

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?

I believe that both projects are good, if not necessary, ideas. They are however bogged down by administration. For DPotM/Worldbuilder, this administration is required and likely needs more manpower. For the VIP system, I do believe that there are a lot of items that simply could be tracked locally and not get bogged down by the single point of review as they currently are.

If I were chosen as NST, I would need to review the DPotM/Worldbuilder before considering any changes. For the VIP system, I would definitely like to review with the NC how VIP is tracked at the local level and revise which items could be spent and tracked locally without needing to be run through the national review process.

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

There was a time in the club's history where MC provided considerable privilege in regards to in-character power. In my opinion though, that time has gone. While there are individuals that tend to gravitate to leadership positions in-character, that is because of their experience and dynamic personalities. Those experienced players tend to have higher MC, but their success in character is not a result of it.

Where those in-character leadership positions fall under the purview of the NST's office, I will certainly take previous in-character positions into mind when evaluating applications. In those cases, I would encourage those experienced players to instead mentor or assist newer players getting involved.

Regarding the player cliques or groups, I have no intention of telling players who they can associate or ally with.

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?

I have no immediate plans to replace the current roster of ANSTs. If I am selected as NST, I plan to have an in-depth review with each of the ANSTs on their current and future plans. I agree that a change of the venue ANSTs can have a considerable impact upon the health of the game and do not consider making any such change lightly.

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?

I have played through several chronicles of varying length. Almost universally, the moment a chronicle end date is defined, the very nature of the games change as player's mindsets prepare for the end, and in many cases, the next big thing. These chronicles were announced with no expected end date and that the chronicle health would be reviewed to determine if an end point should be planned. I intend to keep with that plan and will make ongoing reviews with the ANSTs regarding whether an end-point should be scheduled.

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?

The lack of females in the higher storyteller roles is certainly a problem. This is something not limited just to storyteller or leadership roles but to females in gaming overall. It is indicative of the overall masculine bias in gaming. I have had the opportunity in my years in the club to work with several female storytellers that have filled RST or higher ST roles. The key to encouraging more females to participate at this level require making sure that the environment is welcoming and respectful.

Recently as DST in Tampa, I did a great deal of recruitment and retention efforts with new players. Our game grew considerably and had a greater than 50% female membership when I moved away. I do believe that this was because of the attention placed on making sure that new female players were welcomed and given a place in the game free of harassment and unwanted man-splaining.

If I am chosen as NST, I will certainly make sure that my team is the very welcoming environment that I described above.

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

I don't have a favorite class really. When I play, I choose what class to play based on the group dynamic. The last D&D game I played in was a goblin rogue. Before that, I was playing a wizard in Pathfinder. This question though equated that choice with problem solving, so I guess that means that I don't have a single way to approach any particular problem.

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?

In my mind, it's not a matter of whether they should happen. I believe that 'course corrections' are simply part of the storyteller's responsibilities in maintaining the health of the chronicle. This is an important part of the ongoing review and discussions with the ANSTs.

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

Any staff position that I choose to fill will be opened to an all-call position for interested parties.

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?

As I mentioned above, I do not intend to make any sweeping ANST staff changes immediately if I am selected. I understand that there are people that are going to be happy with the current ANSTs performance and others that are disappointed. My initial plan if I am chosen as NST would be for an in depth review with the current ANSTs and their future plans.

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

My wife will be the first one to tell you that I don't always do or go along with what she would like for me to do. That said, Holly is my partner and best friend and is a part of any major decisions I make. She is also coming to the end of six years on the Board is looking forward to not having any club responsibilities for a while.

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?

I do believe that using NPCs to enforce the setting is appropriate. Player agency can certainly influence the setting, but their actions are only one piece of the overall chronicle. As NST, the 'player agency' of the remaining players that are conforming to the setting have to be

considered also. Any changes to the setting should only be done if they benefit the overall health of the chronicle.

Our different games also have different inherent expectations on the fluidity of the setting. Vampires tend to have a long history of static hierarchy, where a game like Apocalypse thrives on the ebb and flow of various powers within the world. There would be more pushback from NPCs in a static setting like Camarilla vampire than in a setting like Apocalypse.

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

Certainly. One-shot games are a great tool for highlighting our club at trade shows and conventions. As NST, I would provide any assistance needed by the trade show manager.

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

As I mentioned previously, I have no immediate plans to change the current ANST staff until I have had sufficient time to review with them the current state of the various chronicles and their plans for the future. As a player, my current experience is limited to the Masquerade and Apocalypse chronicles. I particularly think that The Doomsday Clock that Brian implemented was a great tool to help steer the setting.

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?

This is an area that we can continue to evolve and get better in. I was unaware of the specific NPC at MEScon that is referred to here, but I see no reason any player that feels like there is incomplete communication with a storyteller or NPC cannot drop out of character and seek better clarification. We need to be more responsive to better communicating "This is what your character understands from this situation" when that understanding is not being processed by the player.

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

I believe that the biggest challenge facing the club are the personal relationships and negative bleed that come from in-character conflict. As NST, the best way that I can help that problem is to make sure that we continue to provide tools for people to use in game to ensure that participants are all comfortable with the scenes that they are involved in. The thumbs up check in that is being used is a great example of the type of tools that we need to use.

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

I would not use the term hands-on. I do intend to be involved with each ANST and how each of the chronicles is run. After the initial planned review with each ANST, some may be given greater autonomy to run their chronicles, and some may get a larger portion of my attention and involvement.

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

Flight. I can't immediately think of a use for invisibility that would not be for nefarious or illegal activities. If I could fly though, I would fly everywhere.

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

It is impossible to look back on 22 years in the club and not recall bad decisions, but there is nothing that I regret so deeply that I would change it. Everything is a life lesson if it helps shape your future decisions. There are certainly times where taking an extra step in communication would have probably eased conflict before it began.

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

In my time in the club, I have lived in six different states within two different regions. I have interacted with players and storytellers around the globe. I believe I have a familiarity with most of what the club encompasses. That said, the job of the NST is to work with the RSTs that represent their regions.

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?

No decision is made in a vacuum, and anything that would be this contentious very likely already was made with the counsel of the RSTs and applicable ANSTs.

I consider myself to be a logical person, so any reasoned argument has a place in my decision making process. If there is truly that much opposition to a decision of mine, I would certainly listen to their reasoning and reconsider my decision. The NST is supposed to lead and manage the storyteller staff for the nation, not rule over it like a despot. In the end though, if my name is the one on it, then it will be a decision that I am comfortable with, not simply because the RSTs all wanted it.