

Pearl Manual

For Companions of the Order

ed. May 2009

Welcome to the Order of the Pearl! This manual tells you what your rights and responsibilities are as a Companion of the Pearl, and what the Order's procedures are.

RIGHTS

You now have the right to style yourself a Companion of the Pearl, to be listed among the Kingdom Orders of High Merit in the Order of Precedence, to appear with other Companions in Grand Marches, to display the Badge of the Order with which you were just invested, and to receive a scroll commemorating this event. You have the right to attend meetings of the Order, and so long as you remain active (as discussed below), you have the right to be consulted by the Crown concerning nominees to the Order.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain your activity in the arts and sciences, at or above the level for which you have been recognized
- Pass your knowledge to others and actively seek out and encourage Arts & Sciences excellence
- Show courtesy and provide advice to the Crown by responding to polling letters
- Notify the Principal annually that you wish to maintain an "active" status

1. Your prime responsibility is to maintain your activity in the arts and sciences, at or above the level for which you have just been recognized.

The Pearl is given for a combination of teaching and the achievement of excellence in the arts and sciences. Atlantians are proud to emphasize teaching in the qualifications for the Orders of Merit. Your Companions recognize that some people can create masterfully without being able to explain how they do it, and that some can teach others something they can't do themselves (you don't need hands to teach the history of calligraphy, for example). We therefore encourage you to both broaden and deepen your knowledge of both techniques and history, learning about new arts and sciences as well as learning more about your present specialties.

2. We also encourage you to pass on your knowledge to others by taking, or continuing to take, an active part in the A&S activities of your local group and your Kingdom. You could do that in a number of ways. Example include:

Encouraging short A&S presentations in conjunction with meetings of your local group

Sponsoring or supporting local A&S workshops

Encouraging your group to sponsor University sessions

Encouraging local people to teach at the University, and by doing so yourself or assisting someone else

Submitting A&S articles to your local newsletter or The Oak, or more scholarly papers to Tournaments Illuminated, The Compleat Anachronist, and other publications.

Look around and you'll see a dozen other ways to promote and participate in A&S activity.

You should be actively seeking and encouraging Arts & Sciences excellence in others. It is important to take the extra time to look at A&S displays, competitions, classes, and to be aware of others around you and their level of skill, effort, and ability.

3. You are also responsible to show courtesy and provide advice to the Crown by replying to polling letters. We'll discuss more about polling letters below.

4. Notify the Principal annually that you wish to maintain an "active" status. At one point in time, "inactive" referred to a member who had failed to reply to two successive pollings. Maintaining the active/inactive designation had an important financial ramification, as it was indeed a waste of money to mail watch lists and pollings to members who didn't respond. However, with the order now using email to distribute pollings and watch lists, most of the cost of distributing pollings and watch lists has gone away.

Currently the need to maintain the "active" roster is to help the Principal act in accordance with the Kingdom Law that states: "Polling letters shall not be sent to any member who has resided outside the Kingdom of Atlantia for more than six consecutive months." We have decided that the Principal will annually ask members to respond and verify that they are still residing within the Kingdom of Atlantia and are eligible to receive a polling based on this law. Those who do not respond will be noted as "inactive" and will not receive pollings until they have again contacted the Principal and verified that they are eligible to receive pollings.

We hope that you will consider it your responsibility to be active in the Order by attending meetings, helping to maintain our Watch List of potential nominees, participating in the investiture of new members, and joining in other activities of the Order.

PROCEDURES

Polling

The most venerable procedure in the Pearl, as in other Orders of High Merit and the Peerages, is the polling letter. Atlantia's Kingdom Law states: "Orders of High Merit may be given by the Crown after written or verbal consultation with the companions of the order regarding the qualifications of a candidate. Each such polling shall be considered valid for the duration of the current reign and the entirety of the following reign." Their Majesties are required to consult with the members of the Order before recognizing nominees. Note that they are not bound to agree with the recommendations they receive.

