

YOUR LGBT GUIDE TO COMICS

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PLUS INTERVIEWS, ARTICLES, RESOURCES, CREATOR BIOS AND MORE...!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

WELCOME

Dear Reader,

A year ago, we brought you the first annual PRISM COMICS: YOUR LGBT GUIDE TO COMICS — and though it was our first time out, we thought we set the bar pretty high. So when it came to putting our follow-up together, we wondered what we'd have to do to top it. We decided, "more is more."

The deceptively small paperback you're holding has all the great original features, resources and artwork you enjoyed last time and then some. We're also proud to have assembled 50 pages of exclusive comics and previews from some of the most talented folks working in comics today. These contributors tackle subjects like strip clubs, marriage, censorship, divine super-heroes, pinching pennies, twisted fairy tales, and no less than three wars (Trojan, WWII and Iraq). If you ever wanted proof of the diverse range of subjects and styles that comics have to offer, you need look no further. Wrap it all up in a terrific cover by the one and only Joe Phillips and you've got one great package.

But one of this year's best additions isn't even on the pages. It's the fact that we're able to bring PRISM COMICS to you not only at conventions and special events, but also in retail stores across the country. This year, we'll be able to reach thousands of additional readers hungry for more queer representation in comics.

That's what it's all about!



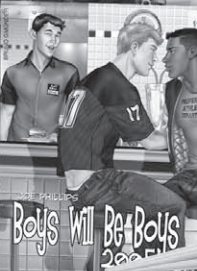
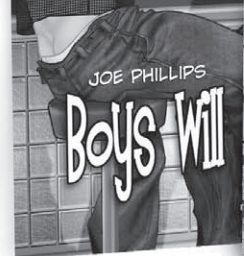
Charles "zan" Christensen
President, Prism Comics

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On the cover: Joe Phillips, artist of *Adventures of a Joe Boy*, celebrates gay marriage super-hero style!

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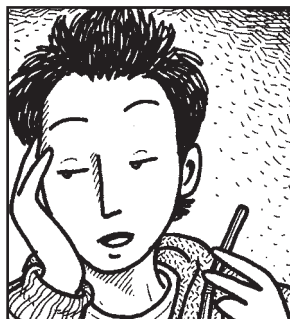
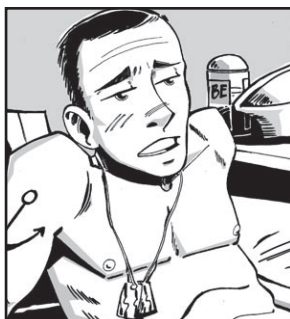
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CREATOR COMICS

Prism Comics is proud to present a new feature this year: 50 pages of exclusive and preview comics by some of the most talented creators working in the industry today.

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QUEER YEAR 2004 IN REVIEW

by Joe Palmer

Last year's Queer Year in Review closed by asking the rhetorical question of what the future might hold for gay content in mainstream comics. For good or ill, there was no project like RAWHIDE KID for conservatives to squawk about, and a year later the answer to the question is that it was a mixed bag filled with alternately good, boring, absent, dead and, yes, even loathsome characters.

DOMESTICITY ISN'T PRETTY

THE AUTHORITY was a wildly popular comic when Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch were the creative forces driving the book. The tone was widescreen action with clever writing and sharp art. The focus of the book changed under Mark Millar's run as the group became even more ultra violent, including gay characters Apollo and Midnighter. A widely held opinion of many fans is that the book has suffered in its latest incarnation as a mature-reader's title. The characters, and particularly comics' only super-powered gay couple, have become, well, caricatures. Fans are voyeuristic by nature, so there was the hope that the couple's relation-

ship would be explored rather than ignored. Instead, what fans were given was a "Stepford-ized" domesticated duo whose lives centered on their sexuality, and as fathers raising the ultra-cute, and therefore annoying, baby Jenny Quantum. Before her death and rebirth, Jenny was the ultimate chain-smoking, ball busting team leader — the defining figure, the final authority. Having Apollo and Midnighter raise raise Jenny, for whom they once faithfully toed the line, only emphasizes the degree to which they're being written out of character. One can only hope that Ed (CATWOMAN) Brubaker's stint as writer will rescue Apollo and Midnighter and the rest of the gang from the depths to which they've sunk.

HOLLY GO-NOT-SO-LIGHTLY?

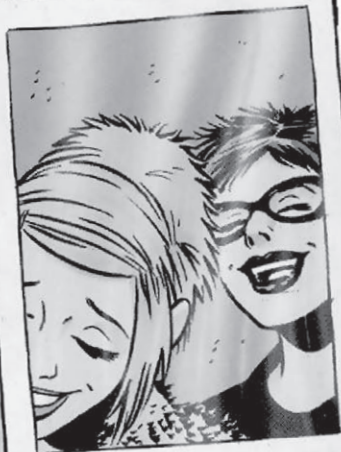
Speaking of Brubaker, the writer seems to have made a commitment to flesh out all of the characters he writes about. This seems particularly true in CATWOMAN, where Brubaker rightly ignored all the continuity squawks and resurrected the character Holly from comic book

death. In his hands, Holly went from being a prostitute and recovering drug addict to someone who faced up to her fear by learning how to fight from Ted (Wildcat) Grant. From there, she and Catwoman went on a road trip of personal redemption, and after a fashion Holly became Catwoman's sidekick. Early on we found out that Holly was in love with Karon, a quiet waitress, but over time we came to understand how deep her concern for Holly's well being was. It seemed completely natural when the two moved in together and became den mothers of a sort to the street kids who are Catwoman's eyes and ears in the rough and tumble East End neighborhood. Brubaker's accomplishments certainly didn't go unnoticed by GLAAD, which recognized his writing with its Media Award in the comics category.

COPS AND QUEENS

Greg Rucka is another writer who wasn't afraid to tackle writing a story with a lesbian character. The 5-part "Half a Life" story brought Renée Montoya out of the closet, and dealt with issues of religion, culture, and the workplace within the context of the larger story of Two Face's obsession with her. Early into the story there was an excellent scene between Montoya and her (lesbian) captain, Maggie Sawyer, who dispensed some tough love advice. Renée came through the ordeal with her relationship with girlfriend Daria stronger for it, although she paid the price of having her parents disown her. After the conclusion to "Half a Life," the focus shifted to other members of the ensemble cast, but hopefully Renée will return soon.

Rucka has also recently introduced a gay character in his espionage thriller **QUEEN AND COUNTRY**, which is set in the United Kingdom. The agent, known only as Poole, is a sergeant in the SAS, and, similar to Montoya, Poole is outed in an incident that could jeopardize



dize his military career. Poole has proven to be interesting in just a few appearances, so it should be very interesting to see how he adapts to being a minder.

STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW

Some fans speculated that when gay-friendly Judd Winick became the writer on GREEN ARROW that he might have Connor Hawke come out as gay. Roy (Arsenal) Harper and Connor go out for a buddies night on the town that starts out low key with Connor's suggestion to visit a book store, and then gets kicked up a few notches when they end up at one of Roy's hangouts, a stripper bar. The subject of Connor's sexuality comes up and Connor tells Roy he's just a really shy guy who hasn't found the right woman to date.

THE GREEN FLAMER

The real world media attention in late 2002 over the Terry Berg gay-bashing story died out fairly quickly. A few issues after the bashing, a convalescent Terry angrily confronts Green Lantern Kyle Rayner over his decision to leave Earth. Later, Terry confides to John Stewart that he wants to learn how to fight. Instead of exploring this idea, subsequent developments have proved limiting. Terry started receiving requests to appear on talk shows, but remained undecided until his father attempts to keep Terry

quiet, and Terry becomes an overnight media darling. Unbelievably, Terry, whose only job has been as Rayner's art assistant, is offered a prominent position in the Human Tolerance League's West Coast PR office. Ironically, Terry takes two steps backwards by obsessing over his parents' emotional distance.

A cliffhanger



ending to GREEN LANTERN #175 shows Terry stunned by the sudden manifestation of a power ring on his finger. Speculation about a gay Green Lantern ran the gamut from positive to negative, but soon proved premature. The following issue revealed that Rayner had projected himself into the ring and

willed it across the universe to Terry in the hope of saving himself from certain death. From the narrative in #176, we learn that Kyle made things good with Terry with an explanation and a pizza (Terry isn't even physically seen in the issue!). Oh well, at least the pizza had everything on it.

ISO: GREEN MALE, SMART & CUTE

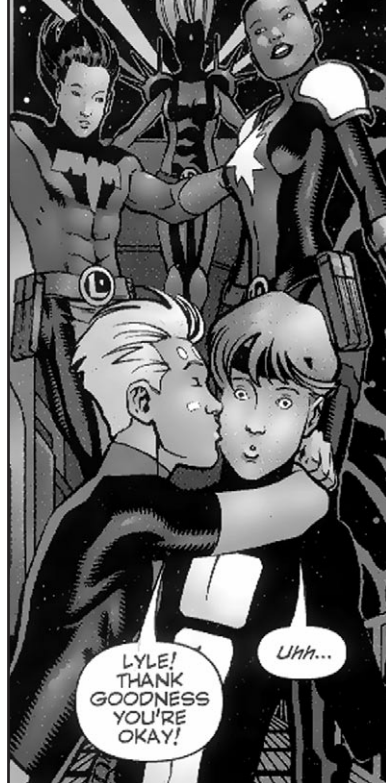
Gay fans have long clamored and hoped for a gay member in the Legion of Super-heroes. Readers were teased by writers Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning in THE LEGION #27 when they presumably played off the rumor of Lyle "Invisible Kid" being gay that started shortly before their tenure on the series.

In a scene where Lyle is rescued, we see Brainy surprise him with a hug and a kiss on the cheek. In the next panel a self-conscious Brainy tries to play down the kiss, but Lyle smilingly says, "I knew you wouldn't let me down, Brainy." Four issues later, Chuck Taine and Gear are snooping through Brainy's lab and come across some "private" pictures, two of which are clearly female, and a third is an ambiguous profile torso shot of a shirt over his/her head. Later the pair leaves Brainy a note telling him if he keeps quiet about their lab break-in, then they won't mention Brainy's "holo-collection featuring Dreamer, Spark, Andromeda, In—"... and then the note is conveniently cut off.

Straight fans on DC's Legion message boards objected to the possibility of it being Invisible Kid, citing Brainy's history of having the hots for Andromeda. It remains to be seen if gay fans were reading more into the scenes than intended or if indeed there is more to be told. One thing is for certain: they make for a cute couple!

EXILED

Judd Winick returned to EXILES to write "A Second Farewell," a story in which lesbian Mariko (Sunfire) and her fellow Exiles were separated and Mariko was shunted to a world that the team had visited once before, the Legacy Planet. On this world Mary Jane Watson became Spider-Girl, and she and the other heroes battled the threat of the Vi-Locks, a radically mutated strain of the Legacy Virus. Once reunited, Mariko and Mary Jane fought against the Vi-Locks and



became romantically involved, knowing full well that they would each experience inevitable heartache when Mariko was pulled back to her teammates. Several issues later when the group was brought together, fellow Exile Mimic showed signs of being controlled by a Brood Queen and soon went berserk. As a result, Sunfire was killed. In the real world we all know death is inevitable, but in super-hero comics death isn't always final. Sometimes the dead...get better. Not so with the Exiles. The dead stay dead. It's only fair that Mariko wouldn't be exempt from that fact, yet with so few LGBT characters in comics one would have hoped that she could have cheated death a little longer or, god forbid, stayed with Mary Jane.

ADD A LITTLE
DRAMA
TO YOUR LIFE



boys kissing



overbearing mothers



dysfunctional families



sex



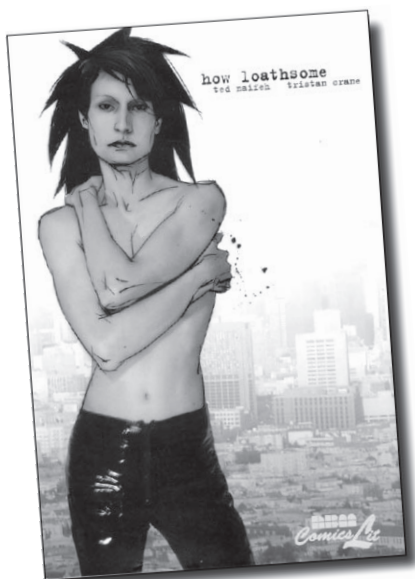
violence

"History never read so good." —**Entertainment Weekly**

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GENDER QUEER

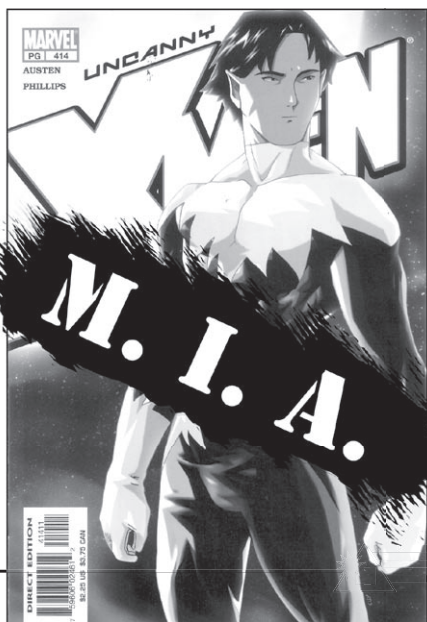
HOW LOATHSOME is without a doubt the queerest book to have seen print in the last year, if not longer. Tristan Crane and Ted Naifeh exploded social norms with a small cast of gender outlaw characters that stood on the fringes of the gay community and asserted their own notions of sexual identity. The story's unconventionality defies summary. Best to set aside any and all of your preconceptions and simply bear witness to another set of truths not that far removed from your own. Don't trouble yourself by looking for back issues because the series is now collected in a smartly designed hardcover from NBM Comics Lit.

WHERE'S JEAN-PAUL?

The queer presence in the X-Men books seems to have faded quite a bit. Northstar's debut as a team member in UNCANNY X-MEN in

October 2002 held a good deal of promise. The temperamental mutant did start out playing an active part in the group and was shown in his role as professor in the NEW MUTANTS book a couple of times. In a unique move as far as mainstream comics go, Jean-Paul developed a crush on cute but straight Bobby (Iceman) Drake. Like all cases of unrequited love, the crush went nowhere and writer Chuck Austen's focus shifted to concentrate on other cast members.

The X books were "Reload-ed" in May and there haven't been many clear indications of Northstar's future involvement. Marvel announced at Wizard World East that there will be a total of 18 assorted books in the X-Men universe, so it isn't as if the franchise is lacking space. In X-MEN #157, various mutants and Northstar confront Cyclops, and Jean-Paul bitchily asks Scott, "Am I expected to just teach?" The answer to his question remains to be seen.



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SUN, BUNS, COCK, TALES, WITTY
REPARTEE AND BITTER TRUTHS

A BLINK IN TIME

The setting for Neil Gaiman's 1602 is Europe at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In it, a time-displaced Captain America has caused doppelgangers of Marvel characters to appear in the early 17th century. Figuring prominently in the story are the Witchbreed, analogues of the original X-Men members. One difference is that in this reality, the character Jean Grey crossdresses and lives as "John" in order to circumvent social taboos. Gaiman also gives us a matter-of-fact gay character in the last issue when he has Werner (Archangel) reveal to Scotius (Cyclops) that he was "in love with that young man" and leaving "Scotius" dumbfounded as a masterful commentary on social hypocrisies of both the Elizabethan and contemporary times.

SIMPLY MAR-VEL-OUS!

In CAPTAIN MARVEL, Peter David decided to return to exploring the "are they a couple?" relationship between Moondragon and Marlo Jones. Remaining true to his writing style, it's a layered and protracted affair. Moondragon is certain she wants Marlo, but Marlo isn't completely sure, and as seen in issue #23, Marlo's future self is sexually involved with Genis's son. Rick Jones is in love with Marlo no matter what time era he's in. Unfortunately since the series is cancelled with #25 it's doubtful that we'll see a satisfactory resolution for the pair.


X-TASY

Over in the pages of X-STATIX, Milligan continued with mixed results his send up of identity and culture in this age of the cult



of celebrity. After deciding that Vivesector (Myles) and Phat (Billy Bob) weren't going to be a couple, Milligan created some sexual tension by adding die-hard straight stud El Guapo (The Handsome One) to the team. Myles starts falling for El Guapo and Billy Bob appears jealous. Myles and Billy Bob argue over it, and then appear to "kiss and make up" like best girlfriends. Or do they? In the heat of battle, Billy Bob reacts instinctively to save pop star Henrietta (the aborted Princess Di stand-in), causing El Guapo to lose his legs when a ricocheting rocket explodes near him. And then just because it's unexpected, Milligan kills Phat, prompting Myles to profess his love for him — and later El Guapo dies in a separate but related incident.

The 2-part "The Cure" is Milligan using the "mutant equals gay" metaphor. In the wake of Billy Bob and El Guapo's deaths, Myles decides he's over being a mutant, and falls in with a shady scientist who cures Myles of his lycanthropy. Milligan's typical cleverness seemed to falter somewhat as he explored Myles' attempts at assimilation into non-mutant society and his realization that mutation is part of his identity.

X-STATIX will end with issue #26. Barring Milligan killing the team, it seems likely that Myles and the rest of the crew will fade slowly into comic book obscurity. 



THE OTHER WORLDS OF PHIL JIMENEZ

by Anton Kawasaki

Phil Jimenez is one of the most visible and high-profile gay creators in the comics industry. His upcoming series from Vertigo, *OTHERWORLD*, finds a group of young adults unwillingly thrust into a war of magic vs. technology. The project was originally conceived during the Gulf War — and now, over a decade later, the project is more relevant than ever. Friend and Prism contributor Anton Kawasaki gets the scoop on Jimenez's creative process, the lowdown on the creator's acclaimed and controversial run on *WONDER WOMAN*, and other surprises. Read on!

ANTON KAWASAKI: *As someone who's known you for some time,*

you're by far the queerest creator I know! What effect, if anything, does being gay have on the stories you tell?

PHIL JIMENEZ: I am? I always think of Jose Villarubia as the queerest creator of all. And I mean that in the best way. He's so smart and handsome. He knows his shit, that Jose!

Being gay has everything to do with the way I tell stories...it affects my every sensibility and sensitivity. Some disagree, but I think something as fundamental as your racial, ethnic, or sexual identity has a profound affect on your world and how you behave in it, and the artwork you make while in it.

AK: Let's get right to your upcoming *Vertigo* project, shall we? With something like *OTHERWORLD*, it must be incredibly labor-intensive as far as research and reference goes. What kind of books, movies, art, or other things have you devoured in order to prepare for this project?

PJ: I'm almost afraid to list them, there have been so many — and I don't want to give all my secrets away! Seriously, let me think if I want to be talking about these influences this early. However, until then...

Books like *Jihad vs. McWorld*, *What Every Person Should Know About War*, *A People's History of the United States* — these are just some of the titles that have influenced this project. So have dozens of films, from *Aliens*, *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Hours* and *Memento*, great theater (particularly for rhythms of language), old black and white films (for the same), art, and comics (THE INVISIBLES, particularly, as well as PROMETHEA, THE WATCHMEN, SANDMAN, George Perez's WONDER WOMAN, and Grant Morrison's ANIMAL MAN).

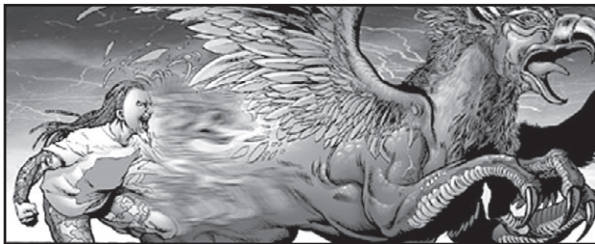
AK: So basically all my favorite stuff? Cool! I'm still amazed that almost all the Earth-based characters in *OTHERWORLD* are visually based on people you actually know.

Can you reveal to our readership who some of these real-life inspirations are, and why you chose them to represent these characters?

PJ: Most of these characters have their roots in friends I used to work with during high school and college. The characters have certainly evolved, but I'd say that at least some of them can be traced back to the folks I used to spend my time with at the end of the 1980s!

Horrrifying!

The actual models, however, are not those friends, and are people who better represent what those characters have evolved into. The models are people I know now — friends, folks I've met at conventions, boyfriends of friends, etc.



Pages 14-17: the art of *OTHERWORLD*.

Pages 18-19: Jimenez's take on the Global Guardians.



Because some of the characters evolved so dramatically, changing their gender or race, several are no longer anything like the person who inspired the character 15 years ago. But a few of them are...

AK: I know we've talked before about how some comics readers will refuse to even pick up a comic if someone isn't wearing a super-hero costume in it. There are tons of people who've never even touched a Vertigo book before. So why should they try OTHERWORLD?

PJ: I want people who like multi-layered, semi-political super-heroics to pick up this book. I want folks who don't mind thinking a bit reading this book. I want folks who demand beautiful artwork buying this book. I'm trying to create the ultimate comic I'd want to read, and I'm hoping people will get their money's worth. Fortunately, there's

enough big art, special effects, super-heroics, etc. to make the skeptical at least take a peek. And [colorist] Jeremy Cox and [inker] Andy Lanning are doing the best work of their careers, so — I think folks will love it visually if nothing else.

AK: We all know your OTHER dream project — WONDER WOMAN, which you wrote and drew for two years — didn't quite turn out the way you'd hoped, due to unreliable scheduling and interfering company-crossovers. Would you ever go back for a second chance at that character? What would have to be different this time around?

I do love Wonder Woman and her world, and knowing what I do know, I'd probably try and approach the material and the character differently. The problem with Wonder Woman is that her fans, including me, have such specific ideas about how that character works, and I'd never be able to please everyone. That's probably the biggest lesson I learned — to write and draw comics without heavy influence by those vocal fans who often threw me in my first months on the book.

As to specifics, I'm still interested in her role as teacher, preacher, and ambassador. I'd try to balance the political intrigues with the grand super-hero action; and I'd try to make sure that other creators, and the editorial staff, treated her with the same respect as I would. If DC more clearly and openly supports her as the "third" of the "Big Three," I think Wonder Woman will have a lot more respect in the comic world.

AK: So, honestly, what do you think of the current Greg Rucka run?

PJ: I think it's a little too quiet, ultimately, and the pace is off (I wonder if this is a problem with Wonder Woman writers, for some reason? My pace was all over the map — it was the biggest complaint readers had of my run). And I hate the Xena-izing of the Olympian Gods, but that's a personal thing.

"I'm looking forward to a really good Wonder Woman movie. Let's hope that happens somehow."

