

Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC) Public Meeting – June 16, 2010

Attendees (12):

Acrophobic Pixie – Black Swan Haven (BSH)
Belfazaar – House Of Mystic Echoes & New Orleans Vampire Association (NOVA)
Corvis Nocturnum – Dark Moon Press & Independent Representative
Isealdor – Vampire Realm Of Darkness
Lady Onyx Ravyn – House RavenShadow
Lono – PsychicVampire.org
Lucien von Wolfe – Tantric Vampires
Merticus – Atlanta Vampire Alliance (AVA) & Suscitatio Enterprises, LLC
Mistress Mikyla – Vampire Church & Independent Representative
Shishain – House Quinotaur
The Pink Lady – Vampirism eList
Vyrdolak – By Light Unseen

Discussion Agenda:

I. Meeting Information

Welcome to the first public meeting of Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC) for 2010. If you have not attended a VVC meeting before or are reading this for the first time please briefly take note of how this meeting will be conducted. The transcript from tonight's meeting is being logged and will be made publicly available.

Topics will be presented in the order they appear on the agenda (VVC members may refer to the forum or their e-mail for tonight's schedule). Please do not skip ahead and please do not suggest discussion of items not on the agenda until at the end of each major discussion topic.

Feel free to speak your mind on any and all topics in a civil manner and offer any supporting information, links, or material as needed. Thank you for coming and now let's begin!

II. Background & Introduction

VVC was founded January 2006.

The purpose of the Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC) is to develop friendly relations among the various Houses, Covens, Orders, and other organizations of the vampire community; to encourage cooperation in solving community related problems and in promoting respect for the views, ideas, and opinions of others without seeking to establish a unifying or governing body; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of groups in attaining these ends. – August 8, 2006

Voices Of The Vampire Community (VVC) does not assert itself as the exclusive organization of leaders or notable persons in the vampi(y)re community nor do we view ourselves or our actions as legislative or authoritarian.

The members of the VVC are representative of multiple groups, Houses, Orders, paths, beliefs, and segments of the vampi(y)re community who meet and are able to put aside personal differences to work together to discuss, suggest, implement, and support projects, ideas, and other intellectual works that help to improve the overall community.

For more information please visit our web site at:

<http://www.veritasvosliberabit.com/vvc.html>

We are available to answer questions through the community feedback form available at the site above.

III. Discussion

As a departure from the specific matters we discuss in business meetings, tonight's meeting will take a broader and more relevant approach to the vampi(y)re community. Opinions offered from members of the VVC who are unable to attend tonight's meeting will be posted first after the asking of each question. All present members please allow time for this to occur prior to posting your own response. Just as a reminder, conversation is to be kept civil, statements or claims backed by example where necessary, and in cases of insuperable disagreements; a concession between parties to respectfully agree to disagree.

Let's start the evening with these questions:

a. The Psychological Stability Of Vampires & Those Who Participate In The Vampire Community - A Three-Part Question: (1) Under what circumstances is it appropriate to directly question the mental health of an individual? (2) How can one best connect individuals who ask for assistance or demonstrate a blatant need (talk of or threaten suicide, self-harm, erratic behavior, et. al.) with resources and qualified mental health officials? (3) What responsibility and potential liability do individuals share when they are notified of behaviors that potentially could cause harm to oneself or others?

b. Those Who Choose To Explain Vampirism & Represent The Vampire Community To The Media - A Two-Part Question: (1) Are you happy with the individuals and/or groups that work directly with the media or public to explain vampirism or represent beliefs generally held by the vampire community? (2) What are you most and least pleased with and what do you see as viable methods for improvement?

c. The Relationship Of The Economy & Other Factors To Social Participation Levels Among Vampires (Online & Offline): In your opinion what impact, if any, has

the recent global economic uncertainty and other factors such as a widening age divide, changes or reductions in specific internet media platforms, decline in participation at club nights or other events, meetup group closings, etc. had on the social networking and participation levels of vampires and their respective groups.

d. Other topics you'd like to bring up for discussion?

IV. Business Reminders

- <Merticus> <<<<<< BEGIN MEETING LOG >>>>>>>>
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<Merticus> Let's start the evening with these questions:

<Merticus> **a. The Psychological Stability Of Vampires & Those Who Participate In The Vampire Community - A Three-Part Question: (1) Under what circumstances is it appropriate to directly question the mental health of an individual?**

<Merticus> **(2) How can one best connect individuals who ask for assistance or demonstrate a blatant need (talk of or threaten suicide, self-harm, erratic behavior, et. al.) with resources and qualified mental health officials? (3) What responsibility and potential liability do individuals share when they are notified of behaviors that potentially could cause harm to oneself or others?**

<Belfazaar> The problem, as I see it, isn't the 'mental health' of community members, it is the enormous ego that several seem to sport and the fact that, do to these egos, they have to create unnecessary drama for those of us trying to do the right thing. Like my work within my own community to create a homeless shelter, feed hungry/homeless people and provide a safe haven for our local community members... Besides... who is truly qualified among us to point fingers at any other member's "mental health"?

<Belfazaar> Who is to say who is a mental case and who isn't, especially within a community as fractured and factitious as ours? No one has even bothered to discuss what definition of vampirism the community should use, let alone, what truly qualifies as a vampire and what doesn't. We still have more details that need to be decided long before we can touch subjects like "how to approach a nutburger to tell them to seek professional guidance.

- <CorvisNocturnum> (1) Like in any case when someone you care about exhibits erratic or frightening behavior, it is important to address it as soon as possible, especially if it is noticed by multiple individuals around the same time. When it maybe a suicidal, cutter (beyond the safe feeding practices) or repeated behavior that is totally out of character for them, approach them with concern in an manner appropriate for the situation, and with compassion.
- <CorvisNocturnum> (2) By checking with local resources in getting help at mental health centers, drug rehabs, and I suggest contacting Shadow Villanueva of Darkness Against Child Abuse he is very familiar with the issues that member of the our community face. He was extremely helpful in my first book when he mentioned how he personally feels about the concerns the various communities have in dealing with the public, and normal psychotherapists.
- <CorvisNocturnum> (3) Organizations are becoming increasingly intolerant of threats and other violent, abusive behaviors in the workplace - I discovered some facts in class that might help:
- <CorvisNocturnum> Know the Warning Signs of Potentially Violent Individuals
- <CorvisNocturnum> There is no exact method of predicting when a person will become violent. However, there are some behaviors and warning signs that are characteristic of people who are having problems. A person may display one or more of these warning signs before he or she becomes violent.
- <CorvisNocturnum> However, an individual may display one of more of the signs and never become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern because people who are experiencing problems frequently exhibit them:
- <CorvisNocturnum> Irrational beliefs and ideas
- <CorvisNocturnum> Verbal, nonverbal or written threats or intimidation
- <CorvisNocturnum> Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence
- <CorvisNocturnum> Expressions of a plan to hurt himself or others
- <CorvisNocturnum> Externalization of blame
- <CorvisNocturnum> Unrequited romantic obsession
- <CorvisNocturnum> Taking up much of supervisor's time with behavior or performance problems
- <CorvisNocturnum> Fear reaction among coworkers (pay attention to how people react.)
- <Merticus> You mean we don't all need to be in the care of mental health professionals because we believe ourselves to be "real vampires"? <sarcasm> On a more serious note, I know there's something outside the norm when I've had authorities perform welfare checks twice since late last year on persons in the vampire community who either threatened or were strongly suspected of attempting to commit suicide.
- <Merticus> I believe there's a growing divide between those who self-

identify as real vampires who also display relatively stable mental health and those who suffer from some form of debilitating mental impairment. I've read more than a few accounts by vampires who've been prescribed medications and outright refuse to take them.

<Merticus> I've then witnessed these same individuals go through stints of irrationality acted out on various fora and in groups, only to then disappear for months at a time and then repeat the cycle.

<Merticus> This proliferation of aberrant behavior isn't just limited to suicide. Faking one's death, inventing new identities you genuinely believe are an extension of yourself (whether due to Dissociative Identity Disorder or not), constantly vying for the sympathies of others, and other more erratic or rapidly-cycling mood swings aren't signs of someone who's well adjusted.

<Merticus> Almost everyone goes through depression, anxiety, and other relatively minor snags along the journey of life -- this is normal and doesn't concern me. It's the extreme cases and their visible social impact on others that capture my attention and focus. Granted we're vampires and our own special snowflake of peculiar idiosyncrasies but this doesn't give us carte blanche to turn a blind eye to uncomfortable truths.

<Merticus> I strongly contend that our unwritten policy or belief of absolute inclusionism and unilateral tolerance of verbal responses or actions is counterproductive to the security, privacy, and overall peaceable functioning of the vampire community.

<Merticus> Moreover, I think we all need to step back and evaluate what effect exposure to these individuals is having on the psyche of those among us who aren't trapped by the instability of our own minds. I don't meant to sound cold by saying this, but if we allow ourselves to be surrounded by broken individuals while not serving the role of lending them assistance or helping to pull them

<Merticus> out of their severe depression, chronic anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or other low points in their lives, then we're reinforcing the acceptance of their behaviors. Tragically, many of these people will refuse advice that they need counseling or at minimum an evaluation by a qualified mental health professional (not fellow lay vampires).

<Merticus> I don't believe we can nor should interfere in the lives of others past making the suggestions for them to explore treatment options or to notify authorities in extreme cases of imminent threat to personal safety. Likewise, threats of harm against others should be taken seriously and reported. Evidence should also be preserved in case an incident reaches the level of physical altercation or arrest.

<Merticus> Saying and doing nothing is tantamount to enabling someone

you know who needs help to live in a state of perpetual delusion for five, seven, or even ten years. If you're close to them and they're willing to listen then at least attempt to steer them in the right direction towards professional help.

