

Wrangling the Wild Wiki..... see page 3



MORTEM POST

The National Coordinator's Newsletter

Issue 9, December 2006

The Camarilla, a White Wolf World of Darkness Fan Club

NC Stuff

Welcome to December issue of the National Newsletter. We've got a few things here that may just interest everyone. We also have a few other projects of note in development. Those of you that want to help develop our efforts to collect recruitment materials, or want to contribute to the National Fiction Collection should email the ANC Newsletter with any contributions or questions.

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If you want to create your own camarilla based
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Charity Drives at ICC Milwaukee Cammies who Care are a Big Thing!

This year at ICC 2006, Milwaukee, Cammies dug deep and donated a tremendous amount to charity. The two charities we sponsored this ICC were the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the Shriner's Hospital for Burned Children. This year we reached an all time high goal for any Camarilla event, we raised \$28,686.

Cystic Fibrosis is a disease that is generally diagnosed at birth or during early childhood. This genetic disease does not allow their body's to remove mucus from their lungs and digestive tract. Besides the problems the disease causes for the lungs, it can also affect the pancreas, sweat glands, and causes frequent infections. The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is treating children with this disease, working on cutting edge research to improve the survival rate for this disease, and to improve the quality of life for children living with Cystic Fibrosis. Based on their work and the work of others like them, the average life expectancy for a Cystic Fibrosis patient today is 36.5 years, up from 32 year in 2000, and in 1990 life expectancy was only 24 years.

There aren't very many centers in the country that are trained to handle burns and even fewer that are equipped to handle burned children. Over the last 80 years, Shriner's Hospital for Burned Children has not only earned a reputation for being the best place for ongoing care for a burned child, but they do it in a kind, loving and generous manner. Burns are especially difficult to treat on children because they are growing, and if treatment isn't done correctly, the children can wind up with more severe scarring, suffer greater loss of mobility, and lose much of the ability to function on their own. There is also a great deal of research that is being done to improve the surgical techniques, minimizing the scarring and contractures (the way the skin gets tight after a burn and sometimes doesn't allow one to move), and they also do a lot of support for the patients and families.

We also donated blood to the Red Cross. Donating blood is an unappealing process to many, but it is

vital for people to have surgeries, for those who are critically wounded and for those with diseases that don't allow their bodies to produce normal, healthy blood. The sign up list for blood donations was filled up on Friday afternoon. When the Saturday Blood Drive rolled around, we had more Cammies willing to donate blood than we had nurses and technicians to take the blood. After several folks were turned away because the Red Cross had not anticipated the sense of charity that we would have, these individuals found a local church that was doing a blood drive that same day, and they went there to give blood.

We as an organization managed to make a huge difference in the lives of many through our donations. This year we raised money through auctioning off in-game and some beautiful out of game items, conducting a jail and bail (where we could put our friends in jail and do embarrassing things), and buying raffle tickets for some really neat prizes.

Every convention I attend, it never ceases to amaze me how deeply Cammies will give. Be it items for raffle or donations, their time in running all of these charity programs, or their blood through the blood drives that almost always seem to have more donors available, and their dollars that make a huge difference in the lives of hundreds of people each convention. The Camarilla has once again proved how serious and committed its members can be about helping the community, and we should all be proud of what we have accomplished together.

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All interested parties should feel encouraged to submit their poetry, fiction, and art to the ANC Newsletter. If you have something else you think would make a great addition to this yearly publication send it along and we will have a look.

It's A WikiWiki World

A wiki is a grouping of web pages that are designed to allow even the most inexperienced user to create useful content with a minimum of effort. In the past, a person needed to know a lot of specialized information to create a website. Now with wikies, the world is now able to let the average user contribute and the members of the Camarilla have taken this tool and put it to exceptional use.

On most Wikies, there is a link at the top of the page called "Edit." When you click the edit link, the page opens into an editor, where you can add content, delete content, and otherwise modify or correct content. This means that almost any page can have its content modified by anyone. This is very useful for developing community moderated sites, but leaves the site open to vandalism. Fortunately, the Cam-Wiki has a set of devoted administrators and lots of diligent community members.

Another great feature is the ability to see any changes made to the Wiki. You can see who changed it, what the page was before and after changes, and you can easily reverse any changes made. This is very helpful for quickly repairing any damages, accidents, or misinformation.

We can all help to keep the website up-to-date and filled with content.. This feature makes Wikies exceptionally useful. You no longer have to wait around for the Webmaster to update the website, and everyone in the Wiki shares the responsibility of contributing and policing the site.

