Contents

- 1 GML Survival Guide
- 2 Acknowledgements
- 3 Overview
- 4 Duties
  - 4.1 What You?ll Need
  - 4.2 First Contact
  - 4.3 The Database
  - 4.4 The E-mail
  - 4.5 The Response (or lack thereof)
  - 4.6 The Pictures
  - 4.7 The Approval
- 5 The Census
  - 5.1 Preemptive Work
  - 5.2 The Survey Begins
  - 5.3 The Aftermath
- 6 Other Duties
  - 6.1 Update Your Command Staff
  - 6.2 Update Member Info
  - 6.3 Working on the CRL or Other Projects
- 7 Brief MemberDB Guide
  - 7.1 Legion Information
  - 7.2 For new applicants:
  - 7.3 Existing Members
    - 7.3.1 Member Status
    - 7.3.2 Personal Information
    - 7.3.3 Your Approved 501st Costumes
    - 7.3.4 Your Unit Affiliation
    - 7.3.5 501st Legion Census
    - 7.3.6 Notes

GML Survival Guide

Acknowledgements

The basic guide was originally written by Rhonda Brown, TB/BH-1165, 70th Explorers Garrison, in 2006 and is contained in the GML tutorial located under the Membership DB section of the 501st Legion Forum. Additional content, e-mail templates and commentary by Jed McBride, TB-3389, Georgia Garrison and Jason Rucci, TC/CT/CC/AR/TD/DZ/RG ? 8581, Florida Garrison.

Overview

A Garrison?s GML, or Garrison Membership Liaison, is meant to be the go-to individual for any and all issues regarding membership and costumes. Given that the whole of the Legion consists of ?members? means you?ll be in charge of a pretty wide ranging series of duties for your Garrison. This workload can, at times seem daunting. It will most certainly be aggravating. It can also be quite rewarding.

Duties

Your duties in no particular order will be:

? Approving the costumes of new members and new costumes for established members. Some costumes are under the jurisdiction of the LMO soley. Note that EU characters, New to the legion Characters and Sith Lord approvals generally fall under the approval of the LMO. Most other costumes are through the GML?s.

? Updating and maintaining contact information for your Garrison?s membership.

? Administering the annual Legion Census to your members.

? Determining the active/inactive status of your members.

? Working with the Legion to update and maintain the Costume Reference Library (CRL).

? Working with your Garrison Web Liaison to upload member images to the Legion site.

? Working with your Garrison Webmaster to grant local forum permissions to new members.

What You?ll Need

To accomplish this arduous task, you?ll need a few things:

- The Member DB interface (formerly DAMIT) This will allow you to access all the members in your group and incoming members
- An e-mail account with automated archiving. I recommend you create a new G-Mail account specific to your GML duties.
- Forum accounts on each of the detachment boards and any other costuming boards that commonly advise on our costumes. The passport system on most sites will cut down on your sign up time
- Patience. This one is the hard part.

TIP: Get that new e-mail address to forward to an account you use regularly so you don?t forget to check it. You do need to be sure you don?t accidentally send from the account you forward to! I recommend G-Mail because it allows you to connect multiple accounts and send from whichever through use of a drop down menu. This is invaluable? If you remember to change the sending account. Trust me, you?ll mess up sometimes. Don?t worry things happen an we can move on.

First Contact

We?ll begin with your most common responsibility: new member approvals. 9 times out of 10, the first contact you?ll have with a new member is when the automated membership system sends you an e-mail about the new member. It will generally send out two: one specific to you to give you the member?s details, and one to the member (with you being carbon copied) to let them know you?ll be in contact with them.

The Database

So it begins. How exciting! The first thing you?ll want to do is log into your membership console. All members have access, but you should by now have the extended edition. It?ll look something like this:

You see there may be Pending Applicants. Your new applicant will be listed amongst these. Find his or her e-mail address, copy it, and use it to send off a template e-mail to them. Once you have done so, edit their listing by clicking their name.

Now click Edit under the Legion Information tab, and switch them to ?Pending App: Contacted by GML?. Obviously, this lets you know (and other database administrators) who has been contacted. At the bottom of a member?s page you?ll also see a notes section. I advise putting a note in showing what day you contacted them first.

NOTE: After you make a change in any section, don?t forget to hit Save where the edit button was previously!

The E-mail

Now it?s time to drop them a line and let them know what the procedure will be like. Some applicants will know what this process entails, but it?s best to give them a rundown anyway. Use the template below. You?ll want to update it with your own info, and SAVE IT so that you have it handy all the time.