<Isealdor> I think a lot depends on what is meant by "questioning" the mental health of someone. If you see signs of some mental instability, I tend to opt toward a moderately direct approach and talk to the person about it.

<Isealdor> As for connecting people with help if they need it, there are any number of hotlines and crisis centers, etc, people can be referred to.

<AcrophobicPixie> I agree with Isealdor. I mean, there are the blatant "OMG, I'mma cut myself" people who definitely need to be pulled aside and talked to, but we can't really judge a person's mental state by what they type in a forum post or chat room.

<MistressMikyla> I agree with Isealdor, too - some people are obviously beyond the 'crazy' you tend to take for granted online and might need help.

<Isealdor> Liability wise... if you have someone saying they just swallowed a bottle of pills (and being at least moderately serious about it), and you have enough information to contact authorities, I'd say there's an ethical obligation at the least. The legalities on that are a bit sketchy, but if it's a matter of saving someone's life or not, I'd say it doesn't much matter if they're going to be mad at you for it later.

<Merticus> Has anyone ever encountered anyone who they think would clearly be classified as "insane" within the vampire community?

<Isealdor> Less immediate threat of harm to themselves or someone else, maybe opt toward encouraging them to seek help

<ThePinkLady> Mental health, only in person. I think if someone poses a threat to you or your community, you have a right to question it.

<Isealdor> @Merticus: If going with the definition of insane being major mental illness, yes.

<MistressMikyla> There could definitely be a liability issue - if you're on chat and something happens to them, the police or families tend to do a lot of digging into online activities and might feel you're responsible for not reporting something.

<Vyrdolak> This is a problem in society as a whole, not just the vampire community.

<AcrophobicPixie> I honestly don't know. I can't really tell via the internet on if someone is insane or not. All of the ones I've met in person had their quirks, but nothing really to write home about.

<MistressMikyla> @Merticus: Do you mean beyond the obvious of "JS"?

<Vyrdolak> A major stumbling block in many "alternative" subcultures is a paranoia about being "judged"

<ThePinkLady> @Mikyla: As far as the vampirism e-list goes, the moderators

keep tabs on drama queens to figure out whether or not it's a cry for attention or signs of a larger problem.

<ThePinkLady> Most of the time it's attention.

<Lono> With this community there's various levels of crazy.... but I assume your talking about batshit crazy or dangerous to oneself and others crazy, as opposed to fruitbat crazy.

<Vyrdolak> People set aside their own good sense because they don't want to "judge" others -- and it's really about *them* not wanting to be judged.

<Vyrdolak> "Attention" isn't an automatic dismissal the way it's treated.

<Vyrdolak> People who "want attention" generally need something legitimate.

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: Like... attention. Some people just want others to notice them and wire themselves weirdly to soak up lots of it.

<ThePinkLady> Metaphors. I overuse them.

<Isealdor> I guess I look at the online reporting thing with keeping in mind the cases of like the one kid in the news a while back who killed himself over several hours on a live video stream, with dozens of people watching, and no one reported a thing.

<Isealdor> It's a fine line of being skeptic and not jumping every time someone cries wolf vs. taking things seriously when they need to be.

<MistressMikyla> I had interactions with someone I don't consider to be mentally stable in the past, but I don't know if I would say she was a danger to anyone but herself - she just did a lot of lying.

<Vyrdolak> Far more avoidable tragedy happens because people refuse to get involved or take the situation seriously, than is over-reacted to.

<Merticus> Who here has been personally made aware of someone who have tried to harm themselves, talked of harming others, etc?

<Isealdor> @Merticus: Yes, several actually.

<MistressMikyla> I have not, Merticus.

<LucienWolfe> I haven't.

<AcrophobicPixie> I haven't.

<Merticus> How did you handle or discuss such matters with them?

<Isealdor> @Merticus: A mixture of encouraging them to seek professional help and being there and supportive for them to have healthier outlets.

<Lono> I have and have taken several steps in the past to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others.

<ThePinkLady> I've been around cutters, mostly transsexuals who get a lot of grief.

<ThePinkLady> @Merticus: I see the question as less clinical insanity, more clinical depression/hysteria.

<LucienWolfe> I have to agree with ThePinkLady.

<ThePinkLady> But you don't know for certain online.

<LucienWolfe> Unless there is a professional here, none of us has the ability to

presume.

<Vyrdolak> I really bristle when I hear that, "oh, they just want attention" crap.

<Vyrdolak> A lot of people are dead because of that attitude and it's inexcusable.

<Vyrdolak> You actually can't overreact to people who are crying out for help.

<Vyrdolak> If they're BSing, getting a huge reaction and all the mess than ensues teaches them a real lesson.

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: In person, I'll bend over backwards to help someone.

<ThePinkLady> On the internet... skeptical.

<Isealdor> @Vyrdolak: I have to agree to an extent... if it's an attention ploy, it's because something else is missing in their life and they feel a strong enough lack of attention that they act out. Most of that sort, I've found, will turn around if they're given positive attention and learn they get more and better attention for good rather than bad things.

<Lono> Yes, but when a person anonymously says I just downed a bottle of medications it's an obvious cry for help... but the fact of the matter is if they don't get the help or you shrug it off as attention/energy seeking, and the person dies wouldn't you feel somewhat responsible?

<LucienWolfe> I agree that many people do want attention, however, those who seriously seek help will take suggestions.

<LucienWolfe> If it is someone in my community, there is a difference.

<Vyrdolak> One problem that American society doesn't have is people caring too much about their neighbors :-p

<Vyrdolak> We're all just too happy to let everyone else croak because "it's not our problem".

<Vyrdolak> And it's a lot worse in alternative communities because they don't want other people telling them what to do.

<Lono> My bad Vyrdolak... we're on the same wavelength.

<ThePinkLady> Offline, I'm there. Online, I see way too many people living out some sort of weird or sick death fantasy.

<ThePinkLady> What's the word for it? Munchausen's syndrome?

<ThePinkLady> Getting attention because someone else suffers?

<AcrophobicPixie> Munchausen's By Proxy or something like that.

<Vyrdolak> Munchausen's is another trendy diagnosis du jour.

<Isealdor> Münchhausen's is faking or exaggerating illness for attention... and gets tossed around a lot term-wise compliments of the television show House, I think. It's one where it has to be fairly severe to be diagnosed--most kids logging into a forum saying they're going to kill themselves wouldn't qualify ;)

<Merticus> There have been quite a number of individuals who have reported being clinically depressed in the vampire community...

for that matter many individuals are depressed at some point in their lives to a clinical or acute degree.

<Isealdor> I'm personally less likely to take someone seriously if I don't know anything about them, they just pop in one of the chats and say they downed a bottle of pills, vs. if it's a site regular saying they're having problems... kind of a given.

<ThePinkLady> Only the person who suffers is your online avatar?

<ThePinkLady> Because you only know what the person provides.

<Vyrdolak> If it's impossible to gauge the validity of something online, then why assume there's nothing to it?

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: I agree.

<MistressMikyla> @Vyrdolak: Some might assume on the side of nothing because they've been burned too many times by the same issue in the past.

<AcrophobicPixie> It all depends on the situation, I guess. I mean, you're better able to gauge the severity of the situation if the person is a regular to your site/chatroom. But *shrugs*

<Vyrdolak> @Mikyla: The trouble is, that laypeople don't understand how to evaluate situations because they haven't been trained.

<LucienWolfe> Those who we know would be more likely to approach us in private than to act out in an open chat.

<LucienWolfe> We are all lay people here, right?

<Vyrdolak> Well, I'm a certified counselor and I have a Masters degree in pastoral counseling, so I'm not quite a lay person.

<Vyrdolak> And there's an instinct you get for it, too.

<Vyrdolak> That's why I get so testy about this topic.

<Lono> I've got a medical license... but not in psychology.

<Merticus> Has anyone here received reports of vampires harming animals (aside from hunting) to seek sources of blood or for "fun"?

<Isealdor> @Merticus: Only a couple.

<ThePinkLady> @Merticus: The few times I have on the e-list, I've reported it to Yahoo.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Merticus: I've not heard of anyone doing that.

<ThePinkLady> The one time I remember clearly was someone who was already pushing buttons by saying he stalked several people.

<LucienWolfe> Wonderful, Vyrdolak. In a professional environment, would you not first have an evaluation face to face before making "diagnosis"?

<Vyrdolak> In some states, you don't need a specifically psych/med degree to be a "mandated reporter" and required to have some training.

<Vyrdolak> Intervention is not diagnosis. I never "diagnose".

<Isealdor> @Lucien: I don't think any of us are really saying trying to diagnose someone.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: I understand, I was trying to determine the process of evaluation, etc.

<ThePinkLady> I'm jaded because I see a lot of it as attention-seeking. I'm used

to an online world where people can be anything.

<LucienWolfe> Perhaps those who are qualified could start a resource website?

<Vyrdolak> We're talking about intervention and that's a whole topic in and of itself, a complete skill set.

<Merticus> While there are some individuals in the community who qualify as mental health professionals, do you think there are enough available resources or resources those who suffer from mental illness would be comfortable contacting to discuss personal matters?

<LucienWolfe> @Merticus: No

<Isealdor> @Merticus: No, there's actually very few community-based resources (lists, links, etc), I think.

<Lono> In Florida for example... a person must present a danger to themselves or others and they can be "Baker Acted".

<ThePinkLady> @Lono: I remember that.

<ThePinkLady> I know SphynxCatVP runs the support page. Would it be worth compiling a list of links or signs for an article?

<Vyrdolak> The community could use some good solid guidelines for when and how to properly intervene, what's a red flag and worth taking seriously, etc.

<Vyrdolak> And a database of resources for referring people for help, if possible.

<Isealdor> I have an article about cutting that's up a few places, but right now I don't have outside resource links included in it.

<AcrophobicPixie> *nod*

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: Any suggestions on a place to start with that?

<ThePinkLady> I don't mean to be facetious. I've cracked open my library's and my old college's database.

