

AN TIR FINANCIAL MEETING -- Twelfth Night 2013 (1/13/13)

Significant Figures Present:

- His Majesty, UlfR Blodfotur Fallgrson
- Her Majesty, Caoimhe ingen Domnaille
- Prince of the Summits, Luciano Foscari
- Princess of the Summits, Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle
- Kingdom Seneschal, Dame Brighid Ross
- Kingdom Exchequer, HL Genevieve Marie Etiennette de Montagne

Instructions to Officers & Royalty:

- Please submit any receipt as quickly as possible. The Kingdom has much less available cash at any given time than in the past, and cannot accommodate these stacking up.
- If an officer is choosing to pay for a certain expense themselves rather than asking for reimbursement from the Kingdom, please report this to your supervisor and the Exchequer so the amount can be tracked. Future officers may not be able or willing to make the same decision. (In some situations the individual may also qualify for a charitable donation letter for tax purposes.)

Financial adjustments for the last portion of 2012 totaled \$7100 and included:

- Increased the allotment for TRM Vik and Astrid's travel in July 2012 through January 2013 to \$3500 to cover receipts yet to be submitted.
- Herald's office received \$450 to cover the travel of Black Lion Herald Anthony Hawke between May and July.
- Marshal budget was increased from \$50 to \$250 to pay for a PO Box so that authorization cards could be sent to a central, public location rather than the prior officer's house.
- Teamster received an additional \$1500 due to the high cost of gas this year, and a change in where the trailer is stored: It was driven from Salem, OR to Omak, WA for May Crown, and then to its new home in Bremerton, WA; and soon thereafter to An Tir West War in southern OR. Crown events next year are closer to the new storage site, so costs should be lower.
- One CD was cashed out to pay for recent expenses. The rest have been left alone because the conversion rates would not offer any benefit.

Preliminary Closing Report for 2012 -- Presented by Kingdom Exchequer HL Genevieve Marie Etiennette de Montagne:

- An Tir lost \$40,826, of which \$33,870 was due to the sexual abuse lawsuit settlement.
 - The loss to date is \$6957, but there is \$11,341 in NMS fees that will have to be paid to the corporate office in the first quarter of 2013.
 - This brings Kingdom's operating loss for the year to \$18,298, or about the same as it was in 2011.
- An Tir had \$36,350 in budgeted expenses in 2012, plus carryovers from prior years of \$5474. Then there was another \$7100 added for unexpected expenses. The result is a total budget of expenses of \$48,924.
- A little over \$33,000 will have passed through An Tir's hands for the non-member surcharge paid to the corporate office in 2012.
- The Raven Travel fund increased by \$1100 over the year, and is now at nearly \$8200.
- The Kingdom currently has about \$116,000 in cash and cds, so we are not in imminent danger of not being able to operate, but we cannot continue in our same patterns either.

Budget for 2013 has been drafted for the most part using the 2012 numbers.

- Exceptions resulting in a \$550 increase in regular expenses include:
 - Travel allotment was increased slightly for the TRM first reign

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- The Marshals portion is now \$300 instead of \$50 to cover the PO Box and to host the new lists database. (Previously that was not charged to the Kingdom.)
- Herald travel is increased by \$100
- Known World Symposium travel was increased by \$500 as the officers report these training opportunities to be very beneficial.
- Travel for two administrative retreats in the east and west portions of the Kingdom was retained.
- Family Activities:
 - Madame Jacqueline de Lioncourt volunteered to reduce her budget, but His Majesty said that that this is an investment in our community's future. In the short term, paying for family activities means parents will choose to attend events because their children are happily occupied. In the long term, if these children have positive experiences in the SCA, they will support the organization as adults.
 - Madame Jacqueline stated that if the Kingdom will not cover her supplies, then she will have to pass the costs on to individual events, and the net result is still a cost to the SCA.
 - Currently Kingdom Arts & Sciences and Bardic Championships, as well as An Tir – West War, are not covered by her budget; so Madame Jacqueline paid for her travel and supplies at these events herself.
- The carryover from prior years of \$5474 is entered again. (This is about 60% for royal travel, and the other 40% for costs we still owe from the 40th Anniversary Doomsday Project.)
- The total proposed expenses for 2103 are \$41,338, but is likely to be higher based on prior experience.

