

D R A F T

A Prejudiced History of the Board of Directors

1969-1985

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October 16, XX, 1985

"The purpose of what you write is to foster clear knowledge, or finer understanding."

- Richard Mitchell

Note: This draft is complete through 1981, at which time I left the Board of Directors at the end of my first term. The final document will continue through to August 1985, the end of my second term on the Board. If there is wisdom in this document, more is yet to come.

Introduction

This is being written for current and new members of the Board of Directors of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not for general distribution or consumption, predominantly because it is a very personal and subjective view, and (in order to make it clear and useful) I intend to be very blunt about what I thought was going on and where I thought problems were. Obviously, this document could therefore cause a lot of hard feelings and unhappiness amongst those whom I might seem to malign. I suppose it could also cause potential lawsuits or such things.

Therefore, please, accept this in the spirit in which it is being written -- as one man's very subjective, personal, and quite incomplete view of the Board of Directors both before, and during, his tenure(s) as a Board Member, and respect the confidentiality that I am assuming, and which will allow me to be candid.

This document is being written at the request of several Board members as a result of a conversation at a Committee of the Whole meeting. For the benefit of a couple of new Board members, I recounted what seemed to me to be the highlights of the Board and its somewhat chequered history. They in turn felt that I should write it all down, and that it should become part of the materials made available to new Board members. So here you are and here I am.

An Alien Few -- 1969-1977

Most of us know that the SCA was incorporated in October of 1968; relatively few know the circumstances. Earlier in that year, in September, the then-new SCA put on a tournament at the World Science Fiction Convention at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, CA. This event probably was seminal in causing the distribution of the SCA throughout the country, because it was people attending this convention who subsequently started firing up SCA chapters in the East and Middle, and other places. Early groups were marked by being associated with college campuses, and by having a high interpenetration with Science Fiction (and with Science Fiction Fan Clubs, of course). One slightly unfortunate side-effect of this was that "fannish politics" became part of the SCA way of doing things. (It is not clear that such politics aren't part of all social organizations by definition. However, they were recognizable as phenomena associated with SF people and groups and characterized as such by many.)

Around this period of time, Jon de Cles and Diana Listmaker (Don and Diana Studebaker) were instrumental in forming the corporation. Many SCA members at that time were not particularly in favor of the idea, feeling it to be unnecessary. There was also a distinct feeling that this was a power play by Greyhaven, Don and Diana's household, to gain control over whatever the SCA was. Since they, or at least Don, also published Tournaments Illuminated (in fact, T.I. originally came from the fact that Don had always wanted to publish his own "fanzine"), it seemed likely. I am sure there were other motives, but the end effect was the same. The Corporation did establish a formal organization and structure (and today I feel that, without its having happened, the SCA would probably never have really pulled itself together, but remained separate, scattered groups which would have soon enough collapsed from lack of cross-fertilization and conflict).

Thus, in retrospect I think that incorporating had the positive effect of establishing the SCA, and defining a structure in which groups could form. Whether that was the original purpose is perhaps more doubtful. It is worthy of note, in passing, that the "education organization" orientation springs from Diana's orientation (she has pointed out, rightly, that song and dance were a part of the very first tournament, being some of the things she tried to arrange). Thus, the incorporation endeavour was oriented towards educational, tax-exempt status. It also resulted in getting tax-exempt status for Tournaments Illuminated. How much that played a role in the original thrust I don't know.

Though there is no doubt that the SCA is and was educational, no one else I knew at the time felt that that was the organization's orientation or goal, and most would have strenuously resisted an attempt to (re)structure it along such lines. (In fact, the only real argument that I can recall from the time supporting the Incorporation was that it would provide a corporate blanket against the possibility of lawsuit due to injury -- without such

a corporate entity, the individual officers would only be individuals.)

Which brings us to an interesting phenomenon which I will discuss now even though it's slightly out of order. The other regions of the SCA (the new, distant ones), got their ideas of what the SCA is and does from published material and corresponding (sort of) with the then Board of Directors. In essence, that means that the new, distant groups took the Articles of Incorporation, the Corpora, etc., seriously, and listed to the Board's promulgations. On the other hand, the Board was totally invisible in the West Kingdom, which essentially didn't hear of much of this at all (since the Board members were local and knew they'd either get laughed at or yelled at by their friends and acquaintances if they tried to do the kinds of things locally that they were pulling off with other places). To my mind, this is why the West Kingdom (and, to a lesser degree, Caid and An Tir), have an SCA culture significantly different than anywhere else in the SCA: because its culture predates the material and orientation on which everyone else has built their structures and operated.

