

2018 NST Election Member Questions

A big part of the NST office is managing the big ideas for the org, including staff decisions for volunteers needed to implement. Some ideas are bad (read: more costs/harms than gains/benefits). But even good ideas can suffer flaws in implementation, which can make good ideas seem bad in their outcome.

With that in mind, please assess 2 of this current chronicle's big ideas--VIP point spend review/approval and DPotM/Worldbuilder review/approval/publishing.

- * Are these good ideas? What do they cost/gain the org?
- * If implementation of them is a problem (e.g., backlog), please explain **why**, to the best of your knowledge.
- * As NST, would you intend to keep/remove/revise/replace them?
- * As NST, **how** would you address implementation of these for improvement of the game?

Answer:

I like the idea of VIP.. It's intention is to drive volunteerism in the club in a way that allows the accumulated totals to be spent in fun ways. When MC is a fixed long term goal, VIP is a more immediate return for someone's time and effort spent volunteering. That said, I think we could implement better ways of tracking what gives a player vip. I've heard way too many players asking how much they vip they get from their time volunteering and it does add to the paperwork for the coordinator side of things. I will look for ways of improving the receiving and tracking of VIP if I become the NST but I will not be replacing the program. An amazing foundation has been laid so I want to add to it.

The DPotM/Worldbuilder worked pretty wonderfully when I used it. It was quick, easy, and the conversations I had with those overseeing it were pleasant and professional. I have no intention of changing it. However, I'm always willing to take feedback if someone had a different experience or has thoughts on improving the system.

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Will anything be done to address the cliques / super friends team ups that seem to repeat through the Chronicles?

IE - The same people tending to be in charge and major powers IC. High MC privilege

Answer:

This is a question that's been asked in different ways for, I think, the life of the club. I'll do my best to address it based off of my experience. There was a time when MC dictated what one could play in the club. An example of this is that a player with MC 1 could only play a neonate in Masquerade. I believe some of these older policies generated a lot of the perception of high mc privilege.

First, let me point out that being high mc, in my mind, is not a privilege. It is a **Responsibility**. Someone who's put in that much time and love in the org also means he or she should be looked at as the example to be set. Membership Class is a way to thank a player for giving their time but it's also a beacon of what a good player should look like. There is no arguing this. Every time I've gone up an MC, I've received a message reinforcing this belief.

I feel like the High MC privilege issue is much less of a problem now. As an example, a good amount of prominent PCs in Masquerade are people who are MC 7 or lower.

As for fighting “super friends,” this is hard as I feel like this is more pointing out that specific people like to play with each other. I know I like to play with my friends. I can’t think of a single player who doesn’t want to play with their friends. However, there are always story elements that can be introduced to provide strife between players’ pcs. As NST, I’d also like to find newer players to throw into the mix of playing NPCs and as the main pcs of major plot. We don’t play to win, we win by playing together.

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It is a widely held consideration (or observation for some) that our flagship/well-attended metaplot games have a tendency to seriously suffer in quality or attendance when a NST changeover happens, so continuity of vision and response is a concern.

Is it your intention to retain the sitting Masquerade and Apocalypse staffs if they wish to stay on during your administration?

Answer:

It is 100% my intention to keep the current national staff. I think changing out staff at this stage is a supreme detriment to our existing chronicles. Doing so would create unnecessary lags in responses and confusion as plot avenues and previous player actions fall through the cracks.

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Where do you feel we are at in our different venue chronicles (using whatever narrative structure terminology you favor) and roughly how much longer do you think they should run?

Masq:

We’re about a year in and things are starting to seriously ramp up if MEScon was any indication. I’m ok with ending at year 3 but, realistically, I could see pushing the chron out for another year or two depending on player buy-in.

Apoc:

Apoc’s plot is getting dark and is also beginning to ramp up the desperation that the Garou are facing. The problem with this chronicle, though, is that more than a few people expected the old apoc story instead of the new one. This isn’t a problem with the chronicle’s plot but a significant settings shift that has been a bit of a culture shock. I’d like to see this go for a full three to five years as well, depending on if we can mitigate some of that shock and bring more interest back into the game itself.

Space:

Space is going really strong and I’m really impressed with its implementation and the player buy-in. If I could let space go forever, I would. Realistically, though, I see it running the same course as the rest of the chronicles we have in motion. I’d like it to last about 4 total years. I think that’d give people enough time to really experience the great product that was created.

CoD-X:

CoD-X has, in reality, just started so we’re still in the set-up phase from what I’m seeing. I’d like to see it go for about 3 or so years.

The list of candidates for NST is all men. The RSTs are currently predominantly men, with 7 of 8 identifying as so. Historically this trend continues back to the clubs founding. A) Why do you think this is? B) Is this a problem; if so, what are your thoughts on how to solve it?

Answer:

I don't know when it happened but, at some point, it became a common thought that Storytellers should be males and Coordinators should be females. I highly disagree with this notion and think it's absolutely a problem. I remember having an amazing NST who was female and, to be frank, one of my current favorite STs is someone who's non-binary.

