

# MORTEM POST

The National Coordinator's Newsletter

Issue 14, November 2007

*The Camarilla, a White Wolf World of Darkness Fan Club*

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## *ICC Wrap Up*

CONGRATS!!! ICC 2007 is the largest Cam Con on record. We had over 900 attendees. Awesome turn out. We also had the chance to make great contributions to two great charities. A good time was had by all! A special thank you to all those who made it possible for us to have such a great time!!! THANK YOU!!!

Let's Make ICC Detroit even more memorable!

## *New Trustees*

There were 2 Trustees named: Indi Mahadeo, former Canadian NC, and Rik Sowden, UK ANST Forsaken. Great job folks, thank you for all you've done and will do in the future!!

Our editor had the luxury of sitting down with Indi to hear her thoughts on being trustee. "YAY! I don't have to do anything for the organization ever again..." Indi said. Then the room points out that she is still her local domain's DC, she is the ST Lead for CAINE 2008, and she is the Props and Decorations Lead for ICC 2008... Then Canadian NC reminded Indi that there will be an upcoming NC election... To which Indi replied "Crap... At least I don't have to track my prestige any more..." Though since Indi doesn't need to track her prestige anymore, this means she will have more time for Cam volunteering. :)

Though the National Newsletter budget doesn't allow us to send a writer to Rik in the UK, we were able to chat about his new role as a Cam Trustee. Rik explained, "Well, to be honest I'm still somewhat startled by it - as I understand things Trustee-ship is something that's given to people who do things above and beyond, and I'm just doing my Cam-jobs, and mainly having fun, meeting people and getting involved with things I enjoy!"

## ICC Thoughts

Lee Rushing

My name is Lee Rushing. I am not very well known. I have never played any big-wig characters. I have never held any high visibility positions. I am MC 13 on the cusp of 14. Usually a high MC Player is well known and is involved a great deal with our organization, but not me. I have attended and worked at the past 4 ICCs. I have attended and worked at many SCaREs. I have been a member since 1998. During this entire time I have never felt as much a part of the game as I did at this past ICC.

Many times I have done everything I could to get involved in larger plots. I have tried to involve my characters in the grand scheme. I have always felt like a speck, which was never accepted in game beyond my own domain. At ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

I would try to help in character, only to be asked to step away. I would announce myself and try to converse, only to be ignored. I would offer my knowledge to help in a plot twist, only to be dismissed. At ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

May I help you? My name is...! I know about this! Excuse me? I have high status! Who are you? I have 156 children! Does anyone care? Look, I just breached Elysium & the Masquerade! Where are you going? But, at ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

I know this game tries to involve everyone, but many times I know I was disregarded because they didn't recognize me OOC. But that is ok. I have sometimes found myself drifting towards those IC that I know OOC. At ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

For the first time ever at big event, I felt that people took me seriously. They listened to my character and actually plotted to kill him. Awesome! Granted that this was helped knowing that the IC location was my characters hometown. I met new PCs, I made new connections. I spread my Bloodline. I stared down a trustee's character. At ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

People approached me, they started conversations, and they asked me for help. It was the best gaming I have had in a long time. Because, at ICC 2007 I felt I was finally accepted.

So, keep your chin up! It is easy to get discouraged about not being involved, but keep trying! At some event, you too will feel that you were accepted!

## Behind the Pink Shirt

Sara Stancato

I had a great time as a White Team (Pink Team?) narrator this past ICC. I like feeling needed and being useful...and I was definitely both. Being an ST of some venue is my eventual goal and this certainly gave me experience. Nothing like jumping headfirst into narration at a con to learn how it's done, right?

That being said, there is a dreadful amount of ignorance about the con ST staff. Players, narrators, and ST's have the duty to educate themselves and each other about who does what.

First, STs wear red shirts. ALWAYS RED. If you run into someone wearing a different color shirt, they are either a lead (blue), security (yellow), or crazy neon color of the White team lead's choosing (this past ICC it was pink because Sean Posey likes to torture me...okay, that's not true, but still...neon pink...ugh). Now, during ICC some STs chose to portray their characters part of the time. I'm not going to voice an opinion one way or the other on this; they were allowed to and that is that. Also, at least one ST wore a shirt other than red, but it was bright and striped and said ST in big letters on the back. Three guesses who I'm talking about. Right. Anyway, the point is that White team does NOT wear red.