Some thing to be aware of, is that we can't always ensure that the posted information is up to date and correct. We depend on members to help keep the Wikies accurate. For this reason, the Wikies are currently non-sanctioned. The owners of Cam-Wiki.org prefer their Wikies to remain non-sanctioned; however, they have strict guidelines that all content must be Camarilla oriented and adheres to the Code of Conduct.

Currently, there are several Camarilla oriented Wikies, one for each venue, one for Prometheans discussions, each Requiem Covenant has a Wiki page, and also several Awakening Order Wikies, UK Camarilla Wikies, Domain Wikies, etc.

Right now, there is a very large Camarilla Wiki, which is located at <http://www.cam-wiki.org> . On the front page of this Wiki, there are several links to other Camarilla Wikies, like the ones I mentioned above. There is also a donations option. All Proceeds go towards the cost of keeping these servers paid for. Any additional funds go into additional services for the Project.

Dan Wright and Michelle Rogers are the administrators of Cam-Wiki and have helped to add another thriving and increasingly essential facet to our Camarilla existence. They wish to thank everyone that has contributed and all of those that will contribute in the future.

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If you have a Camarilla Wiki that you host or admin, you can contact Michelle Rogers at klubwerks@gmail.com in order to be added to our list, linked on cam-wiki.org, and added to our Wiki community email list.

Resources, Character Sheets, and Items. Approvals for your +8 Vorpal Sword

The Camarilla addendum goes into grueling detail concerning the approval of weapons of custom variety or similarity to approved types. But the addendum largely ignores all other types of gear except to say that it needs to resemble the gear in sanctioned material. The hilarity begins when you realize that most gear in sanctioned material would only help you in tapping phone calls at midnight while rappelling down a mountain (surveillance equipment, flashlight, and climbing gear p. 195-7 Mind's Eye Theatre). The rest of us wishing to carry out more pedestrian tasks are left with guesswork and conjecture as to what gear is needed and what said gear does for us. This is where the equipment bonus system comes in.

Every piece of gear, no matter how trivial, needs to have bonus related to using it, even if said bonus is +0. There are even suggestions as to how much a piece of gear should cost, roughly one dot of resources per rating dot is necessary to purchase an item. There are exceptions for very effective standardized tools or tools that are simple to manufacture but perfect for the job. This works for everything from spatulas to super computers, even cars. Before your high resources characters run off buying everything under the sun and start tossing together numbers there is one other oft forgotten factor, VST approval.

There is a long standing attitude among many Cam members that VST approval means automatic approval. I have even heard this repeated by members of the ST chain at all levels. I believe most of the VST population resents this attitude. Anytime you use your resources to acquire a new toy, two things need to happen: 1) The item needs to be recorded on your character sheet with any bells, whistles, or turbochargers included in the description, 2) You need to make your VST aware of the item so that he/she can make a judgment call against your resources and the complexity of the item to see if you really can get it just by paying for it.

To expound on the first point, the Camarilla implies throughout the addendums that the lack of an item recorded on your character sheet, excepting items you have acquired at an event that is still in progress, means that you do not have that item. I repeat: if it's not on your sheet, it does not exist. Anything acquired during a game needs to be noted immediately by an item card or a note on your character sheet with a ST signature. This keeps everyone from the storytelling staff to your fellow members happy. All such items should also have a bonus listed with them so that we know exactly what game effect they have and the general quality of the item.

On my second point, the Resource merit is not a blank check for whatever you want. There are times when appropriate allies may be needed or some other merit or skill. Just because a piece of gear is affordable at Resources x5 doesn't mean you can buy it at the mall. Some gear will require an expert to assemble or otherwise set up before it can be used. Naturally, characters skilled in such things need not worry very much about it. Other gear may be of a restricted nature or require certain licenses to acquire. Characters licensed correctly also need not worry about this restriction (though the license needs to be on your character sheet and approved by your VST). Remember, an item without stats is a deficit, not an advantage. If it has no stats it provides no bonus and requires minimal success to be defeated.

To review, an item not on your sheet can be reasonably argued to be nonexistent; get a card, get a signature. Use the custom gear rating system to design and describe your gear, keeping in mind that +5 means top notch, state of the art stuff. And always discuss, in full, the details and capabilities of a piece of gear with your supervising storyteller so that you and they are on the same base about what can and cannot be done. Gear and the VST are your friends.

