

What We've Been Doing

Steering Committee Update

AT THE FRIENDS OF LULU meeting at the 1994 San Diego Comic-Con, a six-person Steering Committee was elected to carry out the organization and administration of the Friends of Lulu. Since then, through monthly telephone meetings and constant brainstorming, the following items have been addressed:

Incorporation: Following a great deal of research into what kind of nonprofit corporation would best suit FoL's needs, it was decided that incorporating as a mutual benefit nonprofit corporation under California state laws would be the most beneficial. As such, dues are not tax-deductible as charitable contributions. However, professionals can deduct them as business expenses.

During ProCon 3, the six Steering Committee members met and signed the articles of incorporation. These articles have been filed, and Friends of Lulu was officially incorporated on May 25th.

1995 Conventions and Trade Shows: Much of the Steering Committee's time has been spent arranging for representation for Lulu at virtually all of 1995's biggest conventions and trade shows. FoL has been or will be represented at the following shows: WonderCon, Capital City Distribution Sales Conference, Alternative Press Expo, the Small Press Expo, Chicago ComiCon, and the San Diego Expo and Comic-Con. In addition, literature will be available at Colleen Doran's table at various stops of the Spirits of Independence Tour.

Surveys: FoL is currently conducting two informal surveys at trade shows and conventions. One is a reader's survey. Everyone is invited to fill it out, but the emphasis is on women's reading and buying habits. We have already amassed a huge list of comics that women read. The second survey covers retailers, asking how many women go to their stores, how much they spend, which books they buy, and so on. Response to both surveys has been great. After the summer convention season is over, we will compile the surveys and release the results.



Lulupalooza

Social Events: Lulu's social debut (in a red party dress, yet) came at Lulupalooza, held at Rory Root's Comic Relief in Berkeley, in conjunction with ProCon 3. This kickoff party was deemed a smashing success by all who attended. Sponsored by Comic Relief, Dr. Comics and Mr. Games, Flying Colors, Golden Apple, Moondog's, and Night Flight, Lulupalooza was, of course, a great chance to hang out and gab. "A Lulu of a Party" is scheduled during the Chicago Comic-Con, thanks to the generous support of Nancy Ford, Gary Colabuono, and other sponsors.

Media Outreach: Women cartoonists have been a hot topic in the media (including a front page story in the Arts & Leisure section of the *New York Times*). When possible, Lulu members have been available for press interviews and have given an earful of "The World According to Lulu." FoL was mentioned in a story in the *LA Times*, which was then syndicated in several papers around the country, garnering yet more media interest.

Local Chapters: A local chapter is meeting regularly in the San Francisco Bay Area and a New York chapter held its first meeting in June. The Bay Area chapter already has several projects underway, including a minicomic. (See "Announcements," page 2.) Other areas where chapters are in the works include Seattle and Chicago. How about *your* town?

Committees: Action committees are

forming to carry out such goals as fund raising, industry outreach, media outreach, mentoring, and opening a dialog with retailers and distributors.

Membership: FoL is fast approaching having over a hundred members. This makes us one of the largest professional organization in the comic book industry! Yay!

News (continued from page 1)

- **The strange case of Lisa Simpson:** One of Lulu's friends was recently talking to Jason Grode, managing editor of Bongo Comics, and Jason was lamenting the fact that *Lisa Comics*, which Bongo publishes, had been ordered in lesser quantities than other Simpsons titles. Why? Could it have been something to do with the fact that *Lisa* was specifically marketed as a book for girls? Although this would seem to be a case of retailer resistance to girl-oriented material, the story has a happy ending. Jason reports that reorders on *Lisa* have actually been higher than on other Simpsons titles, indicating that the book is reaching the audience and that retailers are taking note. Hooray for Lisa!

- **Newsweek's "Trends" column** reproduced covers from *Action Girl*, *Barb Wire*, *Martha Washington Goes to War*, *Vamps*, *Tank Girl*, and *Kill Your Boyfriend* in a short piece on "tough women in comics." While the piece compares the heroines of these books to Juliette Lewis in *Natural Born Killers* (gee, thanks!), any publicity is good publicity, right?

—Heidi MacDonald

Self-Marketing in the Comics Market – And Beyond

by Deni Loubert

If you're like most "creative people" in comics, especially people who self-publish, you know more about creating a comic than about getting it seen out there once you do it. And you also probably know you'd like to do more about getting it seen, if you just knew how. In this column, I'll be giving a few tips to help you out in just this area. Some of these ideas you may already know and use, and some may be just the thing to use to get more publicity for a project you know would be read and enjoyed by more people if you could just get their attention.

Never underestimate the power of a well-written press release, sent to a journalist who needs a good story. Writing a release has few rules. It can be funny, serious, or something completely different, but remember that a good release should reflect the attitude of the project it publicizes.

Always write in AP style, or you may find your hard work being thrown out unread. You can find an AP stylebook (the bible for publicists and journalists) at your local library. If you can afford it, buy one.

Send out releases on the announcement of the book, on local events you will be attending (conventions, signings, etc.) and about key changes, including new characters, changes in directions, and major happenings in your book. Send these notices to the trade journals (*CBG*, *Wizard*, *Hero Illustrated*, and all those other guys who write about comics now). Equally important, cultivate your own list of journalists who review books and cover the entertainment field for more mainstream publications (such as *The Village Voice* or *Entertainment Weekly*). If you don't know how to find them, go to your local library and look up *The Bacon's Directories*, a marketing guide. These guides exist for broadcast, radio, newspapers, and magazines and list everything in each medium by category, including important editors (so you know the right person to send the release to) and what they do and don't like to get. Send something to them regularly, every two or three months if you can.

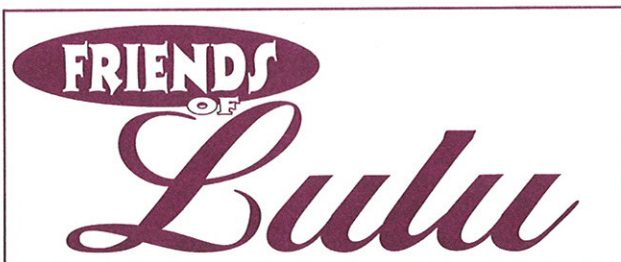
Another way to publicize your book is to send story pitches to specific maga-



zines. A cover letter to introduce yourself goes with your release, with the idea of either you writing an article related to the magazine and your publication or working with one of their writers to do a story about you or your book. A blue sky example: *Love & Rockets'* Gilbert Hernandez doing a story about mythological representation for either *The Circle* magazine (Native American Culture) or *Hispanic American Family* magazine. You can see the possibilities.

You are part of the biggest change in pop culture to happen in years—take advantage of it!

Next time: Store appearances and how to make them work for you!



4657 Cajon Way

San Diego, CA 92115

Cartooning Classes for Women and Girls

Teachers: Lee Marrs, Lee Binswanger,
Trina Robbins

Location: Cartoon Art Museum,
San Francisco

When: Saturdays, beginning in August

Fee: \$15 per class (includes supplies)

Sponsored by the Bay Area Friends of Lulu, in conjunction
with the Cartoon Art Museum. For more information, call
415-227-8666.