<Vyrdolak> Well, there are online resources -- I could see what I could put together.

<Lono> I really like Ravena's article (which is on my website as well) about Enabling, it does have the resources and links available for suicide, abuse, etc. and 1-800 numbers.

<Isealdor> What about less common things, too? Like cutting, suicide risk, and depression get talked about a lot... but what about relationship abuse, other mental illnesses, etc?

<Isealdor> The potential of emotional abuse in vampire/donor relationships, for example, should probably be talked about more, too.

<LadyOnyx> I am currently training for 'I'm Alive', the first online chat based hotline.

<LadyOnyx> Instead of calling they will talk to counselors via chat.

<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx that sounds like a great idea.

<LadyOnyx> Yes, I'm excited about it, it should launch at the end of the year.

<Merticus> @LadyOnyx: Do you have a link for that program handy?

<LadyOnyx> <http://www.pickupthephone.org/IMAlive/home.php>

<LadyOnyx> Sponsored by To Write Love on Her Arms and the Kristen

Brooks Hope Center.

<Merticus> Thank you.

<Lono> The difficulty is always... you can lead a horse to water, but you can't always make them drink... to use an old euphemism.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: Relationship issues is a good one. I have had people approach me about abuse.

<ThePinkLady> @Lono: Having the resources readily available would help at least someone, I think.

<Vyrdolak> Well, exactly @Lono, but if people are talking online about the pain they're in, presumably they're hoping for help.

<Lono> Thats very true Vyrdolak.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Isealdor: That's when people call me in, apparently. I can find local battered women's shelters for people in a heart beat, and talking to a person who escaped an abusive relationship is often one of the best ways to get out of one.

<Isealdor> @Pixie: Would you mind people sending someone to talk to you, if they want, as someone who's "been there"?

<AcrophobicPixie> I don't mind.

<Merticus> Do any of you find that your donor(s) or donors you are aware of suffer from diagnosed mental health conditions to a greater degree than the vampires you know? Or are you able to make such a determination?

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: Well you know that I am always prescreening donor's, and I can say that on average, donors have no more mental health conditions than many vampires I know.

<Vyrdolak> I've actually noticed that donors seem to be more balanced than many vamps!

<ThePinkLady> The only thing I can think of is emotional abuse from the D/s sort of relationship.

<ThePinkLady> But there's so much crossover between that community and this one.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Vyrdolak: That's cause we're cool like that :P

<Merticus> Does anyone have anything else to add to parts 1 - 3?

<Merticus> Particular instances (without naming of names), liability concerns, and resources they're aware of, etc?

<LadyOnyx> As far as liability, are we speaking legality of knowing or liability morally, community wise, etc?

<Merticus> Both

<Vyrdolak> I think legal liability is a bullet the community has dodged many times and probably can't, indefinitely.

<Merticus> Primarily the legal liability of being told something and your obligation (or not) to report it to law enforcement authorities or mental health professionals, etc.

<LadyOnyx> Legally, if you know that someone is a danger to themselves or others, it is a state by state matter.

<Isealdor> The legalities online are still being debated heavily in courts.

<LadyOnyx> Offline, they're a bit more defined and vary from place to place. In Florida, for instance, the good Samaritan law does not require you to intervene at all.

<LadyOnyx> However... if you know someone plans to do harm to another and you do nothing, then you can face accessory charges in some states.

<LadyOnyx> As well as all kinds of civil lawsuits.

<Vyrdolak> But civil lawsuits can be filed without legal background for them.

<Lono> For legal liability... we look to the most infamous of all vampire websites it seems... vampirefreaks.com. How have they avoided it all this time?

<Vyrdolak> Anyone can be sued anytime for any thing -- and the cases we've seen in the last couple of years, I'm amazed there hasn't been some huge litigation.

* Isealdor nods* There are duty to rescue laws, etc.

<LadyOnyx> Not in every location Isealdor.

<Isealdor> Not everywhere, no, and they're not usually enforced, but they could be.

<Vyrdolak> Isn't vampirefreaks based in Canada?

<Merticus> No, New York City, NY to my knowledge - at least that's where Jet lives.

<LadyOnyx> I would say that if it is the case of someone you have knowledge of, and know beyond a reasonable doubt that they may harm themselves or others then you have a responsibility to EVERYONE to notify someone.

<LadyOnyx> Whether that be a family member, a community member in a position to help, or authorities.

<Lono> So is my server...but it hasn't stopped me from monitoring my members... and trying to make sure my members are kept safe.

<Vyrdolak> The more that groups establish a presence in the "mundane" world, the more likely they are to be lawsuit targets.

<Vyrdolak> Also, maybe we need to recognize limits to confidentiality when harm or self-harm is an issue.

<Vyrdolak> "Silence = death" and the idea from child abuse survivors that "there are no secrets" because secrets protect the abuser.

<Lono> The administrators on my forum know... to wake me no matter what time, if they have a member even "kidding" about committing suicide.

<LadyOnyx> Given that my mentor....decided to leave of his own accord, I will say that most people are not out for attention when speaking on suicide, too often though it goes unnoticed.

<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx: That's very true, and often "jokes" are a way of "testing the waters".

<LadyOnyx> Exactly @Vyrdolak.

<Vyrdolak> If everyone blows off the "jokes" the suicidal person decides that

proves no one gives a damn.

<Merticus> Another slippery slope is the age requirements on forum and group memberships.

<LadyOnyx> Well, I'll throw myself to the gauntlet on this one, I am a moderator and admin for Sang/Psy Space and we are all ages.

<LadyOnyx> Although, the new layout has specified areas for different age groups.

<ThePinkLady> @Merticus: I always understood age requirements to be responsibility waivers.

<ThePinkLady> If someone underage joins an overage website, they checked the box or whatever, and the sites waives responsibility.

<ThePinkLady> Or am I wrong?

<Isealdor> @PinkLady: Only if the staff isn't made aware of the false age.

<Isealdor> There has to be "reasonable restriction" for underage (a warning, posted rules prior to registering, etc.) to be able to fight liability.

<Merticus> How many of you here restrict the age of your forum/site/etc. members to a certain age and how many of you do not?

<LucienWolfe> I do.

<Vyrdolak> I have never been willing to place age restrictions, but that means I have to manage content carefully.

<Isealdor> @Merticus: We're 13+ on vampires.nu, with a couple sections with higher age requirements.

<AcrophobicPixie> We restrict posting of vamp/donor ads to 18, and I think the script we use restricts forum access if you're under 13.

<ThePinkLady> The Yahoo group is 17+, I think. There may be underage people still on it.

<LadyOnyx> Sang/Psy does not.

<LadyOnyx> I restrict on my House page and membership.

<Merticus> The AVA Forum is 18+, House AVA is 21+. Those wishing to meet us offline may be so through the Meetup.com group provided they are 18 years of age or older but in order to regularly socialize or be a part of official House functions you must be 21+ (no exceptions).

<Lono> I do... but there has been a lot of debate as to whether to change the age requirements... and a lot of opposition... which is why I have age requirements for hidden forums containing more mature topics.

<ThePinkLady> @Isealdor: We've done a don't ask, don't tell for a long time.

<ThePinkLady> I especially discourage people from posting their personal information or "where you at" type posts, due to legalities.

<Isealdor> @PinkLady: Don't ask/don't tell only goes so far... we do the 13+ to be in keeping with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act in the Realm.

<AcrophobicPixie> My house is 21+, but when we formed, I was the only underage member, because of extenuating circumstances.

<Vyrdolak> Here's a question that I think is related to this issue:

<Vyrdolak> Do we care, I mean *really* care, about each other in this community?

<LucienWolfe> I believe some of us do.

<LucienWolfe> But obviously there is a lot of backstabbing.

<LucienWolfe> So not everyone cares.

<Vyrdolak> How much do you, personally, care about other people in the community -- not just your friends, but everyone?

<Vyrdolak> *Because* they're part of your community?

<Lono> I hope so... the effects of one group, affect the others.

<Merticus> Some of us care more about each other than others... as true for any "friend" groups.

<LucienWolfe> I care about all life.

<AcrophobicPixie> There's clickyness, but I do care about a majority of the vampire community.

<LucienWolfe> I have children, I understand depression/suicide on a personal level. I lost my brother.

<Vyrdolak> I think there's a lot of resistance to accepting people who don't precisely agree with oneself.

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: I would say that I have empathy for everyone in the community, but there are some that if they disappeared I would probably not notice.

<LadyOnyx> That is about as honest as I can be.

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: Offline I do, but online, not as much as I probably should.

<Lono> Heck if a Temple of the Vampire (ToV) member or Aset Ka (AK) member said they were going to kill themselves I'd do the same for them as I'd do for one of my forum members, or local community members.

<LucienWolfe> @Lono: Why is it you would specifically name ToV or AK?

<Lono> Because I like them the least, and have been open about it.

<AcrophobicPixie> I'd probably do the same as Lono, because just because I think they've done something stupid, like join the ToV or AK, doesn't mean I should condone them to kill themselves.

<LadyOnyx> I care about those I have personal contact with, have met along the way, that have shown me the same respect I have given them, but to say I care about a vamp, I've never heard of or met, would be stretching it for me

<ThePinkLady> @LadyOnyx: Agreed.

<Vyrdolak> So, on what grounds is this a "community" at all if its members don't even have that basic tribal unity?

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: LOL... I keep asking that question for years... Where is this community exactly?

<LadyOnyx> I believe we are all tribal in our own localities.

<LadyOnyx> But as far as the far reaching OVC... I would say... not so much.

<Merticus> Some in the community would claim tribal unity and some would not... we're not universally cohesive.

<Merticus> I know speaking personally, I'd do more for those I know offline than online if they were in direct need.

<LadyOnyx> I can state that as well Merticus.

<LucienWolfe> It doesn't do good to chat about it. Do something!