This leads me to number two: there is a difference between the "Black" team and the "White" team. Black = Storyteller. White = narration. Whatever the color of the shirts, this difference is crucial. I as a narrator could not run challenges where a PC would potentially die. I also only knew whatever plot I was assigned; I could not tell you about the other ones. I could run feeding scenes, Clash of Wills, Sovereignty, and basic stuff like that. I could not do anything about other scenes...

...which brings me to number three. The killbox. Dearest Cammies, if I'm not IN the killbox, I can't do anything ABOUT the killbox. I can't tell you what's going on inside it. I can't tell you what will result from it. I fault myself for not making this clear at the con, but when I volunteer at future cons—and I will—this will be my rule. Powers fail. Cell phones go to voice mail. I will not run challenges involving the PCs in the box. Period. Do your poor narrator or ST a favor and don't ask to summon your grand sire who is being attacked by a boot party of angry Kindred. Just be patient. Everything will get resolved when the killbox is over.

Fourth, many Cammies have characters that belong cool bloodlines with wonky powers have custom devotions. If you have the approval and IC registration okayed it, great! You must have a write up. Either a photocopy of the particular page or copy of the mechanics from the approval will do. You see, the vast majority of us do not have eidetic memory IRL. I haven't even read half of the Vampire supplements. Werewolf? Not yet. Mage? Forget it. Promethean does what? Don't even get me started on 'Ling. If you don't have a write up, the narrator is allowed to deny you the use of that power, so cover your butt and keep a write up what your rare powers do.

## Cam Travel on the Cheap

Katherine Ray King

Socializing is one of the key appeals of the Camarilla. A global chronicle, email lists, conventions all reinforce our sense of community. One of the most enjoyable parts of being a member can be going to a Featured Game or a convention. Money, however, can often be a problem. A few simple tips can make travel out of town far more feasible.

1) Carpool – You can save money and stress by sharing the trip with other people. Make sure that the individuals riding with you clearly understand that they will be expected to pay for a portion of the fuel.

2) Bring your own food – It may not be as tasty as stopping for fast food, but packing sandwiches, crackers and peanut butter, and other transportable food items can drastically cut the costs of a trip. If you are going to be staying overnight in the city to which you are traveling, check to see if your hotel will be able to provide a mini-fridge. That way you can bring things for breakfast as well, such as yogurt, or cereal and milk.

3) Gas station hot dogs – Despite the horror stories, gas station food has gotten a vast improvement in the last few years. You can normally purchase two hot dogs for less than \$2.50, and that can suffice for a meal if you don't have the funds to spare for other more expensive options.

4) Budget your trip – If you do not have the money for the trip, you should not take it, no matter how much you want to see your friends. Keep a careful track of your budget, and do not go over, that way you are sure that you have enough money to get home!

5) Roommates – Find individuals to share the cost of a room if you are staying overnight. Invest in an air mattress, it can making rooming far more comfortable than sleeping on the floor, and allow you to pay as little as \$15 a night depending on the hotel.

6) Shop around – Occasionally, and especially if you are driving, it is worth it to shop around using an online hotel website such as travelocity.com or hotels.com. Often times you can find a nearby hotel for substantially less cost than the convention hotel.

7) Bring extra money for 'afters' – Many times after a Featured Game members will all go out to a restaurant such as Denny's, or another 24 hour place, and share a meal together. If you think you may want to go, budget a bit of extra cash, so that you do not end up feeling left out.

Travel can be exciting and enjoyable, especially when you need not stress over the finances and can focus on one of the best parts of being a Camarilla member – the friendships you make.

## Your RP Can Help New Players

Johnathan Ingram

We all know that it is like to be new in the Organization/Games and that any amount of encouragement or assistance is always welcomed.

There are several options to get new players involved, but one method I use is to try getting to know the new player. I will ask what ideas they have for their character and background as well as any concerns they may have. After we have discussed ideas and reassured concerns the new player may have had, I look for a way to help them with either the use of my character or someone else's that has been around for a good period of time. Depending on who they are comfortable with, if it's with another established player, I will try to look for someone who knows how to show a new player the dos and don'ts of the game. From here the other player and I will work with the new player on possible character ties and incorporate them into the game.

Whenever I am playing a character that holds a title (in any venue) and there is a new player who has not gotten any ties to other characters and isn't really socializing with them, I try to involve them. To do this, I walk over to them and introduce myself to them and start conversation to find out information about the character, who they are, where they are from, what they do, etc. After I have gathered what I feel is a safe amount of information my character should know, I will then dismiss anything that might be a secret to the character because a new player isn't always entirely positive on what should be told and what shouldn't. At this point, I will introduce them to other characters with similar or like interests and, if need be, lead them into conversation with each other. Should the new player's character have the same interest that my character has, I will invite others into the conversation and try to let the new player lead the conversation. I will then move out of the spotlight, but stay close enough to help should the conversation steer away from what they are familiar and comfortable with.

