Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC)
Public Meeting – December 6, 2008

Attendees (27):

Acrophobic Pixie – Black Swan Haven (BSH)
Anshar Seraphim – House Lost Haven
Camazotz – Sanguinox (NOX) Message Board
Cynsanity – Vampire Community Message Board (VCMB)
Gabriel – House Lost Haven
Imon – Les Vampires
Isealdor – Vampire Realm Of Darkness
Khan – The Dark Nations & Independent Representative
Lady Slinky – Vampire Community Message Board (VCMB)
Lono – PsychicVampire.org
Mairi – ShadowLore
Merticus – Atlanta Vampire Alliance (AVA) & Suscitatio Enterprises, LLC
Michelle Belanger – House Kheperu & MichelleBelanger.com
NyteMuse – House Rosa
Perce Coeur – Manerium Lamiis
Ravena – House Lost Haven
RavenHarte – Clann Caladvwlch
SapphoWolf – House Maidenfear
sarasvati – Echoes of Night & VCMB
SphynxCatVP – SphynxCatVP Real Vampires Support Site
Stephen O'Mallie – Clan O'Mallie & House Vengeance
Sylvere ap Leanan – Real Vampires Community Alliance (RVCA)
Vyrdolak – By Light Unseen
Wreckmaster – PsychicVampire.org
Xeurika – House Quinotaur
Zero – Atlanta Vampire Alliance (AVA) & Suscitatio Enterprises, LLC
Zilchy – Independent Representative

Discussion Agenda:

I. Meeting Information

Welcome to the third and final public meeting of Voices of the Vampire Community (VVC) for 2008. 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. 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, organizations, and individual leaders 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.

a. The Vampire & Popular Media - A Six-Part Question: From HBO's TrueBlood, Stephenie Meyer's Twilight, SouthPark - Goth vs. Vampire, etc. to History Channel's MonsterQuest, WEtv's Secret Lives of Women, Tyra Banks Halloween Special, etc; the "vampire" - fictional and real - has invaded our televisions and almost all forms of media. This was the truly a year for the "vampire" and 2009 should be no exception. (1) In your

own estimation what has been the impact of the fictional-based shows on the real vampire community? (2) Have you noticed an influx of new participants, the development of any positive or disturbing trends, or any shifts in the population of the community? (3) What do you think the long term effects of increased public interest in "vampire" related entertainment will have on our community? (4) What impact has the non-fictional (real) vampire community television (non-print) programs had on the real vampire community? (5) Which would you classify as positive, neutral, or negative and why? (6) What types of documentary-style or informational programs, if any, would you view as potentially beneficial to the community and how would you define such "benefit"?

b. Representation & Coming Out Of The Coffin - A Five-Part Question: (1) What messages and goals, if any, should the vampire community and representatives who appear in the public press attempt to convey or promote to the general public? (2) When a representative, or someone on their own accord, choose to go public about vampirism what expectations and standards should be expected of them and what types of information would the majority of the community most likely consider appropriate for public consumption? Take a moment to examine both sides of the "In or Out of the Coffin Debate". (3) What are some of the advantages of widespread public recognition of real vampirism and self-identifying real vampires in relation to both vampires and the vampire community? (4) What are some of the disadvantages to publicly revealing one's nature and the potential impact or repercussions on the larger vampire community? (5) As both members and leaders of the vampire community do you think it's possible to find a middle-ground that would satisfy public and community interests while addressing the desire for others to remain private or "underground" in the vampire community? If so, how?

c. The International Vampire Community: What steps can the community take to bridge the information and networking gap between U.S./Canadian and European/South American/etc. vampires? Aside from multi-lingual translations of documents and culturally diverse forums what specific avenues should be explored to encourage transparent dialogue and participation? What are some particular differences in cultural and communication styles you've noticed between different regions of the world and how many individuals outside of your country do you regularly speak with? How do vampires and vampiric-identity or practice differ in these countries as opposed to your own? Could normalization of resources and information-sharing become a reality in the near future? If so, how do we get to that point?

d. Diversity, Perception, & Empowerment: What steps can we take as a community to help improve our own lives, encourage appropriate and meaningful participation, and prevent the over-simplification of what it means to be a vampire while still helping those coming to know their nature for the first time? As vampires we often have an incredible diversity in the personal meaning we ascribe to the concept of "vampirism" - some viewing it solely as a need - physical, spiritual, or both (albeit sang, psi, or hybrid), others as a potential medical condition or deficiency, still others as an ability, state of being, or extension of energy work, and many who incorporate all of these views into their own menagerie. While we are engaging in self-examination how can we maintain focus on

supporting the vampire community, arrest the self-deprecating mindset that the only aspect to vampirism is a "constant struggle", and bypass the pitfalls of division over terminology?

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

IV. Business Reminders

    <Merticus>   <<<<<< BEGIN MEETING LOG >>>>>>
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\<Lady Slinky\>	a. (1) Fiction has always had a huge influence on the vampiric community. Its influence can be seen in almost all corners and aspects of the community from the black veil, vocabulary and houses to fashion and forum/website décor. The influence can even be seen in the YouTube films we the community put out and the information that we preserve, the skills that are claimed

	and keeping alive the thought that 300 year old vamps might be real and just have a retrovirus.
<Lady Slinky>	a. (2) I have noticed an influx of new participants to the community. It's the same influx we get every time a new vamp flick comes out. You get a few real vamps who stumble on us while enjoying some fiction or researching fiction to find answers to what's going on with them like many of us did in our early days. As always a large portion of the influx is young teens who think it is cool or are really just looking for a place to fit in.
<Lady Slinky>	Often these teens will play the part whether they really are or not and usually come with a boat load of fantastic attention seeking stories of their trials awakening. You also get a few skeptics and all out trolls.
<Lady Slinky>	a. (3) As long as we continue to cling to the aesthetics of fiction it will continue to permeate our community which in turn perpetuates the stereotype that we are all deluded people who are obsessed with a fictional construct and cling to it in an attempt to escape reality.
<Lady Slinky>	If we are able to successfully separate ourselves from the aesthetics of fictional vampires then we may be able to use the media hype to the advantage of those who want to out the community to the masses.
<Lady Slinky>	a. (4) With Non-Fiction documentaries there are a much higher influx of new people with the number of skeptics and trolls being about equal to the number of real seekers. The number of "fangbangers" is much less then with fiction. I find the trolls and skeptics from our non fiction pieces seem to be more vicious.
<Lady Slinky>	a. (5-6) I personally would prefer it if the community did not have this need to make sure everyone knows that there are real life vampires at least until we have something more concrete to give them.. I think the documentaries such as the A&E special and I think there were some on Discovery were neutral.
<Lady Slinky>	While the format was well done and the producers respectful the impact to the community of posers and skeptics outweigh much of its positive aspects for me. Bad talk shows are very negative. They don't educate anyone, serve to make us mockeries and bring us nothing but trolls as well as creates drama within the community when people start expressing their opinions about it and being slammed for them.
<Mairi>	a. (1) Honestly, I haven't seen much of an impact yet. Granted ShadowLore has had more people joining the group recently and claiming to have been awakened vampire. But this also happens every winter so I don't credit those programs with having much to do with it.
<Mairi>	ShadowLore Teen group hasn't seen a rise in members and I think it would if Twilight had an affect on kids that many fear. I

moderate a True Blood discussion forum and none of the members there have expressed an interest in being turned or in knowing more about the OVC. They are just wrapped up in the plot of the books and the program.

<Mairi>   a. (2) As I said above, not really. (3) I think there is always going to be an interest. We are unusual and those interested want to know if we are a threat to society, just a bunch of nuts or could we actually be the real deal after evolution.

<Mairi>   a. (4) Some have had a positive affect. Allowing society to see us as we really are, just like everyone else. And others make us look like freaks. (5) The interviews that Michelle Belanger does.

<Mairi>   She is intelligent and articulate in her speech and information. She also always appears dressed as everyone else and doesn't try to come across as a superior being. I also felt that the article in the Washington Post was positive even if the author took it upon herself to cross the line in many places.

<Mairi>   a. (6) If we are going to step out into public view we need to make sure we do it in the best ways possible. We Must show them that we are potentially just like everyone else......our only difference is our need for additional energy. And we are for the most part just as sane as they are.

<Perce Coeur>   a. In France during 2008 we don't have had such a vampire invasion by the media. French reality shows are not "that opened" to talk about real vampirism. On the other hand, vampire fiction stay vampire fiction. It may have an impact on teenagers still looking for some personal identity but that is all.

<Stephen O'Mallie>   a. + b. Why oh why do people feel the need to "come out" and make the community look like a bunch of freaks? People who work in the real world and would loose their job, house and family for being "outed". I am glad that some people can be "out" and kudos to you if you can make a living out of your lifestyle... but don't make the "hidden" ones look bad.

<Stephen O'Mallie>   The Tyra Banks show disgusted me. Time to go back "underground" - we did just fine hidden from the world.

<RavenHarte>   a. (1) From my perspective it has made some quarters of the Pagan community more empathetic to the vampyric, to get just enough of the real to make them curious, more likely to ask questions, rather than just say SHUN THEM ALL.... out dreaded spot :)

<RavenHarte>   a. (2) I have had a few people request admittance to the Utopia Nocturna Yahoo Group, which has had NO new members in like a year, but it's a dead group so no discussions are going on that would tell me what the leanings are there. I am slowly getting ready to replace that group with an info only webpage since there are FAR more

<RavenHarte>	Otherkin and Therian groups now than there were when I started it... my intent being to bring those two communities into contact with Vamps and Pagans to try to dispel myths, understand each other more.
<RavenHarte>	a. (3) I think you'll go through what we (Pagans) went through, tons of "posers and wannabes" will come crawling out, some will majorly screw it up, some will become flash in the pan BNVs (Big Name Vamps) and then when it's over you'll have
<RavenHarte>	come through getting the GP off your back, with some good additions to the community, and A LOT of "what not to do's" under your belt.
<RavenHarte>	a. (4) Well I can only judge by our group since its the only connect I have to the VC right now (besides personal friends) - but I think its helping you all define what you would prefer to see out there, and giving you the impetus to get out there and make that happen, which to me is a good thing.
<RavenHarte>	a. (5) I think most if it was neutral. I mean Tyra made things at least not scary. SouthPark to me was like HEY the Vamps have really arrived now, LOL. I haven't seen Vampire Secrets yet - on DVR waiting for me, but the MonsterQuest was interesting to watch.
<RavenHarte>	The WEtv network one (Secret Lives Of Women) was awful but everyone on it was made to look ridiculous and other episodes I've seen weren't better so I think the audience gets that it's not the best work.
<RavenHarte>	a. (6) I think I have seen quite a few of these things done by Michele Belanger already, I don't know that much else is needed that's not already readily available EXCEPT perhaps the donor perspective stuff... which I myself have been remiss in getting my article in for so I can't really talk!!
<SphynxCatVP>	a. (1) More people will be exposed to vampirism concepts, but with additional fictional baggage. What I've historically seen in IRC is a rash of people coming in and getting pissed because we don't meet their fictional expectations of what vampires should be like.
<SphynxCatVP>	a. (2) I'm not aware of changes in participants or population trends within the community, but I haven't exactly been paying attention lately...
<SphynxCatVP>	a. (3) Long term, I think people will become more aware of the community, especially as the journalists keep poking around the edges and finding it harder to meet their "freak of the week" quota.
<SphynxCatVP>	a. (4) It's hard for me to say. I've seen some of the truly horrific ones from the 90's, and compared them to the ones made today - I see improvements in how community members are treated, but we're not entirely taken seriously yet still. But, it IS a start. Baby

steps before walking, as the saying goes. :)

<SphynxCatVP> a. (5) Taboo: Blood Rites and A&E's Secret Lives of Vampires were among the more positive ones. We were presented more as normal people -without- 'our' segments being peppered inbetween police expose's on psychopathic killers. Taboo was done by National Geographic, so really, I think they were one of the first, if not the first, to start to treat us better than what had come before.

<SphynxCatVP> a. (6) I don't entirely understand what "types" are being referred to here however what I think would be beneficial would be to actually ask reasonable questions - not the same ones that have been asked before (do you sleep in a coffin, are you only

<SphynxCatVP> awake at night, etc. etc. *yawn*) - that explore more into how we live day-to-day without bringing up myths and urban legends, despite their popularity.

<SphynxCatVP> However, I see good and bad to such beneficial documentaries. As people see more of how we really are, they'll start to see "the boogyman" around every corner. Those of us who are marginally "in the coffin" may get unintentionally dragged out as people eventually learn enough to put the pieces together.

<SphynxCatVP> I do see that some people's lives may unintentionally get impacted negatively, even if in the *long* run - a couple generations perhaps - things will improve as people eventually understand that we're not all the "freak of the week" category.

<Wreckmaster> a. (1-2) I feel the impact has been large. I have noticed a large influx into the forum I work with. The discussion is not all that great. A lot of newbs and curious folks. More of a drinks and appetizers crowd, rather than meat and potatoes.

<Wreckmaster> a. (3-4) Vampires seem to be the new hip thing. Hollywood will continue to show vamps until it is not profitable. We will continue to get more folks poking around and looking into the "rabbits hole", and they will probably never go further into the hole than the rim, while Hollywood keeps profiting.

<Wreckmaster> a (5-6) Negative - I do not trust the media. I am not sure I understand the question. Do you mean for this to be shown within the community, or shown to the world? I have no comment on in the community stuff.

<Wreckmaster> But, I would rather we keep to ourselves than broadcast to the world that there really are "creatures that go bump in the night" The world is NOT ready for us. I will personally never tell a non-trusted (long time friend or lover) person about us, or myself, EVER.

<Zero> a. (1) The increase in wide-appeal media, especially the non-challenging, lowest-common-denominator appeal of the Twilight book series, helps to normalize the abstract idea of vampires and of a vampire community by making it part of the

cultural background noise. Since we take the word "vampire" from the fiction, the fictional

<Zero> associations will color the mainstream's interpretation of anyone who adopts the term. The current fictional milieu has shifted the associations and assumptions surrounding the word "vampire;" since the fiction has become less spectacular, the vampire character more of an everyday person and less of an outsider, we will see the perceptions about our community shifting in those directions as well.

<Zero> a. (2) I would like the community to make a concerted effort to call participants' attention to the fact that most of them are not vampires. Hanging out with the vampire community is fine, we are pretty egalitarian about who we'll socialize with. But I don't

<Zero> want the mainstreaming of the idea of vampires to lead to an increase in interested people adopting false identities or misleading themselves.

<Zero> a. (3) One of the vampire community's biggest problems has always been the poor public reception to our use of the word "vampire" to describe ourselves. Since the word has no known etymology and no solid definition, it's easy to pick up a very different meaning than the one we intend when we use it.

<Zero> And the outside associations have always been negative. Even within the community, the vampire terminology evokes different imagery for different groups and sub-cultures within the community.

<Zero> Some have latched onto the community and family aspects of the vampire fiction, others appreciate the "vampire's" evocation of gothic beauty, grace, and dignity, and others have taken the metaphor to symbolize individual spiritual strength and the perseverance of the outsider.

<Zero> However, from outside the community, the use of the word has created a direct association between real people and fictional characters, without the cushion of metaphor or interpretation. The mainstream has always treated our community as people who literally "think they are vampires," not a minority group seeking to conceptualize itself

<Zero> with a ready metaphor. This creates an instant worry in the mainstream that there are cults of people who are out of touch with reality, or even worse, that we are a group who has fully rejected the norms of society and represent some kind of ideological and/or physical danger.

<Zero> Interestingly, the normalization of the vampire in fiction has created an identity politics for fictional vampires - the association of TrueBlood's vampires with a civil rights movement within that fictional universe signals to the audience that "vampires are people" who think like they do and want to

participate in the same society.

<Zero> This is a far cry from Dracula living in his drafty castle, or Anne Rice's vampires living in some wacky mountaintop estate like Batman. If we're going to be perceived as people who "think they are vampires," I think that being seen as people who think they are the kind of vampires who want to live in furnished apartments and sue for their civil rights is definitely a step up.

<Zero> I hope that the normalization of the concept of vampires continues, and the vampire keeps its place in mass media as the icon that looks like Twilight and The Society of S, and shows like TrueBlood have made it. The vampire-as-literary-concept has actually moved a little bit closer to the concept as we've employed it in metaphor.

<Zero> a. (4) For now, the impact doesn't come from the interviews and talk shows, the real indicator of change is that the talk shows are interested in us at all. Daytime TV has courted the vampire community before, but the most reasonable people have always been rejected in favor of the Goth kids and headcases

<Zero> - whatever looked the most dramatic. The fact that talk shows, documentaries and news magazines are willing to portray a more accurate viewpoint is an immensely positive step - it means that they think their audience is interested in seeing a colorful but humanized minority group, not the circus sideshow. This means that there has been a fundamental shift in the general public's perception of identity groups, eccentric aesthetics, and the

<Zero> concept of "vampires."