Group Discussion about Officer Budgets

- Statement by His Majesty UlfR -- An Tir has been very fortunate, especially compared to our fellow Kingdoms, but we cannot count on this continuing. We need to take a hard look at the budget and perhaps cut back on some items. He would like more time to review the numbers before approving the 2013 budget.
- Publications: Can the allotment for this be reduced now that the Crier is produced in a standard format by the corporate office, and more people are reading the online version?
- Travel reimbursement for TRM to local events could be reduced, and that for the Heirs eliminated since they are not actually required to be there. Other Kingdoms pay for very little of this.
- Officer and champion travel could also be reduced to the minimum required appearances.
- There's a balance here: On one side, officer travel is an investment in the Kingdom's functioning, and it helps officers do their jobs better if they can meet directly with local staff. We also don't want to discourage people from applying for these positions. On the other hand, the Kingdom should not be compensating someone's hobby for several months, especially in the current financial climate.

Discussion of raising Kingdom event rates:

- Expenses are going up everywhere:
 - Site rentals are up 3-10% per year for the same location, and many we cannot afford at all. Having more income would allow us a greater choice in where events take place.
 - Portable toilets, trash service, and storage fees are costing more.
 - Gas prices have escalated and more officers are asking for reimbursement of this.
 - September Crown 2012 is the only Kingdom event in the past couple of years which exceeded its expected attendance. The others are down 10-20%, and the same is being seen at the branch level and in other Kingdoms. The drop is actually more severe this far into the international recession than when it initially hit: At first people thought the impact would be temporary and attended events anyway; now a meaningful portion can no longer do so. We hope things will improve, but it may be awhile yet.

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- Some individuals report additional questions at the US – Canadian border are resulting in individuals choosing to travel less for events.
- Fewer merchants are traveling to events as the effort and cost involved do not always equal what they earn during a weekend. It is also increasingly easier and more profitable to sell their goods online.
- In 2012, the 4 Kingdom events brought in \$40,102 based on \$15 for each adult.
 - Expenses were \$21,281, resulting in a profit of \$18,821.
 - Using the 60/40 split with the hosting branch, the Kingdom's share was \$11,657.
- If the adult gate fee was raised to \$20 then income would be \$52,637.
 - Expenses are assumed to be the same for this exercise, resulting in a profit of \$31,356.
 - Using the 60/40 split with the hosting branch, the Kingdom's share would be \$18,814, or an increase of \$7157 which would do a lot towards improving our financial health.
- The discussion today was to leave rates for children ages 6-17 at \$10 and the family cap at \$55 (The family cap makes the third child \$5 and any additional free.)
 - Exchequer Genevieve will have to check how many family cap situations there are at typical Crown events, but the quick guess is under 20.
 - It is suggested that perhaps the cap could be raised to \$60, which would still cover two adults and the same rates for the children.
 - Do we want to lower the family cap to encourage even more to attend? Would this actually work? It may be perceived as unfair by those with small families or no children.
- How other areas are handling this topic:
 - The Principality of the Summits is not currently reimbursing officers for travel.
 - The Principality of Tir Righ raised the rate for their Coronet, Investiture, and championship occasions to a minimum of \$20. A given event can charge more. There was some complaining at first, but that faded quickly.
 - A large number of branches have raised their rates \$2-5 per local event.
- Various discussion points:
 - The Kingdom cannot continue to subsidize the populace's participation in our activities.
 - The alternative is to significantly cut expenses from the budget, starting with the travel reimbursement. His Majesty said that we may need to cut costs as well, both to truly have a healthy bank account, and also because it is only fair to do so if we are asking our members to pay more.
 - Non-member surcharge does add to the cost for individuals to attend, but if regular participants are paying this rather than becoming a member, then that is their choice. We can all do better about explaining the individual and group benefits of becoming a member to our attendees. Officially we cannot refer to the lower gate fees for those with blue cards as a "member's discount", but if that language helps you convince people in casual conversation, then we all benefit.
 - What about a smaller increase of \$2-3? This is quickly rejected by those who do gate and keep the books as it requires massive amounts of change and more complicated calculations.
 - If local branch events start costing more than Kingdom ones, individuals won't attend them which would be detrimental to the health of those local communities that form the core of SCA life.
 - His Majesty says it's not fair to the Kingdom to solely hold Crown events on the I-5 and I-90 corridors because those are the only places where high attendance can be expected. We have a responsibility to find a way to make it financially viable to hold some of these events throughout the whole span of our lands.
- How do we communicate this to the populace?
 - This is the first rate change in at least 8 years. Everyone knows that the cost of everything has gone up in that period.
 - The extra \$5 is what many people spend on coffee in the morning, and less than lunch.

