

## Of Moving Out and Moving Forward

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This category of the 'Dex is dedicated to the adventures and exploits of the Anime Punch staffers. As some of you may know, we've been known to "do some things", and hopefully this section will be filled with the tales of our "activities" (the ones we can talk about, at least!). I feel it's somewhat fitting that the first post on this site be a tribute to the end of an era, not for the sake of our undying attachment to irony, but as a tribute to the ever forward-looking spirit of the people who make up this convention.

For the last two years many member of the staff of Anime Punch shared a house together. It was a massive frat-style house that at its peak held 15 otaku, three kitchens, seven bathrooms, a cosplay room, a con room, two TV rooms, a server room, a ballroom, a dining room, a jam room, two laundry rooms, a guest room, a box room, a staging room, and even a bar. We had multiple weekly gatherings, including Matsumoto Mondays, Drink-night Tuesdays, Blu-Ray Wednesdays, and Post-club hangouts on Fridays. There were dozens of parties, and rarely was there a day that a guest was not staying over.

To celebrate the end of our tenure at such a glorious compound, we spent some time in each and every room (as well as several roofs, hallways, and closets) and toasted it one last time with a shot. A lot had taken place in that house. Ideas were born, friendships were ended, romances flourished and faded. Anything you could imagine happening, happened there. There had been sword fights and epic wrestling matches. At one point one of the rooms was used to practice break dancing. Grand feasts were prepared in our kitchens, and dozens of people threw up in our bathrooms after too much drinking. People have been rushed to the emergency room, paramedics have arrived, the police have broken up our shenanigans, and even the US Marshalls stormed in once! We've had great moments of camaraderie, terrible betrayals, unprecedented acts of kindness, and shouting matches that nearly turned to violence. It's been an exciting, energizing, exhilarating, and sometimes exhausting couple of years, and to bid it farewell was emotional, even for the most stoic of our members. There was no bitterness or resentment in our recollections, and every story told was done with a smile and a laugh.

Some stories ended in pain, like when Brad locked the third floor bathroom from the inside and climbed out the window, leading to Charles breaking his leg trying to kick down the door in frustration, or Nathan and I knife fighting and eventually cutting deep into my palm. Others in humor, like the time Robert got drunk and ranted for three hours about how he did dishes. Some things were novel in how mundane they were, like Chuck sighing heavily every time he came home, or Wyatt's alarm clock going off for hours, effectively waking everyone but Wyatt himself. Every room had some tale to it, and every tale was a reminder of old friends, old times, and past glory. In the right company memory becomes positively slanted, and there are no bad times. Even the most miserable of days can be remembered fondly, and past drama serves only to remember past friendships. There were many good times, and many bad times, and I think I speak for everyone who was with us that night in saying that we wouldn't have traded any of them for the world.

The last room in the house that we toasted before moving to the porch for our final farewells was the living room. The living room had been the nexus of everything, as it was the first room, and it had the big TV. For visitors and residents alike, it was typically where you went to see what was going on. This room served as the most visible testament to the success of the house, and to the greatness it provided us with, as in two years I think I saw that room empty less than two dozen times. Night or day something would be going on there. Whether it was a staff meeting with the staffers fighting over whether or not Strike Witches was bad enough to be shown in the bad anime room, staffers racing to re-assemble shotguns to test events for the con, Charles looking up porn on the public computer, Zach playing Oblivion, Ryan shooting Nazi Zombies, Wyatt playing little-big-planet, people watching anime, Codi and I watching Adult Swim, the bros shouting at each other in an intense battle of Pokemon Puzzle League, or even just a crowd sitting around talking while the menu of some DVD looped endlessly, this room was always in use and always welcomed anyone who happened to walk by to join.

As we moved to the porch we decided that the greatest legacy that the house left us with was the people we met here. Although I was the guy who got the ball moving and suckered everyone into moving in together, from there to ball kept rolling and gathering speed, and an atmosphere was created that let everyone feel comfortable inviting people over, whether they themselves lived there or not. I myself like all the others have met dozens of people that were invited here. Were it not for the house I would never have gotten to know Asian Nick, Dot, John and Brendon, Michigan Jess, Amanda, Kyle, Nicole, and countless others as well as I have.

At the end of the evening a few of the people were getting a little emotional, and not wanting to let go of the fortress that for so long served as the axis of our social lives. I feel such concerns are misplaced, however. The house facilitated awesome in a way that few things can replicate. It gave a safe harbor to all we knew to hang out without question or fear of over stepping social boundaries. It gave us space and sanctuary to be wild and ridiculous without much worry of what the neighbors would think. However, it was not what made the good times, and it was not what made the good times meaningful. We were, and we will still exist. We will still go on having fun however we can.

I challenge everyone to remember that we decide how to live our lives, and that we must always remember to make the most of the present. If we don't have a good time now, then we won't find ourselves having a good time in the future. If we're unhappy now, we'll only find bitterness in the past. People change, times change, and not everything can go on forever. This is as true for living arrangements as they are for friendships and lifestyles. It's up to us to make the most of those changes. I guess to word things in a way that would be more familiar to the people who know me: "Times change, fucking deal with it and find a new way to kick ass!"