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Getting Into Your Character's Groove 101

We all pretend to be someone else. More than that, we pretend to be someone who's worldview is likely drastically different from our own. Be it a powerful willworker, who spends most of his time interacting with things we'll never really see, in worlds we'll never know, or an ancient Vampire, who lives in a world like our own, but with a blood-spattered overlay of centuries long political maneuvers, ancient grudges and alliances. It can be a lot to wrap your head around – especially when you've got 20 minutes to get from the mindset of diligent employee to lycanthropic spirit warrior at the end of a long week. So let's take a look at some of the methods that can really help us get into character.

One of the most important tools at our disposal in this is ritual. Mankind has forever used ritual as a means of getting in the proper headspace, so why not use it for our hobby? Find something you can do where you really feel your PC inside yourself. Imagine some



task or some thought process that your PC would regularly go through, or really gets you in touch with their headspace. Something you don't normally do seems to work best, so that the ritual cannot be tainted by your own day to day dealings. For example, when I played a lupus garou in a troupe game, I showed up 30 minutes early to game, which took place in a downtown area, and sat quietly crouching on a street corner. I watched everything happen around me, staring deep into headlights so that their harshness would burn my eyes. I took account for every smell, imagining the unnatural city smells of pollution and cigarette smoke churning my stomach and filling me with unease. I listened to everything, and willed myself to be annoyed with all of the loud, garish sounds of the city, disrupting my ability to hear the mortals walking all around me. But I strained to listen to them too, to hear prey moving all around me. I sat quietly, and felt them all slowly change, until for a time, that city felt foreign to me. I'd then make my way to the check-in site, loping purposefully past the milling mortals, stalking off towards my destination. It was wonderful, and when game started, I felt ready to step into my PC's mindset fully. Perhaps your PC reminds you of a very peaceful, spiritual person? Try meditating in a nice patch of grass before game. Do they remind you of your favorite Hong Kong Action Movie? Find a little corner table in a small Chinese food restaurant. While I've never played a PC like him, sitting on an uncomfortable stool, hovering over a bowl of chow mein has always made me feel like Harrison Ford from *Bladerunner*.

Another powerful tool is costuming. Find outfits that match your character. Shop as long as you have to until you find at least one perfect thing for your character. Then set it aside, only to be used at game. What we wear, and how it makes us feel, can have an amazing impact on our headspace. Find an outfit that brings out the same feelings that are strong in your PC, and keep that outfit set aside. Again, the more you use it in your daily grind, the less effective it will be

Getting into Character - continued

at bringing you outside of it and into your PC. Costuming shops can be a great choice, but so can the little jewelry stores in the mall. There may even be a cammie in your area that does costuming, either for themselves and other cammies, or as part of the SCA or similar group. Talk to the players you see at games with fine costumes, especially ones that are similar to what you're looking for. Each of them is proof that costuming stuff is out there for you, and they can double as helpful guides in locating the costume for you. If you have trouble coming up with a proper costume, ask around about that too. If you show up every game in jeans and a t-shirt, someone probably has in their head an idea of how your character really dresses, and it might help you to see how others view the PC.

Next, let's look at music. Music, like all art, can have a powerful emotional effect on a person. We can use that to help further reinforce the emotions that are central to the PC, as well as to mute those emotions of our own that most frequently bleed through. Try building a soundtrack for your PC, one with a variety of songs that help you get into character. A solid selection of 20 or so songs can be used, and once you get used to them, you can start picking out a couple of tracks

that will most benefit you on the way to a game. This is another place where recommendations from other players can really help. There's a ton of music out there, and some of it will help you find your character, I promise. The important thing is to make sure it talks to you, be it lyrics that you can really feel, or a beat that helps get you into the headspace. A strong soundtrack can help bring a PC alive, both for you and others. It can help you on your way to games, as you try and RP a scene online, or whenever you need to find that part of yourself that resonates with your PC's worldview.

Today we've discussed ritual, costuming and music as means of getting into character. These methods, and many others, help add to the experience of the LARP, both for ourselves and others. It can make the difference between good roleplaying and the fantastic experiences we love to talk about. I hope you've managed to take something useful away from this article, and look forward to seeing you all again soon. If you do, feel free to regale me with stories of some of your exceptional moments. But only once, please. ☺

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National Fiction Collection

For those of you who have World of Darkness fiction sitting around and really want to get out and be published, but not sued, we have the perfect opportunity for you. The ANC Newsletter Office is collecting WoD fiction for release to the nation. We will be accepting anything you can throw at us. Then, the submitted material will be reviewed and we will publish the best in our yearly WoD Fiction Annual. We've decided to start this program to help our fiction writers reach a greater audience and provide a space for prose that may be too lengthy for our 6 page newsletter.