

Letters to Lulu

Susan Alston

Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
Northampton, MA

As a member of FoL, and the Director of another nonprofit, charitable organization within the comic book industry, I would like to be clear about the goals and mission of the Friends of Lulu. It is my understanding from our brochure that our purpose is (1) to increase female readership of comics, (2) to promote the work of and improve working conditions for women in comics, (3) to offer networking opportunities for women in comics, and (4) to facilitate communication among women who share the organization's purpose. With this in mind, and after re-reading the FoL newsletters, I would like to suggest that rather than spend our money on "Social Events: parties at Chicago & San Diego," as stated in the 1996 goals in the March newsletter, that the money be designated for grants or scholarships for aspiring women cartoonists. I don't see that having parties is a very good use of our money. Even though it may be fun, our goals are supposed to be more philanthropic. Heidi MacDonald's column, "Little Girls, Big Dreams," made it perfectly clear

to me that there is a need for encouraging females to pursue comics as a career, and providing them with the monetary means to that end would be money much better spent—rather than on parties.

On another note I would like to comment on some (of what I perceive to be) subtle male-bashing and references to censoring fleshy costumes at cons as mentioned in the October 1995 "Lulu's Diary" and newsletter. I realize that everyone has a right to an opinion on any issue, but for an organization that purports to support comics and females in comics, portions of the newsletter seem contrary (almost hypocritical) to our purpose. Also, I think that the author of "Lulu's Diary" should be identified in the column and if it is an individual's opinion it should be so stated. And, is it necessary to cover the political and social events of the comic book industry in our newsletter? How does it relate to our mission to review Bill Tucci's party or make surreptitious comments about thongs, boys' toys, and fanboys—is this



an FoL newsletter or a gossip bulletin?

In addition, there seem to be regular derogatory references about males scattered throughout the newsletters. Intentional or not, they bother me. I like men and boys, I like the diversity between males and females. We have no control over what gender we are born to. We are different, and I enjoy and appreciate (and sometimes loathe) the differences. I comprehend that we are separate genders yet equal beings, and I hope

that FoL members think similarly. Otherwise, we are not going to accomplish our goals and we will lose the respect of the very people we wish to attract to our membership.

Heidi MacDonald replies: Well, I like men and boys, too. (Egads, what a straight line, but I'm biting my lip.) Obviously, male-bashing has no place in either *Lulu's Clubhouse* or FoL policy. I do reserve the right to ridicule sexist attitudes, however, since they are ridiculous, whether they're held by men or women. I think it's important to observe the distinction between perceived male-bashing and criticizing the status quo of the comics industry, with its 95% male readership. Refuting the idea that "women don't like to read comics" (which I have heard expressed dozens and dozens of times since we started FoL) is central to our purpose.

"Lulu's Diary" is written by several contributors. I wanted to include it in *Lulu's Clubhouse* because our newsletter doesn't have to worry about advertisers (like CBG and Wizard) or owners (like Fan, TCJ,

LULU'S DIARY

(Note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of individual contributors and not official statements from FoL.)

Safety in Numbers: First it was a trickle, now it's a stampede of former self-publishers joining up with various "group" publishers. Among those who made the jump: FoL member Colleen "A Distant Soil" Doran to Eric Larsen's Image/Highbrow Comics; Martin "Hepcats" Wagner to Antarctic; Teri S. "Wandering Star" Wood to Sirius; and Terry "Strangers in Paradise" Moore to Jim Lee's Homage imprint. In addition, Caliber's new all-ages line is now home to Scott Roberts (Patty Cake), Terry Collins and Bill Neville (Explorers), and Jimmy Gownley (Shades of Gray). publisher's rep gleefully proclaimed in an online message? Not the case, say many longtime self-publishers, who chose this route because they wanted total control over their product . . .

Meanwhile, insiders say that it was Diamond's three-tiered catalog listing system that made a lot of self-pubbers make the move. Indie books were usually lost wayyyy in the back of the catalog, and retailers had exhausted their budget on front-of-the-catalog books by the time they got to the "Select" section. . . . Diamond has responded by returning to a two-tiered system . . . Speaking of all-ages comics . . . Caliber's new line is the kind of trend we'd like to see catch on—publishing a variety of titles with appeal to a broader audience fits right in with FoL's goals . . . In fact, as the superhero ship seems to be taking on more and more water, more and more publishers are talking about all ages and women. This talk was all over the place at Pro/Con, the industry's #1 schmoozefest. Could it be that Lulu was right all along?

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Editors: Jackie Estrada and Heidi MacDonald

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Dedicated to Marjorie Henderson Buell