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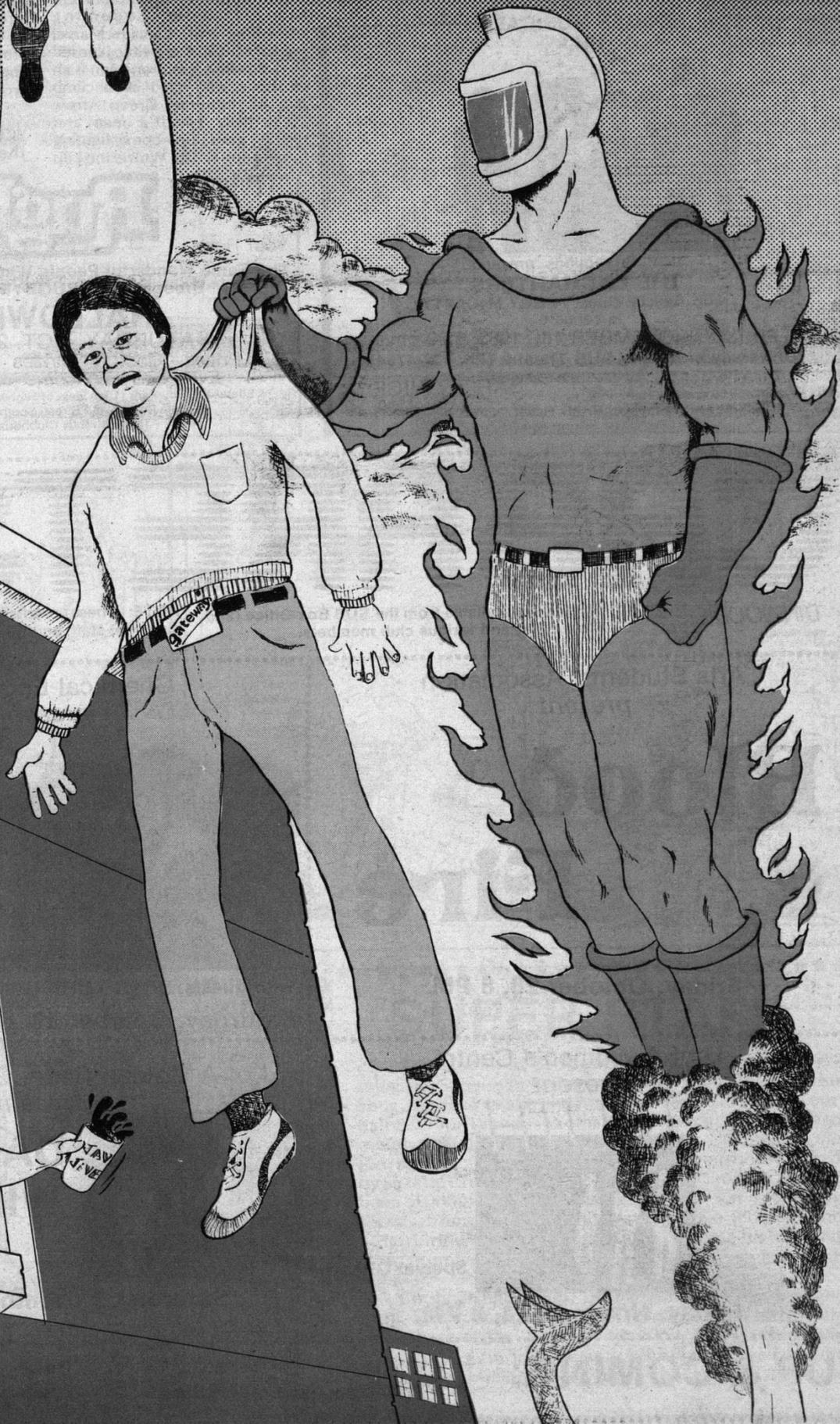
GOSH AND GOLLY!  
THAT MALEVOLENT  
JOHNNY BURNOUT  
IS DRAGGING OFF  
OUR EDITOR!  
(WHERE IS MY  
CAMERA?)

JEEPERS!!  
THIS CALLS FOR A  
REALLY HARD-HITTING  
EDITORIAL!  
(WHERE'S MY THESAURUS?)

NO! THIS LOOKS  
LIKE A JOB FOR  
CAPTAIN GATEWAY!!  
(WATCH MY COFFEE)  
YOU JERK!



IAN FERGUSON '83



Layout and Design by GKH

# Comics growing up... costly, but mature

**by Wesley Oginski**  
In the early days of the comic book, many independent companies published comic books. E.C. or Red Circle are just names of a few of them.

"Today we're seeing an explosion in the independent field," says Bruce Thomson, a comic collector and co-owner of Darkstar Collectables. There are more independent companies publishing today than ever before. "The big thing in today's market are the independents because they allow their artists more control."

We can define independents in two categories, but they do have some things in common. First, the independents do not approach the size of the two large conglomerates, Marvel and D.C. Thomson explains the major difference though. "Marvel and D.C. have set policies they must publish under. Independents aren't published under the Comics Code Authority."

With the popularity of the independent brands D.C. and Marvel are feeling the effects. The decline in sales experienced by number one publisher Marvel is generally attributed to rises in the sales of independents. Also, both conglomerates have begun to publish new lines of comic books outside of their set policies, as prescribed by the Comics Code Authority.

"The Comics Code Authority has practically lost all power," he says. "One of the more unfortunate things in comics today is its leading to violence." One of the popular independent titles available details the adventures of a mercenary, and many others rely on the use of graphic violence and sexual innuendo.

For this and other reasons, Thomson says, "I think the independents are going to die over the next two or three years." Another reason is inflation. "95¢ for a comic is atrocious. Over the past five years I've seen the price

rise from 25¢ to 95¢. All the independents sell for a dollar and a quarter."

Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on your perspective, there are a lot of people who are willing to pay the higher prices. So it appears Marvel and D.C. are here to stay. Thomson does say two independent companies have a chance of surviving the upcoming turmoil. "Sales wise I would have to say FIRST Comics is best. Quality wise, Pacific Comics stand out," he says. "I see FIRST and P.C. surviving."

Yet another type of independent

will also probably survive. "The independent books that do very well are the lines that sell only one book," he says.

"One of the finest independents published today," Thomson says, "and has world acclaim is *Cerebus*." It is the only comic book sold in the Soviet Union from the western hemisphere and it has high European sales. "It is the highest selling number one independent title and it's Canadian." *Cerebus* is published from Toronto and Canadian Dave Sims draws and

writes it. (Sims is appearing at the Comics Convention in Edmonton, this weekend).

A second well selling independent title is *Elfquest*, which Thomson says is the second best selling book at Darkstar.

"One of the more enjoyable things about comics these days is that they're much more intelligent," Thomson says. The independents have forced the big two to grow up and reach out to a more mature audience. From the sales figures, they must be doing something right.

## Comics are classics

**by Bob Gardner**

Comics may never read like Shakespeare of Kafka but not all comic stories are as trivial and mundane as the antics of Archie or Casper the Ghost. Consider some of these modern-day heroes and their stories: Adam Warlock committed suicide in order to prevent himself from becoming something evil, Captain Marvel died of cancer after being exposed to radioactive gas, Iron Man is an alcoholic who can't even climb into his costume. Green Arrow accidentally killed a man and nearly gave up crime-fighting forever for it. The Wolverine kills

fairly regularly and rather enjoys it. Daredevil saved his enemy Bullseye from falling off a building and then dropped him anyway. Heroes are not always perfect.

Less perfect are the clear-cut, good and evil worlds we usually associate with comics. Black and white occasionally turns to grey. Daredevil's life was once saved by his arch-enemy the Kingpin, a crime syndicate boss. The Kingpin's explanation for the favor:

"Consider it an illustration of the true nature of our

relationship. Your attack on Injun' Joe has served to quell a mutiny in my organization. Consider also, that when you needed to find this hideout you did not contact the police. You came to me. We need each other. We are partners after a fashion. We are the power in this city."

The relationship between good and evil can be complicated, difficult to define. Mister Miracle learns this from the villain Darkseid: "The interplay of light and shadow - each absolute in its own sphere, yet forever limited by the other - yes, and forever bound to be where the other is not. Without light we would know no shadow and without shadow...." Good cannot exist without evil, evil cannot exist without good, and both must remain forever unvanquished.

While some comic writers prefer to engage in lofty, philosophical pursuits, others tend toward more blunt social commentary. From Green Lantern/Green Arrow #76 (1969):

"Listen, forget chasing around the galaxy and remember America. It's a good country...beautiful...fertile...and terribly sick. There are children dying, people cowering in fear, disillusioned kids ripping up campuses. On the streets of Memphis a good black man died, on the streets of Los Angeles a good white man fell. Something is wrong. Something is killing us all. Some hideous moral cancer is rotting our very souls."

Howard the Duck's views on Kung Fu movies:

"Cheesh....Like you hairless apes haven't screwed up your world enough. You misrepresent an ancient philosophy, package it a violent entertainment and sell it to your young to emulate. You glorify violence like this, make it socially acceptable and, believe me, somebody's gonna get hurt."

Comics don't always take themselves so seriously, of course. Howard often did battle with such creatures as the Deadly Space Turnip, Garko, the Man-Frog and once even a giant salt shaker. Occasionally, a comic character will make fun of his perilous situation. When Dr. Doom is about to be attacked by giant mechanical octopusses called Octomechs he says simply, "Octomechs? How droll."

Not all comics are the same. To suggest so would be as absurd as to say that all novels or all films are the same. As with any art form you get the good and the bad and everything in between, and some comics are worth more than just a casual glance.

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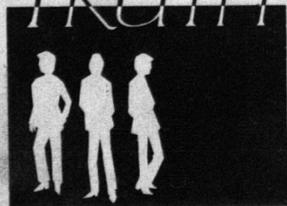


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- November 19 B-Sides
- November 25 Sound FX

# Cartoons from the twilight zone

by Zane Harker

We are entering the strange and ill-defined realm of comics, a world without sense or coherency. Such comics are more likely to raise an eyebrow, produce an uncomprehending snort rather than a bellylaugh.

Some readers are likely to dismiss these comic strips as simply "not funny," but those with sufficient brain cells can appreciate the intended absurdity and often layered humour of the situations.

"Weird comic strips" have a loose set of requirements. First and foremost, they must be entirely improbable; they are rarely political; and most often they are drawn with simple lines.

An exception to the last rule is Edward Gorey. Gorey's Victorian, meticulous drawing style belies his obvious madness. Having made his living illustrating children's books, Gorey has openly admitted that he doesn't much like children. This is apparent in such works as "The Beastly Baby", where a loathsome, obese infant, after committing several vile acts, is abandoned on a ledge.



A few minutes later, a passing eagle noticed it there.



The eagle, having never before been presented with this classic opportunity, carried it off.



The eagle found keeping hold of it more difficult than he had expected.



