The Hidden Parlor
NST Elections - September 2017
Candidate Q&A: Joe Carron

Question 1:

Is there anything in your life, or anything you feel might crop up in your life, that would cause you to be forced to step down from this position, if elected? Have you ever ended a term as an officer of any org prior to the end of your term? Please give details.

Answer 1:

While I certainly cannot predict the future, I do not foresee anything impacted my ability to finish my term. Most of my kids are grown and out of the house, I like where I live, and I love my job. I live a pretty drama free life, and I work to keep it that way.

I do not recall ever living an office early. I did step down as BoD member here in the Hidden Parlor, but I also joined before we had term limits, and gave about 2 years of effort to the club as a member of the BoD.

Question 2:

What do you feel is the best way to introduce a national plot to a Chapter? Rumors disseminated to people you know will spread them? NPC hard-proxied to a Chapter's game? Noticeable things just happening in a Chapter, as implemented by the local CST? Do you have other ideas that you can elucidate?

Answer 2:

In my opinion the best way to introduce a National Plot to a chapter, is to send a completed plotkit to the CST (Venue Storytellers as needed) and work with them, to see how it can be best introduced. CST's and VST's are going to have the best insight on how to work with their players, and will know the best ways to get their players involved, and will be able to provide the needed tweaks for plotkits, so they work for their Chapters.

Question 3:

In your own words, from the perspective of NST and your approach to your role, "what is a vampire"?

Answer 3:

From my perspective as both a player and a storyteller, a vampire is opportunity. Mechanics, mythology, and canon aside, a vampire represent the chance for a player to explore characteristics, ideals, personality traits, and socio-political interactions in a unique environment that allows for space between fantasy and reality. A vampire is vehicle to experience feelings, thought processes and stories that can provide an opportunity for personal growth for both player and storyteller, through both the slow fall to the beast, and the constant fight to maintain humanity, and much, much more.

Question 4:

In your opinion - regardless of what is decided upon by the Board for our review and vote - should VIP ever be spent on mechanical advantages? If so, to what degree? Why or why not?

Answer 4:

I absolutely support the use of spending VIP for mechanical advantages. As one of the creators of the Volunteer Incentive Program, I am admittedly very bias. I would like to see the program used to provide extra xp, npc teachers, lores and such. In my application for NST, I actually outlined a couple of uses for VP to XP, depending on chronicle length. I have been in several clubs, that have relied on volunteering to run, and used volunteering as a means to give back to their local communities, and it has been shown time and time again, if you give people some kind of In Game bonus (ie mechanical advantage), they will volunteer more, and we will have more people willing to volunteer. The reason I designed our system to have "spendable points", instead of a class system that provided benefits into perpetuity, is I wanted to keep players engages in the volunteer system. I believe in the system and would love to see it used more widely and in more ways.

Question 5:

To what degree do you intend to drive plot into local Chapters? How voluntary will your plots be, so far as a CSTs ability to choose to run them?

Answer 5:

Myself and my team intend to provide a setting and metaplot for the chronicle, as well as have various plotkits ST's can run if they choose. However, there will be some plotkits to move our chronicles story forward that will be required. Some things that happen in our version of the World of Darkness will be far reaching, and impact everyone. However, since it is also my intention to be constantly working with the CST's and VST's closely to advance our chronicle, nothing should come as a surprise, and everything should be done with their input anyway.

Question 6:

How should a chronicle end? Bang? Big Bang? Epic Bang? or Whimper? Explain.

Answer 6:

I personally love epic stories. But if I am around for a chronicle end, I would like to work with each Chapter to provide an ending appropriate to their local stories. Not everyone story needs to end in a "Year of Fire".

Question 7:

Many LARPs struggle either with recruiting new storytellers or retaining storytellers. Do you perceive this as an issue within The Hidden Parlor, and if so, how would you plan on addressing this issue as NST? Please walk us through what your steps would be at 3, 6, and 12-months out.

Answer 7:

I have been worried about retaining ST's and such. Which is one of the main reasons I asked Jessica Karel's to join my team, to focus on education and problem resolution, for both ST's and players. We want to continue to build on the Hidden Parlor's inclusive culture, and to provide ST's with the tools they need to have a constructive and fun experience within our club.   Jessica's first documents focused on these things, will be available in November, and from there, we will use club feedback to continue to adjust our approach to achieve our goals.

Question 8:

How do you see the National Storyteller office working alongside the National Administrator's office in order to foster a healthier gaming community?

