

# Vintage Card Traders (VCT) Group Bylaws/Policies

Last revised August 19, 2023

## I - Group Information

VCT Website: <http://www.vintagecardtraders.org> <http://www.vintagecardtraders.com> (mirror of the main site)

E-mail the entire group at: [vintage-card-traders@googlegroups.com](mailto:vintage-card-traders@googlegroups.com) (subscribed member e-mail addresses only) VCT Directory: <http://vintagecardtraders.net/webdir/webdir.html> (userid/password protected)

VCT Bylaws: <http://www.vintagecardtraders.org/bylaws.pdf>

Requests for Bylaw modifications should be directed to the VCT Facilitator.

## II - Group History

Vintage Card Traders (VCT) was founded on July 23, 1999 by Dan Austin. Dan had a vision of uniting a group of people who were banded together by their love of collecting old baseball cards. The group was formed to promote trading of cards between members in a “safe and trusted” environment. Members are encouraged to trade wantlists and swap cards through the mail, much like we did in person when we were kids. The VCT site started as a small webpage, which existed as a subdirectory on Dan’s homepage. VCT has come a long way since its inception and has grown into a fantastic group of collectors who are kind, generous, and easy to trade with.

In 2001, VCT expanded to include collectors of vintage football, basketball and hockey cards as well. We also got our own domain name, [www.vintagecardtraders.com](http://www.vintagecardtraders.com).

In 2002, we obtained our second domain name, [www.vintagecardtraders.org](http://www.vintagecardtraders.org) and made this our primary domain, as we moved the VCT site away from Dan’s personal website and out on its own. In addition, Dan turned “ownership” of the group over to the members, and VCT held its first elections to select a “governing board” to administrate the group. The Bullpen was born!

In 2003, the Bullpen gathered together all of the information on how the group did business and formed the first incarnation of the VCT Bylaws!

### III - Initial Membership Requirements

Any candidate for membership (a.k.a. “prospect”) who meets all of these requirements will be asked to send in their "member profile" to the membership coordinator (MC). They will also be sent a copy of the VCT Bylaws and be asked to confirm their willingness to abide by them. The MC will then announce the prospect to the group, to solicit feedback. The prospect will then become officially recognized a "prospective member" for a short period of time, while final feedback is sought from current members.

A period of at least one week will be given for the membership to respond with comments about the prospect. The MC, after receiving feedback from the group at large, will report that information to the Bullpen, highlighting the feedback from the members who were responsible for the prospect's fulfilling of the two-trade rule. In the absence of negative feedback, a simple majority of the bullpen is necessary to approve the prospect. If negative feedback is received, the necessary procedure reverts to the guidelines laid down in section IX below.

When the MC is ready to convert a prospect to “probationary member” status, they will contact the Webmaster, who will then (1) assign a “membership date” to the prospect which will be recorded in the directory (along with a “probationary” note after the date), (2) list them on the VCT website (along with a “probationary” note after the membership date) and (3) subscribe them to the VCT mailing list. The Webmaster will then be responsible for passing along initial group information to the new member, and informing the MC of the completion of this process.

### IV - Full Active Membership Status

After a probationary member has been a member of VCT for six months, they can be considered for promotion to full member status. The MC will again seek feedback from the current membership regarding the behavior of the probationary member. A period of at least one week will be given for the membership to respond with comments about the candidate for full membership. The MC, after receiving feedback from the group at large, will report that information to the Bullpen. In the absence of negative feedback, a simple majority of the bullpen is necessary to approve the promotion to full membership status. If negative feedback is received, the necessary procedure reverts to the guidelines laid down in section IX below. Once the Bullpen agrees to promote a member to full “active” status, the MC will notify the Webmaster, who will remove the “probationary” note by the member’s membership date on the VCT website and directory.

Active members who fail to maintain an active, updated web-based wantlist, which can be readily accessed by the group, will be warned by the Bullpen and given 2 weeks to show significant effort toward getting their wantlist in order. Members who fail to comply with this may be moved to “inactive” status at the discretion of the Bullpen.