He attempted to get a further grip on it with his beak.



There was a wet sort of explosion, audible for several miles.



And that, thank heavens! was the end of the Beastly Baby.

Moving right along to another madness meister: Kliban. What can one say of this mysterious man? Does anyone out there know his full name? If so, you are a true aficionado of this important genre in...our Comic Strip Heritage.

Kliban has the exquisite talent of being able to reduce his cartoon characters to the stupidest people imaginable. This would not be so funny in itself but that he grafts these characters to an appropriately ridiculous set of circumstances, the result:



"Well, OK... but if you ask me, fourteen thousand dollars is a lot of money for pie and coffee!"



"No, that's not him!"

As with these other artists, Mary Kay Brown's work requires a methodical and often multiple reading for the humour to sink in. Brown's work has appeared in National Lampoon, and in keeping with that fine magazine's policy of "That's not funny, that's sick!" may I present Bill and Russ....(\*brief fanfare\*).

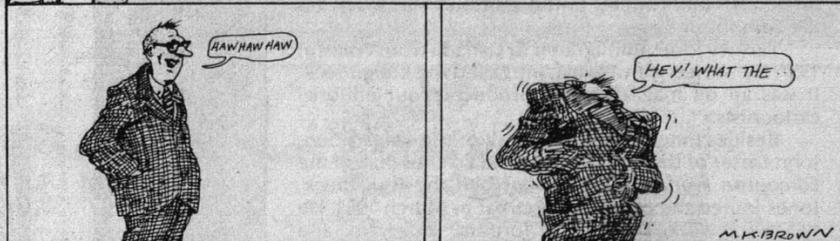
And finally, Gary Larson. You all know and love him for his regular *Edmonton Journal* strip "The Far Side." No doubt the product of a tragic and twisted past, Larson can masterfully portray total lunacy in a single frame, and often without captions:

**THE FAR SIDE** By GARY LARSON

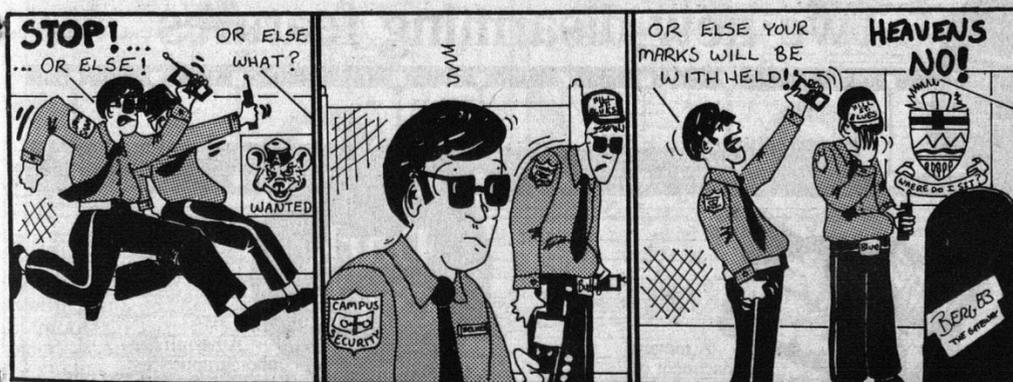
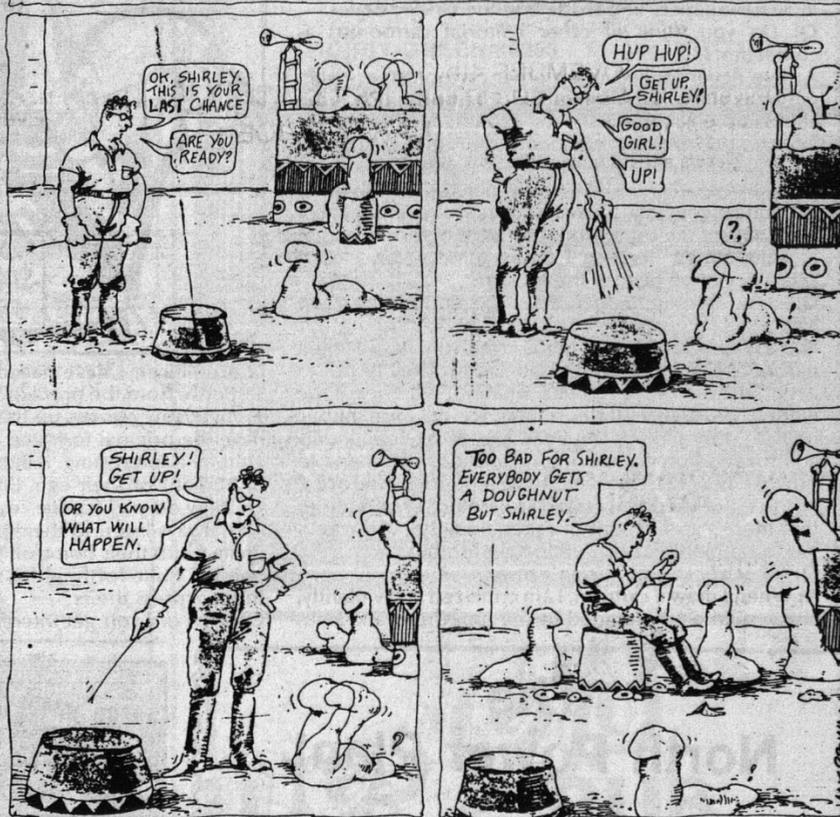


The above drawings are among my personal favourites, and while certainly only a skeletal indication of the vast weirdness in the comic cosmos, perhaps they can serve to bring a little more appreciation to this superficially tacky, but ultimately hilarious comic form.

## THE STORY OF A NEWT WHO WAS EATEN BY HIS SUIT



## Russ de la Rocca - Worm Trainer of the Americas



## SUPER STAFF

Zip...Zap...Zoom, as Batman bashes local U of A Gilbertologists, Superman X-Rays cuties in Quad. Then Martin Shug, Brenda Waddle and Aquaman search the six and one half seas for Wonder Woman, last seen giving mouth to mouth to Gunnar Blodgett and Rich Watts. Unknown to the JLA, the Teen Titans are ransacking the co-op house shared by Suzette Chan, Jim Moore and Ninette Gironella, who've been rumoured to have bought stolen Star Laboratory secrets from the Joker and his two prize loonies Zane "Chuckles" Harker (with the mauve streaks in his hair) and Wes "Rumble Fish" Oglinski (with mauve hair in his streaks).

Crash...Bang...Boom, The Fantastic Four rescue Shane Berg, Jordan Peterson, and Ian Ferguson from sure death, while back at the Avengers Mansion, Bob Gardner, and Doug Harvey, obvious mutants, still aren't allowed into the X-Men. Or as Galactus said, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing!"

Those who can't do, teach. Or at least posture and pontificate. Therefore, a special thanx to our Gateway cartoonists, the people who "can do". Shane Berg, Sarah Hickson, and Jim Moore did their best work this year. Extra special thanx to Ian Ferguson who gave up his chance for a full-size Bunky Sawchuk to produce the Captain Gateway cover masterpiece.



# Yardley Jones on rocking the boat

by Brent Jang  
**Interview with Yardley Jones, editorial cartoonist for the Edmonton Sun.**

Yardley Jones immigrated to Canada from Wales in 1957. He started with a magazine called the *Roughneck*. It was an oil magazine that produced four editorial cartoonists.

Besides Jones, Lance Rodewalt of the *Calgary Sun*, John Larter of the *Toronto Star*, and Ed Uluschak of the *Edmonton Journal* got their start with the *Roughneck*. Jones joined the *Edmonton Journal* in March 1963. He has also worked for the *Toronto Telegram* and *Montreal Star*, both of which, Jones laughs nervously, folded.

Now with the *Sun*, Jones' cartoons are syndicated in 50 newspapers in Canada and the United States.

**Q: Do you think of other editorial cartoonists as competitors?**

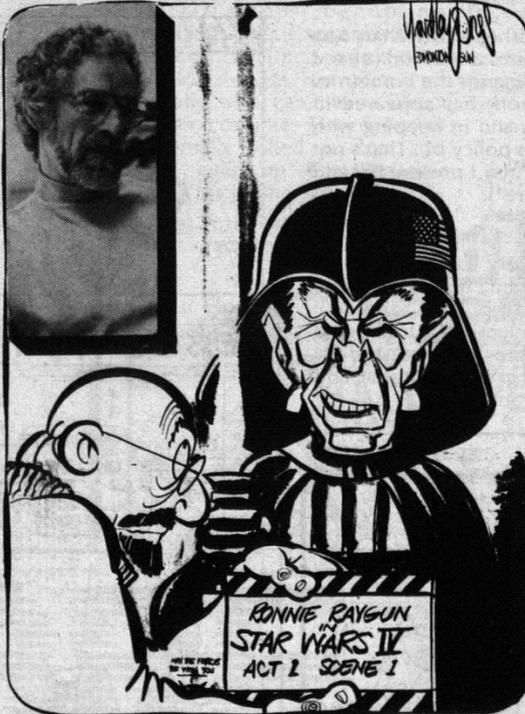
**A:** I've never looked upon other cartoonists as rivals, rather as allies in the same field. The opposition is the editors. We (cartoonists) are essentially a bunch of loners, a bunch of independents. And although there is an Association of American Cartoonists, and that includes Canadians....I do not keep in touch with other cartoonists generally. I have not been in touch with (Ed) Uluschak (of the *Edmonton Journal*), not for any reason of competition because I count some of my closest associates to be over at the *Journal*.

**Q: How much influence does the editorial cartoon have?**

**A:** Perhaps that (influence) is overestimated. I think people are more sophisticated today. They're not as easily swayed by another's opinion whether it be written or drawn. Rather than try to form public opinion, I try to rock the boat. I try to be deliberately controversial on occasion, to provoke thought and to provoke people to form their own opinions. And in the process, I've tried to throw in an element of humour so that there's an element of entertainment....A cartoon has to be more concise (than an editorial).

**Q: What about a politician's response?**

**A:** When I draw a cartoon, I am criticized and violently, and very often threatened by the supporters and aides

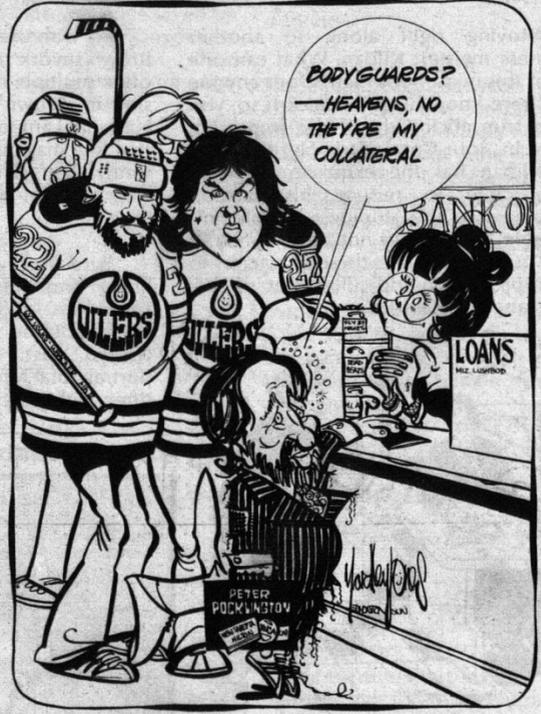


of a politician I have nailed to the cross. And yet, the response from the brunt of the cartoon — the politician — invariably phones up the next day and asks if he can have the original to frame and hang in his office. That attitude is interesting. It either says much for their sense of humour or their ego. I'm not sure.

