

Survey Results

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of store (13.26% for small, 12.07% for medium, and 13.21% for large).

The retailers were asked what percentage of their female customers fell within certain age groups, and what percentage of their male customers fell into those same age ranges. Female customers are more prevalent in the 23–35 age group, with a large number also coming in at college age (18–22). Male customers also seem to follow this pattern. However, while both young males and females (ages 4–12) appear to start out in stores in similar percentages, males appear to become more concentrated customers at a faster rate than females. There is also a quicker drop-off of women customers at ages 36–50 than seen in male customers of the same age range.

The retailers were also asked to break down their female customer base by how frequently they shopped in the store (one or more times per week, once every other week, once per month, and less than 12 times per year). Females seem to be fairly evenly spread in their shopping habits. When asked how often mothers come in to shop for their children, forty retailers replied mothers came in often, sixty-six said they came in only occasionally, thirteen said only during holiday shopping seasons, and one retailer said no mothers ever came into the store.

The retailers were asked to list the top five books sold to females in their store. As with the consumer survey, “families” of titles were often named instead of individual books (e.g., “X-titles”). The total number of mentions for those books is the number of retailers either mentioning a specific book within that family or the family itself. The top eleven (tenth place was a tie) titles mentioned were: *Sandman* (64 mentions), *X-Men* titles (59), *Elfquest* titles (41), *X-Files* (36), *Bone* (23), *Vertigo* titles (20), *Star Trek* titles (19), *Strangers in Paradise* (18), *Archie* titles (16), *Lady Death* (14), and *Star Wars* titles (14).

Most of the retailers replied that females also bought other types of merchandise in their stores, with cards, magazines, clothing, and games the most frequently mentioned items. Other items mentioned by retailers as being bought by females included books, vid-



eos (including Japanese titles), pins/jewelry, pogs, *Star Trek*/*Star Wars* collectible items, compact discs, gift/novelty items, dolls, comics supplies, and sports collectibles.

Only thirty-four retailers reported that they had ever used store promotions aimed at attracting female customers. However, those stores using such promotions reported on average a higher per-

centage of female customers than those stores that do not use such promotions (averages of 18.53% and 11.58% respectively). Smaller stores were more likely to try these promotional efforts than large or medium-sized stores (39.3% of small stores, as opposed to 19.3% of medium and 19% of large).

Some of the actual promotions described by the retailers included offering incentives for male customers to introduce a female to comics; producing a radio commercial talking about products that would appeal to women; Valentine's Day specials; signings by female creators; giving comic books to females who accompany males to the store for them to read while their companion is shopping; and “Ladies Night” once a week when a 25% discount is offered to female purchasers.

Several other promotions were described by the retailers. Additionally, many of the retailers were generous with suggestions and ideas for attracting and keeping more female customers and readers. For further information about this survey, or to request a copy of the full report, please write to the newsletter address or call me at 770-984-9419.

Announcements

Designer Needed: The Retailer Handbook Committee is currently looking for a volunteer to design the book and handle the desktop production. The Handbook will be 64 pages of information gathered from successful retailers on getting more women and children to shop in their stores. If you are interested, send samples of your work to Handbook Committee, Friends of Lulu, 4657 Cajon Way, San Diego, CA 92215.

Chapter Coordination: The Regional Chapter Coordinator urgently needs interested members to assist with starting up regional Lulu chapters and maintaining national/regional communication. If you'd like to help coordinate chapter activity or start a chapter in your area (please specify which), contact Anina Bennett via mail (P.O. Box 14278, Portland, OR 97293-0278), fax (503/236-7144), or e-mail (bigred@teleport.com).

Portfolio Reviewers Needed: Friends of Lulu will be doing portfolio reviews at the Comic-Con International: San Diego in order to give prospective artists honest feedback. Although all portfolios will be

reviewed, the primary goal is to give beginning female artists honest feedback on their work. If you would like to participate in looking at portfolios, contact Samantha Sackin at 213-489-8250.

Art Show Submissions Sought: Ellen Vartanoff will be curating a show of political cartoons and other comics art entitled “To Be PC or Not To Be PC” that will open on September 22 at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia. Vartanoff is planning to give one wall of the show over to Friends of Lulu and is accepting submissions of art. Call her at 301-460-8636 for more information. The show will be the same weekend as the Small Press Expo in Bethesda.

Don't Lose Lulu!

Remember to send us a change of address if you move or (if you're getting Lulu mail at work) change jobs. Send us a change of address notice, so you stay in the Lulu loop!