



# MORTEM POST

The National Coordinator's Newsletter

Issue 5, June 2006

The Camarilla, a White Wolf World of Darkness Fan Club

## NC Stuff

Here we are, recovered from the US national convention (which was awesome, by the way!), and sending out another monthly installment of the US national newsletter. The last month has definitely been exciting, and I'm really looking forward to the results as we apply professional process improvement techniques to the Camarilla for the first time ever. I've already seen some small changes, and as the top brass analyzes the results of the survey from last month, I expect some big things to come down the pike.

In this issue, though, we have some great advice on how to file an appeal, how to recruit new members, a primer on city status, and our typical summary of recent announcements. What we're still missing,

though, are the more personal stories about local events. Really, we want to hear about this stuff! If you know about something cool that happened, or some officer that just really deserves some recognition, let us know! Drop us a note at [usnc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:usnc.newsletter@gmail.com), even if all you have is an idea. Just catch our attention and we'll research and write the story!

In the meantime, there's still plenty to read, and I do hope you enjoy it. Please print out copies and take them to your local game - your coordinator should even award you a bit of prestige for doing so, but more importantly, we want as many people to have access to this as possible.



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## Staff

*Dineh Torres, Editor; Wes Contreras, he who shall not be named.. too much; Roo James, Archives; dustbunnies and other denizens.*

***We are looking for a few creative players!!***

Seeking ingenious writers and cunning reporters! Represent your region with short articles or summaries of events. Artists also sought, with a willingness to create illustrations or just graphic text elements to separate articles.

Contact: [usnc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:usnc.newsletter@gmail.com)

## Recruitment in the Camarilla

Any organization must gain new members in some form or fashion in order to continue to exist. A fan club such as ours is no exception. While a few of our intrepid members try to perpetuate our existence through procreation, that form of replacement is slow to bear fruit, and is of course, tongue in cheek. In all seriousness, however, recruitment is not as complex as it might seem. Participating in such often gains you new friends even if you happen to be a bit shy.

The first step is for us to know just what it is we are, what we are about, and what we intend. If we intend to speak to others about it, knowing what we are talking about will at least make us sound intelligent, even if our friends tease about the short bus. Defining an organization such as this will give you as many answers as the members you might ask. My own personal most successful description seems to be "it's a mix of Improv and dinner theatre without the dinner", at least when describing the actual game. This could partially explain why the few who wished to merely observe us like a play would find it quite confusing. However, we are so much more than that.

We are friends. We are a community created by a very large similar goal, with a few bits of other goals to add spice and individual differences. Examples of this goal might be to 'have fun', 'tell a great story', or 'meet new and interesting people.' When speaking of recruitment, find out what aspect of the Camarilla might appeal to your prospect, and start from there. Don't forget that it's not just gaming, though that is a very large part of what we do. We also support each other, support our communities and charities, and achieve some very incredible works. These aspects might not be what immediately come to your own mind when you think of us, but they are still a part of us, and there are those that do indeed think of them first before the game. We've been given thank you letters by more than one charity, tears from friends that have been helped in their time of need, wonderful and sorrowful memories of members we have lost... these things all add to what we are and define what we can be. Don't forget that the richness when presenting us "as a whole."

The next step is to find your prospect. This can be achieved by putting up flyers, talking to people, and basically being a friend to them. Flyers in gaming stores, Universities, laundry places, underground concerts, parties, even normal stores can bring you curious individuals. Once they call you, talk to them, find out who they are and what they enjoy, make sure they are over eighteen, of course, and then invite them to attend the next game or gathering.

The last step has many parts. Retention. There is no recruit if the prospect does not stay. Be friendly, helpful, find them a mentor if you are an officer and don't have time. Make sure to give them assistance with combat if they need it, and give them some leeway to learn the game. (Not killing their character the first time they play, unless that is something they truly desire, is likely the best idea.) Take them out for Afters, match them up with someone that has a similar roleplay style. Call them a week or two later, or before the next event. Make sure they had fun. Actually listen to them when they speak, without the "omg, another ventrue invictus, why can't newbies be more creative?" in your mind. Help them understand the differences between IC and OOC, what the acronyms mean, and try to be sure they aren't confused. Try to remember what you felt like when you were new, and if you didn't like it, remember why. Try to change that for your new recruit.

It's not easy to do any of these things. It's not easy to be a friend, but when you are, when you make the time to actually talk to someone, it's not just a service to them that you find, but one to yourself. People are amazing creatures, so often we stop and stare at the surface mask and forget what a rich treasure might lie underneath. Dig for it, find the friend inside your prospect, and you will never lack for roleplay partners.

