

Chapter Reports

NYC Chapter

With a few breaks for blizzards, FoL-New York has kept up its monthly meeting schedule. The well-attended Christmas Party was very mirthful and everyone got their share of Christmas cookies. FoL-NY also organized the Lulu booth for the January Great Eastern Show in Philadelphia. The show turned out to be lightly attended due to bad weather, but FoL got 12 new members (actually making more money than some exhibitors!) and the booth was graced by a new addition: a jointed giant figure of Wonder Woman. See the pictures accompanying this for more of the fun. FoLers staffing the booth noted that that many people came up to the booth having heard of the organization and eager to join. Word is spreading!

FoL-NY held a fund-raiser on March 1 during the ill-fated Great Eastern Convention. Attendees voted with their money on which of a panel of four luminaries would get a pie thrown at him or her at the end of the evening: Mike Carlin, Mark Gruenwald, Kevin Dooley and, ulp, Heidi MacDonald. Guess who won? Anything for Lulu! Pix next time!

Due to a scheduling problem, the February meeting was held at DC Comics. Special thanks to Martha Thomases and Paul Levitz for making it possible.

—Heidi MacDonald

Lulu in Hollywood

FoL's Tinseltown branch held its first meeting January 20, at the LA Central Library. (Thanks to member/librarian Gene Mandelcorn for making this possible.) Twenty-four Lulus were eager to get right down to business . . . brainstorming!

Many ideas were suggested to promote Lulu awareness. PR at the local level might include art shows, personal appearances, video screenings, and other events likely to attract media attention.

There was also a strong interest in encouraging "Lulus of tomorrow" via mentoring programs, portfolio reviews, school talks, and the like.

Some cybermatters required clarification at the national level. A list of questions was created to submit to the board, regarding e-mail, web pages, chat rooms, and so on?



Left: Bill Tucci signing at the The FoL booth at the Philadelphia Great Eastern Show.



Right: Heidi MacDonald, Mike Ellis, Elayne Wechsler-Chaput, Paul Storrie, Ruth Morrison

But what does everyone really want? T-shirts!!

Finally, elections were held, with Ilia Carson becoming our president, and David "Scoop" Seidman, secretary. [Editor's note: David has since had to withdraw from this position, but thanks to this long-time Luluite for helping get things off the ground.] Without his help and that of Deni Loubert, this column could not have been assembled by Jack Enyart

"Man About Toon"

Bay Area Chapter

FoL—NorCal is busy preparing for the Second Annual LuluPalooza, to be held during Pro/Con and Wonder Con in Oakland in mid-April. Member Rory Root has once again offered his store, Comic Relief, in Berkeley as the site. NorCal is also planning to staff the Lulu booth at A.P.E. in San Jose on March 23 as well as at Wonder Con April 26–28. NorCal was having its March meeting as we were going to press—they'll have a full report in the next newsletter!

Committee Chairs/Contacts

Membership Committee

(Goal: Expand the FoL membership base)
Monika Livingston
P.O. Box 910
Brookdale, CA 95007
408-335-3888

Public Relations Outreach

(Goal: Produce PR outside the comics industry)
Martha Thomases
c/o DC Comics
212-636-5450

Inside Industry Public Relations

(Goal: Promote FoL and its activities within the comics industry)
Heidi MacDonald
Cooper Station, P.O. Box 1484
New York, NY 10276-1484
212-533-9630

Nontraditional Venues Committee

(Goal: Get comics into venues outside the direct market)
Liz Schiller
607 N. Tioga Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-273-4132

Fundraising Committee

(Goal: Find ways for FoL to raise funds for projects)
Heidi MacDonald (see above)

Mentoring Committee

(Goal: Set up mentoring relationships among members)
Liz Schiller (see above)

Regional Chapters Committee

(Goal: Establish procedure for national-regional coordination)
Anina Bennett
5131 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, OR 97215
503-234-0269

Newsletter Committee

(Goal: Produce a regular FoL newsletter)
Heidi MacDonald (see above)
Jackie Estrada
4657 Cajon Way
San Diego, CA 92115
619-286-1591

Technology Committee

(Goal: Set up a web site and give FoL a presence on the Internet)
Jerry Stratton
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619-270-6327
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If you would like to participate in any of these committees and have not yet been contacted to be involved, please feel free to write or call the contact person.

Comics for Girls in Japan

by Trina Robbins

On October 27, Steve Leialoha and I, along with cartoonists Arvell Jones, Sergio Aragonés, and Jerry Robinson, flew to Japan for a week as guests of the Osamu Tezuka Foundation. Tezuka, creator of Astroboy and Kimba the White Lion, among other characters, is considered the Walt Disney of Japanese comics (manga) and animation. Although he died in 1989, Dr. Tezuka left a foundation and a museum in Takarazuka, a small city near Kyoto, which we visited. We also visited two of the major Japanese manga publishers (Kodansha and Shogakukan), had a long discussion with editors from three manga publishers, and another meeting with manga artists.

Here's what I learned about manga for girls in Japan: There are about 500 women writing and drawing manga for girls in Japan. Kodansha's line starts with a 450-page comic book (it's the size of a phone book!) for girls ages 7-14 (average age 10) called *Nakayoshi* (Friendship) that sells 1.8 million copies a month. From here they go to another monthly for girls in junior high, called

Young Girls Friend. Readers can then move to a book for high school girls, then one for college-age young women (*Mini Kiss*) and even a book for women (*Be Love*). (Never mind the titles; they sound funny translated into English.) The other publishers have similar lines.

The star book is *Sailor Moon*, an animated version of which has been airing in America, which is about a group of cute school girls who become superheroines. *Sailor Moon* has been turned into dolls, paper dolls, candy, toys, phone cards, lip gloss, pins, calendars, you name it. At an amusement park in Takarazuka, I saw a live *Sailor Moon* stage show. It has been translated into Italian and French, and over a period of three years, *Sailor Moon* has sold over 300 billion copies.

All the publishers find talented high school and junior high girls—they get over 400 submissions every month—and nurture them with special teaching programs for learning to do girls' manga.

At Shogakukan, we were shown how they fold gifts and freebies (punchout paper dolls, little boxes you can fold up your-



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self, posters, cards, stickers and stationary, etc.) inside the books meant for the youngest girls, to improve sales. They lose money on these inserts—and they know

it!—but they make it back on their line for older girls, and this way they acquire their readers for the next line up. All the other manga publishers do this, too.

I met Amachiko Satonaka, a superstar artist for Kodansha. She told me (through an interpreter) that there is very little difference in opportunities in manga for men or women. She said there didn't used to be as many women in the industry as there are today. There were about 30 women in the '50s, then 100-200 by the '60s. She said the girls' comics industry grew because readers liked the comics, the comics sold, and the publishers had to pay attention. It all makes so much sense! The fact that American comic book publishers are not doing even the smallest fraction of what Japanese publishers are doing for girls is evidence of either criminal negligence or inexcusable stupidity.



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