

October 8, 2022

Dear Lothlorien Membership,

This may be premature, as this is prior to our meeting tomorrow, but the pain brought on by the latest grievances is worth a response. I am wholly responsible for the mishandling of the situation with Eva. The knowledge many on the land had about who and why CPS was called floated around unanswered and I saw that as a detriment to the health of her people. Not addressing it seemed to be a gross negligence on the part of council. That was not for me to decide, but was in sincerity that I thought it important to discuss.

I asked Jef to talk to Eva about it beginning in June, and hoped to discuss it during the July meeting. When Jef said he had not yet spoken with her, then I did not present it to council. Then, as the August meeting was approaching, I reached out again to Jef, who said he hadn't spoken with her. I told him if he was not comfortable, then let me know and someone else should. He was fine talking to her about it, but he thought it best to wait until after festival. I was glad he was still willing to be the one, because I thought he would be a good person to have that personal dialogue. The meeting was getting closer and felt that we would never address it and it would just be let go. Again, I pushed Jef to let her know we were going to discuss it. He finally did and was on the Friday prior to the meeting. He told me that she said she would have to be dragged kicking before she would come before council. I took that as a sign that she would never come before council to address the rumors from several people having heard her say she called and that she was laughing and bragging about it. I placed it on the agenda and sent it to council.

No, I did not follow the grievance policy. After years dealing with covid life, I guess I forgot all processes and honestly gave no thought to filing officially, nor had anyone ever suggested I do. A few did ask to wait until another time, but again, I felt that it would never be addressed. Just as many things remain, festering. I knew there would never be a "good" time to address it, but there is certainly a worse time to do it and a worse way to handle it. I assure you I have been thoroughly punished for it by very hurtful words and hard truths. Moreso is the suffering of council members at my expense. They do not deserve the ire. These council members voted (yes, it was premature) in earnest as to what they knew went down, even not having all documented info, there was plenty of talk from those having witnessed the behavior. I still think it is indefensible and hiding behind obligation was still not convincing of the retribution inflicted on that family. Having CPS called on you, and cleared of accusation (of course), is NO badge of honor!

Then, after the meeting, watching my elvin kin get gut punched with scathing texts because of her sister's actions, which she too has talked about, was shocking and painful. To hear it be said that "All of council was dead to her" was very specifically directed at council members. Then she ran for VP!? I did not file that grievance, but totally understood why. In all my years, the ubiquitous touting of how many people have been abused as a council member, and how people keep running others off, and here we are addressing those very things, but we didn't do it right, so it no longer matters.

I have ruined Lothlorien for many people over this, and I am physically and mentally ill for it, as are they. Most of this has been done under the righteousness of the lawyer. The accusations and assumptions have led to serious misinformation and misrepresentation, as if even representation was possible, as some members aren't even on the FB pages, or that the bile being spewed is anything anyone wants to read. I had to step away. So, it's been a free for all to character assassination, and quite cruelly so.

The derogatory comments are often by people who don't even come anymore, or are seriously lacking in current awareness and participation. The lawyer did not leave council with much favoritism of her own doing. I did still though. I did appreciate and respect the work of the lawyer and her time there, and even considered her my friend. Over the years, the continual bashing of Lothlorien, the people, the insults and condescending attitude changed that feeling. Her behavior was no longer respectable. She has opened the portal for you all to engage your feelings in a negative way. I'm sure there are valid points there, but too hard to see through the hate.

Next year is Lothlorien's 40th anniversary! It will be my 30th. I have been driving down to camp about every month as the moderator for the meetings around 18 years now. I am staff and do not have a vote, which helped me maintain neutrality. I am sorry that I lost that. My motto of fairness and consistency took a hit. It was done so with Lothlorien and her people in mind, no act of revenge or pettiness was a thing I hoped to achieve. I'm not sure how to proceed, but know that what I'm doing should still be meaningful. What I have been doing that is actionable is looking for a group therapist willing to take on our madness. I have reached out to some members for recommendations and cost, etc, with the hopes of bringing it to council as a step toward resolutions and healing. The search is ongoing at this point, as I'm sure this line of work is quite busy. I do not see the lawyer as a neutral moderator for such things.

I cannot defend each person's participation in my push to address what I thought was in serious need of discussion, but they are getting the brunt of my errors. That is unfair. We did not pursue these things legally, but as a community issue. We are not a court of law, but need to do things legally. Council does not have CPAs, Attorneys, or Psychiatrists, nor are we required to have, but the current council has done a wonderful job, with a sincere love for the land, doing what so few are willing to do. So, I'll go off again, drive an hour and a half, and take my lashings. As much as people may feel I have been in denial about toxicity, the fact is that I am an optimist. Always hoping things will get better, and we will be able to move forward and become more productive and happier for it. I'm a sucker like that.

Janie Van Buskirk
Elvin H.O.M.E., Inc. Staff-Moderator