<Isealdor> @Lucien: Such as? Suggestions of ideas of things that can be done?

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: As we have discussed privately, people talk a good game but they can't seem to get off high horses to actually work together to accomplish much.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: First we would need to step down to the same level and show one another respect.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: Then we would need to approach solutions on a mature level.

<LadyOnyx> Precisely, it is the merry-go-round.

<LadyOnyx> We go and never move to the train in the playground.

<AcrophobicPixie> The vampire community is very cliquish. To say the least.

<Vyrdolak> That's why this and all our other discussions just go round and round and round and round.

<Isealdor> @Lucien: Then put out some suggestions and see if it'll change? People can't "do" the things others want to see happen if they aren't voiced.

<AcrophobicPixie> we're worse than the people in the "Mean Girls" movie.

<Isealdor> @Pixie: Amen to that.

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: I can also say, I have every vampire's phone number who has ever given it to me.

<LadyOnyx> I try to keep in touch a few times a year.

<LadyOnyx> More often than not, I get a text saying... who is this?

<LadyOnyx> So... at what point do I say, what is the point?

<AcrophobicPixie> Well, I have a different point of view than most of you, since for most of the "drama" I'm on the sidelines, looking in.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: Ok... first, as a whole, personal opinions aside, what is it we are willing to do? Can we all agree to post Help information on our community websites?

<Vyrdolak> Prominently placed Help information would be good.

<LadyOnyx> I am a certified spiritual counselor, I am also currently obtaining my masters in clinical psychology.. I will help anyone who comes my way.

<Isealdor> @Lucien: I could go for that...especially if we could compile some sort of list anyone who wants to can post everywhere.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: Secondly, since we don't have Vampire specific organizations, can we not simply create a list of common organizations to give to those seeking help?

<LucienWolfe> It would be a common list. Anybody with a phone book or Internet access can locate the info -- we just post it.

<Merticus> Could we compile such a list of resources and also host it on the VVC Public Web Site? And those who wish to do so on their

own personal websites could do the same?

<LucienWolfe> @Merticus: Yes.

<LadyOnyx> Posting help, talking, texting, chatting, etc.

<AcrophobicPixie> LadyOnyx - if I get something I can't handle, can I hand that person to you?

<LadyOnyx> Certainly Pixie.

<LadyOnyx> My phone is never off, and my computer is always up.

<AcrophobicPixie> *nod*

<AcrophobicPixie> And if you ever need to have someone talk to a person who got out of a DA relationship, my phone's always on.

<Merticus> Not everyone in the community is going to get along... it's a degree of numbers and gradual changing of opinions on a case by case basis. There will always be inherent bias against some groups and individuals unfortunately. This can sometimes be mitigated by teaching newcomers to our community to be more aware of one another.

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: I thought we made up ;-P

<Merticus> Funny ;-P You know you're on my good list.

<LucienWolfe> @Merticus: I now understand that, and I have come to accept that not everyone will agree or get along. I image I was naive ;)

<Isealdor> IMO... this isn't about "getting along", this is about general response to people being in a dangerous situation. I don't have to get along with someone to not want them to go on a shooting spree because they snapped because they never got psych care they needed.

<Vyrdolak> I think that one big quantum leap this community needs to make is to push past the personal to the larger priorities.

<LadyOnyx> I think that it doesn't matter if we "get along" or even "agree", I think it is more about the ability to act as ADULTS and accept one another's differences, and respect what those differences.

<Vyrdolak> You can care about what happens to someone without being willing to share an apartment with them.

<LucienWolfe> @Vyrdolak: I totally agree!

<Lono> What are the larger priorities?

<Lono> Let's get those out in the open.

<Isealdor> @Lono: I'd say one is/should be encouraging proper channel resources and discouraging catering toward enabling of problems.

<Isealdor> Or two things, rather.

<Lono> How would you define enabling of problems Isealdor?

<Isealdor> @Lono: Probably the best explanation of that re: the community is Ravena's enabling article:
<http://sphynxcatvp.nocturna.org/articles/rav-enablingvc.html>

<Isealdor> Basically, the "standing by and not saying/doing anything" is a form of enabling.

<LadyOnyx> @Isealdor: So is using triggering language or sharing too much

of a personal story to someone, that may only trigger them into action rather than pointing them towards help.

<Isealdor> @LadyOnyx: Depending on the story, true.

<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx: Very true, although that can be harder to parse out and address.

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: Agreed.

<LadyOnyx> So, as a recap, I believe the consensus was organizing a "get help" list, be open and aware of potential triggers in others, and notify accordingly? Did I miss anything?

<Lono> I think you're dead on.

<Vyrdolak> Sounds right.

<AcrophobicPixie> Sounds good to me.

<Merticus> That's the long and short of it.

<Merticus> Ok, are we ready for topic B?

<Lono> Yes

<LadyOnyx> Mais oui

<Isealdor> Ja

<AcrophobicPixie> Yes

<LucienWolfe> Yes

<Merticus> **b. Those Who Choose To Explain Vampirism & Represent The Vampire Community To The Media - A Two-Part Question: (1) Are you happy with the individuals and/or groups that work directly with the media or public to explain vampirism or represent beliefs generally held by the vampire community? (2) What are you most and least pleased with and what do you see as viable methods for improvement?**

<Belfazaar> There are several members of the community who feel we should never be in front of the camera but these are the same ones complaining about how much misinformation is out there... Can't have it both ways... and since TV is here to stay, we may as well try to make the best of it.

<CorvisNocturnum> (1) As a majority yes. I feel groups like the Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC), The Atlanta Vampire Alliance [AVA], and conventions open to the public such as The Kheperu Open House that I recently spoke at. Of course, no one person, website, blog, podcast, etc can or should speak for the community as the 'one' source for information, it is good that so many are being looked to as a steady location that has done well at establishing the common terms, etc.

<CorvisNocturnum> Certain key individuals, such as Zilchy, Michelle Belanger, Merticus, Joseph Laycock, Sanguinarius, Belfazaar, Lono, and so many others have repeatedly stepped forward. They are respected and consistently strive to help explain things to the media and public at large.

<CorvisNocturnum> (2) I'm very pleased that the History Channel shows are well done, that Fox outshone the ABC 20/20 in journalistic integrity.

Drake Mefestta seems to be progressing quite well, Belfazaar has proven himself more and more often in the last year or two I had noticed.

<CorvisNocturnum> Feedback from reviews on Joseph Laycock's book and my last one have been positive and highly encouraging when looking at the public reactions to the living community. More and more television shows seem positive. I think we need to be cautious in how we are approached and react to. So many just want to exploit those who are different without giving anything positive back.

<Merticus> I'm honestly satisfied with the in-print (newspaper, magazine, academic papers, etc.) coverage we've received in the past several years. I'm looking forward to additional academic publications and well researched books on vampires coming out in 2011 and 2012. I wish more caution would be exercised when agreeing to on-camera interviews and the other reality-based programming solicitations we receive on an almost weekly basis.

<Merticus> It's just going to be a matter of time before one of these production companies lands a show and depending on the network, we could be looking at a massive influx of newcomers who've been given the wrong impression of who we are or what we believe. It doesn't help matters that most of these production companies are seeking individuals between the ages of 18-25 and the average age of someone participating in the vampire community is 30-31.

<Merticus> While it's impossible to represent all of the views held by community participants and/or self-identified real vampires; we should always strive to present our views as our own opinion or interpretation. Those who accept the responsibility of representing "vampirism" in the media should remain as neutral as possible towards others' beliefs if asked by interviewers or filmmakers.

<Merticus> I don't believe the best interest of the vampire community is served by displaying a fractious and embattled base to the public. Such theatrics are best left for other demographics; not a subculture that continues to be marginalized by religious groups, cult 'experts', and some in the news media every opportunity they have to use the words 'vampire' and 'criminal' in the same sentence.

<AcrophobicPixie> Well, there are some good and some bad people that have been involved in the media *cough Vampira cough* I mean, we can't really tell producers "don't use this person, but none of the "good" people will want to talk to you"

<Vyrdolak> Actually, we have told producers that!

<AcrophobicPixie> I know we have, Vyrdolak. But how does that make us look, honestly?

<Vyrdolak> @Pixie: That's a key question.

<LucienWolfe> We will all have different opinions as to who presents the vampire community best.

<LadyOnyx> My answer to Part 1~ Yes and No. I think my frustration comes not from the actual people who seem to be bombarded by the media, but rather the lack of inquiries others receive whom I deem to be far more knowledgeable in some aspects of the OVC.

<LadyOnyx> I also would state that I don't think anyone who appears on camera or in print means to do any harm or misrepresent the community, they are giving their experiences and their opinions based on their own awakenings and interactions within their vampyrism.

<Lono> For the most part those well known in the OVC like Michelle Belanger, Merticus, Belfazaar, and Anshar have done a decent portrayal and above all some of these people have held up well in interviews with FOX of all stations... but there is that other element, those that want the press and attention at whatever the cost and no respect or concern for the after effects or repercussions of the on and offline community.

<LucienWolfe> Is there something particular about a person or group that would make you personally contact a producer in protest?

<Isealdor> My opinion on this is much as it's always been -- the media is always going to be there and will always try to sensationalize most everything they can, there are always going to be people responding to media requests who tend toward the sensationalism, and there are always going to be people upset/offended by whatever the person responding to the media presents or who dislike whomever is responding to the media requests.

<Isealdor> I think the sooner we stop focusing on how much we hate/like whatever and start focusing on things we can have more effect on, the happier everyone would be.

<LucienWolfe> @Isealdor: You're right.

<ThePinkLady> How many of us here would feel comfortable giving a paper interview, being on a podcast, a television show, etc.?

<LadyOnyx> I am comfortable in print, podcast, but give me two more years before I step out on national television.

<LucienWolfe> The problem with "misrepresentation" is that we all have different views.