Once or twice each reign, the Crown (typically with the assistance of the Principal) prepares a polling letter listing several people who have been nominated for the Pearl, and (we hope) stating why these people seem deserving of the award. (Also see "The Watch List" below.) The letter is copied and mailed, either by US mail or by electronic mail, by the Principal of the Order to all active members. Responses should be prepared thoughtfully and returned promptly to the Crown. These do NOT go to the Principal. Feel free to speak strongly in favor of someone, if you are so inclined. If you feel you must oppose a nomination, be sure to explain clearly and objectively. You may see nominees you haven't met, or with whose

work you aren't familiar. Some of us, especially the less-traveled, abstain from voting on such people; others, especially the well-traveled, feel that if a person is up for Kingdom honors then his or her work should be known in many parts of the Kingdom. Respond according to your personal convictions.

Mistress Teleri Talgellawg has made an excellent analysis of the evaluation of candidates which is reproduced here verbatim:

"I have been evaluating candidates by looking at three areas of their work: execution of their craft, research, and teaching. I also look at the breadth or narrowness of the "category" they are nominated in. The narrower the "category", the more depth I expect the candidate to show in that category - the candidate should be strong in this case in all the three areas mentioned above. The broader the "category" or the more "categories" a candidate is nominated for, the less depth I expect that candidate to have in any one craft. Take for example, a person who is skilled in a variety of aspects of jewelry-making - copper enameling, and gold- and silversmithing, and gemstone polishing and setting - I would expect him/her to have done enough research to create period-looking articles of jewelry, but not necessarily much more than that. A person who does only gemstone polishing and setting, I would expect to have researched the stones used, period methods of cutting and polishing, what the stones meant in the Middle Ages/Renaissance, if and how they were used medicinally, etc., and to do some instruction in this area to be equivalent to the greater variety of skills demonstrated by the first example.

People who are particularly strong in research and/or teaching of a craft rather than the execution of a craft should not be ignored when candidates are nominated to the Order. A person who cannot make one stroke of a calligraphy pen on paper, without flooding the paper with ink, may still be the most knowledgeable person on the history of calligraphy and illumination around. Lack of skill does not exclude knowledge of a craft or the ability to teach others that craft."

Nominations

While Their Majesties are at liberty to put any name they want on the polling letter, almost all names come from nominations. In addition, Their Majesties frequently ask the Order for opinions on who should be included on a polling. This is usually done either at a meeting or by mail through the Principal, and we frequently rely heavily on the information provided on the watch list.

In Atlantia, anyone can nominate anyone for anything. Most nominations from outside the Order go directly to the Crown. In addition to sending nominations to the Crown, nominations should be sent to the Principal of the Order so that the candidate can be brought to the attention of the rest of the Order. In a nomination, the candidate should be clearly identified by SCA and modern names, home group, and reason for the nomination. Companions of the Pearl should be especially attentive to A&S activities, watching up-and-coming people to help and accomplished people to nominate.

The Watch List

We observed that, in this Order and others, the most common response to a polling was "Who's that?" or "I didn't know (s)he did that." Therefore we've established a list of people whom we consider likely to advance to Pearl status. We circulate these names among ourselves so that we can watch for the people at events and thus be able to think, "Lady

So-and-So? Oh yes, she did the scroll that won the calligraphy contest last month." Also, if we know some of those people, we can subtly encourage them to broaden or deepen their skills, to teach at University sessions, and so forth.

There are a couple of hazards here.

(a) We don't want people to know they're being watched. People who are "cooking this feast so I'll get my Pearl" are apt to slack off after they get it, or be bitter if they don't get it at once. Other people can be very uncomfortable with the idea of being observed. People who are doing it because they enjoy it will appreciate the recognition and likely increase the quality and intensity of their work after they get it.

(b) We don't want one's presence on the list to be a requirement for receiving a favorable polling. Any Order is in constant danger of being seen as an elitist group concerned mainly with promoting its members' social status and excluding the unworthy. That's not so much a hazard in Atlantia as in Kingdoms where the members of an Order have near-veto power concerning new members; but we must be sure no one can claim we're only looking at people we've decided are worth looking at.