**Q: How do you handle reader criticism?**

**A:** I always listen to them because after all, I'm sort of invited into their home on the editorial page. I give my opinion quite forthrightly, so the least I can do is have them express theirs.

**Q: How did you get interested in drawing cartoons?**



**A:** My hobby has always been art in some form or another. I always had a tendency to put my ideas down on paper. To keep me occupied my parents would often shove a piece of paper and a pencil in front of me as a child. This seemed to keep me out of some element of mischief. I've always thoroughly enjoyed the art of caricature and cartooning. I would as a young person, and even now — and I'm still a young person, damn it — I would carry a sketch book around with me and sketch whatever I saw on buses, trains, and so on. And this is how I developed my ability to caricature without any formal instruction.

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## gateway

Oct. 27, Vol. 74, No. 14

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## Two new disarming features

**IN THE KING OF PRUSSIA**

A moving re-enactment of the Plowshares 8 civil disobedience trial. Eight church people, including the Berrigans, symbolically destroy nuclear missile parts at a General Electric Plant.

Film-maker Emile d'Antonio; Martin Sheen and the original defendants co-star. (90 minutes. Colour.)

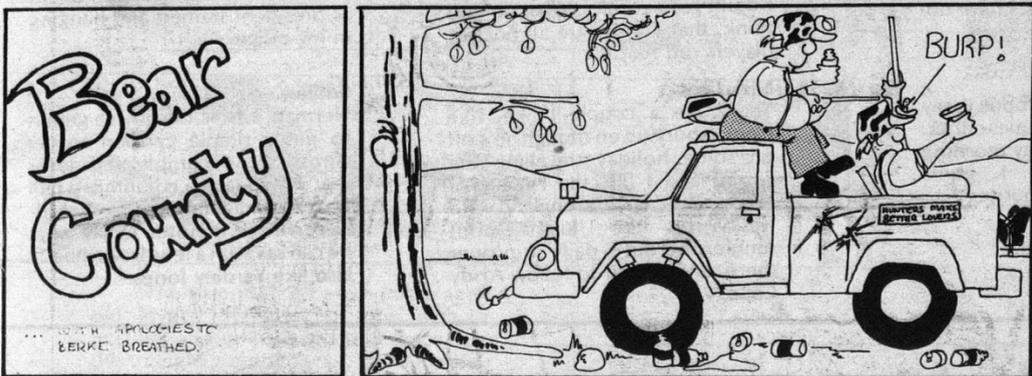
**Dark Circle**

A beautifully-photographed and delicately-edited film. Nonetheless, a powerful expose of plutonium leaks at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant. All is not well in the suburbs of nearby Denver. A sensitive blend of "heavy" material and "ordinary people" footage. (90 minutes. Colour.)

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# Favourite funnies of local yokels

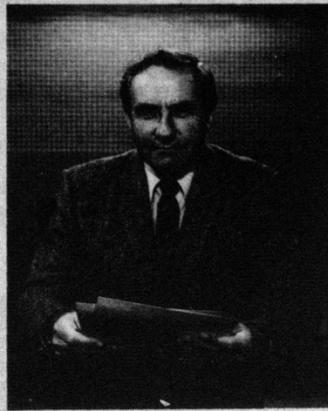
by Brenda Waddle

Can you imagine Pierre Trudeau slurping his morning coffee while giggling over the morning funny papers? What about Ronald Reagan dunking his doughnuts while reading Dennis the Menace? Well, these intriguing visions have dominated the Gateway's waking hours these last few days. Unfortunately, our concern over PET's feelings toward Bloom County remains unalleviated. We did, however, manage to reach a few slightly lower profile notables and ask them the pressing question: "What is your favourite cartoon strip?" Here are the answers we got...



**Bruce Hogel**

Herman, I think it's great. A laugh or a smile with one picture, a real change of pace, and Peanuts are a close second, even though they aren't as funny as they once were. The reason why so many journalists like Herman might be the pace of our profession, you can read it in ten seconds and still get a laugh out of it.



**Alex Moir**

I'm not really a comic fan, Yardley Jones I guess, even though I don't look at him often, but his cartoons are as good as any. He usually tells it as it is, like it or not, even though he occasionally goes overboard.

**Mark Messier**

I like Doug Wright's Family. It's realistic and true to life, and always keeps you thinking.

**Randy Gregg**

BC - It's very animated and yet it deals with a lot of relevant social issues.

**Pierre Couchard**

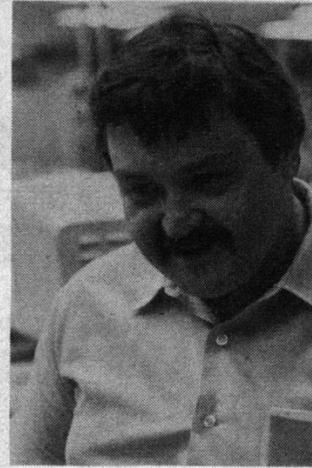
I've never read comics. I have not got the faintest clue.

**Wayne Gretzky**

I've never read a comic book in my life. I don't read the funnies either. I do watch the Saturday morning cartoons sometimes. I guess Scooby Doo is my favourite.

**Wayne Crouse**

Pavlov, well for one thing, it's just bizarre enough for my tastes, and I've met the guy who draws it. He's just crazy enough to get a laugh out of me in the morning. I really hate Garfield.



**Andy Moog**

I like Shoe - you know, the one with the birds in the tree with the newspaper? It's funny and realistic. They make up a lot of good puns.

**Ken Linseman**

I don't read comics. What do you think, that comics are all hockey players can read?

**Nick Lees**

There are a couple I like, like Doonesbury (even though he's off on some holiday travelling the world) and I like the Peanuts. I used to read Giles in England who was a bit like Uluschak, but funnier, he did a daily strip over there, and I used to follow Andy Capp.



**Barbara Kelly**

Herman, I had Jim Unger on my talk show as a guest and he was delightful. I also like Ben Wicks (who was also on my show and is also delightful), both are extremely talented.

**Myer Horowitz**

I like cartoonist Gerry Trudeau (Doonesbury). I have a collection by him entitled "The President Knows More Than You Think", which was given to me by a friend inside the university. I also collect cartoons. I have the original copy of the Gateway editorial cartoon from the day of my appointment as president framed and hanging in my office.

**Eddie Keen**

Herman, I think the guy's a genius to get a simple cartoon to get across some complicated ideas that would take a columnist a half dozen paragraphs or a broadcaster three minutes to say what he can say with a few drawn lines. I also like Yardley Jones.

## Mama, don't let your babies grow up to read comix

by Ninette Gironella

Since 1940, controversy has raged about the effects of comic books on the innocent minds of children. Do comics act as a catharsis for aggression or do they plant ideas of violence? Do they inhibit the development of reading skills by distracting with their four colour drawings, or do they encourage reading with their interesting plots?

The portrayal of violence and its effect on aggressive behaviour has been studied countless numbers of times for both adults and children and for all the mass media, comics included. There is yet to be any conclusion drawn from the myriad and often conflicting collection of results. About all that can be said about reactions to comics and other media is that they vary depending on the differing psychological states of the readers and even on the individual's mood at the time. Factors such as age, gender, education, upbringing, social status, marital status as well as many others, will affect psychological state. However, weak unstable characters do tend more towards heightened feelings of aggression than strong stable people and thus are more susceptible to portrayal of violence.

Unfortunately, there is no practical way to ensure that only strong, stable adults and children have access to the mass media and that weak, unstable types are shielded from the vaguest suggestion of violence.

One fascinating expose on the evils of comic books is

Frederick Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954). He saw comics as portraying violence, sadism, and cruelty; they inhibit children's spontaneity and prepare the ground for later aggressive behavior. Indeed, many of the examples Wertham uses are obscenely violent, and he backs up his claims with numerous clinical cases. However, many of his cases deal with children whose social environments and family background would already have done so much to contribute to delinquency that comic books probably could not have had much influence in bringing these children in conflict with the law.

Wertham believed that not only did comics seduce children into crime but also into sexual perversion. He saw phallic and vaginal symbolism, fetishism and other sex symbols lurking everywhere. With his vivid imagination, Wertham found in the detail of a shoulder the image of a *mons veneris*. Batman and Robin were clearly homosexual, and Wonder Woman was a lesbian — even her magical lasso was a vaginal symbol.

Wertham's writings occurred during the McCarthy era, heyday of hysteria, when evil could easily be located in simple things. Indeed, Wertham ends his book by telling a young mother that she need not look for faults in her son's upbringing or social environment, that comic books are to blame for his delinquency.

Since Wertham's time, we have come to realize that

children's fundamental character traits are profoundly influenced by parents. Thus a violent comic book will have much more influence on a child if it is espoused by a parent. Adults as well as children enjoy watching Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, The Roadrunner, and Coyote and all the other anthropomorphic animals, blow up each other, flatten each other with steam rollers and falling rocks, as well as other "just" treatments for their enemies.

In addition comic book publishers voluntarily imposed a code upon themselves in 1954. This code called for "clean" dialogue; decently attired characters; no excessive violence or gruesome illustration; respect for marriage, consensual sex, and love; good triumphing over evil; and also regulated advertising.

The next controversy is comic books' effects on reading. On the one side is the contention that comic books harm the develop-

ment of reading skills. As evidence, proponents of this view point to the large number of illiterate children who "read" comic books. They claim that by referring to the pictures, children can bypass the words yet still follow the story. Moreover, comics can prevent early diagnosis of reading difficulties by giving parents the impression that the child can read.

On the other side is the view that comics stimulate reading by maintaining that child's interest in the book. Indeed, in the late forties, thousands of children learned to read with the help of a *Superman Workbook*. In the late sixties, Classics Illustrated published shortened and in comics form literary classics such as

Shakespeare and Mark Twain. These comics were intended as an introduction to these great works, not a substitute, and at the end of the book encouraged the child to read the original. In contrast to film or television which induce

passive reception, comic books demand active mental activity to figure out the plot, most of which is imbedded in the text. Indeed it is hard to see how the "See Dick run" primers are superior to *Donald Duck* for developing reading skills. Both use pictures to illustrate the text, but the comic books also have the advantage of a much more interesting plot.