Really, these things are simple, they just take time. If the officers of your chapter or domain do not have time for this, help them. Put up flyers, talk to people you don't know. Don't let the 'newbies' get lost and become Gone-bies. You may just find the friend you didn't realize you never had.

## HOW TO WRITE AN APPEAL

By Jesse Daniel, US2002022102

So, you are thinking about writing an appeal? You are sitting in front of your computer with a copy of the official decision with which you vigorously disagree. You have read the membership handbook, possibly the Camarilla specific LARP rules, and conceived of a number of really great arguments that show why the official decision is wrong. You have your snacks and soda next to your computer, and are ready to pull an all-nighter like an undergraduate writing a paper the night before it is due. Then it hits you.... How do I write an appeal? Do I come right out and say what the officer did wrong? Do I give a little back story to provide context? Do I say how the officer whose decision I am appealing hates me and this is all a big personal witch hunt? How do I write this appeal?!

My name is Jesse Daniel. I have been a member of the Camarilla since 2000. Over my six years in the Camarilla I have worked almost exclusively with disciplinary actions and appeals at all levels of the organization. I was an ARC Arbitration for about two years, a member of the US Arbitration Board, and have served as ANC Arbitration and administrator for the US Arbitration Board for the past two years. My experience has given me valuable insight into the appeals process, including what works and what doesn't. I want to share what I have learned from those experiences in hopes of helping you write a successful appeal.

Before writing an appeal, I believe everyone should first ask him/herself an important question. Should I appeal this decision? The Membership Handbook is clear in that "members should exercise some discretion when calling for appeals. Not every decision that affects you negatively should be appealed. Only those decisions which are clearly incorrect in the way they were made are likely to be reversed." (MH, p.77) These passages place on the appealing member a heavy burden. In order to overcome this burden, you must put a notable amount of time and energy into crafting your appeal. You are going to have to re-examine, some might say re-live, the original incident. Even after performing all this work, there is a possibility that the officer reviewing your appeal will chose to amplify the decision to something more severe. Basically, the appeals process is a time-consuming, uncertain, emotionally and physically draining event. Many times the appealing member is better served by accepting the officer's decision and moving on with her life instead of beginning the appeal process.

Once you have made the decision to appeal, you need to get your ducks in a row. In most cases you only get one appeal, so you have to make it count. Almost all successful appeals have three traits; specifically, they are concise and well written, they focus on a limited number of issues, and they cite to the hard evidence of the case and specific rules.

Making your appeal concise and well written is perhaps the most important factor. "No interview with the appealing member is required," (MH, p. 79.) so your written submission could quite possibly be the only chance you get to state your case. Although

now is not the time to suddenly become a first class writer, you must demonstrate at least a basic ability to communicate via the written word. Spelling and grammar are very important. If your appeal reads like a third grader wrote it, legitimate points as to why the decision is clearly incorrect might be lost. Make sure you run a spelling and grammar check on the document, have a friend review it, or read it out loud to yourself. These methods should help you pick up overlooked mistakes. Although there is no page limit to an appeal, shorter is always better than longer. I know of an old saying that says "I didn't have time to write you a short letter, so I wrote you a long one." In other words, longer is not better and, in fact, an overly long appeal could cause the reader to possibly tune out your appeal.

Another attribute of a successful appeal goes right along with being concise. How many issues do I raise in my appeal? First, what do I mean when I say "issue?" When you first started thinking about your appeal, you might have come up with half a dozen reasons as to why the decision was wrong. Heck, you might have even come up with more than half a dozen. Each thing you believe the officer enacting the decision did wrong is an "issue." These issues should specifically show why the decision is clearly incorrect. As an example of an issue, the decision is clearly incorrect because the officer failed to consider and apply three mitigating factors. You should brain storm and write down a list of all the issues in your appeal. Once your list is complete, pick out two, three, or at most four of your strongest issues. It is better to present a smaller number of strong issues than it is to list every single one. Using a limited number of issues keeps the reader tuned into your most powerful points, and prevents her from becoming distracted or confused by a deluge of claims. When you write your appeal, concentrate on your selected issues. They should serve as a headlines for your appeal, as logical segments that make your appeal easy to understand.

A final attribute found in many successful appeals is citation. What do I mean by citation? You are not trying to fulfill some talismanic rote put on you by a professor. You are trying to make it easier for your reader to reference your points. An example of an acceptable citation can be found in this article, specifically, "MH, p. 79," meaning Membership Handbook, page 79. You should cite two general types of information. You should cite anything from club or game rules to hard evidence. If a storyteller ignored a rule in running a scene, tell the reviewing officer on what page he can find the rule in the relevant book. If a coordinator ignored a statement from another member backing up your version of events, include that statement in your appeal and cite to it. By citing information you allow the reader to spend time thinking about your appeal instead of looking up rules and shifting through evidence. Being organized is the best thing you can do for your reader.