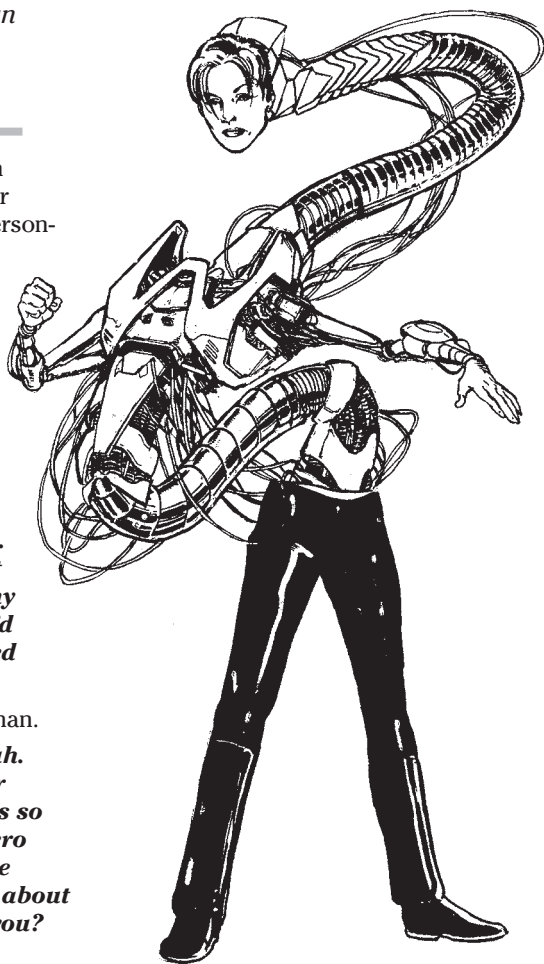
However, I *do* think he's got an excellent feel for Diana and her worldview, her politics, her personality. She's much more the Wonder Woman I imagine, than the one he describes in interviews (whom I think I'd hate). And while I didn't love the fact that he dispensed with the new Paradise Island, I thought the way he did it was creative and downright hilarious!

AK: That was kind of genius. So with Wonder Woman out of your system, are there any other comic-book icons you'd like to tackle for an extended period of time?

PJ: I'd love to work on Aquaman.

AK: Aquaman? Really? Huh. I liked him best under Peter David's run because he was so unlike every other super-hero out there. And I believed he could be a king. What is it about Aquaman that appeals to you?

PJ: I just love Aquaman's world, and his potential power. Aquaman should have one of the most incredible visual worlds out there — and it's rarely the case. He is the King of three fourths of the Earth, and yet he's always treated as the embarrassment of the JLA. It bums me out that people don't take the time to invest in this character the way they should, or make his world the most spectacular. One trip to the Hall of Marine Biology at the Natural History Museum and you're



overwhelmed with the potential, both visually and in terms of story, of Aquaman and his world.

And I still want to do a series working with DC's international characters...

AK: Why them?

PJ: I love the international characters because they're mostly blank slates — many are incredibly powerful, or interesting, or both, but are currently underdeveloped or treated as jokes. I also love the idea of creating stories about characters in other parts of the world for *readers* in other parts of the world. I would love it if my friends in France, or Argentina, or Spain, had their own characters to invest in, instead of the ultimate American, Superman.

AK: Even I'm bored with Superman! Give me Tasmanian Devil, Tuatura or Little Mermaid any day! Oh wait... Little Mermaid's

dead, isn't she? But yeah, I just want to see you on big team books. I'd kill to see you on THE LEGION, but that's just me...

PJ: I'd love to work on the pre-reboot Legion with Blok, Sensor Girl, Dream Girl, et al. But I'm pretty happy now.

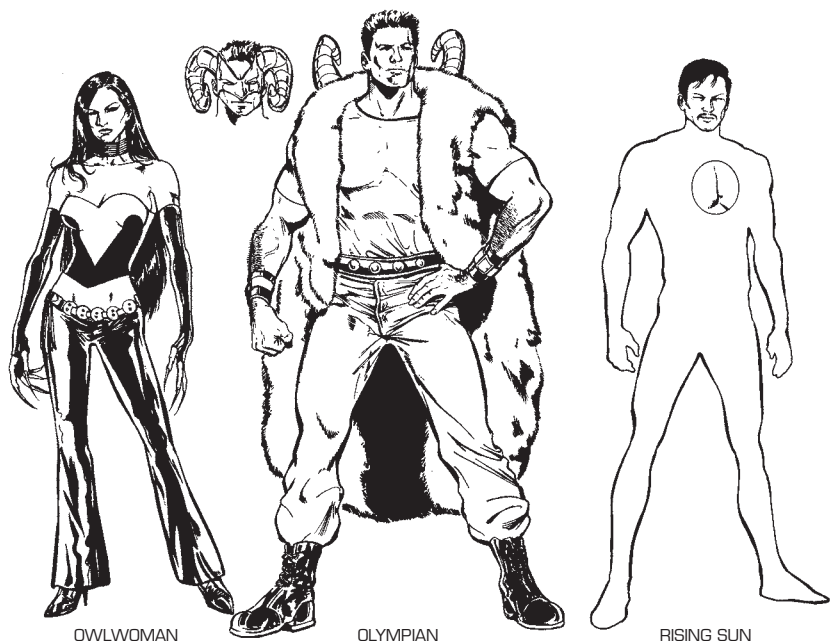
AK: Well that's good to know! But let's say the comics industry self-destructed tomorrow and there were no other comics to work on — what would we find Phil Jimenez pursuing as a career?

PJ: What do you mean, self destruct? What are you saying? Do you know something I don't know?

AK: Hmm. Do I?

Just answer the question...!

PJ: Gosh, my other dream jobs are many — doing art production on films and TV, for starters. I'm obsessed with the way people



OWLWOMAN

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RIISING SUN

acquire and process history, so my biggest dream is to go into museum exhibition and design. I want to create educational spaces that are interesting and exciting for people and create tactile learning experiences for them.

What about you? If you weren't working in comics, what would you want to do?

AK: *I'd want to be a playwright or a graphic designer, but I'd probably end up working in movies like my boyfriend, but failing at it and being miserable. Speaking of movies... your hands became stars in the first Spider-Man movie. I'm simply appalled you weren't asked back for the sequel. Will you even bother seeing Spider-Man II, or will you protest outside the theaters?*

PJ: I guess I'll go see *Spider Man II*. I guess...

AK: *Are there any other comic-book movies you're looking forward to?*

PJ: I'm looking forward to a really good Wonder Woman movie. Let's hope that happens, somehow.

AK: *Ok, I need to wrap this up. We need to fill all-important ad space, after all. So pretend your boyfriend Joe isn't reading this. Who's the sexiest person working in comics?*

PJ: Sexiest person? Hmmm.

AK: *That's not an answer! OK, OK...who do you think draws the sexiest guys and gals in comics then, besides you of course?*

PJ: Adam Hughes draws incredibly sexy women. And I think Bryan Hitch draws some of the hottest men in comics. They all seem to have nice, um...equipment.

AK: Perv! 🍌



SERAPH



EXTRÂNÔ



DR. LIGHT

Marriage is an institution meant to bring people together, but this year LGBT marriage has proven to be hotly divisive. The comics industry, God bless it, has never been shy about capitalizing on social trends — so we here at Prism Comics wonder if the major publishers might dovetail same-sex unions into an amalgamated crossover.

Would such a brave and bold move succeed? We fear not: not because of the gender issues involved, but because wedlock is drab. Now DIVORCE — that's where the fun is! Join us as we turn wistful day-dreams into limp-wristed dream teams...then trade amour for armor! Not a scream! Not a coax! It's not just a meeting of Super-Friends with super-benefits, it's...

CRISIS ON IRRECONCILABLE EARTHS!

*by Terrance Griep, Jr. with Chris Cerasi
Illustrations by Andy Swist*

BATMAN & MOON KNIGHT

THE MARRIAGE: Marc Spector's ethereal alter ego was understandably angry when a sure collar was impetuously ensnared in a rope-toting batarang, but when its callop-caped master descended from a fire escape, and Moon Knight felt the slightest pinch of adrenaline...well, unnaturally enough, vigilante love was the result.

Although their crime lab reciprocity program seemed a happy harbinger for their grim and gritty love affair, case-crackings were routinely stalled by arguments regarding the superiority of inductive reasoning over deductive reasoning, as well as the best applications of Luminol.

THE DIVORCE: Super-powered by the Wayne and Grant fortunes, the super-divorce was as complex as a Riddler-laid trap...only without the rhyming clues. Things got ugly in a hurry when Moon Knight's side submitted papers alleging that Batman "always made me be the sidekick and never, ever let me be the detective."

THE SETTLEMENT: Batman received unfettered use of Moonie's Jake Lockley identity on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and every other Saturday. Due to adept civil parrying by Wayne's legal team, Moon Knight was not allowed to assume the Matches Malone moniker, but the Grant team did

win custody of Robin. Alas, *which* Robin was not specified within the paperwork, forcing Nightwing to submit to retconning and making it so that he had actually been Dusty the Boy Detective in his youth.

The Moon Copter was to be traded for the Batmobile, but the agents assigned to make the trade — one Jean-Paul “Frenchie” DuChamp and one Alfred “Limey” Pennyworth — decided, according to a note left behind, that their former employers “can [fornicate] themselves.” Drawing on his experience as a

Shakespearean actor, Mister Pennyworth wrote an ode to his new traveling companion, which read: “O proud Norman! Thou hath mine heart captur’d. Where you go, it goes. Where it goes, I go. So go.” Both Moon Knight and Batman claim to know where their ex-assistants are, but they lack any means of pursuing them.

WONDER WOMAN & MISS AMERICA

THE MARRIAGE: Miss America found herself trapped within the tectonic throes of super-bulemia, wherein she would compulsively binge on tankers full of boxed



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GIRL
TWIRL
COMICS

by paige braddock

jane's world



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chocolates, then try to salvage her hourglass waistline via ultra-purging. Answering a newspaper ad (ain't that always the way?), she attended a 12-step group which held its meetings at Holliday College. Here the keynote speaker, a certain Amazon Princess, discovered that one Etta Candy had been engaging in feeding frenzies while patched into the mental radio. Thanks to her powers, Miss America proved to be a kind of willowy-legged vacuum tube oscillator, absorbing Etta's unnatural appetites and ultimately enabling the super-barf hijinx to ensue. Keep 'em flying, indeed!

Although Miss America was unused to being a damsel in distress, she found herself falling hard for her Princess Charming. Miss America may have possessed the wisdom of the ages, even while ol' Double-W possessed the wisdom of Athena, but this collective wisdom, hoary and dust-covered though it may have been, served as no reprieve from Cupid's arrow...particularly when Miss America cast her chestnut peepers on Wonder Woman's fabulous, chocolate-waist-band-obscuring golden girdle.

THE DIVORCE: It had to happen! Miss America would "borrow" the Golden Lasso, then, thanks to the magic intrinsic to it, "forget" to return it to the Amazing Amazon. Then "coincidentally," Miss America's spare cape would disappear, and Diana would be seen beating up bank robbers in a new starless, blue mini-skirt.

Paradise Island's toga-totin' judge advocate generals, invoking an obscure Greek edict, arranged, in lieu of a

divorce trial, a dogfight between Miss America and the invisible plane. Etta, tinged with more than a little guilt by her glucose-drenched Marconi routine, re-manned the mental radio while humming Ani DeFranco's "Superhero," and Miss America and Wonder Woman found themselves overcome by the desire to wear flannel and drive Subarus. They opted to settle their matrimonial differences over eighteen holes of golf.

THE SETTLEMENT: Because of both women's affiliation with the United States Department of Defense, details remain classified. Oh, Donald Rumsfeld has already given your telephone number to John Ashcroft, since you're so unpatriotically nosy.





available at amazon.com or your local GLBT bookstore!

SUPERMAN & CAPTAIN AMERICA

These two overgrown Boy Scouts seemed perfect for each other, until the absolute unthinkable happened: Bucky came back from the dead! Cap and his “little buddy” confessed their true love for each other, leaving the Man of Steel no choice but to sue the U.S. government for all it was worth and then flee the Earth from a broken heart.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK & THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER

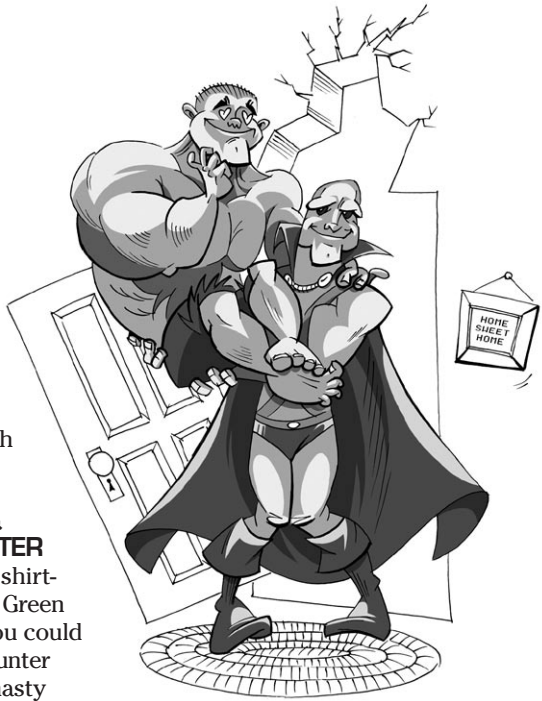
These two emerald-skinned, shirtless wonders fell in love at a Green Day concert — but before you could say “Dr. Phil,” Martian Manhunter was crying “rage issues!” A nasty divorce settlement led to the Hulk’s destroying their love nest, leaving the Manhunter with nothing more than a broken kidney (Martians don’t have hearts).

AQUAMAN & THE SUB-MARINER

This on-paper-perfect pair met at a tuna rally in Nova Scotia, and their mutual love of water sports made them inseparable. But Arthur found Namor’s emotional distance a bit fishy, and the two eventually parted ways. The legal battle over ownership of each’s kingdom is still pending, while Namor has the pet seahorse only on weekends.

THE SCARLET WITCH & ZATANNA

They say love is magical, and in the case of these two bewitching ladies, magic played no small part in their brief but passionate union. But all spells are eventually broken, and after arguments on how to run their homemade candle business,



Zee was overheard calling Wanda a “tnuc” — which led the witch to perform the ultimate hex, leaving her fishnet-wearing ex to have that “not-so-fresh feeling” 24-7.

FINAL VERDICT

Unlike MARVEL VS. DC, this was a crossover where no one came out a winner. Not the super-heroes, the comic companies or even the fans. But this in no way should be taken as a statement against gay marriage. No, really. The reality is, gays are just as likely to be happy (or miserable) in marriage as straights — so shouldn’t they be offered the same rights?

We think so.

Terrance Griep writes for SCOOPY-DOO and is the wrestler SpiderBaby on the side — seriously. Chris Cerasi edits some of DC’s licensed publications, and is fluent in every alien Star Wars language. Andrew Swist is a freelance designer/illustrator, and can be contacted at andrew.swist@verizon.net

THE GRANDE DAME

OF
LESBIAN COMICS

ALISON
BECHDEL



by Heidi Pike-Johnson

Since 1983, Alison Bechdel has authored *Dykes To Watch Out For*, a strip that appears on PlanetOut.com and in over fifty different periodicals. The strips have been anthologized in ten different collections, the most recent of which *DYKES AND SUNDRY OTHER CARBON-BASED LIFE FORMS TO WATCH OUT FOR* was published by Alyson Books in 2003 and her book, *The Indelible Alison Bechdel* was released by Firebrand Books in 1998.

Prism contributor Heidi Pike-Johnson phoned Bechdel at her home in Vermont to have a Sunday morning chat.

HIEDI PIKE-JOHNSON: *What's the part of Pennsylvania that you're from like?*

ALISON BECHDEL: It's funny that you would ask that. It's pretty rural, a farming place in the Susquahanna Valley. It's an Appalachian farm hand kind of place...it's a somewhat benighted area. I don't think I would want to live there now.

HPJ: *Why not?*

AB: It's provincial....I just got back from there.

HPJ: *How was it?*

AB: A little draining.

HPJ: *Was there something about growing up where you did that made you start drawing?*

AB: These are interesting questions! I'm hesitating because I'm working on my graphic memoir about growing up and about my father...I don't know if I can trace my drawing to the landscape but there wasn't much else to do.... The memoir is autobiographical. I've done little, short, autobiographical pieces but never anything like this. I have got to turn it in to the publisher next month so it will be out some time after that.

HPJ: *There's a lot of marriage going on in your strip right now. Is it social commentary about what's going on right now or is it autobiographical?*

AB: I'm writing about it in the strip because it's happening. For that same reason, I went and did it. I have very mixed feelings about the whole marriage issue, but my girlfriend and I happened to be in San Francisco when they were

marrying people and we thought it would be cool to get in the fray.

HPJ: Did it change anything?

AB: You know, it kind of did. I am not sure if I can articulate how but I caught a glimpse of privilege. I don't actually have that privilege but seeing what it might be like was very fulfilling.

HPJ: Do you base your characters on people you know?

AB: There are a couple minor characters who are drawn to look like real people but most are totally made up.

I did base Sydney on someone I met. She was really obnoxious but none of the other characters are based on anyone. I usually say that all of the characters are aspects of myself. Mo was always the one who was most me. Over the years, that has transitioned so that Sydney is the one who is me.


HPJ: Why did you choose DTWOF over writing something more fantasy-based?

AB: I hate fantasy. I hate sci-fi. The real world is so rich and interesting and fascinating. I can't imagine why you would want to make up another one.

HPJ: Last book you read?

AB: *Anna Karenina*. It was pretty amazing to see reality re-created in such rich detail. It was very inspiring and I would love to be able to do just a little bit of that in my cartoon.

HPJ: What's coming up for you?

AB: Well, hopefully, I will meet all of my deadlines (laughter)...I started doing it because I wanted to see my lesbian reality reflected somewhere but it has become much more about being a person....It's a critical, critical election this year so there will be a lot about that. I think Mo's still planning on voting for Nader so they are going stage an intervention and that's the only storyline I'll give away. 

Heidi Pike-Johnson's day job is writing for AVN Magazine (www.avn.com) and she lives in Sylmar, California.



A NEW HERO

IN TOWN

ANDERSEN
GABRYCH

by Anton Kawasaka

While he seemed to appear “out of the blue” to many comics fans by landing a gig writing *DETECTIVE COMICS*, Andersen Gabrych wasn’t a complete unknown to his gay audience. As an actor who’s appeared in films such as *Edge of Seventeen* and *Boys Life Four*, the handsome 30-year-old has already commanded quite a presence in the comics world. Anton Kawasaka got the 411 on this new hero in town...

ANTON KAWASAKI: *I remember the party where I first met you, and where you also met DC editor Bob Schreck. Little did anyone realize that your chance meeting with Bob would eventually lead to an ongoing gig as writer of DETECTIVE COMICS! Was it intimidating to be a relative unknown in the business to suddenly be the writer on DC’s longest running title?*

ANDERSEN GABRYCH: What can I say? Clearly, it was a great party!

It was the first time I had met anyone working in comics on a social level and I was in heaven.

I remember I was quite bummed I had to leave early because I had to be on the set of *Gypsy 83* the next morning. When I first got the job, a few people responded with “Oh, so he meets an editor at a party and then he gets DETECTIVE?!” Well, what I think people need to understand is that the party was four years ago! Anyway, was it intimidating to get the job? Hell, yeah. I mean not only is it *Batman*, the coolest character in comics, but the flagship title at DC. I mean I would’ve been stoked just to contribute to a *SECRET FILES* at that point (not that I still wouldn’t!) But quickly the excitement took over the intimidation and I really wanted to use my “new voice” in the business to illuminate aspects of *Batman* that we haven’t seen in a long time.

AK: *What’s been the coolest thing about the whole experience of writing comics?*

AG: Every single aspect of this business is cool, in my opinion. Comics are a singularly unique art form and as a result I'm fascinated and delighted by nearly everything about them. But I have to say the "Bat Summit" where we had to work out the "War Games" crossover was very cool and fun. The rapid-fire exchange of ideas with such a disparate and immensely talented group of writers and editors was really a childhood fantasy come true. But the truly coolest moment I've had so far is having a drink at the same table as Frank Miller. That just blew my mind. I was speechless. He is the coolest.

AK: People always tell me "Oh, that Andersen — he's so sweet." But then I read your DETECTIVE, and the stories are so moody and complex, with a real edge. Is there a dark side to Andersen that you only reveal in your writing?

AG: Ha! Maybe you should ask my beau about that! But seriously, I think one of the reasons I write and act is the need to express those feelings and thoughts I don't in day-to-day life. I think like a lot of gay/queer/whatever people have a lot of anger and pain and disappointment and unrequited desires that need an outlet. I think a lot of us, to good effect, still carry the sense of "secret feelings." And there is a lot of power in secrecy (just ask the White House!) I find that I most desire to play and write characters that are self-tortured — that aren't the kindest people in the world... most of all to themselves. But saying that, I think it is extremely important to be socially kind and generous. Someone said once, "Love Fails, but Courtesy Prevails." I think it is very true in a lot of ways.

AK: While your Batman is a dark, gritty hero, he also has a real humanity to him and even a sarcastic sense of humor. It's a side to the Dark Knight we don't often see anymore. What's your take on this iconic hero? Is he the ultimate vengeance-obsessed hero that will never have a happy personal life, or is there hope for Bruce yet?

AG: Wow, well thank you Anton. I've tried very hard to keep a balance to Batman. He is a man, first and foremost, made of skin and bone like the rest of us. The way I see it (and others may not, which is great) is that if Batman/Bruce Wayne didn't have the hope that he could maybe, just





maybe, have a happy personal life someday he couldn't do what he does. Otherwise he would be The Punisher, or would have hung himself, you know what I'm saying? Bruce has so much hope for a better world, and I don't think its just altruism, it is deeply personal. I think for him the ultimate proof of his success would come in his being able have a personal life. He loves Humanity above all else (hence his "no killing EVER" edict) and I always find it strange when he's portrayed as being misanthropic. Or humorless. Wit, in the classic sense, is an integral part of being an intelligent, well-educated person. And that Bruce Wayne definitely is.

AK: As an actor, you're used to getting into the heads of different characters. So does writing the actions of different characters come naturally for you? Or are there other factors at work with writing that make it more difficult than acting?

AG: Hmm. I think there is a very close connection between writing and acting — getting inside of someone else's head and thinking their thoughts and feeling their desires. But the key to both (for me) seems to come from the fact

that the vast majority of these thoughts and feelings will never be seen/read by the audience. They are my tools to tell the story. And so, in that way, writing is more difficult because I have to edit myself much, much more because with acting the parameters of what I say and do are already dictated by the script or the staging or the camera frame, whatever. But with writing I have to create those boundaries myself. Which at times is very daunting, but ultimately extremely rewarding. And yes, some characters are much more difficult to crack than others. I'm not gonna say which, though; a boy's gotta have some mystery.

