

# PowWow #25

**PowWow #25** is by Joyce Worley Katz, created for the monthly assembly of Apa V, Nov. 4, 1995. Thanks to Arnie for doing the onerous chores. This is Mailing Number Twenty-Five, the beginning of the Holiday Season, on a cool crisp Autumn Day. Our topic this month is one that lives at the foot of fandom, as in fact it lies at the root of all festive occasions and holiday affairs. Indeed, where would the fun be if we had to do without the backbone of society, the framework that supports our idealism:

## Myth, Superstition & Folklore

One of the nicest things that anyone has said about Las Vegas fandom was by Don Fitch, written in a letter of comment. He said that Vegas fandom was capable of making its own myths. I had never heard this description, but Don is right: one of the most charming signs of a healthy fandom is the tradition and lore that each creates.

Traditions and myths sweep a fandom along with a common broom, providing a shared ground for its members. Love of mutual experience turns isolated actions into traditions.

Arnie and I were charmed by some of the Vegas thumbprints: the glance at the unadorned wrist while saying "look at the time", the speaking stick, the inevitable election of the person who's not in the room. Since that good beginning, there've been a lot more home-grown customs take root, such as movie nights, annual lake treks, the socko Christmas bash, Socials and one-shots -- and these just skim the top of the Vegas bag.

St. Louis fans were much the same, with a twist toward the weird. Dave Hall started a routine: he said that when a person was blue or depressed, they should quack like a duck...that no one could stay down if they quacked. Ghu only knows why it caught on, but it did... depressed OSFAns would look sorrowfully at each other and start quacking. Unfortunately, that was a pretty depressing era, with lots of angst-filled fans, and there was a whole lot of quacking going on.

St. Louis fans also had the annual picnic tradition: I ran for president on the platform that I wouldn't have one. But of course I did; the tradition was too well

established to break, even though most people dreaded the event.

St. Louis fans had another traditional occupation, unique (so far as I know) among clubs: the fans liked to get together and color. It's true... many an evening was spent with the Magic Markers and stacks of drawing paper. That's where all those "Blat" posters came from. (You don't remember the Blat cover? Shame on you!)

New York is a much bigger, stronger, and older fandom, with traditions that date back to before the flood. I don't know the half of them... There's the Fanoclast habit, Clap For Steve Styles. It's like the "Norm!" thing on Cheers. Whenever Steve arrived, all the Fanoclasts would clap him in. I haven't a clue how or when it started...

There's a positively ancient fan custom that probably started in Boston: The Great Wall of China Walk. I never seemed to be hanging out with that group of people at exactly that time... as best I could figure out, it was (probably still is) a group walk to the best Chinese restaurant in the convention area.

---

Ed Cox Doodle Here

---

I haven't a clue who first left space for Ed Cox to doodle, but in the 60's, there was hardly a fanzine without such a square. I don't even know if Ed Cox liked to draw....

---

## This Space Dedicated To Geri Sullivan

---

I believe the tradition of dedicating space, or even whole pages, goes back to the very early days of fandom, when faneds would actually buy ads in each others zines at the rate of ten or 20 cents for a quarter page.

Fans quickly went broke, from buying all the paper, ink and postage to produce their own zines, so they quit buying ads (except in strange remote locations like Locus and Science Fiction Review). But the little squares of dedicated space persisted for years. (It's a sweet thought, if you think of it. Figure the fanzine costs x amount, it boils down to x amount per inch of space: it's a nice gesture to hold some of it aside in honor of something or someone.)

The hundred page annish, the 21-issue goal, the "why you got this ish" check list. I couldn't begin to name all the good or bad traditions in the shared background of fanzine fans. So, in the mode traditionally used to end such musings, I'll just stop.