

PowWow #24

PowWow #24 is by Joyce Worley Katz, created for the monthly assembly of Apa V, Oct. 7, 1995. Thanks to Arnie for doing the onerous chores. This is Mailing Number Twenty-Four, marking the beginning of a new year. And it comes at an auspicious time, since it also follows close on the heels of SilverCon 4, where a good time was had by all. After that week of effort, it's only appropriate that the subject this time is something in retrievably connected with conventions, something we all know too well:

Work

A Family Affair

Conventions represent a great deal of hard work, and the effort, though spread over many, falls heaviest on the shoulders of the few. Usually, it's unwise to view a convention in terms of labor; it's a depressing way to see things, and taints the pleasure that's gained.

But convention work is hard, demanding, and the rewards are very tenuous. Andy Hooper, a many-times veteran, described con work: "It's a bottomless rat hole into which you can throw all your money and energy. And on the day you stop, you're forgotten; all the work is for nothing." I believe this to be true.

Therefore, I applaud Ken and Aileen's decision that they'll run no more SilverCons. If someone else nuts enough to do it comes along, I'll be glad for Las Vegas fans. If not, so be it. For the time, money and effort that it costs to run one of these things, that would-be con chairperson can go to quite a few out-of-town conventions, soak up all the science fiction ambience, and have a good time without killing themselves with frustrating and thankless work.

Ken and Aileen have done more than their share. I'm glad they're going to relax and have some fun.

But, I am not pleased to learn that some members of SNAFFU don't want the club to front the money to let Ken put on a small fanzine-oriented convention.

Is there anything more that Ken and Aileen could do for this fandom that what they've done? Could their home be more open, their hospitality be more endless? What

is it Ken and Aileen could do that they haven't?

I believe that Ken and Aileen should get anything they want from SNAFFU. If Ken wants to take the club treasury, turn it into feathers and roll around in them, I'd say let him.

But in fact, all he asked to do was get some seed money to run a fanzine oriented convention.

Just what is this antipathy for fanzine fans that we're seeing here? Just who do they think it is that supports Las Vegas fandom? Scan the auction list: who donated most of the materials sold there? And who bought most of the material, paying more than it was worth, as a way of supporting the convention? I'll tell you who...it was fanzine fans. Who attends the banquets? Who rents the hotel rooms? Where would our conventions be without fanzine fans?

When SilverCon 1 had financial troubles, who dropped large bills in the piggy bank to help out? What SilverCon guest of honor "good-mouthed" us all over the country, starting our reputation as a special fandom. Here's a hint: it wasn't Leslie Fish. When the gamers boycotted SilverCon, who was there? When the filkers stayed away, who came? Who is that charming guy who passes out gourmet candy and nuts? Who's that loveable Santa Claus? Why did Joe Haldeman attend an out-of-the-way, insignificant and unimportant convention? Just who is that Bob Tucker? Why did Bruce Pelz agree to come to Las Vegas for our very first gathering? And, considering how that went, why did Bruce give

us the honor of being the first stop, on the introduction of his 1945 fanzine tour? Fanzine fans. That's who they are, and why they come.

I'm getting dammed tired of hearing what bad guys fanzine fans are. Just who do they think the fanzine fans are? That's Ken, and Tom, and Arnie, and me. That's Ben and John, and Marcy and Ross. That's the Vegrants they're talking about. And all those other shadowy forms left behind in our hearts from Corflu. Do they actually hate us?

It's fanzine fandom that throws the parties. It's fanzine fans who welcome and talk to every stranger who shows any interest. It's fanzine fans that keep their doors open, take the guests to dinner, provide the pass-outs and spend all they can afford to make sure everyone has a good time.

This is a damn fine fandom. I have a great deal of affection for our members individually, and as a group. I think this, of all the fan groups I've been in, is the best and the most fun. This is my fan family; I'm proud of us, and I want to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, fight back-to-back, against any who attack it.

As I said to Ken, I believe there are enough of us that, if I called the question at SNAFFU, we would carry the day. But I'm tired of this insulting song and dance I'm hearing. I've got too much pride to go to SNAFFU and beg for rights.

If we decide to go ahead and do a fannish convention, Arnie and I will put up the seed money.

But I'm throwing down the glove here: I think it's about time that they tally what fanzine fandom has done for Vegas.