



From Lord Wade of Many Places,

At one time we were all novices in these **Current Middle Ages**. We did not know the traditions or mores that we now take for granted. I'm sure we all have some incidents we may wish to forget and hope that others have. I am equally sure that there are some individuals who stand out as great examples to follow in fitting in to this perhaps once foreign and alien seeming society.

There have also been times of swift growth in areas of the **Society** where it has been difficult to accustom new folks to traditions and practices in our social organization. There are unwritten rules that members follow that make this **extended family** what we know and love.

Simple observation can lead to misinterpretations of what is actually going on. Role Models chosen might be someone equally new to the **Society** or might be someone who behaves unacceptably by most standards of the **Society**.

Moving out into society is not something horribly novel and I am sure that all of us has done so in the past and will do so again in the future. The same goes for moving into a novel or new society. Merely leaving the shelter of our Mother's skirts is a step into foreign territory. In parts of Europe at times in the **Medieval Period** there was the tradition of fostering one's children to another family so that they might learn more of the world away from their own Father and Mother.

When someone is introduced to the **SCA** they often do not have the advantage of Family who are versed in the traditions and mores of the **Current Middle Ages**, even those of the area local to them.

I am proposing a solution, both for the new members and for the group. I am proposing a form of fostering of new members. This would be a short-term commitment to show the new members the ropes so to speak. It would be something that would answer the questions that creep up over their first **6 to 12** months and would be definitely a follow up from something like the **Newcomers' Event**.

I am seeking individuals or couples who might be interested to make a short term commitment to a number of new members to our **SCA family** for between **6** and **12** months, or for between **1** and **2** reigns

of **Crowns** or **Coronets**. They should have some experience in the **SCA**, have patience with novices without being patronizing, and be willing to put in a few evenings a month to be a mentor for a group of new members.

They would foster these members during this time by meeting with them in their home or some other mutually agreeable location **1** or **2** evenings a month. Things would be flexible of course, but for the most part the meetings would simply be for chatting about what the new people had been experiencing and trying and any problems they might have or questions that might have come up.

Some very important things could be discussed such as: looking into a persona, which leads to the choosing of an appropriate name; the designing of a

suitable heraldic design; courtesy and etiquette in the **SCA**; and similar things.

These meetings would be excellent times to plan out garb and similar projects and perhaps even doing simple projects. These meetings could be a good time to make plans for going as a group to events either local or requiring travel. The person fostering the new members need not go to the events, just help them with the planning and what to expect.

The person fostering the new members would also be able to put the new member in touch with people who might be doing things of interest to the new members. For instance introducing a new member interested in brewing with a local brewer, or directing a person interested in fighting to a fighting practice that welcomes new fighters. Introducing the new

members around to people of the **Barony** would also fit in rather well.

Something else I would also like to see, though might be ambitious would be for the different groups of fostered new members to host other groups in **mini events**. Perhaps it could be an evening of games, or an evening of dance. The groups might host small potluck banquets for each other throughout the year. It might be fun with the **mini events** of perhaps **15** to **30** participants.

I suggest that the new members be fostered in groups of between **3** and **6** and that it not matter whether they know each other before this or not. My reasoning for this is based on my personal experience in a number of areas. With only **2** members plus one leader there is much less input available and things really can lag. Also if one person drops

out things become perhaps a bit too intimate. With more than 6 it is too easy for some people to overshadow others even if the leader is being careful to listen even for the quiet person in the back of the room. It is also easier to practice delegation with at least 3 people and it provides a bit of a "home base" at an event where everyone else might be a stranger. (Or friend you haven't met yet)

In addition to meeting with the newcomers once or perhaps twice a month, I believe the people doing the fostering should meet occasionally to compare notes and perhaps plan the inter group get-togethers if they should happen.

So I see gathering together a number of folks who would be interested in making a short term commitment to Fostering a small group of New Members, then having this group of Fosterers meet with any

New Members who wish to be Fostered. After this these groups could meet on a monthly basis over the following 6 to 12 months. The Fosterers could meet occasionally during this time to compare notes. Optionally the Foster Groups could host small **mini events** for the other Foster Groups.

I think this would be useful to both the **Barony** and to the New Members and would give a feeling of accomplishment to those doing the fostering. While there are relationships defined in **Society** such as: Laurel and Apprentice; and Knight and Squire; Pelican and Protègè, but these are directed and intended towards people who have been in **Society** for a while and know of the direction they wish to take. Fostering is intended for one who is just beginning to get their feet wet. Whether it is called "Fostering" "Mentoring" "Advising"

"Stewarding" or whatever, I think it would be good and useful.

From my start 25 years ago in the **SCA** in the **Barony of Lions Gate** I was lucky enough to start in a small University Club which provided a close cluster of new people who were learning with me. There were also some great role models in the then much smaller **Barony**. Those excellent role models if I were to start listing them would start sounding like a who's who of **Tir Righ**, or even **An Tir**. I was very lucky. I hope new members of today will be able to say much the same.

Please let me know your feelings on this and pass it on to folks you think might be interested.



In Service,

Wade



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