## V - Policy on Minors

VCT is intended as a group for adults (18 years and older), so at this time we have chosen not to offer membership to those less than 18 years of age. This policy exists to protect members from the legal consequences of a “trade gone bad” with a minor. “Members in waiting” who cannot be admitted due to their age are encouraged to reapply when they turn 18.

## VI - “Fast Track” Applications

Due to their extensive screening processes, and similar collecting interests, members of the following groups can be placed on the “fast track” to membership and skip the required 2 trades with active VCT members:

Old Card Traders (OCT) - Can be “fast tracked” if collecting interests are primarily vintage, they have an existing web-based wantlist, and they are at least 18-years-old.

Old Baseball Cards (OBC) - Can be “fast tracked” if they have an existing web-based wantlist and they are at least 18-years-old.

In addition, members who previously left VCT, while in good standing, may be “fast tracked” if they decide to re-apply at a later date.

## VII - Equal Opportunity / Tolerance Policy

VCT welcomes vintage sportscard traders of all shapes, sizes and varieties and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, etc. Members are not required to be “politically correct” or to change the way they view the world, but they ARE asked to show respect to other members regardless of how they feel about them.

## VIII - Group Disclaimer

VCT claims no responsibility for trades conducted by its members. Each member is responsible for their own trades, actions, statements, etc.

Only members of the Bullpen are authorized to speak “on behalf of the group” (this implies official endorsement by the group, including commitments of various kinds). This does not preclude members from publicly attaching themselves to VCT, or using their VCT membership for personal gain, as long as no implied endorsement from the group is made. Examples might be a member who wants to make note on eBay auctions that they are a “member of VCT”, with a link to the site, in order to increase their sales, or a member who wishes to associate themselves with the group on a website, newsletter, or other similar medium. These are perfectly acceptable.

## IX - Denial of Membership

The Bullpen reserves the right to deny membership to anyone for any reason that is deemed appropriate, and is consistent with the spirit of this document. Such denials may be due to (but not limited to) a bad reputation in the trading community or a valid "thumbs down" from a member, collecting interests that are incompatible with the group's focus, or other similar reason.

When a case arises where a prospect receives one or more "thumbs down"s from VCT members, the Bullpen will attempt to work with the prospect and member(s) who gave the feedback, to try and resolve the problem. If the problem cannot be resolved, the decision to admit the prospect or deny membership (temporarily or permanently) will be voted on by the Bullpen. A unanimous vote from the Bullpen is needed to override a member "thumbs down".

This same procedure will apply when a probationary member is being evaluated for full membership status.

## X - Member Code of Conduct

VCT members are expected to be fair and courteous to those they trade with. We are not here to take advantage of each other, but to help each other to enjoy the hobby we love. All of us will grade cards a little differently, so VCT members should try to err on the conservative side, and avoid whining over small details. If we all try to grade and price our lots fairly, we can all be happy. Let's not get stressed out over things that are insignificant. "Don't sweat the small stuff." Remember, this is supposed to be fun! When in doubt, VCT members should go the extra mile for the other guy, and should always take the attitude that the trade isn't over until both parties are happy. Members should assume that "retaliation" for cards received is strongly encouraged (as we are a TRADING group), unless the sender indicates otherwise.

Members who show a pattern of poor trading habits may be subject to removal from the group.

## XI - Permissible Postings on the group mailing list

Within reason, there are not really any prohibitions about the content of postings to the group mailing list(s). Members are not limited to posting about cards and trading (although this is our reason for existing as a group), and are encouraged to use the message board to get to know one another better.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should any member intentionally post anything obscene, hateful, racist or pornographic to the VCT mailing list(s). This type of abuse may be cause for removal from the group.

SPAMMING the group will not be tolerated, but members are permitted to occasionally post cards/ items for sale or provide links to their eBay auctions, as long as such postings are infrequent. If complaints arise from other members, the Bullpen may direct specific members to stop certain types of posting designated to be “spam- like”. Failure to comply with the direction of the Bullpen could be grounds for removal from the group.

