

PowWow #27

PowWow #27 is by Joyce Worley Katz, created for the monthly assembly of Apa V, Jan. 13, 1994. Thanks to Arnie for doing the onerous chores. This is our first gathering of the New Year, traditionally time for determining Goals For The Future. But as I contemplate the ignobling work of setting Real Goals, I realize I'd rather discuss the Topic of The Month, ie the work that has us gathered here today. Fortunately, that's not such a chore, but just

Las Vegas Pandom

Las Vegas fans have always been pragmatic about the need to raise cash.

"Let's have a car wash," suggested Aileen at one meeting. But the general sounds of sloth were heard throughout the room, and that watery sentence was averted. Oh, I'll not deny it; we have eager and energetic fen who rose to the bait and cheerfully started rolling up their sleeves. But a few others raised from their stupor long enough to mutter "Not on your life." One or two even tried to make it sound virtuous: "That would be like stealing from highschool kids," said Righteous Arnie, as he angled to keep his own feet dry.

Aileen and the other energetics buttoned their cuffs, while trying to balance the club's budget on the end of our noses. "But we really do need to raise some money," whined one Willing Worker. "If not a car wash, well then what?"

A bake sale was quickly averted; we all knew we'd eat the wares before we could peddle them to the unsuspecting neighbors.

Actually, a food sale wouldn't be such a bad move. SNAFFU has several good cooks. Aileen has made birthday cakes her specialty (she made me a Red Velvet Cake this year) and she's become very good at it. Cathi, too, has gained a reputation for outstanding dessert cookery. Give that woman a spatula and stand back; there's just no telling what will come out of her kitchen.

I myself eschew baking. I blame it on Barbara Silverberg who was once heard to say, "Why bake when there are

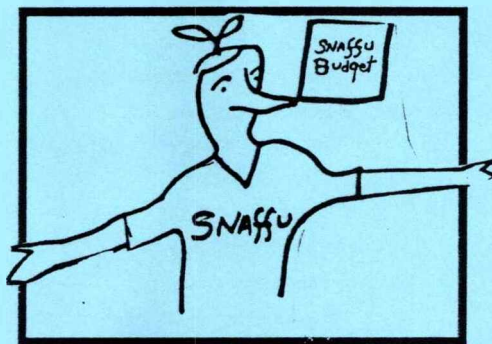
bakeries?" The logic of this made me hide my own cake pans on the top shelf, well out of reach.

But there'd be no SNAFFU bakesale, because we're all such weak and easily tempted fans that we can't be trusted with fresh tarts. Or baked goods, either.

There was idle talk about auctioning off some of our treasurers. "Why don't YOU sell Your autographed copies?" was an invitation declined by all. Similarly, it seemed hopeless to set up a Kissing Booth, because we're all too cheap to Pay For Love. Even Trufan Love. Ah, what to do?

"We'll have a garage sale," someone finally said, and there being no way to slither out of the proposition, we did it.

Actually, the garage sale concept worked well for us. And why not? Aileen and Ken gave the use of their



garage for the cast-offs of the members. Before the Great Day, they hosted several evening work-party sessions sorting and pricing. Then on the day itself, they held the sale on their own driveway.

It became an annual event, in the way that Good Works are likely to do if someone doesn't put a stop to them. And, they were pretty profitable, earning several hundred dollars per year.

This year's sale was a two-weekend extravaganza. Ken & Aileen held the first weekend, and then moved the remaining stuff to Peggy & Tom Kurilla's for the second shift, to see how much money we could milk out of their neighborhood.

So it was that the Good Ladies of SNAFFU sat in the garage one Saturday morning. Wetook turns greeting wary buyers as they drove to the Forman curb, and in between times browsed the merchandise. Put a bunch of clothes in a pile, and who can resist digging through them? The fact they've already rested on the backs of other fen, and actually been discarded by someone else, only makes them more fascinating.

I had an early appointment so didn't get there until ten:thirty. Belle and Aileen, Karla and Sue were there ahead of me. "Look at this, Joyce," said Aileen, drawing my attention to a suede jacket hanging on an impromptu clothesline. "It's just your size."

Everyone around here knows my predilection for bucksin, suede, and western styled clothing. I tried on the jacket and quickly peeled off a bill to cover it.

Just about then Belle spied a bown lace dress hidden between the folds, and snatched it up, quick as an anxious buyer in Macy's January

inventory sale. It was a honey; empire waisted and short skirted, a perfect tunic.

"I wanted that," I squealed, thinking how well it would go with the jacket.

"Heheheh, I beat you to it," said Belle, and tucked it behind her chair.

I groused a bit, and pulled out a divinely colored v-necked sweater, soft and delicately colored. It went on the growing stack under my chair.

