

ARKANSAS RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

AT DRAGONSTONE SPRINGS

CAST HANDBOOK

Festival Year 2026

Hail, Fellow — Well Met!

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Welcome & History

Hail, and well met! Welcome to the Arkansas Renaissance Festival (ARRF). We return to the gates of Dragonstone Springs for our 2026 season, ready to build on the magic we have wrought together.

Our History & Vision

The Arkansas Renaissance Festival was born from the vision of Patrick and Susan Taft, who sought to bring the wonder, laughter, and community their family discovered at festivals across the country home to Arkansas. Their dream remains steadfast: to fill our streets with the sights and sounds of living history. From the thunder of jousting knights to the melodies of wandering minstrels, we aim to provide a world-class destination where guests from across the globe may lose themselves in the merriment of the past - with just a dash of the fantastical.

Dragonstone Springs, situated at 275 Adkisson Road, Mount Vernon, Arkansas, is Arkansas' largest and only permanent Renaissance festival, spanning 80 acres of the most beautiful space the Natural State has to offer.

Your Role in the Village

The world of Dragonstone Springs is an immersive experience. Whether you are a merchant, an artisan, a food purveyor, or a street performer, you are first and foremost a denizen of this village. We ask that you go beyond your professional duties to inhabit a unique character, complete with a personal history, dreams and desires, strengths and flaws, and a mastery of the Queen's English.

Founding Cast of Dragonstone Springs

Before there were standards, a handbook, or infrastructure, there was a group of people who showed up anyway. The Founding Cast built the first version of Dragonstone Springs out of creativity and commitment, and their labor made everything that followed possible.

Any cast member who performed during the 2024-2025 seasons holds the permanent title of Founding Cast. That title is not something new members can earn. It belongs to the people who were here first, and it does not expire.

While Founding Cast members remain active, their contribution is acknowledged at the opening of each season's Cast Convocation. When the last of them moves on, the title remains a permanent part of the festival record - and part of this handbook - as a testament to how Dragonstone Springs began.

Ceremonial Recognition

At the first Cast Convocation of each season, before any other business, leadership will call the Founding Cast to stand. Leadership will offer a brief, specific, sincere acknowledgment of what they built. The assembled cast responds together: "We stand on what you built."

This is not a lengthy ceremony. It is a moment: brief, consistent, and permanent. Its repetition each year is the point. The Founding Cast will hear those words every season they return, and every new cast member will learn early that the people who came before them are honored here.

A Note from Leadership

This recognition was designed in conversation with the cast and leadership of ARRF because we believe that trust is built through honesty, and honesty means saying clearly: we know what you gave, and we do not take it for granted. The festival you see growing around you was made possible by what you did before anyone was watching. That is worth saying out loud, every year, for as long as Dragonstone Springs stands.

Core Values & Mission

Our Vision

Dragonstone Springs is a very special place. A 16th-century English village nestled between a 10th-century Viking encampment and the crash-landed ship of an 18th century pirate crew - all brought together by the strange power of the Dragon Stones. It is our mission to bring this fantastical realm filled with colorful world-travelers and incredible Fae creatures to life. We endeavor to provide a family-friendly escape from the troubles of the modern world through immersive storytelling, music, merriment, and top-tier audience interactions... And that's where you come in!

The North Star of Every Interaction

The north star of every interaction is this: to make the patron feel good. Every exchange you share with a guest should leave them feeling seen, delighted, and welcome in the village of Dragonstone Springs.

The Golden Rule: "Yes, And..."

Always accept the reality another performer creates - then add to it!

- **If a fellow cast member says, "The sheriff is coming!"**
 - Do not say "No he isn't," but rather "Yes, and we should throw him a welcome party!"
- Never shut down a scene unless there is a genuine safety risk or another very good reason. "I don't like their suggestion" is not a good reason. Ask yourself what you can contribute to the scene to make it even better.

Leadership & Key Contacts

Should you require guidance, the following servants of the Crown are your first port of call. Seek them out with any questions, concerns, or matters of import.

Name & Title	Contact
Patrick Taft — Owner	patrick@arrenfest.com
Colton Holder — Operations Director	colton@arrenfest.com
Randi Weaver — Director of Education & Nonprofit	randi@arrenfest.com
Andy Weaver — Cast Director	andy@arrenfest.com
Melissa Baker — Entertainment Director	perform@arrenfest.com
Bailey Richardson — Garb Coordinator	brichardson@bpsbearcats.com 321-505-8310
Anne Regan — Vendor Coordinator	vendor@arrenfest.com
Festival Main Line	info@arrenfest.com 501-690-5770
Festival Website	ARRenFest.com

2026 Season Calendar

The full cast calendar, including Cast Convocation dates, rehearsals, and cast-only events, may be found on our cast website.

Themed Weekends

Below is the schedule of themed weekends. Know them well, for they may provide valuable inspiration for what sort of special interactions you might craft!

Weekend & Dates	Theme
Weekend 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Awaken the Magic● August 29–30	Our High Fantasy weekend. Medieval life blends with mythical creatures, enchanted quests, and magical encounters. Faeries, trolls, and legendary beings roam freely.
Weekend 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pirate Weekend● September 5–7 (Labor Day)	The Scurvy Crew of the Rusalka arrives! Swashbuckling, sea shanties, games of chance and cunning, and high-seas adventure. Pirates take centre stage.
Weekend 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A Dragon's Masquerade● September 12–14 (Student Day)	Venetian mystery and elegance. Masked revellers dance, the arts come alive, and the air thickens with enchantment and intrigue.
Weekend 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Celtic Highlands Weekend● September 19–20	The rugged charm of the British Isles. Bagpipes, Highland warriors, sword fighting, archery, and ancient clan pride.
Weekend 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Viking Weekend● September 26–27	The hoard returns! Feats of strength and skill, fireside stories, clan representation from Arkansas Viking Thing. SKÅL!
Weekend 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dusk of Dreams● October 3–4	Where All Hallow's Eve meets high fantasy. Magic, mystery, and the supernatural fill the air — our final and most otherworldly weekend.

Special Events

Event	Details
School Day	Monday, September 14th, 2026: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. An immersive educational field trip experience. Cast attendance and conduct expectations differ.
Queen's Tea	A special ticketed event during faire days. Details and cast expectations to be communicated by the Cast Director.
Champion's Feast	A special ticketed event during faire days. Details and cast expectations to be communicated by the Cast Director.
Community Appearances	Art Walk, Toad Suck, and other outreach events throughout the year. Garb must be approved no later than 24 hours before any such appearance.

Onboarding: Your Path to the Village

Welcome, new friend! Below is your step-by-step path from prospective cast member to full-fledged denizen of Dragonstone Springs. Follow it in order... a castle is not built from the ramparts down.

1. **Application and Audition:** Submit an application and/or attend a cast audition to the Cast Director, Andy Weaver. See the Audition section for further information.
2. **Character Selection:** Choose a character from our Character Library that you would like to embody! You will meet with the Cast Director to discuss modifications that are possible to make the character your own.
3. **Mentor Pairing:** As a first-year cast member, you will be matched with a returning cast mentor within your area. See the Novice Programme section below.
4. **Costume Concept Submission:** Work with your mentor, Bailey, Andy, or Randi to develop your garb concept, then submit to the Garb Coordinator, Bailey Richardson, for approval. See the Garb Approval section.
5. **Cast Convocation Attendance:** Attend all Cast Convocation Sessions and workshops. All garb must be approved at least one week prior to dress rehearsal.
6. **Denizenship Requirements:** Complete your character packet, have garb approved, attend all Cast Convocation days, and demonstrate three go-to bits before speaking the Denizenship Oath at the final Cast Convocation Session.
7. **Sign-In Protocol:** At all cast events, locate the 'Squirrel Herder' to document your attendance.
8. **Festival Day Ready:** Arrive dressed and ready by morning meeting. Vehicles must be off festival lanes by one (1) hour before that meeting.

Novice Programme & Mentor Pairing

All first-year cast members at ARRF are Novices. Being a Novice is not a lesser station, but a noble beginning! The Novice Programme ensures that no new denizen of Dragonstone Springs is left to wander the lanes without a guide.

How the Mentor Programme Works

- **Paired 1-on-1:** Each Novice is matched with a returning cast mentor within their area. Your mentor has been where you are now and knows the way.
- **Your Mentor's Role:** Your mentor helps you understand Dragonstone Springs, learn your character, refine your bits, navigate the social hierarchy of the village, and feel at home in the lanes. They are not your supervisor — they are your guide.
- **Your Role as Novice:** Come to your mentor with questions. Attend Cast Convocation sessions. Be willing to play, to fail, and to learn. A Novice who tries earnestly has already succeeded.
- **Mentor Assignment:** Mentor pairings are made by Leadership prior to the first Cast Convocation Session. If you have a connection with a returning cast member you'd like as a Mentor, you're welcome to request it, though pairings are not guaranteed.

Novice Denizenship

To become a Denizen of Dragonstone Springs, a cast member must: (1) complete their Character Packet, (2) have garb fully approved, (3) attend all required Cast Convocation days, and (4) demonstrate three complete bits — one to Inform, one to Entertain, and one to Educate — before speaking the Denizenship Oath at the final Cast Convocation Session.