## XII - Termination of Membership

Members may have their membership revoked at the discretion of the Bullpen if they make a nuisance of themselves, blatantly violate group policies, or if their personal activities reflect poorly on VCT.

While differences will exist between members, and we will not always agree with one another, VCT does not tolerate members who spew derogatory remarks about other members based on their race, gender, religion, etc. This is viewed as a serious offense and may be grounds for immediate expulsion from the group. Matters such as this will be reviewed by the Bullpen on a case-by-case basis and the appropriate action determined.

The VCT directory is considered sensitive, as it contains private information about the membership. Willfully distributing the VCT directory outside of the group may be grounds for removal from the group.

## XIII - Member Types

The different types of VCT memberships are detailed below. Status changes should be coordinated with the MC, who will notify the Webmaster of changes in member status.

### **Probationary**

This status applies to a new member who has been with the group less than six months. After six months, a probationary member is considered for Full Active Membership. The member’s name/info shows in the directory in the “active” section, their name/info shows on webpage, and they are subscribed to the group mailing list(s). A note of “probationary” is listed after the membership date associated with the member profile on the VCT website and directory.

### **Full Active**

This is the normal member status. The member’s name/info shows in the directory in the “active” section, their name/info shows on webpage, and they are subscribed to the group mailing list(s). Active members SHOULD NOT turn off their group e-mail, except in extreme circumstances and for short periods of time (e.g. extended travel, illness, etc). Group e-mail is used by the Bullpen to pass along important announcements for the group.

An active member will also receive the special designation “charter member”, which appears on their website entry if they were one of VCT’s “founding members”. At this time, no special rights or privileges are assigned to charter members.

The special designation of “Founder” has been granted to Dan Austin for his role in creating the group. Dan will be forever immortalized as the founder in a special section of the group website.

### **Inactive**

This status is reserved for members who want to remain part of the group, but are unable to participate in group activities for an extended period of time (generally more than a month). The member’s name/info will remain in the directory in the “inactive” section and their name/info is NOT listed on the group webpage. They will, however, remain on the mailing list so they can receive group e-mails. An inactive member may request a return to active status at any time by contacting the MC. The only requirement is that they still have a working web-based wantlist and e-mail address. Inactive members may not vote in VCT elections and may not run for office. Members may notify the Bullpen at any time that they wish to change between active and inactive, but at least once each year, the SPC should conduct a survey of members to determine if anyone would like to change their membership status. Members must be active for at least 1 year after leaving inactive status before they may go inactive again, unless granted permission by a majority vote of the bullpen.

### **Retired**

This status is reserved for members who have retired from active collecting, but wish to remain part of the group to participate in discussions and stay connected to friends in the group. The retiree will receive a brief listing in the “retired” section of the directory and must maintain an active e-mail address in order to remain in the email group. Retirees may “unretire” to active status by contacting the MC, but may not go Inactive. Retirees may not vote in VCT elections nor run for office unless they first become active. The status of “retired member” may be revoked at any time by unanimous vote of the Bullpen. Retired members will not need to renew their retired status during the membership renewal process.

### **Honorary**

This status is granted by the Bullpen in special circumstances. This may be bestowed upon a special individual for services rendered to the group or the hobby. The status of “honorary member” will automatically be granted to any member who passes away while in good standing within the group. The member will receive a brief listing in the “honorary” section of the directory. Living honorary members may not vote in VCT elections nor run for office. The status of “honorary member” may be revoked at any time by a unanimous vote of the Bullpen.

## XIV - Membership Renewal Process

Once a year, within the September-October timeframe, members will be checked for inactivity by the Special Projects Coordinator (SPC). The SPC will send an e-mail to the entire group over the group mailing list server, asking them to confirm their membership for the following year (this includes agreeing to abide by the current version of the VCT Bylaws). Members can declare that they wish to stay “active”, become “inactive”, or leave the group entirely. Currently inactive members will be contacted individually to verify their desire to remain in the group. Members who are initially unresponsive to the group e-mail will be contacted directly by the SPC. Once a reasonable grace period has been given for a response, the member will be declared unresponsive. Those who are declared as unresponsive will be removed from the group.