Another method I use is similar to the one above; I will take the new player's character and pull them under my character to help them get involved. This allows them to add to their character by means of creating tie-ins through my character which will allow them to get involved locally and globally. The only drawback of this method is that the new player's character can inherit my character's enemies in given situations. This can, however, allow them to get involved also, but perhaps not at a level of involvement they might be comfortable with. In using this type of method it's always best to prepare the new player for such possible outcomes.

In closing, there are several ways to implement the use of one's character to assist a new player in becoming involved with the local and global game. These are just a selection of options at anyone's disposal and you should choose the method best suited to the new player's needs.

# Help! I Need a Costume!

David Holler

Costumes make the character's you play in a LARP much more interesting and believable. They also enhance your character, your fun and fun for others and can even get that extra XP from an ST for doing so

## Building a Costume:

1) First, build your character and their background. You have to have an idea of the character's history and personality in order to design a costume. If your character is from London in the 1800's and as a vampire does not take to change to well, you might want to look at what they were wearing at that time

2) Second, have to think of what elements you must have, would be good to have, can do with out, and cannot have in order to effectively play the character. Are you a vampire and have to have fangs? Do you have scares from attacks that happened in the past? Do you have a tail? Is your face a mess? Do you only wear the latest trends? Is a homeless guy better dressed then you?

3) Next, you should brainstorm. Look at pictures. Search the Internet. Remember, costumes you may have seen in the movies, in books, magazines, etc. Draw and/or collect all the ideas that even remotely resemble how you want your final product appear.

4) Then design it. Once you have plenty of options, you can start to narrow down your choices keeping these things in mind:

- It should be logical. Avoid the 8 foot wing span.

- It should be safe. A costume shouldn't force you to forego your prescription eyeglasses, for example.

- It should fit. Everyone's body is different. Just because the hot looking leather mini looks great in the catalog it might not look the same on you (especially for you husky gentlemen)

- It should not make you stand out to much in the place you play. If you play in a public park visited by families, avoid something with blood! If you play in a private home but go outside for scenes, you might want to consider something with a indoor/outdoor option.

Try a mix of the different ideas that you have come up with until you find a combination that suits what your character would wear. Now, how to make it easier and less expensive to build?

When you first start building your costume, remember something I was told once: you get to pick two of the following items for you costume:

- Time - I want it fast.

- Expense - I want it cheap.

- Quality - I want it perfect.

If you are going to build the costume from the ground up I would recommend for the novice costume builder

to go with a pattern. Not all of use can sew.

5) Step five is finding the right materials. This can be tricky. Here's where improvisation comes in handy. If cost is not an option, try looking on-line. There are several companies out there that might have what you're looking for. If you're on a tight budget, think about what you want as an end look, then try to think about what materials can be manipulated to reach the desired look. When deciding on fabric, keep a few things in mind:

- Is it easy to move in?

- Does it breathe well?

- What is the weather like where you play?

- Is it easy to repair?

- Is it washable and will it shrink?

- How expensive is it and can I get more if I need it?

6) During construction. Make sure you have a large enough, well-organized workspace that you could leave and return to another day, especially if this is a project that will take time.

7) Last, you'll want to try it all on together to make sure it will be comfortable to wear for an extended period of time. LARP runs any where from two to eight hours, those eight foot wings I talked about earlier MIGHT become a pain in the butt after you have hit a couple of people with them and catch them on a doorway or two.

8) Places to go to pick up a cheap costume. So far we have talked about putting a costume together from pretty much the ground up but what if you just want to pick one up and you have to do it on the cheap

- Hit the thrift shops. Goodwill, Salvation Army and similar thrift stores are very useful. Remember to look not only for things that are ready to wear, but for things that, with a little modification. (Hint: check on belts, handbags, leather coats, blouses, shirts and furs.)

- Tag sales, yard sales, and school or church bazaars are some of the big bonanzas. The most amazing things can be found for props and costumes! It's kind of like panning for gold - sometimes it's slow, but you never know when you'll strike it rich! And with all of these, the prices are usually excellent.

- Try a big fabric store. Big ones often have sales on remnants. Keep an eye out for remnants of fake fur, fake leather, nice wools, etc. going on sale. Also, go through the "Notions" section; you can find lots of little things to add to your costume, such as buttons, broaches, and studs. If you need to cut and hem something, but you don't sew, try some fabric glue or iron-on hem sealers (like Stitch Witchery). Little touches like scarves, feathers, chains, belts, etc. can be found at a wide variety of places; also consider looking in costume shops, hardware stores, boutiques and dollar stores.