Ken put in an appearance to show off a beautiful, authentic carved Indian doll, housed in a plastic dome. The doll puts in an appearance at every sale, and it adds a lot of class to these affairs. Unfortunately, it's pricey, and it seemed likely that it would return to Ken's shelf at the end of the day, as it had for previous sales.

About that time I spotted a white unicorn. "It still plays music," Su volunteered. True, a quick windup and the chords of *Impossible Dream* tinkled across the lawn. "For \$2, what the hell," I thought, "it'll look good under the Christmas tree."

This seems like a good time to add a digression to this digression. There's been a lot of talk about my attitude toward unicorns and fanstasy fans, but I don't automatically smash each one I see. Usually I nod politely and let fantasy fans and unicorns have plenty of hall space to get on to where they are going. It's only when either tries to insinuate itself too deeply into my space that I get uppitty. I did NOT say "Death to all Fantasy Fans". I do, however, think that fantasy fans and unicorns are, by and large, happier somewhere that I'm not. Which is why I am campaigning to Ban All Fantasy Fans. You can see that this is a completely different matter, and a perfectly reasonable one, at that.

Think how happy they'd al be, at a different convention on the other side of town, well away from my hostile stares. It's only their own good I'm thinking of here.

After I'd bought the unicorn, there seemed little territory left for me to conquer. I sat quietly in my chair, Being Good and thinking Uplifting Thoughts.

What happened next really wasn't my fault, entirely.

In a stack of goodies under a chair I saw an edge of lace sticking out, tempting me.

"OOOh, I really like this," I said, pulling it out and measuring it against myself.

"I think that's Belle's stack," said Karla, trying to head off a fight.

"Oh, I don't think so." I wanted the dress.

"Yes, Joyce, she's right," said Aileen. "Belle said she wanted that dress."

"She's not here, is she?" I looked around furtively. Belle was graciously talking to a family who piled out of a Nash Rambler. They actually looked interested in the discarded 286-pc. If Belle convinced them, it would really make our club budget.

"I'll just put this under my chair," I announced to the air.

The others looked at me with surprise. What angels they are...they've never faced off against a 350 pound woman across a Macy's counter. Experience counts. I knew I could take them.

The computer vanished into the trunk of the Nash, and Belle returned to her chair, a triumphant look on her face. With any luck, she'd be so excited she wouldn't notice.

"Would you like a cup of coffee," I offered sweetly. Sometimes a distraction like this works. "Why, thank you, Joyce," purred Sweet Belle. She sat down, back toward the stack of clothes. Success! She hadn't noticed.

Karla, Su and Aileen looked at me oddly, but said nothing.

"Where is Peggy?" I artfully changed the subject.

"Since she's doing it next weekend, she said sh won't be here today," explained Aileen.

"Besides, she's very busy. She has a new ambition, a new career path."

We all clamored to know more.

"Peggy is going to become a Psychic Psychiatrist." Gasps spread around the circle, as we contemplated Peggy psyching out our problems.

"How will she do this?" I asked.

"She's sending away to a diploma mill; she won't need to actually take psych classes. After all, she already has her psi powers."

We all pondered this in silence.

Just then another car drove up; it was my turn to be the greeter. That's how I lost control of the situation.

When I returned to the garage, Belle was looking around her with puzzlement. "Where's my dress?" she queried. No one answered. Then she spied it under my chair. "Joyce, is that my brown dress?"

"Oh, no," I lied heartily. "This is a completely different brown dress."

She laughed musically and pulled it out. "Joyce... I said I wanted this one."

"You've heard of apartment house wrestling, I presume?"

An old friend of ours, editorially involved in the world of professional wrestling, was given the assignment to try to get some sex appeal into the magazine. Perhaps it was demonic inspiration: he hired a couple of models, arranged them in combative and scantily clothed poses, and coupled the pix with a few paragraphs about the completely mythical sport of Apartment House Wrestling. It was a catch phrase that actually evolved into a quasi-sport.

Belle allowed as how she knew all about it, so I squared off pugilist style, ready to do battle for the lace. I must have looked pretty scary, cause she laughed and said, "Oh, take it -- I don't need it that badly."

Aileen suddenly experienced a coughing fit, and Su dropped a cup of coffee in her glee. Karla covered up her own laughter by rushing up to help the day's last customers.

That evening, Arnie asked how the sale had gone. I was busy hanging up my new garments.

"It went well. We made a lot of money. And when there were no customers, we traded our own clothes; look at this pretty tunic I got from Belle."

"That's nice, Joyce." He turned back to the Sporting News. "Why don't you write it up?"

And so I did.

(--Joyce Katz)