At the same time as the above, by the way, Don was still exercising personal control over exactly what was published in the Page, the West Kingdom newsletter, which was being edited and produced by someone else, even though he made no such attempt with the other newsletters. This is largely because of a power struggle in mid-1969 between the then monarch, and Greyhaven. The end results demonstrated the old truth that he who controls the publications ultimately controls operational reality, a lesson Don never forgot.

The early Board of Directors had three members, two of them husband and wife (Don Studebaker = Jon de Cles, and Diana Studebaker (ne Paxson) = Diana Listmaker), and met in the basement at Greyhaven. Minutes of these meetings are uninformative to a staggering degree, since they never discuss what anything was. ("Item IV.A was a letter from X. It will be answered.") This is the Board of Directors that seemed to think of the SCA as a personal fiefdom; that invented the "Imperial Electors"; that promulgated a new medieval award from the BoD itself; etc. It was largely responsible (along with some totally inactive and incompetent national officers, although the only ones that existed were the Steward, the editor of T.I., and a Clerk of the Board of Directors, and some kind of Registry function, all jobs which Don held first, interestingly enough), for creating the totally unresponsive climate which even today characterizes how people think of the Board of Directors. To my mind, the things that characterized the early Board of Directors were:

- No grasp of what the SCA actually seemed to be, or what was important to the members
- No personal activity in their local groups that would give them any idea of the above

- A tendency to believe their own writings, as with their propogulations in Corpora and By-Laws, etc.
- A belief that the SCA was whatever they called it, and by simply saying something was so everyone would go along
- A tendency to treat the SCA as a personal fiefdom
- No interest in doing anything, as opposed to pontificating about what ought to be done
- No comprehension of the actual internal medieval social structure for which most SCA members signed up, and which actually characterized how the Kingdoms worked
- Total inactivity on the local or Kingdom medieval level

In other words, all of the charges that have been levied against the Board of Directors through the years at least used to be true. at one time.

Probably the first two thundering impacts against the Rod's belief in itself were the Earl Marshal issue, and the Order of the Pelican. The former was the Crown of the West versus the Earl Marshal of the West. The marshal refused to obey any orders of the King because "my superior is the Corporate Marshal and I will only obey orders from the Corporate Marshal". This ultimately resulted in a confrontation between the Kingdom of the West and the Board of Directors, in which the Corporate Marshal made a grandstand play ("back my officer or you'll have to find a new Corporate Marshal") and lost ("thanks for all the service, Paul.....").

Eventually, what came out of this was the concept of Suspension of an officer, with final appointment or firing being agreed upon by the Crown and the Corporate Officer. (I am told that by the time Bill Jouris became Steward the way it worked was that either could fire, but both had to agree to hire. Years later, it has gone back to what I recall as its original form.) Another, more immediate effect was that, prior to this time, Board of Directors meetings had always been held privately. This confrontation established that the members could attend Board meetings.

Perhaps most important was the tacit recognition on the part of the Board of Directors that the Crowns and the medieval structure had real authority as opposed to titular authority (it may not have mattered whether they thought so, but this was one of the foundations of our current and somewhat unique dual chain of command and the recognition of the separation of medieval and mundane. Another nail in that particular plank was the mess caused when the Board tried to intervene in Kingdom affairs, however noble the intent. See below.)

The second item was a lot of very negative reaction to the "Board Pelicans". The objection wasn't so much that the Board had invented a new order: it was that the Board of Directors was giving a medieval order directly and of its own recognizance. By extension this could only exist if the "Imperial Electors" had a real medieval existence. If so, then these Imperial Electors had power over the monarchies in the medieval context. This didn't go down very well. I submit that, whether people thought about it or not, one of the most compelling positive things about the SCA is the archetypal King and Monarch images. In other words, Imperial Electors simply didn't fit the worldview of what we were playing SCA for.