These ideas are just a few that can be used. If you see someone with a costume that you like, just go up and ask about it. Most people are glad to share what they did. It gives gamers an opportunity to goob about an aspect of their character, and we all know everyone loves that!

## Proper Corseting

Tisha Looker

Corsets are great. They seem to be a staple of Cam costuming, but do you know if you are wearing the right one? A look around any Ren Fair or even Cam Convention can show you the gambit of ill-fitting to perfect-fitting corsets. The important thing about a corset is to allow it to enhance your body and make you look the best you can. So here is a crash course on corsets!

**TYPE OF CORSET** - First off you want to figure out which types are best for your body and shape. Some corsets really shouldn't be worn with some body types and some are fairly universal. Several factors can effect what type of corset you should be wearing. Keep in mind that if you are going to a professional and having your corset professionally made that those experts can do wonders and not all of these restrictions have to apply. However, even when you order on Ebay and they say "send us your measurements for perfect fit" most venders don't actually custom make the corset for you. They simply have a stock and provide you with one that will "best" fit your measurements but without the custom elements that would allow you to wear a corset style that isn't suited to your body.

Women who have a fuller bust, a generous D cup and up, should really opt for under the bust styles. For a good fitting corset you will need a good balance between your cup measurements, your waist measurements and hip measurements. If you have a generous bust, this dichotomy can become skewed. Should you opt for an off the rack full, over bust no cup corset, it will bisect the chest area and give a very unflattering overage at the top. This is one of the most common mistakes women tend to make when corseting themselves, I'm sure you've seen it plenty of times.

There are ways however that this can be avoided. First off you can opt to pay the extra money for a custom corset. These will be made with gussets and allowances for the more generous sections so when they are properly put on, they will give the desired shape without the cramped and unattractive overspill at the top. Lacing will really only go so far and should not be considered a substitute for large variations in measurements, such as a large bust but small waist line.

But what if you like the look of the full corset but your heavy on your upper section and really "should" wear an under bust corset? That's simple! You can achieve a full corset look by pairing an under bust corset with a small, but well matched chemise underneath. In this instance it will give you the full clean look of a full corset, because

you will have the continuous line of color, but without the horrible side effects that a full corset would cause. It will also even out your body more by taking advantage of both your exaggerated assets, not constricting your bust, and it will also cinch in your waist giving you that beautiful hourglass silhouette. I take care to point out that if you are going for an under bust corset, that you do not pass over into the waist cincher area.

The main difference between waist cinchers and under bust corset is structure and length. An under bust corset should start just below the bust and go just over the flair of your hips. A waist cincher should go just around your waist area and normally will not rise over your ribs. Under bust corsets should be constructed out of steel boning, where waist cinchers will either use plastic or none at all.

Another option for women with larger busts is to find corsets that actually have a cup built in. Unfortunately these haven't really hit mainstream production and ones that look aesthetically pleasing can be hard to find. It's good to try to find that balance of form and function.

Another factor in finding a good fitting corset can be height. Women who are fairly tall, about 5' 7" and above should opt for corsets that go farther down on the hip and contour the flair of your hip bone. Women of this height generally have an elongated torso so bringing the bottom of the corset past the flair of your hip will help smooth that shape and make you appear to continuously flow. Cutting the corset off at or above the flair for women this height runs the risk of making your body appear disjointed and causing a "mushroom" effect.

Women who are under this height or who have more compact torsos will want to make sure that the corset ends at the flair of the hips, or just above. Using a longer styled corset on a body that is more squat will not give you the long line you would assume. Instead it will appear to make your body look unbalanced and spindle like.

**SIZING A CORSET** - Sizing is an important aspect of a proper corset fit. Rack corsets are generally sized by your waist measurement, which is generally about 2 inches above your navel, in 2 inch increments. In general you will want a corset that is 2-6 inches smaller than your waist measurement. There are several factors that you want to consider when deciding exactly how many inches smaller. One is gap. When a corset is laced there is gap between the laces. The larger the gap, because you've chosen to go too small (6 inches) the more skin will show. Additionally the skin that shows through the gap will tend to look "flabby" and stick out, which isn't very attractive. So be mindful of this. Modesty panels can be added to hide this, or a chemise can be worn underneath to cover the skin.