AK: I absolutely love how you take full advantage of the DC Universe's cast of characters, from newly-created ones (the new Tarantula and new Robin) to characters I thought no one else remembered but me (Onyx). What other characters can we expect to see pop up in the future?

AG: I don't know why, but I am a "second-stringer" kinda guy. I totally dig DC's rich and ample stable of B- and C-list players. Gimme Gypsy. Gimme Booster Gold. Gimme Lady Quark or Black Orchid, Lodestone, Animal Man, Dumb Bunny, Duela Dent or, hell, the entire old Titans West crew and I feel like a kid in a candy store. I have always, from day one at the age of eight, been a DC Man. I have read some Marvel and other books with great fever and intensity (the original NEW MUTANTS run in particular is very dear to me), but ultimately it's the richness of DC's mythos that keeps me coming back. As for who we can expect to see? We'll be seeing a lot more of the enigmatic and

kick-ass Onyx quite a bit in “War Games” and after... that’s all I can say for now.

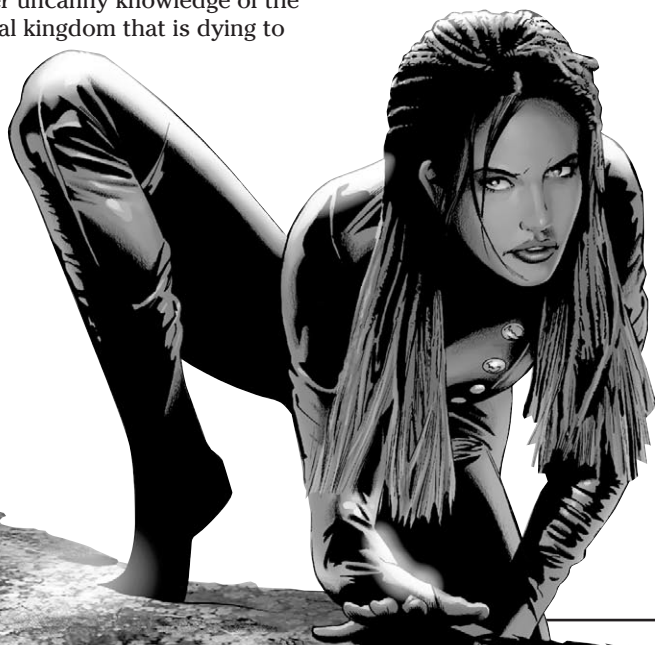
AK: Your love for the character Vixen is no secret. What is it about DC’s animal-powered heroine that appeals to you? Any chance we’d ever see a VIXEN series by you someday?

AG: VIXEN, ohmigod I love her so much! I’ve always felt it a huge injustice that she has been “backburnered” for years, but it looks like that might be changing over in BIRDS OF PREY (Thank you Gail Simone!) I feel that she has all the right components for a truly great breakout character. I mean, come on, she’s a supermodel super-hero! With unpredictable powers that are magical in nature but scientific in execution. Her origin is really strong in a mythological sense, she has a past that she regrets, she’s sexy, smart, scary, what else do you want? I would absolutely love to write a VIXEN series (I have a rather uncanny knowledge of the animal kingdom that is dying to

be put to use besides when I drag my boyfriend to the zoo!) I think with the right “hook” a book starring her could be a surprise hit. I don’t know what Gail’s plans are for her over in BOP, but I’m sure it’ll be great. So who knows — maybe newfound interest in the old girl will pave the way to an ongoing series (hope, hope wish, wish!)

AK: Anything else on the plate for you in the future that you can talk about, be it acting, writing or something else?

AG: I’ve got a couple of really great projects lined up for this summer, but I can’t say just what yet. All I can say is I’m going to be in a movie with an ex-SNL star and an Indie Goddess, but until it’s “in the can” I’m hesitant to say anything else. And it looks like I’ll be writing something else over at DC... but can’t say what just yet. But keep your peepers peeled, folks cause it’s gonna be really, really hot! Again more mystery. Jeez, I’m a tease... 🐾



COMING OUT OF THE COMICS CLOSET

by Rod Townsend and Drew R. Moore

As you hang up the phone, your heart is pounding. You take a few deep breaths to keep from having a panic attack. There's too much work to do, and *fast!* You race through the apartment, picking up the magazines scattered across the coffee table and floor — oops, almost missed the one in the bathroom.

When Dad said the family was stopping by after church, your eyes popped out. Not only are they completely unexpected, but Matt, your younger brother football jock, is with them. He would be so embarrassed if he found out the truth about you...the terrible secret you've been hiding.

You toss the mags in the closet and cover them up with dirty clothes. As long as Mom doesn't try to do your laundry it should be fine. *Maybe.* That's everything, right? Right?

The phone rings again. They're downstairs! You buzz them up and do a quick recon, knowing you have only a minute left. Close the bedroom door behind you.

Take a breath. Calm down.

Your secret is safe...

You let them in, with a big smile, apologizing for everything being such a mess, and jokingly remind them to give you more notice in



the future. Mom asks how Don is as she takes some leftovers to your refrigerator. You suddenly spot the calendar that's on the wall.

Stupid!

It's okay. It's okay. It's Lynda Carter Wonder Woman. They'll just think she's a gay icon. They would never connect that to the fact that you partake in a mortal sin on a daily basis. That you still... read comic books.

Sound familiar? It's okay. We all have to go through it. The important thing to know is that YOU ARE NOT ALONE. And once you open up to your family and friends about your comics reading, life will seem so much easier...

The Coming-Out Process: By holding this wonderful guide in your hands you've taken a great first step in the right direction. Perusing the pages of PRISM COMICS opens you

to a whole new side of the comics experience — the LGBT side. When you see the diversity of creators and creations catering to your community, it's like finding the welcome mat put out to a home that you never knew you owned. But the guide is an easy first step; your next challenge is more daring.

Search the Internet: Admittedly, this is not all *that* daring, but it is a necessary next step. There are LGBT comics fans spanning the globe and the web is one place where they can meet. Be it a heated debate on the pros and cons of Power Girl's "tit-window" or a thoughtful discussion of the lesbian tendencies of Millie the Model, there is always conversation to be found in the online community. A clearinghouse of these groups can be found at www.prismcomics.org or at one of the largest gatherings of LGBT fans, www.gayleague.com. The Gay League site even features member profiles from across the globe — maybe even someone near you.

Wear Your Passion on Your Sleeve: You'll be surprised by the attention you'll receive when you add comic-themed items to your wardrobe. Being asked, "Hey, isn't that Green Lantern? I love Green Lantern," is not an uncommon occurrence. Countless couples report having met because one was wearing something as small as a Spider-Man pin or as noticeable as full Wonder Woman drag. This challenge not only hastens your exit from the comics closet, it might even help you find love! Now that you're emerging from your shell, you might as well bring it all out!

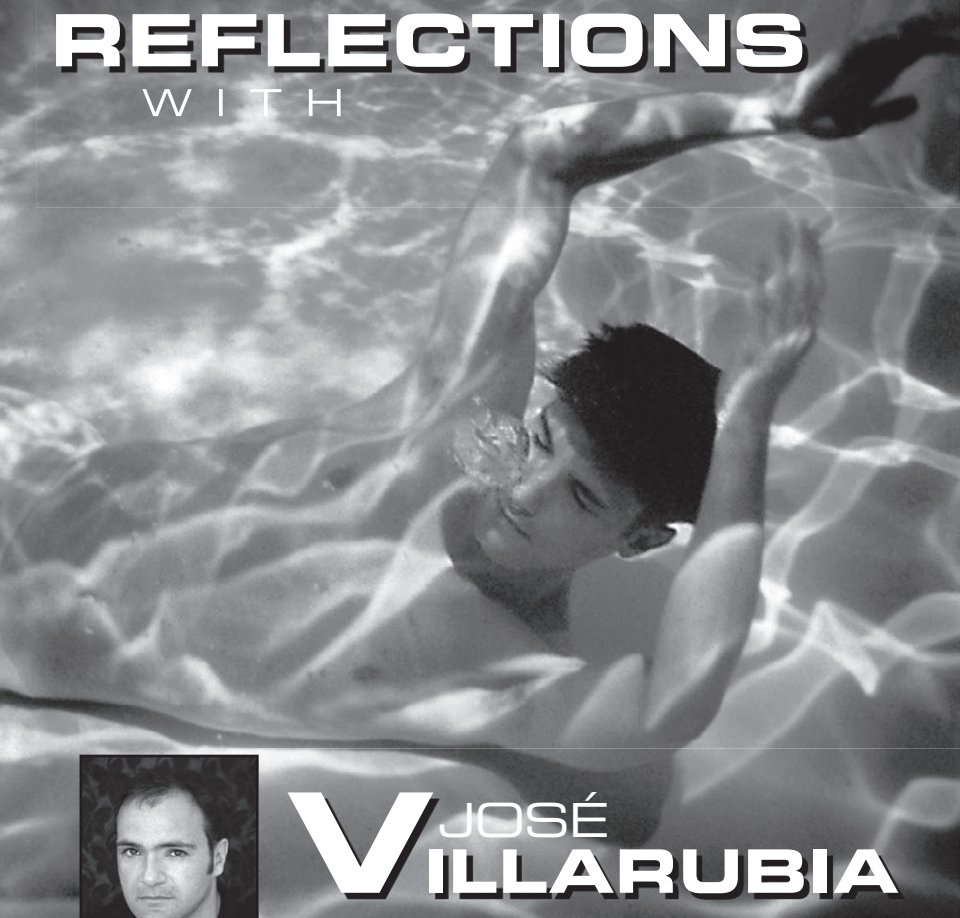


Comics Eye for the Closet Guy (and Gal): The previous challenges have helped you emerge from furtive to full-blown fanboy. Why not celebrate with a home makeover? Your collectibles can now come out from under the bed to decorate your home. Dedicating an entire wall to Wonder Woman may be a bit much, but there are nice touches that work anywhere. Vintage comics can be put behind frames and bring a world of wonder to any wall. Paraphernalia from coasters to clocks add a fun touch of camp to any environs.

If you've passed all of these challenges, then a hearty "Congratulations!" You might even be brave enough at this point to tell your family. And you'll be surprised at how coming out isn't quite as bad as you imagine it will be. You'll find yourself presenting the whole you. You'll be meeting many new people (translation: hot fanboy action!). Most importantly, you'll be joining a community that spans the globe — much like the Global Guardians, just way gayer! 🦋

REFLECTIONS

WITH



V JOSÉ ILLARUBIA

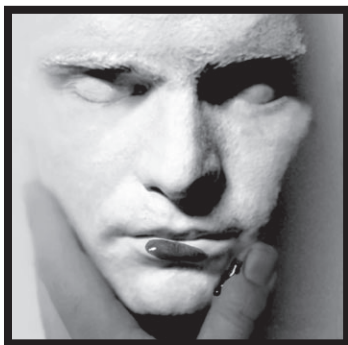
José Villarubia has worn many hats: photographer, digital artist, comics colorist, art professor, stage performer, the list goes on... He most recently completed two illustrated books by Alan Moore — *THE VOICE OF*

THE FIRE and THE MIRROR OF LOVE, the latter of which is an important gay text that narrates the history of homosexuality and lesbianism in the form of a passionate love letter and a political manifesto.

JOE PALMER: *You have a bit of a history with THE MIRROR OF LOVE since you were involved in its 1998 adaptation for the stage as well as it being your debut performance. What was it about Moore's work that attracted you to adapt MIRROR as a play as well as to provide illustrations for the book?*

JOSE VILLARRUBIA:

Alan has been my favorite comics author for a long time, ever since I discovered his work during his run of SWAMP THING. But I must say that I didn't become an Alan devotee until I read V FOR VENDETTA, the "Valerie" chapter in particular. The story blew my mind and that particular chapter made me cry. It was so beautiful, lyrical and meaningful, told through the relationship between two women. Alan understood how it felt to be hated and persecuted just for loving someone, and amazingly, he gave an answer to the dilemma between daring to love or compromising your integrity by staying in the closet. His work gave me the courage to be myself, and confirmed the things that are important in this life. There is something in how Alan understands the human condition and addresses it in his stories that truly resonates with me.



"There is something in how Alan understands the human condition and addresses it in his stories that truly resonates with me."

I read THE MIRROR OF LOVE as a text piece, not a comic, many years later. I was very taken and surprised by this piece; I had never read anything quite like it. It was difficult in parts, but also exhilarating and profound, ironic and earnest, passionate and painful. But most of all it was hopeful. Not just feel good, escapist hopeful,

but deeply so. I read it, cried, laughed, and read it again several times, enjoying it more and more with each consecutive reading. I realized that it was something very, very especial, the kind of art that one only encounters once in a long, long while.

And then I did not think about it for a while.

Years later I was having lunch with David Mills, a very talented solo playwright and performer from San Francisco, and,

prompted by him, confessed my not so secret ambition to perform on the stage. I figured a dramatic monologue of sorts would be appropriate to get my feet wet, but my knowledge of those is pathetically limited. Plus I wanted it to mean something to me, if I was going to make that big step. I thought about it for an hour or so and then I remembered THE MIRROR OF LOVE. I pulled it off of my shelf, read it and cried.

Read it again and cried again. A third time, and the same happened. That convinced me that this was the right material for me. It was now a matter of finding someone who would help me shape it. This was an obvious choice for me. For almost two decades I have been best friends with David Drake, the author/actor/director. Artistically we always understood each other perfectly. I proposed to him to turn this strange text piece into a theater piece and he responded enthusiastically and did it with gusto. It became one of the greatest experiences of my life and I feel very blessed to have been able to do it.

And then I did not think about it for a while.

A few years later I was in France, in the Angouleme international comics festival, and a friend of mine, François Peneaud, asked me: how come I had not illustrated *THE MIRROR OF LOVE*? Well, two reasons. First, I was already working on illustrating Alan's first novel *VOICE OF THE FIRE*, and second, *THE MIRROR OF LOVE* had already been illustrated, as a comic, by Steve Bissette and Rick Veitch, and I did not want to step on anyone's toes. So I could not possibly suggest such a project. But I told François that he could. Not missing a beat, he went right up to Chris Staros from Top Shelf and suggested it. Chris agreed on the spot, as long as Alan, Steve and Rick thought it was OK. Alan gave us his blessing and the rest, as they say, is history.

JP: Did your involvement in the performance influence your vision for the photography in the book?

JV: I wanted to remain completely faithful to the tone and style of the piece, and this is difficult in a text that contains so many different facets. The basic thrust of the story is that it begins in a mythical ancestral time, and evolves all the way to a quasi-documentary style, wrapping up in a lyrical, yet ironic, happy ever after. The images had to reflect this shift. The mythical stuff was easier for me, since that has been the bulk of my fine art work. But I had to tackle a lot of subjects that I had little or no experience photographing: still lifes, landscapes and, most importantly for the end of the book, photojournalism. The spontaneity of the last batch of images was necessary for me to reflect the times from Stonewall until now; in other words, those events that have taken place during my lifetime.



It was easy for me to dress up friends as dying Spartan warriors, but I simply could not do the same things when addressing the AIDS pandemic and ACT UP. It would have been kitschy and irreverent.

JP: What was the collaborative process between you and Moore like?

JV: Well, the first thing we did together, the story within the story in PROMETHEA, was done in the normal way that Alan collaborates with visual artists: Alan draws small layouts for each page, which he rarely shows, but he turns them into very detailed descriptions for every panel, which work wonderfully.

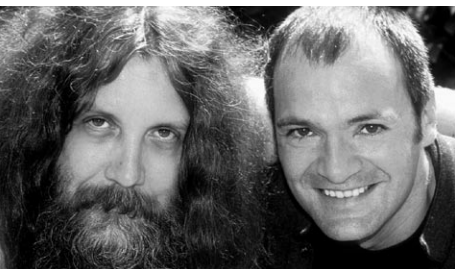
He wrote one of these for THE MIRROR OF LOVE, which is posted on the Internet, and that is the script that Bissette and Veitch had used. I studied this script, but did not want to repeat what had been done before. Instead I wanted to reinterpret what Alan had written juxtaposing it with images that narrated their own story. So I made a sample portfolio with ten images and went to Northampton with Chris Staros to present it to Alan and get his feedback. Alan opened it, very carefully, took a long breath, and went on to recite precisely the passage that the first image illustrated, even though it was very far from a literal representation of his words. He did this with all ten images. I was blown away; Chris was pleased. As much as Chris had trusted me



completely to conceive this project, it was essential to both of us that Alan was 100% pleased with our approach. And he was. So I proceeded following my best judgment, keeping Alan abreast of my progress, and he was consistently supportive and encouraging. It's been a marvelous experience.

JP: There was a lot of traveling involved on your part for location photography. What was that like?

JV: The bulk of the images for MIRROR were completed in Baltimore, where I have my studio, and Madrid, where my brother Alvaro, a famous fashion photographer, has his. I photographed friends for both of the books, just like I had done in PROMETHEA. I usually never work with fashion or professional models unless I know them and we are friends; since what I do is not typical commercial work and it is important to me that the people that I work with do it because they are excited about it, and not just as another job...



For MIRROR I also shot in London and New York for locations. I went there to shoot the Stonewall Inn bar — which I did following the suggestion of my friend David — from across the street, behind the bars of the iron fence that surrounds the small park. David had already perfectly envisioned this image in his mind. What he did not imagine was that while I was shooting it, there was a homeless man on my right urinating for what seems like the entire time I was shooting. Needless to say, I did not linger. But the picture ended up looking fab, if I may say so! The magic of photography is sometimes in the cropping: it is not what you show; it is what you leave out.

The other big surprise occurred in France. I was visiting Paris with my mother, and we went to the Père Lachaise Cemetery to photograph the famous tomb of Oscar Wilde, with its great decadent art deco angel. When we arrived we discovered, to our dismay, that the statue had been covered in graffiti! I freaked out...but when we got closer we realized that it was not graffiti at all, but dozens of lipstick kisses in every shade of red covering the entire monument! We were astonished and thrilled! What a perfect homage to Wilde... so loving and outrageous at the same time.

I shot the picture and it is now in the book. I know that it was a great surprise to Alan as well and it is now one of his favorites.

JP: What would you point to as the appeal of MIRROR to the average, gay comic fan who seems mostly interested in the mythology of super heroes?

JV: I would say that if they haven't yet, this is their chance to learn about the real life Queer heroes that have shaped Western culture: Sappho, a lesbian living two and a half millennia ago was the first poet to write about herself and her feelings of love, loss and loneliness. Her verses changed the world, and when you read her words today, they will give you the chill of recognition. To me, she is the true Wonder Woman, the one we should really admire and learn about. We all know Michelangelo, but some of my friends did not even know he was gay! Or had read any of his love poems to men... Possibly the greatest artist in history, and yet fairly ignored as a queer hero. And so many others, Shakespeare, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, the greatest poets of the English language... Invisible.

I think at some point it is a great idea to, in addition to following the fictional lives and feats of comics characters, to start enjoying the fantastic lives of actual queer folks that have become larger than life *heroes*, and yet were just like us in the most important ways...

JP: As a professor of illustration, you have one foot in the fine art world and the other foot in the comics world. Does working in one influence the other?


JV: I share the work that I do with my students, so my professional career is very integrated with my academic one. In terms of aesthetics, there is still little crossover between illustration/fine art and mainstream comics. Superhero comics have their own style of both storytelling and graphic representation, which has changed very little since the '40s. Publishers like Fantagraphics, Drawn and Quarterly and Top Shelf are, however, much more open toward different approaches to sequential art.

Comics have influenced fine art in the past, during Pop Art, as kitschy mass-produced objects, not unlike soap packages or cans of soup.

But there is a new generation of comics, no longer a mass medium,

that is opening doors and ideas in fine art, particularly in terms of representation and storytelling. Artists like Chris Ware and Craig Thompson are captivating readers that have not grown up reading comic books, and are seeing the medium with fresh eyes...

JP: Can you talk about any projects that we can look forward to?

JV: Ah, this is the question I can never completely answer until the projects have been announced! For now, keep an eye on DOCTOR OCTOPUS: YEAR ONE and the last three issues of PROMETHEA. After that, we will see... 

Joe Palmer is the moderator of Gayleague.com, the world's largest hub of gay comics fans and creators. He lives in Champaign, IL, and is involved in art workshops for HIV+ people.



AW, STAN...
DON'T LOOK AT
ME LIKE THAT...

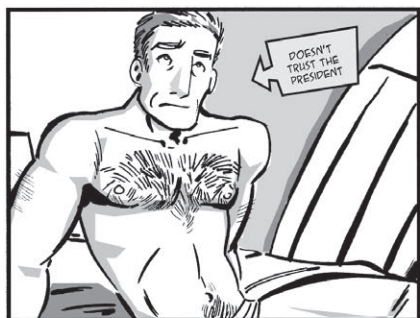
YOU KNOW
I HAVE TO
GO...

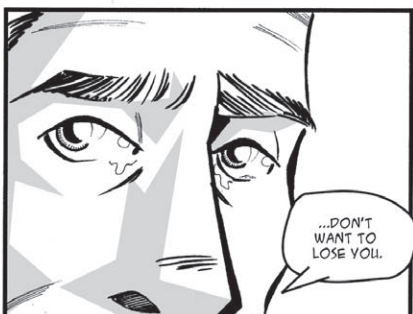
it's my DUTY

by
Tim
Fish







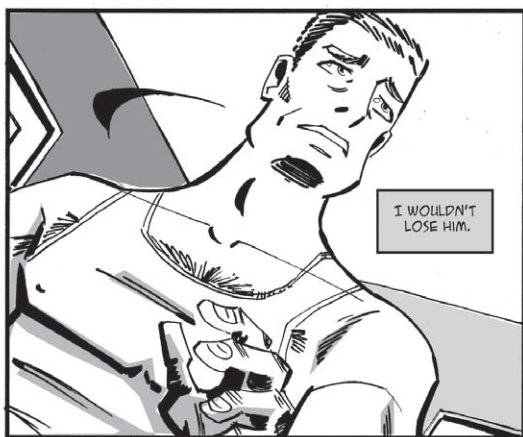


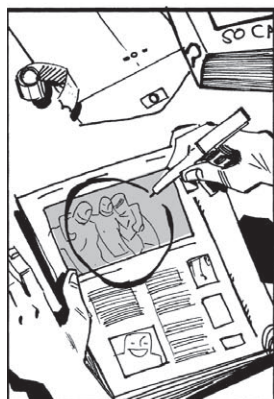


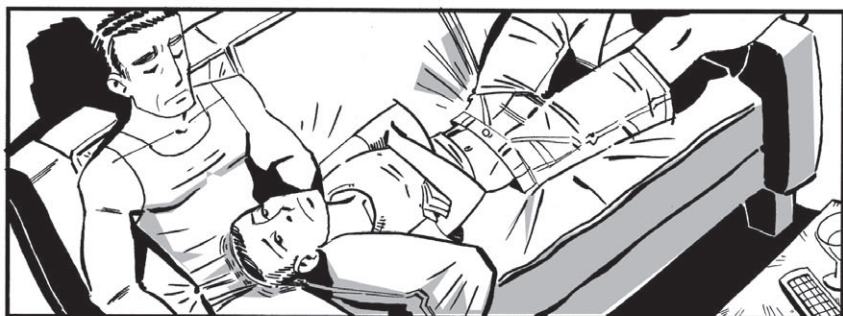
LIKE A BAD
OLD MOVIE...