- Novices who do not complete the requirements before opening weekend may still perform, but shall be required to remain in the Novice Programme the following season.
- Becoming a Denizen of Dragonstone is not a test or mark of perfection — it is a demonstration of readiness, commitment, and the care you've already put into bringing your character to life.

Returning Cast Showcase

All cast members are expected to grow from their time spent wandering the lanes of Dragonstone... and you will! Each season, all returning cast must complete a Showcase before opening weekend - a celebration of the artistry you have already applied to your craft and an opportunity to sharpen your skills even further.

What the Showcase Requires

- **A Fully Documented Character:** You must review your character packet before the Showcase date. If there are any modifications that you would like to make to your character for the upcoming season, you will discuss these with the Cast Director and amend your packet as agreed upon.
- **Three Complete Interactions:** You must demonstrate one interaction that Informs (e.g., directing a patron to an attraction or event), one that Educates (e.g., sharing a piece of real-life historical knowledge or Dragonstone lore), and one that Entertains (e.g., an engaging, often comic “Bit” involving a patron or fellow cast member).
- **Garb Review:** Garb must be reviewed and re-approved if any changes have been made since the prior season.

Showcase Format

- Showcases take place during the final Cast Convocation Session before opening weekend.
- They are conducted in the lanes or a designated performance space, not in a formal audition setting.
- The tone is collaborative and encouraging — Leadership observes and may offer feedback, but the Showcase is not a pass/fail examination.

Any deviations from the Showcase process — such as scheduling conflicts or extenuating circumstances — must be discussed with the Cast Director well in advance of the Showcase date.

The Denizanship Oath of Dragonstone Springs

At the close of the final Cast Convocation Session before opening weekend, all Novices who have met the denizenship requirements gather with the assembled cast to speak the Denizanship Oath. This ceremony marks the moment a Novice officially becomes a Denizen of Dragonstone Springs!

How the Ceremony Works

- **Led by a senior official:** The Oath is led by any member of leadership present.
- **Call and response:** The official speaks each line; the Novices repeat it together in one voice.
- **Denizens assembled:** All returning Denizens of Dragonstone stand witness and respond together at the close of the ceremony.
- **The lines are fixed:** The Novices' oath lines and the Denizens' response are to remain as written below, season to season, so they may become something cast members carry with them always.

The Official's Opening

Those who stand before me have proven themselves worthy of denizenship in Dragonstone Springs. I invite you now to honor and celebrate the accomplishment of coming Home.

The Novices' Oath — spoken in call and response

PENDING

The official's opening remarks and declaration may be adapted freely to suit the moment. The Novices' oath lines and the Denizens' response are to remain as written above, season to season.

Audition Basics & Expectations

ARRF auditions are designed to be welcoming and low-pressure. Prior performance experience is not required. We seek enthusiasm, a spirit of collaboration, and willingness to play

While auditions are not required, all cast members or potential cast members are encouraged to audition each cycle.

What do I bring?

Come to auditions prepared to perform one or more of the following:

- **A short monologue.** Classical or contemporary; comedy or drama; from a play, film, TV, literature, commercial jingle, wrestling promo - anything you can imagine is on the table, but keep it to about one minute (generally about a page). A good choice for an audition piece:
- **Has one speaker.**
- **Comes from a character relatively similar to you, demographically.** Think age, ethnicity, gender, etc. Gender can be played with a little bit where appropriate, (most Shakespeare comedies), but white actors should steer clear of August Wilson plays, and it'd be hard to justify a 19-year-old playing King Lear. Make sure your choice is respectful to others and use good judgment. A bad choice in this area can be distracting.
- **Features a speaker with a *Strong Want*.** Your character should be trying to get something that matters to them.
- **Takes us on a journey.** Nothing crazy, remember this is only one minute, but your character should learn or discover something, change their mind about something, or commit to a decision. If your character ends in the same place they started, this is likely not a good choice.
- **A skill or talent.** Can you dance? Juggle? Do you have an incredible impression of a chimpanzee? We want to know about it! Not everything can be done in the room, but be prepared to make the director aware of anything special you can do!

The review of your audition includes projection and diction, physicality and presence, and openness to direction and feedback. Remember to have confidence and to have a good time!

What to Expect

- **A Private Audition:** The individual portion of your audition (monologue, re-direct, scene performed with a “reader”) will be in a separate space from other auditioners to allow you to work without worrying how it looks to others.
- **Re-directs:** After performing your monologue, the director might give you a “re-direct.” This means they are asking you to perform your monologue again, but a little differently than before.
 - Perhaps in a different accent, or “as fast as you can,” or in a wildly different context... “Do it like you’re a carnival barker,” or “Try it like you’re in a library” - don’t worry if this doesn’t make sense within the story your piece comes from.
 - Dive into the note with enthusiasm and see what exciting opportunity the re-direct offers you. Remember to perform your monologue differently each time!
- **Cold Reading:** The director may hand you part of a script you haven’t seen before and ask you to perform it script-in-hand with another actor. It could be either another auditioner who’s asked to join you in the room or a “reader” on the same side of the table as the director. You may be asked to go out of the room and study the scene for a moment or to try it immediately. Either way, take your time reading the scene and make sure you understand it - remember it’s okay to ask questions!

- **Warm-Up Games:** Expect group exercises to help you loosen and connect with your cast mates.
- **Improvisation:** There are no wrong answers. We watch for your instinct to play and support others.
- **Be Present:** Put your phone away. Active listening is among the most prized of performance skills.
- **Support Others:** In improv, your task is to make your scene partner look good. We notice and value generosity.
- **Come Ready to Commit:** Half-hearted participation is the one thing that could count against you. Show up fully.

Remember: not being asked to perform one or more of the above during your audition does not necessarily constitute a bad thing. The goal of an audition at ARRF is not to eliminate — it is to find the right place for each denizen of our village.

Common Theatre Terms

Being on cast for ARRF does not require a theatre background. Below are some common terms:

Term	Definition
Acting	Two good and common theatre answers to the question of “What is acting anyway” are: 1. Acting is “doing truthfully under imaginary circumstances” and 2. Acting is reacting.
Audition	Where an actor meets with the directors and shares something - such as a monologue, scene, or improv exercise - meant to give directors an idea for which roles the actor may be appropriate.
Bit	A short, repeatable interactive performance used in the lanes. Every cast member should have at least three.
Blocking	Purposeful arrangement of actors including entrances and exits.
Break Character	Stepping out of your role — permitted only for genuine safety concerns or emergencies.
Callback	Referencing an earlier interaction with a patron later in the day; creates magical continuity and an exceptional comic opportunity.
Cheating Out	Standing in a way that lets the audience see and hear the action - halfway between them and your scene partner. It’s not as awkward as you think.
Cold Read	Performing a scene or character without prior preparation.
Deference	Proper acknowledgment of another’s rank and social status that would be required in polite society. If your character does not bow to the Queen, you have made a wrong character choice.
Devised Theatre	Performance created collaboratively by the ensemble, as opposed to scripted work.

Downstage	Assuming a proscenium stage, closer to the audience.
Endowment	Giving an object or person imaginary properties ('This stone doth hold the warmth of the sun itself!').
Ensemble	The full cast, working together as a unified company.
Fourth Wall	The imaginary wall between performer and audience. At ARRF, we do break it — frequently, and with great joy.
Get	(noun) A suggestion “gotten” from the audience before an improv scene.
Hot Spot	An area in the lanes with high patron traffic — ideal ground for bits.
Improv / Improvisation	Unscripted, spontaneous performance responding to the moment at hand.
Lane Acting	Performing whilst moving through the festival lanes — not from a fixed stage.
Offer	Something a scene partner gives you to build upon ('I found a dragon egg!')
Physicality	Using the body expressively — posture, gesture, gait — to convey character before a word is spoken.
Projection	Casting your voice so it carries to all nearby ears without straining your throat. Breathe from your diaphragm.
Proscenium Stage	A “traditional” stage, where the entire audience is set behind a line separating them from the stage - this line may be denoted by a curtain.
Rehearsal	Practice for scenes or exercises before the performance.
Side	A typed scene, often given to actors for use during auditions.
Stage Left	Assuming a proscenium stage, the actor’s left while facing the audience.
Stage Right	Assuming a proscenium stage, the actor’s right while facing the audience.
Status	The perceived social rank between characters. It affects posture, speech, and deference.
Theatre in the Round	A stage which is surrounded by the audience on all sides.
Thrust Stage	A stage similar to a proscenium stage, but featuring a part that “thrusts” downstage, into a portion of the audience.
Upstage	Assuming a proscenium stage, further from the audience.
Yes, And...	The foundational improv rule: accept what your partner offers, and add to it.

Garb Approval Process

All costuming decisions must be approved before purchasing or crafting begins. The garb approval process protects your investment and ensures consistency across the village.

Step-by-Step Approval Process

1. **Character Creation First:** Your character name and backstory must be approved by the Cast Director before costuming may begin.
2. **Costume Concept:** Communicate with your mentor, Andy, Randi, or Bailey and form a basic concept of your character's look.
3. **Garb Coordinator Review:** Bailey Richardson shall provide comments, suggestions for sourcing, and guidance on construction.

Deadlines

Garb deadline: one week before dress rehearsal (two weeks before the event). All cast must have at least ONE completed, approved look by this date. Changes shall not be approved after the deadline has passed.