The net results were fascinating. One of the recipients of the thing simply refused it. The monarchs of the Kingdoms at the time promulgated and signed a "multi-Kingdom Laurel" for another recipient (Bonceuer) feeling that, if he should be recognized for work across many kingdoms, then that's how it should be done, rather than with a "Board Award". And the third recipient wasn't and hasn't ever been active, rendering it moot. In the event, it was another two years before a Pelican was given at a Kingdom level, I believe, and the Board-level awards have simply never been mentioned much since. But that was another block strongly cemented in the wall of separation of Board/Corporation on the one hand, and the medieval Kingdom structure on the other.

In passing, I think that the relative significance of the King and Monarch archetype (what we sometimes call "the King's word is Law" in the West), is shown by the fact that, when the Monarch/Marshal confrontation occurred, the people in the West had the Incorporation papers all set to go for the "Sword and Chivalry Association" (why make people change the initials they know?) If the Board had failed to act, or had insisted on playing its game regardless of what the members actually wanted, the West was prepared to incorporate (other Kingdoms were in on this too) and simply take the SCA away from the Board of Directors. I don't know if it would have worked, but the fact that this issue drove people to that extreme is instructive.

During the mid-1970s the Board of Directors went up to five (5) members. It also moved out of Greyhaven's basement and started holding its meetings publicly. One famous meeting, at which the issue of women fighting was considered, was held at Bill Rolls' house in Richmond. However, by 1976, Board meetings were usually held at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. David Green, one of the Board members, was the Librarian at PSR. Meetings continued to be held at the PSR for a few years, until David was no longer at PSR. At that time, the Board reverted to holding its meetings at private residences, and rotated between members of the Board of Directors.

Until about 1979, members were appointed in perpetuity, as was the Chairman, and Bill Rolls was the Chairman for several years. This Board was somewhat more responsive than the old three-person club had been. On the other hand, it also had a functioning

Steward (William the Lucky -- Bill Jouris) who did most of the things that needed doing. You might want to ask him about the Board at that time, but be prepared for a fairly bitter answer.

During much of this period, the only "employee" the SCA had was a lady who was doing part-time work for the Registry (Jessica Firestar). The Registry was a series of hit-or-miss (fairly miss) operations until Cliveden Haas bid the job in 1977/78 on a yearly contract basis.

The Corporate Secretary simply didn't exist. The Clerk of the Board was a succession of people whose responsibilities consisted of taking minutes and preparing and mailing the minutes to the Board and those who subscribed to them. The Clerk also prepared and sent out such letters as the Board directed, and was responsible for emptying the Post Office Box in Berkeley (the famous Box 1162, which still exists). Board Packets as they exist today were not known, although during William's tenure as Steward he prepared briefing documents for the Board on issues they needed to consider.

The post of Clerk of the Board was held by a series of volunteers for a long time. In each case it was done well for a while, and then less and less well. In 1978, Deborah Bennett, a graduate student at GRU in Berkeley, suggested to the Board that she be a "Clerk's Assistant" on a Student Work Study Program, whereby the SCA would pay one about 1/4 of the actual cost. She held the job for about a year, and then simply became Clerk of the Board, still under the same Work Study Program. When she finally had to give it up, the job was folded into the Registry/Corporate Secretary function, where it remains.

In the mid 1970s, the SCA had an "office", first in the basement of Greyhaven, and later in Robert Orser's garage. During some of this period there may have been a telephone; there was certainly an answering machine. The office was where volunteers could come and process paperwork like filing Warrants and answering letters (stuff the SCA, as opposed to the Clerk of the Board, had to do, although they were frequently the same person.) During this time the volunteers by policy received free memberships and free subscriptions to T.I. Such volunteers also edited, printed, bundled and mailed T.I. By the time Deborah became Clerk of the Board, the "office" in Robert Orser's garage had been forgotten, although she did get the answering machine and attach it to her phone so a number for the "SCA" could be published. Later still, Robert Orser plaintively asked if we could get the stuff out of his garage. (It seems that we had paid rent religiously until Gordon became Treasurer, whereupon we stopped. When Robert asked Gordon said we didn't use it any more. It took another three or four years to actually get the stuff out of his garage.)