THE SCENES
KEPT RUNNING
THROUGH
MY MIND...

I COULDN'T
LOSE HIM...







END

We're putting out a gay comics catalogue that is

...and we'd like to give some exposure to your comics.



Safe for all ages

©2004 Leanne Franson

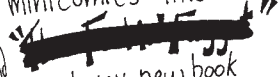


... i Love what you do !!



- Sure!

... i can plug all my old minicomics like



...and my new book about people

each other and being real



~~_____~~!!! What are you doing?!!

... Blacking out the bad language!

No "adult content"!!



...awright awright... but it's weird to write about sexual politics and adult relationships with "no adult content"!!

... You see, most everyone swears in real life, but in print, even commonly used words

are Bad! Maybe you could say "The Copulating Male Homosexual" instead of "The ~~_____~~!!

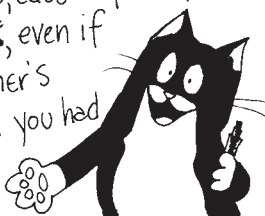


... it's a challenge!



1

...and it's not so much **what** you say, but **how** you say it. You can say "diarrhea, excrement, turd, poop, caca or feces, but **not** ~~shit~~, even if the weather's ~~shit~~ and you had a ~~shit~~ day..."



...uh, i've been talking with my cat... what do you consider "OK" for "all ages"?

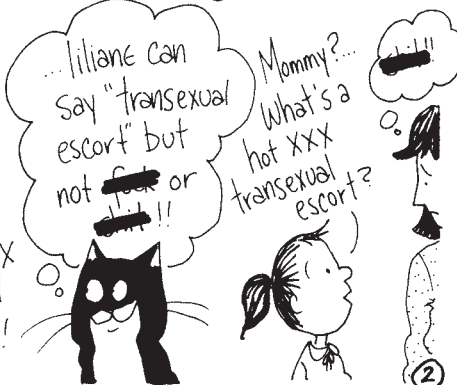


...but here, online, it says "Adult" is **nudity** or **partial nudity**... especially if it is there to "arouse sexual desire" versus being "for educational or artistic purposes"

...Well, the free newsweekly is perhaps artistically educating us about phone sex...



...and the availability of hot XXX transsexual escorts!



The nice guy
said you could write about
leather bars or gay pride parades...



...i dunno...
i drew guys
groping and
porn videos in
my bar
story

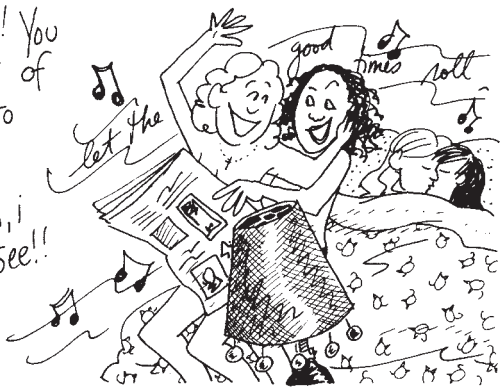
...and in my "Gay Shame Day"
comic i wrote about lesbians
yelling **Shame!!** at me in
the Pride Parade cuz i
was topless with
a leather harness
and blue paint
on my nipples...



Ahh, but **Now** you've got it!! You
drew the "bad" parts out of
the panel! You just have to
cover things up!!!



ah, i
see!!



Ironically that
is often so **forced**, it **pushes**
one to imagine all
Sorts of lewd
things!

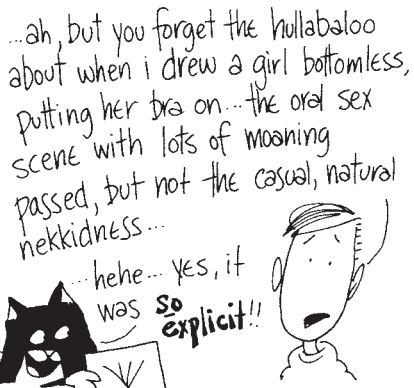
3



get your mind outta the
gutter!

Yeah,
REALLY!!

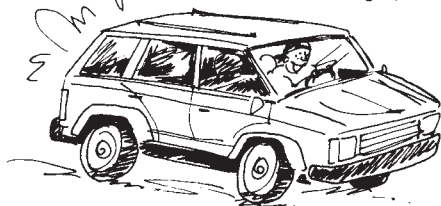
!!
?!



END (4)



...i used to love a girl
who drove a four-wheel
drive...



©2004 Leanne Franson

...i used to love a girl
who held my hand at the
airport...



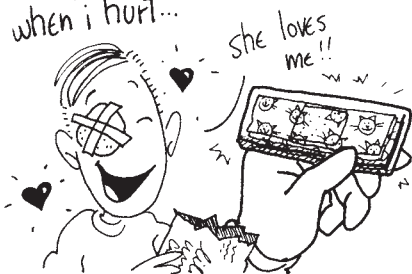
...i used to love a girl who
smoked when she messed up
bad...



...i used to love a girl
who held me tight at night...



I used to love a girl who
bought me band-aids
when i hurt...



...i used to love a girl who powdered her nose...



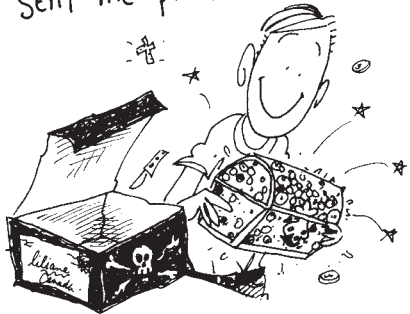
I used to love a girl who loved storytime...



I used to love a girl who stood up for me...



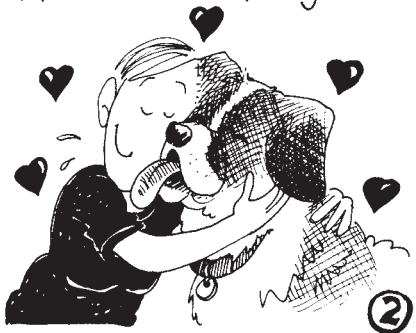
...i used to love a girl who sent me pirate treasure...



I used to love a girl who used to love a girl.



Now I love my dog.



SOME TIME,
VERY SOON

"IT'S NOT AN EASY CHOICE I'VE MADE, BUT I FIGURE IT'S THE RIGHT ONE. I'VE BEEN A DEMON FOR SO LONG, I CAN BARELY REMEMBER WHAT HEAVEN WAS LIKE."



"I CHOSE TO FOLLOW LUCIFER INTO HELL, AND IT'S TAKEN ME AN ETERNITY TO REALIZE THAT I HAD MADE A MISTAKE."

"I FIGURED HEAVEN WOULD TAKE ME BACK SINCE GOD IS ALL FORGIVING. BUT HEAVEN AND HELL ARE AT WAR, AND THE FLYBOYS ARE LOSING."

SO NOW I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH THE ERRAND BOY JOB PUTTING IN HIS HOURS FOR THE GOOD GUYS! HEAVEN WILL TAKE ME BACK BUT AT A PRICE.

PATRICK FILLION PROUDLY PRESENTS:

DEIMOS™

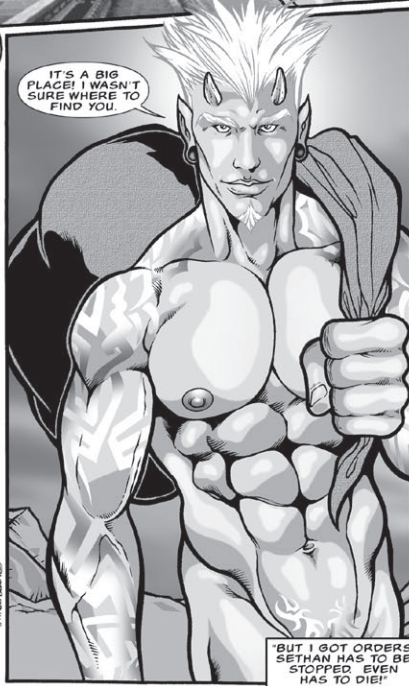
ACTS OF MERCY

"SO I WAIT FOR SETHAN AT THIS OLD FACTORY ON THE OUTSIDE OF CIVILIZATION. WE GO WAY BACK. I WAS SWEET ON HIM AT ONE POINT. DEMON LOVE! THAT'S A FREAKIN' LAUGH!"



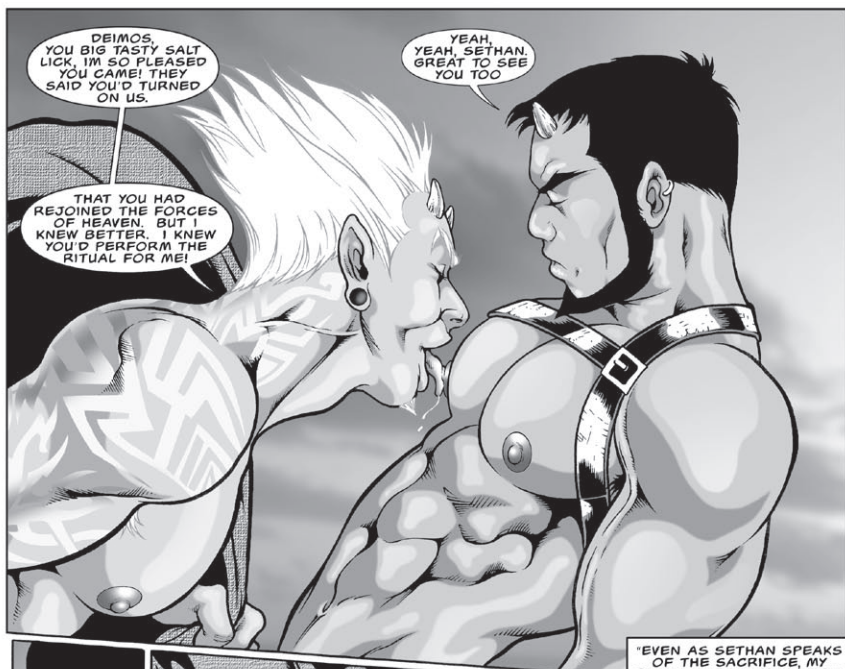
TOOK YA LONG ENOUGH!

IT'S A BIG PLACE! I WASN'T SURE WHERE TO FIND YOU.



"BUT I GOT ORDERS. SETHAN HAS TO BE STOPPED. EVEN HAS TO DIE!"

Patrick Fillion



DEIMOS, YOU BIG TASTY SALT LICK, I'M SO PLEASED YOU CAME! THEY SAID YOU'D TURNED ON US.

YEAH, YEAH, SETHAN. GREAT TO SEE YOU TOO

THAT YOU HAD REJOINED THE FORCES OF HEAVEN. BUT I KNEW BETTER... I KNEW YOU'D PERFORM THE RITUAL FOR ME!

'EVEN AS SETHAN SPEAKS OF THE SACRIFICE, MY PLAN IS SET INTO MOTION. MY LOYAL SERVANT, GRIN REAPER, IS UP TO HIS BADASS TRICKS.'



SO WHO'S IN THE BAG?



PLUS, HE'S A TOTAL STUPID! I ENJOYED POUNDING HIM REAL GOOD BEFORE BRINGING HIM HERE!

OH, THE PERFECT HUMAN SACRIFICE: ONE WITH MUCH POWER

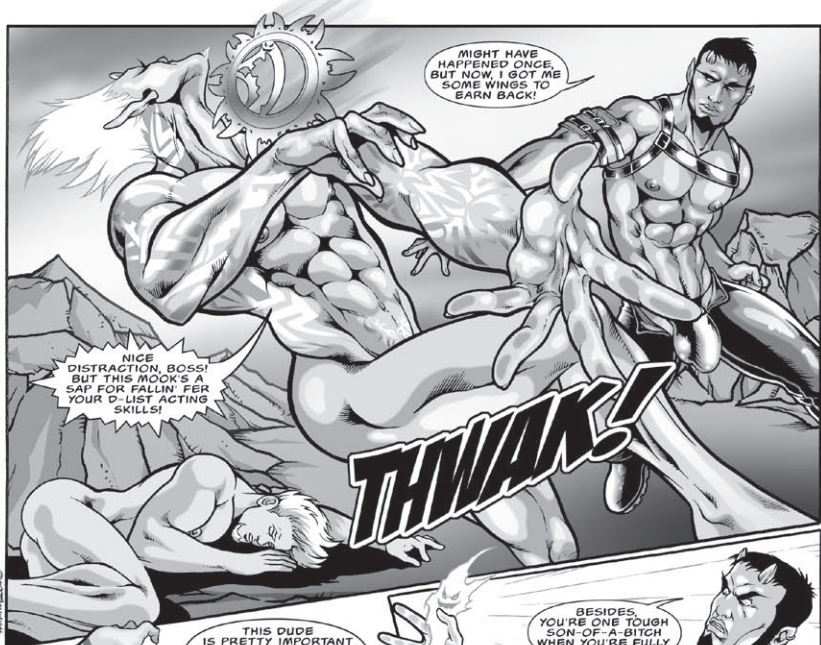
DIDN'T GET A NAME, BUT I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT HIM BEING "YESTERDAY'S HERO". SOUNDS LIKE HE HAS STRONG TIES TO THE EGYPTIAN GODS OR SOMETHIN'!



SO I KILL THIS HUMAN, AND YOU CROSS OVER PERMANENTLY INTO THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE...



...CLAIMING HIS POWERS AND LIFE FORCE FOR YOUR OWN...



MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED ONCE, BUT NOW, I GOT ME SOME WINGS TO BARN BACK!

NICE DISTRACTION, BOSS! BUT THIS MOOK'S A SAP FOR FALLIN' FER YOUR D-LIST ACTING SKILLS!

THWAK!



THIS DUDE IS PRETTY IMPORTANT TO THE FLYBOYS, SETHAN! NO WAY YOU'RE GONNA GET HIS LIFE ENERGY.

BESIDES, YOU'RE ONE TOUGH SON-OF-A-BITCH WHEN YOU'RE FULLY CORPOREAL.



END OF THE LINE, DICK-HEAD!!

IT SPEAKS!?!

WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT YOU CROSSING OVER HERE AND SCREWIN' WITH ME ON TOP OF ALL THE OTHER CRAP I HAVE TO DEAL WITH!

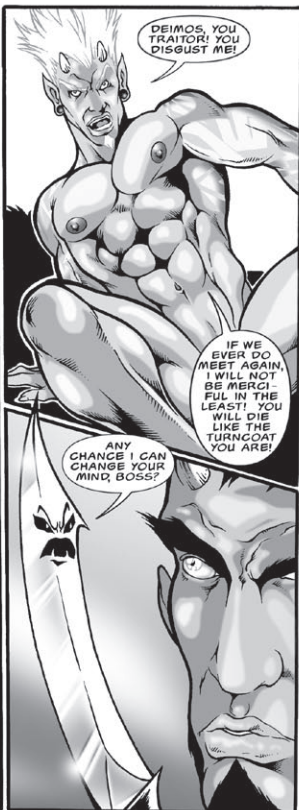
SWAN!



BUT WHEN THE TIME COMES TO PLUNGE THE DAGGER INTO SETHAN'S HEART, DEIMOS FINDS THAT HE CANNOT KILL THE DEMON.

GET UP AND GET LOST, SETHAN! GO BACK TO HELL AND NEVER LET ME SEE YOU ON EARTH AGAIN, CAUSE IM ONLY SPARING YOU JUST THIS ONCE!

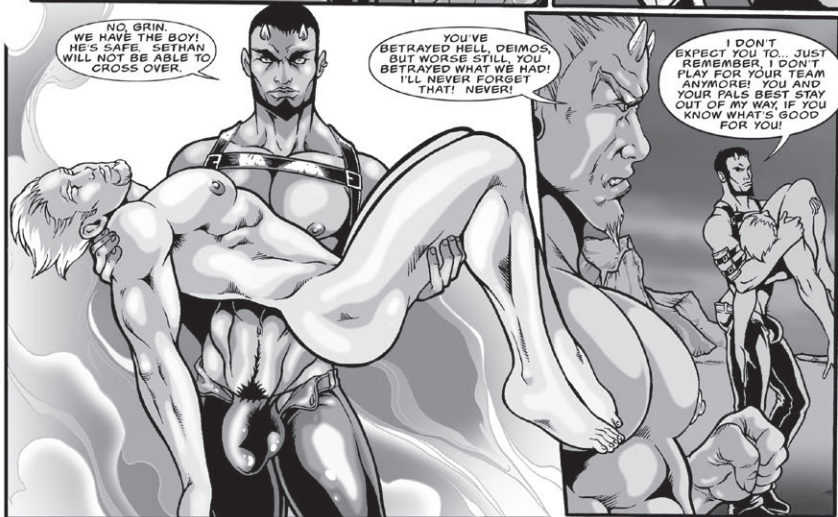
WHAT?? DEIMOS! KILL HIM! YOU HAVE ORDERS, I WANT TO TASTE HIS BLOOD!



DEIMOS, YOU TRAITOR! YOU DISGUST ME!

IF WE EVER DO MEET AGAIN, I WILL NOT BE MERCIFUL IN THE LEAST! YOU WILL DIE LIKE THE TURNGOAT YOU ARE!

ANY CHANCE I CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND, BOSS?



NO, GRIN. WE HAVE THE BOY! HE'S SAFE. SETHAN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CROSS OVER.

YOU'VE BETRAYED HELL, DEIMOS, BUT WORSE STILL, YOU BETRAYED WHAT WE HAD! I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT! NEVER!

I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO... JUST REMEMBER, I DON'T PLAY FOR YOUR TEAM ANYMORE! YOU AND YOUR PALS BEST STAY OUT OF MY WAY IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!



THAT WAS WEIRD, I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE TO HESITATE. I WAS ORDERED TO KILL SETHAN, BUT I COULDN'T.

IS THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL MERCY? NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE CAPABLE. GUESS THIS NEW GIG IS REALLY DOIN' A NUMBER ON ME! WONDER WHAT OTHER CHANGES I GOT IN STORE? BAH!

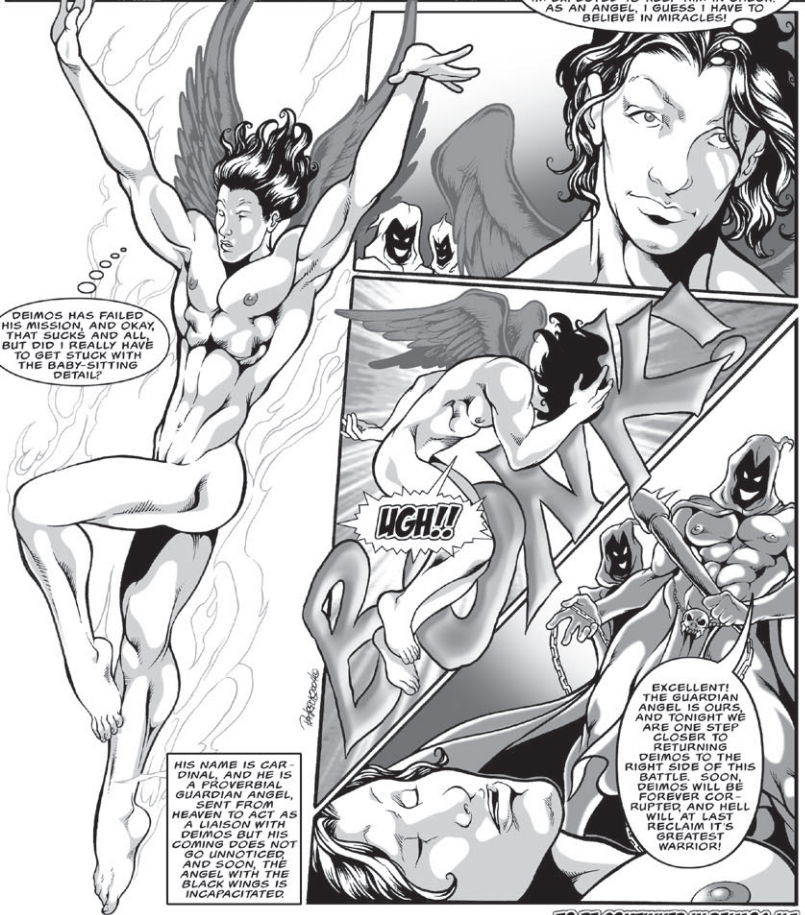
I'VE HAD ENOUGH EXCITEMENT FOR ONE DAY. I DESERVE ME A BUBBLE TEA!



LATER THAT EVENING:

ABOVE THE CHAOS, THE DRUG DEALERS, THE RAPISTS AND MURDERERS THAT RUN RAMPANT IN THE STREETS BELOW, AN ANGEL DESCENDS TO EARTH IN A BLINDING STREAM OF WHITE FIRE.

I SURE HAVE IT ROUGH! DEIMOS MAY BE A SOLDIER WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE IN THIS WAR, BUT HE'S A LOSE CANNON, AND HE HAS ONE HECK OF A NASTY TEMPER, AND I'M EXPECTED TO KEEP HIM IN CHECK? AS AN ANGEL, I GUESS I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!



DEIMOS HAS FAILED HIS MISSION, AND OKAY, THAT SUCKS AND ALL, BUT DID I REALLY HAVE TO GET STUCK WITH THE BABY-SITTING DETAIL?

HIS NAME IS CARDINAL, AND HE IS A PROVERBIAL GUARDIAN ANGEL, SENT FROM HEAVEN TO ACT AS A LIAISON WITH DEIMOS BUT HIS COMING DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED, AND SOON, THE ANGEL WITH THE BLACK WINGS IS INCAFRGATED.

EXCELLENT! THE GUARDIAN ANGEL IS OURS, AND TONIGHT WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO RETURNING DEIMOS TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THIS BATTLE. SOON, DEIMOS WILL BE FOREVER CORRUPTED AND HELL WILL AT LAST RECLAIM IT'S GREATEST WARRIOR!