<LadyOnyx> @Lucien: Exactly

<LadyOnyx> Mine is more a matter of I have a teen still at home and my camera appearance could ruin her life.

<Merticus> I am only comfortable giving interviews for print media or phone consultations... actually not a matter of comfort but privacy concerns.

<AcrophobicPixie> Me, I'm kind of in a spot between a rock and a hard place.

People hear that I donate, and their first thought is "OMG, She is like Bella" and then when I actually open my mouth, I get shot down because, while I date a vampire, I don't donate to him, I donate to my best friend, my brother, and a few others when I have to.

- <LucienWolfe> I have no desire to be in the media.
- <Isealdor> @PinkLady: I only do print things, and even that, limitedly.
- <Vyrdolak> For me, there are two MAJOR issues with the well-meaning, fairly sane people who have been in the media so far.
- <Lono> @Vyrdolak: What are the major issues?
- <Vyrdolak> The first is, in almost all cases (with maybe one or two exceptions), people in the VC really, seriously, don't know how they come across to the general public.
- <Vyrdolak> There's just this huge blind spot there.
- <Vyrdolak> The second is -- anonymity. If you can't use your real name and identity, you won't be taken seriously, that's just the way it is.
- <Vyrdolak> So we need spokespeople who can use their real names. How seriously would people take Joseph Laycock if he published as Lord Bloodmaster?
- * AcrophobicPixie snickers.
- <LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: LOL good point.
- <Isealdor> @Vyrdolak: Is it really that people in the vampire community as a group don't know how to, or a healthy percentage of those who actively do the more out and public things don't?
- <LucienWolfe> That is not a preference for many in the community.
- <Lono> Some of us are in careers that make that impossible.
- <LadyOnyx> I tend to agree Vyrdolak, which is why I recently did away with my ritual name on my Facebook page and have my page under my given birth name.
- <LadyOnyx> My name, Onyx, is however, the name I use in all matters within my House.
- <LadyOnyx> And I am currently writing under my own name now.
- <LadyOnyx> Although, I will say that within six months my middle name will legally be Onyx, going through the process currently, makes life easier!
- <AcrophobicPixie> Well, that's one reason why my "other" name sounds normal.
- <AcrophobicPixie> I mean, Heather Corus sounds like someone you could have gone to school with.
- <Lono> Lono Fructus "fruit" Vespertilio "bat"...
- <Lono> I use it for my meditation and fiction books... but not for my vampire community related books... (too many questions during background checks).
- <Vyrdolak> People in the vampire community give these earnest, honest, serious interviews but they aren't in the heads of their target audience.
- <Vyrdolak> And you HAVE to be if you're really going to connect with that

audience and change their attitudes.

<Vyrdolak> I'm not saying that people in the vampire community should be "outed" when that's not safe for them, not at all.

<LucienWolfe> Why are real names important?

<Merticus> Real names are important for sourcing within the context of professional journalism... which is sometimes but not often who solicit us for information.

<Merticus> It's a credibility issue to the organization presenting the story.

<Isealdor> @Lucien: Serious answer to that would be a general trust factor... anyone presenting anything to an audience has to develop a level of "presenter trust" with the audience.

<LucienWolfe> I understand, but giving real names also means putting oneself in possible harm's way.

<LucienWolfe> I don't want my children ridiculed at school.

<LadyOnyx> I think the problem, comes with, if we are OUT in the public eye, then how can we truly be sincere if we are using a pseudonym.

<LadyOnyx> Is what Joe Public thinks.

<LadyOnyx> Nor I @Lucien, which is why I won't currently do national media.

<Vyrdolak> But spokespersons must be people who can be out there -- meaning, only a few people *can* be spokespersons in an effective way.

<LucienWolfe> For those people who's whole lives are about media, it's fine for them.

<Lono> You also must be comfortable with the medium of communication.

<Lono> For example, I'm far more comfortable behind the camera after working for CBS, than in front of it.

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: Yes and no... I think there are plenty of people who can gain credibility in print and podcasts without plastering their face all over the television.

<LadyOnyx> Just my opinion.

<AcrophobicPixie> My sister just graduated from nursing school, and in our hometown, if it got out I was doing something "crazy" like hanging out with vampires, she could lose her job, etc. Hence me having my other name that sounds normal. That, and I like my other name. It's not fancy like some others out there, but it suits me.

<LadyOnyx> But the call of the question, as I understand it is, are we happy with those who are stepping out and do we feel well represented.

<LadyOnyx> I for one, will say NO. At least not from a pure sanguine aspect.

<LucienWolfe> I will also say No.

<Vyrdolak> We need to think more about where our target audience (general public) is coming from and start from that point, rather than start with what we want to talk about and expect John and Jane

American to just "get it" if only we're earnest enough.

<Vyrdolak> What I see in a lot of these YouTube videos, etc is a compulsion to "explain us" that is well-intended but poorly considered.

<Merticus> The problem arises when productions companies aren't satisfied with "there is no one willing to go on your program" and take it upon themselves to contact further and deeper into the community to find individuals who are willing and then those individuals report back they were unfairly mistreated by the media or their portrayal wasn't accurate etc.

<LucienWolfe> Production companies want ratings = \$.

<Merticus> Of course they do.

<LucienWolfe> They could care less how accurate the people are.

<Isealdor> @Vyrdolak: Why? Why do we need to do any of it? What is the huge press and draw to try to get everyone everywhere to understand us? I mean... take Americans in general, most have a very difficult time accepting someone of another mainstream religion from them, what makes us think that, with enough media, suddenly we'd somehow be able to overcome that as the vampire community?

<Vyrdolak> Well, exactly \$ @Lucien.

<Vyrdolak> It's all about the money, and the more sensationalism, the better.

<Vyrdolak> And if it doesn't there are SFX and creepy music to make it so!

<Lono> Yes

<Lono> That's why everyone remembers the Jerry Springer vampire episode.

<LadyOnyx> It is kind of like showing a ritual on television, no matter how it appears to those involved, it comes off looking hokey on television, same with sanguine feeding, there is no need to do it publicly, because it comes off looking BAD, no matter how good the intent.

<LucienWolfe> In my opinion, the mundane media is not our friend.

<LadyOnyx> @Isealdor: When you get that answer, let me know...I still am trying to figure out what it is we are fighting for that we don't already have as basic human beings, by being so public as vampyres.

<Merticus> What the community (and many others) don't understand is that the vast majority (probably 80% of all media requests) go absolutely no where... they never see print, video, or production. There are varying reasons for this but the "opportunity to be on camera" isn't something that just anyone is willing to jump at or suggest people for.

<Vyrdolak> And there was another talk show where they had some Goth kids and brought some girl's brother on to scream at her Ricki Lake, did that one.

<Lono> I remember that one as well.

<LucienWolfe> It's probably best they don't go anywhere.

<LucienWolfe> Are those who represent the vampire community in the media being paid?

* Isealdor agrees with Lucien.

<LadyOnyx> I have seen this over and over, we are somewhat of a novelty every time a new vamp series or movie comes out, we become the new fad all over again.

<LadyOnyx> Then it goes away until the next one hits, when they talk to real vampires, they discover we are rather mundane ourselves in our day to day lives, and that is not worth much to anyone.

<LadyOnyx> Although I was delighted to see the werewolf kids in Texas.

<LadyOnyx> Laughed for hours... finally someone else can deal with this crap.

<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx: I think you touch on another critical issue.

<AcrophobicPixie> Well, thankfully, after this latest one, there should only be one more Twilight movie, I think.

<AcrophobicPixie> Though, I have to admit, some of the cute shirts that are out about vampires... I want.

<Lono> Bela Legosi holding the head of Edward saying "the sparkling ends now" one of the best shirts of all time :)

<Vyrdolak> There's a huge disconnect in motive as to why these media things happen at all, who wants them, etc.

<Lono> Hey vampires are cool....until you get to know us...and then they get bored...

<Lono> Unless your being outsourced to Paranormal State every other episode :P

<Vyrdolak> Vampires aren't nearly as eager for publicity as media (especially lower-tier media) are for sensation.

<Merticus> There have been six media requests in the last four days alone... that we've / I've / others have fielded, passed along, rejected, or outright ignored.

<Merticus> And it's not that every vampire who participates in the media desires publicity or "fame" more than it is for some who dread a poor or sensationalistic depiction by those who would fill the void otherwise.

<LadyOnyx> My answer to part B of this question, as far as improvements... I wish I had an answer, but I have no more control over who steps out and who doesn't than anyone else.

<LadyOnyx> Nor would I want to start trying to control what someone says or does, because I would NOT want someone to censor me.

<Lono> True

<LadyOnyx> What I would LIKE to see.

<LadyOnyx> Is when someone steps out, and I have seen this lately...

<LadyOnyx> That they clarify they are not "Spokespeople" for the OVC as a whole and simply sharing their own viewpoints.

<AcrophobicPixie> The only reason I agree to interviews is just cause I'm there, I can, and I don't look/sound nuts... I think.

<Vyrdolak> I agree, but people rarely want to look like unique weirdoes. They want to convey the impression that, "we are legion, we're all around you".

<Lono> Simple... but... it could always be edited out in final cut.

<Lono> Your name is legion too? What a coincidence! :P

* AcrophobicPixie snickers

<AcrophobicPixie> One of the good things to come out of the vampire "craze" was that blood bag energy drink. It actually didn't taste too icky.

<LadyOnyx> I do not believe there can ever be a universally approved spokesperson for the OVC or the VC for that matter.

<LadyOnyx> We are all too individualized for that

<Merticus> As an example, Drake Mefestta is a sanguinarian who will be appearing on the History Channel (Canada) documentary later this year (to address some of the sanguinarian aspects that are clearly lacking in the media - for better or worse).

<LadyOnyx> I am familiar from afar with Drake.

<AcrophobicPixie> Drake seems to be such a nice guy.

