

For those who bloody suck at quitting

Christopher Taylor
Arts & Culture Editor

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to not be a predator anymore? To not drink anyone's blood? Have centuries of habit gotten you to a point where you can't stand looking in the mirror? Look no further; your salvation is at hand. V.A. — Vampires Anonymous — meetings have officially found a home on campus. Your path to rehab starts now.

"I founded this group with the intention of helping others overcome the issues I've experienced after 1,000 years of being a creature of not only the night, but of habit," said group founder and Senior Chairman Carlyle

VanderGlide. "I couldn't stand who — no, what — I'd become, and it was time to change for the better. Murder takes its toll on your soul."

The core function of the group is to help other vampires overcome their habitual dietary needs and substitute them with a healthy alternative, while providing a mutual support group to help them through the rough transitions and hold them accountable.

"I had decided enough was enough. I'd gotten to the point where I had forsaken even the bonds of family and literally drained my cousin at our family reunion," said Samuel Fredrickson, group veteran and success story. "Talk about a serious fiasco amongst my family."

Fredrickson joined the group right after these events and has

been clean for the past two years. But the path hasn't been easy. There were tense moments, illness from withdrawals and close calls with relapses.

"There were times where I went through serious withdrawals and once or twice came close to sinking my teeth into a fresh, pulsing neck. But then I remembered that I made an oath to abstain, and I had good friends to hold me accountable," said Fredrickson. "It's the best feeling in the world to know there are those to support you."

Unfortunately, not all members are as strong or as far along as Fredrickson. For instance, new group member Scarlett-Rose Wilder has only been in the program for two weeks and has been feeling the effects to the point of where she declined an in person interview, so as to avoid tempta-

I've been blood free for 1, ah, ah, ah, 2, ah, ah, ah, 3 years.

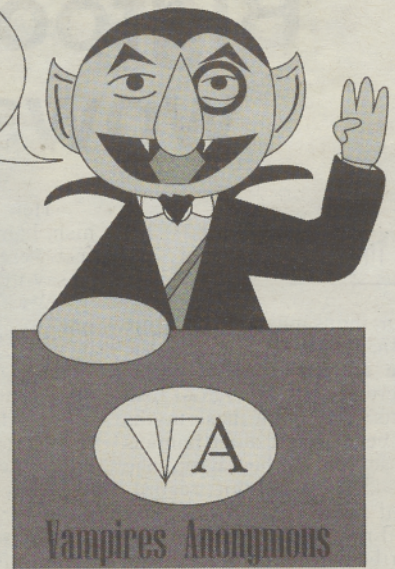


Illustration by Brian Steele The Clackamas Print

tion. "My thirst has set my insides on fire," stated Wilder in an email. "But after I killed my seventh husband due to my unquenchable thirst, I decided I'd had enough and need to change if I ever want to be happy for the rest of eternity."

Indeed, many vampires have endured countless trials and more than their fair share of sorrows. They've had no way to end it other than finding the nearest hunter and begging or prompting them to end their suffering.

"These are not desirable outcomes," said VanderGilde. "Our goal is to assess the situation, formulate a plan to help you achieve your goals, and then help you

stick to them." So if you are a vampire on the run, in hiding and are in need of rehab, you are cordially invited attend the once a week meetings in McLoughlin Hall at the moon's peak. Bring your friends, bring some food and enjoy the company of your fellow addicts. Please don't bring your mortal friends, or they may become the entree.

Ex-vampire ministry courts controversy

Chris Morrow
The Clackamas Print

Pastor Simon Garfunkle Belmont, 46, is the executive director of the "Whip The Vamp Out" Ministry and Retreat, located in Oregon City. He is a member of the Brotherhood of Light church and proclaims that with "the power of religion," the undead can fight their bloodlust, rid themselves of all vampiric tendencies and eventually "become normal, functional members of society."

"Vampires aren't born, they're persuaded or forced into that unlife-style by other vampires. With the right motivation they can change just like any drug addict," said Belmont. "Their so-called 'need' for blood to continue their unholy

unlives is completely all in their heads. I'm just doing my part as a holy man to bring them back to the light and the truth, any way that I can."

Alucard Tepes, who is 1,632 years old, was enrolled in the facility by his adoptive parents after a fellow member of his youth group accused him of trying to 'glamour' him. Tepes describes the activities that routinely take place during the retreats.

"At five in the morning they drag us out into the gymnasium under bright lights, like the kind at baseball fields, then the staff pull out Bibles on ropes, whirling them around in circles like an aboriginal bull-roarer and hitting as many of us as they can with them," said Tepes.

"Then come the 'trust' exercises. They stand us in front of a

living person and press our faces against their necks, deliberately trying to entice us to bite, then those fangteasers pull us away and start flogging us with their whips until we cry bloody tears, or pour bottles of holy water out onto our heads!" He said. "It sucks here, I want to go home and watch True Blood."

Joachim Armster, who is rumored to be more than 2,000 years old, is one of many ancient as well as newly turned vampires attending the retreat willingly. He has hopes of making a genuine transition to a more socially acceptable existence.