Watch Lists are provided to new members, and updates are provided to the entire order two to four times a year.

Any Companion of the Order can suggest anyone for the Watch List, simply by writing to the Principal. In addition, the Principal collects information shared on the email list, and includes appropriate quotes on the watch list. The suggesting letter should say where the candidate is from and give modern name and commonly used alternate personas, since some Companions may know the person only thus. It should also say why the person looks like potential Pearl material, and might identify areas in which the person needs encouragement or support.

The comments on the watch list are dated, to assist us in keeping the watch list focused on the active artisans. The most recent POSITIVE comment must be within one year of the current quarter's update. A "Positive" comment is one that speaks in favor of the person's work and abilities, and includes the writer's opinion. A comment that is neutral (for example, only lists recent competitions entered or classes taught) or that is clearly negative will not be considered for purposes of determining the 12-month period. This means that if the last positive comment is dated twelve months (or more) before the current update, that person will be dropped from the list, regardless of whether or not they have a currently active polling. If you have new information on a person whose name is about to be dropped, please send it in!

Time Frames

We frequently hear words to the affect that the Pearls aren't recognizing artisans quickly enough. Here is some information to help clarify the time frames involved in this process.

Step 1. The process of getting someone added to the order starts with someone paying attention enough to recommend a person. The Principal adds the name and information from the recommendation to the Watch List.

Step 2. The watch list is distributed at least once per reign. Members of the Order use the watch list to try to become familiar with the person and their work: viewing their work in A&S displays and competitions, attending their classes, noting their local contributions, viewing their web pages, or spotting them at events.

Step 3. Eventually, Their Majesties want to put out a polling, and the recommended person may be polled for.

Step 4. Their Majesties usually give a couple weeks for the polling responses to be sent back. They compile the results, and act on the recommendations as They see fit.

So, lets think about time frames. The time difference between step 1 and 3 could be 3 to 6 months while a person has been on the watch list until a polling is formed. Assuming that during that time the person has had enough name recognition for Their Majesties and/or a consensus of the Order to want the person on the polling, add a month for polling results to be sent to Their Majesties and compiled. Then add the time of Their Majesties' reign, or even Their Successors, before that person is at the same event as the Crowns to be able to receive the honors. Thus, it is entirely possible that a year may have come and gone between the time someone says: *"hey, this person should be a Pearl!"* until it actually happens. There are many exceptions, but this is possible.

And what does this mean to you? You have a responsibility to help get other worthy artisans recognized, so as soon as you see someone whose work is getting very good, you should bring that person to the attention of the rest of the order, and not delay.

Electronic Discussion List

The Order of the Pearl has been provided with an electronic re-mailer that allows e-mail messages to be sent to all the members of the order by sending to a single address. The order uses this for discussion, watch list updates, and anything that is directed to all the other Pearls. The Principal of the Order is the one who adds and/or deletes members from the electronic list. If you would like to be included, make sure the principal has an accurate e-mail address and let the principal know you wish to be included on the electronic list. Posting to the list is done by sending e-mail to "[pearls \(at\) atlantia.sca.org](mailto:pearls@atlantia.sca.org)". Notes can be sent to the Principal by sending e-mail to "[pearl \(at\) atlantia.sca.org](mailto:pearl@atlantia.sca.org)".

What if You DON'T have email?

Most Companions of the Order have email and interact via the email list, but this is NOT a requirement for being an active member. It is still required that in-person meetings of the Order must be held at least once per reign, so you will have opportunity interact with your fellow companions that way. You can still receive pollings and watch lists by US mail. To defer the expenses of the mailings, we request that members who desire to receive information via US mail be responsible for providing SASEs to the Principal. The Principal will let you know when your last envelope is used.

Medallions

The Order decided, some years ago, that all Companions are entitled to have a medallion of the Badge of the Order. You are not required to wear the Badge of the Order, but you have

the right to wear it if you choose. Of course we hope you will choose to do so, so that we will recognize one another.

