



THE Undercurrents

The Official Newsletter of the Dark River Society Domain

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Welcome Back!

Hi everyone!

Last year was a heck of a year with the new chronicle in full swing; and with two new venues to choose from as well as several large events to attend (including our own very fabulous domain event), it's no wonder time flew.

This year started out with a bang with the brand-spankin' new **Mage: The Awakening** venue, and I'm very excited about it. There were several people in attendance at the December socials and the first Nashville game, and many of our members made the snowy trek to Knoxville to play in their Mage game.



Loraine Flegal
Undercurrents
Editor

In this issue, I've included a great short story about the origin of vampires written by Rick Backhouse; an article by yours truly about Mage and Mana; a very useful article from your DST Sam Flegal about playing characters from source material; a list of January releases from White Wolf; and a brief description of two upcoming U.S. Camarilla conventions.

Enjoy this issue, and please pass it around! ☺



Please welcome new member **David (Hashbrown) Williams** to the club!

2006-2007 OFFICERS

Loraine Flegal
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Chuck Lovvorn
VST Awakening

Ian Harris
ADST Audits

Andrew Anderson
ADST Mortals

Rick Backhouse
AVST Requiem

FROM THE DESK OF THE **DST**

Playing the Source Material



Sam Flegal
Domain
Storyteller

Over the last year the Camarilla has made some changes for the better. After the Year Of Fire, the club faced low numbers and a growing lack of interest. Then as the new Chronicle started, people began to get excited about new characters; and over the last year, the membership started to grow again. This month celebrates the first year of the Requiem Chronicle, and a good year it has been.

Thinking back on the last year in all the venues, I began to notice a trend; people like being the exception rather than the rule. I've often heard people describe their characters as "He's a Gangrel, but he acts like a Daeva" or "He's a Werewolf, but he doesn't like to hunt." In Mage, it's already started. Many people want to play Acanthus, because Fate and Time magic is cool. However, Acanthus are described as flighty and scatterbrained. I've already had 3 people tell me, "I play an Acanthus, but he's not as scatterbrained as most."

Initially it didn't bother me. Part of me feels that people should be allowed to play whatever they want; after all, it is a game. Then I got to thinking (a dangerous past time, I know), in the Camarilla we have a very different situation than what is presented in the source material. The source material is geared towards a Table Top (TT) game. In TT, the Storyteller, except for four to six players, portrays all the characters. The setting depicts the world around those players. To use Vampire as an example:

A typical TT game would be about a Coterie of four to six Neonate vampires of various clans, but likely of only one or two covenants. This Coterie would start from the bottom, and have to scratch, claw, and politic their way to the top. The Prince and the majority of the court officers would be NPCs portrayed by the Storyteller. As NPCs, the Storyteller is likely to use the stereotypes and standards as presented in the source. If the four players deviate a little...that's OK. In TT, if the players deviate, then the setting is still maintained.

In some LARPs, that can still apply. Many troupe games fill the higher positions of the city with NPCs, so the setting is once again maintained. In fact, the Old WoD Camarilla vampire game used this tactic by making all the regional and above positions NPCs that were very true to the source material. In the Camarilla, we have a very different situation. Players hold all the city positions in all venues. Players also hold all the regional and national positions. In our game, NPCs only appear to fill in the background, to generate plot, or serve as antagonists. This creates a situation where the players are responsible for establishing the setting.

That's a big responsibility, especially when the majority of players are playing a character that is different from the norm. In the interest of changing this, I challenge you all to play characters that fit with the source material. If you really want to be different, play what's in the book. Trust me, you'll shock people.

In order to help generate some ideas I would recommend getting together with other members of your group and talking about ways to make the game more like what's in the book. Get excited about the source material and play it.

Here are some examples:

If you're a Carthian, think about what type of mortal government your character endorses. The Requiem book says that all Carthians look to implement mortal government models in Kindred society.