And as far as I can tell, the Board was still a group of people who didn't do anything, just pontificated. This period was marked by Carolyn Conway, who knew nothing about the SCA and was never a member. She was voted on the Board by Don and Diana

because "we ought to have someone on the Board who knows about being on Boards of Directors" (Carolyn had been on the Board of Directors of the Co-op, or some such thing). It wasn't uncommon for a discussion to have reached the point of a vote when Carolyn suddenly would say "now, just what is 'Atenveldt' anyway?" or some similar thing showing that she (a) didn't know what was going on and (b) couldn't be bothered to find out.

Making Chaos out of Disorder -- 1978-1980

I was first invited on the Board of Directors in late 1977, and my first meeting was December 1977. At that time, the Board was officially meeting once per month. However, they were also having Committee of the Whole meetings at least once per month in between. The Committee of the Whole meetings had been intended to work on the Corpora Revision, along with the Corpora Revision Committee established a while back by the Board, but in fact had decayed to committee meetings discussing the same things as the Board meeting, because of "lack of time".

At my first meeting, everyone was bemoaning the fact that the SCA was about to lose its second-class mailing permit for Tournaments Illuminated due to hassles with the Post Office (Linda von Brasket, then the publisher, was saying she couldn't deal with them at all). But the amazing thing was that not one of them suggested that they should do anything about it, like for instance going and checking with the Post Office themselves! Furthermore, this had been going on for at least six months when I got on the Board! I suggested that maybe one of us might do something like asking the Post Office, and volunteered to do so.

As it turned out, the only problem was that Linda was so spooked by the idea of dealing with a "Government Office" that she had totally ignored all of the postal regulations, including publishing the masthead information, and was ignoring them when they tried to get us to correct our ways. It didn't take too much to get this fixed, although in the process T.I. moved on to another editor. (For some reason, my Board involvement frequently seemed to be dealing with post office hassles vis T.I. -- Cliveden knows of the next big one of those we had!)

That was my introduction to the Board of Directors. Other things I found out were:

- The Corpora Revision, on which the Board was supposedly working, had in fact been sitting in limbo for quite a while because they had "more urgent things to do"
- They had so infuriated the Steward that he was in the process of resigning (as rudely as possible)
- There was no term of service for being on the Board or being Chairman
- We needed to get rid of one member who simply refused to resign (Carolyn), yet the Chairman flatly refused to allow us to kick her off or call a "special election meeting" to do so, saying that he felt it was a "dangerous precedent" (undoubtedly prescient of Bill Rolls).

Looking at the Board Minutes from that period, it is obvious that many problems of the time have been solved, and that some others are still with us. A good example of the latter is the "Revised

Warrant" -- in early 1976, the Board was trying to do something about that. Another which has plagued us is making sure that Monarchs, Corporate Officers, and Kingdom Great Officers are quickly notified of Board decisions directly affecting them, such as Corpora or By-Law changes. Yet another: outstanding items dropping off of the Agendae (in 1979 the Board passed a resolution tht all such be carried on the Agenda under Old Business until they were finally resolved!)

Rather than go through all of the things that happened during my first tenure on the Board, I would like to take a few themes and expand on them. I am doing this first because a simple replay of the Board Minutes is not necessary, and second, because I think there were a few instructive points.

The Corpora Revision

To my mind, this remains the greatest achievement of the Board of Directors during my term of service. Since I had a lot to do with it it also feels like a personal achievement.

In the Dawn of Time (when the SCA was Incorporated), By-Laws were established. As time went on, these By-Laws were changed by the Board as required. The By-Laws, however, were those of a 20th-Century Corporation, and little related to the functionings of the medieval structure. Thus, as the Board made rulings about the medieval structure, those rulings were eventually collected into the Corpora. The Old Corpora eventually reached four volumes, and set a new level in incomprehensibility. This was due in part to the fact that the rulings were made piecemeal as issues came up, and were never organized into any structure, and in part because they tended to be phrased in ersatz "forsoothly", a technique useful for sounding to yourself like you are being period (assuming you don't know much about period speech), but hardly a precise language for the establishment of formulae for governance which must be heeded by seneschals and others all over the SCA.

By the mid-1970s, it had gotten so bad that a Corpora Revision Committee was established. What they did was to boil all of the existing Corpora down to simple statements, which included extracting all of the pontifications made by the Board in the Minutes that could be located, organize them into sections, and publish the result to Corporate officers, Kingdom great officers, Monarchs, and everyone else they felt they could get responses from, looking for comment (this seems to have taken about two years, not bad for our organization. They also went through about three committee heads.) This was not really a Revised Corpora, but simply a rephrased and summarized Corpora. In the process they remanded a lot of things to this Committee such as Courts of Chivalry and new Waivers -- in other words, more or less hot items that had been outstanding for a while.

