

Al Mahala Operating Procedures

Al Mahala was founded to serve as a focal point for Middle-Eastern studies at the Society for Creative Anachronism's (SCA) annual Gulf Wars inter-kingdom event. As Early Period Life and the Salons each address a variety of related topics and activities, Al Mahala strives to facilitate study of cultures relevant to the Middle East during the SCA period. Geographically, it encompasses Andalusia, northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Levant, Turkey, Persia, and the Indian subcontinent. Multiple language and cultural groups would have existed in those regions and may be topics of study within the SCA's anachronistic bubble. Toward this end, Al Mahala maintains a pavilion for music and dance instruction and performances, a functioning kitchen and open-fire cooking area for recreating historical/cultural foods, and a flour-free classroom where students may learn about textiles, clothing styles, regional & cultural histories, languages and other potential topics.

Al Mahala is not a household or guild; it is simply a group of people with shared interests within the SCA who desire to maintain this space in an effort to introduce guests to the focal cultures. Although many people support and participate throughout the year through its Facebook page, the group is administered by a Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee consists of the founders of the group and persons who have encamped with Al Mahala for a minimum of three Gulf Wars. The Steering Committee is identified at the planning meeting held on site at the end of each Gulf Wars. The Steering Committee, in turn, selects the Al Mahala Department Head and Al Mahala Class/Activities Department Head for the following year. The selected persons then select their deputies to serve as their assistants and replacements should they not be able to serve. Additional persons may be appointed to serve as a camp coordinator, maintenance or inventory manager.

Al Mahala Department Head:

- Serves as the primary communicator with Gulf Wars autocrat and staff and informs the Steering Committee of updates.
- Promotes volunteer opportunities on Al Mahala Facebook page.
- Coordinates efforts to promote Al Mahala throughout the year.
- Seeks financial, practical, and artistic donations to provide the desired cultural atmosphere. This includes arranging for repairs or replacements needed, coordinated with the Camp Coordinator.
- Works with the Al Mahala Class/Activities Department Head to plan salons and activity nights for Al Mahala throughout the War week.
- Arrives suitably in advance of Gulf Wars Event Opening Date to initiate and/or oversee reassembly of Al Mahala components in conjunction with Camp Coordinator.
- Arranges for firewood provision.
- Arranges for inventory retrieval from on-site storage. Verify location and condition of all inventory items.
- Arranges for Gulf Wars A&S-supplied tables and chairs delivery at Al Mahala encampment. Current usage is 9 tables and 56 chairs.
- Arranges with Gulf Wars A&S for extra volunteers when assistance will be needed.
- Hosts Steering Committee meeting(s) to review Gulf Wars' week pros & cons and proposes plans for the following year, including appointment of Al Mahala Department Head and Al Mahala Class/Activities Department Head.
- Provide upcoming Al Mahala Department Head and Al Mahala Class/Activities Department Head names and emails to Gulf Wars Autocrat.

Al Mahala Class/Activities Department Head:

- Serves as the primary coordinator of teachers and classroom usage.

- Maintains a record of teachers and topics to facilitate repetition in following years. Also advertises and recruit instructors from various kingdoms, using online and/or print media. This includes the distribution of paper flyers and/or word-of-mouth endorsements at events throughout the year.
- Coordinates equipment and supplies for cooking demonstrations and food preparation for salons other AI Mahala-hosted activities.
- Oversees volunteers preparing food and other aspects of salons and other AI Mahala-hosted activities.
- Schedule for Classes and Meetings in AI Mahala
 - Classes are to run Monday thru Friday, 10:00 am till Noon, and then 1:30 till 5:30, Saturday 10:00 am till Noon.
 - Classes for AI Mahala to take place primarily in one of the three AI Mahala classroom tents, but also in other locations including – AI Mahala courtyard, Merchant’s Row (with Middle Eastern –themed vendors), and specialty locations as needed.
 - Nighttime Expo: Dependent upon volunteer availability, the Nighttime Expo will run after dark, one night during the week, preferably late in the week to allow participants time to plan their performances. The Expo will remain open to all interested parties with a request to refrain from amps.
 - Afternoon Instructors Showcase: Dependent upon volunteer availability, the Afternoon Instructors Showcase will run mid-afternoon, with emphasis on increased levels of authenticity and historical research.
 - Acts as individual information custodian to maintain records of incoming information during the War to be used for planning at future Gulf Wars.
- Maintains content on the AI Mahala Webpage and Maintains an instructor/class database
 - Continuous, frequent e-mail usage, multiple times per day, is a primary requirement for this position – instructors often need to exchange information multiple times in a single day, in order to confirm schedule availability, class requirements and other details.
 - Instructor contact information to include:
 - e-mail address,
 - mundane and SCA names plus titles,
 - kingdom of residence, and
 - current topics of research/classes available to teach
 - Class title and description
 - Class size limitation, age limitation, and/or fees
 - List of experienced instructors willing to replace cancelled classes on short notice
 - Makes frequent updates of this database to the AI Mahala website
 - Provides schedule updates to the Gulf Wars Overall A & S Coordinator as required. Updates should include:
 - Date, location and time of classes
 - Class descriptions
 - Name and Title of Instructor
 - Class size limitations and/or fees if applicable
- Is available (or appoints and supervises appropriate deputy) to greet and direct visitors in the public spaces of AI Mahala, answer questions and assist instructors as needed.
- Prepares Daily Schedule Change announcement boards at front gates of AI Mahala
- Ensures that schedule change information is sent to Information Point
- Complete authority over classroom physical environment – no one is to alter conditions in the classroom tents without first getting permission of AI Mahala Class/Activities Department Head or the deputy
- Maintains complete responsibility over the AI Mahala donations basket for procurement of snack and beverage to be available to the public at AI Mahala events.