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- Dinner at any decent restaurant costs \$20, as do tickets to a show at a club. Tickets for large concerts or sporting events cost vastly more. Even a movie is about \$12 now. This is compared with an SCA event that offers 48 hours of entertainment.
- Seneschal Brigid says that the Kingdom can make the decision without asking the populace for their opinion, as long as we are completely transparent with the reasons and the numbers. Some will still complain about the outcome, but they won't be able to dispute the facts.
- **DECISION** -- The \$5 increase will be implemented for adults making the minimum gate fee \$20. Youth rates will be left at \$10 and the family cap will be equivalent to two adults and two youth (typically \$60). This required a change in Kingdom Law which was announced at Ursalmas. The increase will be effective as of May Crown. -- Also announced at Ursalmas was that the travel allotment for TRM and officers will be reduced. Further discussions of the budget will occur at Kingdom Arts & Sciences and Bardic Championship.

An Tir – West War Financial Committee

- Due to delays in the West paying the land owner last year and work he is doing on the property this year, An Tir is about to write a check for \$16,000 for this year's war that it will not recoup until July. This is not an ideal way to operate.
- The intent is to create an independent entity which would fund and supervise organization of this annual event, rather than the two Kingdoms alternating responsibility for fronting the money. This is how several of the other inter-Kingdom wars are managed.
- While some individuals have expressed concerns about the future of this event, attendance has held steady around 1100 for the past 5 years and may grow as fewer can afford to travel to Estrella War. The current Monarchs and active chivalry in both Kingdoms report enjoying the weekend.
- Draft policies have been created based on those used for An Tir –West War in the past, Quad War, and several inter-Kingdom wars. Master Arontius of Bygelswade was instrumental in creating these. Exchequer Genevieve gives copies to TRM and Seneschal Brigid, and asks their assistance in discussing these with their counterparts in the West and asking for their consent with the project.

EVENT BIDS

Summary of decisions to date:

- Arts & Sciences and Bardic Championship (March 1-3, 2013) -- Barony of Blatha An Oir. La Quinta Inn & Suites near the Tacoma Dome (WA).
- May Crown (May 17-19, 2013) -- Baronies of Madrone and Vulcanfeldt. Toppenish Rodeo & Livestock Association (WA).
- July Coronation (July 19-21, 2013) -- Shire of Midhaven. Northern State Recreation Area in Sedro Woolley, WA.
- September Crown (Aug 30 – Sept 2, 2013) -- Shire of Fire Mountain Keep. Nix Ranch in Chehalis, WA.
- 12th Night (January 10-12, 2014) -- Shire of Wyewood. Doubletree hotel in SeaTac, WA.
- Arts & Sciences and Bardic Championship (March 7-9, 2014) -- Barony of Stromgard. Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, WA.

No new bids are presented today. Applications for the following events are being actively sought:

- 2014 = May Crown, July Coronation, and September Crown
- 2015 = Twelfth Night.