What we need to do is cater our avenues of reaching out for volunteers toward ways that don't take gender into account but rely on skill sets instead. This way, we can fight the perception that men are always STs. Because of this, I would like to mentor players who wish to be storytellers, especially if they are female presenting, gender fluid, or gender neutral.

D&D is in many ways about problem solving, with that what is your favorite D&D/Pathfinder class and why?

Answer:

I actually agonized over this one. My first thought was the Paladin because the class is really good at either being a major combatant or support, making it a versatile and fun class to play. After some serious thought, I'm going to have to say Sorcerer is my favorite class. Not only is it mechanically versatile but it makes the player think outside the box surrounding the use and implementation of spells, is also a charisma based class which means I get to flex my talking abilities (it helps me fight off social anxiety), and is also very good at being support. I don't mind not being the most popular so long as I can properly assist with getting things done.

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Course corrections can be difficult but are sometimes necessary for the health of the game. Do you foresee a need for a course correction and if so how would you implement the correction?

Answer:

Course corrections are always a matter than needs to be considered. My current perception of the chronicles as it stands is that they're on course so I wouldn't need to steer them back toward their intended stories. That said, once I know more about the chronicles, I will assess them and discuss the intention behind the plots with their respective ansts and course correct as necessary.

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If elected, do you intend to appoint your assistant staff, or hold an all-call for members interested in applying for a national position?

Answer:

My current intention is to keep the existing staff if they're willing to work with me. However, if any of the current staff decides to step back for any reason, I would want to put out an all-call to the membership to back-fill the position.

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Thanks for running! We are approaching halfway through the Apoc and VtM chronicles and the 2.0 ones are just getting started. Not every member has approved of every decision of our aNSTs, but

they have been the architects of the current metaplots. With all of this in mind, is your intention to keep the current aNSTs or do you plan to reopen all-calls?

Answer:

My current plan is to keep the current ANSTs and their staff. I think removing them from their positions at this point would be more of a detriment to the health of our chronicles. I understand that not every decision is popular and I'm willing to take feedback to the national staff. However, know that any decisions I make will be with the health of the Membership, the Org, and our chronicles in mind.

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1. How neutral can you maintain in the face of pressure from your significant other, friends, and family in the organization?
2. How much influence does your significant other hold over your decisions?
3. How do you plan to minimize your significant other's involvement with the office, and the decisions you will make if you are elected?
4. Can you confirm and support that your significant other will not influence what you do as the NST if you are elected?

Answer:

1. This is probably the only time that I can say this and have it be significant toward a position in the org. I'm a Magician as my father was before me. This means that I can absolutely maintain composure and a neutral position even as those closest to me try to press me into revealing secrets or into making specific decisions based on their perceptions.
2. My Significant Other is really good at asking me direct and specific questions in order to ensure I'm thinking about all the angles of a situation/issue. Her influence on my decision making is simply support and assistance in critical thinking. That said, she's already asked that I keep her left out of the decision making of the NST's office should I be elected.
3. My S.O will have no involvement with the office and decisions I will make.
4. I confirm and support that my S.O will not influence what I do as NST should I be elected.

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What are your thoughts regarding setting enforcement via NPC's? If game mechanics favor enough PC's and their ability to oppose the setting, should NPC's "bring the hammer" to reinforce the setting? Should player agency take priority and change the setting? Where do you strike a balance?

Answer:

I feel like characters can absolutely oppose the setting, and even change it, so long as the players do so in a collaborative manner. Constant communication with the ST staff is key so that expectations on both sides can be managed and this is, in my current opinion, the only way to properly balance setting with player agency. If characters oppose setting without that collaboration or take aggressively drastic measures then the setting should react to them just as drastically. This means yes. I do believe that NPCs in positions of power should "bring the hammer" when it's necessary.

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Is there a place in the MES for one-shot games? If so, how should the NST's office approach such a task?

Answer:

I believe we did a one-shot Changeling game at SWRE. This tells me there's definitely a place for them. I would say they're most appropriate for cons and implementation would be something the NST and NCA offices would need to discuss. That said, the MHB states that any domain can hold

MES Sanctioned non-chron games. If you have an idea for your local game, I say see if your domain staff is down with planning.

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Given the primary role of leadership and management the NST position has over the varied venues; what are your plans for moving these venues forward? Are you planning larger setting changes? Are there plans to replace/adjust current ANST staff across the board, or any venue in specific?

Answer:

My plan is to discuss the current chronicles with the sitting ANSTs to determine their next steps and direction. I am not planning major settings changes, though I do have some ideas to help with engagement. I do not think it is healthy for our existing chronicles to replace or adjust our existing staff at this time.

What are the aspects of each venue you enjoy and conversely which aspects (if there are any) that you would like to see changed?