The template is a little wordy, so if you feel the need to chop it down to fit you and your Garrison more, please do so.

The main points to hit are:

- Legion requirements: 18 and over, and high quality costumes.
- Get them to join the garrison forums (you?ll learn to love people who do ahead of time).
- We need those ID pictures.
- If the costume isn?t adequate, no worries, we?ll advise as we can.
- It may take some time for approval. Once that?s sent, you?re waiting for a reply.

The Response (or lack thereof)

I separate this from the next section because it needs to be noted. You won?t always receive a reply right away from an applicant. In fact, in my experience, you?ll have about 25% from whom you?ll never hear another peep. Another 25% or so won?t have a costume, and will say they filled out the application thinking either that they should do that before getting a costume, or that they thought we were affiliated with L.F.L. and would be supplying them a costume (I secretly suspect that those you never hear from again thought that we?d just assign them a costume? incidentally almost all, for some reason, seem to choose a Sith Lord).

If you don?t receive any response within, say, two weeks, contact them again. I don?t have a template for this. You don?t need anything fancy, just a short reminder that we received their application and are still waiting. It?s entirely possible that the first e-mail is stuck in a spam trap, so you might want to point that out.

Note again in the MemberDB that you?ve attempted to contact them. After three attempts with no reply, change their status from ?Contacted by GML? to ?Delete.? At that point you?re not likely to hear from them, and if they really want to join they can re-apply.

If they don?t have a costume, cheerfully point them either to the detachment board based on the costume they specified they want, or to the Legion page listing the Detachments. You?ll also want to pimp your local Garrison boards again. A trooper who joins your Garrison boards before applying will become your absolute favorite kind: you know them, they?ll often post pictures of works in progress for advice, and very, very rarely have any major problems with the costume. After sending them to the detachment though, edit them in the MemberDB to mark their status as ?Delete: No Costume.?

The Pictures

If all goes well you will, within a few days of sending out the template, get back a series of images of your new member in costume. In most cases here the approval will be all up to you. Look at them closely and determine if there are any major flaws with it.

If you?re unfamiliar with a costume, this is what those memberships to the Detachment forums were for. Most will have listings somewhere of what they expect to see, and examples. Look for threads about the CRL as well, as those will typically have what you?re looking for.

Speaking of the CRL, the listings for some costumes are already available on the GML forums on the Legion boards. It will be incredibly useful once those are complete, but at the time of writing this document, they?re not.

In the GML forum there will also be a general advice thread. Here, GML?s will work together on costumes they may not be familiar with. This will be very useful to you if you?re having difficulties identifying problems.

NOTE: It?s important to remember to SAVE THESE PICTURES. Later on you?ll be forwarding them to your GWL to get them ready for the Legion members site. This is part of why I recommended a standalone G-Mail account for this job. Instant archive, and not cluttered up with other e-mail. If your applicant?s costume isn?t up to snuff, reply and let them know. Be kind, of course, but point out the specific concerns you have and how they could improve them. Point them to the detachment board again if need be. There are a few things to remember if they start arguing:

- Existing members in the member pages cannot be used as a resource for new members. Many old costumes are no longer up to our standards.
- Your applicant may argue that they?ve worked long and hard on their costume. This doesn?t matter: if it?s not up to our standards, that?s that. We have high standards for a reason.
- When in doubt, contact your GCO and or the LMO. They may need to step in, especially if an applicant is getting unruly or even threatening. In the case of the latter they may end up blacklisted.

The Approval

If all is well and you?re ready to approve the new member, log into the MemberDB and set their status to ?Ready for Duty.? You?ll also need to approve their costume specifically. You?ll find two headings underneath their personal information for ?Your 501st Approved Costumes? and ?Your Unit Affiliation.? In the first, it will have a link to approve the costume they submitted. Just click approve for that. In the latter it will have a similar approve button assigning them to a Detachment.

Once you approve that, the DL will need to approve them. Don?t forget to save! Every night around 9 p.m. EST the DB will run a job to process all member changes. It will process your new member, spit out a Legion ID for them, and shoot out e-mail to you and the new member letting them know all is approved. Yay! At this point I?ll typically follow up with another template.

From here you?ll want to post a welcome thread in your members? area of the Garrison forums, as applicable. You may also need to alert your Forum administrators to give them access to the members? area (if they joined the forums). Send the pictures on to your GWL for their processing part of the whole deal, and you?re done!

The Census

Chances are good you?ve participated in the Census before. Nowadays the census is all web based, which will save you a lot of headache. Each GML is responsible for getting as much of their membership as possible to respond.