<Zero> a. (5) I would classify the WEtv (Secret Lives Of Women w/ Vampyra) and Tyra Banks treatments as the most negative, because they both challenged the audience too much. If a mainstream audience is willing to accept a friendly and open discussion about the vampire subculture, and entertain the notion that there are fundamental differences between vampires and non-vampires,

<Zero> then we have to be careful not to challenge them with too many new concepts at a time. Don Henrie was perfect for the Tyra Banks show, because he was audience-friendly and presented only one real challenge to their worldview - the blood drinking. The thing fell apart when the other guests brought in further challenges - aesthetics, family concepts ("I light my son on fire" was not

<Zero> appropriate. Even "I have adopted this person as my spiritual family" would have sounded too cultish, but the challenge to the idea of the mother-son relationship embedded in Vampyra spot undid all of Don Henrie's progress). The WEtv spot gets lumped in here, too, because the concepts of BDSM and vampirism together are going to

\<Zero\>	stretch a mainstream audience beyond their willingness to concede. The idea that "we need to drink blood or feed on energy in order to live healthy lives" and the idea that "some people enjoy acting out power dynamics while being a bit aesthetically transgressive" are not only not going to be understood in conjunction with each other,
\<Zero\>	they're too much of a whammy all at once. The audience shouldn't be introduced to so many challenging concepts at once, if you're going to be asking them to accept your proposed shift in their reality.
\<Zero\>	a. (6) Something exploring the psychic aspects of vampirism particularly. A medical documentary where they do in-depth research and info on blood drinking (health concerns, dispelling misinformation about blood-borne diseases, finding out that it's not easy and that we don't do it because it's cool. A sociological treatment of the community
\<Zero\>	and its subcultures, and how we get along (or not, depending). We are a unique culture; we dress like it's Halloween, and we interact like Quakers. We expect everyone else to be as contemplative and considering as we are. We see other people's side of the argument and don't get why they don't do the same for us. We are NOT everyday people, and
\<Zero\>	though the differences are sometimes subtle, I think that we're a pretty interesting culture just waiting for an ethnography.
\<Merticus\>	a. (1) I think the impact from the fictional shows is unable to be adequately measured right now aside from the obvious media attention and widening public interest in vampires - fictional, folkloric, and even perhaps real. I only expect this to increase in 2009 with the new Underworld movie, Johnny Depp in Dark Shadows, TrueBlood Season 2, etc.
\<Merticus\>	a. (2) The periphery community networking sites have increased in membership (most notably Ning, Gaia, Facebook, and portions of Yahoo such as the Answers service) but not much in substantive conversation. There have been efforts made by community members to spread information to HBO and Twilight message boards about real vampirism and engage the curious and dabblers head-on. This is often
\<Merticus\>	met with rejection of vampirism as anything serious by the majority of the forums and not appreciated by some real vampires whose sites and information is distributed via this method. Instead of following the old adage that we would allow others to seek us out we have in turn started to go off the reservation and seek them out first. To a degree I
\<Merticus\>	support the spreading of links and quality information sources to the public when first brought up on their end but see no benefit in directly engaging in a debate over vampirism on a non-

community-oriented or television/movie forum.

<Merticus> a. (3) I think the long term effect will be an increased awareness that there is in fact a real vampire community or subset of the population who identify as real vampires. Along with this we will face increased scrutiny over the material that is available via our forums and web sites which will be viewed by thousands of individuals

<Merticus> we likely will not have the chance to interact with and properly gauge how they perceive our particular "take on vampirism". This is why I think we should be cautious and vigilant at increasing the quality of the information put forth.

<Merticus> a. (4) The non-fictional/investigative/interview-style articles and publications on the real vampire community and individuals I hope will contribute to the gradual normalization of the subculture to the general population at least on some base level. The more material we have out there in print conveying that we are indeed a diverse

<Merticus> community that doesn't hold to the common "Goth, Coffin, or Capes/Fangs" stereotypes, the more apt we are to be taken seriously by academia, the scientific community, law enforcement, and perhaps even by some in the general public.

<Merticus> I feel that we can maintain our unique identity and perception to others while reinforcing the idea we are a responsible, ethical, and reasonable community.

<Merticus> a. (5) I'd classify History Channel's MonsterQuest along with several of the recent print articles - ABC's Real-Life Vampires and the Washington Post article as overall positive in helping to portray a serious and non-sensationalist side to vampire. While I disagree with certain elements of all of these productions/publications I don't

<Merticus> think they reached the level that WEtv's Secret Lives Of Women or the Tyra Banks show did of portraying vampires as side-show performers. Don Henrie's performance on Tyra Banks in comparison with Sarah Lester and Vampyra was both professional and informative to the audience

<Merticus> (this is the perspective we need to view these shows from). Maury Povich was short and pseudo-informative but overshadowed by the theatrics added by the show in keeping with their format. By the starkest of contrast Vampyra's performance has now twice been deplorable.

<Merticus> My thoughts of SouthPark (non-stop laughing) and the NY Daily News Fashion article are neutral - if anything they help bring "vampire" into the cultural lexicon as something other than a blood-sucking creature that roams the night.

<Merticus> a. (6) Anyone who seriously considers accepting media offers needs to know what they are getting into beforehand… whether

	it's Tyra Banks or Maury Povich or on the opposite end of the spectrum Oprah or Larry King. They shouldn't be afraid to say "no" when the producer or format of the show or article is irresponsible or sensationalistic with their requests.
\<Merticus\>	Granted we never know how things will turn out once they have gone through editing and hours of interviews are turned into 1-3 minute clips but we should be researching those who wish to showcase us and be familiar with their past work.
\<Merticus\>	I hope that in the future respectable persons from the community will be featured or interviewed on quality film, radio, and print that goes beyond the superficial questions that often reinforce the idea of the fantastical. More A&E, History, Discovery, National Geographic, and cultural/scientific-based programs and perhaps a roundtable discussion filmed from a conference or other gathering.
\<M_Belanger\>	1. Many recent shows have helped raise awareness in the presence of a real vampire community. HBO's True Blood is a prime example of this, as its advertising campaign in part used the existence of this community to help promote the show. Although that campaign (in my opinion) dangerously blurred the lines between the True Blood world and the realm vampire community, it nevertheless created opportunities for dialogue about us as well as on several television & radio media outlets.
\<SapphoWolf\>	I haven't noticed an influx of genuine participants, and we induct a new group every year. However I am getting a lot of mail from people who think they're sincere but are actually just confused.
\<AncientKhan\>	I just saw someone who has been part of the OVC for a while use the term "fangbanger" here in a sentence and mean it. I am beside myself.
\<Vyrdolak\>	a. (1) Not nearly as big an impact as people in the VC have been assuming and worrying it will.
\<Vyrdolak\>	People DO know the difference between fact and fiction, even young people!
\<Vyrdolak\>	All those "Team Edward" kiddies and True Blood fans think we're boring and delusional.
\<Vyrdolak\>	Or part of HBO's viral marketing campaign.
\<Vyrdolak\>	a. (2) I have been getting an uptick in e-mails from young people asking about the Twilight saga
\<Vyrdolak\>	"is this or that really true?" etc usually in a cautious way
\<Vyrdolak\>	*Everyone* who writes me finds it necessary to insist, repeatedly, that they're not "crazy".
\<Vyrdolak\>	I'm also hearing a lot that people have been brushed off and/or called crazy by others they've e-mailed
\<Vyrdolak\>	"You're the first person who's taken me seriously," I've been hearing recently, a lot more than I used to.

<Vyrdolak>   I can't explain this but it's very noticeable.

<Isealdor>   Much like the paranormal/ghost hunting community, I think a lot of the "popular" vampire things have started to push the community from being viewed as "freaks" or on the fringes of society as much and into more of a popculture thing. However, it's also added a number of new stereotypes and misconceptions, and a mass of people now wanting to be real vampires, because it's "unique and cool and special".

<M_Belanger>   2. My biggest concern lies with the popularity of Twilight & its target audience. Meyers' goal with the books seems to have been to use vampirism as a symbol for sex to encourage abstinence and responsible sex among teens. Unfortunately, the teen and tween audience of these books are utterly romanced with the vampire itself...

<M_Belanger>   ...and I think this fascination lead some to seek out the real vampire community at an age where I do not think they can make reliably good decisions about their participation.

<M_Belanger>   They might know the difference, but terms have been borrowed from one to the other & back again from the start of the official vampire community.

<Sylvere>   The public's fascination with vampires continues to grow.

<Sylvere>   However, instead of the horrific, inhuman, and debauched yet alluring creatures vampires were in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the vampire of today is beautiful, sexy, and complicated. Anne Rice and White Wolf showed us the core of humanity beneath the monstrous veneer.

<Sylvere>   This has translated into an acknowledgement that the vampire is an appealing and powerful archetype. More people identify with the "vampire mystique" and shrug off the less attractive characteristics. Vampires no longer rape and kill; they seduce and feed on willing participants.

<Sylvere>   This is a double-edged sword; more people are willing to be donors but, simultaneously, there are more "lifestylers" trying to get in on the action. Media have taken notice of the public's interest and have been more willing to treat the vampire community as an interesting, if eccentric, mode of living.

<Sylvere>   Though there are still the "freak of the week" shows, serious journalists are stepping up to find out about us and report facts rather focus on the sideshow aspects of the community. The long-term effect of such media attention has yet to be seen but the growing number of accurate, informative works is encouraging.

<Sylvere>   We may never see a vampire president, but it would be nice to think we might be able to live our lives without fear of losing jobs or loved ones because of our different needs.

<Lono>   I'd have to agree with Wreckmaster...There have been at least

	100 new members on my forum in a 4 day span after Twilight was released.
<zilchy>	I agree with Michelle on this, but we also have the influx of 15 year olds who want to bear our children. Double edged sword FTW
<AcrophobicPixie>	I have not noticed a large influx of new members. There have been a few, but we've been around for only a year, and most of our newbies come over from other OVC forums. There have been a couple of people I keep tabs on (especially with people breaking board policy on things like donor/vamp ads) but nothing that flags a huge warning at my site.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Honestly, I don't think the effects will be much more than what's already been had by the books. If there is a long term effect from True Blood and Twilight, it will probably have the same effect as Anne Rice's novels.
<Camazotz>	Sanguinox (Forum) hasn't especially been affected numerically.
<SapphoWolf>	Well, let's face it. Real life tends to suck. Anything that offers an alternative is going to be appealing.
<cynsanity>	(1) Impact of shows on the community - significantly less than I originally expected. When Underworld came out, there were much more teenagers who suddenly discovered that they were vampires/lycans/hybrids. When Stephenie Meyer's book came out and gained a following, there were dozens of Twilight fans invading the corner of the OVC I am inhabiting.
<Lono>	TrueBlood was more of an annoyance than anything else.
<Isealdor>	There are always the mass influxes of new people anytime there's a major, mainstream thing about vampires, be it a movie or popular book or news article or tv show feature…and lately we've had all of those. At least a number of places I'm at, it's shifted the population down a little in average age, but I don't know how long-term that effect will be. I'm guessing that a good percentage of the people we've picked up recently wont actually
<Isealdor>	stay around overly long, as soon as they figure out that our skin doesn't glitter when we go out in the sun and that we haven't graduated from high school 115 times.
<AcrophobicPixie>	I personally like the documentaries and the like. I think they do help people outside the community to understand us better, and not be all freaked out. Showing a doc to my mother, and handing her a copy of Vamps in their words helped her understand that my brother and I aren't total psychos and the like.
<cynsanity>	(1) I personally think that the movie caters to an already existing fanbase, which entered the OVC when the books came out and they wanted some of that vampire goodness.
<cynsanity>	TrueBlood has, as of now, not yet drawn the attention of the younger viewers towards the OVC, as far as I can ascertain.
<cynsanity>	However, everyone's giving more attention to the media now,

	and the camps of "no media attention at all" vs. "let's come out of the coffin" are definitely forming.
\<M_Belanger\>	3. As the vampire in fiction & film has gained increasingly more expsoure from the mid 90's onward, it has driven fans of the vampire to seek the archetype anywhere it appears -- including the real vampire community. This has raised awareness about our community and created an understandable curiosity about who we are.
\<M_Belanger\>	and how we differ from the traditional media portrayals. In the long run, this means that more and more media attention will be directed toward us and, as the fictional archetype goes mainstream, we as a community will inevitably encounter more requests to share our personal stories.
\<Ravena\>	I'm not convinced vampires as a topic is more popular now than it was before.
\<M_Belanger\>	Ravena --- REALLY?
\<Ravena\>	Vampires are archetypes, there were tons of fiction and movies before now.
\<M_Belanger\>	Massive media campaigns, promotions, a huge influx of vampire-specific romance novels (complete with a whole new recognized genre!) all argue against that
\<Ravena\>	The vampire was always popular.
\<Anshar\>	I got wantonly bizarre emails after appearing in the ABCNews.com piece, I can only imagine what will happen after FOX's Hannity's America (Beyond Belief) tomorrow.
\<Anshar\>	They just get swept up.
\<SapphoWolf\>	TrueBlood is based on a novel series...we all knew that?
\<Lono\>	South Park... what can I say I loved it...we have arrived, you arent anyone unless you've been mocked by Matt and Trey.
\<Vyrdolak\>	a. (3) I really don't think it will have any. We've seen vampire-mania before.
\<Vyrdolak\>	I encourage everyone who contacts me to read up on folklore, the history of vampire media, etc.
\<Vyrdolak\>	Just so they have some perspective on the big picture.
\<Vyrdolak\>	I hope -that- will be the effects, people learning more.
\<Isealdor\>	Hopefully some of the media coverage and publications and things will at least have promoted a little bit of greater awareness of the VC, but what I'm really hoping is that it will bring a bit of interest from some different communities, namely the medical and psych communities, and we might have a better shot at getting some real research done. The only other thing I really see coming from all of it, in the long term, is maybe a little bit of the general
\<Isealdor\>	social stigma around vampirism will be decreased.
\<SapphoWolf\>	The folklore explains so much about the vampire archetype.
\<Vyrdolak\>	a. (4) Largely negative. Like the Pagan community, the VC

	appears to be very out of touch with how "the normal world" really sees us.
<Vyrdolak>	I recently told someone that my company publishes "vampire books" and she asked, "what are vampire books?"
<Vyrdolak>	The majority of the world doesn't even relate to genre fiction, let alone "real vampires".
<Vyrdolak>	The Washington Post article by Monica Hesse was reprinted by a Hawaiian newspaper.
<Vyrdolak>	and someone commented "this is what's wrong with the news media today, what a waste of space to print this".
<Vyrdolak>	But that attitude is the majority one.
<cynsanity>	(2) Not as of yet, nope.
<cynsanity>	(3) More lifestylers, more people desperate for a glamorous and "special" life pretending to themselves that they are vampires and coming to us for validation of their personal fantasies/delusions.
<cynsanity>	And definitely more media attention.
<Camazotz>	I'm concerned at people wanting to be donors, if they don't know what they're offering to be a part of.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Ditto, Cama
<zilchy>	Camazotz - thats why we inform them when they offer.
<AcrophobicPixie>	That's why we're very blatant as to what we do, and what is required of donors.
<Lono>	I was very dismayed with the whole Don Henrie in the coffin scene on Maury Povch. I think it set us back to the days of Jerry Springer for a bit there...
<Ravena>	The attention is just shifted from a book to the media.
<cynsanity>	(4) They most definitely caused a stir within the community. The main problems here seem to be the portrayal of sanguinarians (a- represented by Lucien or whatever his name is, b- it's always all about the energy and just rudimentary means of feeding, hitting the sore spot of the sanguinarians) as well as the question "who made X and/or Y spokespersons for the real vampire community?". A lot of people are unhappy with the "public faces" we as a community, have.
<Ravena>	Everytime a new movie or something comes out though, we get an intake of fools in #sang
<Ravena>	Then it dies down, then the next one comes out.
<Isealdor>	Some of the things that have been shown and said to be part of the RVC havent really helped public image and some things said that have really frustrated portions of the community, because they're being taken as representitive of everyone within the community, when often something is just one person's views or lifestyle choices.
<SapphoWolf>	If they only understood what the vampire represents in the human psyche around the world...

<SapphoWolf> That's why it's relevant, damn it.

<cynsanity> (4) Don Henrie is a matter of debate for many anyways, Father Sebastiaaaaaaaaaaaan remains a controversial figure, Michelle Belanger is focusing on the aspects of energy feeding and energy system alterations, Vampyra is... beyond words, and Sarah Lester just comes across as stupid and arrogant. At the same time, many in the community struggle with 'coming out of the coffin' to even their best friends and closest

<cynsanity> confidantes, and although they criticise our "public faces", they can't come out on TV for various reasons and fears. Also, the depiction of real vampires in the media are a reason for debate.

<AncientKhan> I'll just call a spade a spade. We've hit a "jumping the shark" moment.

<M_Belanger> 4. Impact -- Mostly, I see that the widespread number of books & shows has just made people more curious about real vampires and has inspired journalists, radio show hosts, and several television personalities to seek real vampires out in order to get them to tell their stories.

<M_Belanger> The format of many of these interviews is definitely influenced by the relatively new genre of reality tv -- there is a level os voyeurism to it, but that voyeurism has infected quite a lot of print media & television recently.

<NyteMuse> While I may have originally been a big advocate of getting us out there, I'm starting to lean more with Lady Slinky in this... it would be nice if there was either something more concrete to point to (in the sense of science or evidence) or at least a tad bit more cohesion within the community itself. And at the same time, I agree with RavenHarte. I've felt much safer coming out to the pagan groups I'm involved in because I've had Michelle's books to refer them to…

<NyteMuse> putting GOOD information out there in relatively easy accessibility, without doing the screaming up and down shouting "Lookitme! Validateme!"

<cynsanity> (6) If we have to deal with this kind of exposure, I'd say a documentary along the lines of "Secret Lives of Women" combined with the approach of "Secret Lives of Vampires" as well as the National Geographic special (from what I've seen in small bits of it) could work. The more prominent faces of the community could play to the media's need for glamour and the freaky, a few of us who are more 'mundane' when it comes to appearance and work

<cynsanity> or lifestyle, together with solid information about, for example, what safety precautions are taken by sangs, how one came to realise that one was vampiric etc. - finding a balance between what the media wants and what we want to convey. If we can raise money somehow, we could do it on our own.

