

Unto their Majesties Kinggiyadai and Altani does Semeon Aleksandrovitch Dragon, known mundanely as Simon Miller send greetings.

I write to you to respectfully place my name in consideration for the position of Baron of Politarchopolis in response to the declaration from their Excellencies Crispin and Joan that they intend to step down and are seeking successors to the role.

I have been a member of the Society since 1992 and in that time I have resided in the Baronies of Stormhold, Rowany and Politarchopolis, with the vast majority of that time spent in Politarchopolis. I am one of the original members of the Barony, with my name appearing on the charter document created when the Barony was formed.

I was the first Baronesses Champion to Baroness Mathilde and have since been Baronial Champion twice, most recently in 2016/2017. I have served as Baronial Marshal and Baronial Seneschal. I am particularly proud of my time as Baronial Seneschal as several initiatives and events were held during my period in the role that have continued to this day and have grown proportionately. I am currently a member of the Australian SCA Board of Directors (BoD), in which role I help formulate policy for the better running of the SCA and its interaction with the mundane world and legal framework. I have also, prior to my membership of the BoD conducted investigations for the BoD and the Kingdom Seneschal into sensitive matters related to the conduct of SCA members and was able to act with discretion and professionalism while achieving positive results for the Society.

I have Baronial awards for heavy combat and service, being Orders of the Burley Griffin. I also hold an Award of Arms, a Princes Cypher for the reign of Kurgan and Huraiwa, a Royal Cypher for the second reign of Stefan and Branwyn, a Golden tear for service to the Kingdom, An Order of the Jomsviking and a Golden Sword. I have served on numerous Royal retinues as a guardsman, either as Princess' escort, Mead guard or Royal Guard.

I am an active teacher and mentor in both the fundamentals of heavy combat and more advanced techniques and pride myself on being open and approachable to any who wish to train and learn. I contribute regularly to the beginners fighter courses run in Politarchopolis when requested to. I also run a training session at my home address on Thursday evenings. This is a small training but it is growing slowly and should I be successful in this application I fully intend to expand this into a Baronial gathering not just catering to fighters but to A&S as well. I also run classes in how to teach, based on my extensive experience as a workplace trainer and mentor and military instructor. My lesson in this area has been included in Stefan's Floregium. I also make and wear my own garb and have recently started to use more period techniques for doing so, in order to increase my franchise and in-game appearance as befits my rank and aspirations in the Society.

Regarding my ideas for the Barony I have the following initial areas of interest that I refer to as the three R's. These are Return, Recruitment and Retention.

Return refers to reaching out to former or lapsed members of the Barony and attempting to entice them back into the group. This is of course not a simple matter, especially for people who left the group for personal reasons however I envisage leading the way by being an example of energy, inclusiveness and commitment to the Barony that would perhaps encourage former members to take another look. I will create a welcoming and positive environment through example, by taking an active hand in as many facets of the Barony as possible, by being approachable and generous with my time and skills. I would also encourage the more active members of the Barony to do the same and try to focus the disparate members of the Barony into a more cohesive whole.

I realise that this is far from an easy task but I find myself in the enviable position of not having a political agenda due to household affiliation. Though I am the head of my own household, the Company of the Silver Dragon for the duration of my reign I would set aside my membership of the household, hand the leadership over to another member and concentrate entirely on the business of the Barony.

I have deliberately distanced myself from inter-household or inter-personal disputes within the Barony and have thus maintained close ties across the group. I believe that this neutrality will be a tremendous asset as Baron as it will be known that I will not be drawn into siding with one sub-group against another in the normal course of events, unless such activities require the formal intervention of the Baron to mediate. In these circumstances I would be able to remain objective and scrupulously fair, an ability honed by my almost two decades of experience as a senior law enforcement officer and my experience conducting investigations within the Society.

