

Publishing your Branch Newsletter

Greetings fellow Chroniclers,

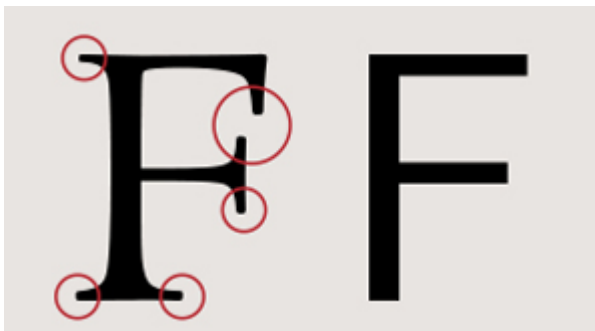
Some of you have expressed an interest in publishing a newsletter for your branch. This is a fabulous idea as it will capture some of the history of your branch. A newsletter is super helpful when someone wants to know, for example, what event happened when and where, maybe see a photo of themselves from a while ago, or perhaps even want to compile a 20 year anniversary book. As Chronicler, this is your domain and your superpower – you get to write history!

At this time, only baronies are required to publish a regular newsletter; shires have the option. If you are going to publish a newsletter, below are lists of things that must be included and things that are nice to have along with some basic tips and a couple rules. If I've missed anything or you have questions, contact me and we can have a discussion.

Basic Tools

Your newsletter doesn't have to be published using fancy software. It's nice if you can, but Microsoft Word has all the basic tools to give you a nice looking document. Have a look at print magazines to get a sense of how to lay out your information. I suggest a basic alternating 2 and 3 column layout, with at least 1-2 photos per article. If you have someone with the skills to act as your Graphic Artist deputy, that is great. Publishing newsletters is easier with a team. If you do the layout yourself, here are a couple tips to create something readable and attractive:

- Avoid trapped white space (big white empty gaps in the middle of the page); keep your empty space around the edges.
- Avoid using super fancy fonts in general. **They are hard to read and tend to annoy people** as they struggle to figure out what has been written. It's best to leave those for scrolls.
- In general, the rule of fonts are to use serif fonts (those with tails and curly bits) for articles and san serif fonts for headlines.



Serif on the left, san serif on the right

- Choose 2 fonts and stick to them. *A mix of fonts and sizes also falls into the **annoying** category.*
- Put in lots of photos. These add colour and you can capture a lot of story with a simple picture. See rules about photos below.

Photos

- Photos can only be published with **written permission** of the photographer. A simple e-message is all that is needed. Photo credit must **ALWAYS** be given. The photographer can choose to use their modern or SCA name. It simply needs to say "Photo by _____" following any caption that may be written for the photo.
- With regard to photos, it is a good idea to write a caption that identifies the main people in the photo and a brief description of what is happening. This helps for those later years when we look fondly back on our old newsletters and our memories aren't so good 😊

Schedule

- You can publish your newsletter on your chosen schedule. It can be monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, twice a year – you choose what works for you. Try to choose a regular schedule that you can keep up with.

Required Inclusions

- The names and email addresses of the Shire Officers as well as the current Royals and Seneschal for Tir Righ. **Never** include physical or mailing addresses for anyone.
- A calendar of events and any announcements for the time period between newsletters (if it is monthly, then a calendar of events for the month is all you need; if it is quarterly, then 3 months of events is what you need to include). Make sure to include all your gatherings – fight practice, A&S nights, any special classes, demos etc
- On the front cover, include the name of the newsletter, the Shire, Principality and Kingdom, and the month and common era year of publication
- Many chroniclers will also include minutes from Council meetings. You may choose to include them if you wish, but as minutes are now available electronically on your website or FB page, you do not need to include minutes in your newsletter anymore.
- There are no rules as to how many pages your newsletter needs to be. Because they are all published electronically, you don't need to worry about printing costs so publish according to how much content you have. The Principality newsletter is usually around 24 pages on a quarterly publication schedule. We have a lot of information to put in for something published every 3 months. You may only have content for 6 or 8 pages, no worries, that is perfectly fine.
- Make sure to post your newsletters on the Chronicler's page on your website, and name the files based on the season/month

and year published. If you want to post them on FB in the files section, that is a bonus, but we highly encourage keeping them safely archived on your branch website. Do post on FB when you have published your newsletter and include the URL in your post so people can easily and quickly find it.

Remaining Content

This can be whatever you wish. Event stories, reports from officers, stories and poetry, recipes, interviews, articles on pretty much anything SCA or medieval in nature – all of this makes interesting reading for your populace. Read newsletters from other branches, especially outside our Principality and Kingdom, to get ideas on what to include. A good place to find examples of good newsletters is on the SCA site for the [William Blackfox Awards](#). This is a listing of winners of newsletter awards for the SCA across all kingdoms. Mine them for good ideas ☺ Remember to keep it family-friendly! Reprinting articles is also totally acceptable; you just need written permission from the author. Of course I highly recommend subscribing to the Principality newsletter, *The Northern Sentinel*.

A final note about submissions. Encourage your populace to submit content. This helps you a lot as it is a bit of work compiling content by yourself. However, just because someone sends you something, you, as editor, have the right to edit it (sometimes for brevity and/or grammar) or simply not publish it (ie content is inappropriate / not SCA related). This is your call.

Final Thoughts

At the end of the day, a newsletter can be a great resource to your branch and I highly support all branches who want to take this on. It can be whatever you want it to be so wield your power for good, and above all, have fun with it. If you have any questions, contact your Principality Chronicler for help and support.

In Service,
HL Tatiana Alexievna
Chronicler, Tir Righ

