

A CHECK LIST FOR AUTOCRAT'S

A checklist similar to the following one, was written by Adelia of Cumbria (O.P, C.B, G.D, A.O.A) in Tournaments Illuminated, Summer 1994 edition. It was called "An Autocrat's Checklist." The original checklist has a footnote stating that it may be reproduced free and without special permission. I have taken the liberty of changing some small details. This was to reflect more upon the rules and regulations of Lochac and the Greater Empire of Mordenvale, as opposed to the different rules of other kingdoms.

Have you ever considered being an autocrat? Too hard? Not sure how to go about it? Well the following list has helped me put on events, and hopefully it can help you too. To date, I have been autocrat for three events. These events were, to a certain extent, successful. So, you say. What is a successful event? Well, different people will tell you different things. I believe a successful event is one that (a) people had a good time at, (b) breaks even, or even better, makes a surplus, and (c) does not install in you a desire *never* to do that again!

If you can achieve all three, fantastic! I made a loss (very small) on my first event, but I still call it a successful event. This was because everyone had plenty to eat, the atmosphere was good, and as a result, people had a good time. The 2nd event I did make a small profit. And everyone still had a good time. If you don't ever want to be an autocrat again, I'm not sure that I am the one to help you! Being an autocrat is by no means a walk in the park. In fact, if you're not careful, you can give yourself an ulcer! But with a little planning, a bit of hard work (nothing ever got done by itself!), and the contact numbers of one or two previous autocrats, holding a successful event can be achieved by just about anyone. It is also very satisfying when you can look back and say "I did that!" knowing that everyone won't cringe!!

As every event is different, you may find that the checklist states things that are not appropriate for your event, or there may be things you need to do that are not on the list. Use common sense. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please let me know. At the end of each month on the checklist, there is a section for Staff Meetings. These meetings are designed so that you are not surprised on the day of your event when no-one has illuminated the menus or the surgeon forgot to stock up his or her first-aid kit. These are unlikely, but small things can be forgotten. These incidents, and many others can be avoided, by having regular get-togethers leading up to the event and going over EVERYTHING. I believe that you cannot plan something too much, and by getting all of the details of your event out in the open, if some one notices that someone else has forgotten something, no matter how small, they can let them know. When your staff are doing their job properly, then you are doing your job properly. It is your job to delegate ALL of the jobs to be done on the day. By rights, you shouldn't have anything to do, but watch it all fall together. At least then, when it all falls apart, you will have the time to fix it!!

I hope this check list comes in handy, and happy Autocratting!

Yours in Service,
Lady Gabrielle de Taillevent.
Mordenvale Seneschal.

SEVERAL MONTHS IN ADVANCE

Select a date and check with your Seneschal to make sure it does not clash with other events. He or she should at this point tell you to go and do some homework, as described below.

Find a site within your price range.

Does it have enough parking?

Does it have enough tourney space, and do you need permission from council, or otherwise to use the grounds for this purpose?

Does it have adequate room for dancing?

Does it have a good kitchen and does every thing work? ⁱ A fridge, stove, large oven, and bench space are the main points you should look out for.

Secure site and place a deposit if necessary.

Determine the cost of the event:

Projected attendance: _____

Site fees divided by projected attendance: \$ _____

Food cost per person (about \$10-12 / head is good) \$ _____

Prizes, incidentals, decorations: \$ _____

Total cost per person (to break even): \$ _____

Take your homework to the Seneschal for approval. He or she will then check with the Reeve to find out if the group can afford it, and if everything is OK you can then fill in an Event Information Formⁱⁱ to go into Pegasus.

Send an Event Information Form to Pegasus newsletter. Include:

Date of the event (Day, Month, and Common Era Year)

Sponsoring group (In this case, Mordenvale)

Name, street address, and town of event site plus directions (keep it brief)

Site opening and closing times

If Alcohol is not allowed on site, make this clear

Arts & Sciences contests, Type of Tourney and prizes

Event price – members, non-members / students, children

Society and legal (mundane) names and address of the autocrat(s)

Name and address of the reservation clerk

Cut-off date for reservations

The statement: "Make Cheques Payable to SCA _____(Group name) Inc.