TO BE CONTINUED IN DEIMOS #1

MY EX-BOYFRIEND SEAN CAME BACK TO VISIT SCHOOL ONCE AFTER HE'D BEEN KICKED OUT FOR HEROIN. HE STAYED WITH A MUTUAL FRIEND JANET WHO HAD A SINGLE IN THE BASEMENT OF THE DORMS, A DEEPLY DISTURBING PLACE TO LIVE ...

PEEK-A-BOO



MASKS

by Justin Hall

...AND HE'D ALREADY GONE SERIOUSLY CRAZY OUT IN THE "REAL WORLD."



I HAD JUST MOVED TO THE CAMPUS APARTMENTS, BUT HEARD ABOUT IT ALL FROM FRIENDS.

AYE/I/EYE (W) HOLE

THEATER MASKS

SEAN LIVED FOR A MONTH IN JANET'S PANTRY-SIZED ROOM, WHICH HE NEVER LEFT FOR FEAR OF DISCOVERY.

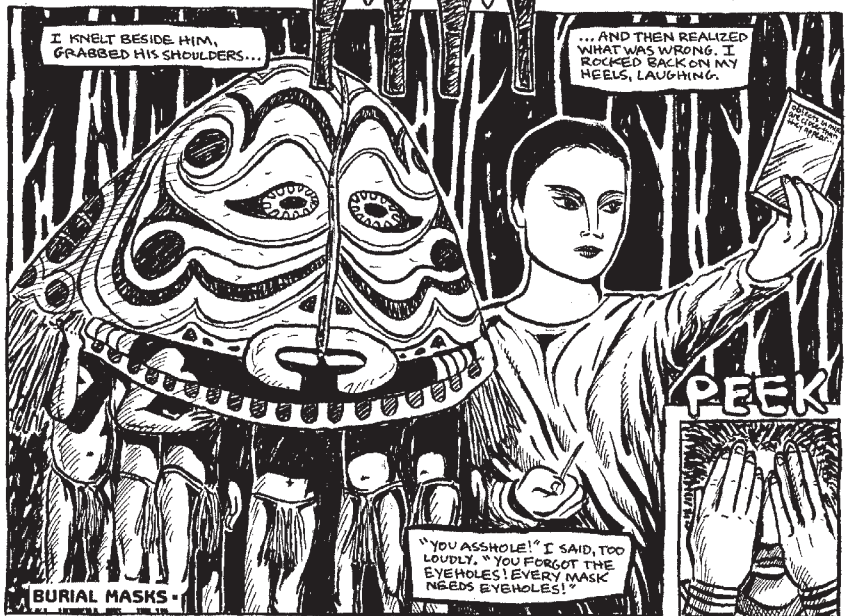
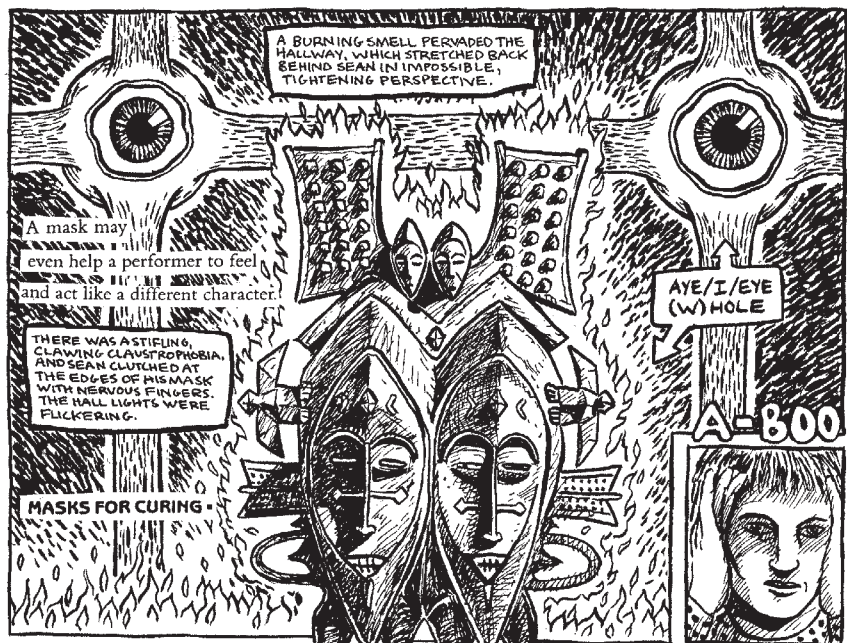
PEEK



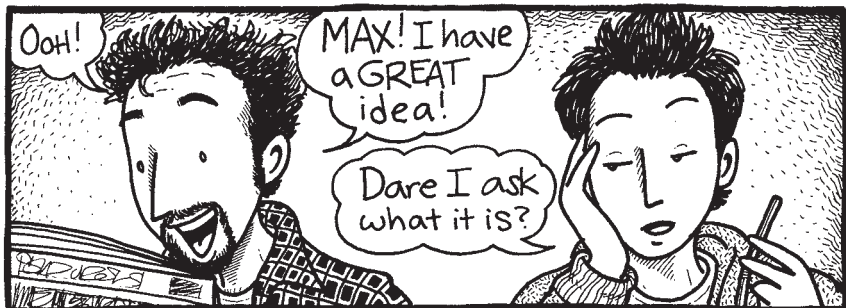
WHEN HE HAD TO (FOR THE HALL BATH-ROOM) HE ALWAYS WORE SOME SORT OF MASK...

Many masks have grotesque features.





MAX and Lily in "I DO, I DO, I DO!"



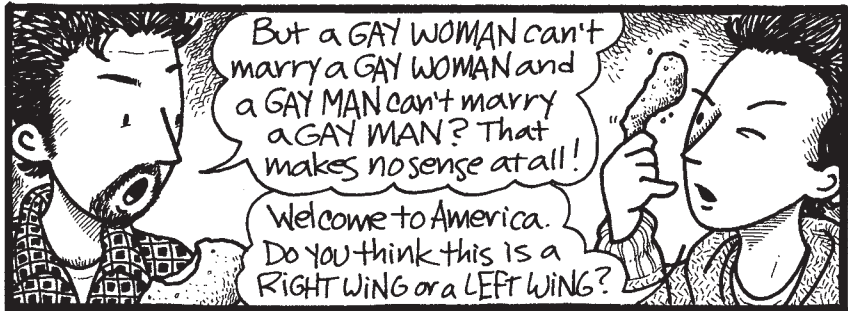
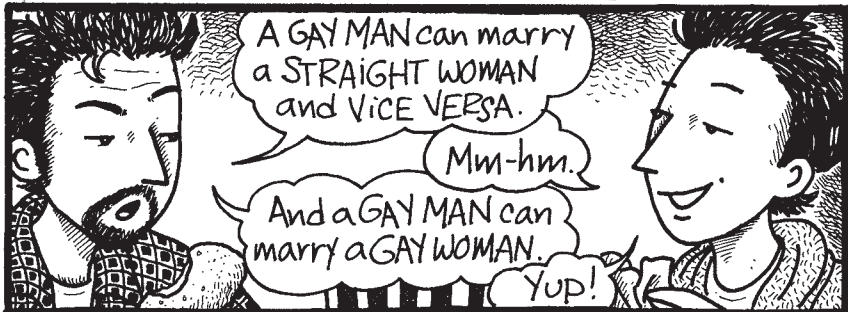
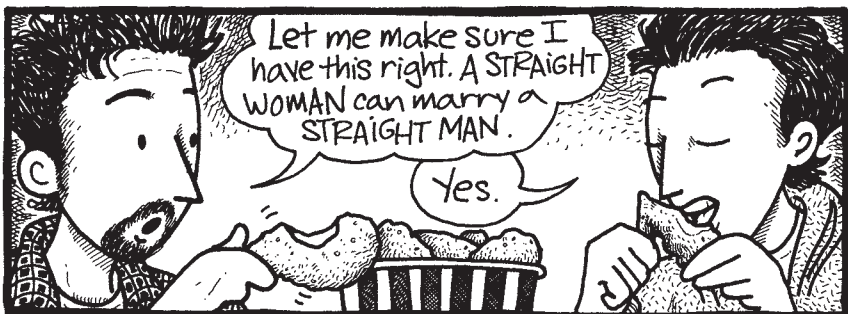
© 2004 Kris Dresen

THE MAXSTER & THE LILYMEISTER IN "I DO...PART DEUX"



©2004 lensdresen

MAX & LILY  "I DO, I DO, I DO" "ADIEU!"



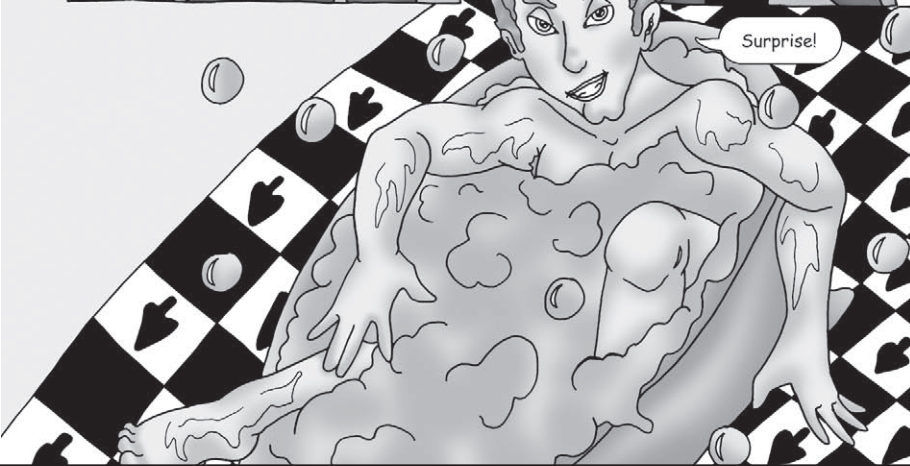
©2004 Kris Drezen

Fairies Tell: Rub a Dub Dub, Three Men In A Tub

Story & Art by Lynx Delirium from Carabosse Comics









What's going on here?!



Well, you weren't supposed to walk through the door...

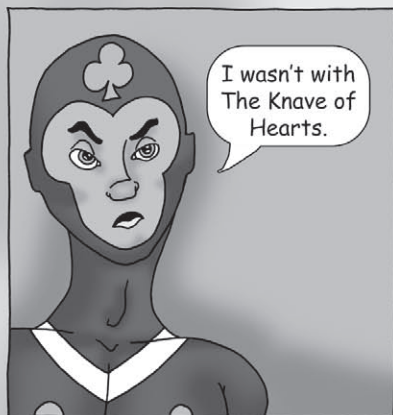


How you like them apples? Since you wanna sneak around...



I like them fine.





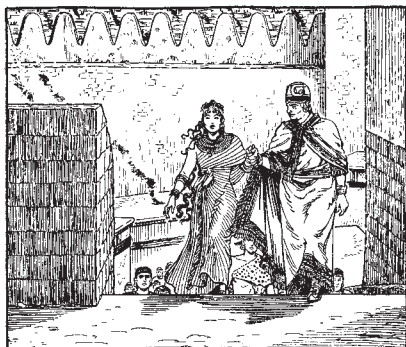
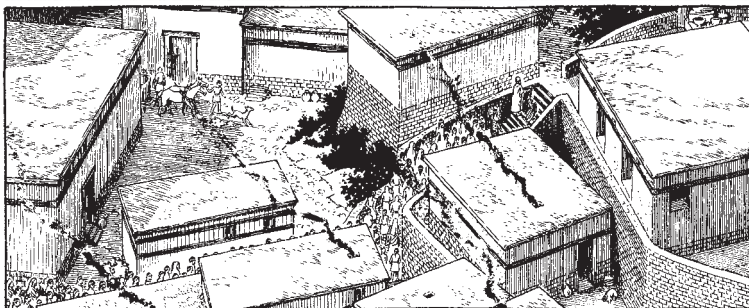
AGE OF BRONZE

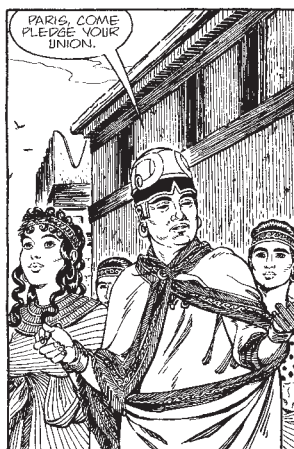
THE STORY OF THE TROJAN WAR

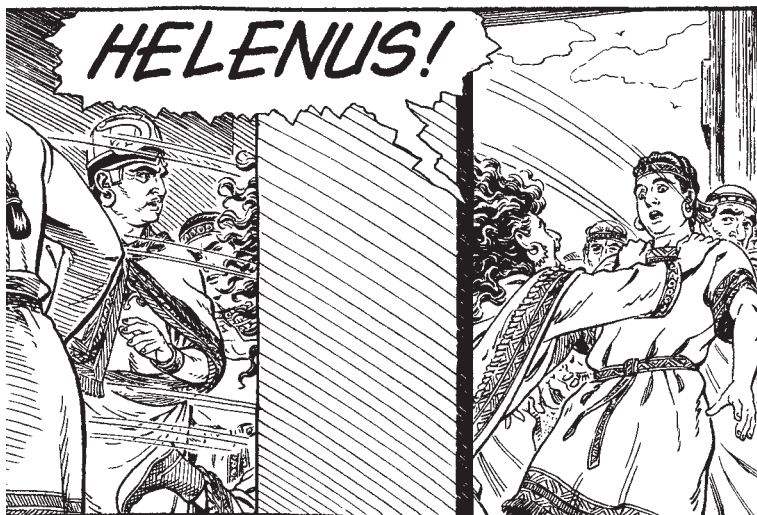
by Eric Shanower

An Excerpt

Helen of Sparta has left her husband to join her lover Paris, prince of Troy. When Helen and Paris arrive in Troy, King Priam leads them into the city.









MY **TRUE** BROTHER--GROWING TOGETHER IN MOTHER'S WOMB --ONE BIRTH--ONE MIND--YOU **KNOW** THE GOD'S WORDS ARE **TRUE**--

UH... ..



HELENUS, DON'T--DON'T DO THIS TO ME -- NOT AGAIN-- DON'T LEAVE ME TO STRUGGLE ALONE--NOT LIKE THAT DAY --THE DAY WE NEVER SPEAK OF--



DEATH HOVERS OVER TROY-- **TELL THEM!** YOU **KNOW** IT! YOU **SEE** IT!

NO-- CAN'T --I DON'T.



TELL THEM! TELL THEM! THEY'LL BELIEVE YOU! **TELL THEM!**

KASSANDRA...

UH!



HELENUS! DON'T DESERT ME!

KASSANDRA...



NOAAAAAAAAAAAA

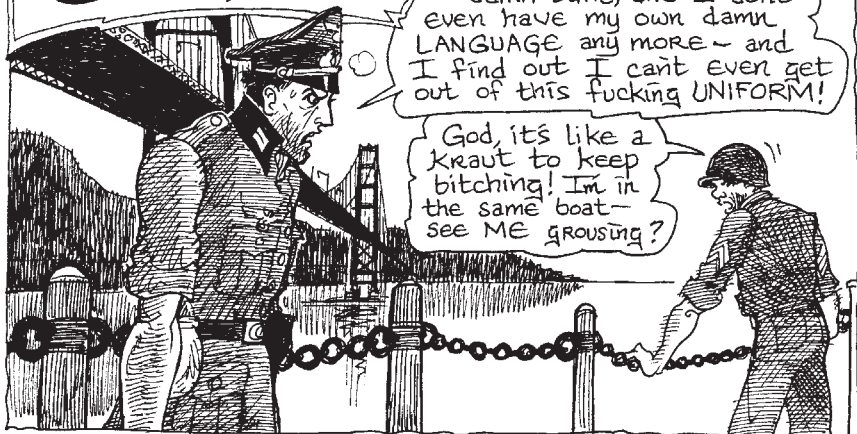


CONFINE HER TO HER ROOM. IDAEUS, I WANT SOMEONE WATCHING HER DAY AND NIGHT.

How's that for chewing scenery?

Follow the full story of Priam, Cassandra, Paris, Helen, and other characters of the Troy legend--Odysseus, Achilles, Aeneas, Agamemnon, Troilus and more--in Eric Shanower's *Age of Bronze*.

Bosom Enemies IN BRIDGEWORK



It's not RIGHT! If NOT
goddamn RIGHT! I LIVE my
whole life IMPRISONED
and I finally get out
and it's not even my own
damn time, and I don't
even have my own damn
LANGUAGE any more - and
I find out I can't even get
out of this fucking UNIFORM!

God, it's like a
kraut to keep
bitching! I'm in
the same boat -
see ME grousing?



How come that
OTHER American
gets to strip off?

Member of
the 4?

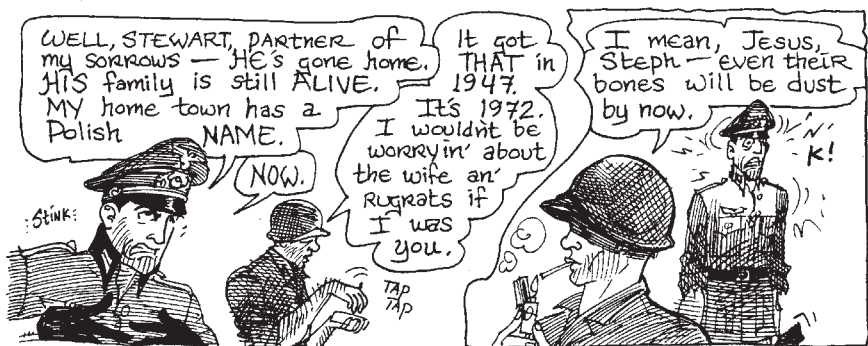
Who IS he,
with
changing
privileges?

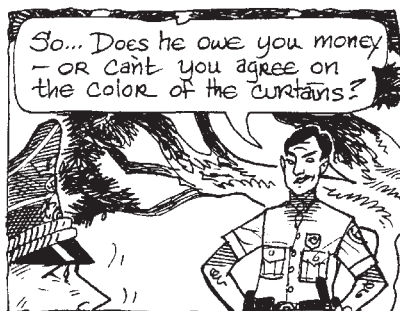
Christ, Stephan, I drift in
blissful ignorance. Maybe it's
because this Vietnam war he
was in is still happening. OR
because he was supposed to be
a HORSE sacrifice. OR he's

CUTER than
OUR asses.
Let me
know, Juh,
when I get
WARM?

DONNA I-NEED-HELP BARR ©2004

1







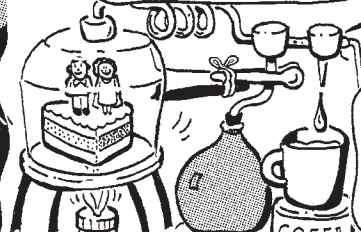
The full, 64-page story will soon be available at www.moderntales.com.
 For more BOSOM ENEMIES, visit your favorite comics retailer!

It's true!!

In Secret Laboratories from San Francisco to Key West....

Gays are learning how to distill and dilute the institution of marriage!

USING A FEW HOUSEHOLD ITEMS OBTAINED AT ANY TARGET OR WAL-MART, WE CAN REDUCE EVERYTHING TO A SIMPLE COMBINATION OF LIQUID AND GAS.



POUR THE LIQUID INTO A SMALL SAUCEPAN AND REDUCE OVER MEDIUM HEAT UNTIL YOU HAVE A THICK GLAZE.

© 2004 GINA KAMENTSKY

COMBINE WITH 1/2 CUP OF EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, 3 LARGE RIPE TOMATOES, FRESH BASIL AND A DASH OF SALT IN A MEDIUM SIZED FOOD PROCESSOR



SERVE OVER CAPPELLINI



A FINE DRY WHITE WINE SUCH AS A CHARDONNAY OR MEURSAULT GOES NICELY WITH THIS.

AS FOR THE GAS? AFTER COOLING, THE RESULT CAN BE MIXED WITH WATER FOR A DELIGHTFUL APERITIF



BON APPETIT!

And They're Throwing Rice All Over!

I'VE LIVED AS A MAN FOR 17 YEARS.

IN 85 I WAS LIVING IN THE BAY-AREA AND GRAPPLING WITH MY IDENTITY.

AFTER TRANSITION I DATED A BIT BUT NEVER MET MR. RIGHT

POST 9-11 I RETURNED HOME TO TAKE CARE OF MY AGING PARENTS.



TOM AND I MET AT THE LIBRARY.

DOWNTOWN TOLEDO OF ALL PLACES....



WE JUST GOT MARRIED!



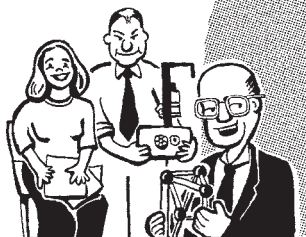
THANK GOODNESS STATE LAW SAYS I'M STILL FEMALE!

To Gina,
Presents
**Girl
POWER**



© 2004
GINA
KAMENSKY

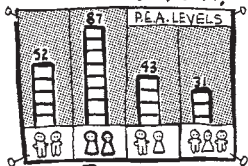
SCIENTISTS AT OXFORD
DISCOVER HOW TO CONVERT
PHENYLETHAMINE (P.E.A.)
INTO GAS USING A MICRO-
WAVE ABSORPTION
SPECTROMETER.



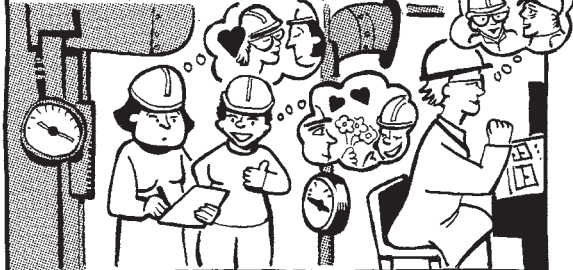
BY 2010, ENTIRE CITIES ARE
POWERED BY THIS CHEMICAL
WHICH IS PRODUCED IN THE
BRAIN WHEN ANTICIPATING
ROMANTIC EUPHORIA.



PLANTS ARE STAFFED
100% BY **LESBIANS**
WHO ARE EFFICIENT
PRODUCERS OF P.E.A.!



BY MAINTAINING SECRET CRUSHES ON EACH-
OTHER AND **NEVER** REVEALING THEIR HEART'S
DESIRE, THESE HARD WORKING GALS PRODUCE A
CONSISTENT SUPPLY FOR THE GENERATORS TO
CONVERT INTO ELECTRICITY.



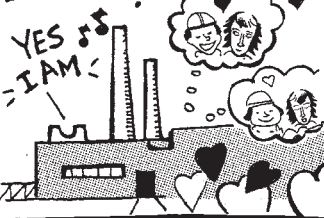
A MAJOR
PROBLEM
WITH THIS
ENERGY
PROGRAM
IS THE
SO CALLED
"ANVIL"
EFFECT...



