn't sell out the feast, but make gobs of cash, I refund their money anyway. If we can't sell out the feast and look close on the financials, I usually refuse. Obviously, some of this can't be decided until after the event, and that is

acceptable as long as you tell people that what you are doing. Whatever you decide, make sure you are consistent.

Event Announcement:

The most important things to remember about event announcements are timeliness and completeness. For an event to be official, it must be listed with a complete event announcement in the Kingdom newsletter, The AEstel. The event announcement must contain the following to be considered complete:

- Date of the event
- The time the site opens AND closes
- The name of the sponsoring group (Incipient groups and guilds must also provide the name of the official sponsoring group)
- The location (name, street address, and town) of the site
- The name (SCA and modern) and address of the Autocrat (phone # is also nice)
- The statement "make checks payable to SCA INC. <group name> if there is a fee

The current AEstel deadline is the last day of the month two months before the issue. Thus if you have an event in mid-December, the event announcement must be in by October 31. It is easy to lose track of time when planning an event, but it is essential that this task is done on a timely basis. The key is to get, at a minimum, a complete event announcement submitted in time for the issue preceding the event date. It is better to submit something early so that people can plan to attend the event. Also, when you are sending that announcement in to AEstel while not send it in to other local newsletters? The same announcement can be taken to other events for advertisement purposes or sent to local seneschals. The more that people hear about your event, the more likely they will come.

Because your announcement also doubles as an advertisement, it should contain much more than the minimum requirements. A good guide for creating event bids was published some time ago by Baron Aaron faheud Swiftrunner, and it is attached to this handout. This same method creates a pretty good event announcement, and can be followed for almost any type of event. Once the required information is covered, certain other elements should also be included. A complete fee schedule should be included. Good directions are a must. Also, a list of proposed activities is essential to draw people to the event. Of course, there is a limit to what the chroniclers can print, but in general, more information is good, and it can be condensed to a reasonable format. Your announcement is not just a means to make the event official; it is also your advertisement!

Reservations and Troll

There are several regulations concerning troll and reservations, and they are covered in the Exchequer's handout. This section is not a replacement for that, it is just additional tips to try to make things flow smoothly.

The troll booth makes the first impression on most people who attend your event, and it should be pleasant! While mistakes and mix-ups are impossible to avoid entirely, they should certainly be minimized or corrected quickly. The reservations clerk should keep all of the correspondence that is received, including a copy of the information on the checks that you deposit. That way, if someone has a question over his reservation, you have all of the original documentation at your disposal. If there are any issues, they should be dealt with quickly and courteously. Remember, an event is like a small business, and if the customers are not happy, they won't come back!

The reservations clerk should also have set policies: Will you take phone reservations and accept the money at the event or do you only take paid reservations? Is there a limit on the feast? What are your refund policies? These policies should be decided BEFORE you have someone on the phone asking if they can make 6 more phone reservations for on-board. My personal preference is to put phone reservations on the waiting list. It is only fair to the people who mailed a check to give them priority. I do make one exception to the "paid reservations only" policy - people from Canada. It is very expensive for them to send a check in American funds, so if they PROMISE they will show up, I will accept cash when they arrive.

Check in at troll should be swift. Large events will get crowded at peak check in times, so it is essential that people be processed quickly. If a large number of people are expected, consider two stations - one for people with reservations and one for people without and one cashier. The exchequer rules add some requirements, but it is still to your advantage to make things as simple as possible. Make sure that the check in system isn't complicated. People shouldn't have to fill out multiple forms, and wait while you cross check index cards to a computer list. A simple list of who has registered is usually sufficient, or their name and payment can be written on an index card. The new rules are requiring either proof of membership or a signed waiver, but this can be done quickly and simply or even ahead of time. The most important thing to remember, is that when you are done, you will need to reconcile the money you have with the attendance at the event.

Different groups use different tokens to show payment, and some are definitely better than others. Necklaces with multi colored beads for on or off board are common, but can be a real hassle. The strings get tangled, or people need to wait while you make them on the spot. New requirements say that you should give them something so that everyone knows they signed the waiver, but it should be something simple. Short lengths of different colored ribbons will usually work fine without causing lengthy delays at the troll. One group gave out safety pins and a bit of fabric. Hand stamps work well. Just keep it simple and inexpensive.

Train your trolls in whatever system you choose, and make sure they are polite. The first impression should be a good one! Make sure they know where the changing rooms and restrooms are located, and that they have a schedule available in case there are any questions.