<Vyrdolak> Unfortunately, that's exactly the kind of pseudonym we need to avoid (Drake>Dracula, Mefestta>Mephisto).

<Vyrdolak> He might be nice, but the second he's introduced, he has "KOOK" on his forehead in red block letters - -no one will hear anything else.

<Merticus> Par for the course... Sunshine Moonchild was taken.

<LadyOnyx> It's okay, the History Channel will throw in 15% history, 70% folklore, and then leave the rest for living vampyrysm.

<Lono> Notes Onyx's percentages are pretty accurate concerning the History Channel.

<LadyOnyx> LOL @ Lono

<LadyOnyx> <~~Old Bat.

<Vyrdolak> How about "Dan Smith?" or even better, "Dr. Dan Smith".

<AcrophobicPixie> @Vyrdolak: Sounds too creepy.

<Merticus> Well there's Dr. D J Williams...

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: You have been doing a bit of media lately, in print, what have you been most pleased with, and least pleased with in your own circumstances.

<Merticus> I was least pleased with the final outcome of the ABC 20/20 piece given the amount of footage they had and the unfortunate outcome from some appearing on the show as a result of ABC's negligence.

<Merticus> Likewise, I was disappointed that the front page Wall Street Journal article many of us worked on was canceled by the editor because the ABC 20/20 special coincided with the same time frame of the planned release of the article (actually it aired prior to the article run date).

<Merticus> As far as print articles, I'm pleased most with the academic articles I've consulted on (the mass media has the least interest to

me as far as big picture is concerned).

<Merticus> Though I'm not displeased with the Atlanta Journal & Constitution article, Walton Tribune article, Washington Post article, Paranormal magazine article, Miami Herald article, and so forth...

<LadyOnyx> I didn't care for the Miami Herald article, the others I don't have much to complain about.

<Lono> My personal favorite was the Bizarre Magazine article.

<Merticus> I've only been misquoted in the print media once... perhaps twice (not even important though) in all of my interviews.

<Isealdor> @Merticus: And been named as someone else :P

<Merticus> Yes, that was the coffee table book; Romancing The Vampire.

<Merticus> The 2nd printing (if there is one) should correct that mistake on the part of David Skal; though at least they attributed my name correctly in the text portions.

<Merticus> I'm very pleased with the FOX 8 Cleveland, OH News Interview that Michelle Belanger and Maloryn from the Atlanta Vampire Alliance [AVA] participated in - now available on the VVC YouTube channel. <http://www.youtube.com/user/VVCVideo>

<Lono> I agree.

<Lono> I find it ironic that some of our best representation has come from FOX, rather than ABC, CBS, or NBC.

<Merticus> **c. The Relationship Of The Economy & Other Factors To Social Participation Levels Among Vampires (Online & Offline): In your opinion what impact, if any, has the recent global economic uncertainty and other factors such as a widening age divide, changes or reductions in specific internet media platforms, decline in participation at club nights or other events, meetup group closings, etc. had on the social networking and participation levels of vampires and their respective groups.**

<Belfazaar> I know that the economics of what I am doing and not doing do play a role in it, but most of the reason I don't support/participate in things any more is due to maniacal egos by people I watched come into the community from years ago. I am also not very techno-oriented and the perpetual shifting of internet locations, platforms and websites tends to frustrate the hell out of me. I have also been known to stray away from anything that begins to become too 'cliquish'...

<Belfazaar> I can understand an organization being for specific types of people... IE a vampire organization being for vampires only... but, when certain members of a group try to heavy hand a group to force it to their way of thinking... That's when I take notice and if things don't change, slowly make my way out.

<Belfazaar> I never got into 'meetup' though I have a 'meetup' profile... I got bombarded by "what clan are you?", "I'm a real toreador and

want to meet other clans" and "I am the Prince of New Orleans, you must bow to me" so... I changed my profile to list off bi-weekly meetings that HoME/NOVA sponsor and have pretty much left it at that.

<Belfazaar> Money is tight, so I don't think about starting a NING group or any other group for that matter. It is also why I haven't put up a website for HoME or NOVA... Sucks, but I tend to fund most of what I do strictly out of my own pocket. Like the feedings in Jackson Square... Though NOVA does help some, I bear the lion's share because I am the one that feels the need to do this. I'm just glad that NOVA helps when and where it can.

<CorvisNocturnum> I do strongly believe that the economy has limited people in traveling to events. It certainly has made me more cautious in going to too much, outside of classes I'm finishing - it is imperative we spend only when needed, share accommodations (thank you Cole!) and other means to diminish costs.

<Merticus> Generally speaking, those who self-identify as real vampires or with other non-conformist groups tend to not be 'rolling in the dough' -- therefore as one could expect the economic woes are hitting the vampire community especially hard. I'm aware of several organizers who are letting their Meetup.com groups lapse due to the cost (\$144/year) and moving their existing regular members over to Facebook or via their smartphones.

<Merticus> Daemonox and I haven't hosted Twilight IV simply because of the economy and we know many people wouldn't be able to attend (regardless of the chosen location). The three times we've held the TWILIGHT conferences we've had to absorb the extra expenses out of pocket (Seattle, WA was particularly painful). I'm hoping things will improve by late 2011 or after the U.S. presidential election in 2012.

<Merticus> The "cyclic" trend that many claim explains the lull in activity within the online vampire community (in particular) doesn't hold up well to close examination. Such claim is logical when you look at the evolution of the internet from the early 1990's until around the mid-2000's and track the increases in availability of home computers correlated with spikes of pop-cultural references to vampires.

<Merticus> Technology and the way we all interact have now turned this assumption on its head as we sail into uncharted waters. There's been a steady decline for the past four to five years in participation across the board on forums, Yahoo Groups, LiveJournal, Ning, Meetup, etc. -- in fact many have completely flat-lined.

<Merticus> At the moment, Facebook participation will soon account for the bulk of the remaining social networking interaction within the vampire community with active numbers (those discussing real

vampire-related topics with regularity) below 1,000 persons spread across dozens of groups/pages.

- <Merticus> I contend that social interaction within the vampire community (social groups in general; not just the vampire community/subculture) mirrors Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory and that given the increase of smartphone/mobile usage, state of the global economy, and an aging demographic we're simply unplugging -- placing more value on offline or direct peer-to-peer interactions.
- <LadyOnyx> I will say that economic factors, and age differences seem to have a Large part in the lack of participation at certain club functions - no one wants to be the creepy old guy or gal in the back of the bar, be honest, we have all noticed them.
- <LadyOnyx> I find as I get older, I am 41 now, that I don't enjoy the CLUBS, and prefer more intimate settings where I can actually HEAR the people I am trying to commune with.
- <LucienWolfe> I personally don't find clubs interesting. I would prefer meeting in a place I can hold a conversation.
- <LucienWolfe> @LadyOnyx: I agree.
- <LucienWolfe> As we get older, it seems we prefer a quieter venue.
- <AcrophobicPixie> It all boils down to: Most of us are broke, therefore can't afford to go to cons or clubbing as much as we want/used to.
- <AcrophobicPixie> That, and with me trying to snag as much overtime as I can while it's being offered, I'm too tired to do much of anything except veg out in front of my computer/tv when I get home. It takes a LOT of work for me to look cute for going out on the town.
- <Isealdor> I'd say it's one of the contributing factors in a decline in activity across much of the community... it certainly has been a factor for people for a lot of offline gatherings, but also somewhat with online ones, in terms of people working more hours, not having the leisure time or funds to put toward computer and internet things, etc.
- <Shishain> Clubs are great for finding new people, but coffee shops or conferences are much better for conversation. The problem is being able to afford to attend conferences.
- <Lono> There are definite economic factors. Heck I was one of the people with out a job for a year and a half until I switched fields... I almost had to shut down my site twice... but my members always came though online... Offline however I'm still very financially constricted; I wish I could attend the Tampa Vampire Gatherings more often.
- <Isealdor> Concept of the economy causing a change in age differences in the community is interesting. Subjectively from personal observation, I'd say... maybe somewhat -- cut out some of the middle age ranges a little.

<LadyOnyx> I will also state, that even travel for me right now is difficult, life is busier than ever, and while I am only 45 minutes out of Atlanta currently I have been there only twice since November, and yet to return to Florida for any gatherings due to economic and medical constraints.

<Vrydolak> When I saw this question, it made me curious -- IS there a decline in participation? I would have thought the opposite, with all the Houses forming and everything.

<LadyOnyx> @Vrydolak: I would say that there is a decline in participation globally, although locally I have seen an influx of Houses, although I do not know how many of such I see going long-term.

<AcrophobicPixie> Vrydolak: The local Goth club is now only 1 night a week, versus 3 this time last year.

<Shishain> We're getting older; responsibilities and not wanting to be the creepy dinogoth at the back of the club combine to keep us out of many of the places where we could meet new folks.

<ThePinkLady> @Shishain I lol'ed at dinogoth.

<Vrydolak> Dinogoth, oh, gods, I have to do a cartoon of that.

<Lono> My online forum is thriving. and I second Shishain.

<Merticus> Most of those in my circle have tapered off from attending clubs or traveling any distance. Likewise we prefer more intimate venues and other economic factors affect the frequency of these gatherings.

<Merticus> I've noticed a decline across the board on forums, groups, posts, etc.

<Isealdor> @Vrydolak: I somewhat wonder if there's as much a decline as a perceived one as the community focus seems to be shifting as a whole from large-area and vast community groups toward smaller circles and communities.

<Shishain> The only problem with strictly online stuff is the preponderance of teen sparkle vamps who seem to be rearing their ugly heads thanks to a certain author.

<ThePinkLady> I'm heavily rooting for a Twilight IV because I'm at the point where I could work towards attending such a gathering.

<ThePinkLady> And with my own meetup finally, finally taking off, I like interacting with people offline.

<Vrydolak> I know that I've noticed a couple of things (this over many years, not just now).