At the same time, the Board had had a "By-Laws Committee" for quite a while. When Deborah started working for the SCA, one of her first jobs was to go through the Minutes and extract everything that amounted to a By-Law change and put it all together with the existing By-Laws in a consolidated "new" By-Laws.

By early 1979, the summarized Corpora was in a form that allowed it to be published to the entire membership for comment, which was done. Over much of that year, letters of comment came in, and were dealt with at Committee of the Whole meetings -- by this time, we were having one Board meeting a month, and one Committee meeting a month (i.e., one meeting every two weeks). We also had the first two out-of-the-area Board members, from Sacramento (Rhea Stone) and Los Angeles (John Trimble). Remember, at this time it was still policy that the Board Member pay for his or her transportation.

I and the Clerk undertook to make copies of all of the responses, cut them apart by issue, and "paste up" review boards with all comments for each issue. By May, the By-Law revisions and the collection of policy statements by the Board over the many years had all been folded into the Corpora Revision project.

As it happens, in June of 1979, while the Corpora Revision project was still going on, the Great Aonghais Mess occurred, which had a direct effect upon both the Board.

The Great Aonghais Dew (or, Watch Where You Step!)

Duke Aonghais of much repute moved to the West in 1976 from the East, where he had been King twice, and had become the first person in the SCA to actually be convicted by a Court of Chivalry. He was in the West for only a few months, and then moved to Caid, where he quickly became notorious. In 1979, he managed to become the second person in the SCA to actually be convicted by a Court of Chivalry. Furthermore, the Court recommended a degradation from the Peerage, which required that the issue come before the Board of Directors for confirmation.

At the June 12, 1979, Board meeting, attended by a lot of people (including a whole bunch from Caid), the issue came before the Board (that of whether to accept the recommendation of the Court for a degradation from the Peerage). (FYI this wouldn't mean that Aonghais would not be a Duke, since that title derives from having ruled twice as King -- only that he wouldn't be a Knight.) There was a lot of discussion and review by the Board, mostly on whether the Court was properly conducted (Aonghais wasn't there, as it turned out, nor was he at the Board meeting.) When the issue came to a vote, I, Rhea Stone, and John Trimble voted Yes, and Jean MacMillan voted No. The Chairman, William Rolls, then voted No, and stated that the motion had failed due to the lack of the necessary two-thirds vote!

What made this especially bad was (a) the Chair voted on an issue which was not a tie; (b) William in fact was misstating the requirement for a two-thirds majority (the Board had changed it to a simple majority at his recommendation on September 14, 1976), and (c) Jean had made it clear that she was going to vote No solely because she didn't feel that the Board should be unanimous on something like this (but would have voted Yes rather than let the motion fail!) (I know, but that's what she said!)

It emerged somewhat later that Bill and Dana were currently being Aonghais' "champions" (a number of people have more or less serially been his "champions" against all those nasty people who unfairly do him dirt. This lasts until he screws them, and finds another set of champions.)

In any case, the rest of the Board felt that they had been blindsided by Bill, and that this was another (and one too many!) case of his tendency to try to "manipulate by trickery". The ultimate result was the calling of a Special Election Meeting of the Board of Directors, at which (to make a long story short) William was fired as Chairman and from the Board. The official statement was

"The other members of the Board of Directors of the SCA, Inc., feeling a lack of confidence in him, voted to ask for William Rolls' resignation; failing that, they voted to remove him. Subsequently, Jean Macmillan was elected chairman."

The Board then went on to affirm that Duke Aonghais was indeed no longer a Knight, as a simple majority was what had been needed.

Of primary importance to this paper, however, was the fact that William was the first Board member to be removed. He had been a permanent Chairman of a Board whose members were appointed in perpetuity, and was the primary opponent of fixed terms of service for Board members; rotating Chairman; and of ever firing a Board member (remember my note at the beginning of this paper?) His opposition to such things was also a problem with the completion of the Corpora Revision.