At the end of the renewal period, the SPC will inform the Bullpen of the member(s) to be removed. The Bullpen will then direct the Webmaster to remove the member(s) from the directory, webpage and mailing list. Once a member is removed from the group, all their info will be deleted from the directory and VCT web page. At this point, the deleted member must re-apply to regain their membership, although they can be placed on the “fast track”.

## XV - The VCT Bullpen

The Bullpen sets and enforces policy, and administrates the group. The Bullpen will set the frequency and method by which they meet and/or discuss issues. Such systems as e-mail exchange, online meetings with an instant messenger tool, etc. are potential ways they may choose to do business.

The Bullpen is responsible for approving the content of the VCT Bylaws (this document). Any members may make suggestions to the Bullpen about the content of the Bylaws, but the Bullpen has the final say on what is, or is not, included in the document.

Group decisions, made by the Bullpen, which require a vote, will be decided by a simple majority.

The Bullpen size must always contain an odd number of voting members and will be determined by the Bullpen prior to the election each year. It shall never consist of less than 3 people.

Bullpen members must be re-elected each year, but there is no “term limit” for Bullpen members. They may serve indefinitely as long as they are continuously re-elected each year by the membership.

Bullpen members who fail to do their job may be asked to resign by a majority vote of the Bullpen. If they fail to resign, their resignation can be forced by a 2/3 majority vote of the membership.



## Voting members (elected positions) - “The Bullpen”

### **Facilitator (Closer)**

The primary duties of the Closer are to “chair” the Bullpen meetings and discussion of issues, enforce decisions made by the Bullpen, direct changes to the VCT Bylaws, and mediate member disagreements.

### **Membership coordinator (MC)**

The primary duties of the MC are to serve as the interface for new member applications, interact with the webmaster on new member additions and to participate in Bullpen meetings/discussions.

### **Special Projects Coordinator (SPC)**

The primary duties of the SPC are to run the annual election and annual member purge(s) and participate in Bullpen meetings/discussions.

Occupants of each of these positions will be elected for 1-year terms. Each position will be voted on separately. Terms begin and end at Noon on March 1. Extension of these terms to a length greater than 1 year must be approved by a 2/3 majority vote from the membership and a unanimous vote from the Bullpen.

## Non-voting members (appointed positions)

The positions of Webmaster and Treasurer shall be appointed positions, selected by a majority vote by the bullpen. Since these are merely administrative functions, the Bullpen will appoint a member to each office that they feel would be acceptable for the position. These appointments are indefinite in length and the current appointees will remain in the position until they resign or are removed by a majority vote of the Bullpen, at which time a replacement will be appointed immediately. Bullpen members may also serve in these positions while holding a Bullpen position.

### **Webmaster**

The primary duties of the Webmaster are to manage the VCT website, online directory and mailing list(s).

### **Treasurer**

The primary duties of the Treasurer are to manage the group PayPal account(s) and to pay group expenses as directed by the Bullpen.

### **Trustee**

Trustee is a special advisory position, appointed by the bullpen, which is held by a long-time member of VCT who currently has Full Active Membership status. Trustees are a resource available to the Bullpen when it is faced with issues that it deems important. Trustees must



have been a member of VCT for at least five years. Once appointed, a Trustee serves indefinitely, unless he or she no longer desires the responsibility, loses their active status, or is asked to resign by a majority vote of the Bullpen. There may be more than one Trustee appointed by the Bullpen. Trustees should not also simultaneously serve as Closer, MC or SPC.

## Temporary positions

### **Vote-Meister (VM)**

The Vote-Meister (VM) is a temporary position that will be appointed by the SPC to assist with elections. Each election should have 2 VMs to ensure voting accuracy. The SPC may serve as one of the VMs if they have chosen not to run for any positions in the upcoming year. The primary responsibility of the VMs is to receive and tally votes from the current year's VCT elections and to report the results to the Bullpen (via the SPC). The VM must not be running for any Bullpen positions in the year they are appointed, and they must have been a member of VCT for a minimum of 1 year at the time of appointment. When the vote tally has been finalized, the SPC will dissolve these positions until the following year's election. The VMs may not discuss the results of the election with anyone outside the Bullpen until after the final election results are released to the group.