Why go to all this trouble?

? It?s an easy way to gauge what members are active or inactive.

? It serves as an annual reminder to inactive members that they were part of this whole thing once upon a time.

? It reminds members to update their contact info now and then.

? Sometimes it?s just good to hear from everyone.

The Census occurs every year in October. Around mid-September, you?ll want to start preparing.

Preemptive Work

You?re going to have to contact all sorts of people for this, and there are a couple of easy ways to go about it. One is just a general forum announcement, which you?ll need to work out with your forum administrators. That one will usually be easy. The one that will require some work is the blast e-mail you?ll send.

Go into the MemberDB and begin collecting e-mail addresses. If you don?t have many members, you can just copy and paste them out into a text file. If you have more than 30 or so, I recommend doing a copy and paste into an Excel spreadsheet. It should sort them out into convenient columns for you, and from there you can highlight just the e-mail row and copy it out. This will also get members with multiple e-mail so you have the best chance of getting them all. Save this out to another text document and keep it handy.

NOTE: You don?t need, or want, to send this out to members who are inactive, retired, pending, or discharged. Deployed members, in the database, are out on real military deployment and may not be available to reply. I personally recommend e-mailing them separately to let them know it?s going on, but remind them that for them it?s not critical.

Staying alive and doing their duty is vastly more important than some stupid survey. If they do have a few to answer it, however, then that?s fine.

The Survey Begins

Post that forum announcement! Members will go to the same link you do to access the MemberDB to add in their information. Remind them in that forum post to update their contact information while they?re there, and tell them to send any questions your way. Remember: members who do not respond will not automatically be discharged, but it WILL make them look pretty inactive, and be sure to point out that your inactivating trigger finger is itchy.

Regarding the e-mail: All you do is send out an e-mail to that whole list. Remind them in the e-mail to fill out the census, to update their private information, and be sure to add in the link to the Garrison forums for any that conveniently forgot.

The first thing to do from here is to begin collecting e-mail addresses that bounce. Every mail bounce you get you can look up in MemberDB, and you can remove e-mail addresses from those users. Be sure to add a note that you did so for future reference. If they had more than one e-mail, hopefully the other will have gone through. If they now have no e-mail addresses listed, gather up the names and privately offer them to your GCO. He or she may have other contact info for these members.

From here I recommend sending out a weekly reminder e-mail, but ONLY to those members who haven?t filled out the Census yet. You?ll be easily able to determine who has and hasn?t from the MemberDB page. Under the MemberDB you can also find Census statistics showing what Garrisons have the highest percentage of participation. Remind folks in your Forum thread. You can do better!

The Aftermath

Officially, the Census closes the night of October 31st. It will unofficially go on for a brief period after that, but you can begin the dirty work. Begin now by collecting the names of any users who didn?t fill out the survey AND had an e-mail that bounced, so that they don?t have any active e-mail accounts anymore. In the MemberDB, set them to inactive and save it. When the nightly processing job runs that evening, it should

remove their Legion forum access. In this case, either A) they really are inactive and won?t care, or B) somehow they ignored both the e-mail and the forum stuff, and this will rush them into doing something about it.

In the case of the latter you can readily set them to active again.

Gather up the other members who didn?t respond to the survey and present the list privately to the GCO. He or she may be aware of unusual circumstances for a member that weren?t made public and may be able to address that for them, or might want to excuse them from the forthcoming round of deactivations for one reason or another. It is, after all, at their discretion.

Now, if any of those members who didn?t respond are definitely active, you might want to ping them on the forums or through e-mail. You also have the option of entering Census information for them, though of course you shouldn?t enter false info. If they haven?t been trooping, then they just haven?t.

Otherwise, you can begin your mass execution. I mean de-activations.

Other Duties

There are a handful of other duties you?ll end up performing, and there are some recommended practices as well. This is just a quick list of them.

Update Your Command Staff

Your Garrison?s command staff gave you this job so they don?t have to deal with it, but you should still keep them up to date on what?s what. Be sure to take the time regularly (quarterly should be more than frequent enough) to present them with a brief report detailing:

- Number of active members
- Number of total members (including inactive, etc)
- Number of recruits waiting in your queue
- List of new members since last time
- Brief update on anything interesting you?ve been working on at the Legion level
- Any problems you have with members new or old

Update Member Info

While your members can update their own information, you do still have to be involved. Every time they make a change, their listing in the MemberDB will turn yellow. Look inside and you?ll see that you have to approve changes they make. Most of this you can approve out of hand, such as address changes. It?s not like you?re going to drive out there to verify their new address. For things like adding new costumes, however, you?ll need to approve them just like you would a new member. If they try to slip one by, be sure to get the pictures for approval before you approve it!

