Wednesday, October 31. 2007

A comment about optimism

Over the past few days, I have been working on a proposal to change AWTeen. I had figured that it would be better to actually do something about the things I'm criticizing instead of simply commenting on them. Before I was able to finalize the proposal, however, it was leaked to the Activeworlds forums. Now that it's already publicly available, I figure there's no reason to take it down from the website, so instead I'll comment on its seemed reception.

I should point out that the leaking of the proposal does not state my intent to run for an AWTeen position. If I had wanted to declare my candidacy, you would have known about it in no uncertain terms, and I did not send a telegram to AWTeen Elections with my name (so don't telegram mine either). The proposal was and still is a living document, with about 10 versions being created over the past two days. In fact, those who knew about the proposal can tell you that AlexTheMartian was the Governor candidate just yesterday, and I was trying to convince Eric to take the top spot before I noticed the thread. The proposal was not about me, but about the idea.

The responses to the proposal were very interesting. While there were a few people who actually did read the entire proposal and commented on it, it seemed that others responded simply to disparage the proposal in any way they could. That's not surprising, given that Matthew, SEVENs, and Strike Rapier, who contributed a majority of the comments to the discussion, are running for their own positions. And after those posts, some of which are even self-congratulatory for "killing" the AWDream idea, who in their right mind is going to say they are actually in support? Certainly not the ten other people who telegrammed their support to me both before and after the thread was started.

Yes, they did an excellent job at tearing apart the proposal - so well, in fact, that they caused Chanty to reconsider whether she had ever wanted to be involved with the idea in the first place, and I consider that a tragedy. This whole event makes one wonder whether, if I had posted the same proposal but with my name deleted and replaced it with SEVENs's, nobody would posted any negative comments at all. See, it's easy for people to stand around and complain about how things are bad now. However, I see very little discussion as to why things are bad, and even less as to how to improve what is bad. Instead, the same few people put down everyone who has any ideas for change whatsoever, and that's what's gotten AWTeen into the situation it is in now.

And, of course, those who claim they've "been around longer than two weeks" are clearly demonstrating that they are using their vast store of experience to the absolute fullest in developing a clear path forward for improving AWTeen. It's easy to understand why JerMe, digigurl, and Tony M decided to give up (but not to forgive the way in which they did it) .

Nobody who has ever created something great has started by aiming low. Bill Gates did not start Microsoft with the intent of developing a software company that brought in revenues of $500,000/yr. He saw the potential of the technology and was optimistic about its growth to its current astronomical market share of greater than 90%. Here, however, everyone is like the mom and pop shop on the corner that is content with barely earning enough to keep its one mini-mart open.

Sure, Flagg hasn't said that he would rename the world, but of course he didn't - because nobody thought of the idea at the time! I didn't even have a chance to E-Mail the proposal to him before it was leaked. Those who hold the current mentality of everything negative assume "Well, Flagg didn't say he would rename the world, so he won't even consider it."

Instead, how about the following, equally valid, thought: "Flagg hasn't flatly denied he won't consider renaming the world, and if we produce a well-thought-out proposal with good reasoning, why wouldn't he go for it?"

This might not be the right proposal for AWTeen, but it shouldn't be shot down without consideration. I haven't decided whether or not to follow through with this proposal and get my name on the ballot, or whether someone else wants to take over - or whether nobody should run at all. Some have even suggested that this idea be proposed for a new world instead. What I do know is that I'm not going to be shot down by extreme pessimism, and that I, and those who support the proposal, can decide for ourselves which direction is best to move forward.

Posted by Brant in Commentary at 10:09