## XVI - Elections

Elections for the Bullpen will be conducted once each year. The SPC will be in charge of running the election, coordinating the vote tally with the VM(s), and passing the results along to the Bullpen. The Bullpen will then give the SPC direction to release the results to the group.

In early January, the SPC will ask the group for nominations to be made for all available positions (a list of available positions will be provided by the Bullpen) and ask for volunteers for the VM position, if the SPC cannot fill this role. One week will be given for nominations to be made. At the end of the one-week period, the SPC will confirm nominations with nominees to verify that they wish to run for the given position(s). One week will be given for confirmation of nominations. The final list of available candidates will then be presented to the membership prior to the election.

The election should end no later than February 16. A minimum of 2 weeks should be given for members to respond to the election. All active members are expected to participate in the election. Inactive and honorary members are not permitted to vote in VCT elections.

All members who have been a VCT member for at least 1 year, by the date the elections begin, are eligible to be nominated for Bullpen positions.

Candidates are permitted to run for multiple positions, but must indicate their order of preference to the SPC before the election begins. If a single candidate wins in multiple positions, they will be elected to only their "top selection", and the candidates with the next highest number of votes will be selected for the other position(s).

For each position, candidates will be asked to vote for only one member. The candidate with the most votes for a specific position will be considered the winner. The VMs will tally these results and present them to the Bullpen (via the SPC). After final approval, the SPC will release the results to the group.

In the event of a tie, the SPC will conduct another election for the position in which there was a tie. Two weeks will be given for members to vote in this special election. Votes will be tallied by the VMs, and reported to the SPC, in a manner similar to the main election.

If a member of the Bullpen leaves the group or passes away during their term, the Bullpen may either choose to hold a special election to fill the open slot, or offer the position to the “runner up” for that position during the previous election.

## **XVII - Dispute Resolution**

When a member has a dispute with another member regarding a trade or their conduct, this should be brought to the attention of the Bullpen. The Closer will be tasked with mediating the dispute and making a recommendation to the Bullpen about what to do.

## **XVIII - Dues/Collection of Funds**

It is expected that the normal functioning of the group will require some money to be expended. At this time, no formal dues requirement is made of members. As the treasury becomes depleted, additional funds will be collected as necessary through a call for voluntary contributions from the membership. When funds begin to get low, the Treasurer is expected to contact the Bullpen and let them know of the need for additional funds. The Bullpen will then put out an announcement asking for voluntary contributions. Should this be insufficient, the Bullpen has the authority to institute temporary or permanent dues, as required, to support group costs.

## **XIX - Policy on Use of Treasury Funds**

Members who have a need to use funds from the treasury for group-related purposes must get approval from the Bullpen. Only Bullpen members may give direction to the Treasurer to spend group funds. The exception to this is that the Bullpen may choose to give Webmaster authority to periodically request funds from the Treasury for recurring web hosting / domain registration costs. Requests for expenditures will be forwarded, by the Bullpen, to the Treasurer who will make the payment from the group PayPal account or reimburse a member, if required.

## XX - Bylaw Modification

A VCT Trustee, appointed by the bullpen, will manage the VCT Bylaws (this document). The bullpen can, at any time, appoint a replacement to manage this document, by a unanimous vote. Significant modifications to the Bylaws, impacting policy, may only be changed by a unanimous vote of the Bullpen. Minor updates, corrections, etc., that do not effect group policy, may be made by the Trustee without prior approval of the bullpen. Desired/suggested modifications to the bylaws should be sent directly to the Bullpen, so they can be discussed, and, if necessary, incorporated into the document. Desired changes will be forwarded to the VCT Trustee, who will provide document updates to the Webmaster, for posting on the VCT website.