



Your uncle and mine, Mr. Griffiths, has weakened his will and lowered his standards so that I, a humble comic collector and admirer of the sequential graphic narrative, may bring to you a variety of suggestions and recommendations as to what's hot and what's not in the world of comics.

In the coming weeks, I will be reviewing all sorts of new stuff; but seeing as how the summer has just about been wrapped up, I felt it would be more appropriate to give a bit of an overview to what came out this summer.

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## STUDENT TAXI

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### BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE (\$4.75 Can.) - DC Comics

This actually came out with a shred of good sense. Produced by a British duo, it is clearly a classic in the Batman mythos. Written by Alan Moore, who was awarded godhood for his 'Watchmen' mini-series. *The Killing Joke* is the origin of Batman's arch-nemesis; the Joker, who he is, and how he came to be. The artwork, by Brian Bollard, is dynamic and immaculate. To reveal details of the story is futile, as I could fill at least a page droning on and on.

Suffice to say, this is the Dark Knight at his best and the Clown Prince of Crime at his worst. The first printing sold out in a matter of days and presently sells anywhere from \$15 to \$20. Don't worry! A second printing is available at comic shops at the cover price of \$4.75. Excellent, but not for the tykes.

### THE SPIRIT (\$2.60 Can.) Kitchen Sink Comics

In last year's *Brunswickan*, this incredible piece of work was erroneously described as 'a parody'. This really pissed me off, to say the least. *The Spirit*, by Will Eisner, ran as a weekly 8-page color comic insert in major newspapers all over North America from June 1940 until late in 1952. The stories were set in Central City and concerned a young criminologist named Denny Colt who was thought to be dead. Colt let that thought persist and donned a mask and gloves to fight crime outside the law as the 'Spirit'. Each story was complete in eight pages, although longer plot lines carried through several episodes. Locales varied from the Waterfront of Central City to Indo-China and the Caribbean. When it began in 1940, the Spirit looked like many other comics, differing only in format and the hero's 'costume'.

Will Eisner is one of the true masters of comic book art and has inspired such artists as Frank Miller, William Messner-Loeb, and countless others. **RALPH SMART ADVENTURES (\$2.25 Can.) - Now Comics**

This is Yowza!! Mega fun stuff. Ralph is a former CPA, taken prisoner by the diabolical Dr. Goot and subjected to incredibly mind-numbing experiments. He wanders the countryside aimlessly until he collapses and dreams an incredible dream. Absolute craziness!

Mark Hanson is the fellow responsible for the carnage wreaked upon the world of comics by Ralph Smart and Hansen should be rewarded for doing so.

### Do buy Ralph Smart! Humor unbounded! SAVAGE HENRY (\$2.25 Can.) - Vortex Comics

This particular comic is a big hit with the crew at CHSR-FM. Henry is the lead guitarist in the 'Bull Daggers' (Bugtown's premiere insect rock group.) Conrad Schnitzler is the German synthesist and also was a founding member of Tangerine Dream. The residents perform sonic wizardry. Nash the Slash is the mistreated violinist. The elder god, Ford C'thulu is the percussionist. No place is safe from their sonic pursuits.

Matt Howarth, artist and writer, is very much into the cutting edge of music. Each issue of *Savage Henry* includes several 'Real Music' strips where Howarth reviews and recommends such albums/tapes as Ministry's *Twitch*, *Scornflakes*, *Scorn in USA* and Micheal Chocholak's *Ear Tracks* as well as addresses to where they can be obtained.

### JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL (\$1.00 Can.)-DC Comics

This used to be, for the most part, a dull, slow super-hero team book called the Justice League of America. Sure, there were highpoints, but it was terminally ill and finally, it succumbed. Then, in 1986-87, amidst a popular resurgence of old characters brought up-to-date, the JLI was reborn. It is more than just a team of super heroes with slight character differences. This is a sit-com.

Characters that have been around for 3 decades or more seem fresh and new in the hands of plot maker Keith Griffan and scriptor, Jean-Marc Denatteis. The artwork is equally good. New to the field, Kevin Maguire has quickly become a highly sought after artist. If you want to read a good, solid, entertaining comic with laughs, action, and lots more; get the new *Justice League International*.

Well, that's all that I'm going into just now, but there's lots more out there that's very good reading.

Here is a quick list of titles that I highly recommend:

**NEXUS-(First Comics)**. Science fiction with just about everything else, too. One of the most critically acclaimed comics of the 80's. By Mike Boran and Steve Ride.

**EDDIE CURRENT-(Mad Dog Graphics)**. An insane asylum patient escapes, meets a nun who gets kidnapped, tries out his fusion suit and has to be back by 6 a.m. for bed check. By Ted McKeever.

**AMAZING SPIDERMAN -(Marvel Comics)**. Vancouver artist Todd McFarlane has captured Spider Man perfectly. This is a great looking book with fantastic stories. Easily as good as the originals by Lee Ditko.

Now for some WARNINGS: The following comics should only be used for hand to hand combat:

**WOLFPACK, \$1.25, (Marvel Comics)**. Teen gang fights crime. Not a bad idea, but the end result sucks!

**NEW GUARDIANS, \$1.75, (DC Comics)**. Gross. A spin-off from a mini-series, called *Millenium*, that inflicted terrible pain upon most of its readers and left this unwanted tragedy in its slimy wake.

**EX-MUTANTS**. Who cares how much it costs? Whatever it is, it's too much. To steal a line from Monty Python, 'This is a comic for laying down and avoiding.'

Unfortunately, there will be more of these warning next time, too.

Before I go, I want to let you know that I have an extensive collection of reference books on comics and their history. I would welcome any inquiries concerning them.

CALLUM JOHNSTON  
C/O BRUNSWICKAN RM35  
STUDENT UNION BLDG.

Your answers can be found in future reviews, or can be sent out personally.

Now for some vital information as to where to buy comics; now adays, most comics are not available at the newsstand. A new industry known as 'direct sales' has grown so that many new and smaller comic publishers can afford to distribute their books to direct sales outlets, or comic shops at a less expensive rate. You can find most comic shops listed in the yellow pages under Books - Used and Rare.

To name a few:  
A Collector's Dream - Fredsville  
Sorcerer's Store - St. John  
Loyalist City Coins - "  
Wilkie's Wonderful World - Halifax  
Moncton, Dartmouth  
Million Comics - Moncton  
Odyssey 2000 - Halifax

From 'The Killing Joke,' hard to believe but Batman comics cool and pretty damned scary



Cover from the latest ex-mutants loosely based on what happened when Marti came to visit me last year



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