TWO WORKERS CAUGHT
MAKING OUT START A
CHAIN-REACTION
RESULTING IN A SERIES
OF POWER FAILURES.



AN EMERGENCY BACKUP
SYSTEM BROADCASTS
MELISSA ETHERIDGE
THROUGHOUT THE PLANT
NARROWLY AVERTING
MASSIVE ROLLING
BLACKOUTS!



T-Gina,
 IN
BORN TO BE MILD
 ☆ ☆
 ☆ ☆
 @2004
 Gina Kamentsky

WELCOME TO
FLORIDA

1500cc VTWIN HARLEYS UNDER OUR
 ASSES; WE ARE THREE QUEER WOMEN
 IN SEARCH OF SUN, VALIDATION AND
 THE PERFECT CUP OF COFFEE...

NOW THAT WE'RE HERE,
 I'M GONNA DO JUST
 THREE THINGS...

RIDE AROUND
 LOOKING COOL,
 LIE ON THE BEACH,

FIND DYKE BARS 'N
 SCOOP UP CHICKS!

WOW, I WANNA RIDE
 TO THE DEVIL'S GARDEN*
 AND CHALLENGE SATAN
 IN THE QUARTER MILE!

MAP

*In Hendry County, Florida

I CAN'T WAIT TO
 GO TO MIAMI BEACH
 AND DISCOVER MY
 JEWISH ROOTS.

HOTEL

LIVE TO RIDE AND RIDE
 TO DENNY'S!

ZOOM!

AFTER 470 MILES,
 NUMEROUS
 "GRAND SLAM"
 BREAKFASTS
 AND ENOUGH
 COFFEE TO
 DROWN A GATOR,
 OUR LEATHER-
 CLAD CUTIES
 CONVENE AT A
 MIAMI BEACH
 BISTRO. —

DENNY

SO ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

NO SIGN OF SATAN, BUT
 I FOUND SOME TASTY
 HABANERO PEPPERS AT
 DEVILLES FARM STAND..

SPICY!

YA KNOW, IT'S KINDA
 HARD TO LOOK COOL
 WITH FIRST DEGREE
 BURNS, BUT I MANAGED
 TO TURN UP BUSTER
 AND HER DOG CINDY
 HERE...

CATCH!

I FOUND THIS MENORAH IT'S MADE OF SEA-SHELLS!

MAKES ME WONDER... HOW MANY OF MY DISTANT RELATIVES; EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS ON HOLIDAY VACATIONED HERE?

UH OH, I FEEL A LONG DRAWN OUT ANALOGY COMING...

AFTER LEAVING A FAMILIAR WORLD AND FRIENDS...

YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE AS A WHAT?

MAKING AN UNCOMFORTABLE VOYAGE TO A NEW WORLD...

OK, THAT'S ONE HOUR OF ELECTROLYSIS DOWN, ONLY 400 MORE TO GO.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

SAY THAT AGAIN AND I'M GONNA SLUG YOU ... OOPS ..

I'M THINKING THAT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA IF I SLUGGED YOU. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

GAINING CITIZENSHIP

I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES AND NEVER WEAR BLUE EYESHADOW ON MONDAYS ..

AND ASSIMILATING INTO THE CULTURE...

OH, LOOK AT THOSE TROGLOVESTITES

UH-HOW VULGAR!

I GUESS ONE DESERVES A VACATION... NO?

SO, UM GINA ..

ARE YOU PLANNING TO TAKE THAT THING HOME?

HEY GO FIGURE, A REAL KOSHER HOG!

THE END

LOVE

MDF '05

THIS ONE IS JUST FOR ROB!

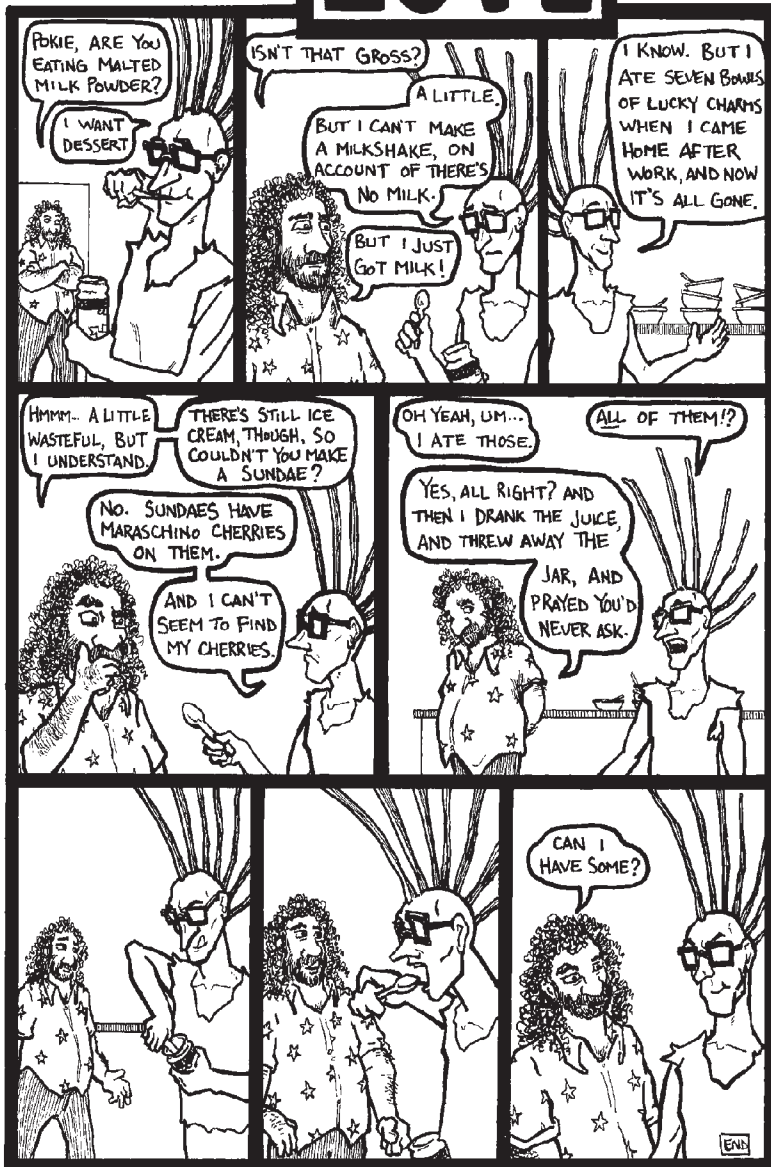
"BRAINS"



LOVE

"DESSERT"

MDF '04



LOVE, Volume 2
will be available
Summer 2004!

LOVE

MBF'04

"JACK-O-LANTERNS"



Curbside

NATHAN BEGINS

© 2003 R. Kirby

SO YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO JUST TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU AND NEW YORK AND C.T. AND LIKE, ALL YOUR SECRETS, NATHAN? WOW.



WELL, YOU ASKED DIDN'T YOU? MAYBE IT'S TIME I GET SOME OF THIS OFF MY CHEST... MAYBE IT'LL EVEN HELP SOMEHOW.



WELL, LIKE I SAID, IT'S A LONG STORY... I GUESS IT REALLY ALL STARTED BACK WHEN I BROKE UP WITH THIS GUY NAMED DREW A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO... HE LEFT NEW YORK AND I WASN'T DOING SO GOOD, MUCH TO MY SURPRISE.



I'D TRIED STAYING IN TOUCH WITH HIM BUT HE FINALLY TOLD ME THAT IT WAS TOO HARD AND HE NEEDED TO FOCUS ON GRAD SCHOOL AND HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO BE DISTRACTED. I MYSELF DIDN'T HAVE ANY DISTRACTIONS AT THE TIME...



EVENTUALLY THOUGH, A FEW THINGS CAME MY WAY.



EVEN THOUGH I ACTED ALL OFFENDED AFTERWARDS WHEN HE OFFERED ME MONEY, I WAS SECRETLY TURNED ON, AND I GUESS THAT'S WHAT LED ME INTO WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.



by Robert Kirby

Curbside

© 2003
ROBERT KIRBY

SO LIKE YOU REALLY HAD SEX WITH SOME GOONY MIDDLE-AGED GUY YOU DIDN'T LIKE JUST BECAUSE YOU WERE BORED?



WELL, YEAH... HAVEN'T DONE THAT BEFORE?

UM, NO. WELL ANYWAY, LIKE I WAS SAYING, I WASN'T GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING MORE TO DO WITH HIM...



AND A ROOF OVER MY HEAD....

I'M SORRY, NATHAN, BUT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONLY TEMPORARY. SEE, CARLOS AND I REALLY WANT TO TRY LIVING TOGETHER, SEE IF TWO OLD DOGS LIKE US CAN WORK THE RELATIONSHIP THING...



by Robert Kirby

...BUT EVENTUALLY, WHEN I LOST MY JOB.....
.. BECAUSE YOU'RE RUDE AND INSOLENT TO THE CUSTOMERS, THAT'S WHY.



ho hum...
SEE, YOU'RE DOING IT NOW!!

WORKING AS A MALE DANCER WAS BETTER PAY THAN WORKING AT THE COFFEE JOINT, BUT THE TIP SITUATION REALLY SUCKED AT TIMES.



NAH-UH UM??
YOU GET IT ONLY AFTER YOU SHOWN ME A LITTLE MORE...
OH, WHATEVER

I HAD TO FALL BACK ON DESPERATE MEASURES.

YEAH, RODNEY, I'M THE DARK-HAIRED SMOKER, UH HUH... THE ONE WHO FUCKED YOU IN YOUR KITCHEN Y'KNOW? SO, WAS WONDERING IF YOU'LL REMEMBER? YEAH? YOUR OFFER, REMEMBER? YEAH? OK THEN.



curbside

BEING WATCHED © ROBERT KIRBY '03

OK, SO THIS GUY RODNEY SETS ME UP FOR A GIG AT THIS DUMPY GAY BAR. HE OWNS, WITH A BUNCH OF HIS "ASSOCIATES", AND EVEN THOUGH I MADE ME SOME GOOD MONEY, I DEVELOPED A BAD ATTITUDE RIGHT OFF THE BAT.



YOU'RE UP IN TWO MINUTES, DUDE.

SWELL.

ON THE WALK HOME TO THE FLEA TRAP I WAS STAYING AT, I WOULD SEE THESE GROUPS OF YOUNGER GUYS HANGING OUT, BUT THEY NEVER MESSED WITH ME. THEY SEEMED SORTA GAY ANYWAY, SO NO WORRIES, RIGHT?



by Robert Kirby

I DIDN'T THINK THIS BAR WAS IN A PARTICULARLY BAD NEIGHBORHOOD, BUT I KEPT HEARING FROM MY CO-WORKERS ABOUT BEING CAREFUL.



JUST WATCH YOUR BACK, NATHAN, DON'T BE WALKING AROUND HERE BY YOURSELF AT NIGHT.

HOW COME?

SOME GANG ACTIVITY, THAT'S WHAT I BEEN HEARING.

HE CAME BACK, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, NEVER APPEARING TO SPEAK TO ANYONE OR DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN WATCH ME AND I WAS SURE AS HELL WATCHING HIM TOO.



SOME OF THE OTHER DANCERS RELISHED THE JOB, BUT BEING TREATED LIKE A BRAINLESS PIECE OF MEAT MADE ME FEEL EVEN DEADDER INSIDE.



A FEW YEARS AGO I'D HAVE TOTALLY GROOVED ON THIS.

ONE NIGHT I NOTICED THIS KID WATCHING MY "ACT". HE WAS SO MUCH YOUNGER-LOOKING AND WAY MORE RUMPLED THAN THE REST OF THE CROWD. HE REALLY STUCK OUT.



Curbside

WIRE © 2003 BY ROBERT KIRBY

OK, NATHAN, SO THIS KID THAT'S WATCHING YOU GO-GO DANCING EVERY NIGHT— DOES HE TURN OUT TO BE "C. T."? IS HE THE ONE?



SO LIKE I WAS SAYING, CAL WOULD SHOW UP NIGHT AFTER NIGHT AND EVEN THOUGH HE NEVER TIPPED ME OR SPOKE TO ME, I COULD TELL HE WAS, YOU KNOW, INTO ME. I BEGAN TO LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN I'D SPOT HIM OUT THERE. MY "SECRET ADMIRER."



YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE THIS IS SOME STORY I'M MAKING UP TO ENTERTAIN YOU. IT'S NOT— IT ALL REALLY HAPPENED TO ME, BREN.

I KNOW IT'S REAL, NATHAN, I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST THAT NOTHING EVER HAPPENS TO ME! ANYWAY..



THEN ONE NIGHT I SAW HIM ON THE ARM OF THIS OTHER, BIGGER GUY, WHO SEEMED REALLY POSSESSIVE. THIS NEW GUY KEPT GIVING ME THE EVIL EYE AND I FIGURED, BACK OFF, THE KID WAS MARKED TERRITORY.



by Robert Kirby

ANYWAY, YEAH, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT C. T. ONLY HIS NAME IS CAL, OK? JUST CALL HIM CAL. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE "T" IN "C.T." STOOD FOR— HE'D NEVER TELL ME...



SO NEXT TIME CAL DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WEEKS, AND THAT CROWD OF BOYS ON THE STREET SEEMED TO BE WATCHING ME A LOT MORE CLOSELY ALL OF A SUDDEN, AND NOT IN A FRIENDLY WAY, EITHER.



AY BOY.

Curbside

Curbside © BY ROBERT KIRBY

THAT BUNCH OF BOYS HAD ME CORNERED. THEY LET ME KNOW THEY DIDN'T LIKE ME MAKING EYES AT CAL FROM MY SPOT ON THE STAGE.

BETTER TO KEEP YOUR EYES TO YOURSELF, MAN. HEALTHIER FOR EVERYBODY.

PARKING



I WASN'T SURE HOW MUCH I SHOULD REALLY BE AFRAID OF THEM, SO I ACTED ALL CASUAL AND SH IT.

YEAH, THAT'S COOL... DON'T WANNA STEP ON ANYBODY'S TOES!



IT ACTUALLY WORKED TOO....
ALRIGHT THEN. JUST CHECK YOURSELF AND WE'RE COOL.



..NOT ONLY DID THEIR SPOKESGUY WINK AT ME, BUT TWO OF THE OTHERS GAVE ME THE TOTAL ONCE-OVER AND LIKE, GIGGLED AND WHISPERED LIKE TEENAGE GIRLS... SO I STARTED PUTTING TWO AND TWO TOGETHER...



GASP! THOSE BOYS - THEY'RE A GANG, AREN'T THEY? A GANG OF YOUNG GAY STREET HOODLUMS!!



YEAH, AND WAS I EVER SURPRISED - I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS GAY GANGS. ANYWAY, THAT WASN'T THE LAST I'D HEAR FROM THEM, LET ME TELL YOU.



OK, THAT WAS LIKE, REALLY WEIRD.

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www.carabossecomics.com

CREATOR PROFILES

Written and edited by Andy Mangels,
Kyle Minor and Dakota Mahkij.

SEE PAGE
40

Look for the prism next to
creators with exclusive and
preview comics in this guide!

ROBERTO **AGUIRRE-SACASA**

Roberto first gained the attention of comics fans when his play, *Archie's Weird Fantasy* — in which the Riverdale High gang all grew up, and a gay Archie became involved with two men, including real life spree killer Nathan Leopold — received a “cease and desist” letter from Archie Comics a day before opening night. The play went on with the changed name *Weird Comic Book Fantasy*. Roberto has since gone on to become the writer of the ongoing MARVEL KNIGHTS 4, which is a grounded and edgy look at the Fantastic Four. He also adapted the movie *Spider-Man II* to comics form.

Marc **ANDREYKO**

Marc Andreyko has been a comics fan all of his life and a comics writer since 1994 with his first published work *THE LOST*, infamous Harvey-nominated, cult comic series. He also worked on the Harvey and Eisner Award-winning *DR. STRANGE: WHAT IS IT THAT DISTURBS YOU, STEPHEN?* with artist and friend P. Craig Russell, for whom he translated the Italian opera

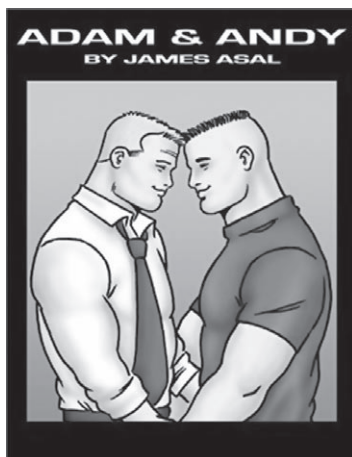
PAGLIACCI/THE CLOWNS.

Other notable collaborations include a Spider-Man tale with Jill Thompson in *MARVEL: SHADOWS & LIGHT*, and *TORSO* with Brian Michael Bendis. Marc is currently having the time of his life on two new monthly series: an all-new *MANHUNTER* series for DC Comics and *CASEFILES: SAM & TWITCH* for McFarlane/Image.

mandreyko@sprynet.com

JAMES **ASAL**

James Asal's comic strip *ADAM & ANDY*, based on the experiences of him and his partner, was created



Please Note: Creator Profiles included in this Guide have been edited due to space limitations. For additional information and additional creators, please visit our website at www.prismcomics.org

in 1994 and debuted on the web on May 15, 1999. ADAM AND ANDY appears weekly on its own web site and is featured in a number of print and web-based publications around the world. Readers can sign up for free email subscriptions to the strip. The first ADAM AND ANDY trade paperback collection was published by Studio 64 in October 2003 and is available direct from adamandandy.com and at bookstores worldwide. He lives in Connecticut with Timothy, his partner of 18 years, and their beagle, Baxter.

www.adamandandy.com

TIM BARELA

Native Californian and avid motorcyclist Tim Barela began working professionally as a cartoonist in the mid-'70s. In the '80s, Tim's life and career took a turn out the closet door when he decided to give two minor gay characters from an abandoned project their own comic strip. LEONARD & LARRY was enthusiastically accepted by GAY COMIX, and made its first appearance in 1984, appearing in several issues, and in a GAY COMIX Special. The strip appeared for many years in the national news magazine *Frontiers*,



and was part of *Out of the Inkwell*, a four-segment play presented in 1994 by San Francisco's Theatre Rhinoceros. LEONARD & LARRY has been released in three book collections: *Domesticity Isn't Pretty*; *Kurt Cobain and Mozart Are Both Dead*; *Excerpts from The Ring Cycle in Royal Albert Hall* and *How Real Men Do It*.

www.leonardandlarry.com

DONNA BARR

SEE PAGE

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Donna Barr has been drawing since 1954, writing since 1963. She's also been published since 1986, and publishing since 1996. She has a loyal, eager world-wide audience for her critically-acclaimed and much-awarded books and series. These include THE DESERT PEACH, STINZ, HADER AND THE COLONEL, and BOSOM ENEMIES. Donna has lectured at conventions and symposia all over the United States, Canada and Europe, and is well-known to the growing drawn-book audience in eastern Europe. Her work has been translated into German, Japanese and Italian.

Among Donna's awards are the London Comic Creator's Guild's Best Ongoing Humor, Seattle's Cartoonists' Northwest's Toonie, The San Diego Comicon International's Inkpot, and the Washington Press Association's Communicator of Excellence in Fiction. She has memberships in The Graphic Artists Guild, The National Writers Union, and is a consultant for the Media curriculum in the Arts Department at Olympic College, in Bremerton, Washington.

www.stinz.com

ALISON BECHDEL

Alison Bechdel has been creating her award-winning bi-weekly comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* since 1983. It currently runs in seventy lesbian/gay, feminist, and alternative publications. Nine collections of Alison's cartoons have been published by Firebrand Books. Her work has appeared in *Ms.*, *STRANGE-LOOKING EXILE*, *AMERICAN SPLENDOR*, *Slate*, and many other publications and anthologies. One of her most recent collections, *POST DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR*, was nominated for a 2000 Eisner Award in the "Best Humor Publication" category.

www.dykestowatchoutfor.com



PAUL BERGE

Wisconsin native Paul Berge has drawn topical and editorial cartoons for the LGBT press since 1993. His weekly cartoons are now distributed by Q Syndicate and appear in some 20 papers and on countless refrigerators and bulletin boards across the United States.