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## City Status Primer

By Christopher Leeson NC RST, US2002023429

There seems to be a lot of confusion here and there concerning how City Status is supposed to work. The purpose of this document is to help clarify and mitigate some of the problems I have witnessed concerning the use of City Status.

### EXP Cost:

A PC can come into play with the first two dots of city status purchased at normal cost of purchasing status. After that point, any changes in status do not cost XP. If a PC comes into play with 0 city status, then they do not have to spend any XP on status gains. This is because City Status is a fluid system that can change frequently.

### Multiple Cities:

A character generally may only have City Status in their home domain. Because Vampires are very territorial and naturally distrust outsiders, it is very rare to hold City Status in more than one city. City Status also requires regular attendance and participations at city functions. Because of this it is extremely difficult to keep up the requirements to hold City Status in multiple cities.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a character may earn City Status in more than one city, but each additional city reduces the amount of Status that can be earned in any of them. Also, a character with status in multiple domains cannot hold any sort of office in any of these cities. The character is not trusted and will not be granted a position. Allowing Status in multiple cities should be rare, however, if the option is ever used at all. (MET Requiem, PG 132)



### Appeals..... concluded.

Hopefully you take away from this article some important tools to help you through the appeal process. Begin by asking yourself whether you should appeal. If you are going to appeal, make the appeal concise and well written, include a limited number of issues, and cite to important information. I hope you found this article helpful and, more importantly, that you never have to make use of its contents.

So to recap, anyone with a city position may not have City Status in more than their own city. A character cannot be the Harpy of one city and the Sheriff of another. In order to sustain having City Status 1, the character needs to be active in another domain's games. This should be carefully watched. At a minimum it should include regularly attending at least one game a month in the other city and then being heavily involved and socially active there.

### Travel:

Instead of having City Status in multiple cities, the reputation gained in a character's home city translates to effective City Status outside of their home city. A character visiting another city has no true City Status but has an effective rating based on his reputation at home. A character in its home region but not home city is at a -1 to City Status, outside of the region, but inside the home nation is a -2 to City Status, and outside of the nation is a -3 City Status. A visitor's effective City Status can never be above 3.

The effective City Status rating does not grant any special powers within the city visited, it just denotes the level of respect the character's reputation carries outside of the home domain. A character can have his effective rating reduced by the Prince and Harpy's of the visiting city, but this has no effect on his home City Status dots. Even a blood hunt only matters within the visited domain. The local officials may send word back to the home domain concerning infractions and praiseworthy deeds the visiting character was part of, but any status changes must be made by the home domain's officials.

A Prince cannot refuse to acknowledge a vampire with an effective city status rating. The Prince must first strip their effective rating to 1 and strip the last dot. This revokes any welcome the visitor had. Those with a higher effective rating are more difficult to strip and would require a joint effort with the Harpies to strip to a rating of 1.

### Moving:

A character can only consider one domain its home domain. Should a character decide to move, first it loses all City Status dots from its original home domain. The character's City Status dots in its new home domain are equal to the effective City Status the character held as a visitor to the city.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Thanks to Roo James

### *New Hires*

**US ANST Requiem:** June 21, 2006 – Thank you to Logan Boatfield for all his hard work as the US ANST Requiem. We wish him well in all his future endeavors. Please welcome Jason Stafford as the new US ANST Requiem; he has a wealth of storytelling experience, and we look forward to working with him. Jason's email is [unionjack@jyhad.net](mailto:unionjack@jyhad.net).

**First National Ombudsman:** June 26, 2006 - Please help us in welcoming Chris Buser as the newest member of the Camarilla council and First National Ombudsman. Official websites will be changed in the upcoming weeks to reflect this change to the staff.

### *From the Offices of the Storyteller Chain*

**ConGames 2006:** June 13, 2006 – The Camarilla is expanding its presence at conventions across the country; one of the newest conventions on the slate is ConGames 2006, held in Phoenix, AZ, July 27-30, 2006. The website for more information is here: <http://www.conevents.com/page/p06/member.asp> The staff of the convention and White Wolf itself is trying out some new ideas for pushing interest – come on down and check it out.