"I am tired of being treated like a monster. Whatever it takes to become human again, I will do it," said Armster. "I don't mind doing what Simon says. I miss my friends and family and I want to be able to

see them again and be with them the way I could before, before they found out what I am."

Several ex-participants in "Whip The Vamp Out" have come forth with allegations that Belmont and other members of his staff are guilty of improper conduct.

"Mr. Belmont asked that I come to his office, alone. When I got there, he locked the door, pulled down his clerical collar and asked me if I wanted 'a taste,' when I said that I did not, he called me a liar and threw a dagger that was on his desk at me then told me to get out," said a source who wishes to remain anonymous.

Belmont vehemently denies the allegations.

"I'm a man of purity and chastity, a good-hearted man who is being vilified for telling the truth and trying to help these tortured souls change," he said. "I'm not surprised there are those who are angry about it, and would try to slander me."

This isn't the first time controversy has befallen Belmont. Elizabeth Bartley, a 1,423 year old vampire, who attended the retreat last summer, was stabbed through the heart with a wooden stake by John Morris, a member of Belmont's staff and a personal associate.

Bartley's adoptive mother, Hazel Bartley, has begun legal proceedings to file a wrongful death suit against Belmont and his staff. She explained through a cascade of tears what her daughter had gone through.

"I wanted to help Eliza, not have her murdered," said Bartley. "This so-called holy man trains murderers and sadists. They killed my Eliza like she was nothing more than an enemy character in a damn video game!"

Bartley has started a support group for Parents of Vampires and is attempting to push for legislation that would require organizations such as Whip The Vamp Out to have security cameras that would monitor activity by staff and participants alike, something Belmont is vehemently against—referring to it as an "invasion of privacy" and a "conspiracy by the vampire sympathizers."

"Why does the government need to know what goes on in my buildings? This is all the fault of President Osama Tezuka or whatever his blasted name is! Ever since he started talking about giving protections to vampires and making laws against 'hate speech,' people like me have been having a harder and harder time, it's getting to be so a guy can't even perform an exorcism anymore!" said Belmont.

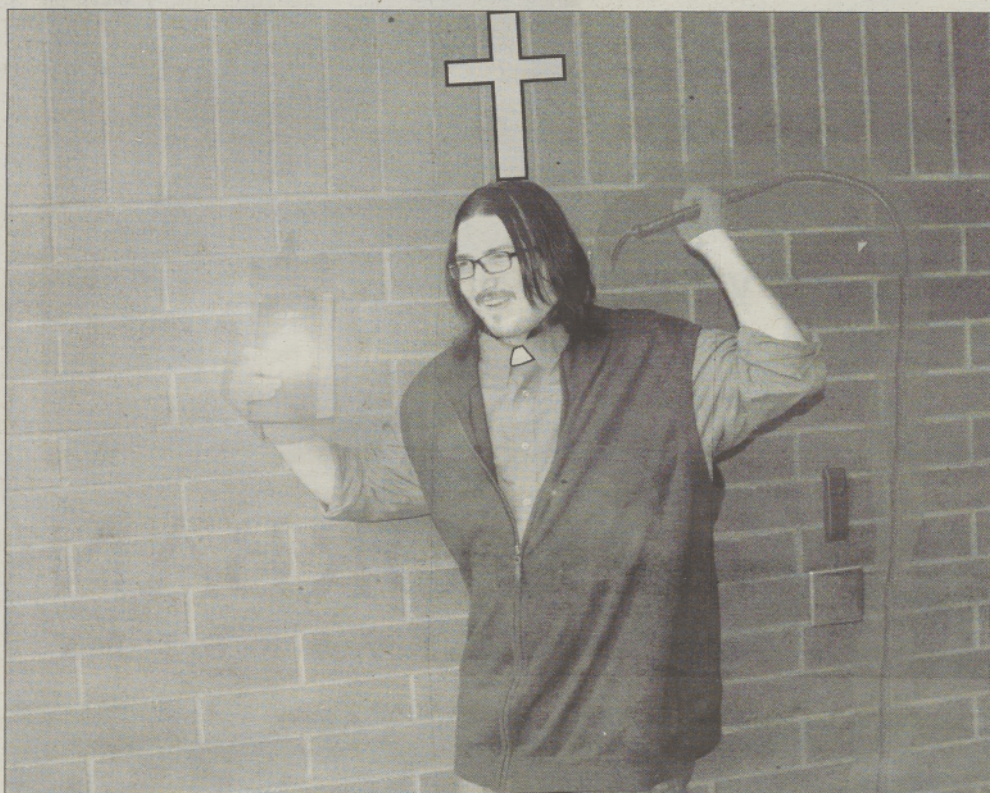


Photo illustration by Brian Steele The Clackamas Print

Executive director of the "Whip the Vamp Out" Ministry and Retreat, Pastor Simon Garfunkle Belmont delivers a fiery sermon. He works hard to change his audience's very nature in the hopes of releasing normal human citizens from their demented vampiric souls.

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