- For alternate looks, plans must be submitted before the deadline, even if your main garb is already approved.
- For small events (Art Walk, Toad Suck, school appearances, and the like), garb must be approved no later than 24 hours before the event.

Wardrobe & Appearance

General Costuming Guidelines

The 100% Rule

You must be in full garb or completely out of patron sightlines. No 'half-garb' is permitted in public areas — for example, wearing a period tunic with modern jeans or sneakers shatters the magic for all who witness it.

Materials

- **Natural fibres preferred:** Cotton, linen, and wool breathe and dry quickly. Synthetic fibres trap heat and appear less authentic.
- **Furs:** Faux or authentic furs are acceptable. Pelts must not have the animal's face still attached. We are a family-friendly festival.
- **Leather:** Natural leather is encouraged. Faux leather is acceptable if it looks natural and is not overly shiny or patent in appearance.
- **Plastic and Foam:** Must look authentic. The Garb Coordinator reserves the right to deny items that appear obviously manufactured.

Sourcing Your Garb

- Handmade pieces are strongly encouraged for an authentic look. Request approval before commissioning or crafting.
- Consult your Area Steward and the Garb Coordinator before purchasing online to ensure items shall be approved upon arrival.
- **Avoid:**
 - SheIn, Amazon, Temu, or other fast-fashion sources for main garb pieces unless specifically approved.
 - No media replicas, cosplay pieces, or items prominently featured in mainstream films, games, or television.
 - No visible zippers or snaps. Buttons and clasps should look natural. Wood/metal preferred.
 - No spandex, neon colours, tie-dyes, or bright prints.

Shoes

- Shoes are required at all times for safety and sanitation. No bare feet.
- Thick-soled, rubber-soled footwear is acceptable. No modern styles visible.
- Closed-toe only. No sandals, hiking boots, sneakers, cowboy boots, combat boots, or dress shoes.
- Natural or natural-looking materials in colours achievable through natural dyes.
- Shoe covers may be used with Garb Coordinator approval. They must fully disguise the modern shoe underneath with no visible modern hardware.

Shirts, Pants, and Skirts

- All shirts must have some type of sleeve. No sleeveless garments.
- Shirts must be family-friendly and provide full coverage at all times, including while dancing, bending, and performing.
- No cutoffs, jeans, yoga pants, pajama pants, leggings as outerwear, or lounge wear.
- Skirts must be knee length or longer. Shorts above the knee are not acceptable even with tights.

Bodices and Corsets

- Any bodice or corset must have a sleeved chemise or peasant blouse underneath.
- Corsets must be costume-intended pieces, not lingerie. Lacing too tightly is a serious health risk.

Garb by Cast Area

Garb requirements range from fantasy-forward to strictly historical, depending on your area. Always consult your Area Steward first.

Cast Area	Garb Style & Time Period
Faye (Fairy Forest)	Fantasy — no set historical period. Family-friendly, bright colours, whimsical.
Travelers (Romani/Wanderer Spirit)	Mostly fantasy with respect to Romani cultural history. Vibrant, layered, fluid. Beads, feathers, and practical travel-wear. 15th-century inspired.
Pirates	Golden Age of Piracy: 1650s–1730s. Historical with approved fantasy elements. The most modern area in its chronology.
Town (Townsfolk)	Historically accurate peasant wear, Tudor and Elizabethan eras (1509–1603). Region and year should reflect the character background.
Vikings	Traditional early Scandinavian, roughly 900 AD. Natural fibres, simple construction. Base layers must always be historically accurate. The earliest in chronology.
Knights, Nobles, and Court	Strictly historical Tudor and Elizabethan eras (1509–1603). Must be designed around historical reference material. The most historically rigorous area.

Shoes, Accessories & Weapons

Accessories and Jewellery

- **All accessories must match the character and area.** Keep safety in mind. Long scarves near flames, heavy furs in the heat, etc.
- **No visible smartwatches or modern technology** (phones, tablets, and the like) in patron view.
- **Drinking Vessels:** Cast members must carry a period-appropriate drinking vessel at all times whilst on the lanes. No plastic bottles, cups, or modern vessels in patron view. Use wooden, stone, metal cups, mugs, chalices, steins, or decorative bottles.
- **Fans:** Wooden, wicker, or other natural-material fans are a highly recommended accessory. Festival season brings considerable heat.
- **Pouches and Bags:** Worn on belt, shoulder, or carried. A most excellent means of keeping your valuables and modern conveniences out of patron sight.

Hair and Makeup

- **All areas except Faye:** Unnaturally dyed or ultra-modern hairstyles must be completely covered by a hat or head covering.
- **Royal Court and Nobility:** No visible tattoos or piercings.
- **Travelers, Townsfolk, Vikings, Faye, Pirates:** Visible body art and jewellery allowed with Cast Director and Garb Coordinator approval. Content must be family-friendly.
- **Wigs are acceptable but must follow the same guidelines as natural hair.** Overly shiny or synthetic-looking wigs shall not be accepted.
- **Nail polish must be in natural colours for all areas except Faye.** All nails must be kept clean and trimmed.

Weapons

- **Only prop and display pieces are allowed on grounds.** No live blades unless approved by the Operations Director.
- **Peace-Tying Required:** All weapons that could cause bodily harm must be peace-tied — secured to the holster so they cannot be drawn without removing the tie.
- **If a peace-tie does break, go immediately to Security or the Info Booth for replacement.** Do not play-fight with weapons in the lanes.
- **Bows may be carried, but arrows must remain in the quiver and be secured.** Arrows may leave the quiver only during supervised archery competitions.

Garb Marketplace & Sourcing Guide

Below are trusted sources for period-appropriate garb. All items must still be submitted for Garb Coordinator approval before purchase. This list does not guarantee approval; rather, it directs you to worthy merchants.

Clothing

- **Pearson's Renaissance Shoppe:** pearsonsrenaissanceshoppe.com. A long-established faire merchant with period pieces across many areas.
- **The Tudor Tailor:** tudortailor.com. Excellent for Court and Townsfolk research and ready-to-wear pieces.
- **Recollections:** recollections.biz. Broad selection of Renaissance, Tudor, and fantasy garb.
- **Moresca:** moresca.com. Well-regarded for practical faire garb across multiple areas.

Shoes

- **House of Andar:** houseofandar.com. Handcrafted period shoes and boots. An excellent first choice.
- **Son of Sandlar:** sonofsandlar.com. Custom Renaissance footwear.
- **Tribal Foot:** tribalfoot.com. Good selection of natural-material footwear.

Fabric

- **Fabrics-Store.com:** fabrics-store.com. Linen and natural fibres by the yard.
- **Online Fabric Store:** onlinefabricstore.com. Wide selection including period-appropriate materials.
- **Fabric Wholesale Direct:** fabricwholesaledirect.com. Budget-friendly option for larger projects.

Commissioning a Costume

- If you do wish to commission a handmade costume, consult the Garb Coordinator before engaging any maker.
- Both fabric and design choices require Garb Coordinator approval even when working with an approved maker.
- Please reach out to the Garb Coordinator for current referrals to seamstresses and tailors who work within our community.

Bizarre Bazaar

The Bizarre Bazaar is a beloved tradition where cast members - new and returning alike - may bring items they wish to sell, trade, or give away. Clothing pieces, fabric, boots, belts, pouches, accessories, and more are all welcome.

How It Works

- Bizarre Bazaar takes place during the lunch break at designated Cast Convocation Sessions and the day following each weekend of festival (typically Mondays).
- You are responsible for watching your own items. Make arrangements for lunch accordingly.
- Items need not be approved garb. Raw fabric, modern belts, and accessories are all useful to fellow cast.
- Prices and trades are negotiated directly between cast members. ARRF does not mediate exchanges.

Bizarre Bazaar is an excellent opportunity for new cast to build their kit affordably and for returning cast to refresh their look without great expenditure.

Performance & Immersion

The Queen's English & Anachronisms

Zero Anachronisms

Refrain from using modern slang, discussing modern politics, or using modern technology in view of patrons. You are a denizen of Dragonstone Springs, and in Dragonstone Springs, the era is ever the 16th century.

Period-Appropriate Vocabulary

Avoid	Use Instead
What time is it?	How stands the hour? / How high sits the sun?
Bathroom	The Privies
Money	Coin / Gold
Hello	Good morrow / Well met
Goodbye	Fare thee well / Godspeed
Please	Prithee / I pray thee
Thank you	Gramercy / My thanks
Maybe	Perchance / Mayhap
Listen	Hark!
Hurry	Make haste!
Truly	Verily / In sooth / I' faith
Um (filler)	Marry... / In sooth...
Okay	Anon / Aye / It shall be done
Wait	Tarry a bit / Hold!
Yes	Aye / Verily / Indeed/Yea (pronounced "yay")
No	Nay
I don't know	I know not / That does escape me

Rumour-Based Storytelling

Lore reaches the ears of patrons through rumour. Ensure your rumours align with the weekend's narrative, and the Show Bible so that every patron receives a consistent and wondrous tale.

Accent & Speech Resources

At ARRF, we do not require a single mandatory accent across all areas. Instead, accent choices should reflect your area and character background. Below are the recommended approaches by area, along with resources to help you practise at home.

Accent by Area

Recommended Accent Approach by Area

Royal Court (General British RP - Received Pronunciation): The classic 'BBC English' accent most closely associated with the Tudor period. Focus on open vowels, non-rhotic R's, and clear consonants.