Recruitment needs no real explanation, however I will qualify that by saying that I feel the SCA in Politarochopolis is too restrained in its recruiting activity. I would work with the Baronial Hospitaller and Seneschal to expand the reach of our recruitment, looking at schools, sporting clubs, art and craft groups and many other areas in which to advertise our activities. Members of the Barony have strong ties with local LARP groups and it is my hope to build on those ties and perhaps allow greater cross-pollination and interaction with that community. I would also be looking to create an SCA presence at local conventions such as Cancon and Gammacon in order to showcase who we are and actively recruit from a population base already minded to at least be attracted to what we do. The current heavy fighting, fencing and arts and sciences beginners sessions are working very well and I would foster and encourage these to continue, as they are both useful in attracting new members but allow established members to build experience and renown by contributing to them.

Retention is the main focus of the three R's. It's no good attracting people to the group if we then don't support and encourage them in their interests and provide an environment that remains welcoming and helpful. Initially I will do my best to lead by example in this regard, by engaging with both returning and new members, assisting them to find their way around the group, introducing them to members who share their interests and encouraging other members of the Barony to do the same. I will make my knowledge and resources freely available to people or if unable to do so will arrange for other members of the Barony who are willing to do the same.

I believe that small events, such as 'monthly bashes' as well as regular Baronial get-togethers and trainings are the environments that help bind the Barony into a cohesive whole. Small tourneys in both fencing and armoured disciplines, archery competitions and Arts and Sciences classes and competitions provide newer members a venue to practice their skills and compete locally in a way that encourages them and rewards their efforts, amongst a group of their friends and peers, without the pressure of a Kingdom level competition. I myself will be taking up fencing to expand my combat participation and improve as a fighter and because I believe that a prospective Baron should participate in as many aspects of the Society as they can, to provide inspiration to the populace and to represent their lands in the wider Kingdom.

Local landed Royalty have, in my opinion, a huge amount of influence on their populace and I believe set the tone for the group. Energetic and approachable Barons and Baronesses inspire their populace to match their energy, whether it be in the list, the war field or through the arts, sciences or service. Being engaged with your populace means encouraging them, being a positive reinforcer of their efforts and a mentor and example for all. As Politarchopolis is such a large Barony, both in terms of membership and land area I would make special effort to travel to our outlying groups to ensure they had a regular Baronial presence at their events.

Politarchopolis has always been lucky in the quality of its Peers, whether Royal and from the four Polling Orders. I would rely heavily on the advice of these gentles, as well as those who have previously undertaken the role of Baron or Baroness, to aid me in performing the role.

If I were to be successful in my bid to be Baron I don't believe it's within my purview to steward events in the normal run of things. Certainly I would make myself available to assist in the planning and implementation of events in support of stewards, however I see it as my role to be a focal point for the members at events as the representative of the Crown and to do my part to embody and strengthen the 'dream' as we refer to it. I believe landed royalty have a responsibility to help with the immersion of the activities we all undertake and that their ability to play the role they hold is essential. I also believe that they set the bar for their populace and that of the wider Kingdom in their examples of courtly behaviour, personal chivalry, their honour and deportment, largesse and pageantry. Their station should be reflected in all these ways, with an awareness that they are constantly in the public eye, 'on-stage' as it were. Even when not at a formal event this standard should be maintained. The role of Baron is more than just wearing the Baronial colours, sitting at high table and giving out awards, you are the focal point of the Barony both within it and externally to it and that has to remain the focus of your behaviour and bearing.

I have a great love of the theatre of the SCA, the pageantry and display of Court, of tournament and events. I look to my royals at all levels as an example of this and would expect that, were I Baron my populace would expect the same of me.

My persona is that of a Russian nobleman living in Northern Germany during the reign of the Emperor Maximilian and I would continue this style of dress and harness during my reign as it is the time period and locale that interest me the most from a personal point of view. That said I am more than happy to

encourage and support anyone in their interests as one of the things I love most about the SCA is the diversity and co-mingling of various time periods and styles. Politarchopolis has members who re-create everything from the Viking Age to the Renaissance and it would be incumbent on me to be inclusive and supportive of all of these people. Should the Crown have a very specific theme for their reign I would, as their representative make an effort to fit in with their theme, within reason. For example creating and wearing Mongol garb to wear to events where yourselves are in attendance, as a sign of support and to enhance the experience of your reign.