Answer 8:

The importance of all the National Staff working together cannot be over-stated.   By providing a consistent message regarding an inclusive culture, by working seamlessly and transparently together to solve issues that may arise, and to have an open door policy with the membership, the National Staff instill confidence in the membership, and set the example of full cooperation.

Question 9:

The World of Darkness utilizes a setting where there are extreme power dynamics (rich vs poor, influential vs powerless), and where player-characters and non-player characters are encouraged to act amorally for survival or in order to gain power. Given the American parlor LARP play-style (ongoing chronicle + competitive) and contemporary environment, this can lead to minority players feeling alienated as there's such a strong connection between the fantasy world and their real-life experiences. Do you feel that this is an issue that game runners should concern themselves with, and if so, what steps should they take to assist such players?

Answer 9:

Our club should absolutely be concerned with the enhancing a culture of inclusivity within our clubs, and this goes doubly so for our club's leaders, on both the Storyteller and Admin's side.   Becoming educated in the struggles minorities face in real-life is a great beginning, and reaching out to such players, making certain the feel included, as well as be quick to help educate other players to be mindful of their action.

Question 10:

How well do you know non-Camarilla genres as described by BNS? How true do you intend to be in portraying/developing those other Settings? Have you ever ST'd any of these other Settings in BNS?

Answer 10:

I am as Assistant ST for Garou with my local chapter as well as served as the ANST Garou, under the previous ST, so I am knowledgeable in that arena. I am also very familiar with Sabbat, and the Independent Alliance. Of the Venues, Anarch is my weakest, but I am also confident I could run a Anarch game, with minimal time to prepare. That being said, I also have a very strong ANST chosen in Kate Kay, whose knowledge and experience will fill in any gaps I may have.

On a side note, I have also begun studying the new Changeling: The Dreaming Alpha Slice and will be taking part in our chapters local test games.

Question 11:

In your own words, how would you explain the difference between being a storyteller in a troupe game and being a storyteller in a networked game? Target audience - an individual planning on either being a storyteller of a Chapter within our network or someone planning on having their game apply to become a Chapter of The Hidden Parlor.\

Answer 11:

In a networked game you are sharing responsibilities with other storytellers, and you are often creating story, for players you don't get to interact with face to face. In a troupe game, the lead ST has total control over mechanics, rules call's, direction of the setting, and so much more. In a networked game, you are giving up some of that control, but in return you are gaining a richer, deeper, and hopefully more immersive chronicle. You are also gaining the challenge of marrying your ideas, and your players desires, with ideas and desires of other's, possibly around the world. While this adds a level of complexity, and it also means you have more tools at your disposal, people to turn to when if you hit a block, and a larger stage for you and your players to shine on.

Question 12:

Storytelling style is everything. Would you consider yourself more of a "sandbox" ST, or more of an "enclosed box" ST? Have you ever been criticized for railroading plots?

Answer 12:

I am an ST who plans things out, tries to be proactive, but also tries to be quick on my feet, ready to react to the player's actions, to provide an interesting and challenging story for the players to immerse themselves in. I do stick to canon, so in that way, I am probably an "enclosed box" ST. However, my hope is to lead the club into creating new stories, and making our own world, within the Setting provided by BNS and White Wolf.

Question 13:

How do you perceive your reputation in Hidden Parlor? How important do you feel reputation is in a National Storyteller?

Answer 13:

My focus is on doing the best I can for the club, in all things I do. I am not trying to build a reputation, or a legacy, or any such thing. I am trying to help build a club that is welcoming, inclusive, and fun for its members.

Question 14:

Rank the following responsibilities of NST in order of importance, as you see it:

- o Plot writing - creating plots on a national level for introduction to the various Chapters.
- o Rules Clarification - making org-wide rulings to clarify gray areas in the rules.
- o System Management - Establishing and maintaining systems and policies that enhance the RP experience on a national level.
- o Accessibility - being accessible to the membership for questions, concerns, and brainstorming.
- o Neutrality - actively working to avoid conflicts of interest, cronyism, and biases in yourself and your staff.

Answer 14:

Division of Responsibility - ensuring that you and your staff remain focused on your own duties, and avoiding interfering in the responsibilities of the NA, MAs, CSTs, CAs, and BoD.

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This was very difficult, and it would be very easy to change the order of all of these, because everything here is very important, and need to all be done simultaneously.