The controversy over the evils and benefits of comics will likely continue for years. But since the forties when people believed comics corrupted youth, thousands of children have grown up surrounded by comic books, good, bad and mediocre. Some of these children have indeed gone into lives of crime, are illiterate, or turned to journalism. Many more have become respected citizens. Regardless of the controversy, children continue to pour out money for comic books and eagerly trade them. And the interest in comic collections show that adults fondly remember the comics they had as kids.

A C / B C

By Johnny Come Lately



# Krazy Kat

by Kent Blinston

I have learned one thing in trying to explain Krazy Kat to people: you cannot explain Krazy Kat to people.

Some people see the gentle humor and subtle ironies immediately. Others are slowly led to see what is going on; bit by bit they find wit and meaning in the small variations of life in Coconino County. The rest of humanity never see more than a crudely drawn cat being hit in the head with a brick.

The first and last groups above are settled in their respective fates. For the middle group, however, while I have given up trying to explain Krazy Kat, I will pass on what information I can, in the hope of helping potential fans organize the disjointed thoughts it creates.

"The most highly praised of all comic strips," according to the editors of the *Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics*, was the creation of George Herriman. Born in 1880, Herriman started drawing while working in his family's bakery. He moved to New York in 1901 and started working as an illustrator until 1908 when he joined the Hearst Syndicate as a cartoonist. He created three moderately popular strips; Baron Bean, Stumble Inn, and the Dingbat Family.

In the Dingbat's basement and in a small strip just below their own were a cat and a mouse. Strangely, the cat did not chase the mouse but instead the mouse attacked the cat with

bricks. Even more strangely, the cat enjoyed it. In fact the cat seemed to live for it.

By 1916 the antics of the cat and mouse were far more widely followed than their Dingbat owners so they struck out on their own. They moved to the surreal surroundings of Coconino County, a place where buildings, fences, open space, trees and giant stone "J"s could appear at any time. Even night and day were capable of changing from frame to frame.

The mouse, Ignatz, still threw bricks at the cat, Krazy, but another character was added: Offissa Pupp, a dog whose self-sworn duty was to protect Krazy Kat and put Ignatz mouse in jail.

For 28 years, until Herriman's death in 1944, these three chased each other through the unstable Coconino background. Though the strip was highly acclaimed, it was never the financial success of such contemporaries as the Katzenjammer Kids, Mutt and Jeff or Thimble Theatre (the original Popeye cartoons). *Krazy Kat* was never in danger of being cancelled, however, because its biggest fan was William Randolph Hearst, himself.

And that is it. This is the point where anything I say will be a waste of time. Here are some strips and a few notes to keep them in context. I hope you understand. I hope you enjoy.



"The strip itself is based on the age-old lovers' triangle, but one with a peculiar and unexpected difference, for the triangle is a dog, a cat, and a mouse. Offissa Pupp, a very masculine canine, is crazy about Krazy, a cat of indeterminate gender (sometimes referred to as "she" but often as "he"), who is in turn mad about Ignatz Mouse, a male rodent who lives only to vent his hostility on Krazy by hurling bricks at her loving head. Ignatz will go to any lengths to find a brick to hurl at the head of Krazy.

"She doesn't, moreover, love someone who hurts her." Quite the contrary: she loves someone who gives her unmitigated joy. How? By always trying his limited worst to make her unlove him, and always failing.

e.e. cummings

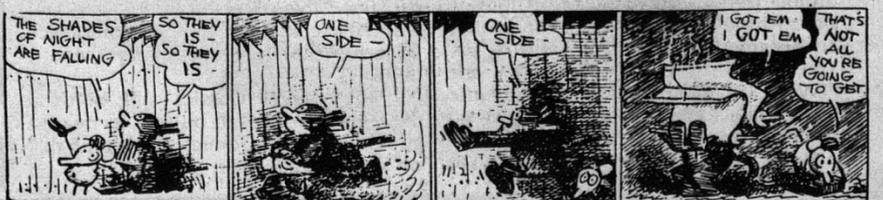
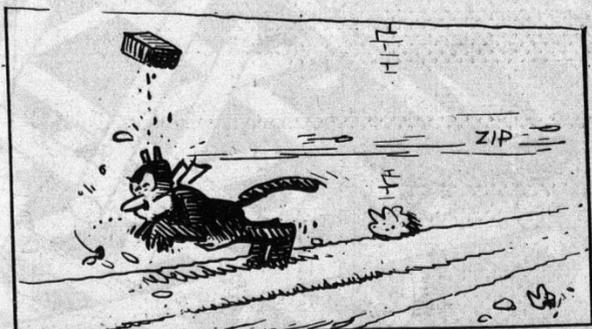
And Krazy lives to be beamed with that omnipresent brick. To our heroine — or hero — it is a sign that her "I'il angil" Ignatz is constant and true: "He neva fahgets," as Krazy puts it. Her persistence in seeing the situation in her own way gives the strip its distinctive flavor. It also causes Offissa Pupp to love the innocent cat even more, and impassions him with an absolute determination to protect her from the vicious blows of Ignatz; but even he cannot fail to see, as the rest of us do, that those swiftly flying bricks are the prime source of Krazy's happiness."

Barbara Gelman

One day in 1936 Krazy Kat returned from afar with a sack of "Tiger Tea" and for two years it turned her and the rest of Coconino County topsy-turvy. Innocent, loving, Krazy withdrew and huddled over her teapot like a San Diego Charger cooking freebase. She would then emerge aggressive and belligerent. Both Ignatz and Offissa Pupp drew back in fear and became allies in trying to understand what had changed the cat they loved. Krazy gave Tiger Tea to other passive residents of the county, further upending the natural order. Later she became obsessed with the idea that people were trying to steal her tea and spent all her time trying to hide her "I'il sickrit". Eventually the tiger tea ran out and life returned to its normal rhythm of flying bricks. But nobody in Coconino County, especially Krazy Kat was ever quite so innocent.



Herriman stories like his oddly decorated background were sometimes surreal and sometimes just plain silly. The existential love story was often told through slapstick humor and old vaudeville jokes.





# Marvel-lous

As in all businesses, cycles of decline and expansion exist. "Marvel right now is on a decrease of sales," he says, "and independent publishers are on the increase." Yet Marvel may be on the rise again.

During the barbarian age, an artist/writer began to bring a new flavor to some old characters. This period could also be called the discovery period. John Byrne took an old concept and breathed life into the *New X-Men*. The *New X-Men* quickly became the number one product on the market, and though Byrne is no longer involved with the comic, it remains in top spot. But the two titles he now controls are closing fast on his previous success, *Alpha Flight* and the *Fantastic Four*. (It may interest readers to know that *Alpha Flight* is about a Canadian super hero group).

Byrne was born in England but raised in Alberta (the *Alpha Flight* connection). He trained at S.A.I.F. in Calgary but eventually dropped out. Being a typical success story, Byrne went to New York, began work as a back-up artist at Marvel.

The company liked his work and let him develop his idea about the *New X-Men*. The rest is history. With a yearly salary of a quarter of a million dollars, Byrne is the highest paid artist in the industry.

Thomson indicates Marvel Comics made a resurgence in the industry in 1978. He terms this the new golden age with a rediscovery of the Marvel heroes. "I'd have to point out John Byrne for causing the resurgence." Byrne's work revitalized many other titles as the *New X-Men* rose.

Part of Marvel's continued success may also be a cashing in on popular trends in comics. The most popular being the mini-series format. Thomson explains the company reasons they have a character who cannot survive in a book of their own, but will sell well on a short term basis. Though this idea began at D.C., Marvel has been producing some limited editions of its own which have done well. On the other hand, Marvel pretty well avoided the other extreme which D.C. tried, the maxi-series. Thomson says, "People prefer the mini-series. I don't know about the maxi-series. I think they're too long." He indicates that sales of D.C. maxi-series have fallen off at Darkstar. Marvel does have one title which could be considered a maxi-series, *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. "But *Marvel Universe* is different," he says. "It's an encyclopedia that everyone wants."

For a change of pace, there is one trend that Marvel did start, the graphic novel. The graphic novel allowed Marvel Comics to publish material it could not do under its regular trademark. Both D.C. and Marvel publish under the guidelines set by the Comics Code Authority. The Authority was created in the '50s when a public uproar rose about the violent and sexual content available in children's comic books. The Comics Code brought about the demise of many publishing companies, but D.C. and Marvel survived through conform. Yet it is popular and profitable to publish outside of the Code's guidelines, though strict enforcement of the Authority is lax.

Another product published by Marvel is *EPIC Magazine* and a line of Epic comics. Both titles allow Marvel to publish material they would not normally, even with the laxity of the Code today. It also allows artists and writers an opportunity for more control and creativity they never enjoyed under the regular Marvel banner.

Marvel Comics is successful. From all appearances, it is here to stay, but in order to do so it must meet the needs of the public who purchases their material. With an expanding industry, Marvel may have some hard work ahead of it. Yet they have done it before and it looks like they may do it again.

by Wesley Oginski

With the huge success of popular movies like *Star Wars*, *Superman*, the *Movie* and *E.T.*, the comic book industry is gaining an incredible amount of credibility as a thriving business. Yet even in hard times, Marvel Comics has been able to do quite well. Today they are the number one publishing company of comics in the world, thanks to such titles as the *New X-Men*, *Alpha Flight*, *Daredevil* and the *Fantastic Four*.

Marvel actually began publication of comics in 1939 under the company name of Timely. The company experimented with many flags and trade names, one of the best remembered being ATLAS in 1951. Still the characters published under these titles are not memorable, except for the Human Torch, the Sub-Mariner and Captain America. Only these three characters still survive under the modern Marvel trade mark, in one form or another.

Bruce Thomson, a collector and co-owner of Darkstar Collectables, explains how Marvel fits within the history of comic books. He says that comic's history can be divided into particular periods or ages, beginning with the First Golden Age denoted by the creation of the D.C. character Superman. This is the first costumed and super-powered hero to be published in the comic format. His popularity set other comic publishers to creating costumed super heroes, including Marvel's Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner. Captain America was not to arrive until a few years later.

The second period is the Silver Age. Marvel does not stand out in this period according to Thomson, D.C.'s heroes undergo what he terms a rebirth in the '50s. Technically this is the beginning of the parallel worlds in the D.C. universe.

As comics entered the '60s, D.C. dominated the industry, while Marvel barely hung on and only a few other companies like Archie Comics and Gold Key tried to serve markets outside the super hero interest. The name Marvel was born as the publishing company changed direction in the late '50s and early '60s. Here began the Second Golden Age.

"That's when Stan Lee came along," Thomson says. Stan Lee created the *Fantastic Four* and *Spiderman* (who eventually created a cult following). "They have such believable characters (at Marvel). In D.C., they're (the characters) not living in the real world. Somebody would have come across Superman's identity years ago," exclaims Thomson, asking what kind of disguise a pair of glasses and a stroke of a comb creates.