**Changeling Chronicle:** June 14, 2006 – Despite rumors to the contrary, it is still the intention of the MST and his office to run the end of the Changeling Chronicle within the previously stated timeline. At this time, there are no plans to end it earlier or later than what has already been

discussed. It is further the intention of the MST staff to start releasing information about the newly developed chronicle in September, 2006.

**Camarilla Addendum Updated:** June 19, 2006 – The new Camarilla Addendum is up, including adjustments for new books that have come out recently and mechanics, paying special attention to rules regarding grandfathering, cross-venue background ties, and approvals for Gnosis, Primal Urge and Blood Potency.

**Cam-Rules List Split:** June 22, 2006 – The Cam-Rules list has been split into two lists: Cam-Rules-Advocacy and Cam-Rules-Answers. Cam-Rules-Answers is a moderated list, allowing only valid mechanical questions to be asked by all members, and answers by a group of Storytellers assigned to the task. Cam-Rules Advocacy is for general rules discussion and debate, and is open to all members. Subscription links are as follows:  
<http://cammail.white-wolf.com/mailman/listinfo/cam-rules-answers>  
<http://cammail.white-wolf.com/mailman/listinfo/cam-rules-advocacy>

**US Haiku Contest Results:** June 26, 2006 – The US Haiku Contest has come to a close, and we are happy to announce that the results have been posted to the US NST Website, here: <http://camarilla.white-wolf.com/usnst/docs/index.php?line=haiku>. Keep an eye out for the next US NST Special Contest.



This is not the gargoyle you are looking for..... keep going.

### *Gargoyle Contest*

I have found a strange little fellow that needs a home... but I want to trade. I will trade a gargoyle statue for the best caption for a gargoyle. I have been using ones of my own, but I am sure you can do better. Use my gargoyle pics or ones of your own. Submissions will be published, and the best one will take home the prize. Your own private watch-gargoyle.

Dineh Torres [usnc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:usnc.newsletter@gmail.com)

## Convention Throwing 101

Running a Convention from the idea up. 1. The basics

Before a Convention even becomes a group of dedicated workers making things happen, it starts with a concept.

If you are holding a local, regional or larger convention, a few things are always starters. Arrangements and permissions with the "powers that be" are the first step. Whether you need a full plan and schedule to be approved, or just the acknowledgement of your event's existence, this is where you start. One person is designated the contact person, and they make sure this preliminary work is done.... the "official" stuff. It's highly likely that this person is the Chairperson, Event Lead or Coordinator in charge.

In many cases, for anything but a small local event, arrangements need to be made before the stamp of approval is awarded from on high. The same arrangements usually need to be made locally, but larger gatherings need advance preparation. A RFP, or "Request for Proposal" from a hotel is usually the first step, specifying the hotel's costs, what they will provide, available space and equipment. Providing the Regional or National event offices with this hotel information, specific dates, availability of travel arrangements, and workers to hold the convention is the next step, and bid guidelines may be found on the NCA's website below. If you are holding a small event, regional notification is usually all you need, but any hotel contracts must go through the NCA's office. ( <http://camarilla.white-wolf.com/conventions/> )

A core group of people is gathered to provide the center that will build the convention around them. These are normally the leaders/groups that make an event happen the way it should:

**Coordinator/chairperson:** The ring leader who keeps tabs on everything and is the legal contact person for the event. They makes people run smoothly. This group oversees and schedules the event. They provide Publicity, Publications and local liaison also.

**ST Lead:** They have purview over all the venues, seeing to the setup, running and locations of games. This team includes the Venue STs, narrators and Rules Expert(s).

**Programming Lead:** If it isn't a game, it's this person's job to make it work. From panels on rules, a costuming demonstration or classes on leadership, the Programming team will schedule and coordinate it. This can include on and off-site activities.

**Ops (operations) Team:** If it happens, Ops probably have set it up. Signs for rooms, sound systems, enough chairs, and more creative items can be found or made. They make things run smoothly.

**Security Lead:** The proverbial cat herder. They keep the peace and the pieces. Whether it's finding a lost coordinator, peace bonding a boomerang or making people in a line keep the noise down, Security can do it. Besides, they have all the cool walkie-talkies.

**Hospitality:** Somewhere there is a room with drinks, munchies and a place to sit down and talk between running to games. Hospitality runs this room. They try to make sure you survive the event.

Next issue will be an explanation of what happens next and how you want everything to come together for a great event.



Worried... No. There are ley lines breaking, a blood borne virus, hunters sneaking around, someone trying to collect a "complete set" of our kindred, and dozens of zombies appearing every time I turn my back. No... not worried. I'm just beginning to get a.... migraine.  
~ Prince Iono Tezla