Townfolk/Faye (Country British - Rural West Country): The rustic, earthy accent of England's southwestern countryside, evoking farmers, villagers, and folk traditions. Focus on rhotic R's (one of the few British accents to pronounce them), elongated vowels, and a slower, melodic drawl.

Viking (Old Norse-Influenced Scandinavian): The bold, weathered accent of Norse raiders and explorers. Focus on slightly clipped consonants, flat broad vowels, and a musical rise-and-fall cadence — with a guttural edge and a tendency to harden softer sounds.

Pirate (West Country English - Somerset/Bristol): This is the historical origin of the 'pirate accent' most patrons recognise. Features rhotic R's ('arr'), rounded vowels, and a warm, rolling quality.

Traveller/Romani (Romany-Influenced Eastern European): A rich, wandering accent shaped by centuries of movement across the steppes and borderlands. Focus on deep melodic vowels, softened consonants with a slight Eastern European lilt, and a warm conspiratorial cadence — think mysterious storyteller, not caricature.

Free Practice Resources

- **International Dialects of English Archive:** dialectsarchive.com. Free recordings of real speakers from every English-speaking region. An invaluable reference.
- **Paul Meier Dialect Services:** paulmeier.com. Free accent guides and audio samples for RP British, West Country, and more.
- **"Dialect Coach" on YouTube:** Search 'Dialect Coach' or 'Erik Singer accent breakdown' for free, expert-led accent instruction.
- **Forvo:** forvo.com. Hear individual words pronounced by native speakers. Useful for practising period vocabulary.

Daily Accent Practice

The Accent Walk: Whilst doing your daily chores or errands, narrate your actions in your character's voice and accent. 'I must fetch water from the basin to cleanse the porcelain.' Repeat until the Queen's English feels as natural as breathing.

- **The No-Contraction Rule:** The single fastest way to sound 'period' is to eliminate modern contractions. 'I do not know' sounds immediately more formal than 'I don't know.' Begin here.
- **Five Minutes a Day:** Even five minutes of daily accent practice yields remarkable results within a fortnight. Consistency matters more than duration.
- **Find a Practice Partner:** Recruit a fellow cast member to practise with you. Scene work in accent is more effective — and far more entertaining — than practising alone.

General Culture & Patron Interaction

The north star of every interaction is this: to make the patron feel good. Every exchange you share with a guest should leave them feeling seen, delighted, and welcome in Dragonstone Springs.

Core Culture Principles

- **Make the Patron the Main Character:** Our goal is for every guest to feel as though they are the hero of their own story within Dragonstone Springs.
- **Speak no ill:** Do not speak disparagingly about any person, cast member, show, vendor, product, or competitor — in character or out of it. If a patron asks your opinion of another act, find something generous to say.
- **No Tip Solicitation:** Only cast members contracted as performers through the Entertainment Director may request gratuity. Street cast, area cast, and general volunteers do not solicit tips under any circumstances.
- **Carry Your Vessel:** Every cast member on the lanes must carry a period-appropriate drinking vessel at all times.
- **Ownership of Film:** The Festival does reserve all rights to any photographs, video footage, or promotional material originated on festival grounds. Participation confirms ARRF's permission to use such material for commercial or promotional purposes.

Social Media

- We love character content! Tag us and share your faire moments: @ARenFest | #ARRENFEST
- No photographs of cast smoking, vaping, or drinking modern beverages while in garb.
- No spoilers of surprise narrative plot points before they occur.
- All content should be family friendly and protect the magic of Dragonstone Springs.

Character Bits: Inform, Entertain, Educate

A 'bit' is a repeatable, interactive performance that gives you a reason to exist in the lanes. Every cast member should have at least three go-to bits. Character bits should serve at least one of three purposes:

- **Inform:** Help patrons navigate or understand the festival — directions, schedule, what attractions and events await them.
- **Educate:** Share something historically accurate or lore-true about Dragonstone Springs and its inhabitants.
- **Entertain:** Create a moment of delight, surprise, or laughter that they shall carry with them all the day.

Anatomy of a Bit

- **The Hook:** An external action that catches a patron's eye — mending a net, searching for a lost cat, counting your coins.
- **The Invitation:** A question or comment that pulls them in. ('Pardon me, traveller — hast thou seen a spotted pig? He doth answer to the name of Hamlet.')
- **The Interaction:** A brief exchange of 'Yes, And...' based upon their response.
- **The Exit:** A strong exit that leaves them smiling. ('If you do see him, tell him his mother is worried! Fare thee well!')

Example Bits

- **The Royal Scout:** Ask a family if they are loyal subjects or spies from the neighbouring shire. Give loyal subjects a small task: 'Keep your eye on that shifty-looking merchant for me.'
- **The Language Lesson:** Teach a child one Renaissance word — 'Huzzah!' or 'Gramercy!' Make it a ritual, complete with a bow.
- **The Traveller's Tale:** Carry a 'story stone.' Ask a patron to hold it and share a good omen from their travels to 'charge the stone.'

Final Revels

Cast are encouraged to participate in the final daily send-off, though each area must still have a radio person. The last impression matters just as much as the first.

- **The Invitation to Return:** 'The fires of Dragonstone shall burn until your return.' / 'Keep the hearth warm until we do meet again, cousin.'
- **The Last Look:** Stay in character until the very last patron has left the sightline of the village. The magic should not end until the car door closes.

Performer Self-Care

Performing at Dragonstone Springs is an endurance sport. Taking care of yourself is not optional — it's how you take care of the magic.

Voice & Projection

Fundamentals

- **Project, do not scream:** Speak from your diaphragm with a relaxed throat and jaw. If your voice is raspy by Saturday afternoon, you shall have no voice for the Sunday Finale.
- **The Five-Foot Rule:** Project as if you are speaking to someone standing five feet behind the patron you're actually addressing.
- **Forward Placement:** Drop your jaw more than usual. The Queen's English is rounder and more vowel-heavy than modern American speech.

Vocal Health

- **Honey and Tea:** Keep a flask of warm honey-water or herbal tea in the Green Room. Ginger and lemon are also most effective for soothing the vocal cords between sets.
- **Rest Your Voice:** Use the Green Rooms between bits. Silence is an instrument — use it wisely.
- **Avoid Dairy:** Dairy before performing increases mucus production and may affect clarity of speech.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Dehydration is among the chief causes of vocal strain. Drink your water.

Vocal Warm-Up Exercises

- Lip trills: 'brrr' sounds while moving through your pitch range.
- Tongue twisters at increasing speeds — 'Red leather, yellow leather...'
- Humming on a comfortable pitch, then gradually opening to vowel sounds.
- Sirens: slide from your lowest to highest comfortable note and back again.

Nerves & Performance Anxiety

Even the most seasoned performers feel the flutter of nerves. Nerves are a sign that you care — they are energy, not a warning. Here is how to work with them rather than against them.

Before the Opening of the Gates

- **Physical warm-up:** Shake out your hands and feet. Roll your shoulders. Stretch your face with exaggerated expressions. A warm body is less likely to hold tension.
- **Breathe:** Take slow, deep breaths before entering the lanes. In through the nose for four counts, hold for four, out through the mouth for eight.
- **Ground yourself in character:** Ask: 'Who am I today? What do I want? How am I going to get it?' Grounding in your character's internal life takes the focus off your own nerves.
- **Find your ensemble:** A quick laugh or brief warm-up scene with a fellow cast member does more to settle nerves than any solitary exercise. Remember to have their back and to make them look good and they will do the same.

During Performance

- **Get what you want:** Know what your character wants, both from their life and in a given interaction, and what they're likely to do to get it. Honestly pursue your goals, "really do," and you will not have time to worry about your nerves. What's more, you'll be creating genuine, compelling human behaviour.
- **Use your body:** Physical commitment to your character — posture, gait, gesture — occupies the mind and channels nervous energy into something useful.
- **Begin small:** Start with a simple 'Good morrow!' to warm up before attempting longer bits. Build your confidence in stages.
- **If you do blank:** Lean on your go-to bits. You always have 'Hast thou any news from the North?' as a conversation opener in your pocket.

Health & Wellness

The village shall miss you sorely if you are stuck in the First Aid tent. Listen to your body, look out for your cast-mates, and stay well hydrated!

Hydration

Dehydration is the chief cause of breaking character and medical incidents on site. Treat hydration as seriously as you would treat your lines.

- **Pre-Game:** Start hydrating 24 hours before the gates open.
- **The Ratio:** One cup of water per hour on the lanes. If you do drink caffeine, double your water intake.
- **The Check:** Your urine should be the colour of pale straw. Dark ale colour means you must get to a water station immediately.
- **Electrolytes:** Water alone is not always sufficient. Keep salt packets or electrolyte powder in your pouch to prevent cramping and heat exhaustion.

Heat Management & Cooldown Protocol

Arkansas humidity and heavy garb can lead to heatstroke with alarming swiftness.

- **Know the Signs:** If you do stop sweating, feel dizzy, develop a headache, or become suddenly irritable, you are in the danger zone.
- **The 'Vanish' Act:** If you feel overheated, do not tough it out. Use an in-character excuse to exit to a Green Room ('I must fetch water for the Queen's hounds!').
- **Ice Points:** Apply cold water or ice to wrists, neck, and the insides of elbows to cool down quickly.
- **Garb Breaths:** Wear natural fibres — linen, cotton, wool — where possible. Avoid synthetics that trap heat.