Finally, make sure the Trolls know that no one is to take money out of the cash box. No, I am not talking about stealing (although that should be avoided too), but those "oh I'll just take \$10 from the cash box to send someone to the store for toilet paper" scenarios. Just try to reconcile the totals at the end of the night if this is a regular custom! Cash will need to be removed once in a while at big events in order to keep the amount of money lying about at a reasonable level, and that should be done by only the person set in charge by the Autocrat. (e.g. yourself, your Exchequer or your troll/reservations clerk - but only one of you). That money should be replaced

with a receipt (\$250 removed for safe-keeping) and then locked up. If small items need to be purchased during the event, there are two methods for doing it. First, my preferred method, either have the Exchequer write a check for it, or convince someone to buy it with their own funds and reimburse them with a check. The second is to (reluctantly) have your designated person (you, Exchequer, or troll/reservations clerk) remove the money and replace it with a receipt explaining where it went. If you choose this method, the head person should get stuck with filling out the financial forms, because it will be a mess. Try to use the first method. Trust me.

Feast

The feast is one of the biggest parts of the event, so do your best to work with the feastocrat to make it special. Most of the feast will be run by the feastocrat, but there are a few things that are at least the partial responsibility of the autocrat. While you don't want to step on the toes of your feastocrat, it is critical to keep communication lines open. As stated before, it is best to keep the feast separate financially from the rest of the event, but as autocrat, the finances are ultimately your responsibility - charge what you plan to spend and make sure your feastocrat understands his or her budget.

If the feastocrat is within budget, it is best to stay out of his way, but feel free to ask what is going on since you are responsible for the event. Make sure the menu includes enough "regular" food for picky eaters. Feel free to ask the feastocrat if he has pre-tested the dishes. If he has a menu, it is your job to get it printed in the event program. Any special requests or dietary restrictions in the reservations must be communicated EARLY to the feastocrat. Also, the scheduling is critical - when will he serve lunch? Dinner? Is he running late? Tell him if the event is delayed. In general, we try to hold the feast time firm. Unless Royalty are late, it is best to serve the dishes when they are at their best.

Ask questions on serving: Does the feastocrat need help organizing the servers? Do the servers have enough nice dishes for High Table? Where should the servers put empty dishes when they retrieve them from the tables? Are there adequate garbage containers available? While the feastocrat is (or can be) in charge of these matters, you must help or assign someone else. Hot water should be provided for people to clean dishes, or they WILL wash their dishes in the rest rooms or bother the kitchen crew. Provide one large pot of soapy water, one of rinse water, and as many dish towels as you can spare. Save plastic grocery bags for the crowd to use to take home dirty or wet dishes. High Table must be served properly. If you have the personnel to do it, a separate person in charge of serving is a great idea. If not, make sure you and the feastocrat are clear on who is doing what.

Finally, remember that being in the kitchen is the toughest job at an event. While all tasks are important, everyone else gets to view the event or at least meet people. The kitchen crew is stuck in a small area all day and can't even follow the event. Help them as much as you can to ease the burden of 8-12 hours in the kitchen. Make sure they are provided with a fresh clean up crew (the site is your responsibility too). These people have spent all day cooking and don't deserve to scrub all night as well. Make sure they get to attend court if at all possible. Announce to them when the tourney finals are approaching so they can watch. Send help in as often as you can. I hear a lot of people say they can't cook so they will do some other job instead. Nonsense! The feastocrat is in need of people who can scrub pots, chop veggies, roll dough,

and any number of tasks that do not require a great deal of skill. Everyone should try to help at least an hour in the kitchen (except the autocrat and people who are contagious).

Activities

Activities can be a whole course in itself, but here are a few tips. Include activities in the event announcement so people know what equipment to bring. Make sure any planned activities are clearly listed in a schedule of some type, so that people know where to be. (And then try to keep to the schedule!) Make sure they know where the activities take place. Keep them varied so that everyone can enjoy themselves. All fighting events or all music events will attract a much smaller group of people! Try to have an A&S display to showcase the skills of the local artisans (and scientists). Make sure that all of the activities take place in a suitable location - musical performances can not be held in the middle of a crowded hall and of course, safety must be a priority for martial activities. Children's activities are critical - remember that they are people too. Just remember that people are there to have a good time! Delegate these areas to sub-autocrats. Schedule someone to handle all of the tourney details, and another to run the children's activities. You can not be everywhere at once, so it is critical to get some help that you can count on to run the activities.

It is also important to make sure that activities do not clash. The same people can not be in two places at one time. (For example, I once had several activities delayed by last minute order meetings. The people scheduled to perform were pulled into the order meeting, and the performances were delayed). Also, the large area that works great for fighting and dancing can't hold both at the same time. The musicians can not perform opposite the hog calling contest etc.

Finally, don't forget that each activity coordinator needs to be aware of budget constraints. Unauthorized spending will not be reimbursed!