\<cynsanity\>	(6) The benefit? I don't really know. It seems we can't escape the entertainment media's attention anymore, so if we have to be out there, let it be on our terms. It would also serve as a realistic contrast to vampire movies or badly done talk-shows or pseudo-documentaries in which we are portrayed as freaks.
\<Vyrdolak\>	a. (6) I don't think they're beneficial at all. I don't think we should do any more of these non-fiction shows.
\<SapphoWolf\>	It's kind of like, "Are you going to do a show on green eyed people?"
\<NyteMuse\>	I agree that the Vampyra material is probably some of the worst, because it tries to force the audience to accept TWO minorities that most of mainstream is no bueno with: vampires and kink. Positive material would, IMO, work more to show a distance in the two. It's OK to be vampiric and like kink, but they are two very different communities/lifestyles, so even if I DID get a lot of energy via BDSM, I wouldn't give that fodder to the media.
\<Ravena\>	But there has been an increase in people visiting channels, forums, etc a small bit of them might be vampiric, but most are seeking that fiction aspect.
\<Ravena\>	But I'm not sure if it's because the topic is more popular or it's just because the media is focusing more on it.
\<Isealdor\>	I think it's both, Ravena
\<Ravena\>	Like how plane crashes aren't as common as car crashes but plane crashes make it to the news.
\<Isealdor\>	I'd say I'm somewhere between neutral to hesistantly positive. I think there are some good things that could come out of all of it, but I think we also stand to just be the newest passing fad, and everything will blow over and little will be changed or someone will say or do something that overwhelms any possible positive things we've gotten from the attention.
\<cynsanity\>	We've already got the attention, Isealdor.
\<Lono\>	(6) You are at the mercy of video editors... that's the problem...
\<xeurika\>	For better or worse, the media tends to act like a soccer (football) game with 5 year olds. As disgusting as some of the Tyra Banks shows et. al. can be, it does get the mob mentality of some of the more serious media chasing our direction IMO see the ABCNews.com & the Washington Post articles.
\<Lono\>	All broadcast news Xeurika is targeted at a 1st grade reading level... so I can believe it.
\<SapphoWolf\>	This is nothing new. "Vampire" is a loaded word.
\<SapphoWolf\>	Nevermind the inherent sex appeal...
\<Isealdor\>	They're feeding off of each other.. it's popular because the media is touting it, and the media is pushing it because it's popular.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	The one thing about all of this that's been worrying me is that there are new donors-to-be who think they MUST put a physical description in their donor ad, because they want to be a

	fangbanger, or think that it's expected to give sex with the blood/energy.
\<AncientKhan\>	Another "fangbanger" reference? I'm going to get a glass of wine. I'll be back in a minute....
\<cynsanity\>	AcrophobicPixie: Please bash into their head that not every vampire enjoys sexual stuff whilst feeding.
\<Isealdor\>	AcrophobicPixie: That goes the other way, too...vampires looking for a donor without sex are going to face the exact same issue.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	I mean, if that mentality was as prevalent 8-10 years ago when I was first starting out, my brother would have had kittens at the thought of me being a donor.
\<M_Belanger\>	6. Documentary-style shows are overall better exposure for the community as opposed to talk shows. Talk shows, by their nature, demand a certain level of sensationalism. We have worked long and hard to earn enough credibility to appear on more serious shows.
\<M_Belanger\>	True Blood and Twilight both have potentially dangerous repercussions when it comes to individuals wanting to be donors.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: Totally agree.
\<M_Belanger\>	Nearly all of the fiction explores the sexual side of the vampire, and that edgy, forbidden sexuality has a widespread appeal.
\<M_Belanger\>	Unfortunately, when it's targeted to tweens, it puts real vampires in the very uncomfortable position of having to deal with 13-15 year old girls who stumble on real vampire sites online, looking for a real-life Edward.
\<cynsanity\>	Michelle is right.
\<Isealdor\>	Michelle: I'm hoping that the majority will wander off once they find out that the reality isnt glittery bodies in the sunlight.
\<xeurika\>	Exactly Michelle, and when it's minors it exposes us to all kinds of crap.
\<Camazotz\>	The Irish documentary show said they wanted to treat things sensitively... then put every word, term etc. in inverted commas... the media has no intention of treating us the way we WISH to be, just varying degrees of badness.
\<Camazotz\>	Less bad does not equate to good.
\<Anshar\>	I think something to consider is that people who feed on energy (especially those who aren't self-aware) are going to have personality archetypes that focus attention onto them. For at least the energy feeders there's going to be an intrinsic amount of drama.
\<xeurika\>	This vampire vogue in the media and most things in the media as a whole tend to be fads. The question is do we try to interject our views into the mix, and how can we craft a coherent message to the media while the spotlight is our way IMO?

<SapphoWolf> Haven't vampires been a common interest for a little too long to be a fad?

<xeurika> Well the interest has existed for ages, but it comes and goes in cycles.

<Isealdor> Things like the BDSM mix in the Vamprya things dont help, either.

<cynsanity> Anshar: What do you mean by "I think something to consider is that people who feed on energy (especially those who aren't self-aware) are going to have personality archetypes that focus attention onto them"?

<Anshar> I mean that with metaphysical energy the idea is that thought and emotion can direct energy. That would be why visualization techniques work. If that is the case then the structure of a person's mind has to be a possible factor in vampirism. If a person doesn't feed intentionally, then they must feed unintentionally. I'm cogitating on what the effects on that passive feeding personality would be. A desire for attention / schizotypal personality is a strong possibility here

<cynsanity> Anshar: A shizotypal personality due to... not feeding consciously?

<Anshar> Cynsanity: A schizotypal personality as a result of needing the attentive energy of others since there's no awareness of another feeding method. Living organisms are form-follows-function.

<Anshar> Cynsanity: If a person needs something but can't get it intentionally, then the personality will adapt through positive reinforcement to get its attentive energy another way.

<cynsanity> Anshar: Wouldn't a narcissistic or histrionic personality also fit the criteria?

<Anshar> Bingo.

<Anshar> Exactly.

<Anshar> Cynsanity: This could explain why drama is so prevalant along with so many signs of Schizotypal Personality in the community.

<Anshar> Any one of those could be a reaction to unconscious feeding.

<SapphoWolf> So many of my students came back to school after the weekend..."I want to MARRY Edward Cullen!" Yikes...

<M_Belanger> I've got a stack of fanmail from tweens that is alarmingly graphic in what they'd like a vampire for.

<cynsanity> We had a steady influx of girls searching for their "Edward" on the VCMB when the books became popular.

<NyteMuse> Are they expecting you to be the vampire matchmaker or something?

<M_Belanger> Sometimes the matchmaker, sometimes the vampire.

* SapphoWolf teethed on Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Whitley Strieber and Poppy Z. Brite...

<M_Belanger> Yarbro is such a sweet lady!

<SapphoWolf> She is, and her books are feasts

<M_Belanger>	At least her vampire is someone people can emulate without getting arrested!
<SapphoWolf>	Long live Saint-Germain
<AcrophobicPixie>	NyteMuse: Someone expects me to play match maker.
<sarasvati>	*chuckle* The books aren't really good until the third one anyway... 13-15yo wanting to be donors was an issue we had to address on VCMB as well... if they couldn't find Edward, than any ol' vamp would do.
<Merticus>	Who here has received e-mail lately along the lines of something you'd expect someone to say to you after watching Twilight?
<M_Belanger>	But the age group is what has me most concerned.
<M_Belanger>	::raises hand::
*	Anshar raises hand
*	AcrophobicPixie raises hand
*	sarasvati reaises her hand... heck the email as "Twilightfanatic18"
<sarasvati>	I giggled when the first line was "I'm not a Twilight fanatic or anything, but... *insert myth question here*"
*	Sylvere: no mail
<Sylvere>	I'm sure I'll get my share of "fans" when/if this Pitch article comes out.
*	Isealdor raises about 100 hands
*	NyteMuse is happily in the no-scary-fanmail camp
*	cynsanity raises hand (surprisingly)
<SapphoWolf>	"What about your skin? Do you sparkle?"
<Lono>	The problem is, some of us was to stay hidden in the shadows...our lively hood demands that we blend in... but we are passing our voice off to those that may not be the best spokespersons but are looking for 15 minutes of fame... they tend to do the most damage.
<Camazotz>	I *think* everyone knows what I felt about certain media outings.
<Camazotz>	The Washington Post article... it wasn't horrible, BUT I didn't get everyone's bandwagon ecstacy either.
<Imon>	We ask people to give a reason they'd like to join our real vampire forum...we get some doozies.
<Imon>	We even put a statement about Twilight seekers on our forum description.
<Isealdor>	Imon: same here
<SapphoWolf>	Interesting...how many of us have encountered a personality disorder at some time this week?
<Isealdor>	I've seen probably a double in number of applications to the forums.
<Isealdor>	Several SapphoWolf; but that's not actually unusual for the groups I get.
<Isealdor>	A few of my people started denying applications that had the

word "Twilight" in them anywhere.

<M_Belanger>   The media is our 300 pound gorilla.

<M_Belanger>   They know we exist. We cannot simply refuse media inquiries -- though I feel that we have a responsibility to pick and choose which ones we do answer wisely.

            *   AncientKhan agrees with Michelle

<Camazotz>   Indeed Michelle ... it's making the wise choice.

<NyteMuse>   I agree with Michelle...if we don't do it, Vampyra will

<Sylvere>   NyteMuse: Exactly

<Camazotz>   and even then being able to be honest about what the results were

<M_Belanger>   My publisher -- or the head publicist there -- got pretty hot under the collar when he learned that I turned down Tyra Banks & Maury Povich.

<M_Belanger>   But I do not feel that shows of their caliber can add anything useful to the dialogue we have been trying to build with the media.

<SapphoWolf>   Publishers can be...er...necessary evils? :)

<SapphoWolf>   Pimp yourself for profit...what an industry.

<Anshar>   Michelle: I can imagine. You could have sold books by appearing on them.

<M_Belanger>   I could have. I knew that. I still didn't do it.

<M_Belanger>   I have a bigger responsibility to the community and how it is presented than I do to numbers.

            *   Sylvere wishes Michelle had done Maury & Tyra instead of the nutters they each got.

<NyteMuse>   I'm with Sylvere, sort of.

<SapphoWolf>   Well Michelle, I applaud you heartily.

<NyteMuse>   Even if the media is going to do a hackjob on edits, at the very least we can keep their job from getting TOO easy.

<cynsanity>   Could we do a documentary by ourselves?

<NyteMuse>   Cynsanity: Small scale, probably, but the money needed to really get it out there is beyond our resources, I think.

<xeurika>   I agree that we should pick and choose which one we do, but also must live with the fact that freakshows will always have an easy time finding freaks to perform. Not much we can do about it.

<Lono>   Live TV shows might be the best... depending on the question and on stage performace of the person.

<Camazotz>   Meet them on your own terms.... what worries me is the idea of people rolling over and displaying their belly.

<Ravena>   Well, PR is just that, not sure we can point fingers at others because they do talk shows and we don't.

<Ravena>   Still out there in public.

<Isealdor>   There are always going to be the nutcases out in the media.

<Isealdor>   That's part of what the media actively looks for.

<AcrophobicPixie>	What about the thing with Good Morning America? Is that still in the works?
<Anshar>	Speaking for myself, I did the interview (FOX's Hannity's America) because I think that there HAS to be a counteracting force to all that garbage.
<Anshar>	We do nothing and it will only get worse and worse.
<SapphoWolf>	I contacted Good Morning America but haven't heard anything.
<cynsanity>	I think we really have to consider media appearances as something that has become important.
<M_Belanger>	I'm not pointing fingers -- but given the persona I have in the media as the academic/expert who is also a part of the community, those talk shows would have only torn down some of the credibility I have fought so hard to earn.
<Sylvere>	We can't afford to be paranoid of the media any more.
<Anshar>	Michelle: Agreed.
<Camazotz>	I'm glad you didn't do them Michelle.
<sarasvati>	*nods* if the sane ones don't the crazies will.. and then all the world will see is crazy.
<Isealdor>	I dont think we can just take the whole "go back to being underground" route, either... even if we dont go out actively and do the media things, people will still come find us because of the nutcase media things.
*	Sylvere agrees with Isealdor
<Anshar>	Michelle: If you have any credibility, you HAVE to hold onto it, or the voice becomes useless.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Well, if Good Morning America goes through, you know the Today show will follow shortly, if not try to get to it first.
<M_Belanger>	The media has become important. It's not going away. We need to address it intelligently and, as much as feasible, as a community. Sticking our heads in the sand and hoping the queries go away -- when some of those queries come from things like Good Morning America -- is naive and overall destructive to our image.
<xeurika>	If the media is interested in writing a story, they'll do it with or without us, and I think it is wise if we try to have our say.
<AncientKhan>	I have to pose the question: If we think media is so important, what are we really gaining by this?
<Isealdor>	AncientKhan: Like I said earlier, the main thing I'm hoping is that it will bring a bit of interest from some different communities, namely the medical and psych communities, and we might have a better shot at getting some real research done.
<AncientKhan>	If we want that kind of attention, Isealdor, why not just write the Howard Hughes Institute and ask them to do DNA testing, instead of hoping folks like them might eventually get interested?
<Isealdor>	Because companies and groups like that usually want to know

	there is enough of a population and demand for it, Khan
<Sylvere>	Isealdor: There's a psych study in the works. I participated.
<Isealdor>	Sylvere: Which? Run by whom?
<Merticus>	B.J. Kuehl's work.
<Sylvere>	Isleador: Dr. Barbara J. Kuehl of University of Wisconsin
<Merticus>	We're routinly working with universities on a variety of social and scientific based inquiry - it's just so happens that the media often is the intial catalyst to get them to pay attention or spur interest based on the public's reaction, etc.
<SapphoWolf>	I have a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania who wants to scan my brain during asserted vampiric activity.
<Sylvere>	SapphoWolf: Cool, go for it
<zilchy>	SapphoWolf: Brilliant, I'd do it.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Really, SapphWolf? That'd be spiffy.
<NyteMuse>	SapphoWolf: Neat
<sarasvati>	Dang, thats right... I need to get into contact with Dr. Kuehl again... she is almost litterally right aroud the corner from me.
<Sylvere>	I think BJ is done collecting data. She should be working on analysis now.
<Anshar>	Go for it SapphoWolf.
<xeurika>	That is very interesting SapphoWolf, I've wanted that for a while. Are they using an fMRI or PET?
<SapphoWolf>	fMRI for starters
<Isealdor>	SapphoWolf: Can you keep us all updated on that?
<SapphoWolf>	I'm planning on it… she's trustworthy and frankly I'm as fascinated by it as anybody.
<xeurika>	Yeah, it's one of those things where anything they find or don't find will be interesting SapphoWolf.
<SapphoWolf>	Well, we know that the brain reacts to thought and sensation... it's how those associate with vampirism that we're looking for.
<NyteMuse>	So then how do we get someone on the sane side who COULD do the talkshows without losing that sort of credability?
<Sylvere>	The only way out is through.
<SapphoWolf>	Because we can put ourselves forward as intelligent and rational beings.
<cynsanity>	The problem is, we need to find a balance between what the media wants and what we want.
<Ravena>	I'm not critizing that you didn't do them Michelle, it was a good move I think.
<Ravena>	But you have a niche, the rest of those vamps, likely don't.
<Ravena>	You do the talks and write the books and such.
<Ravena>	And the talk shows is all the PR they can get lol.
<SapphoWolf>	The media need not be an enemy.
<Camazotz>	If we don't identify with the "crazies" then why worry? I don't get riled up everytime I see a drunken Irish NYC cop in a drama show, just because I'm Irish too.