Nutrition & Footwear

Nutrition for the Long Haul

- **Eat Breakfast:** Never start a festival day on an empty stomach. Protein and complex carbs provide sustained energy.
- **Grazing:** Keep invisible snacks in your pouch. Almonds, dried fruit, jerky. Avoid heavy faire food until day's end, as it often causes lethargy mid-performance.

Footwear and Physical Integrity

- **Your feet are your most important prop.** Cast are required to wear shoes at all times.
- **Support:** Ensure your boots have proper arch support. Modern gel insoles are invisible inside boots and are most encouraged.
- **Keep Socks Dry:** Damp feet lead to blisters. Bring extra socks.
- **Movement:** Stretch your calves and lower back before the gates open.

Fire & Costume Safety

For those participating in the Viking Thing or performing near the ship-burning:

- **Layer Safety:** All warm layers — bloomers, leggings — must be natural wool or treated cotton. Synthetic 'fleece' leggings are a fire hazard. If a spark hits them, they may melt to your skin.
- **Flowing Sleeves:** Pin back wide sleeves before approaching open flames.

Safety & Security

Weaponry and Peace-Tying

YES, cast – this does include you.

- **All weapons** (steel, wood, or prop) must be peace-tied by Security before the gates open. A peace-tie is a coloured zip tie that prevents the weapon from being drawn.
- If a peace-tie breaks, go immediately to Security or the Info Booth to have it replaced. Do not play-fight with weapons in the lanes.

Alcohol and Substance Policy

- **Daytime Prohibition:** ZERO TOLERANCE for alcohol consumption by cast members during festival operating hours.
- **Outside Alcohol:** Not to be brought to faire grounds during operating hours, nor consumed within two hours of opening.
- **Illegal Substances:** Possession or use shall result in immediate removal and potential legal action.
- **Smoking:** Permitted only in designated areas and at appropriate times.

Harassment and Conflict

- **Zero Tolerance:** Harassment of any kind - sexual, verbal, or physical - toward patrons or fellow cast shall not be tolerated.
- **Reporting:** Report issues directly to Leadership. You are entitled to bring a support person to any meeting regarding a conflict.
- **'The Duke':** To remove yourself or another cast member from an uncomfortable patron interaction, use the code word that 'The Duke' has summoned you. This phrase is not to be used in any other context. Above all, keep yourself and your fellow cast members safe.

Radio Codes

Code	Meaning
“We have a Kevin”	Missing child – provide clothing description, hair colour, and last known location.
CODE GOLD	Management needed for a non-medical conflict, e.g., an unruly patron.
CODE BLUE	Medical emergency – stay with the individual and do not move them. Management shall call for an ambulance if indicated.
CODE RED	Major maintenance issue such as a fire.
CODE BLACK	Active threat/lockdown – break character immediately and move yourself and patrons to safety.
WEATHER HOLD	Severe Weather.

Punctuality and Access

- **Sign-In:** Locate the 'Squirrel Herder' at cast events to document your attendance.
- **Site Lockdown:** All vehicles must be off festival lanes by 9:00 AM. Vehicles remaining after this time may be fined or towed.

Cast Governance & Development

ARRF utilizes a clear chain of command. If you have a problem, follow these steps in order:

- **Medical or Safety Emergencies:** Skip the chain of command entirely and use the nearest radio immediately.
- **Area Stewards:** Your first point of contact. Each area has a designated steward, who has a radio.
- **Cast Director:** If the Area Steward cannot resolve the issue, it is escalated to the Cast Director, Andy Weaver (andy@arrenfest.com). Andy shall consult with Colton Holder where necessary.
- **The Support Policy:** You may bring a support person, such as a fellow cast member or trusted friend, to any meeting regarding a grievance, to ensure you feel heard and safe.
- **Documentation:** All reports of harassment or safety violations must be documented in writing, including Who, What, Where and When, for our records.

ARRF's cast structure is built around three parallel tracks and a set of operational roles. These systems are designed to be honest, transparent, and genuinely useful for cast members, leadership, and the patrons who walk through our gates. Every structure described here exists because it serves a real purpose.

The three tracks run in parallel and are deliberately independent. Advancement in one does not automatically affect another. Each track rewards something different and is assessed on its own terms.

The Operational Role — Area Steward

Operational roles are practical logistics positions, not membership tiers. They carry no rank and no authority over other cast members. Any Denizen in good standing can volunteer for or be assigned to one of these roles for a given season or festival run. Some operational roles earn a Dragon Scale on completion.

Area Steward Duties

- Carry and monitor the area radio throughout the faire day.
- Ensure water stations and essential supplies are in place and stocked.
- Conduct a pre-opening walkthrough of the area and report any site safety concerns — fallen branches, structural issues, trip hazards — to the Operations Director.
- Serve as the first point of contact for any logistical question or problem that arises in the area during the day.
- File a brief end-of-day report with any issues that arose and how they were resolved.

Area Stewards are caretakers of the physical and logistical health of their area. They are not supervisors of other cast members and do not carry leadership authority. Completing the Area Steward role for four faire days earns the Area Steward Duties Dragon Scale.

Cast Mentor

Cast Mentors pair with one Novice for a season and help that Novice find their footing in the village. The role is logistical, not evaluative. Mentors are not supervisors of their Novices and do not carry leadership authority.

Cast Mentor duties:

- Pair with one Novice for the season.
- Help your Novice understand Dragonstone Springs, including festival rules, procedures, lore, chain of command, and how Cast Convocation works.
- Be a friendly, available point of contact during Cast Convocation sessions and faire days.
- Help your Novice learn the rhythm of the village and feel at home in the lanes.

Cast Mentors do not coach their Novice's performance and do not assess Dragon Scales. Those are separate processes that belong to the Cast Director and the Dragon Scales evaluators.

Any Denizen in good standing can volunteer to mentor for a season. If you'd like to mentor a particular Novice, you can request the pairing, but final pairings are made by leadership to balance the program. Completing the Cast Mentor role for a full season earns the Cast Mentor Duties Dragon Scale.

Track 1 — Membership Status

Membership status reflects your relationship to the community of Dragonstone Springs: how long you've been here and the trust and responsibility you've earned. Two tiers.

NOVICE — First-Season Cast Members

Every cast member begins as a Novice. Being a Novice is not a lesser status. It is the beginning of a genuine journey. The Novice Programme ensures that no new denizen of Dragonstone Springs is left to figure it out alone.

- Paired with a Mentor at the start of the season.
- Works toward Denizenship through character development, garb approval, Cast Convocation attendance, and demonstrating three bits.
- Novices who do not complete Denizenship requirements before opening weekend may still perform, but continue in the Novice Programme the following season.
- Novices are eligible to apply for Advisory Council seats.

DENIZEN — Full, Standing Members of the Cast

Denizenship is the foundational and permanent status of a fully onboarded, contributing cast member. This is where most of the cast lives, and that is exactly right. Denizen is not a waiting room. It is a complete and honored place to be.

- Earned by completing all Denizenship requirements and speaking the Denizenship Oath at the final Cast Convocation.
- Returning Denizens complete the Showcase process each season to maintain active status.
- Denizens are eligible to apply for Advisory Council seats.
- Denizens may be invited by leadership to become Mentors.

Track 2 — Dragon Scales

The Dragon Scales program is the performer development track of ARRF. It recognizes specific, demonstrated skills across seven categories through embroidered scales worn on each cast member's Dragon Scale Panel.

Dragon Scales advancement is entirely independent of membership status. A Novice may earn scales. A long-tenured Mentor continues to pursue them. Earning scales does not change your membership tier — it reflects what you can do, not where you stand in the community.

The standard for each scale is fixed, clear, and applied consistently. Advancement is based entirely on demonstrated proficiency — not time served, attempts made, or enthusiasm alone. Not yet is not no.

The full Dragon Scales program, including all badge descriptions, assessment methods, and the Evaluator Guide, is documented in the **Earning Your Dragon Scales** guide, available on the cast portal. Passoff sessions are scheduled at Cast Convocation and at designated pre-season dates.

Track 3 — Festival Culture Recognition

Festival Culture Recognition is not a tier, a title, or a badge. It is a seasonal practice of specific, public gratitude.

At the closing Cast Convocation of each season, leadership identifies cast members who consistently embodied the values of Dragonstone Springs throughout that season — generosity, warmth, inclusion, patron care, and ensemble spirit — and acknowledges them by name, with specific language about what they did and why it mattered.

You cannot aim for Festival Culture Recognition. It arrives as a consequence of living the values every day, across an entire season, whether or not anyone appears to be watching. That is precisely the point.

The Cast Advisory Council

Purpose

The Cast Advisory Council is a hybrid body. It exists for two reasons that are equally important and that the council should treat as equally serious.

First, the council is the formal channel through which cast voice reaches leadership. Members surface concerns, questions, and ideas from the broader cast and bring them into the room where decisions are made. Council input shapes outcomes even when it doesn't determine them. Members know their input is heard and responded to, even when leadership ultimately decides differently.

Second, the council drives operational work that ARRF needs done but cannot put on payroll. Cast community events, on-site work days, Cast Convocation setup, and outreach support are all real work, and they belong with cast members who care about the festival enough to do them. The council is how that work gets organized.