- Appoints and supervises night-time watch to maintain the physical integrity of the AI Mahala classroom tents and public spaces.
- Keeps hydration facilities maintained in the AI Mahala dance tent during the day; is aware of location of AI Mahala first aid kit and can direct others to its location as needed
- Collects the Class Signup sheets and is responsible for their delivery to A&S Point
- Notifies appropriate personnel of any emergent class cancellations
- Signs and issues volunteer vouchers to the instructors teaching in their area
- Issues encouragement and reminders to visitors and instructors regarding Expo and Instructor's Showcase
- Is responsible for serving as (or finds suitable replacement) Master of Ceremonies for both the AI Mahala Afternoon Instructors Showcase and the AI Mahala Nighttime Expo

Emergency Procedures:

Emergency Procedures for both AI Mahala residents and AI Mahala visitors, class attendees and instructors require strict adherence to all Gulf Wars policies.

Emergencies in the AI Mahala Classroom Area and Public Spaces – Residents are to remove themselves and aid any individuals in need of assistance in their departure of the area and immediately notify the AI Mahala Department Head. If the AI Mahala Department Head is not available, AI Mahala Residents are to notify the AI Mahala Class/Activities Department Head and any other staff members.

All AI Mahala staff members are required to be familiar with:

- The location of the AI Mahala first aid kit
- The location of the nearest source of water
- The location of the AI Mahala camp fire extinguisher
- Appropriate procedures per Gulf Wars Policy regarding emergencies, including contact with The Watch in a prompt manner

In case of emergency within the AI Mahala private residence area – all Residents are asked to pre-familiarize themselves with the location of the AI Mahala first aid kit and fire extinguisher, and are to notify AI Mahala Department Head or AI Mahala Class/Activities Department Head as soon as possible of any emergency situation.

Equine emergencies must be handled as specified in the onsite Horse Waiver policy.

Emergencies requiring evacuation from the entire site are always coordinated with The Watch per the Gulf Wars policies and procedures regarding site-wide emergency procedures.

AI Mahala – Residential Camp:

The residential camp will be overseen by the Camp Coordinator and, if none had been appointed, the AI Mahala Department Head. All Residents of AI Mahala are required to camp in a manner that is respectful of each other's camping experience and personal space. Land is allocated by the Camp Coordinator with consideration given to tent size, including staking area, special needs such as handicap access, and a clear and safe pathway throughout the entire camp. The Camp Coordinator is also the coordinator of plans regarding AI Mahala's physical plant.

- Jointly maintain diplomatic relations with other encampments - The Camp Coordinator and any deputy to this position are the sole voice requesting assistance or brokering agreements with other encampments.
- Coordinates all land allocations, including the dividing line between AI Mahala public/classroom space, and AI Mahala residential space
- Works closely with any Camp Coordinator deputy regarding camp-wide projects
- Communicates on a regular basis with the AI Mahala community through the AI Mahala Facebook group

- Coordinates the camp requirements for participation/assistance with onsite projects
- Formulates meal plan policies, including recruitment of cooks and allocation of clean-up duties. With respect to this duty, if no Camp Coordinator is appointed, the AI Mahala Class/Activities Department Head shall oversee this responsibility.
- Ensures compliance with all official Gulf Wars reporting requirements regarding emergencies
- Landcrat for AI Mahala
- Must attend landcrat meetings as announced by Gulf Wars officials
- Maintains listing of all incoming tent sizes and designated camping locations
- Is direct contact and sole voice of AI Mahala in discussions with Gulf Wars Land Office
- Makes camp map and allocates available tent space
- Responsible for all emergency evacuation data
- Must communicate with all AI Mahala campers (and applicant campers) in a timely manner regarding where/if they can camp onsite
- AI Mahala site improvements
 - Maintains records of blueprints and/or drafts of planned site improvements
 - Cost estimates
 - Supplies
 - Transportation
 - Alternate supply sources (must price compare at least three sources for large purchases)
 - Volunteer offers of specific skills (i.e. if anyone has mundane building experience, etc.)
 - Notations on any needed repairs of existing structures
 - Obtains all required approvals for site improvements per Gulf Wars policy
 - Maintains supervision of all AI Mahala construction projects, including enforcement of safety procedures
- Keeps listing of items maintained in the onsite Gulf Wars storage
- Responsible for checking items in and out of onsite Gulf Wars storage
- Must keep group apprised of damaged or lost items from storage