Paul is not afraid to tackle the vital issues of the day — he has depicted the Teletubbies as the four horsemen of the apocalypse and drawn Fred Phelps leading his brood in protest of the Washington D.C. Zoo's gay penguins. Every week,



Paul draws cartoons on topics such as same-sex marriage, gays in the military, or homophobia in Congress. He also draws for the *Business Journal of Milwaukee*, although they seem to be less interested in penguin-related topics.

www.geocities.com/pwberge

JOHN BLACKBURN

John Blackburn was an illustrator for some of the first gay publications, *Physique Pictorial* and *Physique Art Quarterly*. His work also appeared in *One* magazine and *In Touch*. He has recently illustrated for *FirstHand*, *ManTalk*, *Manscape*, and *Guys* magazines, creating over 200 magazine illustrations. Since 1992 he has been writing and drawing the sexual adventures of his gay comic strip hero, COLEY, for Fantagraphics Books erotic imprint, Eros Comix. These hardcore stories have been collected into three graphic novels, all still in print, with a fourth waiting to be published. A separate Coley storyline has been running in Leland Press's *MEATMEN* series, from issue 13-24.

www.fantagraphics.com



CRAIG BOSTICK

Craig Bostick is an illustrator, designer and photographer, working hard to make the world a little easier on the eye. He currently writes and draws *GO-GO GIRL*, an ongoing comic book series about the lighter side of heavy drinking. His other works include *CRASH: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A GERM*, *FUCHSIA GALACTICA SUMMER SPECIAL* and several stories for *XY Magazine*. Most recently, he designed and contributed several short pieces for the 10th anniversary issue of *BOY TROUBLE*. He can be found wandering the streets of Boston, burning the midnight oil at Aquaboy Drawings & Design, or grinding an axe with his band *SpoilSport*. He married the drummer while attending the 2004 Alternative press Expo and the beat goes on.

www.aquaboy.net

TOM BOUDEN

Born in Ostend, Belgium, Tom Bouden decided at a young age to become famous as a comics artist. By the time he studied animation in Ghent, he had already

won a comic contest in a well-known magazine and created ten volumes of his own strips. In 1990, Tom began writing comics about two gay characters, Max and Sven. Soon after, he was asked to provide regular strips for Belgian and Dutch magazines *ZiZo* and *Expreszo*, which have also been collected. Tom has written scripts for various Disney comics, television, theater, and *The Smurfs*. His work has appeared in the German magazines *Queer* and *Freshmen*, and his twelfth collection of strips was published in 2000.

www.tombouden.be

PAIGE BRADDOCK

Paige Braddock is the creator of the daily online strip *JANE'S WORLD*. For the past twelve years, she's been working as a visual journalist for a string of newspapers in the East, including the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Paige says if you are predisposed to caffeine addiction, natural disasters, bomb threats, fashion incompetence and sleeping late, then journalism is the field for you. While she spent her days working in a newsroom filled with slackers and gossipmongers, Paige spent her nights toiling away on comics. Working on comic strip concepts her whole life, beginning with her youth in the rural South, she's landed in northern California, where she has the luxury of doing comics almost full-time.

www.janesworldcomics.com

DAVE BROUSSEAU

Dave Brousseau is a cartoonist, illustrator and graphic designer from Louisville, KY. He created his

weekly comic strip, *A COUPLE OF GUYS*, in 1996. The following year, it was picked up by Q Syndicate, and is now distributed worldwide. Dave has also served as the Cartoon Editor for Q Syndicate since 1999. Dave's illustrations can be found in the magazines and brochures of EarthSave International, and his food guide pyramid has become the standard for vegetarians and vegans everywhere.

www.acoupleofguys.com

JENNIFER CAMPER

Jennifer Camper's book, *SUBGURLZ* from Cleis Press, follows the adventures of three women living in abandoned subway tunnels. Her previous book, *RUDE GIRLS AND DANGEROUS WOMEN* from Laugh Lines Press, is a collection of the best of her cartoons. Her work has also been published in comic books (*GAY COMIX/GAY COMICS*, *WIMMEN'S COMIX*, *REAL GIRL*), magazines (*On Our Backs*, *Outweek*, *The Advocate*, *Out*), newspapers (*The Village Voice*, *The Washington Blade*, *Bay Times*, *Sojourner*), and various anthologies. She is currently editing the comics anthology, *JUICY MOTHER*. Jennifer usually lives in NYC.

juicycm@mindspring.com



CHRISTOPHER CERASI

A native New Yorker, Chris has been in publishing since 1996. He is currently an Associate Editor in the Licensed Publishing Division of DC Comics, where he edits the *Smallville* book and magazine programs, as well as the upcoming *DC Comics Encyclopedia* from DK, various young adult *Catwoman* film titles, original *Batman* novels, and the novelization for the upcoming Christian Bale *Batman* film. Slight and kittenish, Chris is also a freelance writer who fervently wishes he was Lois Lane.

verbalmuck@yahoo.com

MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER

Michael Christopher has been creating art in the same-gender loving community since 1990. A native of New Jersey, Michael's first monthly strip, *G BOYS*, was featured in *Whassup! Magazine*. He then went on to create *THE CLIKQUE* for *Clikque Magazine*. Michael also began to flex his writing muscles as Staff Writer/Book Reviewer for *Whassup!* In 1997, Michael decided to take matters into his own hands. Fueled by the support of fellow cartoonist and good friend Belasco, MC started his own comic series called *LIVING THE LIFE* about three friends, Hank, Andre and Kurtis.

www.livedlife.com



CHRIS COMPANIK

Chris has drawn comics before he could write, and his two current strips HIV + ME and 881 MIDTOWN COURT are as different as night and day. HIV + ME is a monthly syndicated strip as a “how-to” guide to living with HIV. Sometimes controversial, often tasteless, and always irreverent, it began attracting national attention after *POZ* Magazine ran his “Sleeping Beauty” strip (criticizing the lack of needle exchange programs) and began its national rollout. The strip now appears monthly in *A&U Magazine*. 881 has its roots back in the early 80s when a local bar magazine wanted a serialized “gay Luke & Laura” strip (and being the *General Hospital* fan, he is jumped all over it). It now runs in the British gay comic book anthology BUDDIES.

www.HIVnMe.com

COLLEEN COOVER

Colleen Coover is the bisexual creator and artist of *SMALL FAVORS*, a girly porno comic for adults. *SMALL FAVORS* tells the story of two women, Annie and Nibbil, who enthusiastically enjoy sexual romps with each other, and with several pretty friends. *SMALL FAVORS* has been featured in articles in the magazines *Bust*, *On Our Backs*, *Out*, and in Germany, *Lespress* and *Mein heimliches Auge*. Two volumes collecting the first seven issues have been published by Eros Comix, and issue #8, a fully painted color special, is still available. Colleen has contributed comic work to *Out* and the anthologies *WHAT'S RIGHT?* and *TRUE PORN*. Colleen is now working with writer Paul Tobin on a new



comic book miniseries for all ages, *BANANA SUNDAY*. Featuring the timeless themes of teen romance, teen angst, and talking monkeys, *BANANA SUNDAY* is a lighthearted story of friendship, loyalty, and the challenge of staying awake through a day in high school.

colleencoover@yahoo.com

TRISTAN CRANE

Tristan Crane is a genderqueer writer and photographer currently living in San Francisco. His first comic book *HOW LOATHSOME* (co-created with artist Ted Naifeh and published by NBM) was nominated for a 2004 GLAAD Media Award. The hardcover collection of the first four issues of *HOW LOATHSOME* is now available. Currently working on several upcoming projects, Tristan occasionally finds the time to sleep or chase the cat around with a laser pointer.

www.tristancrane.com

HOWARD CRUSE

Howard Cruse is the creator of WENDEL, the 1980s comic strip about a circle of gay friends that was collected in its entirety in 2001 in a book called WENDEL ALL TOGETHER. His 1995 graphic novel STUCK RUBBER BABY won both Eisner and Harvey Awards in 1996, and has since won awards in England and Germany. STUCK RUBBER BABY's French edition won the Prix de la critique at the Angouleme comics festival in 2002. Many of Howard's underground comix were compiled more than a decade ago in the books EARLY BAREFOOTZ and DANCIN' NEKKID WITH THE ANGELS. Howard's newest book, THE SWIMMER WITH A ROPE IN HIS TEETH, an illustrated adaptation of a fable by Jeanne Shaffer, was published by Prometheus Press in April of 2004. Many of his comic strips, both old and recently drawn, are archived on his extensive website.

www.howardcruse.com

ADAM DEKRAKER

Adam DeKraker's pencils have appeared in such popular DC titles as THE TITANS, LEGIONNAIRES, SUPERBOY and SECRET FILES. Lately, while working in product design (including Marvel licensed properties), Adam has enjoyed full-art assignments for Lone Star Press (FORCE 7 and EX PARTIE) and various kid-friendly inking jobs for Nickelodeon, including *Nick Adventures Magazine* and movie magazines for *Rugrats in Paris* and *Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius*. Adam's most recent work includes penciling JSA: ALL-STARS #5, inking



the TV tie-in series SMALLVILLE, and inking the comic adaptation of the Catwoman movie, starring Halle Berry, all for DC Comics.

adamdek@aol.com

LYNX DELIRIUM

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Although traditionally trained as a filmmaker, several years ago Lynx began doing pinups and illustrations for various online companies including PatrickFillion.com and Bjork.com. Eventually, many of the characters in his sketchbook began to inspire stories about love, death, corruption, struggles and all types of people, good and bad. In an effort to bring his characters to a wider audience, Lynx created Carabosse Comics under which he is creating and self-publishing his fantasy stories. Titles include THE GOTH QUEEN NEEDS A MATE, FAIRIES TELL and free online comics THE ADVENTURES OF LYNX GIRL AND FRIENDS and FURRIES ON PARADE, co-created with Matthew Cavazos. Lynx currently resides in Washington, D.C. with his boyfriend and assistant David Paul Brown.

wereLYNXart.com

DIANE DiMASSA

Diane DiMassa is the creator of *HOTHEAD PAISAN: HOMICIDAL LESBIAN TERRORIST*, which has been appearing quarterly for seven years from Giant Ass Publishing. Besides the first 20 issues, there are also two paperback anthologies published by Cleis Press. *HOTHEAD PAISAN* was also part of *Out of the Inkwell*, a four-segment play presented in 1994 by San Francisco's Theatre Rhinoceros. Diane's work has been featured in *GAY COMICS*, *STRANGE LOOKING EXILE*, *Frighten the Horses*, *The Advocate*, and *Oh...*

Firebutt@aol.com

CATHERINE DOHERTY

Born in Toronto in 1965, Catherine Doherty became interested in comics when she discovered the unpublished work of her father's in a metal file box in the basement. Her first published work appeared in Vancouver's *A Room of One's Own* and London's *Diva* magazine, and she later appeared in Toronto's *Siren*, and in *GAY COMICS*. Her first graphic novel, *CAN OF WORMS*, was published by Fantagraphics Books. It is a thinly veiled autobiographical story about growing up adopted and her search for her birth mother. Doherty also works as a production designer in Hollywood.

KRIS DRESEN

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Kris Dresen is an artist and writer living in Chicago. She's the illustrator of the critically acclaimed comic book *MANYA*, written by Jen Benka, and the writer and artist of her solo strip, *MAX & LILY*.

Previously awarded the Xeric Grant, Kris and Jen were nominated for an Eisner Award for their work on *MANYA*. Outside of comics, Kris illustrates greeting cards, textbooks, and children's books. While she waits for Jen to finish writing the next *MANYA* book, Kris is drawing a graphic novel she's written called *GRACE*. All she'll say is that *GRACE* will have many drawings of a naked woman in it.

www.krisdresen.com

KURT ERICHSEN

Widely published LGBT cartoonist since '80, Kurt Erichsen has had work published in *GAY COMICS*, *MEATMEN*, *Instinct*, and *Fairy Flicks*. He is both artist and writer of *Murphy's Manor*, the longest running gay syndicated comic strip, published since 1982. *Murphy's Manor* has twice received awards from the Gay and Lesbian Press Association. In 2002, Kurt received the Rostler Award for Cartooning in 2002 from the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society.

ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/kerichsen



MATT FAGAN

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Under the umbrella of Meniscus Enterprises, Matt Fagan has produced a number of mini-comics, including *SONG* and *I HAD TO GET A STUPID ROOT CANAL*. The largest undertaking, though, was the 60-page horror-comedy *DOMESTIC PARTNER OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Matt is working on a series of one-page comics entitled *LOVE*, about two disenfranchised young gay men struggling to maintain their foothold in a world that does not seem to have a place for them — not because they're gay, but because they're smart and self-aware! The next forty episodes of *LOVE* should be completed and self-published by the summer of 2004!

www.geocities.com/meniscusenterprises

PATRICK FILLION

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Patrick Fillion and his partner run their own publishing company, Class Comics, through which they publish their own line of gay erotic comic books. Titles include *NAKED JUSTICE*, *GUARDIANS OF THE CUBE*, *SATISFACTION GUARANTEED*, *BOYTOONS*, *DEIMOS* and *CAMILLCAT*. He has worked for Avatar Press, Leyland Publications, Mavity Media Group and a variety of other gay publications such as Vancouver's *Gay* and Lesbian bi-weekly, *The XTRA West*, and Montreal's *ZIP Magazine*. Currently, Patrick's work can also be found in magazines such as *Black Inches*, *Latin Inches* and *All-Man*. In 2003, Class Comics signed a translation rights agreement with France's H&O Editions, and since then Patrick's Boytoons have been available in French as well as in English.

www.patrickfillion.com
www.classcomics.com

TIM FISH

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Tim Fish writes, draws and self-publishes a variety of comic book series and one-shots. Tim's print series *THE CAVALCADE OF BOYS*, is available at many stores across the country and for sale at his web site. H&O Editions has also published a French translation of *CAVALCADE*. In addition, Tim is the mastermind behind the on-line daily *YOUNG BOTTOMS IN LOVE* which runs at Pop Image. And his 80-page one-shot *MEET ME IN SAINT LOUIE* ran at Modern Tales Longplay in June 2003. There's all kinds of fun info about Tim "too selfish for love" Fish at his web-site.

www.timfishworks.com



ELLEN FORNEY

Seattle cartoonist and illustrator Ellen Forney compiled her weekly comic strips into the Harvey- and Eisner-nominated **MONKEY FOOD: THE COMPLETE 'I WAS SEVEN IN '75' COLLECTION** (Fantagraphics Books). She created a one-woman, multi-media reading/performance based on the book, toured the show in nine US cities in 1999, and has also performed the show in Vancouver, Canada and in Portugal at the XI Salão Internacional de Banda Desenhada do Porto. **TOMATO** from Starhead Comix was her solo comic book back in the mid-nineties, and she's contributed to anthologies such as **SAVAGE LOVE** and **DYKE STRIPPERS**. More recently, Ellen has been drawing a more journalistic comics series: **HOW D'YA DO THAT?**, a monthly full-page comic featured in Seattle's *The Stranger*. She is also published in *Out*, *Pulse!*, *Bust*, and *Nickelodeon Magazine*. Ellen is currently working on a project called **BIG PAINTINGS OF SEXY WOMEN**.

www.ellenforney.com



GREG FOX

Greg Fox is the creator of **KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST**, a comic strip about a gay B&B in the suburbs, that is currently running in numerous gay publications across North America, as well as online. Gay newsmagazine *The Advocate* recently named **KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST**'s web home as one of their "Hot Websites." It has also been featured in *Genre* and *Instinct* magazine, and also written about in *The New York Times* and in *Newsday*. Greg has done work for comics publishers as well, including **DOCTOR CHAOS** for Triumphant Comics and **BASEBALL SUPERSTARS** and **ROCK 'N' ROLL COMICS** for Revolutionary. He did one job for Marvel, **NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB**. Greg is also creator of **AN ANGEL'S STORY**, a comic strip about a gay angel, that runs in every issue of *Creations* magazine. The "**KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST**" COLLECTION will be published in September, 2004, from Kensington Books.

www.kylecomics.com

LEANNE FRANSON

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Leanne first started drawing comics in a sketchbook after she finished a degree in Fine Arts at Concordia University in Montreal in 1985. While working in a coffeeshop, she quickly got bored with the less-than-amusing comic strips in the daily newspaper and decided her own life was wackier. Thus "Liliane" was born, in minimum wage and caffeine — reflecting the lesbian and bisexual realities of the '90s. In 1994, the Liliane strip was quickly picked up by Peter Pavement of the now defunct Slab-O-Concrete, who shoved



her out into the great world between the covers of her first two real books, *ASSUME NOTHING: EVOLUTION OF A BI-DYKE* (1997) and *TEACHING THROUGH TRAUMA* (1999). The disappearance of Slab coincided with an upswing of Leanne's career in children's book illustration, and she laid down her technical pens until this past Fall, where she returned to the caffeine and produced 96 new pages for *DON'T BE A CROTTE!* which appeared in spring 2004. She has also just begun putting comics online at Keenspace.com.

liliane.keenspace.com

ANDREW "AETHAN" FRENCH

Andy French's published writing career coincides with his decision to come out. Coincidence? Actually, it's because his first professionally published work was in an anthology of gay erotica, and he wanted to tell his parents that

he had been published. That story, "Full Moon Fever," can be found in the anthology *WIRED HARD* from Circler Press. After this came a number of "anthropomorphic animal" stories, on the internet, via the website he shares with his husband of three years, Steve Domanski. Andy is the co-creator and scripter of *CIRCLES*, a gay, anthropomorphic animal, slice-of-life comic, with husband Steve (layouts), and good buddy Scott Fabianek (pencils & inks). This series is ongoing, and Andy is very pleased with the reception it's receiving. It is his first work in comics. He is planning a new project with artist Chris Goodwin.

www.rabco.org/circles

ANDERSEN GABRYCH

Before writing a fill-in issue of *BATGIRL* and landing the ongoing writing gig on DC Comics' longest-running title *DETECTIVE COMICS*, Andersen appeared in several feature films including *Edge of Seventeen*, *The Look*, and *Boys Life 4: Four Play*. He is determined to one day write a series starring the character Vixen.

PHIL GOOD

Phil has been coloring comics (with the company Heroic Age) since 1997 and has worked on some incredible artwork from the likes of Phil Jimenez, Stephen Sadowski, Howard Porter, and Todd Nauck, on titles including *JLA*, *JSA*, *WONDER WOMAN*, *HAWKMAN*, and far too many more to name.

www.espaciopato.com

DEVIN GRAYSON

Devin Kalile Grayson has spent the last six years in love with comic books, a medium she never had the opportunity to explore as a child. She is enjoying her role as domestic-goddess-with-a-tool-belt in her new Victorian house in Oakland, California. She commutes regularly to Blüdhaven to continue her work as the deliriously happy series writer for NIGHTWING, and has been very busy this year working with DC's licensing department on a few DCU novelizations due out next fall. Her past work includes RELATIVE HEROES, a 6-part creator-owned limited series following the adventures of a new group of teen heroes called The Weinbergs (and featuring a gay team leader); THE TITANS, CATWOMAN, BATMAN: GOTHAM KNIGHTS, NIGHTWING/HUNTRESS, and ARSENAL for DC and BLACK WIDOW and GHOST RIDER for Marvel Knights. She was also the author of USER, a 3-part, prestige format, creator-owned Vertigo miniseries about sexual identity issues and online role-playing, which was nominated in the "Outstanding Comic Book" category by GLAAD (the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation). Look for MATADOR, a creator-owned project with artist Brian Stelfreeze, due out from Wildstorm later this year.

www.devingrayson.com



DIANA GREEN

Diana Green is a 49 year old post-op transsexual and has a number of firsts to her credit: she is the first transsexual woman (possibly the first transsexual at all) to earn a BFA in Comic Book Illustration; she created the first dramatic/humorous transsexual funny animal comic strip for the gay press, TRANNY TOWERS, which ran for about a year and a half in Minneapolis' bimonthly *Lavender Magazine*; she is the first transsexual woman to self-publish a comic book, INK TANTRUMS. She also interned briefly with Reed Waller. Her splotches and unevenly cut zipatone may be seen in OMAHA, THE CAT DANCER #13-14, and the opening story in THE COLLECTED OMAHA No. 3. She has just completed writing a new TRANNY TOWERS story, which Katherine Collins is slated to draw.

dgreen2@earthlink.net

ROBERTA GREGORY

Roberta Gregory has been creating her own unique comics for over twenty years. She appeared in many issues of GAY COMIX/ GAY COMICS and self-published SHEILA AND THE UNICORN and WINGING IT, both of which studied gender issues. She also self-published two of the three issues of ARTISTIC LICENTIOUSNESS, which she describes as "a sort of bisexual love story." Roberta is best known in the comic world for

her long-running NAUGHTY BITS series, starring the unforgettable Bitchy Bitch, still coming out quarterly from Fantagraphics Books. The latest of five NAUGHTY BITS trade paperbacks, BITCHY BUTCH: THE WORLD'S ANGRICEST DYKE, is available through her website. Roberta has just published BITCHY STRIPS, a collection of the BITCHY BITCH weekly newspaper strips. The *Bitchy Bitch* animated cartoons for Oxygen Network have expanded into a third season of half-hour shows. Roberta is the script consultant and model designer. The show, *Life's A Bitch*, can be seen on Sundays on Oxygen Network, or on Oxygen.com.

www.robertagregory.com

TERRANCE GRIEP, JR.

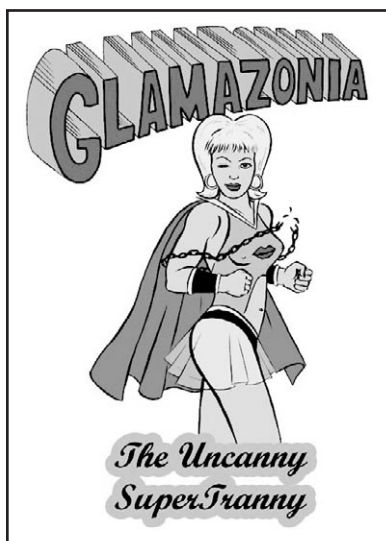
Terrance Griep acts, sings, and writes. When he's not writing *SCOOPY-DOO* or *BIG BANG COMICS*, Terrance becomes the Midwest Pro Wrestling circuit's notorious "heel" The SpiderBaby — who is not only known for his dastardly barbs, but for also being the first openly gay wrestler both inside and out the ring.

tgriepjr@aol.com

JUSTIN HALL

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Justin Hall's obsessions include comics and travel, both of which collided when he produced his first comic book, *A SACRED TEXT*, after seeing the Dead Sea Scrolls in their museum outside Jerusalem. The book won a September 2001 Xeric Award. His current comics project, *TRUE TRAVEL TALES*, collects real stories from the road, both his own and those of his friends.



The subject matter ranges from sex in ancient Egyptian temples, to meeting a Lizard God in Mexico, to smuggling cocaine from Peru. He has also contributed to various anthology comics and zines, and has had a solo show in the San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum's "Small Press Spotlight." He also produces the adventures of the drag queen super-heroine *GLAMAZONIA, THE UNCANNY SUPER TRANNY*, now up on the web.

www.allthumbspress.com

CRAIG HAMILTON

Craig Hamilton was the artist for DC's 1986 *AQUAMAN* miniseries and *THE SEA WOMAN PORTFOLIO* in 1992. His other comics work includes *STARMAN* (#28 and 54), *GREEN LANTERN* (#50 and 55), and *SANDMAN* (#50 and *GALLERY OF DREAMS*), as well as other pinups, posters, and short stories for DC and Marvel. He produced covers for *GAY COMICS* #18 and 25.

He also did a short story with Mike Carey for an issue of Vertigo's horror title, *FLINCH*. Craig lives in Macon, Georgia, where a 100-year-old house serves as his home and studio. He's been drawing from the age of three and began taking private classes from accomplished artist and mentor, Houser Smith, at the age of twelve. He now teaches private drawing classes, does commissioned works and freelance, commercial, and corporate illustration.