In general a corset should take approximately 4 inches off of your measurement. Those of us who have more cushion will compress more; while those who are thinner, will compress less. It is important to note that a comfortable corset will not be overly uncomfortable to wear. Instead, you should feel like you did when you first started wearing a bra. It's not the most delightful thing in the world and you are happy to take it off after a day of wearing it, but it should NEVER be painful.

Let me repeat: A CORSET SHOULD NOT BE OVERLY UNCOMFORTABLE TO WEAR. YOU SHOULD NEVER FEEL PAIN WHILE WEARING YOUR CORSET.

A corset, after the initial lace up, should never make you feel short of breath. The only exception to this is that some people are "belly breathers", which means that each breath they take expands their stomach more than their chest. Of course all of us do that when we take deep breaths, but if you are a belly breather, you'll notice some shallowness of breath. If this is the case, you should probably opt for less cinching around your stomach.

PUTTING ON A CORSET - I cannot stress enough how helpful it is to have someone help you put on your corset and that, that person know how to properly do it. It isn't overly difficult to learn and you can teach anyone fairly quickly. When you first get your corset you'll want to lace it before putting it on. You want to lace from top to the middle and from the bottom to the middle so that the laces will come together at the waist. You want to avoid corsets with just one set of laces as this severely limits your ability to make your corset fit correctly and cinch properly.

Keep in mind that the first few times you wear a new corset you don't want to over lace. You want to give the fabric and bones time to adjust to your body and you to your new corset, before really tightening it up. Failing to follow this step can cause your corset to wear out more quickly and lose its shape far more quickly than it should. It can also cause you to get light headed.

The first step is to slide your corset on and fasten the bust in the front. Most people find that doing it from the top down is easiest, I actually find it's easier for me to go from the bottom up. This is really personal preference I think. Then you will want to have help. If this is your first time you'll definitely want help. While it is possible to do it yourself, it is good to have an extra set of hands, especially the first time.

You want to start tightening the corset from top to middle and bottom to middle. Obviously the top and bottom should not be as snug as the middle. You want to do this progressively and make take several passes to get a good fit. A good way to do it is to hold the laces at the center and keep pressure on them so when they are pulled and tugged by your helper. This way they slip through easily and this will also make it go quicker. You should keep tightening until you get a good controlled hugging sensation. When you feel that you have achieved the appropriate balance of support and comfort simply tie of the laces in a bow and you are set!

## ST Tricks

Bert Sanders

Is your domain having a tough time trying to give the city a unified, world of darkness feel to it? Here is a simple trick! Once you have someone willing to take on this project, you will have an invaluable tool for the entire ST staff.

The idea is that while every venue has its own dynamic there is one constant for all. The world and in most cases that is the city itself. As such, one of the hardest jobs a DST can have is working to integrate the venues into a unified world of the city. The hardest part is tracking where events take place and who lives or runs what. A simple way to deal with this is have the DST get a Map for the Domain and a simple spreadsheet and some highlighters. If someone in the domain is a AAA member, they can get free maps from AAA.

Sit down with each VST or have them get with the players and go through the map and show where things such as havens, territories, sanctums, businesses and personal holdings are. Then enter in to the spreadsheet each player and character and the grid cords for that information and a simple note. The DST then takes that info and puts it in the map with different color highlighters for each venue. Once you do this can see where venues can and might overlap. Work on information so that do not have 4 people who have that same huge mansion as their home in each venue or track where bad things <tm> happen in the city and who might be affected in each venue.

Once you have the map and the spread sheet worked out it, becomes a great tool for the ST staff to use for plots and ways that players can impact not just those in one venue but can have a bit more of a unified feel when track that the Elysium that you burned down in the requiem game was right next door to that Mage's sanctum and such.

If you wanted to be even more flexible, photocopy sections of the map, place them in a plastic sleeve and use water soluble overhead pens to track areas that are in constant change. Also having a map that can show both the players and ST's where events are happening can give a greater feel for the location and allow for some more closely integrated games.

# How to be a Charmer

Leslie Massey

As both a table top gamer and a live-action enthusiast, I find the challenges and difference between the two genres to be intriguing. It's a fairly common topic of conversation amongst my friends, and through many the long nights of hashing (as we gamers are so fond of doing, and doing, and doing), I've compiled a mental list of translations from paper game to living, breathing person. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to take statistics and backgrounds and be able to walk that walk and talk that talk!

Below I've created a list of "Do's" for the aspiring charmer. If you're playing an anti-social sociopath, then obviously, this list isn't for you.

So you want to be a "playa"?