Both functions matter. Members who only want to give input without doing the work, and members who only want to do the work without engaging in the advisory process, are not the right fit for this council.

Authority and Scope

The council's advisory authority is advisory, and senior leadership decides. The council is told what was adopted, modified, or deferred, and why. The council does not have decision authority on personnel, budget, safety, or vendor matters. Members execute on tasks assigned or volunteered for, within the scope of cast operations and community-facing work. Operational decisions that would commit ARRF to expenditure, public communications, or external partnerships still require senior leadership sign-off.

Structure & Seats

The council consists of eight cast member seats. Four are year-round and four are cycle seats.

Year-round seats (4)

Year-round seats are held by cast members serving a full calendar year (January through December). These members provide continuity, carry institutional memory, and lead council operational initiatives across the year. Year-round members participate in selecting cycle members and are expected to be present at every monthly council meeting.

Cycle seats (4)

Cycle seats are held by cast members serving a three-month term tied to one of ARRF's three major events. Each cycle has its own focus and brings fresh perspective to the council during the planning and execution window for that event. A cycle member who wants to serve a second term must apply for a different cycle.

Cycle Calendar

Cycle	Term Period	Event Focus	Application & Selection
Year-Round Seats (4)	January through December	All events	Apply October 1 through October 31. Selections by November 15 by senior leadership.
Cycle 1 (4 seats)	December, January, February	Arkansas Viking Thing	Apply October 1 through October 31. Selections by November 15 by senior leadership and seated year-round members.
Cycle 2 (4 seats)	March, April, May	Arkansas Highland Games	Apply February 1 through February 28. Selections within two weeks of close by senior leadership and seated year-round members.
Cycle 3 (4 seats)	June, July, August	Arkansas Renaissance Festival	Apply May 1 through May 31. Selections within two weeks of close by senior leadership and seated year-round members.

Year-round member selection happens in fall and is timed so the new cohort is in place before Cycle 1 begins. Cycle member selection happens in the cycle immediately preceding their term, which lets seated year-round members participate in choosing who joins them next.

Eligibility

Definition of Good Cast Standing

“Good cast standing” means a cast member who has met the current season’s Denizanship requirements (or who is a Novice making active progress toward those requirements), has no open disciplinary actions, and is not currently subject to a performance warning. Council seats are open only to cast members in good standing. A cast member whose standing changes during their term is subject to the step-down protocol below.

Year-Round Seat Prerequisites

To apply for a year-round seat, a cast member must:

- Be in good cast standing.
- Have participated as cast for at least one full ARRF season.

- Have also participated as cast at either Arkansas Viking Thing or Arkansas Highland Games.
- Be available to commit a few hours each week of personal time to council homework and assigned tasks.
- Be available for monthly in-person council meetings.

Cycle Seat Prerequisites

To apply for a cycle seat, a cast member must:

- Be in good cast standing.
- Have participated as cast in at least one ARRF event (ARRF, Arkansas Viking Thing, or Arkansas Highland Games).
- Be available to commit a few hours each week of personal time to council homework and assigned tasks during the three-month term.
- Be available for monthly in-person council meetings during the three-month term.

Functions of the Council

Council functions are split into two categories.

Advisory Functions

Members participate in the council's advisory work, which includes:

- Reviewing proposed decisions and changes before senior leadership finalizes them.
- Advising on programming for ARRF, Arkansas Viking Thing, and Arkansas Highland Games.
- Acting as a focus group when senior leadership wants to pressure-test an idea.
- Surfacing cast concerns, questions, and ideas to senior leadership.
- Representing the voice of the cast as a whole, with the understanding that final decisions belong to senior leadership.
- Advising cast members who bring concerns to the council on the proper channel for their issue without taking on the role of investigator or arbiter themselves.

Operational Functions

Members participate in the council's operational work, which includes:

- Assisting senior leadership with cast community events such as in-garb bowling, Friday celebrations before opening weekend, and other cast social gatherings.
- Leading the coordination of cast volunteers for on-site work days, including site upkeep, ribbon-making, signpost repair, area refresh, and similar tasks before and after major events.
- Assisting senior leadership with Cast Convocation setup.
- Sourcing materials for council-approved initiatives, with senior leadership sign-off on any expenditure.
- Assisting with the coordination of council-based initiatives such as promotional event staffing.

What the Council Does Not Do

To keep the council's role clear and to protect both members and cast, the council does not:

- Make major creative decisions such as event plot points or casting.
- Make decisions on personnel, hiring, firing, or disciplinary matters.

- Investigate or arbitrate harassment complaints, conflict between cast members, or safety violations. These follow the chain of command described in the Cast Handbook.
- Commit ARRF to expenditure, vendor contracts, public communications, or external partnerships without senior leadership sign-off.
- Override or substitute for senior leadership roles.

Application & Selection Process

How to Apply

The application will be circulated to the cast at least one week before applications open. Cast members apply for council seats by returning completed applications to andy@arrenfest.com during the open application window for the seat they want.

Selection

Year-round seats are selected by senior leadership. Cycle seats are selected by senior leadership in partnership with the seated year-round council members. This gives year-round members a role in shaping the council they will work alongside, while keeping ultimate selection authority with leadership. Selections are communicated to all applicants by the dates listed in the cycle calendar above. Applicants who are not selected receive a brief written response and are encouraged to apply for a future cycle.

Member Expectations

Council members are expected to:

- Attend every monthly in-person council meeting during their term, except in cases of illness, family emergency, or other excused absence communicated in advance to senior leadership.
- Respect everyone's time during meetings. Show up on time, prepared, and engaged.
- Follow through on assigned and volunteered tasks within agreed timeframes.
- Complete weekly homework as scoped by senior leadership during the term.
- Maintain confidentiality on matters discussed in council that are not yet ready for broader cast communication.
- Surface cast concerns and ideas through the proper channels rather than acting on them unilaterally.
- Hold themselves and one another to the values described in the Cast Handbook.

Conflict of Interest

Council members recuse themselves from any council discussion or vote in which they have a personal stake that could create real or perceived bias. This includes (but is not limited to) decisions involving awards or recognition for which the member is a candidate, council leadership appointments where the member is being considered, and policy changes that would specifically benefit or burden the member's area or character role. When in doubt, recuse and let the council and leadership proceed without you.

Recognition for Council Service

Council service is a substantial commitment, and ARRF acknowledges that service in two ways:

- Completing a full year-round term or a full cycle term in good standing earns the Council Service Dragon Scale.
- Council members who completed their term are acknowledged by name at the closing Cast Convocation of the season, alongside Festival Culture Recognition.

Step-Down Protocol

Council membership is a commitment. Life happens. If a member needs to step down, the protocol is:

- Communicate the need to step down to senior leadership in writing as soon as the member knows.
- Where possible, complete or formally hand off any in-progress work before stepping down.
- A member who steps down may reapply for the next available cycle following a one-cycle pause. (This is a pause to let the cast member resolve whatever caused the step-down, not a punishment.)

If a year-round seat or cycle seat opens mid-term due to a step-down, senior leadership may either operate with the open seat for the remainder of the term or make a mid-term appointment from the most recent applicant pool, depending on workload and timing.

Performance Expectations and Consequences

Members who are not meeting expectations receive a private conversation with senior leadership identifying what needs to change and offering support. If the issues continue, the member's term may end early.

A member whose term ends early due to performance issues may apply for a future cycle after one full cycle has passed, on the same terms as any other applicant.

Meeting Records and Cast Communication

After every monthly council meeting, a written record of meeting minutes is submitted to senior leadership for approval within three days. Once approved, the minutes are distributed to the cast within seven days of the meeting.

The minutes include:

- Topics discussed.
- Council input given on each topic.
- Decisions made by senior leadership, with brief reasoning, on items that were ready for decision.
- Items deferred for further discussion or research, with expected next steps.
- Updates on council-led operational initiatives.
- Open volunteer asks for the broader cast.

Education, Outreach & Special Programmes

Randi Weaver, Director of Education and Nonprofit, oversees all educational programming, community outreach, school appearances, field trips, Student Day, and the nonprofit arm of ARRF. For questions regarding any of the programmes below, contact Randi at randi@arrenfest.com.

School Days & Student Day

School Days is a special educational event open to school groups seeking an immersive 16th-century field trip experience. Students and educators are invited to explore Dragonstone Springs in a living history environment that brings classroom lessons to vivid life.

2026 School Days Details

- **Date:** Monday, September 14th, 2026
- **Hours:** 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM (groups may come and go as needed)
- **Location:** Dragonstone Springs, 275 Adkisson Road, Mount Vernon, AR 72111
- **Pricing:** \$14.95 per student for groups of 10+; \$10.00 for groups of 50+ (one free adult per 10 students)

What Students Experience

- Live jousting and sword fighting demonstrations.
- A live Royal Court session with the Queen and her Court.
- Artisan demonstrations — blacksmiths, glassblowers, and craftspeople.
- A special session with 13-time World Champion Jousting Charlie Andrews on the history and craft of jousting.
- Interactive activities including archery and axe throwing.

Cast Expectations for School Days

School Days is not a standard festival day. Students — particularly younger ones — bring a different energy and set of needs than weekend patrons. Read these expectations carefully.