If we examine just the past two decades of comic book history, some distinct periods still stand out. Thomson starts with the pop art stage, when comic art became fashionable in the mid-'60s. You may remember the BIFF, BAM and POW of T.V.'s *Batman*. "Then we got into what I like to call realism art. It wasn't started at Marvel, but at D.C. with Neal Adams," he says. But Adams also began to



Captain America (top) is one of Marvel's early heroes. The *Fantastic Four* (centre) came from Stan Lee in the "golden age" of the 60's. *Alpha Flight* (bottom) came into their own recently.

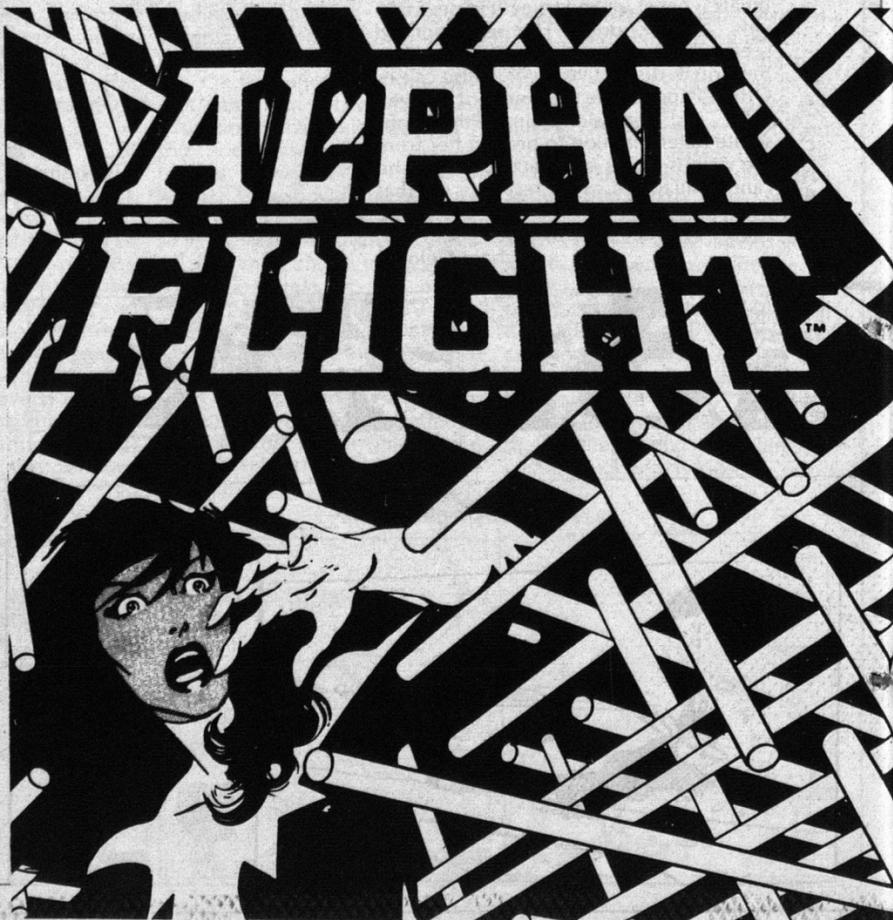
deal with harsh controversial issues, such as drugs in the *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* series.

"Then the barbarian age began about 1970," he continues. This stage saw a trend to creating barbaric heroes in the Robert E. Howard tradition of *Conan* and *King Kull*. Only *Conan* survives from that period today.

"The big thing with Marvel Comics now," Thomson adds, "is the quality of art they carry. The story quality is also very good."

Yet comics have been around for a long time. Many people may think that all the stories and plots possible for a comic book have been done. Even Thomson has had that feeling of *deja vu*. "At times I wonder if they're not going back and rewriting old stories for a new age," he explains. "I've collected for 15 years and worked in comics for 12. Sometimes I pick up a new comic and think I've seen it before."

But Marvel Comics still holds a superiority in sales. It outsells its nearest competitor, D.C. Comics, by about 5 to 1 on a worldwide basis.



# Farmland fantasy and the DC Universe

by Gilbert Bouchard

Someone asked me the other day "why do you read comics?" The answer is quite simple: I've been reading the suckers ever since my fifth birthday and I have no real conscious memory of ever not reading comics. In other words they've become an intrinsic part of my life, like eating or sleeping, and of course are totally beyond questioning. What one can ask is why that five year old in 1966 was attracted to comic books in the first place.

I'm not sure, but I would probably guess that my upbringing in the rather chaotic world of wilderness and farms of northern Alberta had something to do with it. Where men spend their days crawling about in the muck, mire and dust seeking whatever pitiful living one can. I mean even little kids (particularly little kids) guess mighty quick that life really stinks, or at least a good part of it.

Comics, especially DC, provided a needed escape. Cities with skyscrapers and bustling newspapers instead of Falher and the Smokey River Express - men with ideals, hopes and enough vitality to mold the world, and no the grey, stooped, tired men who were my relatives and friends of my father, to tired and cynical to do much of anything.

DC back then was my fantasy world of choice, heck, Marvel was fine but who the spit wanted more reality? I wanted lies, bigger, better, nicer than life. And DC paid in spades. Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman were paragons of virtue, true shining beacons of humanity, what all men should strive to be. In fact, over the years DC began to encompass the whole American Dream into its heroes. Superman is much more the spirit of America than Captain America will ever be, even without wrapping himself up in the flag.

DC has always been the prime comic force, the authority, the father figure, that comic producers have gotten their identities from. Marvel got to be Marvel by recruiting from the DC comic universe. DC has been the thesis for Marvel and all other comic followers (i.e. PC,

First Comics, and other independents).

But in the last year, especially this last year, DC is really easing into (gasp) reality, shucking its super-straight personality and getting its fingernails dirty.

New titles like the Omega Men are questioning men's innocence and the origin of aggression with religion and power struggles tossed in for a little fun (metaphysical, not to mention bloody). And Super-new titles like Triller and Ronin who've introduced protagonists like reincarnated samurai warriors, killer priests, reformed hit-men, and dead ladies.

And older established heroes like Batman, the Flash, and even old stodgy Superman are becoming more human and fallible in their old age. Why, in the last few months alone, we've seen Batman quit the JLA in a tiff over the club's hands-off policy in a European civil war (and Ronnie Reagan style Batman and a group called the Outsiders stage a counter-coup). And, while Superman's been busy beating up Afghan rebels, the Flash actually went out and killed his arch-rival the reverse Flash and is being tried for manslaughter.

Not that I don't like this new trend, heck, DC is producing some of the finer comics probably ever seen.

But what I don't like is that now DC is joining its rebellious rivals, nothing is left to provide the thesis to all the anti-thesis floating about. With all these psycho-heroes facing big problems like acne, BO, love problems, identity crises, where have all the fantasy heroes gone?

The Fantasy, the role models, the idealistic heroes are gone. Maybe because comics are too expensive for the bubble gum set, DC has moved after the baby book wonders who've now hit the lucrative big buck years (18-25 year olds).

To tell the truth, I sort of miss the larger-than-life men in tights - just like I miss the chubby kid with a quarter in one hand and a copy of Action Comics in the other.



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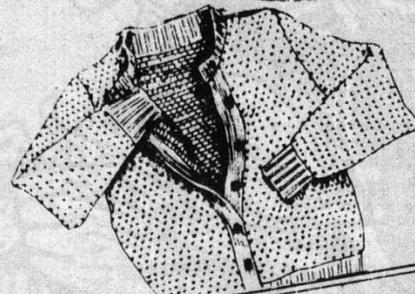


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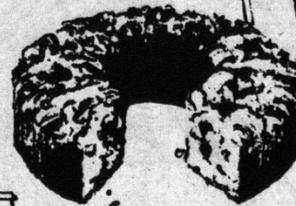
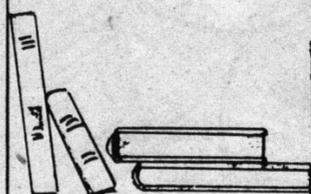
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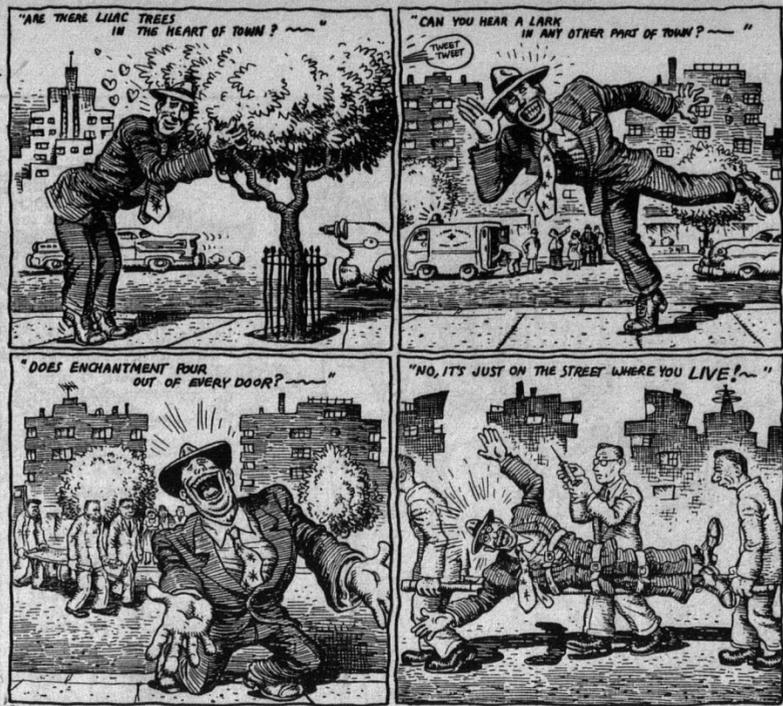
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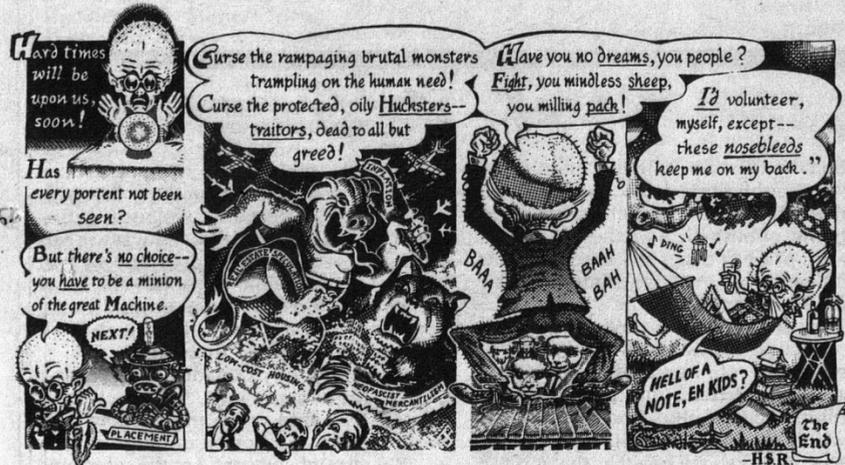
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This excerpt is from a Robert Crumb burlesque upon the lyrics to the melodramatic Broadway tune "On the Street Where You Live" (Crumb says he hates all Broadway show tunes). The strip is from "Weirdo #5," (1982) edited by Crumb. Other artists, like Harry S. Robbins (below) also contribute, and the comic contains unusual features such as reprints of old ads for things like glow in the dark ties and zit removers, and corny antique-flavored photo dramas.