I understand that the prospect of having a single person holding the Baronage may be confronting for some people, perhaps even for yourselves. I have given much thought to this and offer the following ideas to help address any potential concerns you or the populace may have.

Firstly I have great faith in the populace of Politarchopolis and their ability to support and advise their Baron. While it is beyond contestation that the 'buck ends with me' I would always seek the input and advice of members of the populace, in particular the Officers of the Barony when making decisions that will greatly impact the group. I would also rely heavily on the support of the Baronial Household to assist me in the mechanics of the role, allowing me to concentrate on my duties without the added burden of having to deal with minor details of organisation. When asking people to join the Baronial retinue I would be clear about my expectations and requirements so that anyone accepting a role is fully aware of what they are accepting.

Secondly I bring a great deal of experience, both SCA and mundane to the role. I have served numerous Baronages, Coronets and Crowns as a member of their households and have benefited greatly from those experiences. Those persons have always been free with their knowledge and experience and I have always tried to be as involved as possible while performing those roles and the duties attached so as to improve myself as a member of the SCA who wishes to one day reign as landed royalty. I am fortunate to have many friends across the entire Kingdom and the Known World from whom I have sought advice and mentoring over the years, especially during my time as a squire and I know that I can count on these friends to continue to advise me if required.

Mundanelly I am highly trained in conflict resolution, leadership, strategic planning and policy development and mentoring. I have written and helped formulate policy that has National reach in the AFP and continue to do so. I am able to communicate with people from all walks of life and pride myself on those skills, which have stood me in good stead during my mundane career.

I am a well-known and recognised role-player and war gamer, having received many awards in those areas and I believe that my roleplaying ability and knowledge can only help add to the 'in-game' quality of the Barony's activities.

Thirdly my family are incredibly supportive of my participation in the SCA. My daughter Isabella has become very active, performing the role of Herald at Rowany Festival for the last 4 years and having been lauded for her talents as a voice herald and her sheer willingness to 'get stuck in' and help. We are

also beginning her training in heavy fighting as she is extremely keen to take part once she comes of age. My son Christopher is also keen to take part and is now of an age where he can do so.

My wife Amy no longer participates in the SCA as she has her own hobbies and interests however she supports me completely and is an excellent source of advice and a completely apolitical and discrete sounding board for SCA matters whom I have come to rely on and trust implicitly over the years. While she was participating she acted as secretary for the reign of Kurgan and Huraiwa and is therefore very familiar with the behind the scenes processes and activities that accompany being royalty in the SCA.

Finally I have come to trust myself when it comes to the SCA and what I do within it. My goal as a member is to enhance the experience of those members of the SCA around me both through example and through supporting them in their endeavours. No matter the level of participation of a member whether they only play occasionally and have no real aspirations to more than casual attendance to members who are 'hard-core' re-enactors they will have my unqualified and complete support as Baron. No member of the group is beneath the notice of the Baronage and I see it as the foremost responsibility of that Baronage to make their game as good as it can be. There will be those who see this bid as an attempt for me to develop my personal renown and influence. I cannot say that the thought has not occurred to me however all I can say in refuting this is that, by this stage of my SCA career I have come to realise where I will be able to do the most good and believe that the role of Baron is that place.

As an important point I realise that the concept of a solo Baronage is one that has not been successful previously, that in other circumstances it has been due to one member of the Baronial pair leaving the role. I feel that, in this day and age there is scope for change as has been demonstrated already by the change in rules allowing same-sex couples to reign together. While being a solo Baron isn't exactly the same in terms of progressiveness I think that, should it be successful, it will open the gates to others who may have not considered running for these roles to consider doing so, perhaps unmasking a deeper well of talent to draw on.

In closing I wish to thank you for your time and consideration. I know that this process is never an easy one for the Crown and I hope that my missive has at least anticipated some of your questions and concerns and will enable you to make a decision based on complete information. Of course I will be readily available to speak with you at any time to support this application, either via email, telephone or Facebook messaging.

I hope your reign continues well and that your family is in good health.

Yours in Service

Lord Semeon Aleksandrovitch Dragon.

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