- **Educational Focus:** Every bit on School Days should lean toward the Educate pillar. Prioritise sharing historical context, period crafts, and lore over purely comedic interactions.
- **Age-Appropriate Content:** All interactions must be appropriate for children from primary school age upward. Err always on the side of gentleness.
- **Patience and Pacing:** Students may ask many questions — welcome this. A curious child is the most receptive audience in the kingdom.
- **Teachers are Guests Too:** Engage chaperones and teachers as fellow travellers in the village. Their enthusiasm — or lack thereof — shapes the students' experience.
- **Heightened Inclusion:** Some school groups may include students with disabilities, sensory sensitivities, or behavioural needs. Lower your energy when approached by a student who appears overwhelmed. A quiet whispered exchange is often more magical than a loud performance.

Community Outreach & Appearances

ARRF participates in community events throughout the year — Art Walk, Toad Suck Daze, local school appearances, nonprofit partnerships, and more. These appearances are an extension of our mission and an opportunity to bring the magic of Dragonstone Springs beyond our gates.

Expectations for Outreach Appearances

- **Garb Approval Required:** All garb for outreach appearances must be approved by the Garb Coordinator no later than 24 hours before the event.
- **Ambassador Mindset:** At outreach events, you are an ambassador for ARRF. Be warm, be informative, and be enthusiastic. Many of the people you meet have never attended a Renaissance festival.
- **Direct Interested Patrons:** Always have festival dates, ticket information, and the website (ARRenFest.com) ready to share.

Lore of Dragonstone Springs

Dragonstone Springs is a 'Brigadoon-style' location — a mystical crossroads where different eras and cultures converge within a fictional 16th-century English framework. Know this lore as you do know your own name.

The Royal Court — 16th Century

- **Social Mindset:** Society is governed by the 'Great Chain of Being' — every soul has a divinely appointed place, from every serf to the Queen herself.
- **The Queen's Role:** Queen Marianna represents stability and law. The monarch is not merely a figurehead but the literal source of justice and land rights. Queen Marianna is an “of the people” ruler. She should be beloved and respected, not feared.
- **Interaction Guide:** Townsfolk must treat Royals with reverence. Even nobles do not approach the Queen. You wait to be acknowledged. Keep your head lower than hers unless invited to rise.

The Vikings — 900 AD

- **The 'Viking Thing':** Historically, a Thing was a governing assembly where disputes were settled, laws were made, and treaties were signed.
- **At our Viking Thing:** visiting rulers (Jarl Estrid of Clan Fenrir and Jarl Terguir of Clan Gullinbursti) come to challenge the local Vikings (Clan Ursal, led by Jarl Thomson) to contests of strength, skill, and strategy for bragging rights and more. The victorious clan shall have its banners displayed within the Viking encampment throughout the regular season.
- **The Treaty Narrative:** Your performance centres upon the tension between Norse law and English law. You are not merely a raider — you are a political entity negotiating a Viking Treaty to remain within Dragonstone Springs.

The Pirates — Golden Age of Piracy (1650s–1730s)

- **The Pirate Code:** Pirates operate under a 'Democracy of the Damned.' They follow a Captain only so long as that Captain provides loot.
- **History in Dragonstone:** Pirates interact with Merchants for trade but are often at odds with the Royal Guard. They are the shifty element of the village, and they are proud of it.

The Townsfolk — 16th Century

- **Daily Life:** Villager's minds are often occupied with taxes, the weather, the quality of the ale, and the gossip of the village. Villagers are the heartbeat of Dragonstone Springs.
- **The Guild System:** The lives of the villagers of Dragonstone Springs are highly defined by their trade. They take immense pride in their craft.

The Faye Realm

- **A Rare Sighting:** The Faye are Dragonstone's oldest and most fantastical denizens. They are magic itself brought to life. Faye should not be afraid to keep their audience interactions brief. Having but a moment or two before they must be off on their mysterious business only adds to the Faye's mystique.
- **Non-Verbal Communication:** While the Faye have learned human speech from the other denizens of Dragonstone, they should rely heavily on heightened movement that draws inspiration from animals or other sources to give them the feeling of being “beyond human.”

- **Bright and Light:** 'Sunshine and warmth,' both in the colours of your dress and your expression. Inspire child-like wonder, especially in interactions with real children.

The Traveller's Camp — Romani/Irish/Wanderer Spirit

- **Historical Context:** The Romani people arrived in Western Europe in the early 15th century. They were often viewed with a mix of fascination and suspicion by settled Townsfolk.
- **Aesthetic Identity:** Vibrant and fluid. Their garb reflects 'The Path' and may pull from the many cultures they've encountered in their travels. Beads, feathers, and practical layered travel-wear are their hallmarks.

ARRF Performance Toolkit

Character Development Worksheet

Complete this worksheet to bring your character fully to life before you step into the lanes. Submit it to your Area Steward as part of your Novice Denizenship Ceremony or Returning Cast Showcase.

The Physical Self

- **The Gait:** How do you walk? A Knight leads with chest and heavy heels; a Fairy is light upon the balls of the feet; a Merchant is brisk and purposeful.
- **The Centre:** Where does your character carry their weight? Head-first (Intellectual), Heart-first (Emotional), or Gut-first (Instinctual)? What does it suggest about your character if you lead with your nose? Your hips? Try it and see what you feel.
- **The Voice:** What is the texture of your voice? High and breathy, low and gravelly, melodic and loud? Do you have an accent? Start from an interesting baseline that speaks to you, but remember all characters should have variation in their speech.
- **The Quirk:** What is one physical tell or habit? Playing with a ring, adjusting your bodice, checking the sky for rain?

The Social Ladder

- **The Bow:** To whom are you required to bow or curtsy? Who bows to you?
- **Opinion of the Crown:** What do you think of Queen Marrianna? Beloved ruler, or too rough-and-tumble for your tastes? No matter what, when the Queen's procession passes you, you should appear reverent.
- **The Rival:** Who in the village do you dislike or mistrust, and why? Having strong, specific feelings about a fellow denizen of Dragonstone is a great way to form strong, playable Bits.

The Internal Life

- **The Passion:** What does your character **WANT** out of life? What are their goals, their dreams? What motivates them to get out of bed in the morning and **DO** something? If you know nothing else about your character, know this. A strong want will make your character much more interesting and should inform everything that they do.
- **The Flaw:** What keeps your character from getting what they want? This should be something internal. Perhaps more than anything, your character's deepest desire is to be adored, but their tendency to boast about themselves pushes others away. Remember, a character who actually gets what they want is a character whose story is over.
- **The 'Why':** Why are you in Dragonstone Springs's town centre this day, rather than staying home in your cottage or caravan?
- **The Secret:** What is one thing you are hiding? Something like "I stole this ribbon from a noble's laundry line" or "I am deathly afraid of horses."

Social Hierarchy & Interaction

The Social Hierarchy (High to Low)

9. **The Crown:** Queen Marrianna and the Royal Court is the highest status in the land.
10. **Townsfolk:** Guild members, Bakers, and Artisans are the heartbeat of the village.
11. **Vikings and Travelers:** Respected but 'outsider' groups.
12. **Pirates and Fae:** Chaotic elements that play by their own rules, and status varies wildly among them.

Remember: status varies within these groups as well. The mayor is higher than the baker, who is more respected than the villager who is known to be a con-man. Additionally Viking Jarls and other visiting dignitaries would be higher status than simple townfolk, but lower than members of the Queen's Court.

Cross-Group Interaction Guide

If you are...	Encountering... Appropriate Interaction
Townsfolk	Vikings — Trepidatious Curiosity. Ask about the Viking Thing, but keep an eye on them. They could be capable of anything.
Vikings	Royals — Defiant Respect. You are here to make a new home for yourself, not to be subjugated. Bow at the waist, but keep your eyes upon them.
Fairies	Anyone — Ethereal Mischief. Side Quests, pranks, Trinket Trading. Keep it magical and light.
Travelers	Pirates — Wary Alliance. Both are wanderers. Share a secret or Fortune Knot in exchange for news of the sea.
Royals	Fairies — Amused Tolerance. Like garden birds — pretty to look upon, but unpredictable.

The Queen's English Reference

The No-Contraction Rule

The fastest way to sound 'period' is to stop using modern contractions. This automatically slows your speech and adds a rhythmic, formal weight to your dialogue.

- **Instead of 'I don't know where it is':** Say 'I know not where it may be.'
- **Instead of 'He's over by the pub':** Say 'He is yonder, near the tavern.'

The Three 'TH's — Thou, Thee, Thy

- **THOU (Subject):** 'Thou art a bold one.' — Use as thou wouldst use 'You'.
- **THEE (Object):** 'I do give this to thee.' — A different 'You'.
- **THY / THINE (Possessive):** 'Is this thy goat?' 'Thine eyes are lovely' — Use as thou wouldst use 'Your'.

Directional Anchors

- **HITHER (To here):** 'Come hither, child!'
- **THITHER (To there):** 'Walk thither toward the gate.'
- **YONDER (Over there):** 'The Vikings do camp yonder, past the trees.'

Pocket Phrases

- **Greeting:** 'Good morrow / Good day to thee!'
- **Gratitude:** 'Gramercy!' — short for Grand Mercy.
- **Confusion (patron shows thee a phone):** 'What be this curious contraption?'
- **Agreement:** 'In sooth, 'tis true.'
- **Dismissal:** 'I must away! Fare thee well.'