Private Dopin' Dan and a Russian soldier take a brief respite from World War III, in "Today's Army, with Dopin' Dan" (1981). The Mickey Mouse ears on the Russian's helmet are a side-effect of the American cigarette he has smoked.

## Underground comix still alive!

For my generation, born into the depression, beginning to encourage and count pubic hairs during World War II, there was nothing quite like the comic books. While bigger, more mature men were cunningly turning road signs to point the wrong direction in Sussex, standing firm at Tobruk, Sending For More Japs, holding out at Stalingrad, making atomic bombs, burning Jews and gassing gypsies; while General ("Old Blood and Guts") Patton was opening the Anglo-American service club in London, saying "The idea of these clubs could not be better because undoubtedly it is the destiny of the English and American people to rule the world..." and Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey was saying off-the-record, "I hate Japs. I'm telling you men that if I met a pregnant Japanese woman, I'd kick her in the belly."; we, the young, the hope of the world, were being corrupted by the violence in comic books.

white comics which improvised pornography on the nocturnal, even orgiastic adventures of our champions. I speak here of Gasoline Alley Gang Bang, Dick Tracy's Night Out, Blind Date with the Dragon Lady and the shocking but liberating Captain America Meets Wonder Woman, which have long since become collector's items.

Mordecai Richler  
The Great Comic Book Heroes

by Jens Andersen

Today's ribald, free-wheeling underground comics have roots going back to the "eight-pagers" (or "Tijuana bibles") which Richler mentions, and even further back among mainstream comics. They are also the product of a lot of historical forces like the 1950's clampdown of the Comics Code Authority, and the rise of the "counterculture" in the 1960's (from whence comes their sharp philosophizing - or "social commentary" as it is called nowadays).

But let's leave such dry historicising to continued on p. 12



As far back as 1939, publishers...were offering, at fifty cents each, crude black and



Social realism is common in the undergrounds Above, Diane Noomin tells The Didi Glitz Story in "Lemme Out of Here" - a thematic comic about growing up inside the American Dream. To the left, an example of the first-person style of Harvey Pekar, whose "American Splendor" series, (no. 4 here from 1979) is comprised entirely of pithy anecdotes. Pekar - the listener in the strip - is not actually a cartoonist himself, but he provides scripts and sketches to various artists who execute them, in this case Robert Crumb. Above the Pekar strip, Bob Armstrong relates a favourite bum trip in "Back Home in Pasadena on Acid," from a Timothy Leary benefit comic, "El Perfecto." (1973).





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An incident from the Spanish Civil War is illustrated by Spain Rodriguez in "Anarchy Comics 1. (1978). The series presents other historical incidents like the Kronstadt mutiny, as well as analytical social dramas from a loosely "anarchist" viewpoint.



Jesus goes to a faculty party in "Jesus Comics no. 3" (1972), by Foolbert Sturgeon.



© 1982 PAUL MAVRIDES

Advertisements from underground comics are often art and commentary in their own right. This one is from "Rip Off #11" (1982). The "Rip Off" series is edited by underground pioneer Gilbert Shelton, and it has endured longer than most lines. The contents of #11 include Shelton's own Wonder Warthog and Freak Brothers strips, as well as cartoons by other artists, a feature on cartoonists of the Netherlands (both underground and overground), and items on the "Knockabout Comics" obscenity bust in Britain, tattooing, the death of underground giant Dave Sheridan, and gallery exhibitions by various cartoonists (who displayed such things as "hand-worked xeroxes" and black velvet paintings of the JFK assassination).

PS: To purchase underground comics you must be an adult.

continued from p. 11

the Ph.D's. The fact is that sixteen years after the publication of Robert Crumb's landmark Zap #1 the "undergrounds" are still being published. And though factors from the price of paper to obscenity busts have hampered their distribution, their quality is better than ever.

They are also as controversial as ever. The selection shown here is in no way representative of the comics - it greatly downplays their unapologetically forthright handling of sex and violence. It is this writer's opinion that the vast majority of these portrayals are healthy; that it is the sanitized and unreal Archie-sex and TV

violence which corrupts, by refusing to look at the troublesome side of human relations.

(Could there be anything more damaging and anti-social than the pervasive video illusion that violence causes little or no gore, and that it always solves some problem at the end of one or two hours? Or the comic-book conspiracy of silence over the fact that an unpredictable emotional volcano lies at the heart of all relationships between the sexes?)

Unfortunately, Canadian law doesn't respect these arguments, so the pleasant fantasies are sold much more freely than the searching and honest undergrounds.

But enough lectures. Let the selections speak for themselves.

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# Silver Surfer rides the wind

by Gunnar Blodgett

The Silver Surfer, despite his superficial simplicity of character, is among the most essentially complex personages in the Marvel Universe. He's been labeled everything from a "Jesus Christ Surrogate" to "a galactic crybaby of embarrassing proportions", and in a sense is described by a synthesis of all those labels. Besides being just about the most powerful character this side of the Andromeda Galaxy, the Silver Surfer, born Norrin Radd, is one of the longest-winded as well.

In a sense, Radd is archtypical of Marvel's characters. Like Spider Man, the Hulk, the Black Widow and Ms. Marvel (to name just a few), the Silver Surfer is a loner, with little or no attachment to normal earthly existence. He's also a philosopher, though, in the tradition of Spider Man, Daredevil, and others who just can't avoid questioning the ultimate meaning of breakfast while in the midst of heated battle.

Finally, like most solitary Marvel heroes, the Silver Surfer finds himself alienated by the people whom he fights for. On his home planet of Zenn-La, which he originally saved from the planet-sucking Galactus, he is considered a magnanimous traitor, flying the byways of the cosmos without

concern for his home planet. He earned this reputation when he abandoned Galactus in favour of Earth, thus compelling his former master to return to and destroy Zenn-La.

On Earth, Norrin Radd is regarded much the same. Most Terrans see him as a being who appears from space to wield impossible power in incomprehensible battles, then disappears again without a word. It seems to them that the Surfer is an omnipotent, god-like figure; unbound by earthly necessities and a bit arrogant when confronted. Consequently, very few people were actually disappointed when, at the end of a mission, the Surfer flew off into his solitary sunsets.

This image is, of course, a bit slanted. Norrin Radd is the most humanitarian of nonhumans, observing and reflecting for hours upon the niceties and irrationalities of human nature, often finding himself completely appalled by the inherent barbarism. Yet, just as often, he finds himself seduced by the ultimate nobility of Terrans, and it was this seduction that precipitated his rebellion against Galactus when the Earth seemed doomed.

Further, the Surfer's solitude is understandable in light of the

consequences of his heroism. The fruits of his rebellion on Zenn-La were the loss of his homeworld and his lover. The result of his defense of Earth is his imprisonment of this tiny planet. The pain of this sentence is manifest each time the Surfer turns his board skyward in another attempt to breach the barrier, then, inevitably, is thrown back at the brink of success.

On the other hand, there is only so much bitching one can take about the unfairness of one's plight and about Norrin Radd's "beloved Shalla Bal", the girl he left behind. Perhaps the Surfer is in some way responsible for his negative image because he refuses to grow up and face the reality of his situation and as such, actually becomes the "cosmic crybaby". His ineffectiveness as an intergalactic diplomat is partially a self-fulfilling prophecy on his part.

Yet this conclusion is both facile and uncognizant of the true complexity of Radd's character. The Silver Surfer has learned and changed since beginning his study of the human condition. This study has brought his own character closer to that condition, and if there is any hallmark characteristic of human nature, it is the stubbornness that Norrin Radd is nurturing in his exile.



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# British counterparts differ

by Richard Watts

Like their North American counterparts, British comics can be divided into two categories: humour and adventure.

The humour comics, like the *Beano* and the *Beezer* are peculiar from our North American viewpoint since they are not funny. The strips last from ten to twenty frames and do not build up to a punch line in the last frame. The characters go through their motions accompanied by little written asides; a pansy-ish character will have "teacher's pet" written beside him with an arrow pointing towards him; a character may sit down with the word "sit" next to him. This means the artist is less constrained to make the situations crystal clear through the artwork and dialogue.

The characters, in the British comics, unlike the American characters, are never cute. Look at American comic strips. Charlie Brown, Richie Rich, and Dennis the Menace are all cute. If the American strip heroes are not cute they are at least sort of endearing. Their British counterparts, however, at least from our North American sensibilities, are ugly.

Not only are the British comic characters ugly, but quite often they delight in being nasty. Featured in the *Beano* is a British Dennis the Menace. Unlike the American Dennis, who is a cute little kid who sometimes gets into trouble, Britain's Dennis the Menace is an ugly juvenile thug who delights in being a nasty little prick. He calls in "menacing". Dennis has a female counterpart, also in the *Beano*, called Minnie the Minx; she calls her exploits "minxing".

Dennis the Menace, Minnie the Minx, The Bash Street Kids, Oor Willie (featured in Scotland's *Sunday Post*) all spend their time trying to get out of doing their homework, their chores, causing trouble or giving a hard time to "softies" i.e. pansies.

There is a clear line drawn between the heroes of these comics and softies. Dennis the Menace, or the Bash Street Kids will spend whole issues terrorizing sissies, chasing prissy cats, or deliberately making themselves dirty so as to avoid being seen as a softie. In one issue I can remember a Minnie the Minx recipe which gave instructions for making itching powder, ink blots for firing at the teacher's pet, and of course, mud-pies. Contrast Dennis's behaviour with the softies. The softies do well in school; Dennis does not. The softies skip or prance; Dennis just moves without any notations. The softies say "mumsy", play with sissy dolls, knit or take sissy violin lessons. Dennis plays his part by wrecking their fun.

This makes the British sound like a twisted group of people, but give them their due: even Dennis never gets away with his menacing. Dennis's schemes always backfire, or Dad (drawn with a moustache, as are all British cartoon dads) finds out, and gives Dennis a beating with his slipper. Minnie the Minx, Oor Willie, Roger the Dodger, always end up getting beat with Dad's slipper. The Bash Street Kids are a class in school and they get caned. As far as I know, the British don't use corporal punishment on their children any more than we do, so I don't have any explanation for the inevitable outcome of their comic stories. If I was a sociologist, I might be pointing at Britain's punk rockers, skin heads, or soccer hooligans.