<Sylvere>	Cama: For the same reason Italians protest the Italian = Mafia stereotype
<AcrophobicPixie>	Yeah, cause you don't see Don Henrie on the serious documentaries, yet you see Michelle in them, so that has to show for something.
<sarasvati>	True, Camazotz, but if every show has only drunkend Irish NYC cops... thats all people start thinking there is...and so when they met a sober Irish NYC cop... they don't believe it at all.
<Isealdor>	Camazotz: Because they're going to affect us whether we identify with them or not.
<Camazotz>	If people will only believe what they see on TV......
<sarasvati>	Sad, but true... people do tend to only believe what they see on TV...
<Lono>	I'm more than happy to do written works... but I really do not have a good stage presence at this time.
<NyteMuse>	Same as Lono. I'll happily put my name out for print or audio, but no photos or video.
<xeurika>	Radio or print I'm down for, but for now I'm not doing video or photos as well.
<NyteMuse>	Don Henrie was on one of the serious documentaries.
<SapphoWolf>	I'm not all that familiar with Don Henrie...
<xeurika>	I agree with most of that Michelle, but I think the media's gaze will shift with the next shiny thing it finds, so it is best to do our best while the attention is our way.
<Ravena>	Don was in some of the same ones as Michelle.
<Ravena>	There's even one with Michelle and Don doing a ritual together.
<Ravena>	And he's one of the Urn's videos.
<Ravena>	The media association is there.
<M_Belanger>	Let's not turn it into knock Don -- that wasn't my intention. He has an image, but since there's a lot more flash to it, it is the sort of image that appeals to shows like Tyra Banks. I just don't know if that's an image that we as a community want to promote.
<cynsanity>	We should focus on what we want to do resp. achieve with the media.
<M_Belanger>	I prefer that we be taken seriously not sensationally.
<NyteMuse>	I'd rather Don than Vampyra.
<Lono>	I'd rather Don than Vampyra" same here NyteMuse... but I agree that at this time and development of the community, maybe the whole coffin thing, isn't that appropriate and may drive us back into the Jerry Springer days..(not to slam Don - he has been one of the few level headed voices out there).. I just didnt agree with his choice for Maury.
<Camazotz>	we can only be responsible for our OWN actions
<Camazotz>	Do what is right or not for yourself
<Anshar>	On the other hand, no sensationalism and not enough interest for

	the spreading of information.
<M_Belanger>	I think there is a balance one can achieve when one has a work or product to promote but is also perceived as representing a community
<cynsanity>	Hey, guys, it's fine to talk about what has already been done. We should focus on what we can or want to do in the future.
<sarasvati>	Oh! That would be nice!
<Camazotz>	True Cynsanity
<Camazotz>	Though we are all in different positions... with various motives and agendas of our own.
<NyteMuse>	Well, Cynsanity, what can we do? I mean, I think we've been doing a lot of work in trying to make ourselves accessible to drown out the freaks?
<M_Belanger>	Study history. Find identity groups that have similar situations and see how they handled or mishandled the media exposure when it came to them.
<M_Belanger>	Learn from their successes & mistakes.
<NyteMuse>	Ugh... homework
<Merticus>	Absolutely
<Anshar>	If we can't learn from the mistakes of others we are doomed to repeat them.
<xeurika>	Indeed
<Sylvere>	We need more people willing to stand in front of a camera.
<AncientKhan>	Agreed. Didn't we agree to set up a database of reputable media types?
<Camazotz>	Frankly, there's a part of me that thinks that until such times as the general populace actually believes in vampirism, then distancing ourselves from those we don't want to be associated with within that is a moot point
<M_Belanger>	The two groups that have been most useful for me to take cues from are the Wiccan/Pagan community & the GBLT community.
<M_Belanger>	And looking at how the media discovered them initially treated them & how their "elders" (or activists) responded back can give us valuable clues for our own dealings with the media.
<Anshar>	Same. Good metaphors in different ways.
<Anshar>	And they're on different steps of the same path
<Lono>	Same
<NyteMuse>	All right. Given that (the history thing), is there anyone who might be willing to take responsibility for looking into a particular community and making a report on it, thus educating the rest of us?
<SapphoWolf>	NyteMuse: Sure, history being my thing and all.
<Anshar>	So you can compare different parts more readily.
<NyteMuse>	Splitting up the areas could yield some better results.
<zilchy>	However showing the diversity we enjoy is also a good thing.

*	Isealdor agrees with Michelle - I often look at the LGBT and the paranormal/ghost hunting communities.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Like what groups are we going to look into, outside of the GBLT community?
<M_Belanger>	Khan asked what do we get out of it?
<M_Belanger>	There's a basic thing of what we don't get out of it, if we respond to the media.
<M_Belanger>	We ::don't:: get any idiot who wants 5 minutes of fame hopping on TV and presenting him/herself as one of us and spreading misinformation that will ultimately confuse not only people outside of our community, but people inside as well.
<M_Belanger>	The lesson has more to do with the reclaiming of the word "witch."
<M_Belanger>	As recently as the 1950s, "witch" was still a figure from folklore, or from Christian mythology -- a woman who had made a pact with the Devil to achieve extraordinary powers
<M_Belanger>	Yet a community of people chose to self-identify as witches, choosing their own interpretation of the word, which was a deviation from the folkloric archetype the mainstream had been exposed to.
<M_Belanger>	Sound familiar?
<Camazotz>	If people are inside our "community" they should know better.. if we're going to be worried about misinformation it's time to tackle the false elders and demi-gods.
<zilchy>	Camazotz: Agreed
<xeurika>	I think we can also learn from how political parties use the media. Staying "on message" and such.
<Isealdor>	To a lesser degress, the BDSM community, too, since a lot of general "kink" things have become popular.
<NyteMuse>	I'm not saying one person has to look at every group, but if 1-5 people wanted to give little reports on the LGBT community, and another 1-5 did the Pagan community, lather rinse repeat... could be a lot simpler than getting 30+ VVC members to independently research.
<SapphoWolf>	Off the top of your heads... can you name an "other" group that started out rocky in the media but eventually came to be accepted?
<Lono>	I remember that the time Buffy came out both the vampire and wiccan/pagan communities were all in a tiff.. vampires for obvious reasons, but wiccans for the whole influx of "willow" wiccans.
<AncientKhan>	Another question: Because Pagans and Wiccans choose their path, are we sure we want to try and follow their steps?
<cynsanity>	With the difference that liking to have sex with a partner of your own gender is a bit different than drinking human blood, or sucking life energy from them.

\<zilchy\>	Khan - Yes, in a way.
\<zilchy\>	It's still a "different" path.
\<Merticus\>	The Pagan and Wiccan community is as much similar and it is dissimilar from our own community in that respect.
\<Isealdor\>	Michelle: We might not want that, but it's going to happen regardless.
\<Isealdor\>	We've already seen it with ones like Vampyra.
\<SapphoWolf\>	Personally I find greater tolerance of ideas in the VC...
\<SapphoWolf\>	I said greater...I didn't say mind-numbingly overwhelming.
\<NyteMuse\>	SapphoWolf, I see that being a dangerous leaning towards almost being TOO naïve.
\<Anshar\>	Khan: that's why it's a metaphor. GLBT assert that it's not a choice. Where one metaphor fails you extend into the next.
*	Sylvere is still kicking herself for letting Vampyra get on TV
\<Ravena\>	Letting? Did she give you a chance to make it so she wouldn't?
\<Sylvere\>	Ravena: I was the first person WEtv contacted for that show. When I turned it down, they went with Vampyra.
\<NyteMuse\>	Probably... I just get concerned when someone on a forum makes a claim that seems to completely stretch the bounds of belief and no one comments.
\<SapphoWolf\>	That's a good habit
\<Anshar\>	Khan: No metaphor is going to be completely apt, that's why were' looking into multiple elements.
\<Camazotz\>	GLBT can at least offer some PROOF more than we can.
\<Anshar\>	Camazotz: Attraction is a behavior.
\<Anshar\>	Camazotz: What "proof" do they have?
\<NyteMuse\>	Camazotz: How can LGBT offer proof?
\<AncientKhan\>	Understood. My only issue is what we're willing to sacrifice to meet that kind of gain that is accepted amongst thre predominance of our kind.
\<xeurika\>	Remember when we can sway the definitions by what we say in the media, look at how Republicans in the U.S. were able to change the definitions of many words like "liberal".
*	Anshar nods
\<SapphoWolf\>	Xeurika is exactly right.
\<Camazotz\>	Well a gay man can more easily show gay actions than a psi can prove they are feeding.
\<Anshar\>	Camazotz: Both things are behaviors, but I understand what you're driving at.
\<NyteMuse\>	Perhaps, but homosexual actions can also be faked as easily as vampiric actions.
\<Anshar\>	Camazotz: you're saying that sex is an observable phenomena whereas metaphysical energy is not.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Yeah, but Camazotz, they are physically made to have sex with a member of the opposite sex, and vamps are made to eat regular food, the psi/sang feeding and gay sex are things that aren't of

	the norm.
<Anshar>	Camazotz: But, it IS only a metaphor.
<Camazotz>	Indeed Anshar... you're correct.
<Isealdor>	I think rather than trying to stop or complaining about any information we dont want put out, we just need to make sure there is all information out there.
<Merticus>	It's all about perception and timing.
<xeurika>	Yep
<Lono>	The only problem is when people start being too PC and convincing others that "blood is a metaphor".
<AncientKhan>	Amen, Lono
<M_Belanger>	And yet to a conservative Christian, gay is still a choice -- and not only that, a willful choice to sin.
<M_Belanger>	Most anti-gay groups base their hatred on the notion that gay is unnatural, and not something one might be born being.
<Ravena>	If we are setting out to prove anything, I think we will spin our wheels for pretty much forever.
*	Isealdor agrees with Ravena
*	NyteMuse agrees with Michelle
<Isealdor>	I dont think anything can be "proven". Just added as something for people to consider
<M_Belanger>	And that's also something to consider for us. Skeptics and critics of our community will see our self-identification as vampires as a similar choice.
<Merticus>	**b. Representation & Coming Out Of The Coffin - A Five-Part Question: (1) What messages and goals, if any, should the vampire community and representatives who appear in the public press attempt to convey or promote to the general public? (2) When a representative, or someone on their own accord, choose to go public about vampirism what expectations and standards should be expected of them and what types of**
<Merticus>	**information would the majority of the community most likely consider appropriate for public consumption? Take a moment to examine both sides of the "In or Out of the Coffin Debate". (3) What are some of the advantages of widespread public recognition of real vampirism and self-identifying real vampires in relation to both vampires and the vampire community?**
<Merticus>	**(4) What are some of the disadvantages to publicly revealing one's nature and the potential impact or repercussions on the larger vampire community? (5) As both members and leaders of the vampire community do you think it's possible to find a middle-ground that would satisfy public and community interests while addressing the desire for others to remain private or "underground" in the vampire**

community? If so, how?

<Lady Slinky>   b. (1) I would prefer that we not promote to the general public. Having said that I understand that I and the rest of the community who would rather we not go public do not have a choice in the matter and as such all I can really do is try to support those that are the least of all evils so to speak.

<Lady Slinky>   I would like to see those who choose to become involved in the media stress the diversity of the community and the fact that they can only really speak for themselves and from their personal experience. I would like to see less of our internal affairs being aired to the public. Comments like "sangs think of psivamps as delusional and psis think of sangs as

<Lady Slinky>   any of the following: delusional, posers, unevolved" are outdated and only serve to continue rubbing salt into wounds. I would say by far the majority of sangs do not believe that psivamps are delusional these days.

<Lady Slinky>   I would like to see the community portrayed as educated intelligent people who are able to hold down careers and contribute positively to society not as teenagers who desperately needed to fit in while rebelling and never grew out of it.

<Lady Slinky>   b. (2) I feel it is futile to expect anything about the standards of information that independent bodies present to the media. We have no authority over anyone and thus no control over what they do. I personally cannot speak to what the majority of the community would find acceptable. The closest thing that could possibly speak for the

<Lady Slinky>   majority would be the survey (Vampire & Energy Work Research Survey) and even then some would question if it really represents the majority of the community.

<Lady Slinky>   b. (3) It depends entirely on what they are recognizing as "real vampirism". I guess for most it is the possibility that we will someday be taken seriously or the illusion that we will be accepted if we are known.

<Lady Slinky>   I would hope that it would lead to more credible research into our condition by those with the knowledge and ability to help us however the trend towards metaphysical explanations to the masses to make us more pc will probably thwart that goal.

<Lady Slinky>   b. (4) The disadvantages of becoming public are many and varied. Hate crimes, Discrimination, the loss of income, family and children are just a few of the real dangers of going public. The impact on the community varies drastically depending on who is going public and how.

<Lady Slinky>   By far the majority of people who have chosen to go public have in my opinion only served to have a negative impact on community making us look like mass murdering delusional teens or egomaniacal nutcases.

<Lady Slinky>	b. (5) I thought that's what we were doing with the websites and forums. Those interested can come seeking and find information. This means those who can and most likely will accept it are the ones who receive the information. "Education" of the masses means your giving information to all the wrong people too.
<Mairi>	b. (1-2) If we chose a representative or two to speak on behalf of the VC to the media I feel that they need to be able to speak for the entire community so they Must be well versed in how every facet of how our community feels.
<Mairi>	So we have to pick a representative from every voice to get together with the designated Media representative so they can get their message straight. If we chose a representative or group of representatives then the media would know who to believe (least ways this is how I feel). I would cut down on those who just wanted to make a living from being a vampire.
<Mairi>	b. (3-5) I mean if we are just like everyone else, what's there to make a living on what we are. I also believe we need to take in the concerns of those who would rather we didn't come out of the coffin. And there are many of us - myself included.
<Mairi>	I'm on the fence with this. I can see the benefits of both. I've lost my son and the right to see my grandson's because I went public.....so as I said I can see both sides and because of that I am divided.
<Perce Coeur>	b. (1) I suppose the most important thing is to show to the public we are not freaks. I mean we are humans, we (well most of us) have a stable life and we are able to talk and explain our personal views wisely, calmly. Then, we can show how opened we are to share information, the more people ask questions the less they will be afraid of us.
<Perce Coeur>	b. (2) The wideness of the community is a main problem there (well in a way). I mean there are so many different persons that you can't always control what everyone is going to say to the public. Like in politics, you have to vote for someone of your party to become your leader and for him to talk for everybody else of the party.
<Perce Coeur>	I suppose you all will agree it is impossible to do within the vampire community. So let people talk, we just can't help it, besides, that is just freedom of speech.
<Perce Coeur>	b. (3) I suppose the main advantage of this recognition is to open people minds. Make them smell the wind of change. Make them realize that there are a lot of small communities growing underground and it is just getting bigger and bigger. They have to get aware of it as soon as possible in order to understand it instead of being afraid of it.
<Perce Coeur>	b. (4) The disadvantage would be that people don't understand who we are and begin another witch hunt.

\<Perce Coeur\>	b. (5) If we begin to explain things to the public and they are interested in who we are, we can't just close the door. It's a question of choice. I don't think there can be a middle-ground...
\<RavenHarte\>	b. (1) That vampyres actually have ethics, moral values. Being a vampyre doesn't mean a person has no honor. That's usually the big fear so why not just dispense with that right away.
\<RavenHarte\>	b. (2) Anyone representing the whole needs to RESPECT the whole. This means researching the ideas of the many, educating themselves fully, and not looking only in your own backyard. Anyone representing the whole needs to remember that what they say will be taken by those outside the community as true for EVERYONE in your community, no matter how many times you say "this is MY perspective".
\<RavenHarte\>	So get as much general consensus under your belt as you can. The community then has to make them accountable too though. If someone like Vampyra gets to shoot her mouth off unchecked by anyone, she'll just do it again.
\<RavenHarte\>	Take them to task if you aren't happy with what someone said was true about all vamps. You can't say anything about what they said was their opinion or personal preference of course, but you can damned well make them think twice about speaking as the authority on everyone if enough express displeasure.
\<RavenHarte\>	b. (3) I said this in response to the Washington Post article by Monica Hesse: My personal view is that ANY TIME a fringe community can get some positive press, they should take it. Not because you want to somehow "fit in" with the rest of society, I mean if any of us wanted that we wouldn't be who we are, where we are, doing
\<RavenHarte\>	what we do. You take the positive press because it means maybe the next time someone's child custody is challenged just because they are a vampire, the judge makes a better decision, or maybe the next time your local group wants to do a function, the choice venues aren't worried there's gonna be blood on the floor or carnage when you're finished and so actually let you rent their space.
\<RavenHarte\>	b. (4) If the person revealing themselves hasn't educated themselves, isn't able to field questions well, or is way over the top you will get misinformation out there which affects the greater Vampire Community (VC) because newbies will buy into it. Vampyra has led some poor schlep out there to setting his friends on fire to raise energy, I just know it. And people like Sharkey just keep law enforcement looking at you.
\<RavenHarte\>	b. (5) No it's not possible. The public WANT for something "outside reality" will always fuel a want for more from the VC, and by more I mean MORE sensational, MORE flamboyant, just more - that means those who want the VC to remain out of the

	public eye will always be pissed.
<RavenHarte>	Not to mention the VC is SO diverse, without a unifying anything, that no one is ever going to be a satisfactory representative for ALL within the community, as I'm sure Michelle Belanger knows all too well.
<SphynxCatVP>	b. (1) People will *usually* fear that which they don't understand. It is my personal belief that playing to those fears, and the archetype, while beneficial as a smoke screen for the non flamboyant members of the community, isn't the best approach in the long run. I believe any message being conveyed should be done so with particular care taken to body language, dress/hygiene, and choice of words.
<SphynxCatVP>	Anyone appearing nervous on screen will only confuse the verbal message.
<SphynxCatVP>	b. (2) No matter who the representative is, all the information being presented should have some grounding in reality without seeming too far-fetched for the average joe to grasp. Blooddrinking aspects are easier to address, there are physical components to the activities that anyone can see.
<SphynxCatVP>	It's harder for the average person to grasp a lot of energy work concepts because most people either haven't been raised with exposure to the concepts or don't believe in it (for organized religious or other reasons).
<SphynxCatVP>	I'm not saying that energy work and related vampiric concepts shouldn't be brought up. Just that special care will need to be taken to put the concepts (and any demonstrations) in ways that the audience will understand. And hopefully without any resulting fear of "ZOMG they can steal my energy without my knowing it!"
<SphynxCatVP>	I would say that the public consumption should consist of just the more basic aspects until such time as the general populace can prove they won't totally freak out over anything they see as weird.
<SphynxCatVP>	b. (3) Those who are closeted real vampires can more easily find information that they need as opposed to just being exposed to fictional concepts. And that the word "vampire" doesn't always bring to mind "Count Dracula" or other fictional stereotype vampires anymore. :)
<SphynxCatVP>	b. (4) That community members who are in the coffin (due to family, work or other reasons) may get their vampirism dragged into view - possibly lose their job, lose their kids in custody battles, etc. This is a concern for any "beyond the norm" activity (especially in conservative areas!) not just vampirism, and I think a lot of people forget that.
<SphynxCatVP>	b. (5) I am tempted to say yes, but honestly? I just don't know. People need to be more unified, I think, before they can figure

out a middle ground - what is middle ground for one person is too extreme for another.

<Wreckmaster> b. I am personally against this WHOLE idea. I feel the world is NOT ready for us. They can not handle us. And I do not want them to fear us. When large groups of people get scared, they try to remove the source of the fear. I do not want killed, beat, or imprisoned, because of my metaphysical alteration. The media will destroy us, given the chance.