Creating the Magic: Memorable Encounters

The Power of Recognition

- **The Callback:** If you do meet a family in the morn and see them again in the afternoon, acknowledge it: "Ah, the brave scouts do return! Did'st thou find the Viking camp as I directed?"
- **The Honorific:** Assign titles based on appearance or actions. A child with a toy sword is not merely a child — they are 'Sir [Name], Defender of the Bridge.' (This is a type of endowment.)

Low Stakes Side Quests

- **The Messenger:** Ask a patron to deliver a verbal secret message to another cast member.
- **The Search:** Ask for help finding something invisible. 'I have lost my luck-stone near the Maypole. If you do find a pebble that feels warm to the touch, keep it — it has chosen you.'

Inclusion and Accessibility

- **Meeting them where they are:** If a patron is shy or overwhelmed, lower your energy. A quiet whispered secret can be more magical than a loud performance. Also, don't be afraid to make a graceful exit - sometimes someone just needs a little alone time - and that's okay!
- **Kneel to their level:** When speaking to children or patrons in wheelchairs, bring your eye level down to theirs.
- **Validating the Fantasy:** If a child shows you light-up shoes: 'By the stars! Your feet doth carry the very lightning of the storm! How did'st thou catch it in thy boots?' Remember to "Yes And" with patrons as readily as you do with your cast-mates.
- **Acceptance:** If a patron arrives in costume from a different era — a wizard, a Star Trek officer — treat them as a mysterious traveller from a distant land. Asking them for information on their strange home is more fun for everyone than telling them they do not belong (they do).

Cast Support & Wellbeing

You are a person first, and a performer second. ARRF cares about the wellbeing of every member of our community... not merely your ability to perform, but your whole self.

If you are struggling, in any capacity, you are not alone. Below are people and resources ready to help. Seeking help is an act of strength, not weakness.

Arkansas Crisis & Mental Health Resources

- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 — available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Free and confidential.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741. A live, trained crisis counsellor does respond quickly.
- **Arkansas Crisis Center:** Call 1-888-274-7472. In operation since 1985, available for Arkansas residents as a free and confidential crisis resource.
- **AR ConnectNow (UAMS):** uamshealth.com/ar-connectnow — Confidential virtual mental health treatment and education for all Arkansans.
- **NAMI Arkansas:** namiarkansas.org | 800-844-0381 — Advocacy, support, and education on mental illness.
- **Ozark Guidance Center (NWA):** Springdale: 479-750-2020 | Rogers: 479-725-6000 | Fayetteville: 479-695-1240 — Non-profit mental health centre with multiple NWA locations.
- **Arisa Health (Central/North AR):** arisahealth.org — Comprehensive behavioural health services and emergency crisis services across Arkansas.

Additional Support

- **Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+ Youth):** 1-866-488-7386 — Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ young people.
- **Trans Lifeline:** translifeline.org — Transgender peer emotional support.
- **Arkansas DHS Mental Health Programmes:** humanservices.arkansas.gov — Find treatment providers and recovery resources throughout the state.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. You are worth protecting.

Glossary of Renaissance Festival Terms

A quick reference for new and returning cast members on the vocabulary unique to the faire world. Study it well – for language does shape the world.

Term	Definition
Anachronism	Anything that does not belong to the historical period being portrayed. Phones, modern slang, and sneakers are all anachronisms.
Bit	A short, repeatable interactive performance used whilst walking the lanes. Every cast member should have at least three.
Cast	All performers – paid, volunteer, or contracted. Everyone in garb is cast.
Dragon Scale Panel	The wearable belt panel on which a cast member's earned Dragon Scales are displayed. It grows with the performer over time.
Dragon Scales	The ARRF performer development program. Embroidered scales earned by demonstrating specific skills across seven categories. See the Earning Your Dragon Scales guide on the cast portal.
Founding Cast	Cast members who performed during the 2025 inaugural season of Dragonstone Springs. A permanent, honored title.
Garb	The costume worn by cast members. At ARRF, all garb must be period-appropriate and approved before wearing.
Green Room	The cast-only backstage area for rest, hydration, and voice breaks. Patrons do not enter.
Guild	Historically, a professional association of craftspeople. At ARRF, used to describe groupings within the Townsfolk area.
Huzzah!	An exclamation of joy, approval, or celebration. The universal faire cheer. Use generously.
In Character / IC	When a cast member is actively performing as their persona.
Queen's English	Period-appropriate speech as described in this handbook. Old English-flavoured but accessible.
Lane	The paths and walkways of the festival grounds. The lanes are the 'stage' for all cast.
Lore	The backstory, history, and narrative of Dragonstone Springs. All cast should know the basic lore well.
Mundane	Out-of-character and of the modern world. 'Mundane clothes' = modern clothes. 'Mundane conversation' = breaking character.
Out of Character / OOC	When a cast member steps out of their persona – ideally only in the Green Room or in emergencies.
Peace-Tie	A coloured zip tie securing a prop weapon to prevent it from being drawn. Required for all weapons on grounds.
Patron / Guest	A paying visitor to the festival. Every patron is to be treated as an honoured guest.

Privies	Period term for restrooms. Direct patrons to 'the Privies' rather than 'the bathroom.'
Squirrel Herder	The cast member responsible for check-in and attendance tracking at events. Find the squirrel as soon as you arrive.
The Duke	A code word used to safely extract oneself or a fellow cast member from an uncomfortable patron interaction.
The Thing	Historically, a Viking governing assembly. At ARRF, refers to the Viking narrative event.
Walkie Person	The designated Radio Monitor for each area — the cast member who carries and monitors the radio.

Enneagram Overview for Cast

The Enneagram is a personality framework describing nine distinct types, each driven by a core motivation and fear. At ARRF, we do not use it as a label or a box — we use it as a tool: to help cast members understand themselves, communicate with one another, and collaborate more generously within the ensemble.

Knowing your type helps you understand your defaults under stress. Knowing others' types helps you meet them where they are — not where you expect them to be.

The Nine Types in the Village

Type	Core Motivation & Village Role
Type 1 — The Reformer	Driven by a desire to be good and right. Excellent at maintaining historical accuracy and high standards. Under stress, may become overly critical. Strength: integrity and consistency.
Type 2 — The Helper	Driven by a desire to be loved and needed. Natural at patron care and making guests feel welcomed. Under stress, may over-extend and neglect their own health. Strength: warmth and generosity.
Type 3 — The Achiever	Driven by a desire to succeed and be admired. High energy, excellent at pulling a crowd. Under stress, may prioritise looking good over ensemble work. Strength: charisma and drive.
Type 4 — The Individualist	Driven by a desire for identity and depth. Deeply invested in their character's internal life; often the most emotionally nuanced performers. Under stress, may withdraw or feel misunderstood. Strength: authenticity and creativity.
Type 5 — The Investigator	Driven by a desire for knowledge and competence. Often the most historically researched cast member in their area. Under stress, may withdraw from social interaction. Strength: depth of knowledge and preparation.
Type 6 — The Loyalist	Driven by a desire for security and support. Deeply committed to the ensemble; follows protocols carefully. Under stress, may become anxious in improv situations. Strength: reliability and dedication.

Type 7 — The Enthusiast	Driven by a desire for joy and new experiences. Brings contagious energy and playfulness; excellent at bits and patron games. Under stress, may lose focus. Strength: spontaneity and fun.
Type 8 — The Challenger	Driven by a desire for control and strength. Commanding presence; natural leaders; great for roles of authority. Under stress, may steamroll quieter cast members. Strength: confidence and decisiveness.
Type 9 — The Peacemaker	Driven by a desire for harmony and peace. Easy to work with; great at reading the room and de-escalating tension. Under stress, may become passive. Strength: adaptability and calm.

How We Use This in the Village

- **Ensemble Awareness:** If a cast member seems withdrawn, they may be a Type 5 or 9 who needs a moment rather than a prompt. Check in quietly rather than with group attention.
- **Conflict Navigation:** Types 1 (Randi) and 8 (Andy) may give direct feedback that feels blunt. This means they care, not that they are being purposefully rude. Types 2 and 9 may not speak up about problems. Knowing this helps leadership create channels where all voices are heard.
- **Self-Compassion:** Use your type to understand your stress patterns, not to excuse them. Every type has gifts to offer Dragonstone Springs.

The Enneagram is not a box — it's a map. Use it to find yourself, and to find each other.

Finding Your Type

If you are new to the Enneagram, free assessments may be found at enneagraminstitute.com or truity.com. Bring your result to discuss with your Area Steward or any Director. No type is better or worse for performance — every type, at their best, makes the village richer.

Magic Moments - a Final Note

Above all else, remember Dragonstone Springs is a special place - for all of us, of course, but also for each of our guests. Anyone you see might be here for their first or final time. Some look forward to being here all year. It is an incredible opportunity knowing each of your interactions might be the moment that makes that person's day special or even a treasured memory. Keep this in mind and seize the opportunity to make a Magic Moment any time you get the chance.

That is all, friends! As you step out into the lanes of Dragonstone Springs, remember to keep your work simple and specific, to say YES to patrons, YES to one another, and YES to the unexpected and the exceptional. Have everyone's back out there - we'll have yours.

Welcome! We're so glad you're here.

Yours,

ANDY WEAVER

Cast Director