<Vrydolak> One being that vampire community activity seems to *decline* when there's a huge surge in vamp fandom (like Anne Rice, or now).

<Vrydolak> Because the fans ridicule the idea of "real vampires," they're more into role-playing their fantasy world.

<Vrydolak> The other is that younger people are abandoning the Internet.

<Vrydolak> It's all texting from their smartphones now.

* Isealdor nods at Vrydolak that makes sense, though -- the

fandoms create their own place, and the vamp fans go there when there's a surge. When there isn't, people who are vampire fans find our places because they're the only really active "vampire" places.

- <Shishain> Vampirism -- there's an app for that!
- <Merticus> In fact, there are apps for that :)
- <Vyrdolak> I get emails that have been sent by text message from phones -- says so on the email.
- <Lono> IRC, what the hell is that?
- <Vyrdolak> @Lono exactly! You want dinosaurs... that's us!
- <Merticus> It's only fitting that we hold meetings on IRC...
- * Isealdor pets IRC
- <Lono> Anyone else remember telnet?
- * AcrophobicPixie raises her hand
- <Isealdor> Yep
- <ThePinkLady> I remember telnet.
- <AcrophobicPixie> Forums are so last year. It's all Twitter #tags now.
- <Vyrdolak> And Twitter is already on its way out. It's gotten too commercial
- <Lono> I've noticed a decline in quality of information... over the years... but perhaps it's because everything has been said.
- <Shishain> Much of what's been discussed in past years has likely been archived and beaten to death.
- <Vyrdolak> In the marketing world, everyone is already talking about "Web 3.0".
- <Merticus> Each Twitter post through the Vampire Community News (VCN) Twitter yields between 70-100 web hits to whatever particular matter is being discussed so that definitely makes communication easier and direct to many phones.
- <ThePinkLady> So... would it be fair to say that there's a greater need for offline involvement?
- <AcrophobicPixie> Twitter, FourSquare...
- <AcrophobicPixie> @AcrophobicPixie: I'm at "Vampire meetup 2010 at blahblahblah nightclub".
- <Vyrdolak> Maybe we need vampire Meetup flashmobs.
- <Lono> There was a zombie flashmob in Fort Myers awhile back..(where Day of the Dead 1985 was filmed) so yeah that's not a bad idea.
- <Merticus> There is more offline involvement occurring on the local level.
- <Merticus> Unfortunately because of the economy Twilight IV has been placed on hold... not to mention a bad time for it to be named such.
- <Merticus> Though as we have discussed before it would be nice to hold more regional gatherings.
- <Shishain> Yeah, there's that.
- <ThePinkLady> @Merticus: I think that's a good thing. The Virginia chapter of Bloodlines just started back up and there's movement towards a statewide gathering.

<Shishain> Has there been any talk of changing the name?
<Merticus> I personally like the name... Daemonox doesn't... as to how things end up that is anyone's guess at this point.
<Shishain> We could always just call it Not That Twilight.
<Vyrdolak> @Shishain: LOL!
<LadyOnyx> I see no reason to change the name.
<LadyOnyx> I've been walking my own coined Twilight path since 1990, and I don't put a disclaimer on my signature. LOL
<Isealdor> @LadyOnyx Tons of Twilight book/movie fans showing up might become reason...
<Merticus> Attendees are all pre-screened so that's not an issue. You can't show up to the TWILIGHT conferences and gain entry unless your name is already on the list (registered as attending).
<ThePinkLady> I think it was a good name that meant something at one time.
<LadyOnyx> They would leave after the first panel or lecture Isealdor.
<LadyOnyx> Soon as they realized Taylor wasn't there.
<ThePinkLady> I noticed at Twilight III there was a lack of presentations.
<ThePinkLady> I've done enough research on my own now that I could put together at least one presentation if not another.
<Isealdor> @LadyOnyx: Depending on how many there were show up... otherwise they would just ignore half of the panels or lectures :P
<Vyrdolak> That's one of my publishing company slogans, "more than just Twilight!"
<Vyrdolak> I do think that interaction has come around full circle, and it's much more local, offline, small-scale.
<Vyrdolak> But if there is less participation, perhaps the key question is, "what would people gain from participating, and are we offering that?"
<Merticus> What can the "Vampire Community" offer participants... good question. Most of the information is found on websites, books, articles, etc. - aside from this people come for social/support/interaction reasons.
<Vyrdolak> Back in the 80s, Pagan gatherings were a major place people went for "education," workshops, talks, etc.
<Vyrdolak> Now all that is available online, so gatherings attract attendees for different reasons.
<ThePinkLady> @Merticus: There isn't a lot on rural vampirism and there's next to nothing on Jewish vampirism outside the Kabbalah.
<ThePinkLady> Reading too many books on golems and dybbuks.
<Isealdor> I think a lot of people look at the current flux in activity level in the community and don't recognize that it's happened before and is always cyclic.
<Merticus> There are three more books on vampires/community/etc. coming out by the end of this year... at what point do we reach saturation (or have we)? Has the community outlived its usefulness or effectiveness (to educate, network, entertain, etc.) to those who

choose to participate?

<Merticus> There have been more articles, books, resources on real vampires and the community in the last three years than in the last 30 years of the "vampire community".

<Shishain> I think that the fellowship we can provide each other is important.

<Lono> Maybe websites have outlived their usefulness since there are so many of them, but there will always be that need to connect offline and to occasionally gather.

<LadyOnyx> I would say we have oversaturated.

<LadyOnyx> Because there is rarely a newly formed idea or theory that has not already been autopsied to death.

<AcrophobicPixie> I'm too young to have outlived anything... well, I outlived Teddy Ruxpin, but he doesn't count.

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: Sometimes just going to be around others like you is a reason to go.

<ThePinkLady> Hell, I flew on an airplane to meet these folks.

<Vyrdolak> @ThePinkLady: That's a big one, yes, and it raises the question - DO people in the vampire community really feel like most other vampires are "people like them?" People they really feel comfortable around and can hang loose with?

<ThePinkLady> @Vyrdolak: I was scared that I'd go and find a bunch of poseurs. Not so. Getting to meet certain people in person was an enjoyable experience.

<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: I would say for the most part I can say those I've met offline I have felt very comfortable with, except for maybe three in all of these years.

<LadyOnyx> We're polite in public, but wouldn't sit down and chat.

<Vyrdolak> It's not so much "poseurs" as being accused of being one, oneself. The community is so prickly.

<LadyOnyx> ;-)

<Vyrdolak> I can't post on forums anymore because I open my mouth and get flamed to cinders. This makes me very wary of in-person meetings.

<Merticus> I'd be comfortable meeting or conversing with any of you offline... (if I was inclined to speak).

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: I LOVE the part in parentheses.

<Lono> It takes all kinds...and we have to accept that... but unfortunately that process is slow.

<ThePinkLady> @Merticus: If only I could afford DragonCon... I have a conference in late September and it was a choice between one or the other.

<LadyOnyx> I still say, as I have ALWAYS said, proving one to be a vampire is just as hard as proving one to be human, because how do we truly know, both words were created by humans, and all we know was taught to us by others, so, in essence, you can no more

prove to be vamp than you can prove to me you are human.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Vyrdolak: If you were to come visit, my mom would probably talk more than I would. She likes meeting you vampire people for some odd reason.

<Merticus> Most of the individuals doing the flaming now days are the one's who have been around for years and are jaded for one reason or another. I think this is one reason some of the younger crowd has been pulling back from posting, commenting, etc. on anything in groups/forums.

<Vyrdolak> @Merticus: I agree. The curmudgeons are so self-justified; they don't understand their suppressing power.

<Vyrdolak> It doesn't take much to intimidate a newcomer.

<LadyOnyx> As I have seasoned, I have become more quiet in my rantings and less engaging socially, I simply get bored with the same topics over and over.

<Shishain> Because we've already beaten to death the horses that are new topics to them.

<LadyOnyx> @Shishain: Exactly

<Lono> Or they make posts... and the material is already there on the website, but they don't bother to read it ... "that grinds my gears".

<Isealdor> Note it's also now much easier for younger circles to make their own forums and chat groups, etc, than it used to be. They used to have to "put up with" the older people because the main sites with well-maintained forums and active chat rooms, etc, used to really only be there.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Lono: That's the problem with the younger ones now... it's all TL;DR

<LadyOnyx> I will say that the younger crowd is also very "want it now" oriented, and do not seem to have the desire to learn of history and methods, etc. They just want everything handed immediately, and when I say younger crowd, I do not refer to age, but rather length of time since awakening.

<Lono> Ahh the age old information, with out the wisdom to use or not use it.

<Merticus> Many are terrified (well perhaps that is too strong of a word) to speak up and say anything because they may be ridiculed, banned instantly, or never taken seriously again.

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: They aren't the only ones who sometimes hold their tongues for the same reason. It is no secret I usually disagree with everyone.

<LadyOnyx> And after a while, I get tired of speaking, because I'm dismissed... even by those who should know better.

<LadyOnyx> Whoops, there is that elitist attitude of mine, sorry.

<ThePinkLady> People also don't understand the e-list format. They don't get the idea that their posts can be seen by 1700+ people, most by e-

mail.

