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From cartoons to comics culture, Michael Cavna gets his geek on.

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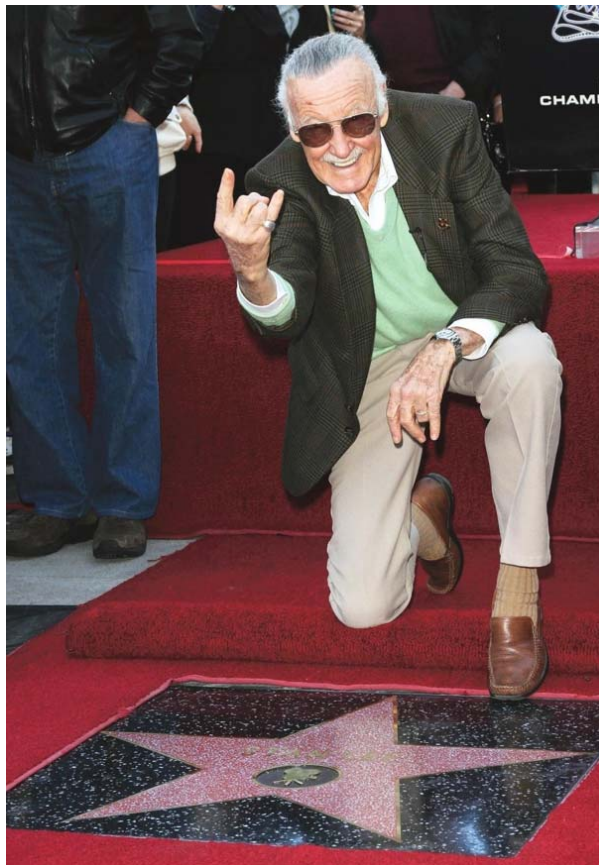
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Posted at 09:00 AM ET, 08/13/2011
Literacy Campaign: STAN LEE to throw out first pitch at Nats game

By [Michael Cavna](#)



The newest hurler to pitch at Nationals Park is already an all-star. (VALERIE MACON - AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

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The Nationals have reached a deal with one veteran who has a long history of producing web gems.

Before the "Spider-Man" co-creator heads to the [Baltimore Comic-Con](#) next weekend to promote new projects, **Stan Lee** will have another pitch to make: He'll throw out the ceremonial first ball Aug. 19 before the Nationals' home game against the Phillies, he says.

"Hope I'll be able to reach the catcher when I toss the ball," Lee quips to Comic Riffs on Friday. "Is it okay to roll it?"

This from the Marvel mastermind who helped create X-Men, in which Colossus and Wolverine's favorite battle move is "the fastball special."

"Only kidding — I used to be a great pitcher," continues the legendary "Stan the Man" *not* named Musial. "Of course, that was many decades ago," adds the rangy Lee, 88.

The Nationals Park appearance helps kick off the East Coast literacy campaign of the Stan Lee Foundation, which is teaming with area comic shops to donate books to youngsters.

"I started the Stan Lee Foundation for one main purpose: to do whatever I could to fight illiteracy in children," Lee says. His foundation is teaming with Unified Industries and the College Success Foundation, which works with tweens and teens to help prepare them for high school and college.

"Any child who grows up illiterate, unable to read and write — or even semi-literate — can be considered handicapped," Lee tells Comic Riffs. "Competition throughout the world has grown so keen that every young person needs every possible advantage to even the competitive playing field. The ability to read well, to study, comprehend and process information is absolutely vital for success as an adult."

In announcing the campaign, College Success Foundation's D.C. executive director Herbert Tillery and United Industries/Stan Lee Foundation leader Theodore Adams said in a statement that literacy is a cornerstone to success. Locally, College Success Foundation focuses its resources and services in Wards 7 and 8.

"As one who has dealt with reading and writing all my life," notes Lee, who is also guest of honor at the Baltimore convention (Aug. 20-21), "I wish every young person could experience the satisfaction that comes with the ability to read, enjoy and benefit from the written word."

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