<Wreckmaster> The world can not handle us. Not yet. I feel we NEED to keep to ourselves. Some folks, who can handle the information, will seek us out. We can open up to them. But, we do not need to advertise ourselves.

<Zero> b. (1) i. We're a minority group who is actively involved in advocating for the health, safety, and rights of our people. ii. We are a community of individuals, and individual viewpoints are important to us - no one of us speaks for all of us. iii. We are interested in understanding our condition more thoroughly.

<Zero> Most media spots make it look like we either know all about vampirism and are keeping it mostly secret, or like we don't want to be confronted with the holes in the story, like we're a belief-based cult or something. I'd like our appearances to convey that we are experiencing and perceiving reality and we'd like answers as much as the next guy.

<Zero> b. (2) i. You are challenging the Muggles' assumptions (blood is bad, fiction doesn't inform reality, everyone wants to be like everyone else..) and asking them to change their perception of reality. ONE concept at a time. Don't become the clogdancing vampire skydiver advocate for plural marriage and BDSM. Please remember that while many of us have diverse interests, the TV is not capable of portraying a renaissance man. You get

<Zero> one shot to get shoved into one box with each appearance. Please don't make it the "crazy" box. ii. The vampire community's primary goals are and always have been the health and safety of its members and their loved ones. That rarely comes out in media spots.

<Zero> We are making ourselves visible for the sake of those who are not visible, to promote right action, right information, and right attitude. Remember that. iii. There's an old Jewish proverb - Those with the loudest voice have to be careful of what they say. You are speaking for an at-risk minority and your words will be taken to speak for the whole. Remember that, too.

<Merticus> b. They should be actively working to dispel the stereotypes, advocate safety, and acknowledge the diversity of our collective experiences. Personally, the information I distribute to the media or academics interested in our community is the statistical responses from over 700 of you who took the time to answer the

	Vampire & Energy Work Research Surveys (VEWRS & AVEWRS).
<Merticus>	I can't, won't, and don't claim to speak for everyone and this is why I continue to place value on tools such as these as most effective at being able to convey the beliefs and practices of the widest range of vampires and community participants. I believe in the right for those who wish to make themselves public in a responsible manner as do I respect the right for those who
<Merticus>	remain underground and keep hidden their identity as vampires from society. While I don't think we'll all agree on the best course of action in addressing the media and the desires of members in our community one way or the other on this issue; I do think if we consistently put forth a sane and rational message to media over a period of time both interests may in time be served.
<AcrophobicPixie>	They should promote that we are normal people, but just a little bit out of the definition of the "norm". That vampires aren't like the characters in books that are popular, and that donors and other "swans" aren't just out for hot monkey vamp sex.
<AcrophobicPixie>	I would prefer for them to dress normally. Definitely not anything that could be considered Goth or the like. Tasteful, like what you'd wear to a business meeting or job interview. They should discuss the safety measures that we put into effect (blood testing, the contracts a lot of people use, etc) so that people know that we're not just going around randomly attacking people. On the negative, I'd prefer it if people would leave.
<Camazotz>	I think if we are going to do media it should be based upon careful research of those we will be conversing with. I agree that some people make better "representatives" than others, however would add that we are such a diverse group that no-one will ever perfectly represent anyone other than themselves.
<AncientKhan>	I would think the point of us dealing with them should be the common goal that we wanted to be treated with the same respect the mainstream wants for themselves. But when we stoop to their level, we serve no good to our kind, and set our primary cause back by trying to make them understand things they don't want to.
<zilchy>	Then we need multiple representatives, don't we?
<M_Belanger>	We MUST have a Sang representative.
<M_Belanger>	Camera-ready.
<AncientKhan>	So, any ideas who would make a good sang rep?
<Anshar>	Coming "out" is more of a personal choice than it is one that affects our entire society (if you can call it that). I think it's important that people separate associated concepts and are willing to say "not everyone agrees" or "my personal take on it is" if people express opinions or personal beliefs as fact that's

	when it hurts all of us. Then it becomes misinformation.
\<Camazotz\>	Well, I am playing devil's advocate here.... but I was just thinking that someone like Don Henrie represents image of probably a larger/equally large cross-section as Anshar does looking dashing in a suit... though I prefer to see Anshar in the suit any day.
\<Camazotz\>	And if we're going that route... what KIND of sang representative?
\<Camazotz\>	ie: Khan is not sang like others... does a predominantly sang who operates hybrid like myself fit?
\<Anshar\>	Cama: but, admittedly, I wear a suit every day. That's my "normal" dress.
\<zilchy\>	Camazotz: Yeah I get people telling me that I'm unbelievable because "u don't look like no vampyre".
\<Anshar\>	So I don't have much of a crate to stand on as far as Don's fashion goes.
\<Camazotz\>	heehee, I know Anshar, that wasn't my point :p
\<Camazotz\>	Just that we are diverse.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	I, for one, wouldn't mind being a rep for my niche, but I'd need a makeover for sure. That, and I'd have to gauge how people in my hometown would handle it, let alone my two sisters that aren't involved in the community, and how it'd affect them.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	I'll pull out my contacts... see if any sangs from my old house would be willing.
\<Ravena\>	I'm not really for dictating to someone what they can and cannot wear because they are vampires and might make the community look bad.
\<cynsanity\>	(1) Goals: Acceptance of the vampiric condition - not as in "can I take a day off, haven't fed in a while and am twoofy", but at least that the sciences start getting interested in us.
\<cynsanity\>	Debunking myths and misconceptions.
\<cynsanity\>	Portraying us in a realistic way - we're just people, at the end of the day.
\<cynsanity\>	Messages: We're not dangerous or psychotic.
\<cynsanity\>	(2) They should know about the basic "types" of vampires and be able to write and pronounce the terms correctly, as well as defining them to a 'mundane' audience.
\<cynsanity\>	They should be able to convey that we don't have hard facts, just personal experience to go by, and present different viewpoints accurately.
\<cynsanity\>	They should be able to explain the main theories about vampirism eloquently, and they should have done enough research to be able to do so.
\<cynsanity\>	(2) They should not give out information that goes in-depth about how feeding works - we personally don't entirely understand it resp. can't entirely explain it, no reason to upen us

	up needlessly.
<cynsanity>	They should not brag about abilities and powers - if they have to be mentioned, doing so in a calm, collected, scientifically minded way would be best, acknowledging where doubt as to a connection to the vampiric condition is appropriate and/or alternative theories could explain the matter at hand.
<cynsanity>	(3) What are some of the advantages of widespread public recognition of real vampirism and self-identifying real vampires in relation to both vampires and the vampire community?
<cynsanity>	(3) You get "Ah, you're one of THOSE freaks..." instead of "Huh?" now.
<cynsanity>	Ideally: Possibility to have vampirism recognised as a special condition in regards to work. But that's wishful thinking.
<cynsanity>	(4) Work. Employment. Trust issues. Disease scare.
<cynsanity>	To the VC as a whole: More ridicule.
<Anshar>	Cynsanity: Discrimination
<cynsanity>	(5) As I said before, a documentary catering to both media interest and the interest of those who wish to be portrayed in a less flashy manner. No one has to be outed. People who participate in media things have to realise that they're opening themselves up for scrutiny, by the general public as well as the OVC. It should remain one's personal choice whether to 'come out of the coffin' or not.
<Sylvere>	Any representative should promote the following concepts:
<Sylvere>	The vampire community is diverse. We don't all walk around in capes and fangs. Some of us dress like soccer moms and some like bankers. Some of us are BDSM fetishists and some couldn't care less. The stereotypes only apply to a few and the rest wouldn't stand out in a crowd.
<Sylvere>	Vampirism is not a religion. It may have spiritual aspects for some of us, but just as many of us attend church, mosque, synagogue, or other forms of worship. Some of us aren't religious at all.
<Sylvere>	None of us can make anyone else a vampire and being a vampire doesn't make all your problems go away. We still work, go to school, raise families, and worry about the economy. What gifts we gain from our vampirism are balanced by the difficulties we experience because of it.
<Sylvere>	Safety, safety, safety! We take great care to choose donors who are healthy and to feed safely. We do have ethical standards (though not necessarily the Black Veil) that we strive to uphold.
<Sylvere>	Any representative should work to represent the community as a whole in an accurate manner while stressing that no single person can speak *for* the community. The issue of in or out of the coffin is moot. We, as a community, were dragged out of the coffin by the appearance of a vampire on Mad, Mad House.

\<Sylvere\>	We can no longer hide from the public eye. The only way out is through. We can no longer afford to be paranoid and shun the media. Those of us who are comfortable speaking to reporters should do so as often as possible in order to make certain accurate, reliable information is available to those who want or need it.
\<Sylvere\>	Those who are not comfortable with speaking to the public shouldn't feel pressured to reveal themselves. Let it be an individual choice. We should also seek to create our own media, whether in the form of books, videos, or podcasts, and distribute it. That is the only way to truly control what information is presented and how it is done.
\<Ravena\>	Why would it be recognized as a special condition? Diabetics have to work.
\<Ravena\>	The rest of the world has to work.
\<Ravena\>	It can be described as a subculture.
\<NyteMuse\>	Ravena: How so? I think the individual beliefs vary too widely for a unifying subculture.
\<M_Belanger\>	1. Our first and most fundamental message should be that we are not dangerous. We are not law-breakers. We are not out to subvert the country's youth, nor to abuse people in any way. Despite the fact that we self-identify in a particular fashion, that self-identification does not negate our basic humanity, nor our basic rights to the same treatment that one would accord to any other human being.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: Amen.
\<M_Belanger\>	2. Anyone from a fringe community who gains media exposure should be aware that, even if they seek only to represent themselves, the audience will nevertheless associate everything they do and say way with that fringe community. If you step up and do an interview, you should be aware of this. You should be circumspect in how you present yourself and you should seek to send a positive message for the entire community…
\<Isealdor\>	(1) I think anyone in the public press needs to mostly just be themselves. Nix with the fangs and the capes and the makeup and all that jazz, and nix with the trying to "represent the community" so much as trying to represent a portion of the community, perhaps, and mostly represent themselves. We all have different enough opinions on enough issues that anyone who tries to represent the community as a whole is going to have someone or group mad because
\<Isealdor\>	they said this or that. Instead, maybe say their own views, and then toss out there that there's some controversy on whatever topic, and what some of the other views are. We need to show that we're not all just cookiecutter, brainwashed clones who are clinging to some idea because it makes us different/special.

\<Isealdor\>	(2) I think the expectation should mostly be for them to not try to glam up whatever they do and to not try to speak for everyone in the community, or claim that their beliefs are the only "real" ones. The only other thing I have with appropriateness is that it just plain looks tacky if we have people out there calling someone else out, saying so-and-so is a fake/lifestyler. If people will just say they don't agree with PersonX's views/lifestyle/
\<Isealdor\>	choices/beliefs, that works well and gets the point across without making it look like a dramafest.
\<Isealdor\>	For the ones actually going on the news and public with what they are, it's going to follow them forever. Once you're on a major media for something, you will forever be associated with that, especially in today's era of the internet and the ease for Google searches. That may or may not affect people's personal lives or potential jobs down the line.
\<Isealdor\>	For the rest of the community, I look at it a bit like the LGBT community and groups that are out and public—they help people coming into the community feel like they're not as alone, but it also adds the fear that they'll be "outed" if they join a group.
\<Isealdor\>	I don't think whether the VC as a whole is underground and private or if it's out in the public eye is something we really have all that much control over, honestly. We have a bit of a say about our own direct communities, and how much into the limelight or not we want them to be, but the greater community as a whole is going to have to settle into it's own equalibrium, which will probably be fairly similar to how it's always been; some groups
\<Isealdor\>	and people are out and open, others are closed off and private.
\<zilchy\>	Isealdor: Yeah, tell me about it.
\<NyteMuse\>	1 & 2: Downplay the Goth and/or kink, up-play the normality & ethics. And avoiding use of the word "lifestyle" would be good, maybe even "culture". There is no vampire religion, not even a vampire culture per se *grin*
\<NyteMuse\>	3 & 4: Advantages: Available support for newbies, and greater ease for those who desire to come out.
\<NyteMuse\>	Disadvantages: What we're already seeing; wannabes. Same thing happens in the Pagan community, and even in LGBT for a while (metrosexuals).
\<Lono\>	I think being in or out of the coffin is a personal choice, with many different variances. You may only show your name, you may display a name and pic, you may meet people offline... you may display your real name...by making sites, and the media conducting interviews I don't think we are challenging anyones right to remain "in the coffin".
\<Lono\>	The downsides to revealing ones nature, (on this alone) I agree with Wreckmaster's perspective.. I've heard many stories about people loosing their kids once telling their family.

\<M_Belanger\>	3. Less hatred, which comes from ignorance and misunderstanding. The freedom to pursue our own paths without fear of reprisal or repercussions from spouses, family members, or co-workers. When someone remains secret and hidden, the natural human response is to wonder why it must be hidden -- and to become suspicious of it. By allowing a dialogue, we allay these suspicions.
\<M_Belanger\>	4. Once you come out of the coffin in the media, you do not have the luxury of ever again shutting the door. Especially if you have chosen to participate in a television interview, you must accept the fact that people will recognize you and connect you with your words and media presentation. Overall, for me, this has been a good thing -- I find that the people who recognize me range from being solicitous to politely curious…
\<M_Belanger\>	5. I understand that many people in the community wish to remain underground, and I respect that. However, I fail to see how participating in media interviews about the vampire community in any way obligates them or forces them out of the coffin. They are not named personally. Although some qualities of vampirism are discussed inevitably in these interviews, I do not see how those qualities would enable a casual onlooker to identify vampires.
\<M_Belanger\>	To me, those who wish to remain hidden and discrete can simply choose to do so, never outing themselves and thus retaining their privacy.
\<Anshar\>	I think we need to separate Mythical Vampirism, the Vampire Culture/Subculture, and Vampirism as a state of being.
	*NyteMuse agrees with Anshar
\<NyteMuse\>	Yes, there IS a vampire subculture/lifestyle, but not all vamps participate in it, so the link is not beneficial, IMO.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: Not that we could really drag people kicking and screaming into the public eye effectively if we wanted to anyway.
\<NyteMuse\>	I can look at any person who claims to be into kink and find a unifying thread. Same with LGBT, more or less.
\<NyteMuse\>	Pagan...not so much...it gets trickier there, but still moreso than the VC.
\<M_Belanger\>	Well, yeah, but the criticism from the closet cases is that somehow, by going on TV, we out them, personally.
\<M_Belanger\>	I just don't see how that is possible.
\<Anshar\>	Neither do I.
*	NyteMuse agrees with Michelle
\<Lono\>	Yes Michelle, but your making a living being yourself... so that could be the difference.
\<Merticus\>	Who here is comfortable speaking to print journalists? Who here is comfortable speaking on radio? Who here is comfortable

	and adept at speaking on camera?
<Merticus>	Identity our strengths and weaknesses with one another and what each of us are capable and willing to do for the community in a media context.
<cynsanity>	Besides for saying that this was well thought out and good... sang representative.
<NyteMuse>	Merticus: I'm fine with print or radio. Nothing with pictures or video.
*	Sylvere is comfortable with print, radio, or TV/film
<Merticus>	I'm comfortable with print and radio. Film would have to be under the right conditions with a final cut agreement.
<M_Belanger>	I cannot stress enough how much we need an eloquent, capable & camera-ready sang vampire willing to do interviews.
<Anshar>	Michelle: Exactly. I got a lot of Sang Questions on camera, some that I couldn't answer.
<Anshar>	<= Comfortable with print, comfortable on radio, and barring a disaster tomorrow on FOX's Hannity's America, comfortable on camera.
<Isealdor>	I will do anything that can be done over text. I won't do radio/tv/film, etc
<Lono>	I'm comfortable speaking with print journalists.
<Lono>	I'm even more comfortable with radio interviews.
<cynsanity>	I'd do it, but I'm in Europe.
<Vyrdolak>	I'm comfortable with any media.
<AcrophobicPixie>	I'm comfortable with print and radio, but I'd have to get some lessons first.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Due to my family, for now, I'm going to have to say no to video.
<xeurika>	I have a face for radio.
<sarasvati>	I would have to agree with all that has been said so far, really... I don't have much to add. Yes to the representation of the WHOLE, maybe multiple reps needed. My job, my career, currently really precludes me from being the media spotlight, so I can't bark at those who are able to do so. Print journalism is ok.
<M_Belanger>	I completely understand why most people here cannot participate in media interviews -- especially anything that uses their image.
<M_Belanger>	It's a huge sacrifice -- there's no hiding from friends, family, neighbors, or random people at Wal-Mart.
<M_Belanger>	Admittedly, it has (for me) inspired some very interesting conversations in the most unusual of places.
<M_Belanger>	But it's not something someone should commit to casually or without considering all of the repercussions on their career.
<Lono>	Hell... in Massachusetts just because of my picture being on MySpace I was running into people at the mall, who recognized me.
<Anshar>	Such as?