If you're a Werewolf, think about your character's method of hunting. All Werewolves hunt per the source, so how does your character do it? What are his preferred targets? Does she hate Ridden, Azlu, or some other target?

If you're an Acanthus, consider actually being a bit scatterbrained. Anyone who can wield that much Fate and Time magic would be a little off.

Remember that with Clan in Requiem, Auspice in Forsaken, and Path in Mage, the character didn't get to choose to be those things. If you're a Daeva, you were likely marked for embrace because of your social grace. If you're a Cahalith, your heart burns with the past glories of the Forsaken people and you desire to sing those tales. If you're a Moros, then your soul was selected by the divine powers because you were pragmatic and had a leaning toward the mysteries of the dead and an understanding of objects. Sure you the player chose to be a Gangrel, but the character was taken by a viscous predator of the night, and now has the blood of the savage clan burning with him. Don't cheapen that by playing a Gangrel that would have more likely been embraced by a Deava.

As for Covenant in Requiem, Tribe in Forsaken, and Order in Mage, remember that your character got to choose to be in those societies. Your character likely chose his group because he believed in what that group believes. If you're playing a Lancea Sanctum, don't be a pleasant creature of the night—get into the role of that very dark religion. Consider playing a lower Humanity character to reflect the number of times you have

punished mortal sinners. If you're playing a Blood Talon, don't reduce it to a Werewolf that "loves to hit shit." Blood Talons are honor-bound warriors that admire self-control as much as battle prowess. If you're playing a Silver Ladder, get into the role of a true leader. Don't come to the game in t-shirt and jeans—wear a shirt and tie, and be a socialite that is good with people.

Most of all, I recommend reading the source material. Once you've read it, take the time to think about it and really take it to heart. Think of ways your character can become the typical for your type, rather than the exception. This is true for both old and new characters. Look at ways the characters you're playing right now can change, even if just a little bit, to be more inline with the source material. If you are not the type that likes to read the books, get together with people who are. A lot of those people are your Storytellers who happen to love to talk about their games (most of the time).

As your understanding of your chosen type grows, encourage other players to play the stereotypes as well. As players in the Camarilla, it's our job to represent the source material, because if we don't, no one will. ☺

How to Get Mana (Without Risking Paradox)

By Loraine Flegal

After our first official game, I know a lot of you are excited about the new **Mage: The Awakening** venue. I am also certain that many of you are also eager to use several of the awesome spells listed in the Mage book.

However, from re-reading the book and trying to figure out how to cast the spells, I found out one downside to all these cool spellcasting: the Mana costs if the spells cast are not of your Primary Arcana; if you're trying to lessen the dicepool of Paradox; and/or if your spells require that you spend Mana. After playing a few games, I found out that I need lots of Mana.

I scoured the Mage book and tried to find ways to gain Mana without risking Paradox, and all I had to do was turn to pages 77-78 to find my answers:

1. **Perform an oblation at a Hallow.** This will take an hour and a Gnosis + Composure roll. Each success gives you 1 Mana point. However, you can only gain as much Mana as the Hallow's rating.
2. **Scour your own pattern.** You can degrade one of your Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or

Stamina) by one dot for 3 Mana points. The amount of times you can do this per 24 hours depends on your Gnosis: 1-4, only once; 5-6, twice; 7-9, three times; 10, four times. The lost attributes come back in 24 hours.

3. **Scour your own health.** You take one lethal wound of Resistant Damage (meaning you can't heal yourself magically) and gain 3 Mana points. You can do this as many times until you kill yourself. The lethal damage heals normally (if you're still alive!).
4. **Sacrifice a living creature.** Killing a size 2 or larger animal provides 1 Mana point, but you can only do this once per day. Killing a human provides 1 Mana per Health point. However, you can only get a total amount of blood-sacrifice Mana points from humans per day equal to twice your Gnosis dots (an average human has Health 7). Plus, you have to make a Wisdom degeneration roll.

