Monday, October 29. 2007

Stop defending those who got us into this situation

Every time I talk with people in-world and on the AW forums, I am shocked at how many turn a blind eye to the actions of JerMe, Tony M, and digigurl. Apparently, the three citizens still have quite a few supporters, and I'm writing this article to question why. It is time for members of the AWTeen community to show themselves some self-respect and stop defending the actions of these former Caretakers in any way.

There have been many Caretakers of AWTeen - some good, and some bad. However, before those to whom I have referred above, none of the Caretakers has so hatefully harmed the world on purpose. There were Caretakers who didn't have enough time, and there were Caretakers who were inept, but they certainly had the best interests of the world in mind. These three, however, have demonstrated a complete lack of respect for the community that has worked hard to make the world what it is today - and they should not be a part of it in the future.

First, let's review the facts we have on the public record for each of the Caretakers. In regards to JerMe, his resignation caused great consternation when it was announced publicly in-world. In particular, JerMe addressed digigurl by using a manner that is extremely derogatory to women. The full chatlog is available here at jerme.txt. Furthermore, after this log, JerMe took the AWTeen forums offline as "punishment," which were previously located at AWTeen.com. The move was hardly unexpected, as animosity had been growing between Brock and JerMe for quite some time (ref: awportals.com).

After JerMe resigned, digigurl and Dr. Squailboont were appointed as Caretakers. On October 16, Dr. Squailboont posted a thread in the AWTeen newsgroups stating that he would remove the Hermes chat relay bot three days later. While I believe this was a good move (see why global chat relay is a bad idea), the announcement was changed three days later when Dr. S suddenly decided to leave with no further explanation.

As if leaving suddenly and without explanation isn't bad enough, the Caretakers then decided to shut the world down by taking all their bots with them. Dr. Squailboont sums up his poor attitude in his own words: "In other words: We're outta here. Good luck with Flagg (ref: here)." One member of AWTeen's staff, meanwhile, was scheduled to host a public meeting the day this resignation occurred, and wasn't even notified of the whole fiasco!

Note that not once in this entire article did I examine these three's actions as Caretaker. I only focused on how they respected the position and their staff members. My purpose is not to put Dr. S or JerMe or digigurl down any further, but to demonstrate that their behavior was abhorrent. If I were one of the members of their staff, I would be downright mad at their actions. Instead, I was berated by S E V E N s here for stating my mind and standing up to Dr. S.

What is wrong with this community that people are still befriending JerMe, Dr. S, and digigurl despite how they have treated other people? I'm sure that few community members would allow someone to stand in their face in person and shout slurs at them. And if you were suddenly fired, thrown out into the street without warning and without an explanation, wouldn't you curse your boss? Yet, for some reason people have let these two things happen to them online. Think about this: what does it say about you when you stand by and allow things like this to happen?

I realize there may be circumstances that lead to their resignations that we don't know about. If there are, then I hope that those circumstances have been worked out and that everything is OK now. But there are ways of resigning with honor that were not adhered to here, and this resignation was completely disproportionate compared to whatever has happened in the past. How about telling the community a week in advance, at the very least, so that continuity can be achieved?

It's time for everyone to gain some self-respect and stop being bullied around. Nobody can blame AWI or GSK or me or anyone else other than the Caretakers for this current mess. It is the previous Caretakers who have destroyed AWTeen's credibility and have earned the world a reputation for childishness and self-serving behavior.

Finally, let's also keep in mind not only who is guilty, but also who is innocent - the rest of the community. We're all on the same side here - we want to rebuild the world and recover. We should be banding together to fix this mess as soon as possible.

Posted by Brant in Commentary at 07:17