

Self-Marketing in the Comics Market – And Beyond

by Deni Loubert

YES, WE ALL KNOW ABOUT store appearances, but how do you make sure that people will actually show up when you come?

To begin with, how much publicity is done by any individual store varies from store to store, so be sure to coordinate your efforts with the store's. You may find you get more done if you are willing to help. The store manager may know some of the local media and only needs you to put together a release or flyer.

But don't take it for granted the store will do publicity for your appearance, as many stores don't know how to do so. (And if you own a store and are reading this, do press releases and get to know your local media. They'll come out to the store if you give them something worth covering. Of course, if the president gets shot that day, you're out of luck!) In any event, always be sure the local media know about the signing by doing your own publicity in addition to any you can count of the store doing.

Send out a press release to the local radio stations, TV stations, daily and

Part Two: Store Appearances

weekly newspapers, and any independent magazines that cover that region. Remember those Bacon books I mentioned last time? Well, here's where they can be a really valuable tool, because the one that covers newspapers lists papers by city, and the one for magazine has a listing of regional magazines (such as *Los Angeles Magazine*) under General Editorial-Metro. Send out announcements to both the calendar section for a listing and to the entertainment editor, inviting them to cover the event. Remember, comics are very hot right now, so you can probably get local media to cover your event if you approach them in a professional manner.

And don't forget to get listed in the CBG for their appearances column. It's how I keep track of local events in Los Angeles and is valuable for connecting

with your own readers in the area.

Finally, be sure you bring extra copies of your books (you can set this up with your distributor) when you arrive for your signing. Some stores are great about remembering to order enough books, and some aren't. **Don't assume the store "took care" of this.** It's hard to drum up enthusiasm if there aren't any books available for you to sign.

And always be positive! Remember that this could be a major event for a fan or some would-be writer or artist. Don't discourage them by complaining how no one reads your book or that you aren't happy with a particular retailer, distributor, or whatever. It's

up to you to handle the fans so that they walk away feeling good about coming out to meet you. Remember that store appearances can be fun, if you work to make them so! (And let me tell you, a good one can sell a lot of books and bring new regular readers onboard!)



Next time: How to get the "big guys" to pay attention to your masterpiece.



4657 Cajon Way

San Diego, CA 92115



Jennifer Graves

JENN

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
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ATLANTA, GA
PERMIT NO. 4516

Johanna Draper
2601 Pennsylvania Ave., Apt. 934
Philadelphia PA 19130