The vampire genre in general is often seen as sexy, seductive, and alluring. All of those traits, at one time or another, I've seen played magnificently well. In theory, all you need are your stats, but in actual play, the reality is that personifying those qualities will create for you a more immersive experience and allow you to succeed at your in character goals which center on those traits. The card may say "striking looks", but if all your doing is striking out, then maybe you should consider a few tactics. I hear these translate into real life, but I can neither confirm nor deny.

## **Top Ten DO's for the dashing, debonair, and seductive roleplayer:**

1. Personal Hygiene regimen. Games are notoriously crowded and overly warm with body heat, so if there is any question in your mind about the last time you got cozy with an Irish spring, play it safe. There is nothing, and I repeat, *nothing* suave about body odor. At conventions, this is especially important - again, the close quarters and the long hours are not friendly to even the most potent deodorant. When a player gets close to you, all you want them thinking about is your charm and the next gem of conversation you drop, not how to escape your close proximity as quickly as humanly possible.

2. Personal grooming and style. Neat and clean nails, hair styled to suit your character, clothing pressed and clean; these are the basics. Beyond that, it's a matter of style. It's important to create a "style" for a "stylish character." I usually try a theme - my character likes lace, or she prefers blue, or she would never be seen without a full suit on. TJ Maxx, Marshalls, and thrift stores abound! Get a

"theme" and stick to it! Always keep an eye out when you're out doing something - you never know when you might find that perfect piece. Find what looks good on you while working within your concept!

3. Cologne/Parfume. Find a signature scent for your character. Scent is a powerful tool - it leaves a lasting impression and can easily sway someone's perception of you. A tasteful amount of cologne or perfume reads as sophistication. We've all had that person walk by at a hundred yards and you wonder if they accidentally broke into a perfumery and went skinny dipping. Again, the art of seduction is subtle, down to the scent that is just enough to register at close quarters. As human beings, it is theorized that our memories triggered by scent are more emotional. A picture of an ex might make you sad, but that old shirt that still smells like him will probably have you curled up with a tub of Benjamin and Jeremiah on the couch watching Bridgett Jones' Diary.

4. Clothing. If you're going to wear it, you'd better be prepared to sell it. And by that, I mean - if you walk in dressed like a cowboy, I want to see swagger, swearing, (role played!) boozing, and bronco riding! Dressing for seduction, however, is sometimes misperceived. Often it is not what you are lacking in modesty that makes you alluring, so much as it is the hint of that which is imagined but not yet seen. Too tight is just that - it will only make you look like you've outgrown your clothes. Fleshy, corner-appropriate clothes are perfectly fine for a harlot character - but if your intention is to seduce, go for class. It is said that money is power, and power is sexy. A character that is wearing a designer suit from a thrift store is still a character in a designer suit - and if you have the extra to get it altered to fit you like a glove, all the better!

Okay, so now you're an object of fascination. How do you DO it?

5. Eye contact. Not being able to look someone in the eye is very disconcerting. Staring at someone blatantly is also disconcerting. If you're trying to scare them, then by all means, continue. If you're out to garner their attentions for other reasons, try to avoid those two tactics. Instead, try to use your eyes to your advantage. (Eye drops are key here - while it's commendable that you stayed up till 6 am drinking your face off, it probably looks like you graduated from Ganja Valley High School.) If you're being introduced to someone, focus on them as though they are the only other person in that room with you. Let your eyes be warm (think about puppies or babies or whatever makes you all mushy inside). A smile that stops before it hits your eyes is as cold as ice. This can be useful, but not for our purposes. Don't leer, wiggle your

eyebrows, or undress them with your eyes... yet. Okay, don't ever leer or wiggle your eyebrows, that's just tacky. Undressing them with your eyes comes later. If you're no longer talking, but still in the same room, the occasional private look creates intimacy - a smile, a wink, or a nod speaks volumes. While you may be talking to someone else, your attention is still focused on them.

6. Conversation. Nothing says sexy like an active listener. So you've been introduced. You've made a good first impression. You've exchanged a few looks across the room, then you move in for the kill. Take them aside for a one-on-one chat. Be casual about it - act as though it is the most natural thing in the world for the two of you to be conversing. It helps, at this point, to be good with the gab (a side note: fresh breath, it's just a breath mint away). However, the most important rule is to be better at listening. Attentive, intelligent, and responsive listeners are incredibly sexy. Ask your target questions about what they're talking to you about, make appropriate comments, but most of all, be prepared to listen.