Thus, at the same Special Board Meeting, By-Law Amendments were presented which (a) established a Term of Service for Board members; and (b) established a six-months rotation period for the post of Chairman.

In August, an updated and integrated set of By-Laws with the above changes incorporated were passed by the Board, as well as the entire Revised Corpora, and the set of Governing and Policy Decisions (a mechanism for the Board to make such without going through the trials and tribulations of updating Corpora, and a way of the Board amplifying and interpreting Corpora and the By-Laws.)

It is amusing that, originally, the Corpora was to provide those capabilities with respect to the By-Laws. One can anticipate the day when the Board codifies some less-formal set of Board rulings as an easier way of doing things than establishing a new Governing and Policy Decision!

At that meeting, the Board took steps to publish the Revised Corpora, with the By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, Rules of the Lists, and Governing and Policy Decisions, to the entire membership. From that point on, a more-or-less comprehensible structure finally existed for the SCA. Many rules, never codified, were finally written down, and many cumbersome and unnecessary procedures (such as the Board approving all new groups) were eliminated. The Revised Corpora, etc., weren't perfect by any means. But they were a huge step forward.

HeraldiCon I

By 1979, the Laurel Office was incredibly behind in processing submissions. Of course, that statement could be made about any year since 1969! In the early 1970s, when Herald of Breakstone resigned the job of Laurel, with the backlog growing ever larger, the job was given to Joseph of Locksley and moved to Atenveldt. As Joseph then proceeded to continue to get more and more behind, Herald was heard to remark that

"if the job isn't going to be done, it might as well not be done here!"

When it was brought back to the Bay Area and given to Karina, it worked for a while, and then fell again into doldrums. In fact, it never had been caught up. Finally, in 1979, the Board authorized an SCA-wide Heraldic Enclave, sponsored by the SCA. All of the Kingdom Heralds were invited, plus anyone else who could come; the SCA paid 1/3 of the way for the Kingdom Heralds, with the Kingdom paying the second third and the herald the third (that was the intent at any rate). In the event, every Kingdom Herald showed up but Dragon (from the Middle), who didn't even correspond about it.

This several-day enclave in fact processed all of the outstanding submissions from all of the Kingdoms (almost) and got through the backlog. At the end of the enclave, Karina resigned, and Wilhelm von Schlüssel was appointed Lord Laurel. Karina's farewell address to the Heralds included perhaps the most pungent observation on the SCA yet made :

"In conclusion, I would like to remind you that we are trying to recreate the Current Middle Ages as they ought to be, not as they are."

The Great Ansteorran Witch Hunt

The birth of Ansteorra, an event marked by a certain amount of animosity all around, eventually led to a horrible mess which sort of centered around a conflict between Jonathan de Lauffeyson and Sean MacFflamm. This began while Jonathan was King of Atenveldt and Ansteorra was part of Atenveldt, and went on into when Ansteorra was its own Kingdom and Jonathan was its first King. Ultimately, the Seneschal and Earl Marshal requested that the Board establish a Court of Enquiry into the matter, and the Steward recommended that a Commission be formed of herself (Katherine), Cathal (the Deputy Steward) and Andrew Smith (former Board member). In the event, it was done, with Phil McDown, the Society Marshal, the third member in place of Andrew, and the Commission went off to Ansteorra to slay dragons. It nearly slayed Ansteorra.

Unfortunately, there were a few things that were not obvious at the time:

- The Board wasn't getting any objective pictures about what was going on from anybody
- The Steward was no more impartial than anyone else, and had in fact predecided the case before she got there (there are rumors that she discussed it in Meridies, saying what she would do, before she ever got to Ansteorra)
- The mess was largely reflective of a larger, traditional, North/South split in Ansteorra (and indeed in Texas) rather than a "problem" to be ironed out

The results were particularly bad since Ansteorra came to hear of the Steward's talking about it all in advance. What it really boiled down to was one side trying to drag the Board in to confirm their point of view (and in this case, succeeding). What it did not do was settle anything in Ansteorra. (Except for a Kingdom Law that no one is allowed to write to the BoD!)

I was ombudsman for Ansteorra during this time, and I freely admit that I was misled by the situation into thinking that the Board could do some good by interfering. Maybe we could have with an objective approach, but I doubt it. The real lesson is: whenever the Board interferes in anything at the medieval level, the loser is the Board. And that was another nail in the separation of the medieval and the mundane.