I hope that the information above helps you fellow Mage players out there. I definitely know that I will use it for my own devices. ☺



February 9 - 12, 2006
in San Francisco, CA

That's right, it's once again time for SWRE. San Francisco is proud to host it this year at the Embassy Suites. We'll be running the full gamut of games (all listed below) along with charity events throughout the weekend.

Venues: Requiem, Forsaken, Awakening, Mortals, Changeling

And just like last SWRE, every room is a suite and a hot, cooked to order breakfast is yours free every morning!

So come out and join us Feb 9th - 12th for the Southwest's Regional event, because you have a beautiful home and we'd hate to see anything happen to it.

**EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL
SAN FRANCISCO-AIRPORT**

250 Gateway Boulevard
South San Francisco, CA 94080
Tel: (650) 589-3400 • Fax: (650) 876-0305

**Room Rates : \$89.00
per night Quad occupancy
(800) EMBASSY / (800) 362-2779**

When calling for reservations, please make sure to advise them that you are with : SWRE 2006 / The Camarilla. ☎

<http://camarilla.white-wolf.com/swre/>

"Out of the Shadows"



"...and into the Night"

April 20 - 23, 2006
in Louisville, KY

This year's EClipse will be held at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville, KY. Several games will be held, as listed is below:

Venues: Requiem, Forsaken, Awakening, Mortals, Changeling

The theme for EClipse is "Out of the Shadows—Into the Darkness." Each venue will focus on bringing home to players the inherent nature of the World of Darkness. Evil, from within and without, will threaten players with far worse than simple death. Corruption will not be forced, but will be readily available and even...perhaps...encouraged. At EClipse, the East Central Regional event for 2006, we welcome you to a world not merely dark, but pitch black.

EXECUTIVE WEST HOTEL

830 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209
(502) 367-2251 • 1-800-626-2708
Reservations Only

**Standard Guest Rooms:
\$79.00 + 6% tax**

Suites: \$89.00 + 6% tax

Cut off date for special rates is April 1, 2006. When calling for Reservations, you MUST say that you're with "The Camarilla" to receive the room rates. These rates will be honored 3 days prior to and post the event. ☎

<http://www.ec-region.com/wp-content/eclipse2k6/index.html>

Short Story Column:

Creation

By Rick Backhouse

The storyteller sat on a low stool in the Great Hall, a cup of warmed mead in his hand and a distant look in his old, grey eyes.

He set the cup down and turned his attention to the villagers gathered around him. He had given them the news of the area when he arrived as the sun set and read their letters for them as the village was too small and too poor to have its own scribe. And now...now that the initial bustle after his arrival had settled and he had entertained them with the old stories of the heroes and the ancient gods...he readied himself for his last tale of the night. The tale to send them to bed with.

He coughed lightly and all noise died down as the group listened to him with rapt attention.

"A long time ago," he started, "Before the creation that the new Christians tell us about, the one God created the race that came before man. Their name is lost to the mists of time, but they were a strong and noble race, hard working and fierce and were given not a planet that was seeded with fruitful plants and with beasts at their beck and call, but a harsh, raw planet of fire and ice, bleak desert and frigid tundra."

He gauged his audience quickly. Good, he had their attention. Out here, near the frozen Northern Sea, they could associate with this far more easily than with kings surrounded by treasure and luxuries.

"The God gave them that harsh Earth as their own," he continued, "And said to them 'This is your land. Do with it as you will!' They were alone and naked when the God left them, but they were undaunted by the task laid before them and they worked, using every ounce of their strength and every bit of their cunning to tame the wilderness that surrounded them.

"They built homes with their bare hands at first, rending trees and smashing rocks with their great strength to do so. They fought the wild animals for food, not content with berries and scraps left for scavengers. They used their great minds to invent tools and used their mighty hands to construct them so that they may plough the earth, direct the water to their fields and harness the power of the earth, the wind and, ultimately, of fire. They tamed savage beasts and created vast herds to feed themselves. They farmed the tamed soil to produce fruits of wonderful flavour, the like of which has



never been tasted since. And they built great stone houses and monuments to their accomplishments. Their bodies grew strong and they lived long lives. They lived, then, in great comfort and luxury, but their nobility forbid them to become fat and lazy, and so they joined the efforts of their hands with the efforts of their minds and then they became truly magnificent. They found how to move things with a thought and how to speak to each other without words. They commanded beasts with a glance and all the beasts of the earth, the fish of the sea and the birds of the air bowed to them and were theirs to command.