Answer:

I'm a long time masquerade player. I really enjoy the politics of the sects and the dynamics of clan interactions. I feel the venue allows for some really intense and deep role play which is, really, why I keep coming back to it. One thing I'd like to revamp, but not entirely change, is lineage plot. I think we need to come up with more ways to make that aspect of the game engaging for the player base and that's something I plan to discuss and work toward implementing should I be elected.

Apoc is by far one of my favorite games ever. The Tribes are unique and really interesting, I like the collaborative side of it even when it becomes competitive role play, and the desperation of the fight has always been intriguing to me. I would like to find a way to combat the initial culture shock of the updated setting

I'm really just not dipping my toes into Space and CoD-X. I think space as a concept is great and I love how people are throwing themselves into amazing costuming. CoD-X, likewise, has some amazing stories come out of it which makes me excited to jump in.

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What will you (prospective NST) do to create a welcoming environment and accessible plots or NPCs for neurodivergent or neuroatypical players? We have a not inconsiderable presence in the club, and are not alone among folks who may have trouble processing auditory stimulus, recognizing body language or unspoken social cues, or face other hurdles in accessing plots.

A specific example of this could be as recently as MEScon, where a national NPC was instructed to only speak in cryptic, vague ways to PCs, with no given alternative. We've come a long way in making the org more accessible to many people from many walks of life: what will the NST's office do with you in it to create an accessible game with regard to non-allistic players?

Answer:

There are a significant number of our players who are neurodivergent/neuroatypical that have severe trouble understanding social cues, body language, and even tone of voice. I have spoken with more than one of our players who say these are issues that are struggled with and have suggested something in place that is text-based as it's easier to read intention in written form.

Because of this, I'd like to try an NPC-centric mission system. This can be like the mission system in apoc where the players get to define the story of their objective or it can be a simple message that states the disposition of the npc and goals the npc would like the pc to accomplish, depending on certain criteria. In essence, the pc comes up and has a conversation with the npc. After the

conversation, the player of the NPC has the ability to hand a mission or a disposition card to the player so they have some fun information to go on. I think this would enhance the fun and engagement of our neurodivergent/neuroatypical players.

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What is the biggest challenge facing the club in your opinion? How do you intend to address that problem?

Answer:

The club is going through growing pains. The change that comes with this will be the greatest challenge of our club. It's the clash of antiquated thought processes against new ideals. We are gaining new members from a new generation of gamer. Our club has to move forward accordingly. We've already started with the clear stance against certain concepts and "isms." I intend to further address it by working with the ANST Safety Mechanics/Safe Spaces toward creating policies on the ST side that a. Bridge the gap with the coordinator chain, b. Help us ease through this culture shift and come out the other side stronger, and c. Ensure the safety and well-being of our players are at the forefront of our minds.

Do you intend to be more hands on with the games or do you intend to delegate management of the games to your ANST?

Answer:

I will be a very visible NST and will be hands on for a lot of things. But I also know that delegation is the key to fighting burn-out and I will utilize the ability to know when to hand things off for the betterment of the Club.

Would you rather have invisibility or flight as a power? Why?

Answer:

If I can only choose between the two, I would choose invisibility. I tend toward introversion so it would be nice to bamf out for a while to recharge. Also, I'm kinda afraid of heights so, while flight would ensure I couldn't die from falling, I'm not sure my heart could handle it.

If I'm NOT limited by the two, I'd say neither of those but would, instead, want the ability to control atoms. Then I could do both... within the comic book scientific realm anyway.

What is something you regret doing or not doing in your time in the organization? What was the lesson you learned?

Answer:

Oh man. I regret not getting involved sooner. I mostly kept myself to the local level of volunteerism and it was rewarding but I actively avoided branching out to try to be a louder positive voice in the org out of a fear of failure. I got over this fear by becoming DST of Austin, which has a large player-base, and by doing so, I found my voice. The lesson I learned was to never let fear win over love. I love this org and I will work to be a major voice for inclusion, fair-play, and safety no matter what. Besides, failure is just the first step to success.

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If elected, how will you as NST deal/include/relate to the Regions of our club that you are unfamiliar with?

Answer:

Lots and lots of conversations with the RSTs. The NST is supposed to have frequent meetings with the Regional Storytellers. I intend to continue this tradition as it's the best and most efficient way to understand those regions I've never interacted with. That said, I'm originally from the SE (Nashville, TN Represent!), have been all around the GL, know a ton of players in the SW, and am currently very much in the SC. I got a pretty good handle on most of the regions personalities.

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Can you tell us how you'd deal with a situation where a majority of RSTs disagree with a decision of yours and how you think that situation should be handled by the NST's office?

Answer:

The NST is supposed to meet with the RSTs. One of the topics of this conversation is to discuss upcoming changes. I would like to continue that trend in the hopes of maintaining an open dialog. If, during that conversation, a majority of the RSTs disagree with one of my office's upcoming decisions, I would open a dialog, asking for feedback, and searching for a compromise that most of us can agree is good for the org and the chronicle in which the decision was based.