From here you can also process official changes to Garrisons (if they move out of state you can switch them to the appropriate Garrison), Squads (if they form or join one), and as I mentioned earlier, Detachments.

Working on the CRL or Other Projects

There?s not much I can add here. The Legion forums may present to you the opportunity to be involved in some larger projects. If you have time and/or interest, sign up for them! The most common at the time of writing is the Costume Resource Listing. This has a detailed list of items necessary for each costume supported by the 501st. Approvals for the CRL are still under way, but the info provided to date has been

very useful.

Brief MemberDB Guide

This is just some quick descriptions of options currently in the MemberDB. Some will be altered over time. This will only cover your Garrison Roster section, as the others tend not to require much GML work.

This view gives a quick list of members, active or otherwise, and their status. Most are color coded for easy finding. Special cases (discharged or deployed members) are shown at the top, followed by new applications in blue. Then is a long list of Inactive or Retired members, followed by all the green ones which are Active.

On this screen you can quickly see their name, TKID, e-mail, and the last update time on the record. You can also spot Census reply information at times. To edit a member, click on their name. To exit the editor, click again on the Roster button on the left. This is all Java script contained in a frame, so if you hit the back button on your browser, you?ll navigate away from the MemberDB.

Legion Information

This section covers a member?s information regarding Legion status. There are only a few things you can alter here. The Status shows their status in the legion. Here?s a quick rundown of what they are and when you should use each.

For new applicants:

Brand New Application. This is set by default, and means it hasn?t been edited yet.

Minor. This is what you set when the applicant turns out to be under 18.

PENDING APP: Armor in Progress. Use this when an applicant has applied but the armor isn?t ready for submission yet. If it stays in this status for more than a few months without contact from the member, delete them. Delete. If you have contacted them three times with no reply, delete them. This will remove their record. PENDING APP: Contacted by GML. Use this after you?ve sent them that initial e-mail. It?s just a reminder that you?re waiting on them.

Ready for Duty. Set this when you?re ready to approve them.

PENDING APP: LMO Last Chance. This is a now-unused option. It used to be that if you couldn?t contact them after three tries, you?d set this and the LMO would try to contact them. That process changed and this hasn?t been used for some time.

Existing Members

Member Status

Active: Self explanatory.

Inactive: These were approved members who either haven?t trooped in a year or no longer have a costume. A GCO can override this status if they choose to.

Retired: Members who have excused themselves from the Legion or have been in reserve status for at lease a year and have not contributed in other ways to the Legion or Garrison.

Reserve: Members who have either not completed their census or have not been active in the past year.

There are also an options a GML can?t set, which are **?Discharged?** and '**Suspended'**. Discharged are members who, following disciplinary hearings, have been removed from the Legion. Only the COG can set this status. You will rarely see it. Suspended are members who have been placed on temporary suspension from active duty either **Administrative Leave** by the Legion Captain of the Guard pending the outcome of a legal proceeding, or as the result of a disciplinary hearing by the Legion Captain of the Guard. Only the COG can set a member to suspended and the should be a note in the file explaining the action and the duration of the suspension.

The "Member Since" option will show when they joined the Legion. This only applies to more recent members. Older members (pre 2007) can have this information set for them if they choose.

Personal Information

This is pretty self explanatory. It contains a members personal contact info. Note that this info can be set to Public, Legion Only, or Private. This determines who can see a member?s contact information. If you?re in doubt, ALWAYS set it to Private.

Your Approved 501st Costumes

This is where a member?s costumes are listed. You can select a new costume if they?re adding one, or approve costumes they have submitted. This was covered somewhat in the Approvals section.

Your Unit Affiliation

This lists the units a member is attached to. The three will be Garrison, Squad, and Detachment. There can be multiple Detachments listed. If a members moves to a new Garrison, you can move them to the new location here.

501st Legion Census

This contains a member?s responses, or lack there of, to the Census. You can edit these if you choose to. Most of this info is covered in the Trooper Survival Guide Census section.

Notes

This section will contain any and all notes a GML offers about a member. It is best to add copious notes as you work with a member during their approval, and when you make any changes. The members cannot see this, but other GMLs (if the member changes Garrisons), future GMLs, and Legion Officials can read these notes, so do try to keep them civil.

Additions and corrections may be submitted to feedback@501st.com

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