Their adventure comics are a different matter. The characters, except for the villains, are neither ugly, nor nasty. Like American comics the heroes often get their powers from a fluke of magic or



circumstances. After all, it was just luck that got Superman where he is today. In addition, where one issue of *Batman* will contain one episode of the Dynamic Duo making Gotham City safe for democracy, the British comics will have about ten different strips, with different characters which never overlap. Britain's Captain Hurricane will never be aided by the boy with the magic football boots, while Superman might show up in Gotham City to lend Batman a hand.

The ads are different too. The American comics will always have an ad offering a couple of hundred plastic soldiers, or urging kids to free enterprise through greeting card sales. The British comics more commonly have ads offering stamps or coins for sale, a classified section in which boys can search for pen-pals, and admiralty and army recruiting ads. The British army and navy still retain the institutions of boy-sailors and boy-soldiers who begin their training at fifteen.

The heroes of these adventure comics are more often boys than in the American adventures. Spiderman and Batman, despite their silly outfits, are after all adults. In Britain a boy will find a pair of magic football boots which make him star of the game, a boy will be launched backwards in time, a boy will receive the power to become invisible. I suppose it makes sense, boy heroes for boys.

There are adult heroes in British adventure comics but they are much more understood than American heroes, and they lack the ludicrous muscle development which all the American good guys seem to have. Except for perhaps Hotspur's Captain Hurricane, who is a Royal Marine Commando in the Second World War. But even he is sort of beefily brawny, rather than an overdeveloped version of Michaelangelo's David, like Superman.

Captain Hurricane is part of British adventure comic's preoccupation with the World Wars. I suppose this is natural, the Wars destroyed Britain's power so it makes sense that they should seek out some heroism or glory in them. Hotspur, for example, always features on the front and

back some depiction of a true war story in which British combatants perform some heroism and win a medal, often posthumously.

Yet, although they are dealing with violent situations, the violence is less explicit than in America's *Fight Stories* or *Action Comics* or even the super hero strips. Captain Hurricane, for example, is always turned into a "raging fury" by some backfiring scheme of his cockney batman. He goes dark in the face, grinds his teeth, and then rushes in and bodily beats up on the "sausage knoshers" (the Germans). To see Captain Hurricane bellowing briny oaths, picking up six German soldiers in one hand and tossing a jeep with his other is more funny than violent.

Compare Captain Hurricane with America's *Fight Stories*.

The violence in the American comics is explicitly all in, bayonet to the guts, boots to the balls amidst graphically drawn spurting blood. American comic patriotism is often ugly and gritty; "It's a tough job bet somebody has to keep Old Glory flying."

British comic patriotism is depicted as a cleaner performance of duty, with the violence and death more understated.

I do not know which ones are worse. I would never state that comic books pollute the minds of youngsters. Although I have to admit, unlike my colleagues in this issue, I have never seen any sort of literary merit in comic books. I stopped reading them, British and American, when I was about 13. Nowadays I do not find their simplicity "relaxing" or "easy". Rather I find them boring at best, and irritating at worst.

Anyway, British comics are different. The British see humour in nasty quirkiness unlike the Americans who like their humour clean and cute or mildly sarcastic. The British are less expert in depicting violence and have not quite resigned themselves to the modern day where patriotism is a pretty useless emotional appendage.

If you wish to read a much better discussion of British comics, read George Orwell's essay entitled *Boy's Weeklies*. If you actually want to read British comics, HUB Newsagents on Whyte Avenue carries the *Beano*.

# footnotes

**OCTOBER 27**  
Technocracy Club: organization meeting noon, Rm. 270A SUB, including illustrated talk.

Anglican Chaplaincy: Eucharist, noon SUB 158.

SCM: film- "To Sing Our Own Song" on the Philippines; 5:30, Med. Rm., SUB 158.

Hellenic Students Assoc.: extraordinary gen. meeting. Come out and exercise your right to vote - everyone welcome.

RMUS (Rehabilitative Medicine Undergraduate Society): meeting. All members welcome, rm. 203 Corbett Hall at 5:00 pm.

U of A Science Fiction & Comic Arts Society: meeting 1930, Tory 14-9. All sapient welcome. Objective random discussion of Tellurian affairs.

Bahai Club: Bahai Fireside, everyone welcome, rm. SUB 618 every Sat. 7:30 pm.

Lutheran Campus Ministry: 7:30 pm. Thursday Evening Worship at the Lutheran Student Ctre., 11122 - 86 Ave.

**OCTOBER 28**  
Arab Student Assoc.: Halloween Party featuring Arabic & Disco music, Arabic & Square dancing/number of prizes. Everybody welcome, 1414 Tory Bldg., 7:30 pm.

U of A Science Fiction & Comic Arts Society: Halloween potluck party - details at yesterday's meeting.

Halloween Party Oct. 28 with Slash & the Bleeding Hearts and special entertainment guests. Golden Garter, \$8.00/person. Entrance 7:30 tickets at N.E. corner CAB and Kappa Sigma House, 11013 - 87 Ave. Ph. 433-3675. Prizes for best costume.

U of A Undergraduate Geophysics Society: general meeting for all those interested in joining, 2 pm. Rm. P531.

Students' Union Faculte St-Jean: Halloween Ball, featuring the Musique de "Encore" 9:00 a 1:00 am. in the cafeteria.

SORSE: come to the Halloween Party. For only \$4.00 you get music, dancing, prizes, a very good time and a few surprises! Tickets available from SORSE office and SORSE leaders.

**OCTOBER 29**  
Int'l Students' Organization: Halloween Party, for details see posters. All welcome!

Edmonton Cougars present Halloween Howler '83 Dress Up Cabaret, Saturday Oct. 29, doors 7:30, Dance 9:00 pm., Balwin Hall 12904 - 74 St. Tickets \$5.00 available at the door, prizes and lunch included. Phone 476-2995.

East European Solidarity Cttee: "The Unofficial Peace Movement in Eastern Europe and the USSR" Telephone hook-up with E.P. Thompson, British peace activist and leader of END (European Nuclear Disarmament). Rm. 2115 - Education North, 12 noon.

Circle K: CHED Haunted House and the boys from Uncles at Large - what a great way to spend an afternoon! Ph. 432-5857 for more details.

Lutheran Student Movement: 8 pm. Halloween Party at Lutheran Student Ctre., 11122 - 86 Ave.

**OCTOBER 30**  
Lutheran Campus Ministry: 10:30 am Worship on Reformation/Reconciliation in Newman Ctre. of St. Joseph's College.

**OCTOBER 31**  
Baptist Student Union: focus-fellowship - same day but new time. We now meet at 5:00 in Meditation Rm. Food & Fellowship provided. Everyone welcome.

**NOVEMBER 1**  
Campus Recreation Womens Intramurals: entry deadline for a bowling tournament to be held on Nov. 5 from 1 pm. to 4 pm. in SUB Bowling Lanes. Both a fun and competitive aspect to the tourney (4 per team).

Campus Pro-Choice: general meeting 5 pm. SUB rm. 270.

U of A Group for Nuclear Disarmament: meeting SUB 280 5 pm. All interested are welcome.

**NOVEMBER 2**  
Southern African Discussion Group: a talk on the Southern African situation by ANC and SWAPO reps. TB-57 at 5 pm. All welcome!

Women's Centre: film night "Killing Us Softly", media images of women. 7:00 pm. TB-87.

Baptist Student Union: seminar on sharing of our faith. All are invited 7:30 am. rm. 624 SUB. Coffee will be on!

# classifieds for sale

**MUST SELL** - Coffee and end tables, wall unit, dining room suite, dinette, sofa and chair, hide-a-bed and chair, variety of wicker and rattan occasional chairs. Dishwasher, refrigerator, stove, apartment washer, dryer and stand, freezer, automatic washer, dryer. Bedroom suite, extra dresser and mirror, extra chest of drawers, single, double, or queen bed with or without frame and headboards. Lamps, sewing machine, 20" portable color T.V., 26" color floor console T.V. Call 438-3005.

New and used wholesale furniture, appliances, and T.V.'s at liquidation prices. "Turning Hard Times Into Great Deals", Model Home Furnishers, Open 7 days a week. Call 461-6254.

For up to 80% off designer overstocks & samples, visit Morie's Women's Wear - HUB Mall.

# services

**Farmer's Market: Every Saturday, 10 AM - 2 PM** in HUB Mall, northern end. Fresh flowers, vegetables, eggs, honey, jams, pickles, baked goods.

Looking for a good dance band?? Call Tourist 455-5379.

Lynn's typing, reasonable rates, Millwoods area, 461-1698.

Word processing/typing, \$17.00/hour. Barb 462-8930.

Professional Typing. Fast and accurate. Westmount area. Angie 452-3844.

Typing, North-east area. IBM Selectric. \$1.00/page. Terry 477-7453.

Professional typing \$1.20 page. Can pick-up and deliver. Phone Helen 463-6085 evenings.

Typing done - IBM Selectric. Reasonable rates. Call eves, wknds, Carol 462-2384.

Can do your typing. 489-5023. Good quality typing at recession rates. Interested? Phone 483-5212.

Typing \$1.25/page. Gerri 468-3937 or Marion 469-5698. No Calls After 9 pm.

Professional Typist - word processing. 24 hour turn-around service MOST papers. Gwen 467-9064.

Typing: prompt, efficient service. IBM Selectric. All work proof read. Phone Mrs. Theander, 465-2612.

Terry's Typing - whatever you need, we type and deliver! 478-2150.

Fast Lane Word Processing - professional typing, from one page to manuscripts - no job too small or too big. 8422B - 109 St. 9 - 4, Edm. 432-0845.

Attention: the best C&W dance in the world is here again. The legend lives on at Bar None '83, Nov. 19.

Professional typing for students. (over 20 yrs. exp.) Reasonable. 473-4404.

Typing, reasonable rates, Riverbend area - phone 436-3621.

# wanted

Eddie Bauer outdoor outfitter looking for temporary Christmas staff. Must be available some days, evenings, and Saturdays. Apply at 10250 - 101 Street.

Need extra income? Exciting part-time positions available promoting new nutrition and skin care techniques. Complete training. 456-7562.

Female non-smoker for 3 bdrm. apt. 10 min. bus to Univ. \$115. 436-5471.

Earn extra cash! Fleet owner with Co-op taxi wants clean conscientious drivers 483-8984.

Roommate wanted for two bedroom fully furnished suite one block from campus. Nonsmoking female, serious student preferred. Available Nov. 1 or Dec. 1. \$250 incl. utilities. 439-3255 evenings.

# personal

Whip us, beat us, hurt us. 4th-K men, ready and willing. No sex preference. Appointments only!

Looking for Christian worship and fellowship? Visit Knox Church (Evangelical Free) 8403 104 St. 432-7220. Sunday celebrations 9:45, 11, 6.