7. Danger. Or going Toe-to-Toe. Another point of enticement is the challenge. Dangerous and threatening situations heighten emotions. If you can, arrange to be part of an attack, or better yet, invite them along for some under-handed derring do against someone they either don't care about or wouldn't mind seeing ended. Excitement is the key. If the person seems up for it, better yet, put them on the spot. Challenge them - the tango is sexy for a reason... you get to see if they can go toe to toe with you. Note, try to not get your character or theirs killed. Maiming is okay.

8. Suspense. Keep them guessing. Don't become predictable or boring. Be eager to make plans with them, keep them waiting while you complete some terribly important in character business, then join them as though you have forgotten anyone else in the room exists, but be ready at a moment's notice to leave them.

9. Remember. Little details make big impressions. Try to remember things... note the color of their eyes, what they've chosen to wear, their hair style, and any accessories that catch the eye. Next time you see them, you get to comment on how stunning they looked in that last color but how this new color really brings out the blue in their eyes. You can be more lascivious than that in game if you choose, but too heavy handed just looks crass. In character "gifts" which show attention to detail are also impressive... the cologne they wear, something their character loves that you discovered the last time you spoke, and so on. Be creative - show interest without looking desperate. It's a fine line.

10. Hard to Get. Finally, don't be too attentive. Remember, a little indifference makes them wonder... were you really interested or not? The more they think about you, the more you have them. But too much distance will only make them write you off. If you push them away with one hand, you have to pull them back with the other (figuratively speaking, of course).

Finally, have fun! Fun is infectious and if you're enjoying yourself, chances are your partner will as well.

## Character Ennui Syndrome

Sara Stancato

Some gamers, whether they play an MMORPG, a tabletop RPG, or LARP, start the game with one character and hold onto it like Scrooge clinging to his money. They never get bored with the concept or disinterested in the game. They'll do anything to keep their character out of danger.

Then there are those who play a character as long as they can, but if plot happens, they handle it with grace. They spend a moment to mourn, then move onto the next without too much fuss.

I, however, am on the other extreme of the spectrum. In my lengthy career of role-play gaming, I haven't been able to stick with a character for more than six or seven months. In the case of my tabletop games, that was often due to the GM/ST getting bored with the campaign and moving onto something else. Sometimes Real Life took over and we had to stop playing, or I moved and had to find a new group to RP with.

In the case of LARP, however, I find that I fall in love with a concept in a particular kind of game, have a whirlwind romance for a few weeks, and then grow utterly bored and want to move on to the next Shiny Thing. I ditched oWoD for new and overhauled Masquerade for Requiem when I joined the Camarilla, then went through four characters in less than two years. Three of those four I chose to get rid of myself because I had no interest in them anymore. I call this problem Character Ennui Syndrome.

What causes CES? It is difficult to pinpoint the origins. Perhaps I am more prone than your average gamer. I have a long history of not being able to stick to commitments in the long term. It is a miracle I graduated high school and college. The longest I've been in any one job was two years, and that was only part time. Most jobs I've only held for a few months before moving onto the next Shiny Thing.

There is a positive aspect to always looking for something better, but only if you're successful at finding it.

When it comes to gaming, there are many influences on how successful I can be with a character. The strength and longevity of the game, the dedication of the person or people running it and the interest of the other players all have a part. However, the biggest influence is what other priorities I have at the time. That has changed drastically and often over the years.

Right now, family is the number one priority, and it comes with many other sub priorities: our upcoming move, keeping a clean house, making sure there are enough of the things we need, etc. etc. The second priority is not interfering with my husband's dedication to the Camarilla. I have heard some criticism saying that I'm too lenient on this score, but I disagree. Jed was RC of the EC region when we met and it was clear from the beginning of the relationship how important that was to him and how important playing is to him. He has compromised in other ways, so I compromise by making sure he can attend the games that are important to him, such as Game of the Month.

How has this contributed to my CES? It is difficult, if not impossible, to stay interested in Vampire when I can't play regularly and make strong and lasting connections with other players.

If Requiem was the only venue out there, I could find a way to attend and perk my interest back up again. But I already had love for Forsaken from a pre-Camarilla game I played in. Then Awakening, Created, and Lost became available. Each has elements that strongly appeal to me and inspires exciting concept ideas. What's a girl to do? How can I choose?

Both RL and the overwhelming choice of venues to play in keep my CES going strong, but perhaps a cure is coming. I have a Werewolf character in mind and a Changeling built. Once the move is over and I am a member the Columbus domain, hopefully I can role-play regularly enough to maintain interest in these characters, hit the one year mark, and get my CES under control for good. Then again, perhaps I am just the type of person that can never stay committed to anything. I hope not, but only time will tell.



