

“Your Mission: Award Recs”  
By Lady Pipa Sparkes, OSC

- “Brunhilde is always helping out. She’s been around for 10 years; why doesn’t she have a Pelican by now?”
- “Tyffayne has studied and studied and studied sewing... but how come she doesn’t have her GoA?”
- “Wow! Bubba ap Elvis is one kick-arse archer! Why isn’t he a Boga-Fyrd?”

All of these questions have the same answer: because YOU did not recommend these people for an award. “Me?!” you might ask, “The King & Queen give the awards; what do I have to do with it?” The answer: everything. In the SCA, the Crown is the source of all honors (i.e. awards), but Their Majesties rely upon the people of Calontir to tell them when people deserve awards. This is because They do not necessarily know everything that is going on in the entire kingdom. If a person is not receiving an award, it is usually because no one has told Their Majesties about them.

“But I’m no one special!” you might protest, “Don’t you have to have that award before you can recommend someone else for it?” The answer: nope! Calontir kingdom law says, “All residents of the Kingdom have the right to recommend to the Crown anyone who, in their estimation, is deserving of an award on any level (12<sup>th</sup> ed., X-601).” This means that ANYBODY can recommend ANY PERSON for ANY AWARD. Even letters from newbies will be honorably considered. No matter what, keep in mind that you do have the right to make any recommendation, and if you don’t do it then that person may never get the award they richly deserve.

“How do I help the worthy gentle get the award?” you might wonder. The answer: write. Kingdom law says, “Such recommendations shall be in writing, and shall bear the name(s) of the author(s) thereof, and bear accompanying documentation (12<sup>th</sup> ed., X-601).” In case you need some clearer steps to follow the law, here are some general guidelines for writing award recs:

1. Check the online order of precedence and see what awards the person has already received; a person usually will not receive the same award twice. The web address for the OP is listed in the resources below, or you can check with your local herald to see the group’s OP.
2. Use the online award rec form and fill it out as completely as possible, including the recipient’s modern info and your name/email. The URL for the form is listed in the resources.
3. Be specific! “Tyffayne deserves the Golden Calon Swan because she sewed 3 Russian letniks and made a kokoshnik last month” is going to be a LOT more effective than “Tyffayne makes a lot of garb, give her something.” Check the resources below and make sure you mention how the person has filled all the prerequisites for the award. Also, ask around and get some extra details (maybe you weren’t at the event where Bubba ap Elvis won the archery contest).
4. Leave the flowers in the garden. It is very good manners to have fancy salutations and signature lines (“Greetings unto Their Royal Majesties Calontir..... Your loyal subject, Brunhilde”), but the body of the letter should be succinct. Say why the person deserves which award and say it clearly.
5. Conspiracy is fun! Get other people, especially group officers, to write their own award recs for the same person, but BEWARE: 1 letter with 10 signatures on it still only counts as 1 letter. 10 distinct letters from 10 different people counts as 10 letters. The raw number of separate letters is critical: just imagine the visual impact of a pile of 10 letters versus only 1. The 1 letter per person rule also applies to the person that the letter is about. If you are recommending 2 different people—even for the same award—send 2 different letters.
6. Don’t recommend yourself or close associates for an award. Doing so will probably sabotage your chances of getting the award since it looks like you are “ladder climbing.” The best approach is to do what you enjoy, don’t obsess about the awards, and trust that if you are doing good work, you WILL get noticed eventually.
7. If at first you don’t succeed, try and try again. It frequently happens that letters are lost, emails accidentally deleted, and servers crash, especially in the changeover period between reigns. So if you submit a rec and the award is not given, wait until the next reign starts and submit another rec. You can use the intervening time to get more people to conspire with you....

Since the final decision rests with the Crown, there is no 100% guarantee that every recommendation will be approved (and every Crown has different attitudes about awards). But you can increase the odds by following the law and persevering. Remember, Their Majesties are relying on YOU to tell them who deserves recognition, your friends are relying on YOU to recommend them for the awards they deserve, and your group is relying on YOU to make them look good by making sure lots of people get called up to receive an award at your group’s event. Don’t let them down: exercise your right to make a recommendation!

Resources:

Laws of Calontir: <http://calontir.sca.org/senesh/laws/laws.html>

Calontir Order of Precedence: <http://calontir.sca.org/heritage/op/op.html>

Calontir Award Rec Form Online: <http://www.calontir.sca.org/award/award.html>

Master Modar’s links to awards info: <http://www2.kumc.edu/itc/staff/rknight/protocol.htm#Awards>