Buy now! Two tickets to Toronto asking \$171 ea. Lvg. Nov. 1, rtn. Nov. 9. Call 464-5035 after 5 or wkend.

Lost silver St. Christophers on Oct. 19. Reward offered 437-6948.

Small house near University; one bedroom upstairs, two bedrooms downstairs. Phone 489-5068.

For Rent: nice furnished room with good East Indian family. Millwoods. Convenient. Low rent for quiet person, 462-3364 evenings.

Seasoned Poplar Firewood: dry & split. Free delivery. Ph. 922-5168.

\$225 return to Toronto - leaving Nov. 4, returning Nov. 13 - must trade for same, but leaving Nov. 5. Willing to pay extra. Lucille, 432-3004 (days) 474-4431 (eve).

Redheads: Do you have 'laran'? Free Comyn testing tonight, Tory 14-9.

Ticket Calgary - Frankfurt direct. Leaves December 1 \$300 o.b.o. 483-9240.

Dignity for homosexual Catholics: liturgy, counselling, educational and social activities. Call Barry, 469-4286 or Philip 422-6832.

LOSE weight now Herbalife stock available - for supplies or information call your Distributor. Ph. 451-5943.

Ski Schweitzer this Christmas from \$165 (Quad) Call Terry 476-4086 evenings.

Apartment to share: fully furnished 2 bdrm; parking; laundry. 5 min. walk to University (Garneau Towers). Available immediately \$250/month. Female pref. Ph. 433-8777.

One way airline ticket Edmonton to Toronto. December 20. \$150. Phone Brad 435-2254.

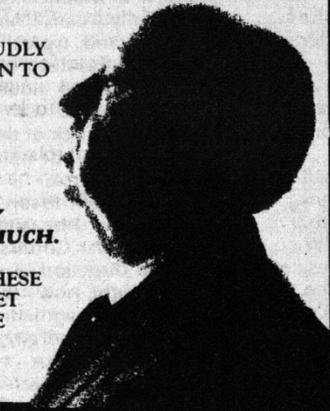
For rent 5 minutes from university, 2 bedroom suite upper floor \$350 Main Floor \$325, also 4 bedroom house \$675. Furniture available. Phone 454-6260 after 4 pm.

Room to rent: use of all the house. \$275/month. No D.D. Ask for Jan. Open for Nov. 15/83. Ph. 437-7906 after 6 pm.

For sale: airline ticket to Toronto. Departure at 11 am., November 30, 1983. Must be a female. Asking \$95.00 Kevin - 433-4330.

**UNIVERSAL CLASSICS PROUDLY ANNOUNCES THE RETURN TO THE SCREEN OF VERTIGO, ONE OF FIVE HISTORIC MOTION PICTURES ABSENT FROM THE SCREEN FOR TWO DECADES, INCLUDING ROPE, THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY, THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, AND REAR WINDOW.**

**THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THESE FILMS WILL NEVER FORGET THEM...THOSE WHO WILL SEE THEM, WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THEM.**

Oct. 21-27 ... <b>'VERTIGO'</b>	 <p><b>JAMES STEWART KIM NOVAK - ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S 'VERTIGO'</b></p>
Oct. 28-Nov. 3 ... <b>'ROPE'</b> James Stewart, Farley Granger	
Nov. 4-10 ... <b>'TROUBLE WITH HARRY'</b> Edmund Gwenn, John Forsythe	
Nov. 11-17 ... <b>'MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH'</b> James Stewart, Doris Day	
Nov. 18-24 ... <b>'REAR WINDOW'</b> James Stewart, Grace Kelly	

**All films are new prints. All student cards will be honored at the youth rate of \$4.50.**

**TOWNE Cinema** 118 Ave. and 124 St. 454-5168

Frank Bryant is a professor of literature. And Rita is his newest student. A hairdresser who thinks Macbeth runs the local pub. And Hamlet is a plate of eggs with cheese. He's a failed writer who has given up on his life. She's determined to change hers by getting an education. And the more she loves to learn. The more he learns how to love.

*Educating Rita*  
Sometimes students end up being the best teachers.

COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENTS AN ACORN PICTURES PRODUCTION  
A LEWIS GILBERT Film  
**MICHAEL CAINE • JULIE WALTERS**

"EDUCATING RITA"  
Music by DAVID HENTSCHEL Music Produced by JOHN GILBERT  
Co-Produced by WILLIAM P. CARTLEDGE Screenplay by WILLY RUSSELL

**Starting Friday, Oct. 28!**

**JASPER Cinema** 156 St. & Stony Pln. R. 489-1455

**All student cards will be honored at the youth rate of \$4.50.**

At 7:00 & 9:00 p.m. **mature**

# It is still a man's world for comix women

by Suzette C. Chan

The comic book industry has only recently taken female characters seriously. The clingy, helpless, token females have been replaced with complex, rational, assertive women. This is not to say that women are now depicted as man-hating, beat-'em-over-the-head feminists. Rather, as women in reality are asserting themselves more eloquently and more forcefully, comic book writers, mostly men, are starting to learn how women think and feel.

Up until about ten years ago, almost all female characters in comic books were cardboard cut-outs, either harried girlfriends, wives, or groupies of male super-heroes, or spin-offs of successful male heroes (*Supergirl*, *Batgirl*, *Spiderwoman*, *She-Hulk*, etc.).

But when the women's movement grew in the '70's, the major comic companies introduced characters that over-compensated for their previously inadequate treatments of women. There was a crop of femme fatales, including a revamped, sexy Catwoman, and a number of those like She-Hulk, who would rather kill than have a door opened for them.

One character whose development has followed and withstood all the major phases of the Modern Super-Heroine is Marvel's Susan Richards, *Invisible Girl*. She started out as a fifth wheel for the *Fantastic Four*, hopelessly falling prey to some scrupulous villain and becoming a hostage for a couple of issues — long enough for the FF to figure out a way to save her, and long enough for the next bad guy to plan another (inevitably successful) attempt to kidnap her.

But in the late 60's through the 70's, Richards, reflecting the new, strong voice of women in society, underwent major life-like changes (if you think soap opera plots are confusing, then comic books may be too much for you). For one thing, they decided that her ability to turn invisible was to weak for the space age, so her creators granted her an extensively powerful invisibility force shield, making her the most powerful member of the group. She also found time to marry fellow FFer, Reed Richards and have a baby, the first baby born to super-parents in all of comicdom. Later, she separated from Reed, wanting a divorce, another comic book first. Now, she is expecting another child. She also refuses to be called "Ms." or "Invisible Woman", content to remain a "Mrs." and in Reed's shadow.



In other words, Susan Richards has become powerful enough to be exciting, but still submits to traditional sex roles.

DC's most well-realized female character has to be Wonder Girl. Like *Invisible Girl*, she started out as a mere token. She was a Wonder Woman spin-off (WW found her as a baby in a burning building and subsequently adopted her) and the only girl in the *Teen Titans*. When DC completely revised the Titans about three years ago, Donna Troy became the back-bone of the Titans, which now has three women to four men, all of whom are fascinating, mature characters (Robin no longer says "Holy Mackerall!").

Wonder Girl is typical of the type of woman that comics are starting to depict. She is independent, compassionate, ethical, and rational. Like all new characters, male or female, she is concern-



ed with the consequences of their actions. To make her character even more concrete, she has just discovered the real identity of her parents and therefore her own.

One of the most welcome and reassuring aspects of her life is her steady relationship to a handsome young history prof (well, they aren't realistic about everything). There's none of the Superman-Clark Kent identity crisis, because her fiance who is as well-adjusted to a world with super-heros knows all about her escapades as Wonder Girl. Their relationship seems to be more egalitarian than Sue and Reed Richards', indicative of another pleasant trend in comics.

Of course, nothing changes unless the old stand-bys change. Neither Wonder Woman or Lois Lane has undergone a character change in over forty years. But as serious comic aficionados are now 15 years of age or more, stories have to be more "adult" to succeed.

Sales of Wonder Woman are dismal, half that of leading titles like *The X-Men*, which sells over 100,000 copies a month. The only reason DC keeps publishing WW is her mass-market appeal: toys, watches, colouring books, etc. (I was dancing in the aisles when Steve Trevor died in the 70's. But for some odd and obviously vindictive reason, Aphrodite deemed this to be wrong and resurrected the wimp).

Now, just as she did 40 years ago, Diana Prince serves the U.S. government with almost as much dedication as Ronald Reagan can dream of — except when Trevor is in trouble; she'd drop everything just to help him across the street!

Ever since she was introduced, Lois Lane had been running around trying to find new and interesting situations from which Superman could save her. But just in the past year, Lois Lane has realized the futility of chasing a man who's always halfway around the world foiling someone's attempt at a dastardly deed. She is establishing her own character and is learning to live without Superman, signalling what amounts to a revolution in the Superman saga: Lois Lane no longer dates Superman.

I prefer Lana Lang, one of the most sensible, confident, and believable characters in comics. She likes her men to be "down-to-earth and secure" — so she dates Clark Kent!

Though the news is generally good for women in comics, there are still a few of those who would rather have women chained to the kitchen and bedroom.

I was going to complain about the skimpy, spray-on costumes and impossibly large breasts that artists envisage for women in an attempt to revolutionize physics. But come to think of it, the same artists give male heroes spray-on costumes and impossibly large muscles and, technically speaking, breasts, as well.

So I'll complain about Somerset Holmes instead.

One of the new "upstart" comic companies, Pacific Comics, is so proud of not being approved by the comics code that many of its titles eschews all attempts to

create plausible plots and characters in favour of an all-out show of sex and violence. One particular example is Somerset Holmes. Somerset is the victim of a hit-and-run accident that leaves her suffering from amnesia. In the pursuit of her identity, she becomes a detective by default.

Along the way, she stumbles across the office of a country doctor and we are subjected to a long sequence of frames showing Somerset sitting around in the waiting room in her underwear while the doctor is getting murdered.

She then goes to a bar to find help and is nearly assaulted in the washroom. As she puts a violent stop to her attacker, (she literally "cans" him), she is chased by a biker, and, typical of the rest of the comic and of this disturbing portrayal of women, runs around aimlessly in ripped clothing and covered with bruises until she hops into the truck of the first obliging driver. A male friend of mine reports that the next issue is worse.

Happily to say, however, the other new company not approved by the comics code, First Comics, has not followed the same direction.

Right now, there are only 3 female characters with their own titles: *Wonder Woman*, *Supergirl*, and *Dazzler*. WW and *Supergirl* are relatively "safe" as headliners; *Dazzler* is a mega-jiggle book that's escaped cancellation only because one of Marvel's execs has adopted her as a pet project. Hopefully, the comic industry will soon be confident enough of the potential of female characters to feature them in their own magazines without exploiting them.

(Super thanks to Jim Owens of *Hobbit's* and Mike Pavlic of the *Comic Shack* for their hyper-information and mega-contributions to this article.)