<M_Belanger>	Anshar -- I've gotten free meals on more than one occasion at restaurants where they recognized me from one of the vampire shows.
<M_Belanger>	A bunch of tweens buying Twilight in the Borders the other day about mobbed me asking whether or not I knew any vampires like Edward.
<M_Belanger>	The free meal usually comes with the person who put it on their employee ticket coming over to ask questions about vampires -- often opening up about being one, or having dated one
<zilchy>	I'll do interviews, but the problem is that I'm not exclusively a sang.
<M_Belanger>	But you do drink blood, which is at least more than I do.
<zilchy>	The problem we'll likely find is that we'd have probing from the media to show a sang feeding.
<zilchy>	A question I get a lot "show us a feeding!"
<Isealdor>	Zilchy: Which would then be picked apart by people inside and outside of the community
<Merticus>	Who are sang vampires in the community who have proven track records of success with the media?
<Merticus>	What about Lady CG?
<NyteMuse>	Lady CG?
<Isealdor>	Merticus: Lady CG
<Imon>	Lady CG
<cynsanity>	Lady CG
<Camazotz>	I would say Lady CG, but she's more animal blood - no?
<Sylvere>	Lady CG has a good record.
<sarasvati>	Lady CG has had human donors as well.
<Imon>	Belfazaar has done some tape but it's not produced yet.
<Isealdor>	Both, Camazotz
<Merticus>	Ok Belfazaar, Lady CG, anyone else someone has in mind to speak with and suggest they take such a role? You can think of someone outside this network of course.
<AcrophobicPixie>	I'll see if I can call Random, Merticus. He's a hybrid, but he's primarily sang.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Merticus.. He's not in my phone anymore. I'll call my brother, and see if he knows anyone who would be good.
<Imon>	There were two other names suggested on the forum but they escape my memory at the moment.
<Imon>	Isealdor suggested them I think.
*	Isealdor doesn't remember who he suggested, now (goes and looks).
<NyteMuse>	A hybrid representative wouldn't be a bad idea.
<Merticus>	Yes, nothing wrong with a hybrid... of those there are many qualified.
<AncientKhan>	Just a suggestion, but shouldn't sangs decide who is a representative for them?

<cynsanity>	Yeah
<Camazotz>	It seems to me that a psi representative is more easily representative than a sang one, because there's so much disagreement within and without about what a sang feeds on/from.
<M_Belanger>	Khan -- I think this is more brainstorming about who might be able to step up to the plate.
<AncientKhan>	Gotcha, Michelle. Just wanted to put that thought out.
<Isealdor>	Khan: Were there a mass of options, perhaps.
<Anshar>	Khan: In theory, sure, in practice, did anyone ever really decide on Michelle or myself as an energy representative?
<Anshar>	It's about availability and circumstance.
<M_Belanger>	True that, Camazotz.
<M_Belanger>	Input sure wouldn't hurt.
<cynsanity>	It so pisses me off that all of this is happening in the United States.
<NyteMuse>	Um...where would one go to poll the sang community about that? I know Myrbree was postulating some sort of site to allow the entire VC to vote on issues and make their voices heard...
<Imon>	I have no problem asking anyone I've suggested, I'm not doing it nefariously.
<Isealdor>	Oh, right... Mike Future or Lady Onyx Ravyn are two others.
<Isealdor>	I dont know how willing they are to go out into the media itself, though.
<Merticus>	Personally I feel that any of us are more than capable of handling any print-related media inquiry... it's the radio and film that is the tricky part. Yes, Lady Onyx Ravyn is capable and may be willing.
*	Sylvere is going to do her best to represent the sangs well tomorrow if asked with the reporter from Pitch.
<Camazotz>	Sylvere: Are you sang per se? (no comment on the per se lol)
<Sylvere>	Camazotz: No, but if the reporter asks me a sang question, I'm going to try to give him good info.
<Sylvere>	It's the least I can do.
<Imon>	Anyway bottom line, get a group of people who are willing to represent 'vampirism' in all its diversity to various forms of media if so interested.
<Merticus>	Imon: Exactly and there is quite the diversity to choose from. When the next media opportunity comes down the pipeline be out in front and don't waste time debating the merits of such for more than 24 hours or they WILL have moved on elsewhere - ie: Vampyra, etc.
<zilchy>	Yeah as the media goes - I'm with Imon about not waiting.
<zilchy>	Jump on it only if they give you final cut.
<Merticus>	By the time you are debating the merits of a show that show has likely contacted nearly a dozen people - same for articles, etc.

They have deadlines and aren't really concerned with your reservations to participate etc. Investigate matters quickly, efficiently, and make your points clear to them.

<Merticus> **c. The International Vampire Community: What steps can the community take to bridge the information and networking gap between U.S./Canadian and European/South American/etc. vampires? Aside from multi-lingual translations of documents and culturally diverse forums what specific avenues should be explored to encourage transparent dialogue and participation?**

<Merticus> **What are some particular differences in cultural and communication styles you've noticed between different regions of the world and how many individuals outside of your country do you regularly speak with? How do vampires and vampiric-identity or practice differ in these countries as opposed to your own? Could normalization of resources and information-sharing become a reality in the near future? If so, how do we get to that point?**

<Lady Slinky> c. I don't feel I should generalize the cultures of other countries based on the individuals that I have known. I would say other then word placement and slang used I would say that I have not noticed much of a difference. I talk with at least 12 people from outside the United States regularly. I suppose anything is possible. Continue to translate articles and seek out the existing communities in these countries.

<Mairi> c. What we are doing right now with VVC is in my opinion a major step in bridging the gap and networking. It's given us an opportunity to exchange info that many of us would not have had before. I consider myself blessed for having had the opportunity to speak online with those from Europe.

<Perce Coeur> c. (1) I mean, the vampire community is wide enough in USA, but it's obviously not the case of every countries of the world. I have read a lot about other countries communities' and often people find it hard to meet other vampires in their own countries.

<Perce Coeur> So let's limit it to the countries who have a vampire community and let others find their own path before they join us. An international meeting would be my best idea on the subject.

<Perce Coeur> c. (2) Nothing is better than meet people and talk to them directly.

<Perce Coeur> c. (3) Wow I could write a book about it but it would be a little too long... All I can say is the fact that all communities are not on the same level of development makes people don't have the same level of discussion. But when you get beyond this gap, you always discover fascinating new people.

<Perce Coeur> c. (4) If that is possible then why not? I can only encourage people trying to do that.

<RavenHarte>	c. I guess more multinational forums is the key. More American Vamps getting to conferences outside the U.S. where/when they can etc.
<SphynxCatVP>	c. Translations, definitely, for a start. You can't begin to start a dialogue until people have a common point of reference to start discussing things FROM. Otherwise you're still hashing out the basics when you could be moving forward.
<SphynxCatVP>	Also, being tolerant of other people's differences. In the USA and English speaking countries, the information is varied, common, and in great quantities - what's available in Non-English countries is often quite limited, and thus people will not have the same vast body of knowledge to draw from.
<SphynxCatVP>	I only notice differences if I'm chatting with someone who's not a native English speaker. I don't usually notice unless something I'm not familiar with is brought up.
<SphynxCatVP>	I know there are some countries with laws that essentially make some vampiric activities illegal (not in so many words, but by how restrictive they are in general.) Resource and information sharing can definitely become a reality - my own site is open to anyone, with some translation capability to help move things along, for example.
<SphynxCatVP>	Beyond that? I don't know - depends on how well people are willing to communicate and get along on an individual basis. :)
<Wreckmaster>	c. I think we need to work on a vocabulary for ourselves. There are many confusing terms we have. A translator program will have trouble with this. Even if we make up words. We need to do it, and stick to it as a group. I have been pushing for this for some time.
<Zero>	c. The associations with vampire imagery, supernatural metaphor, and death iconography differ greatly all over the world. In many places, I think that the community should probably give up entirely on the metaphor and try to normalize it into their own cultural context - mystic religion, scientific research, or some other "hobby." Most places in the world are not free enough to come out of the coffin in.
<Zero>	Mainland China has a history of supernatural-themed political rebellions, and still cracks down on anything that looks like a magical cult. In most other Asian cultures, any association with death or the supernatural is going to be seen as extremely negative and anti-social. In Latin America and Africa, gangs, criminals, and warlords have used aggressive supernatural
<Zero>	iconography for intimidation and to cover up heinous crimes. Europe is wary of extremist religion and would likely view this community as such. Other cultures don't have the literary progression to draw on when humanizing the vampire - often when you translate the vampire out of the English language, you

\<Zero\>	are left with nothing but a community-destroying monster. The associations make the Satanic Panic in the United States look like kiddie stuff. Rule one for international vampires is change the name.
\<Merticus\>	c. We need to actively seek out and speak with those in countries other than our own. To ask them what it is like in their country for vampires and if they have an established vampire community. Networking and knowing what to expect from different cultures goes a long way to becoming effective at long-distance community building and sharing.
\<Merticus\>	I think this first starts with identifying to the overall community what non-English sites or European, etc. communities exist outside of the major forums and web sites most of us are familiar with (something already in progress on the VVC resource links page of the web site). This list needs to be a resource guide others can reference on both sides - us learning about them and them about us.
\<Merticus\>	I hope that we can complete the article translation project at some point in 2009 as well as host TWILIGHT (The Gathering) in either London and/or Paris next year or 2010 at the latest. If we are unfamiliar with what transpires in different parts of the world we can't adequately interpret how what we've written and shared for years in the U.S., Canada, etc. is being put into practice or relevant to their cultures.
\<cynsanity\>	Yeah... London, Paris or Berlin or something like that.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Other than keeping the lines of communication open, and not shutting them out just because they are from another area or speak another language, iono. I am in contact with people from Eastern Europe and Britain on a regular basis. Honestly, other than spelling, there's not that much of a difference between British peoples and Americans. Non-English speakers tend to take things said a bit more literally, but once slang and the
\<Camazotz\>	Well my point was the book project... which I had originally proposed as the 'great translation project'... but that is taking time.
\<Isealdor\>	I think at times there's less of an information and networking gap between all of the English-speaking countries than we normally realize, mostly because we tend to put ourselves into little clusters of people in the same areas as us. For the non-English people, I think translations would be a fabulous thing, as much as we can do them, and in both directions—the non-English articles translated into English, too.
\<cynsanity\>	1 - Homepages need to be translated into different languages. Especially the German speaking vampire community would benefit from that, as the majority of the German stuff online is total crap.

\<zilchy\>	YES translate to German.
\<M_Belanger\>	We need translations.
\<M_Belanger\>	Reliable ones of basic information
\<cynsanity\>	I can translate from English to German
\<Merticus\>	The AVA can translate German + have contacts with Russian translators as well.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Also, to add, I'm currently working on learning Japanese, so hopefully I'll finish learning my Kana fast enough to start translating.
\<Gabrielx\>	I may be able to get a Swedish translator plus she knows about four other languages.
\<Camazotz\>	I can get stuff in Norwegian if Nanu agrees Merticus
\<Isealdor\>	I have a plethora of foreigners on the Realm, I can ask if any of them would be willing to translate if we need, too.
\<NyteMuse\>	I do have one comment. Didn't Michelle mention once that other cultures have more of a context for energy deficiencies/imbalances? I have to wonder if focusing on making resources available in those countries might not garner some...interesting connections.
\<Anshar\>	I have something to add here. Vedantic and Hindi belief systems have a LOT more experience with energetic feeding than western culture does. Pranic Vampirism is even a DOCUMENTED phenomenon in Hindi myth...
\<Anshar\>	We really should talk to some experts...
\<Merticus\>	Eastern energy work practices, etc. Qigong, Reiki, etc.
\<Camazotz\>	Good point Anshar
\<zilchy\>	Anshar: Definitely a good point, though I think some Eastern practices are a bit diluted and contaminated with new-age crap here in the west. How to find someone straight at the source?
\<NyteMuse\>	I should really get back into my holistic health studying, and poking back into Asian studies...
\<Anshar\>	Lots of experts on those belief systems. Just need to open a dialogue. No one has really tried.
\<Anshar\>	Vedic practioners have a FIT when they learn about us.
\<NyteMuse\>	Anshar: Why's that?
\<Anshar\>	Because we use the word prana and because in the related mythos pranic vampirism is caused by demonic possession.
\<Anshar\>	i.e. the Piscavat.
\<NyteMuse\>	Yeah, I've shied away from "prana" most of the time when I talk, except as a mention "some ppl use this word to refer to it, for context, but I've heard it's inaccurate".
\<M_Belanger\>	First, language is obviously a barrier, but we should consider that we do not even have many in-roads of shared communication in other English-speaking countries. I know vampires living in Ireland, England, and Australia -- but I can count these individuals collectively on one hand! Logically,

	there must be more people who are like us in these countries, and yet where are they? How do we reach out to them or encourage them to reach out to us?
<M_Belanger>	I agree with Zero in that we cannot underestimate cultural differences in how a conservative or restrictive culture will respond to our existence.
<Vyrdolak>	Especially in Asia and South America where they have very distinct cultural tradition for the paranormal in general and vampirism in particular.
<Vyrdolak>	Different cultures have very different paradigms for vampirism.
<Vyrdolak>	We can't assume that the popular terminology and definitions in the English-speaking VC have relevance or are understood in other countries--they probably aren't.
<Vyrdolak>	The best thing for us to do is become thoroughly familiar with what other cultures believe and practice in terms of vampirism, mediumship and the paranormal and be able to demonstrate
<Vyrdolak>	"cultural literacy" on those topics when talking to people from those countries.
<Vyrdolak>	Just because they're reading our websites doesn't mean they're interpreting them the same way.
<Camazotz>	An important point is that community abroad is different.... in Ireland we LIKE being solitary/in small pockets.
<Camazotz>	We work together when we need to, but have no desire to be formalized.
<Camazotz>	Frankly, we get less BS that way... if someone bugs you, you show up and hash it out in person.
<Lono>	I have a meetups section on my site, and have encountered about a dozen from Iireland.
<zilchy>	Michelle, I've been getting a LOT of communication from Victoria, AUS, so it's definitely there.
<M_Belanger>	I've got a contact in Hobart, and there was a meetup group there, but it seems to have fizzled.
<M_Belanger>	On one hand, in countries like Thailand, we are likely to encounter less resistance to the question of vampirism -- they're very likely to believe that we are what we say we are.
<M_Belanger>	But the downside is that countries where they are much more likely to believe without reservation, they are often also more likely to fear without reservation.
<M_Belanger>	And there is the very real possibility in some of these places that self-identification as a vampire will be met with violence.
<M_Belanger>	To cut down on the workload (and we've addressed this with the Book Project to some extent) we should compile something like a universal FAQ.
<Merticus>	Yes, I was speaking with Sylvere earlier about a universal FAQ - for VVC web site, etc.
<Sylvere>	I volunteered to work on a universal FAQ during my break.

\<NyteMuse\>	Michelle: I agree in theory, but I wonder about striking a balance between covering the major points without being too tl:dr (too long, didn't read).
\<Sylvere\>	I'll be working to compile 10-15 of the top questions and some short answers.
\<zilchy\>	I'll contribute to the FAQ if you need more help.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Sylvere, I'll send you a list of our FAQ's at the Haven.
\<NyteMuse\>	Sylvere: Let me know if you want some extra minions... I've been doing a lot of FAQing on the Grey School.
\<Isealdor\>	Sylvere, you're welcome to any of my FAQs, too.
\<Sylvere\>	Everyone just send me your FAQs and any other FAQs you think are good. I'll do the rest.
\<cynsanity\>	Besides for Eastern cultures, can I get into "Europe" for a moment here?.
\<Camazotz\>	Please do Cynsanity, would be interested to hear how your Europe and mine differ
\<cynsanity\>	The "vampire tradition" we have is the one most of you would be familiar with... as for real vampires, it's somewhat complicated. Lots of people don't even know about the concept of real vampires who actually are vampires. I think it's those people we should focus on when it comes to vampirism in the international sense.
*	Isealdor agrees with cynsanity - There are a lot of cultures who dont have the obsession that, say, America does with vampire lore.
\<Camazotz\>	Same in the UK/Ireland too Cynsanity, even though we have access to the English forums.
\<M_Belanger\>	Cynsanity has a very important point, and it's been something I've wondered.
\<M_Belanger\>	One of the benefits of the widespread exposure vampires in the media have received in the States since the 70s or so is that more people like us are likely to stumble upon the archetype and realize that it fits them in some fashion.
\<M_Belanger\>	Other countries do not have that background, and it's likely that there are either other archetypes/terms that have been adopted, or none at all for people who, if educated, would realize that they fit here.
\<Camazotz\>	It's very rare that I will meet an awakened vampire in Ireland... more in Scotland/England, even though I do meet a lot of potentials.
\<Camazotz\>	Michelle: Yes, if we get a vampire documentary on TV it's normally at 3 AM.
\<Merticus\>	Ties right back to why many in Europe do not use the "V" word to identify themselves even though we'd recognize them as such.
\<cynsanity\>	In Germany, "Shadow" seems to be the accepted term for vampiric people.