"And then, after fifty generations, the one God returned to look upon their work and he was proud of them, as a father is proud of his children when they achieve great deeds.

"And the God spoke unto these People and he said 'Look upon me. I am your God that created you and I have looked upon your work and find it pleasing. I gave you this land and the beasts upon it and now I return to you, my People, and await your thanks and offerings for what I bestowed upon you and I shall be your Lord and God hereafter.'

"And the People looked at each other and to their leader, Siath-in, and he stood to face the God. And Siath-in spoke unto the God. 'You ask offering for the labour of our own hands? You, who deserted us in a bleak and barren land wish us to give thanks for it? We have worked mightily and we have made this place our own. We have made the land a place to live and raise families. We have created great art and built great monuments. We have made the beasts do our

bidding, and WE have stiled this earth for ourselves with no help sought from you or, indeed, given by you. And yet you would claim our worship and obeisance? Get gone, creature. We need no haughty God.'

"And a great cry rose from the People and they turned their backs to the God and walked away from him.

"And the God was angered and his anger was mighty. He threw great bolts at the buildings of the People, but they were too well built to be shaken. A swarm of locusts descended upon the People's fields, but they commanded the insects to leave, which they did. A plague of boils attacked the People, but their bodies had grown too strong to succumb to them. The God then commanded the blood of the People to turn to water, but the blood was strong and it did not obey.

"And the People turned once more to look at the God and they laughed at him. And Siath-in spoke to the God once more. 'We will have no more of your tantrums. You have no power over us, so leave.'

"And a fury arose in the God as he had never felt before and His voice thundered. 'It is as you say. I have no power over you or over the things that you have created, but I do have power over other things. You have tamed the elements, but I have power over the sun, whose light grows the fruit and grains that you eat. I have power over the beasts, because they come from the beasts that I created when I made this land. From this day forward, the sun shall not shine upon you, and the fruits and grains that grow in its light shall wither and die. The meat of the beasts that I created shall be as poison to you and you shall not be able to abide it. I cast you from my sight and shall see you no more upon my land.'

"As the God left, a great cloud passed across the sun, blocking its light and warmth from the land.

"Siath-in arose and spoke to his kinsmen. 'This is of no matter, my friends. His words are meaningless. The sun shall return and we have stores enough to abide the wait.'

"With that he took a hunk of dried meat from his purse and chewed on it. As he did so, his body rebelled as if taken by poison and he spat the meat out.

"And there was a great hush amongst the People. And then they clamoured and called upon the God in repentance, but he could not hear them as they had been cast away from him.

"The sun stayed hidden and the stores of fruits and grains dwindled. In their desperation, the People attacked each other to try to feast upon the flesh of their own, but they, too, had come from creatures that the God had made and their hunger remained although their trust in each other had been destroyed.

"Some, in their desperation, hunted the beasts which now shunned them and, although their bodies would not hold the meat, a little of the blood from the

animals trickled down their throats and they found sustenance and enduring life there, for it was in the blood that the God had planted the seeds of life.

"Over the ages to come, many of the People died, succumbing to thirst and hunger, but a small few survived and saw the day that the God returned and amongst those few was Siath-in.

"When the God returned, he looked for signs of the People, but could find none and so he tore down their buildings and their monuments and then allowed the sun to shine once more upon the land.

We shall use Man as our food, and we shall tempt and guide them and use them as our herds and to do our bidding during daylight. And the God, because of his own curse, shall not see us subvert his new race from the shadows of the night.