The End of the First Term

I left the Board after three years, in December 1980. By the middle of 1980, the Board had gone to bi-monthly meetings instead of monthly meetings. Many things were no longer things that had to appear on the Board agenda, and the Board no longer seemed to have to meet so often. By then, we had an item on the Agenda for

"Revision of BoD Structure, meetings, Corporate Office, etc.", although we weren't sure what we meant by it. I had prepared a suggested model for restructuring the Board to allow for fewer meetings, nationwide membership on the Board of Directors, more central control and coordination by the Clerk (this was before we got a Corporate Secretary) and a bunch of other things (a copy of this proposal, together with Richard Eney's commentary thereon, is attached). Remember that the climate of opinion at that time was that Board members had to pay their own way to meetings.

As it transpired, the Board finally looked at it all in July 1981 after I was off the Board (I got to come to that Board meeting). That was the meeting where Sandra first attended at Steward pro tem. That was also the meeting where the Clerk of the Board, instead of publishing "The Minutes of the Board of Directors", published "The Tres Dull Heures of the Board of Directors".

Although the proposal as written was not accepted, some parts of it eventually were turned into the proposal for the Corporate Secretary and Corporate Office which was passed in October 1981 when the Clerk resigned. At that time, meetings were also moved to Cliveden's house, and travel expenses for Board members was authorized at 20 cents a mile (or plane fare). The stage was set for the next phase of the Board of Directors.

Lessons Learned

If the late 1960s to the mid-1970s were the "formative" years of the Board, as they were of the SCA, then the late 1970s were certainly the years of definition. The great change for this period was the Revised Corpora, providing structure and definition for the medieval structure, and some (not enough) for the Corporation itself. The Board had learned that it had no business meddling with the medieval structure (and that, even if asked, it probably wouldn't do any good). The Board had also learned how to delegate authority and tasks to reduce a workload that it should never really have had in the first place. The Board had largely changed its view of the SCA, and the SCA was beginning to change its view of the Board. It was starting to look as though the SCA had enough members and income to do a few things it needed to do, like expanding (and paying for) some corporate services which the size of the organization and number of members and groups had started to warrant.

The Portents of Danger -- 1981-1982

It is interesting to note that, from bi-monthly, the Board was back to a meeting a month by January of 1982. Whether that is a sign of what was becoming a problem is uncertain. What I am sure of is that we did not realize at the time we went to Terms of Service for Board members was how fast the "old-line" knowledge of how things had always been done, and who did them, on the Board of Directors, would pass from the Board. This was in conjunction with redefining who was responsible for what, by the creation of the Corporate Office, moving responsibilities around, and so forth.

To make matters worse, the Board was heading into a period of what might be called "indecisive (mis)management". The net effect was to force Cliveden and Sandra between them to have to in effect bear-lead the Board to get anything done. This was where the custom evolved of having the Steward and Corporate Secretary sitting as members of the group at Board meetings, offering comments, and taking an active (and sometimes aggressive) role. It seems to me that they were pretty much forced into that by necessity. In essence, during this time the movement of the day-to-day responsibilities to Sandra and Cliveden, plus the orientation of the Board of the time, forced them to become the de facto Masters of the SCA.

In and of itself, this was not necessarily a problem. What was a problem was that Cliveden and Sandra both understood very well that they might have Executive authority (both explicitly, and much informal implicit authority) but that the Board still retained the Legislative authority. More importantly, although Sandra and Cliveden could say how things might be done, it remained the responsibility (largely abnegated) of the Board to say what should be done.

Into this gap stepped: Mike Woodford.

The Perils of Lorien

Mike Woodford was a small modest man with a great deal to be modest about a well-meaning man in some ways, but he had one great flaw, which was to be his undoing (and came near to being the proximate cause of the downfall of the Board of Directors). Mike was one of those people who are exclusive, rather than inclusive. In other words, he looked on things as "you should do it my way" rather than "all of our ways should work together". And he had a plan: to redefine the structure of the SCA (not the mundane Corporation, but the medieval structure) to fit his view of how things "ought to be" in this most Woodford of all possible worlds. His plan was called "Trends of Change and it precipitated the Plagues of Egypt upon the Board of Directors -- perhaps all for the best.

///TO BE CONTINUED///