Photo by David Holler from IA-003-I;  
Model is Candice Gross from AR-008-D

## National Staff Q&A

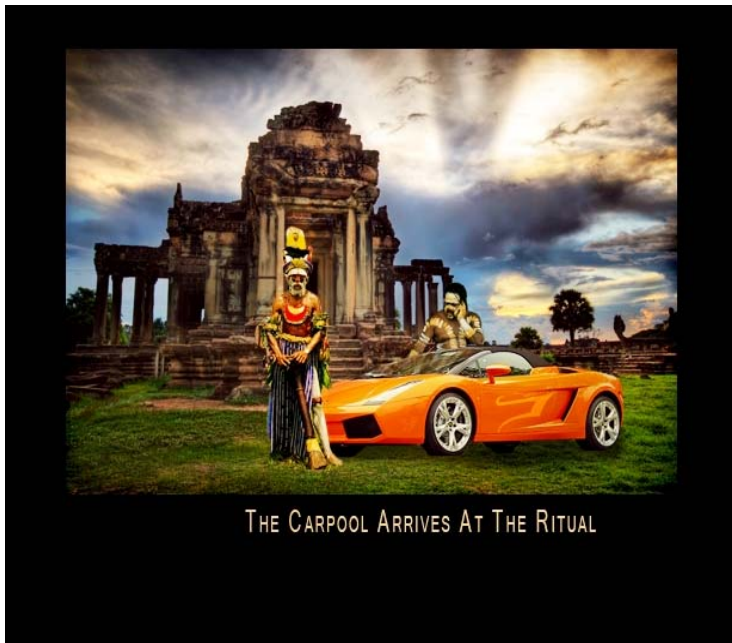
***Who is the person, for returning members to contact, if they "accidentally" issued themselves a brand new member number when re-upping on the WW site?***

If a member needs to merge accounts, they should contact Wes Contreras, ACD Technology, at [cam.global.tech@gmail.com](mailto:cam.global.tech@gmail.com). He can merge or correct accounts

***I want to be more involved in charity, but my Domain isn't. What should I do?***

Organize one for them, travel to nearby domains and help them, get involved in regional charities. Keep you eye out for upcoming national charities :)

***If you have any questions that you would like answered in the National Newsletter, please send them to the editor at [usnc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:usnc.newsletter@gmail.com).***



Carpool by Hans Watson

This newsletter doesn't come together without YOU! December's newsletter is all about Changeling, so if you have a great idea, a problem that you need help with, or an article for Post Mortem, send it to us at [USNC.Newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:USNC.Newsletter@gmail.com).



Self Portrait of David Holler from IA-003-I

## Convention Corner

GLARE (Great Lakes Regional Event) is scheduled for January 3-6, 2008 at The Lodge in Iowa. The Lodge is a themed hotel modeled into a castle setting that has just finished a multi-million dollar renovation. Rooms are \$79/night for a standard room and a generous corporate rate is being offered for the junior suites, suites, and bi-level turret suites. The room block is under "White Wolf Games/Camarilla". For phone reservations, call (563) 359-7141. Additional information and the website will be published soon.

JeremyCon, I mean SWARE (South West Regional Event) will be held in Phoenix, AZ on July 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Our "home" for the weekend will be the Crown Plaza Phoenix Airport. Check out their webpage at [www.cpphoenixaz.com](http://www.cpphoenixaz.com). To make reservations, call (602) 273-7778 or (800) 315-2621. The room block is under "The Camarilla Organization". Be sure to use this code to get our room rate of \$79/night.

ICC 2008 is being hosted in Detroit, MI, October 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>! Keep your eyes peeled for Hotel information and room block information. Once it is up, reserve your room early, we are expecting another big crowd!

The Canadian National Event, CAINE, is being hosted in London, Ontario, March 16-20, 2008. London is only 2 hours from Detroit! The schedule for ECLipse (the East Central's Regional Event) should be coming out shortly, so keep your eyes peeled for this announcement. The dates and location for USCC 2008 will be announced shortly as well.

## White Wolf New Releases

<u>Release</u>	<u>Scheduled Release Date</u>
Astral Realms (Awakening)	November 7
Fall of the Camarilla (Requiem)	November 21
Requiem for Rome (Requiem)	November 21
Winter Masques (Changeling)	December 5
World of Darkness: Changing Breed	December 5
Adamantine Arrow (Awakening)	January 23
Lord Over the Damned (Requiem)	January 23
Midnight Roads (World of Darkness)	February 6
Rites of Spring (Changeling)	February 6