- <Isealdor> @PinkLady: It may be seen by that many... but how many actively regularly respond/post to the e-list of that number?
- <Isealdor> Like I know personally I'm on the e-list...but I only read it once in a blue moon. Otherwise, into the trash bin it goes, no offense.
- <AcrophobicPixie> @PinkLady: That's why the only e-list I'm on is for my house. Those are all people I've known since I was a little kid, so if I can't speak my mind there, where the hell can I? :)
- <ThePinkLady> @Isealdor: I'd say about 3% of the membership posts on a regular basis.
- <ThePinkLady> The list that I moderate is no longer the introductory access point it used to be for the vampire community.
- <Lono> Out of my 4,000 members only about 300 post regularly.
- <Shishain> The House Quinotaur public list has about 265 people, of which about 35 post on any kind of regular basis.
- <Merticus> I'd like to think we could all act as adults and agree to disagree while speaking our own minds... alas not a perfect world.
- <Vyrdolak> @Merticus: But sometimes, we don't even set that as an ideal objective.
- <Merticus> I follow most of the forums, e-lists, groups, etc... but very rarely post a reply.
- <LadyOnyx> I am not on any e-lists, other than the Vampire Community News which repeats what I get here on the VVC e-mails.
- <ThePinkLady> LOL, every time Merticus puts out the word on something, I have 200+ emails.
- <LadyOnyx> I moderate one forum, speak to countless people by phone and text and chat, but I will say I am far more involved offline than online currently.
- <Vyrdolak> I've been on and off e-lists. It's a rule of thumb that 90% or more of any 'Net venue never posts.
- <LadyOnyx> Yeah, me too.
- <Merticus> There's been a distinct lack of quality posts or moreover debates to engage in lately.
- <Isealdor> @PinkLady + @LadyOnyx: I delete most of those, too (I probably should just unsubscribe from most of them, and just stick to checking the couple places I do to read them.)
- <Isealdor> Over saturation of messages/alerts/e-mails etc.
- <AcrophobicPixie> Well, I still get the ShadowLore e-mails but I never check them, really. Just bin them and walk away.
- <LadyOnyx> My attitude as of late, is everyone has my information, my phone numbers, email addresses are all publicly posted everywhere, if someone needs me, they know how to get me, don't need to be on 5,000 forums anymore.
- <Shishain> So we're technologically outdated and bored of rehashing topics. Is there anything we can do to change that?
- <Vyrdolak> Everyone buy iPhones?

<ThePinkLady> Encourage offline meetings?
<AcrophobicPixie> I refuse to have an iPhone... it's bad enough my boyfriend has one.
<Merticus> Half of everyone here is already in my cell phone... doesn't mean I call them though.
<Vyrdolak> I'm telling you, my niece and nephew -- text text text text text.
<Vyrdolak> They're going to forget how to talk.
<Lono> Can we delve further? There are always new things to learn.
<ThePinkLady> Maybe the internet's role is changing from encouraging online participation to facilitating offline participation.
<Merticus> Our local Meetup groups are going strong but the local spur of the moment offline get togethers are even off in participation.
<LadyOnyx> MONEY MONEY MONEY, and lack of money.
<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx: Yes
<Lono> Most people aren't telepathic... the human's response to evolving telepathy cell phones and text messages.
<AcrophobicPixie> @Vyrdolak: I get teased at work for how much I text to Twitter/people at 4 AM on my lunch break.
<Merticus> Anyone have anything to add to topic C... what we can do? Not do? Opinions?
<LadyOnyx> My house has been trying to convene between three states for a month now, everyone is having issues financially, and as much as I love the Atlanta Vampire Alliance [AVA], Merticus I'm broke and busy and unless Psi and Tasha have a couch, I can't get to Atlanta currently.
<Vyrdolak> @LadyOnyx: That's the big thing. We're a highly rarefied and scattered community. That's where the 'Net facilitated the growth of the vampire communities identity.
<Vyrdolak> And it makes it very hard logistically to develop offline interaction of any depth or number.
<LadyOnyx> @Vyrdolak: I agree with that as well, but I also know that 10 years ago I devoted much time to being online all the time, now I find that being online longer than a few hours just makes me grumbly.
<Vyrdolak> I'm confronting these issues now in context of book marketing, and I'm not kidding, it's a VERY tough problem.
<Isealdor> @Vyrdolak: I can only imagine... I think most people's take anymore is "umwut, a book? You don't have a YouTube video for it or something? Or like a short blog? tl;dr"
<Merticus> The AVA hasn't hosted anything publicly in over a year now... mainly just small after dinner meetings when there are enough of us in one place. If you seek us out we'll meet with you but an effort has to be shown on your end.
<Isealdor> @Merticus: That sort of spur of the moment gathering seems to be a universal trend with a lot of groups and people.
<Isealdor> The "younger crowd" from my circles are most into texting,

Skype group calls, spontaneous online radio things, random offline gatherings, Twitter, and Facebook.

<Shishain> We've grown up and gotten lives. ;P

<AcrophobicPixie> Skype group calls are fun.

<Merticus> Flash mob gathering at my place tomorrow night - get in your cars and planes and come over!

<Vyrdolak> Seriously? :-)

<Merticus> Sure... I don't mind.

<Merticus> I used to host meetings at my house almost every week (course we were writing a survey and other "fun" activities)... need an excuse.

<AcrophobicPixie> @Merticus: Sorry, but you know I have to do my radio show tomorrow night, then go to work.

<LadyOnyx> @Merticus: Even getting over just to see people in general... trying to get people to even get together is tough these days... I think that all we can do is to weather the storm, just as we have done in the past.

<LadyOnyx> The OVC and the VC always ebbs and flows, we have periods of stagnation and periods of great growth.

<LadyOnyx> No different than any other community in existence.

<Merticus> The largest gathering of "community" I've seen in a while was my own wedding lol.

<Shishain> Aren't we supposed to be the epitome of long-term planners?

<ThePinkLady> Erg. Either a conference or a tourney has to go to Atlanta for me to go there... and chances are I'll just park in a library for most of the visit.

<ThePinkLady> All things considered, Atlanta's easier to fly into than, say, Roanoke, VA.

<Shishain> This has all happened before, and it will all happen again.

<Lono> At one point we all were seeking information, some of us created websites from our posts over the years... but the tech has definitely changed over the years, we're either not moving fast enough, or are bored by it.

<Vyrdolak> I think there may be a shift coming, globally, whereby energy costs really restrict travel and communications networks will change dramatically in consequence.

<Isealdor> @Vyrdolak: That's why I'm such a fan of things like Skype.

<Vyrdolak> I think there may be some quantum shifts coming in terms of allowing people to "meet" virtually, that we don't even see coming.

<Merticus> In 2013 we're going to have major solar storms so we might as well start transitioning offline.

<Lono> We have 2 solar storms a year... I know that from my work at CBS... we just change satellites.

<Vyrdolak> @Merticus: That's assuming we're all still here after 2012.

<Shishain> We'll be here. Someone's got to put up the chairs and turn off the

lights.

<Vyrdolak> @Shishain: How come it's *always* us who gets that job?

<Merticus> The one's in 2013 are predicted to be far beyond what we're experiencing now.

<Shishain> Massive packs of vampire cyclists roving the interstates?

<Isealdor> Awesome, we'd all get in better shape...

<Merticus> I suggest everyone have an exit strategy over the next few years just in case.

<AcrophobicPixie> Merticus: I'll just use my plan for the zombie apocalypse. *nod*

* AcrophobicPixie goes to find her "Team Shovel" shirt.

<AcrophobicPixie> If the Zombie Apocalypse happens, y'all can come with me... unless you get bitten. Then I'll put you down as quickly as possible.

<Vyrdolak> @Pixie: I think you need to polish your pitch a little :-/

<Lono> Bitten by zombies I take it... you may want to clarify that one :P

<AcrophobicPixie> Well, do you reeeeeeeeeeeally want to be a zombie?

<AcrophobicPixie> And it's not like I said I'd torture you or something... I would put you down quickly and with as little hassle as possible, because I like you guys.

<Shishain> Awww, so no hot knives?

<Shishain> Darn!

<Vyrdolak> I'll be homesteading in Maine, probably.

<Merticus> *If* it were to come to that (a complete societal collapse or loss of the power grids) it would be nice to have some tribal loyalty and unity and know who your friends really are in this community you can lean on.

<Vyrdolak> @Merticus: I SO agree with that.

<Vyrdolak> Hey, I'm always on Team Merticus! :-)

<Lono> I agree.

<Lono> Well... not always but Merticus is one scary dude with his info gathering skills LOL.

<Shishain> Say, isn't that what Houses were supposed to be?

<Vyrdolak> Oh, I think every House had its own reasons for forming, they're all so different.

<Merticus> That's the core of what Houses should be.

<Merticus> For those who don't get hung up on the name "House" and can appreciate the social network and friendship/loyalty components.

<Merticus> **d. Other topics you'd like to bring up for discussion?**

<LadyOnyx> For once there are really no other topics that I would like to discuss, I liked the call of the questions this time around, seemed important to me. I think we should have OVC t-shirts... <waiting to get hissed at>

<Isealdor> I want a t-shirt...

<Isealdor> Nothing here.

<Vyrdolak> I guess I don't have anything to add right now.

<Shishain> All good here.

<Merticus> Well I can offer you AVA t-shirts...

<AcrophobicPixie> Ooh, I want a VVC coffee mug and matching t-shirt.

<Isealdor> VVC shirts would be amusing.

<LadyOnyx> Hmm thinking on an AVA t-shirt.

<Shishain> VVC = Vessel of Vampire Coffee?

<LadyOnyx> Trade you for a House RavenShadow (HRS) t-shirt?

<Merticus> Hmm... I have a House Dark Haven (HDH) t-shirt... but not an HRS shirt...

<LadyOnyx> I have a House Hidden Shadows, an HDH, House St. Germaine, which isn't around anymore, and some others... LOL

<Vyrdolak> We need a CafePress store.

<Vyrdolak> "Question Authority, Ask Us Anything -- VVC"

<Lono> I just have a fruitbat t-shirt.

<LadyOnyx> Everyone, it has been my pleasure as always.

<Merticus> If there's nothing more to be said for topic C and nothing else to be brought up for discussion (topic D) I think we can leave it there for tonight.

<Merticus> **IV. Business Reminders**

<Merticus> Refer to the forum for all current discussions.

<Merticus> Thank you all for coming!

<Merticus> <<<<<END MEETING LOG>>>>>>