\<cynsanity\>	And only very few people know about real vampires
\<Isealdor\>	I think we as the "vampire community" need to be more aware of some of the other names and terms used around the world
\<zilchy_\>	Isealdor: Agreed.
\<Merticus\>	That same point was brought up by Dr. Hufford when researching the old hag effect. People from different cultures had different terms/descriptors, etc. for what is essentially sleep paralysis.
\<M_Belanger\>	I always think back to my Chinese friend's response when I asked if he knew of a Chinese word for psychic vampire.
\<M_Belanger\>	He laughed & said that some people have too much chi, some don't have enough, & everyone just shares chi - no need to get hung up on a silly word when it's so normal.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: That's what I focused on during the interview. Too much nomenclature with no context.
\<Sylvere\>	Michelle: That's what I want someday - to be seen as "normal".
\<Isealdor\>	Normal is a setting on a washing machine...no one is "normal".
\<Camazotz\>	My uncle in India was the same Michelle.
\<Camazotz\>	He said we needed to work on getting me enough energy... period.
*	AncientKhan laughs at the concept of changing the word "vampire" to "chi-feeder"
\<Sylvere\>	Chi-a-feeder
\<Anshar\>	Your donor is a Chi-a-pet
*	Everyone laughs…
\<M_Belanger\>	It would be great. The word is our biggest blessing and our biggest curse, hanging round our necks like the proverbial albatross.
*	cynsanity doesn't want to be called a chi-feeder
*	Isealdor pictures the next cutesy YouTube video being some stuffed animal talking about being a chi-feeder.
\<sarasvati\>	In the U.S., people would probably hear that as "chai" and wonder about Starbucks appeal to vampires...
\<M_Belanger\>	Well, at least we all have a well-developed sense of humor for our positions!
\<NyteMuse\>	Yup, helps cushion the falls our pride takes.
\<Camazotz\>	Inky from NOX and a few of us had been using the word pranist.
\<Camazotz\>	Remove oneself from a starting point of having to dispell myths before you can move onto truths.
\<Camazotz\>	But that's a side debate.
\<M_Belanger\>	Pranist -- would that confuse or irritate traditional Hindus?
\<Camazotz\>	Well my family are Jain M - they would be confused at most lol
\<M_Belanger\>	I've always wondered what a traditional Taoist might think of our appropriation of the word CHI.
\<NyteMuse\>	Camazotz: Totally with you on that... been moving off the V-

	word myself lately.
<M_Belanger>	First and foremost: we have to acknowledge (and get over) the fact that when the community says, "vampire," it means a diverse number of things.
<M_Belanger>	We identify with the vampire in one capacity or another. Most of us acknowledge that a fundamental factor in that identification in a real and palpable need for whatever form of vitality we typically seek.
<M_Belanger>	Because there is strength in numbers, we should not, at this point in our development, focus on our differences. We should focus on our common ground and move forward from there.
<M_Belanger>	Furthermore, we should recognize that, for those viewing us from the outside, such distinctions and nuances simply are not as visible or as important as they are to us.
*	NyteMuse agrees with Michelle
<Anshar>	Michelle: I don't see the different terms people use converging anytime soon, do you?
<cynsanity>	Camazotz: Talk about the European "community".
<cynsanity>	Camazotz: How do you perceive your corner of Europe, 'vampire-wise'?
<Camazotz>	From a perspective of an English speaking European vampire, those who do wish for more access to community do get frustrated. I and others have started boards over here and they don't seem to work/last. Put the word Irish in the title and you end up with 99% 2nd/3rd generation American members.
<Camazotz>	In terms of the real community, more of us gather with a premise of occult workings, than purely over vampirism as a topic
<Camazotz>	I would say whilst there are vampires here Cynsanity, in Ireland there is little to no vampire community.
<NyteMuse>	Camazotz: Why do you think that is?
<Camazotz>	Difficult question NyteMuse... much of it is that we don't feel a need to clump together with others in the same way, we don't have a culture of needing 'support'.
<Camazotz>	I won't hang out with every Irish vamp just because they are vamp, the same way I see people Stateside (for example) looking for others in their own area.
<Camazotz>	I was feeding long before I ever heard the word vampire or learned there was a community.
<cynsanity>	Same as Camazotz here.
<NyteMuse>	I can see the point, Camazotz. There are some people in the local community I will not associate with, even if they are vamps. The local community here is pretty thin, seems like most of the camaraderie happens more online.
<Camazotz>	I would say I fully awakened after making some contact, but more in terms of having a lable perhaps and really accepting sang.

\<Isealdor\>	Most dont realize it, but the Realm actually /is/ located physically in Europe.
\<Isealdor\>	And there's very large Realm population that is European, complete with informal meetups and gatherings.
\<cynsanity\>	In the German speaking "community", it's quite difficult. I think that the vampiric identity of a European is basically different to that of an American vamp. We have no real offline community, besides for one or two houses in Germany, and the whole 'finding out via the internet'-deal is still very much new to us. Those few European vamps I know all had to figure out what was going on with them by themselves - there is no vampire scene in
\<cynsanity\>	Europe, besides for a few feeding circles in major cities. People have to figure out on their own what it is that is happening to them, and so most of them have a more or less non-dogmatic stance on it.
\<Merticus\>	Does the European community as a whole approach the subject of vampirism from a more occult / magickal based-leaning than does the United States or Canada?
\<Isealdor\>	Merticus: In my experience, it's very split in the approach-- partially as a subculture, and partially as a magick/occult study thing.
\<Camazotz\>	Merticus: I would discuss more about vampirism with Luciferian friends than local vamps to answer your question.
\<Camazotz\>	And gay friends to be honest.
\<Camazotz\>	We tend to be rather territorial here... perhaps because there are less, we are more possesive of what is "ours".
\<cynsanity\>	I only have 'mundanes' and donors to talk to, neither of which understand the concept in itself.
\<Lono\>	The problem is as a group we (collectively as a whole) can get in the habit of nit picking when we are really trying to nail something down.
*	zilchy agrees with Lono.
*	Sylvere agrees w/Lono...and some people in the VVC will nit-pick something to death even after everyone else has agreed on it.
\<NyteMuse\>	Camazotz: Do you feel like perhaps the vampires just accept it an as-is thing and not worth making a big deal about? You all have to deal with it, so most of you more or less understand the trials and tribulations, whereas an outsider not so much?
\<Camazotz\>	You go into say The Cathouse in Glasgow, you will be shown very clearly by the local psi's that you're not welcome... they attack/probe first, maybe speak later.
\<NyteMuse\>	Yikes... hostile territory.
\<Camazotz\>	I think when one doesn't start off with the word and the negative associations NyteMuse, it's easier to just get on with it.

\<Isealdor\>	Cynsanity, maybe try talking to some of the less-mainstream religious people?
\<NyteMuse\>	I do feel like some people make just a huge-fucking-deal about it, for shock value.
\<M_Belanger\>	Really? I've heard similar from folks who traveled to Montreal, which is about the most European city in the continental U.S.
\<M_Belanger\>	I wonder is there's some subtle cultural thing that encourages such behavior?
\<Camazotz\>	Good question Michelle.
\<Camazotz\>	The first time I drank blood wasn't a big deal.... now to find a donor and feed, now the term is there, it suddenly is.
\<Camazotz\>	Xaphaniel could tell you that there are a lot of Scottish vampires… again they push and test each other.
\<Camazotz\>	We tend to get adept fast at dealing with psi attacks, tendrils, etc.
\<Anshar\>	Tendrils?
\<M_Belanger\>	Tentacles of energy that one can extend either to probe, lash, or latch onto people.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: Knew the metaphysical theory of tendrils, just didn't know if that's what was being referred to.
\<Camazotz\>	Anshar: A rather nasty feeding/attack technique if you want to use it that way.
\<Camazotz\>	Michelle: Here, they'll stick it right into your spine or base of skull... that hurts.
\<M_Belanger\>	Best places to put them -- at least as far as efficiency goes. Not very polite, though.
\<M_Belanger\>	At some point, it might be insightful for folks here to go back in the Witchvox.com archives to read up on the "Which Witch is Which" controversy.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: Yea, that's a great prototype.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Oh, goodness. I remember that controversy. I think I wrote something for them, back in the day.
\<Merticus\>	Does anyone have any other comparisons or constrasting between the European (Eastern or Western) and the rest of the world?
\<cynsanity\>	Central Europe basically doesn't have a 'vampire subculture', mostly due to lack of information.
\<NyteMuse\>	So maybe the terminology is carrying a lot of the baggage?
\<M_Belanger\>	There's a lot of baggage with the terminology -- there's no escaping that baggage so long as we persist in using that terminology.
\<M_Belanger\>	I have minimal contact with some vamps in Kiev. They are very closeted and they are unaware of anything like a community in their area.
\<Merticus\>	If Central Europe was exposed to such information how long would the "learning curve" be so to speak to get them caught up to where things are in America... would they likely go through

	the same growing pains as we have the last 15 or so years?
\<cynsanity\>	More or less yes, Merticus
\<Isealdor\>	Do the majority of European vampires even /want/ a community?
\<Camazotz\>	You go to certain parts of the UK we have very tight-knit 'family' groups...
\<Lono\>	The problem comes in changing that terminology altogether, and newbies not being able to find the needed information because the term they heard or was given by others no longer exists or is searchable under that name.
\<AncientKhan\>	Maybe if we, collectively, stop trying to create universal definitions, perhaps people coming together to pass information would be more fruitful. We're shooting ourselves in the feet everyday.
\<Isealdor\>	We're assuming that they need to "catch up", that the community we have is right and what there should be.
\<AncientKhan\>	Amen, Isealdor. I tend to like their approach better than ours.
\<Merticus\>	True
\<cynsanity\>	Isealdor: Most of us are very inclined to not interacting with others.
\<Camazotz\>	No, I would say most of us don't... we want access to information, ways to network etc, some events/gatherings would be cool.... BUT we don't need to have a camp-fire and sing kumbaya.
\<Camazotz\>	With us, you're either interesting/worth something, or you're not... doesn't matter if you're vamp/kin/mainstream.
\<Camazotz\>	Perhaps we just value our time more lol
\<Merticus\>	So find an effective way to bridge the lines of communication with the more obscure and get everyone talking and exchanging different perspectives... might all learn a thing or two.
\<M_Belanger\>	It's funny how region affects the character of the community in the States.
\<M_Belanger\>	NYC, it's this huge party scene and so much of the community is about going out & socializing at clubs.
\<M_Belanger\>	Here in the Midwest, you're just happy to have people you can talk to, and it's much more a "hearth & home" kind of feel.
\<M_Belanger\>	California is like New York in that there's this huge party scene, but the vampires prefer to be solitary hunters, hidden among the club-crowd, never making their presence widely known.
\<NyteMuse\>	Or rebelling against authority, from what I've seen.
\<cynsanity\>	We don't have that.
\<Sylvere\>	Yep, same in Kansas City. I know every vamp in town. Possibly in the state.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Michelle, that's how the whole Midwest is, not just the vampire scene, though :)
\<Lono\>	Depends where you go up North...Boston/Rhode Island area.

\<Gabrielx\>	California wasn't always like that, you were lucky to find one individual.
\<Gabrielx\>	I think movies and media helped in that area for better or worse.
\<NyteMuse\>	Yep. Few to no real Houses or groups.
\<Sylvere\>	Few houses in the Midwest too.
\<NyteMuse\>	Sylvere: But is that due to not enough people or no interest?
\<Sylvere\>	NyteMuse: Both. We don't want the drama of Houses.
\<Isealdor\>	NyteMuse: More the latter.
\<Merticus\>	**d. Diversity, Perception, & Empowerment: What steps can we take as a community to help improve our own lives, encourage appropriate and meaningful participation, and prevent the over-simplification of what it means to be a vampire while still helping those coming to know their nature for the first time?**
\<Merticus\>	**As vampires we often have an incredible diversity in the personal meaning we ascribe to the concept of "vampirism" - some viewing it solely as a need - physical, spiritual, or both (albeit sang, psi, or hybrid), others as a potential medical condition or deficiency, still others as an ability, state of being, or extension of energy work, and many who incorporate all of these views into their own menagerie.**
\<Merticus\>	**While we are engaging in self-examination how can we maintain focus on supporting the vampire community, arrest the self-deprecating mindset that the only aspect to vampirism is a "constant struggle", and bypass the pitfalls of division over terminology?**
\<Lady Slinky\>	d. It is natural to focus on your base needs. Until the constant struggle is no longer a constant struggle that is the aspect most people in a support community are going to focus on. If you would rather not address those issues or would like to focus attention elsewhere because either you are no longer struggling with it or are tired of other peoples struggle then perhaps
\<Lady Slinky\>	you would be better off in a networking community and avoiding the support portions of the community. I think most support communities within the vampiric community do try to present both sides of the coin especially for energy vamps as they seem to have so many perks.
\<Lady Slinky\>	You can't discount the fact that for some the only aspects to vampirism ARE a constant struggle.
\<Mairi\>	d. I do feel that it's more important that we put our energies into helping our own community internally rather than putting all our eggs in the basket for our coming out. And in this I mean we need to pair down the vocabulary of terms we use to describe daily activities, emotions and actions.
\<Mairi\>	You must admit its getting to be a bit ridiculous anymore. My feelings are that there are no different types of vampires, just

	different types of energies and different manners of acquiring it. And I know there are many more vamps who feel the same as I do but we sill fall back to sang, psi, psychic, sexual, elemental ect as being types of vamps when we are in a pinch and I honestly feel we need to STOP this.
<Mairi>	It's confusing to many as well as the newly awakened. I feel that this new term "hybrid' is a bunch of bull. I can and do feed from all types of energies and I don't feel that I'm anything special enough to deserve a new title for it.
<Mairi>	It's like saying that because someone can tolerate both apples and oranges that they digestion of them deserves a special term or title. Come on folks! I also feel we need to start being honest with ourselves about our feeding habits, how we acquire the energy or why we go about getting it in a certain manner.
<Mairi>	A vamp who prefers to feed on energies manipulated through sex shouldn't be out there telling the world that he is a sexual vamp who needs to have sex regularly in order to feed. That makes him/her sound like a sexual predator and someone to be afraid of. Let's clean up our own communities act First before we expose it to the media.
<Perce Coeur>	d. It is important to learn to listen to other people who may need your help. As I have discovered years ago, you always learn from the one who learns. It is sometimes hard to get available, but if explained gently then people understand.
<Perce Coeur>	On the other hand, vampires should learn to live and behave with each other. I mean, aren't we suppose to be "higher spirits"? And sometimes I find it hard to believe when I see or read things that look like a nursery school arguing... We don't have time or energy to waste in that kind of things.
<Perce Coeur>	Besides if we want to improve, if we want to open the community (or just a part) to the public, what will they think if they find out that kind of things? That is just not serious. We should help and support each other instead of tearing us apart.
<Perce Coeur>	If you don't agree with the terminology of someone else, that's ok, you have the right of your own ideas but respect those of others too. We must be strong together because the worst is yet to come.
<SphynxCatVP>	d. I think the who-is-and-isn't debates are the single biggest roadblock we have to moving forward - we're still fighting internally, how the hell can we present a united front to the outside world if we can't stop fighting ourselves?
<SphynxCatVP>	The only 'constant struggle' aspect I see is people trying to define themselves and others in or out of the equation. Seriously, if we can all STOP getting into pissing matches about who is and isn't a vampire and why, we can move forward with community support a lot easier.

\<SphynxCatVP>	At best, any such debates should be more along the lines of "my experience is soley with [x] which prevents me from being terribly helpful with [y] – however you might try contacting [so-and-so] who has more experience with [y], perhaps they are in a better position to help you."
\<SphynxCatVP>	I therefore ignore the type terminology except as it relates to issues with overall categories of feeding preferences - there are issues with blooddrinking that don't come up with energy, and vice versa - and I just address potential issues relating to the feeding methods.
\<SphynxCatVP>	It's not my place to make judgments, other than provide a reality check if I think someone is overlooking mundane health issues.
\<Wreckmaster>	d. My only comment is the vocabulary issue. As the resident asshole in Lono's forum, I do not deal directly with our newbs. Unless they mess up. :P
\<Zero>	d. The first step is to quit using false distinctions. I'd prefer to acknowledge the difference between sanguinarian and psi vampires, but to make it understood that the distinction is based on observation, not an understanding of what's going on here. We have spent a lot of time coming up with terms like Hybrid, Elemental Vampire, etc. that can't really be defined and mean nothing.
\<Zero>	For example, categorizing psivamps by the source of their energy intake makes the false assumption that there is a structural difference in those energy sources, when we really don't know. Using the word Hybrid signals that there are two normal states of vampirism, sang and psi, and that sometimes you get two-in-one. Research suggests it's more of a spectrum.
\<Zero>	Basing identity on these false distinctions merely creates false divisions within the community.
\<Zero>	I think that the self-perception of vampirism as being something of a disability is prevalent, and that disability theorists, especially those involved with Deaf identity, may be useful to look at. Many theorists today are advocating the idea of "different, not disordered," when dealing with alternative cognition like
\<Zero>	Asperger's, ADHD, and the like. The idea is that the problems arising from these groups' differences exist not because of their differences, but because society is structured for people without those differences. Learning theory, current sleep-cycle research, and other diverse fields are also telling us that the human experience is diverse and that the "disability" can often come
\<Zero>	from society's expectations that the few conform to the expectations of the many. I think that some of this should be required reading within the community.
\<Merticus>	d. We need to recognize the aspects of vampirism (in any form)

	that we share in common before we assume group X or Y are not "real vampires" because they don't use a certain term or label or have a different feeding method than our own.
<Merticus>	I have met well over a two-hundred vampires from all walks of our community and in most of these exchanges despite any cultural or particular practice differences found something reinforcing to my own vampirism and at the same time uniquely their own. I care far less what feeding method, spiritual or magickal beliefs, physical quirks, etc. one possesses than I do for one's attitude on how they approach their personal vampirism.
<Merticus>	Self-insulating yourself from other ideas and experiences in my opinion doesn't help anyone. Yes, vampirism is often a struggle - whether with awakening, feeding, acceptance, or other attributes; but at the same time I don't believe the struggle with these issues is the only defining characteristic.
<Merticus>	We should be able to learn from this and in turn help others live a more well adjusted and productive personal, social, and professional life. Helping foster what we share in common and supporting the needs and ideas of each other rather than bending over backwards to draw lines in the sand in every direction.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Personally, I don't see what the whole hoopla over terminology is. I mean, who cares what you are, as long as you don't act like a total nutcase when you go about it? Sang, psi, hybrid, MooMoo from Tau nebula. All are vamps. I mean, if all we can do is fight amongst ourselves, we won't get the info out that we want, and only get the ickyness that other's push out there because they can.
<Anshar>	Mairi: But, if that person DOES have to have sex to feed, then aren't we telling a person to not be themselves to make us look "better"? Is that any different from telling Sangs to just say they eat steak so it doesn't make us look like "criminals"? If Khan drinks menstrual blood (for example) do I have to want him to dumb things down and hide to make the rest of us look better?
<Anshar>	I think that's a crock.
*	Camazotz applauds Anshar
<AncientKhan>	If we want to improve our lives and meaningful participation, stop trying to waste time fighting over definitions for everyone based on your experiences, and emphasize what you learned purely for information exchange and collaborate on ideas. We lose too much time arguing over things that have no real, single definition. Get your own shit in order before trying to hold the Vampire Inquisition.
<Isealdor>	I am a staunch promoter of information. I think we need to share, share, and share; what we think, what we know, what we want to know…communication really is the key. Most of us didn't get where we are by keeping everything to ourselves, or