Crash Space

Get an idea what crash space is available in your area, and offer it to whoever needs it. (The reservations clerk is the best person to coordinate this). Make sure that you check to see if people have any allergies to pets or smoking before you connect them to someone with a cat or a smoking habit. Also make sure that you get some idea what accommodations are available. Some people cannot sleep on the floor and still walk the next day. People with children may need to have them in the same room for proper supervision. If you absolutely can not provide someone with crash space, at least try to provide him with information on inexpensive lodging in the area. Try to remember that some people are traveling a great distance to get to your event, and they need your hospitality!

Royalty

The Royalty of the SCA (Kingdom, Principality, and Baronial) work hard and travel long distances to attend all of our events, and They deserve to be treated . . . well . . . as Royalty!

Send Them an official invitation, even if you know They are coming (or even if you know that They aren't). Let Them know that They are welcome, and if possible, offer Them crash space.

Once you know that They are attending, be prepared for Them. Provide a private room for Them to change, store Their belongings, and meet with a little privacy. If there is absolutely no way that you can provide an extra room or tent or cabin, at least divide off an area somewhere in the hall for Their use. It is very important that someplace be set aside for private discussions, scroll signings, and all of the other Royal duties.

Make sure that any attending Royalty are fully provided with food and drink, not just at the feast, but throughout the day. They are traveling many miles with a wagon full of regalia, garb, scrolls and retainers, and it would certainly be convenient if They didn't need to worry about food. If They arrive the night before, consider serving dinner and breakfast. Leave snacks and drink in the Royalty room in case they need them during the day. Anything you can think of will surely be appreciated.

A few other things should also be considered. Do They have a retainer? If not, maybe you can spare someone from your group. If They already have someone, provide a Royalty liaison to deal with Their needs. Ask Their input about the schedule early in the event planning. When do They want to have Court? Do They need to leave early? If you can not accommodate Their wishes, most Royalty will be understanding, but it is courteous to ask, and work with Them whenever possible. Ask whom They would like at High Table, and make sure you have enough places. Check with Them before scheduling entertainment at the feast, or involving Them in activities that They may not enjoy.

Remember, at an event, EVERYONE should be treated like Royalty. The Royalty should be treated even better!

Clean Up

Clean up is critical if you plan to get your deposit back or ever use the site again. Remember, you should always try to leave a sight better than you found it! Map out the placement of chairs and tables if you plan to move them so that they can be returned. Make sure all SCA stuff is removed from the site, and put it in your group's lost and found. Vacuum, scrub and clean until the place is spotless! A clean site often leads to a good relationship with a site owner, and can mean the difference between returning or pounding the pavement looking for new places!

Safety

Don't forget to keep safety in mind when planning an event. Part of making everyone comfortable, is making them safe. Make sure that any off limits areas are clearly marked. This is especially true if there is a bad neighborhood nearby, a body of water, an abandoned building, or a similar danger spot for children. Make sure people stay out of the kitchen. Too many people washing dishes, storing mead, and getting drinks of water will create confusion and the potential

for cuts, burns and spills. Fire presents a great danger if not treated with respect. Site regulations should clearly state policies on fire pits as well as candles. Fire extinguishers should be in clear site at any locations where fire is permitted. Make sure the group has a first aid kit available, and, if possible, have an official Chirurgeon signed up for the day. Know the route to the nearest hospital, and make sure that there is a phone available in case an emergency call needs to be placed. In most cases, there are no problems, but it is always best to be prepared!

Final Thoughts

Autocratting can be fun and rewarding, if you plan well, have a good crew, and are extremely lucky! If you are nervous about trying it, start with a small, local event or just autocrat one activity for someone else. Soon you will be running large events with no problem. Most important, have fun, and make sure your volunteers have fun. Thank them all, and make sure you tell them what a good job they did. Then sit back and relax!

Event Site Suitability

Item	Yes	No	Comments
Is the cost acceptable?			
Are there any extra costs such as insurance, custodial fees, table rental etc.?			
Do they require extra insurance?			
Are some areas off limits?			
Do we have an on site contact or the phone number of someone for emergencies?			
Is the site handicapped accessible?			
May we have open flames?			
May we have alcohol?			
May we dance?			
May we fence in doors?			
May we fight in doors?			
May we fight, fence and hold archery outdoors?			
Is smoking allowed (inside or out)?			
Is there enough room for people to meet, mingle and congregate?			
Are there enough restrooms for everyone expected?			
Are there changing rooms?			
Is the kitchen big enough for the planned feast?			
Is there adequate refrigerator space for the feast?			
Are there enough ovens?			
Does the site have serving trays, pitchers, pots pans etc available?			
Is there adequate parking?			
Are there tables and chairs available?			
Are there classrooms?			
Is there a Royalty area?			
Is there a suitable spot for a children's room?			
Is there a suitable floor surface for indoor fighting?			
Are there hot showers?			
Is there outdoor shelter?			
Is there room for archery?			
Does the hall have good acoustics?			
Is the building heated/cooled?			