You are not required to wear any particular version of the Badge. You can buy or make any version of it you please, provided that your version is heraldically correct: a white circle centered on a blue scallop shell, "fan" upward. Your badge might be cross-stitched, or it might be a real pearl on a real scallop shell, for example. It might be a medallion, a pin, embroidered on a garment, or what have you.

You may give your medallion to a new member at his/her induction; this can be a very meaningful gesture. A medallion could acquire a history: "This was given me by ..., who received it from ... (etc.); and now I give it to you."

The Order of the Pearl is honored to have you join us as a member. Highlights to remember are:

Maintain your activity in the arts and sciences, at or above the level for which you have been recognized

Pass your knowledge to others and actively seek out and encourage Arts & Sciences excellence

Show courtesy and provide advice to the Crown by responding to polling letters

Be careful with watchlist information and be objective

Notify the Principal annually that you wish to maintain an active status

Electronic discussion is done at: [pearls \(at\) atlantia.sca.org](mailto:pearls@atlantia.sca.org)

Principal's email is: [pearl \(at\) atlantia.sca.org](mailto:pearl@atlantia.sca.org)

Excerpt from the [Atlantian Great Book of Law](#), *Effective February 2009*

8.3 Concerning Kingdom Orders

8.3.1 Companions of these Orders who were admitted prior to Atlantia's elevation to Kingdom status shall retain their precedence within the Orders of Atlantia.

8.3.2 Companions of those Orders who resided in the Kingdom at the time their Order had its status elevated shall have their status elevated appropriately in the Order of Precedence.

8.3.2.1 The Orders of Atlantia last had their status elevated on April 1, 2003.

8.3.3 All of the Orders which convey an Award of Arms shall rank equally with each other in the Order of Precedence.

8.3.4 All of the Orders which convey a Grant of Arms shall rank equally with each other in the Order of Precedence.

8.3.5 Recipients shall be known as companions of their respective orders.

8.3.6 Members of the Orders are expected to maintain their service to the Kingdom at the level for which they were admitted to the order and to be chivalrous and courteous at all times.

8.3.7 Concerning the Orders of Merit.

8.3.7.1 The Orders of Merit are bestowed by the Crown and are non-polling.

8.3.7.2 Admission to the Orders of Merit shall be accompanied by an Award of Arms to such recipients as do not already have Arms.

8.3.8 Concerning the Orders of High Merit.

8.3.8.1 Admission to the Orders of High Merit shall be accompanied by a Grant of Arms to such recipients as do not already have a Grant of Arms.

8.3.9 Concerning Polling

8.3.9.1 Orders of High Merit and Peerage Orders may be given by the Crown after written or verbal consultation with the members of the order regarding the qualifications of a candidate. Each such polling shall be considered valid for the duration of the current reign and the entirety of the following reign.

8.3.9.2 Pollings shall not be sent to any member who has resided outside the Kingdom of Atlantia for more than six consecutive months.

8.3.9.3 Pollings shall be sent by the Principal to the members of the order and shall be returned by the members directly to the Crown (or, at the Crown's discretion, Their Heirs). Polling responses shall not be collected locally in any fashion, nor shall they be forwarded to the Crown via any third party.

8.3.10 Principal Requirements: Each of the Peerage Orders and Atlantian Orders of High Merit shall have a Principal.

8.3.10.1 The Principal shall be chosen by the Crown, from those within the order. The Crown shall conduct a polling every two years, or should the office become vacant. Polling responses will be sent by order members directly to the Crown and shall not be collected locally in any fashion, nor shall they be forwarded to the Crown via any third party.

8.3.10.1.1 Each Principal shall continue in his/her capacity for a period of no longer than four years.

8.3.10.2 Each Principal shall maintain the mailing list for his/her order. Mailing lists may be electronic if acceptable to the majority of the order. Those members who do not wish to receive information in an electronic fashion may request pollings and watchlists from the Principal of the order by traditional mail.

8.3.10.3 Each member of each order is responsible for providing the Principal with their address.

8.3.10.4 Each Principal is responsible for holding at least one general meeting of his/her order during each reign by publishing and/or sending written notification of time and place not less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Notification of the order may be by electronic post if acceptable to the majority of the order.

