

Pearl Manual

For Companions of the Order

Edited: September 2016

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 pollings
- Notify the Principal if you are having problems accessing the Atlantian Electronic System for Pollings (ESP)

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 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, 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. Register with the Kingdom electronic system for polling (ESP System).** The watch list resides in the ESP System, and pollings are conducted through the same. The link to the ESP System can be found on the Kingdom website. If you have an account with Atlantia University, your login and password will be the same. If you do not, you will need to request an account be opened for you. Once you are registered in the system, you will have access to the watch list and will be able to participate in pollings.
- 5. Subscribe to the Pearls email list.** Discussion of candidates is conducted through the Pearls email list. Contact the Principal so he or she can send you an invitation to subscribe.
- 6. Notify the Principal that you wish to maintain an "active" status.** The kingdom electronic system for polling (ESP System) automatically keeps track of "active" and "inactive" members of the Order. Members will verify that they have lived in the Kingdom of Atlantia within the past 12 months at the beginning of every electronic polling. Those who respond that they have not lived in Atlantia within the past 12 months will be noted as "inactive" and will not be able to participate in pollings until they have again contacted the Principal and verified that they are eligible to do so. If you are not registered with the Kingdom ESP System, or have not responded to pollings, the System will also list you as "inactive."

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

Atlantian Kingdom Law requires that Their Majesties consult with the members of the Order before recognizing nominees. Note that they are not bound to agree with the recommendations they receive.

If the Crowns decide that they wish to hold a polling, they will notify the Principal. It is common practice that the Crowns consult with the Principal and with the Order regarding the list of names to consider for a polling, but They are not required to do so.

Once the Crowns provide the Principal with the list of candidates They want to see polled, the Principal will prepare the polling through the ESP System, and will notify the Order through the email list as soon as the polling is ready.

Responses should be prepared thoughtfully and returned promptly to the Crown via the ESP System. 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 via an email from 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 through the online recommendation system, and they are copied to the Principal of the Order, who forwards the recommendation to the Pearls' email list 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, be watching up-and-coming people who may need help, and making note of 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 posted in the Pearls' section of the Kingdom ESP System.

Any Companion of the Order can suggest anyone for the Watch List, simply by suggesting it on the email list, or via the Kingdom Award Recommendation site, and receiving at least one other member's agreement that the person should be added to the Watch List. In addition, the Principal collects information shared on the email list, and includes it on the watch list. The suggesting email 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. This means that if the last comment is dated twelve months (or more) before the current update, that person will be moved to "Hold for lack of commentary" status on the watch 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 moved to the "Hold" status, please send it in!

Time Frames

We frequently hear words to the effect 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 available through the Pearls' section of the Kingdom ESP System, and some comments are made directly on the email list before being copied to the watch list. 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 will 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, let's think about time frames. The time difference between step 1 and 3 could be 3 to 6 months from the time 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. Next 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.

Email List

The Order of the Pearl has an email list that the Order uses for discussion, watch list updates, and anything that a member wants to send to all of the other Pearls. The Principal of the Order is the one who adds and/or deletes members from the email list. If you would like to be included, make sure the principal has an accurate email address and let the principal know you wish to be included on the email list.

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 & 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 pollings
- Be careful with watch list information and be objective
- Contact the Principal for inclusion on the email list or the ESP System.

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

