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Comic book lovers, artists gather at 'Comic Con'

CONVENTION: Local dealers and even a cardboard Pamela Anderson were on hand

By Elisabeth Forsythe
Freelance Reporter

The Portland Comic Convention took place March 3, at the Memorial Coliseum's Exhibit Hall.

The Comic Con, as those in the know call it, is a huge, crowded place filled with vendors from local stores all hawking their wares. Hundreds of devotees mill around, looking for the greatest deal, the rarest comic, or perhaps just the right contacts.

Charles Marier, a Eugene comic book artist who previously had a daily strip published in the *Emerald*, was signing autographs and selling his own comic, *Thoughtful Man*.

He said his last show was in Eugene, but was slow compared to the one in Portland. "The Eugene show was our first. We had nothing to compare it to, but from the people we've met up here, we've already doubled our business."

His wife, Sherri, agrees. "As small as we are, it's going really well," she said.

Comic book collectors attending the convention could find



Vendors at the Portland Comic Book Convention, which took place March 3, sold anything from vintage Archie comics to Jihad role-playing cards to collectors from all over the state.

anything from ancient *Archie* and *X-Men* comics to comics from the 1970s and 1980s. *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* figures and regalia were also up for sale, as well as movie paraphernalia, role playing games and sports cards.

Prices ranged from \$45 for a near-mint-condition *Superman* comic from the 1950s to boxes of 50 cent "gems" which crowded under the tables. These boxes contained special "deals" for those looking for *Teen Titans* from the 1980s or John Byrne-drawn *Fantastic Fours*.

Collectors believe these deals

make the Comic Con worthwhile, and for the patient, discerning forager, they can be found in almost every category.

The reason for the great prices? Many vendors use the Comic Con as a means of getting rid of their overstock.

If a vendor happens to have too much of a particular item, the prices can be rock bottom. At one table a box of *Jihad*, a role-playing card game, was \$50, while the same cards could be found at another table for half the price.

There were also several movie displays from films such as *Pulp*

Fiction and *Species*, and even a life-size cut-out of Pamela Anderson of *Baywatch*. Mike Duffield, a vendor, said, "We've been telling everyone that she's for sale, but everyone's like, 'My wife will kill me!'"

Alan Fritz, 13, said that the Portland show was more fun than similar shows he has attended at places like the Portland Expo Center. "It's easier to get around here," he said.

Alan had a large number of *Overpower* playing cards he bought with Christmas money saved specifically for the convention. "I've been waiting for this for a while," he said.

One of the few girls at the show, Maureen Sander, was looking for one of her favorite teams, Power Pack, from the comic book of the same name. "I've read comic books since I was about seven or eight. I brought a list [of comics I want] with me," she said.

Debra Stansbury, secretary for the Science Fiction Museum, a traveling museum of collectibles, said that there are not many women interested in comic books, but she likes collecting them because, "It gives me something to talk about with men. A lot of women just don't understand."

The next Comic Convention will take place June 23, in Portland.

Association destroys women's stereotypes, challenges traditions

AWARENESS: Speakers discussed civil rights, medical leave, reproductive choices, discrimination and harassment

By Elisabeth Forsythe
Freelance Reporter

The American Association of University Women met March 9, at the Eugene Hotel to discuss how women's roles have changed over the past century.

The women welcomed newcomers and guests, especially the younger people.

"We don't quite think of ourselves as decrepit, but if you're very young, we seem very old," said Peg Emery, a membership co-chairperson.

The topics at the meeting were anything but old. The association said it hopes to raise awareness about problems of particular importance to professional women. The most basic of these issues is equality in the work force.

Speakers at the meeting explained how the AAUW is working to destroy negative stereotypes that have plagued women for years. The group challenged the myths "We all know women's brains are biologically inferior" and "You don't need this job, so we're giving it to a man with a family."

The AAUW was founded in 1885 to support the notion that women should be allowed

to go to college. Back then, the notion was considered a joke and impossible. Now the AAUW is active in working with modern issues like civil rights, family and medical leave, reproductive choices, sexual discrimination and harassment.

In addition to its political goals, the AAUW said it wants to organize University women and to provide a social forum for them. It has interest groups ranging from books to bridge and from cooking to travel.

Each year, members of the association take a bed and breakfast tour. Highlights of the tour include presentations to the group by special guests like artists, writers and quilting clubs at each bed and breakfast. Members sell tickets for this event to fund their Ola Love Fellowship, a grant of \$1,500 to a female University graduate student.

June Boles, another membership co-chairperson, said women have greater difficulty obtaining money for graduate school than men. She said she hopes the grant will enable young women to have an equal opportunity to attend graduate school.

In the latter part of the meeting, discussion leaders Ruth Nelson and Mima Spencer talked about the change in women's roles in society.

"Women's work ordinarily has been bearing and raising children," Nelson said. "Everything else had to work around that."

This is no longer the only option for women

in the workforce.

"[The AAUW is] interested in how changes for women have altered their hopes, aspirations and particularly [their] expectations," said Nelson.

Both discussion leaders praised modern machines for lifting the burden of housework from women and freeing up more time and energy for women to pursue their goals.

Speaker Gayle Townsend Whitman said some women still opt for the security of a husband and family despite advances in the women's liberation movement. "Women defeat themselves because we are afraid to step out [of our traditional roles]," Townsend Whitman said.

Women have overcome the time when it was considered wrong to work but now face the attitude that it is wrong not to work. Some women who assumed they would be professionals now struggle with the desire or necessity to stay at home with their children.

The speakers emphasized the need for women to compartmentalize their professional and personal lives.

"You're not giving up by choosing one or the other," Boles said.

A yearly membership to the Eugene branch of the AAUW costs \$52. The fee for student affiliates is \$20. For more information, contact June Boles at 484-0019 or Peg Emery at 344-4321.

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