The Seneschal's Signature

Staff Meeting

THREE MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- Ask your local officersⁱⁱⁱ if they will be available for the event. If any officer will not be available, find someone else to take his or her place.
 - Invite the current Royalty, including the Baron & Baroness (if you want them to attend your event, it is important to let them know early, as they have very busy schedules).
 - At Baronial Gathering (Sunday), pass around a sign-up sheet for volunteers:

ACTIVITY:	SUPERVISOR:
Registration ("troll")	_____
Entertainment	_____
Signs	_____
Hall Decoration	_____
Kitchen clean-up	_____
Site clean-up	_____
 - Discuss the feast with your cook
 - Start taking reservations. Make sure you take both Society and legal names, phone number, member number (if they are a member), crash space needed and where assigned, dietary requirements, paid or unpaid, and type of payment (cash or cheque).
 - Staff Meeting
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TWO MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- Make sure your flyer goes in the next newsletter
 - Check that officers and volunteers are doing their jobs
 - Check any new dishes for the feast (and taste them if necessary)
 - If Royalty are coming, assign someone to be their contact.
 - Make up schedule. Be flexible – something is bound to run late!
 - Obtain site indemnity forms from the constable, or make sure he or she brings them to the event on time. (These are very important).
 - Staff Meeting
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ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE

Note: If you have not received enough reservations, speak to your Seneschal. He or she may be able help you in some way to get more bookings.

- Check in with officers and volunteers.
- Talk to your group. Let them know what will be expected of them.
- Have signs made:
Please Keep Out Of The Kitchen
Dressing Rooms
No Smoking (Several of these may be necessary)
Troll Booth
Menu (You may want this to be illuminated; if so check with the arts and sciences officer/s. You should also consider making up several small menus to be placed on each table. These should contain a list of ingredients of each dish so people can ascertain whether they can or cannot eat it – Great for people with dietary restrictions.)
- Make sure you have all the prizes for any contests.
- Make any dishes that can be made ahead and freeze – Keep ALL of your shopping receipts.
- Adjust menu as needed for revised attendance.
- Staff Meeting
- _____

THE DAY BEFORE

- Make sure that the designated person has put up the signs between the site and all major roads or highways
- Buy the rest of the food – keep ALL of your receipts
- Make sure that the troll has enough of the right change
- Arrange for containers for cigarette butts outside of the hall. This is not necessary, but it makes cleaning up a hell of a lot easier!
- _____

THE BIG DAY!

- Be the first at the site. Make sure it is clean. Note any damage with the caretaker before you take possession. Arrange a time to meet the next morning for an inspection and to return the key.
- Check that direction signs and all other signs have been put up. Post sign-up sheets for competitions, volunteers, entertainment etc.)
- Set up the troll table
- Make sure your cooks are happy
- Ask a good friend to make sure you eat and drink
- Do the royalty wish to hold court? How long? Allow an extra half-hour to an hour, and inform the cooks.
- Relax! Something is bound to go wrong! Did you forget to buy toilet paper, or washing up detergent? Did you forget the directions for the post-revel? No problem! That's why you have delegated all the other jobs – so that you can concentrate on the event itself!!

CONGRATULATIONS!!! YOU SURVIVED THE EVENT! NOW FOR THE MORNING AFTER

- Make sure you have all the receipts for food and other expenses. Make an appointment with the Reeve to complete your report
- Make sure the site is clean and return the keys. If possible leave the hall in a better condition than in which you found it. Don't forget to get your bond back.
- Make a note to check with your officers to see if they have mailed their reports.

1

ⁱ The last thing you need is to turn up to on the day of an event to find out that something is out of order – as I found out on one unfortunate occasion. After using the hall successfully the previous year, I turned up on the day of the event to find out that the stove was out of order. Fortunately, someone lived very close by the hall so I was able to cook dishes there, but this is just a small example of the kind of things that can go wrong when you don't plan ahead.

ⁱⁱ Event Information Forms can be obtained from any Pegasus Newsletter, or ask the Seneschal.

ⁱⁱⁱ Officers required at every event are: Chirurgeon, Constable, Herald. The following officers are required at some events: List-Keeper, Marshall, Seneschal, Hospitaller, Arts and Sciences Officer. Check with the Seneschal if you are not sure.