"And the God reclaimed the earth, fire, wind and sea as his own and great trees grew upon the land. And he called the beasts that were hidden in the caves and allowed them to bask in the sun as they accepted his dominance over them. But the People could not abide the light and heat of the sun, having lived so long without it, and they could not partake of the fruit of the newly grown trees as their bodies had accustomed themselves to the blood of beasts.

"And God created a new race. They bore the semblance of the People, but were weak in both flesh and mind. And God did this to keep the new race humble and ever in need of his aid. And he gave the new race the tamed land, abundant with trees that bore fruit and fields of grains. And he gave the new race command over the beasts, so that they would have meat to feast upon and help in carrying the burdens that their frail bodies could not bear. But they were given only a short time to live, so that they could not grow strong and rebel against Him. And he called this new race Man.

"And the People saw this parody of themselves and were greatly angered, but God's curse prevented strong vengeance.

"And so Siath-in spoke unto them. 'This God has given the earth that we tamed to Man because he thinks us defeated. But we are not. We shall use Man as our food, and we shall tempt and guide them and use them as our herds and to do our bidding during daylight. And the God, because of his own curse, shall not see us subvert

his new race from the shadows of the night.'

"And since that day, they have endured, living the long lives that are given to them when they drink the blood of Man. And it is said that they can make a Man one of them if they infuse him with their own blood, because Man is a semblance of those first People. But still they cannot stand the sun and must dwell in the night. And still they cannot abide the meat of beasts and their bodies cannot use fruits and grains to sustain them in their immortality.

"The name of the first People is still lost in the mists of time, but Man knows of them and has many names for them. Here, in frozen North-lands, they are known as Vampire. And they wait for all of you. Deep in the shadows of the night."

The villagers stayed silent for a few moments as the old storyteller finished his tale and arose, walking to

the door of the Great Hall. The village chieftan, Jergen, followed him and stood by him as he stood in the falling snow and stared out into the night.

The approving noises of the audience inside told the storyteller that he had told his tale well, and Jergen confirmed it with his words. "By the Gods, old man, that was a tale to keep a man awake at night. It's a good job that my men have ale enough in them to help them sleep, eh?" he laughed with a firm slap to the old man's back.

The chieftan went on, "Well, you've earned your supper tonight, and breakfast in the morning with a few coins to see you on your way, too."

The old man looked at Jergen and smiled. "I think that supper for me and my children will be enough. They are on their way."

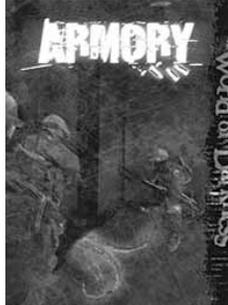
And the moonlight glinted off of Siath-in's fangs as they sank into the chieftan's throat. ☹



the World of Darkness

PRODUCT NEWS

The following information can be found at:
<http://secure1.white-wolf.com/catalog/upcoming.php>

			
Bloodlines: The Legendary <i>(Vampire: The Requiem)</i> 01/16/2006	Legacies: The Sublime <i>(Mage: The Awakening)</i> 01/16/2006	Blasphemies <i>(Werewolf: The Forsaken)</i> 01/30/2006	World of Darkness: Armory <i>(Vampire, Werewolf, & Mage)</i> 01/30/2006

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

If you want to contribute to the *Undercurrents* newsletter, please email your photographs, stories, jokes, and anything else you want to see in the newsletter, to drs_newsletter@yahoo.com.

If you are submitting images, the following formats are acceptable: JPEG, TIFF, EPS, PICT, bitmap. Please do not send anything bigger than 2MB through email. If your file does exceed 2MB, please burn it onto a CD and give it to either Loraine Flegal or Sam Flegal. ☹

February/CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 7:00 pm Mage Game
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 7:00 pm Domain Council Meeting	16	17 7:00 pm Non-Court Requiem Game	18 7:00 pm Forsaken Game
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 7:00 pm Court Requiem Game
26	27	28				

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