

(Here is Mike Friedrich's Foreword, which was inadvertently omitted from the book.)

# FOREWORD

I remember when I was a young comics writer in my late teens and early twenties, watching older artists in their fifties and sixties answering questions put to them by young fans. The artists were frequently quite uncomfortable because they hadn't paid much attention at the time and they had a hard time remembering details. Fortunately for me, now that it's my turn for people to be fascinated about my old comics work, I *had* paid attention. Thus it's a great pleasure to be part of Richard Arndt's labor of love, the *Star\*Reach Companion*, that you're now holding.

The extended discussion Richard and I had a few years ago, reprinted here, covers most of the historical issues about the Star\*Reach publications period, so I won't repeat those now. But I would like to put in an extra word or three about the value in following your enthusiasms. I knew very little about publishing at the age of 23 when I realized that the existing publishers at the time were not taking full advantage of both the enthusiasm of the new young artists and the enthusiasm of the older comics fans who were then beginning to cluster around comics speciality stores. It was my enthusiasm that propelled the steep learning curve I experienced as I launched and fitfully sustained a publishing business. Eventually that lack of knowledge tripped me up, but not until I'd gotten 30 interesting comics into the world, and the experience I gained enabled me to launch into the next phases of my comics career.

The second value that was important was treating my personal and professional relationships as ones of mutual respect and honor. It was those kinds of relationships that enabled me to find established contributors at the beginning of Star\*Reach. I attempted to be as transparent as possible to artists, distributors, and production facilities about what was going on at the time (when I was inaccurate it was because I let my enthusiasm outweigh some countervailing realities). At the end of the publishing run, as cash was disappearing too fast, it was the strength of my relationships with my contributors, printer, and color separators that enabled me to get the last handful of issues published before I closed the doors. Even then, after publication ceased, I made sure to pay everyone in full, though that took a couple of years to accomplish. I'm convinced those actions enabled me to receive industry cooperation when I later tried out new enthusiasms, like producing comics industry trade shows (which failed); a comic convention, Wonder-Con (which succeeded); and most especially an agency for artists, which sustained me for 20 years.

Richard Arndt has produced a treasure trove of facts, flavored with an insightful critical perspective. I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I did in publishing the comics themselves.

— Mike Friedrich