	not trying to find information other places, and the newcomers need to have as many resources as is possible, and people willing to actually sit down and /talk/ about it with them. There are 101 theories out there.
\<Isealdor\>	People who vehimently believe one thing or another, but wont stop and take the time to listen to what anyone else has to say or what they believe and why, and that only hurts those trying to learn and develop their own beliefs.
\<Isealdor\>	I could care less what terminology is used, frankly. I think fights over terminology are among the most stupid we get into. More important is that people explain what is meant by whatever term they choose to use, so there can be clear communication.
*	AcrophobicPixie agrees with Isealdor
\<Sylvere\>	I don't think there *is* any way to prevent over-simplification in the early stages of education. One does not give a six-year-old advanced physics and expect the child to understand. We need to have information available that will appeal to different levels of interest and comprehension ability.
\<Sylvere\>	Joe and Jane Average don't need or want advanced metaphysical theory, nor are they likely to understand it. On the other hand, academics, law-enforcement, and other energy workers may have a need or desire for more complex information.
\<Sylvere\>	Unfortunately, we have yet to come to any consensus on even the most basic concepts, such as what it is that defines a vampire. Until we can do that, we will forever be held to the over-simplifications because those are the only aspects we *can* agree on.
\<M_Belanger\>	What can we do? Network. Maintain reliable resources. Encourage peer review of existing and new resources to maintain a level of quality and accuracy -- not to mention good sense. Follow our own paths of self-discovery with the knowledge that we can serve as examples within the community. Consider mentoring newbies. And if teaching is not in your blood, simply present yourself as a worthy example of how we should behave.
\<M_Belanger\>	There are needs that we experience, just as there are symptoms many of us undergo that indicate when we need to feed. I do not think it would be healthy for us to ignore these things or to sweep them under the rug, but I do think that oftentimes we places too much stress upon them. "I feed, therefore I am" is a very limited and limiting defintion of vampirism, and it may lead some fledgling members of the community to feel disabled…
\<M_Belanger\>	There are good points that most of us experience as well. We should not undersell these.
\<Anshar\>	Michelle: So, essentially, personal accountability.
\<M_Belanger\>	Indeed.

\<Camazotz\>	I am not disabled (though it's not always easy), I am not a victim, I have talents and skills that I will *not* hide to avoid being seen as promoting something supernatural.. oh and we would get on better if we didn't have half the fakers around who are the ones who create and propogate drama.
\<Camazotz\>	Throw the kiddies in the play pen, let them fight amongst themselves and the adults can move on.
\<Isealdor\>	It's really not that hard to preface articles and such when a term is used with a short explanation of each term as it comes up
\<Isealdor\>	Camazotz: those kiddies are going to be the new adults soon
\<Isealdor\>	Let's not make them reinvent the wheel
*	Sylvere agrees with Isealdor
\<M_Belanger\>	I'd love to discourage the new invention of words that basically say the same thing as established words. Or alternate spellings.
\<Isealdor\>	Michelle: I /love/ the idea of peer reviews.
\<M_Belanger\>	Credit Xeurika on that one.
\<M_Belanger\>	His idea first.
\<Merticus\>	Personal accountability and responsibility is unfortunately sorely lacking with some participants in this community.
*	Sylvere just wants "vampyre" to go away.
*	Camazotz wants rid of fangbanger and twoofing
*	NyteMuse agrees w/Sylvere
\<M_Belanger\>	I blame Polidori for "vampyre" and I still haven't forgiven him.
\<Lono\>	I agree.. Bickering over terms is useless...and perhaps even harmfull... especially its small portion of the community that is too stuck in their ways, for who the disagreements of sang and psi, will no doubt never cease...it gets in the way of the message, the more inportant info.
\<AncientKhan\>	The ones becoming the new adults deserve a better example of what it's like to be an adult than what the OVC currently gives.
\<M_Belanger\>	So, back to personal accountability and responsibility…
\<M_Belanger\>	Which I think would vastly improve our community.
\<Lono\>	Personal accountability and responsibility how exactly?
\<AncientKhan\>	By not acting like a jerk (not pointed at anyone).
\<Camazotz\>	Michelle and Khan... exactly.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	zilchy - that a good or bad thing?
\<M_Belanger\>	Well, ideally, every adult should have enough sense to consider the ramifications of their words and actions upon others.
\<M_Belanger\>	However, given that this is not the "best of all possible worlds," I think we should make an effort to encourage a certain level of responsibility.
\<xeurika\>	I agree, but unfortunately the accountability part is the tough to enforce. Accountable to who? Who enforces? Who draws the line?
\<Camazotz\>	Surely one should be respected because ones actions lead to it, nothing more or less.

<Anshar>	Talking about accountability online. Ah, the irony.
<Camazotz>	It's not all online though Anshar.
<Camazotz>	If I thought it was, I'd go kill myself now.
<zilchy_>	As for accountability - people need to understand that WE (the community) aren't a safety net.
<Sylvere>	I don't think that's likely to change.
<M_Belanger>	First, by setting examples ourselves, of course, but perhaps trying to put some social structures in place.
<M_Belanger>	Reviews of other peoples' sites, for example.
<Camazotz>	Xeurika's peer review was a great idea
<xeurika>	It's a worthy idea, Peer Review, but the devil is in the details which still need lots of ironing out.
<Merticus>	Without going into specifics and naming names there are people and actions by people in this community that should be called out publicy. Nothing to do with "enforcement" - more a statement that x, y, z behavior is clearly outside any accepted standard this community holds - unsafe feeding, abuse, impersonation, plagirism, threats, etc.
<AcrophobicPixie>	I have no clue how people see me, and honestly, I'm not going to cry over it. I have more serious things to cry over than some random person I'll never meet thinking I'm the wicked witch.
<Isealdor>	Personally, on the accountability thing, there is no governing force, there is no set of rules or bylaws that everyone follows, etc...there's no way to be accountable besides to logic and truth. If people want that, go find a few channels and be willing to actually troll yourselves.
<M_Belanger>	I know that gets into dangerous territory of honest reviews vs. opinions.
<M_Belanger>	And I think, Merticus we can call them out without naming names…
<Camazotz>	Sometimes we NEED to name names... The time HAS to come.
<M_Belanger>	We can write articles for our sites and blog about the BEHAVIOR, not the PERSON, and explain why it's not acceptable.
*	Anshar agrees with Michelle
*	NyteMuse agrees with Michelle
<Merticus>	Exactly - both by setting examples and stating our own convictions in the general sense.
<Isealdor>	If someone has a problem with something that someone else says, or wants someone called out, then actually do it, and back it up, and keep it up until you're satisfied. But I dont think anyone can expect the community as a whole to be policed that way, and certainly not self-policed by everyone in it.
<AcrophobicPixie>	Or they totally take what's said out of context and totally go into a hissy fit of enormous proportions.
<Anshar>	Nothing will be served by open criticism of one another or of

outsiders.

<Camazotz>   Anshar, I take your point to a degree, but say you have proof that someone's creating drama, why not call them on it?

<Camazotz>   Otherwise it becomes he said, she said.

<Anshar>   Camazotz: because you sully your own name while doing it.

<xeurika>   I agree with Michelle, also naming tends to give the drama seekers exactly what they are looking for.

<Isealdor>   The way I see it, there are two options; people either call others out and everything erupts in dramafest, or we promote people actually objectively and logically examining philosophies and beliefs and opinions and making up their own minds.

<M_Belanger>   I also wouldn't object to a little "No Sharkey" icon we can pass around, much like the old NO RPG icons ... but maybe that's just me.

<Lono>   We had that Michelle... but we thought it would be advertizing him.

<M_Belanger>   I think it would be easier to do NO Jonathon Sharkey, simply because I don't think most of us recognize him as even a part of our community.

<Sylvere>   Michelle: The problem is that the "problem children" never think we're talking about *them* unless we name name

<NyteMuse>   Sylvere: True, but at least other people may be made aware.

<M_Belanger>   Well, I'm less concerned about the problem children getting the message -- realistically, they won't & they don't care -- but I think we need to clarify for others that the examples those problem children set should not be followed.

<Merticus>   How many of you in this chat have reached out to a House, group, organization etc. that you did not agree with to learn more about them by talking with their participants? Or how many are friends with individuals who follow different paths in this community than your own - vastly different?

<Merticus>   ie: How many of you have taken the time to personally engage the individual(s) you disagree with in this community AND who have appeared in media spots you didn't care for. Spoken with them personally?

   *   NyteMuse raises hand
   *   Sylvere raises hand
   *   AcrophobicPixie raises hand
   *   sarasvati raises hand
   *   Lono raises hand
   *   Isealdor raises hand
   *   AncientKhan raises hand

<Sylvere>   I was part of Pandora's Global Vampire Network

<Sylvere>   Everyone was welcome. It was the UN of the community long before DN or VVC.

<Isealdor>   I make a point to get to know the people I disagree with the most

	even before trying to get to know the ones I do agree with, honestly.
\<NyteMuse\>	I guess somewhat, but maybe not the big-ticket ones.
\<Imon\>	~raises hands~
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	I've never really met any of the "famous" ones that I dislike/disagree with.
\<Merticus\>	It's not a terrible idea to see what people in this community are really like - what their beliefs are when you take them out of their element, etc. Basically just don't be in the habit of discounting individuals by association or flippantly.
\<M_Belanger\>	What I think we should focus on would be articles clarifying examples of bad behavior/decisions.
\<M_Belanger\>	These would serve two purposes: helping to educate newbies, but also establishing that we do not condone such behavior to any outsiders who happen to stumble upon our sites.
\<Isealdor\>	Michelle: I disagree. I would rather see "good" behavior promoted than bad behavior ranted on.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Isleador: It could work if it were even on the promoting good behavior as well as going "This is a no-no".
\<M_Belanger\>	There are some things that have been done in the name of the community or in association with it that require some kind of commentary.
\<M_Belanger\>	Even if it's just one or two articles considering the erroneous connections drawn between the community and say, pedophiles or mass murderers.
\<M_Belanger\>	And I think we HAVE to be very careful not to make such articles rants or attacks
\<M_Belanger\>	That would only feed drama & accomplish little of use.
\<xeurika\>	I tend to agree with Isealdor. There's many who see a rule book as a checklist.
\<NyteMuse\>	Isealdor: I see merit in both approaches.
\<AncientKhan\>	I think we need both. If our concern is newcomers and the curious, we need to make examples of both.
\<NyteMuse\>	When I'm educating my students, I give both good examples and bad examples
\<Isealdor\>	I can agree with both, but I think the promoting the good is far, far more important that calling out the bad.
\<Sylvere\>	That would require we come to an agreement on what "good" and "bad" behaviors are.
\<Sylvere\>	I seem to recall some discussions about an alternative to the Black Veil that went up in flames.
\<M_Belanger\>	Sylvere -- shooting up a school.
\<M_Belanger\>	There are some things that are no-brainers.
\<Isealdor\>	Sylvere: Not really. It just means that we each say what we believe and why, and then perhaps engage in logical debate on what we disagree with.

<Merticus>	Can we avoid assigning a "name" or "one central article" to such discussions or examples? ie: the disdain for the Black Veil - all versions and forms (now confusing to most) is still a divisive reality.
<M_Belanger>	Exactly
<M_Belanger>	We have our opinions. Write opinion articles. Op-Ed
*	NyteMuse agrees w/ Michelle
<M_Belanger>	NO ONE in any community anywhere is going to agree 100% on what is right, what is wrong, and what was just plain stupid.
<Sylvere>	Op-ed just opens the door to more loopholes.
<Sylvere>	At least with a central document as a basis, it's easier to say "I disagree with Part X for Y reason".
<Isealdor>	We all have different views, how about promoting mature, calm, and logical debates rather than just saying "this is bad" or "dont be like XXX"
<Camazotz>	None of this covers how we move past the arguments AMONGST ourselves.
<Merticus>	In this type of community loopholes will always exist - best we can do is be engaged in our own local community and watch for signs of those in trouble or causing trouble. We can't interact with this community from a position outside of where people are activing debating/seeking support/etc. Also, we equally can't afford to ignore some of the e-mails and other correspondence we receive from people.
<M_Belanger>	Certainly everyone on the Internet has an opinion and is not afraid to express it.
<M_Belanger>	And that does not in anyway improve the value of those opinions.
<M_Belanger>	But gathered here, we have a diversity of respectable, intelligent, and motivated members of our community.
<M_Belanger>	Our words carry more weight than the words of many others. We should accept and make use of that.
<AncientKhan>	Michelle: Even we are not always the example that should be given.
<Gabrielx>	I don't believe because our words may carry more weight those whose don't should be ignored.
<M_Belanger>	Should they be ignored? No. But we have an opportunity to promote our message in a more effective manner than most. We should accept that and make us of it.
<Isealdor>	Michelle: That's partially my point. Make use of that by setting examples of what we would like to see, not trying to tear down anything we dont like.
<Isealdor>	The latter, to me, falls much into the territory of ego-trip.
<Lono>	We, well most of us with information sites, are here to help the few and the new. As such I think we make ourselves readily available for the most part... the trick is to be vigil of that

	disconnect that happens.
*	Camazotz wonders who the "we" being mentioned is.... WE here cannot agree on how to be civil with each other most times.
<M_Belanger>	Camazotz -- true enough
<M_Belanger>	I don't think this "we" needs to agree in order to make us of our collective positions.
<Camazotz>	True Michelle
<Camazotz>	But equally I think one needs to be careful of appearing as being of one mindset, when VVC is a group of many (and often loud) opinions).
<NyteMuse>	Camazotz: Hence a focus on dialogue being a good idea...dialogue is additive, not subtractive. As many ideas as possible.
<M_Belanger>	Well, for everyone's sakes, let me clarify that when I say that "we" should write articles and state our opinions about actions, behaviors, or events related to the community ...
<M_Belanger>	I mean that "we" should be honest in expressing our own takes on things.
<M_Belanger>	I do not in any way expect nor advocate a concensus.
<Merticus>	Agrees with Michelle. This is one of the reasons why I like having the individual profile sections on the web site.
<Merticus>	**e. Other topics you'd like to bring up for discussion?**
<Isealdor>	This moves a little into topic e, but how about debate panels?
<NyteMuse>	Isleador: Debate or Dialogue?
<Isealdor>	NyteMuse: Both
<NyteMuse>	Both I could agree with...focusing solely on debate, I think we'd be too limited.
<M_Belanger>	I still think we should also try to make podcast/recording debates work -- but after the recording issues with the first one we tried, we need to find a better medium than Skype.
<M_Belanger>	Or we need to severely limit the number of people in such a roundtable -- 4 or 5 max.
<Merticus>	Starting in January I hope we revisit the roundtable and seriously produce the chats and discussions (video/audio) we began work on in 2008.
<Sylvere>	Yahoo has voice chat. Does anyone know if it's better for conferences than Skype?
<AcrophobicPixie>	I've used it before, but not for recording, Sylvere.
<AncientKhan>	I like the roundtable. It gives a better example than written internet posts.
<NyteMuse>	TalkShoe is nice, but requires using telephones to call in and contribute.
<NyteMuse>	I mean, I've got tons of excessive minutes on my cell, so as long as I have reception, I'm good...but that might not be the situation for others.
<Sylvere>	I'd rather not tie up my phone.

\<Isealdor\>	Crazy suggestion, but has anyone considered ham radios?
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Isleador: It's against HAM laws
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	And would you really want anyone with a call sign getting in on it?
*	Sylvere is not going out to buy a HAM radio
\<Isealdor\>	No, it isnt, not if everyone gets a license or works with someone licensed.
\<Isealdor\>	It would just have to be recorded and put out somewhere else.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Also, getting everyone their license and the proper equipment so we can all talk, that would be a pain.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Isleador: I think they'd consider it a religious thing, and religious things are against the rules.
\<Isealdor\>	I actually didn't think about HAM until last night, and like I said, a bit of a crazy suggestion... but at least it's stable. And can be connected over Echolink to internet, too.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	Well, we could bounce off of one of the OSCAR's or the ISS to get a better bounce to everyone, but *shrugs*.
\<AcrophobicPixie\>	And do we want to keep everyone to a tech-no code or do we want to expand further so we can use the little used bandwidth?
\<xeurika\>	There are quite a few free conference call services. Generally you can use Skype to connect to the conference line, but it has less limitations than a purely Skype conference.
\<NyteMuse\>	Xeurika: You need to pay for most of the conference call services, I think... I mean, to connect with Skype.
\<Sylvere\>	I still want to do video.
\<Gabrielx\>	As far as education I really enjoyed what Michelle was doing with her podcast project with Chris Miller and Shadowdance.
\<Gabrielx\>	I found that very informative and reaching.
\<M_Belanger\>	We're still doing it, albeit intermittently, given both of our careers.
\<Merticus\>	**IV. Business Reminders**
\<Merticus\>	Refer to the forum for all current discussions.
\<Merticus\>	Thank you all for coming!
\<Merticus\>	<<<<<<END MEETING LOG>>>>>>