[www.theartistschoice.com/
chamilton.htm](http://www.theartistschoice.com/chamilton.htm)

JOAN HILTY

Joan Hilty came to DC Comics in 1995 as an editor in the Trading Cards department and moved to the Vertigo imprint, where she worked on projects including the Eisner/Harvey-nominated *UNCLE SAM* and the Harvey-winning *YOU ARE HERE*. She also brought writers Brian Vaughan and Will Pfeifer to DC with the *FINALS* mini-series and the 1999 run of *SWAMP THING*. She and co-editor Axel Alonso won the 1999 International Horror Guild Award for the horror anthology *FLINCH*. Ironically, she currently edits the Johnny DC comics line for kids based on the animated characters of DC, Cartoon Network and Warner Bros. She also edits *BIRDS OF PREY*, the upcoming relaunch of *MANHUNTER*, and the DC *FOCUS* books *HARD TIME* and *FRACTION*. Joan is also a cartoonist and illustrator whose work has appeared in *GAY COMIX/GAY COMICS*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, and *The Advocate*. Currently, her strip "Bitter Girl," about cranky single dykes in the big city, is distributed

by Q Syndicate. Weekly installments and an archive can be found at PlanetOut.com.

joan.hilty@dccomics.com,
www.qsyndicate.com

VICTOR E. HODGE

Victor E. Hodge is a mystery and horror writer, graphic artist and illustrator, and creator of *BLACK GAY BOY FANTASY*, about black gay life in Washington, DC. *FANTASY* began as a one-shot strip for the 1996 *Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Guide*. The first issue, an 8-page minicomic, was sold exclusively at Boston's *Outwrite '98*. Those characters also starred in the *LITTLE DRAMAS* comic strip which was featured on the *Women In the Life* website. His amateur detective, *Rene C. Clayton*, is in a short story called "Justifiable Disappearance" under the Spring 1999 edition of *Blithe House Quarterly* website. His "too short-lived" strip, *FEDERAL BARBEE* appeared in the Department of Interior's *GLOBE* newsletter. This parody was about "America's favorite teen model" going in search of a Federal Government job after the leaving her toy company, "The Big M!"

blackgayboy.virtualave.net



JEFF JACKLIN

Jeff Jacklin is an artist/writer whose work has appeared in GAY COMICS, STRIP AIDS USA, and MEATMEN. As a freelancer living in Minneapolis, he's worked for a wide spectrum of clients. He produced cartoons for the GLBT newspapers *Equal Time* and *GAZE* and the budding skater/punk rock magazine *Your Flesh*. Jeff created animatics and storyboards for the Department of Defense and its Armed Forces cable channel. He also worked on animation projects such as the title for Fox TV's *Spider-Man*, and CD-ROM versions of *Catdog* and *Peter Rabbit*. With a 'zine called TALES FROM THE QUEER SIDE, he combined a love of science fiction/fantasy and comics. Two issues of HEARTS & IRON, a comic book following the continuing adventures of two iron-pumping dudes in love, are currently available. Check out his website of bodybuilding and strongman inspired art!

www.jeffsmusclestudio.com



PHIL JIMENEZ

Born and raised in southern California, and trained at NYC's School of Visual Arts, Phil Jimenez has worked in comics since 1991. He first gained recognition for his work on TEMPEST. His later works include pencilling stints on THE INVISIBLES, JLA/TITANS, and PLANETARY/AUTHORITY. Phil

finished a 2-year run on DC Comics' WONDER WOMAN and recently worked with Grant Morrison again on NEW X-MEN. He is currently working on his creator-owned project, OTHERWORLD, to be published through DC/Vertigo Comics in 2004. Phil's been nominated for Eisner and GLAAD awards, listed as one of Entertainment Weekly's "101 Gay Movers and Shakers," and featured in *The Advocate* and *Out*. He also created the art for the first permanent AIDS awareness exhibit in the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry and had the good fortune to be Peter Parker's hands, working in a scene as a hand double for Tobey Maguire, in *Spider-Man*.

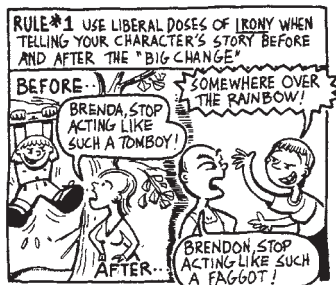
PhilJimeneznyc@aol.com

GINA KAMENSKY

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Comics artist, sculptor, inventor, Vespa mechanic and over-the-hill punk rocker Gina Kamensky was born in New Jersey, and now resides and works in Somerville, Massachusetts with her Siamese Cat Buttercup. Her comic T-GINA chronicles the tale of a "fabulous transgendered gal and her search for validation and a decent cup of coffee." To that end perhaps, Gina's studio is located equidistantly between two Dunkin' Donuts' shops.

www.t-gina.com



ANTON **KAWASAKI**

Anton is an Associate Editor in DC Comics' Collected Editions department, putting together volumes that include the George Pérez's *WONDER WOMAN*, *BATGIRL*, *CATWOMAN*, *BIRDS OF PREY*, *SUPER FRIENDS* and other fun projects. (Basically, the kind of stuff gay readers like to read). Anton is the creator of the Gay League website, but left his web hosting duties when he became the owner of a comic book store, which he ran for almost two years. He then left the retail business behind to become an employee of DC Comics in early 2000, and is proud to be a part of the most gay-positive mainstream comic-book company around. Anton has exciting and extra-special plans for his future at DC, so stay tuned...

Anton.Kawasaki@mac.com

DAVID **KELLY**

David is the creator of *STEVEN'S COMICS*, a comic strip which ran in alternative & gay weeklies such as the *Philadelphia Weekly* and the *Washington Blade* in the mid-1990s. He self-published a collection of strips, *STEVEN'S COMICS: WE ARE FAMILY*, with a grant from the fabulous Xeric Foundation. He also co-edits the comic anthology



BOY TROUBLE, with co-editor and founder, Robert Kirby. David is currently working on a follow-up series to *STEVEN'S COMICS* and recently published the fifth issue of the comic anthology *BOY TROUBLE, GAY BOY COMICS WITH A NEW ATTITUDE*.

www.davidkellystudio.com

Caitlin R. **KIERNAN**

Though probably better known for her short stories and award-winning novels, Caitlin R. Kiernan has been writing comics since 1996, when she first began work on DC Vertigo's *THE DREAMING*. All in all, she scripted 38 issues, about two-thirds of the series' run, including #56, "The First Adventure of Miss Catterina Poe," which was nominated for both the Bram Stoker and International Horror Guild awards. She also wrote the Vertigo miniseries, *THE GIRL WHO WOULD BE DEATH*, nominated for a GLAAD award in 1999, and *BAST: ETERNITY GAME* in 2002. Her work also appeared in three of the annual Vertigo *WINTER'S EDGE* anthologies.

www.caitlin-r-kiernan.com

CHUCK **KIM**

Chuck Kim writes the occasional story for DC Comics. He's written for *SUPERMAN*, *JUSTICE LEAGUE SHOWCASE GIANT*, *DEXTER'S LAB*, *POWERPUFF GIRLS* and various *SECRET FILES*. Chuck's *DEXTER'S LAB* story, "Momdark," was adapted into an episode of the TV show. It features Mandark, Dexter's arch enemy, cross-dressing to infiltrate Dexter's household.

ReadChild@aol.com

ROBERT KIRBY

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Robert Kirby is a Detroit native now living in Minneapolis. His comic strip CURBSIDE runs in newspapers across North America. The first book collection was published by Hobnob Press in 1998 with the aid of a grant from the Xeric Foundation, and it can still be ordered from his website. The second collection, titled CURBSIDE BOYS, was published in October 2002 from Cleis Press. Robert was also the creator of the well-regarded queer comic zine anthology of the early-to-mid-'90s, STRANGE-LOOKING EXILE, and more currently, the gay boy comics anthology BOY TROUBLE, which he co-edits with fellow cartoonist, the lovely and multi-talented David Kelly.

www.cleispress.com/Pages/curbsideboys.html

STEVE KORTE

Steve Korte is the senior editor of the DC Comics Licensed Publishing department. Steve joined DC in 1993, and since then he has edited a wide range of books featuring the DC Comics super-heroes, including coffee-table books, novels, and children's books. His most notable achievements include the book *DC Comics: 60 Years of the World's Favorite Heroes*, *Batman: The Ultimate Evil* by Andrew Vacchs, and *Wonder Woman: The Complete History* (Eisner award winner). His two books with the gayest sensibilities are *Truer Than True Romance*, a collection of old romance comics stories with the original art and new text by

Jeanne Martinet (check out the new story "Loving Gay Men!") and *Catwoman: The Life and Times of a Feline Fatale*.

TOMMY KOVAC

Tommy Kovac, creator of comic books STITCH and SKELEBUNNIES for Slave Labor Graphics, is now at work on a new 8-issue series entitled AUTUMN. AUTUMN is a dark fairy tale about a mysterious girl with unpredictable powers, and the effects she has on a small village and its inhabitants. Last but not least, Tommy co-authors the independent zine, LIBRARY BONNET, which is jam-packed with fascinating and strange visuals, personal essays, poetry, censorship rants, and even games involving naked mole-rats and gorilla assholes.

www.tommykovac.com



HENRY KUJAWA

Henry R. Kujawa first discovered super-heroes in January 1966 thanks to the Adam West *Batman* TV show. His first published book was 2230, a one-shot MAD MAGAZINE-like parody of *Battlestar Galactica*, released in 1984. Henry has been a member of *KLORDNY*, a “Legion Of Super-Heroes” Amateur Press Alliance, since 1991. Henry is currently hard at work on *STORMBOY*, currently available in 6 countries plus the Internet, which is a complex espionage-mystery.

www.webspawner.com/users/zodiaccomics



JAY LAIRD

Jay's most recent comics work includes writing for *STAR WARS TALES* (Dark Horse Comics), and writing and painting for *YOUNG BOTTOMS IN LOVE* (PopImage). Prior to branching off on his own,



Jay worked with Tim Fish on various “Ten Minute Cartoons” projects, including some writing in the original first issue of *CAVALCADE OF BOYS*. Jay is currently working on the next issue of his very occasional short comics anthology, *TALES FROM THE BURNING VILLAGE* and is also back working on his perpetually delayed daily, *SNAP*. His writing has also been seen on the small screen in the form of Roger Corman's *The Strangler's Wife* (Cityscape Productions, 2001), but don't hold that against him.

www.jlaird.com,

ANDY MANGELS

The originator of the popular “Gays In Comics” panels at San Diego and the creator of the first edition of *OUT IN COMICS*, Andy Mangels is also a past editor of *GAY COMICS* (#14-25 and *SPECIAL*

1) and co-founder of the gay APA club, ATDNSIN. His comic book career includes such diverse titles as STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE, JUSTICE LEAGUE QUARTERLY, ELFQUEST: BLOOD OF TEN CHIEFS, CHILD'S PLAY, NIGHTMARES ON ELM STREET, and the best-selling BOBA FETT: TWIN ENGINES OF DESTRUCTION. Many of his stories have featured gay and lesbian characters. Recent comics work includes the DRAGON'S LAIR series for MVCreations/CrossGen and the graphic novel SUPER LARRY: WORLD'S TOUGHEST MAN for Platinum Studios. Mangels also writes regularly for various entertainment publications and is the author or co-author of several books æ including the recent (and mammoth) 600+ page *Animation on DVD: The Ultimate Guide* for Stone Bridge Press, and the best-selling, critically-acclaimed novel, *Star Trek: The Next Generation: Section 31: Rogue*, which featured a gay lead character. Andy is also contributing entries to *The Super-hero Book*, a Fall 2004 encyclopedia for Visible Ink press.

www.andymangels.com

LEE MARRS

Lee Marrs was one of the founding "mommies" of the WIMMEN'S COMICS Collective. Her comic book work includes HEARTBREAKERS SUPERDIGEST: YEAR 10, Vertigo's FAULTLINES with Bill Koeb, various EPIC ILLUSTRATED and HEAVY METAL tales, the graphic novel VIKING GLORY, THE BIG BOOK OF URBAN LEGENDS, and scripts for WONDER WOMAN and LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT. Lee has drawn

cartoons for newspapers from *The Washington Post* to the *Berkeley Barb*. Her work has been reprinted in nine countries, including eight book collections in three countries. Lee received the Inkpot Award in 1982 and served as an Eisner Award judge in 2002. In addition to her comics work, Lee is also an Emmy Award-winning TV art director and has been a pioneer and consultant in the blend of traditional animation and computer graphics since the late '70s. Recent releases: trade paperbacks of Lee's alternative press pieces PUDGE, GIRL BLIMP and a women's humor collection.

www.leemarrs.com

CRAIG MCKENNEY

Having worked as a freelance writer for MTV and *The Comics Journal*, Craig McKenney is now working on his own comics: editing, writing, publishing (and trying to draw). Already published is the STALAGMITE anthology featuring straight, gay & bi creators. Also, he was incredibly lucky to have Rick Geary agree to let him publish BLANCHE GOES TO PARIS. Recent work includes THE BRONTES: INFERNAL ANGRIA, a 64-page graphic novel about the famous literary family; STALAGMITE #2, an anthology of stories about men; WALT, a fictional history of Walt Whitman's time on the Civil War battlefield; and THE MAGIC IF, about a stage magician who tires of the kiddie parties and is ready to take his act to the next level.

capncm1@msn.com,
www.headshakepress.com

WILLIAM MORGAN

Under his 'maiden name' of Howard Stangroom, Will's first professional comics writing appeared in SCARY TALES #37, during the dying days of Charlton Comics. Since then, his work has appeared in many titles, almost all of which have ceased publication (whoops). His credits include stories in such varied titles as GAY COMICS, MEATMEN, BUDDIES, MEANWHILE..., AVALON, BOY CRAZY BOY, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, SHE-RA PRINCESS OF POWER, HEARTBREAK HOTEL, SIDESHOW COMICS, JOY OF S*X, MY LITTLE PONY, and Donna Barr's THE ERSATZ PEACH. He also writes news and reviews for both the comics and gay press in the US and his native UK, and can frequently be found behind the counter at 30th Century Comics in beautiful suburban London.

amazonboy@bigfoot.com

BEVIS MUSSON

Bevis Musson is relatively new to the comics scene but has gone from someone who always would like to draw comics to someone who is actually doing it in a very short period of time. A fortunate internet meeting with writer Alistair Pulling has led to a very successful partnership. They have worked together on a number of projects so far, most notably ODDCASES for www.opi8.com and "Cut" for Cyberosia Press' anthology title REVOLVING HAMMER. ODDCASES, the ongoing title that Bevis and Alistair spend most of their time doing, follows the exploits of two ladies in comfortable shoes (of a certain age) as they travel round dealing with the

more strange and paranormal side of life. Two stories have also appeared exclusively in the much praised independent title THE GIRLY COMIC and ODDCASES was voted in second place for The Best On-line Comic at the 2003 National Comic Awards at the Bristol Comics Festival. Bevis also writes and draws his own super-hero character, The Queen Of Diamonds. Bearing "more than a passing resemblance" to Bevis himself, The Queen has so far only seen print at UK comic conventions.

www.opi8.com/sequence/oddcases/oddcases.php

NDR

Dylan "NDR" Edwards has been creating art, illustrations, and comics professionally since 1995, usually signing under the name "NDR" or "Ender." His work has been printed in a variety of publications, including *The Boston Phoenix*, *Express Gay News*, *Sojourner*, *FTM International Newsletter*, and *The Antioch Record*. His cartoons are featured monthly at Outsports and quarterly at Trans-Health. Unable to pick a single theme for his cartoons, NDR instead writes about whatever strikes his fancy, including gay Republicans, transsexual superheroes, lolorn lesbians,



sports, Orthodox Jewish cats, goths, and manatees. POLITICALLY INQUEERECT, his series about gay Republicans, has seen print as a self-published mini-comic, and is currently running in newspapers as a bi-weekly strip. NDR also produces a weekly, queer-themed editorial cartoon for publication.

www.studiondr.com

ERIC ORNER

Eric Orner is an artist living in Los Angeles. He writes and draws a weekly comic strip called THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS SOCIAL LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN, which appears in gay and alternative weekly publications in the US and Canada. There are four Ethan Green books are in print, all from St. Martin's Press. Eric is the cover artist for the irreverent and opinionated Rum and Reggae Press travel guide books. He illustrated Patrick Price's popular book *Husband Hunting Made Easy* in 1997. Eric's illustrations appear regularly in mainstream publications including the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe* and *The New Republic*. Over the past two years he has been learning to animate at the UCLA animation workshop, and is currently working on a new animated television show for Discovery Kids.

www.ethangreen.com

Brad PARKER

Brad Parker is an illustrator who has created cartoons for several gay publications such as *In Touch*, *Skin*, *Stroke*, *Friction*, *Advocate Men*, *Male Review*, and others. His work has been reprinted in two collections and GAY COMIX/GAY COMICS. More recently, Brad worked on

MARVELS: CODE OF HONOR, created several special covers and pin ups and a short story for Chaos Comics, and did the painted art for the graphic novel GREEN LANTERN: FEAR ITSELF for DC Comics. Brad did an ongoing cartoon series for *Freshmen*, called *Ace's Adventures in the Year 2000*, featuring his infamous gay character from many adult strips, Ace Moorcock, and painted the first official portraits in fifteen years of the rock group KISS in a special issue of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

bpparker13@aol.com

JOE PHILLIPS

After years of drawing such comics as MR. MIRACLE, SUPERBOY, SILVER SURFER, WONDER WOMAN, SUPERMAN, BODY DOUBLES and the creator-owned THE HERETIC, Joe Phillips turned his full attention towards products aimed at the gay community. He has created calendars, cards and magnets with Xodus USA and 10% productions.



His work is also often seen in magazines like *XY*, *Genre* and *Instinct*. Joe also created adult online cartoons as the head of Adult Visual Animation Inc, and their first DVD release of *The House of Morecock*, the first gay adult cartoon to win an adult industry GAVN award. Joe is possibly best known for his calendars *Boys Will Be Boys* and *Girls Rule* along with greeting cards and five new characters for the "Dress Me" magnet sets. His book *Boy America* from Bruno Gmunder Publishing has over 100 full color drawings of guys from all over the country. His latest books are *Adventures of a Joe Boy* and *For The Boys*. He plans to return to return to the world of comics soon! Look for his latest animated film to debut in San Diego 2004.

www.joePhillips.com

BRAD RADER

Brad Rader has wanted to draw comics since he was twelve, but most of his career has been spent doing storyboards on series such as *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Gargoyles*, and *Men In Black*. He finally got the opportunity to do comics back in the early 19'90s working on DC's *THE BATMAN ADVENTURES* (4-6), and *THE MARK* for Dark Horse. Brad was also Animation Director of *Roswell Conspiracies* and *Space Monkeys* on UPN. His work with the team that produces *Spawn* for HBO won for a primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program (for programming of more than one hour) in 1999. He was the penciler for *CATWOMAN* for DC, and has done fill-in issues for *BATMAN: GOTHAM ADVENTURES*, and *FUSE* #3 for Image. Currently, he is



embarking on the adventure of self-publishing. His first volume is *TRUE ADULT FANTASY*, a compilation of 20+ years of his erotic sketchbooks. His primary influences are Adams, Kirby, Kubrick, Toth, Eisner, Caniff, Hitchcock, Kurtzman, Miyazaki, Los Bros. Hernandez, Otomo, and Lubitsch.

www.flamingartist.com

CITIZEN RAHNE

Citizen Rahne is a trannygirl writer and performer who suddenly found an outlet by making a comic book. She considers it karmic payback for having taken her name from a comic book character while maintaining a mere tangential interest in comics.

www.xantippe.com/tranzilla

ROBERT RODI

Robert is a prominent novelist who sold his first comics story to Marvel's *EPIC ILLUSTRATED* in 1983. He went on to write comics criticism for years in the pages of

The Comics Journal, then jumped back over the fence with a gay-themed story in Vertigo's HEART THROBS #1 with art by Phil Jimenez. Contributions to other Vertigo anthologies followed, including FLINCH, STRANGE ADVENTURES and WEIRD WAR TALES, as did two creator-owned titles: the miniseries 4 HORSEMEN with Essad Ribic, and the monthly spy-and-sex farce, CODENAME: KNOCKOUT, featuring the irrepressible gay sidekick Go-Go Fiasco. His post-Vertigo work included stories for BATMAN: GOTHAM KNIGHTS and WONDER WOMAN, plus another creator-owned series, THE CROSSOVERS, for CrossGen's Code 6 imprint. Robert is currently playing hard in the Marvel Universe, where, after an extended run on ELEKTRA, he currently scripts the miniseries IDENTITY DISC and LOKI and the new ROGUE ongoing monthly. Robert has published six novels: *Bitch Goddess*, *Fag Hag*, *Closet Case*, *Drag Queen*, *Kept Boy*, and *What They Did To Princess Paragon*. Other works include the novella *Glad Gladder Gladys* (on USATODAY.com) and short stories in *Men on Men 5*, *Sandman: Book of Dreams*, *His*, *Reclaiming the Heartland* and others. He lives in Chicago with his partner, Jeffrey Smith, and two Shetland sheepdogs.

www.robertrodi.com

Bill ROUNDY

Bill Roundy, a Brooklyn-based writer and editor, details his life of stylish poverty in his twice-weekly autobiographical webcomic THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF BILL. Bill has also written a creepy Halloween story for the online gay romance comic YOUNG BOTTOMS

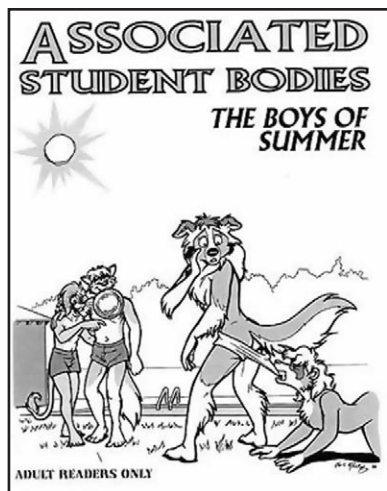
IN LOVE. He is currently working on a superheroic legal comedy, called SUPERPOWER OF ATTORNEY. He would write more here, and be witty, but he is tired. Now he's going to sleep. Good night, Bill.

www.billroundy.com/

Lance RUND

ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODIES happens to be the kind of story Lance Rund has always wanted to tell. It's a story about a lion, a wolf, and a big dose of soap-opera. It's about being gay in a straight world, told in a unique and refreshing way in a world of anthropomorphic animals. It is available from selected distributors and direct mail order through his website. If you look into Lance's room, you'll see a bunch of computers, a couple of guitars, stacks of ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODIES stuff, bottles of home-brewed beer and mead patiently aging, a few paper targets with their centers nicely shot out, and an overworked computer geek snoring on the bed. Don't wake him!

www.arclight.net/asb



P. CRAIG RUSSELL

Philip Craig Russell is a 30-year comics veteran, one of the comic world's most respected and award-winning artists, and one of the most high-profile, openly gay creators in the business. Some of Craig's favorite work includes SANDMAN #50's "Ramadan" for Vertigo, his first in a series of works with Neil Gaiman — the second is ONE LIFE FURNISHED IN EARLY MOORCOCK. Other favorites include "Isolation & Illusion" in EPIC #14, and "Human Remains," included in CLIVE BARKER'S TAPPING THE VEIN #1 from Eclipse Comics.

A winner of a Harvey Award, many Eisner Awards, and the Inkpot Award for Career Achievement, Craig came out to the industry in a 1991 interview in *The Comics Journal* 147, where he referred to himself as "just another left-handed, night-dwelling, gay libertarian cartoonist." Craig is in the midst of a career-long project, which is set to include adaptations of 12 operas into graphic story form. Six have been com-



pleted, including THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG, a four-opera, 400-page adaptation for Dark Horse. His layout and/or ink work has also been recently seen in WONDER WOMAN, JLA: AGE OF WONDER, FABLES: THE LAST CASTLE, and LUCIFER #50.

www.lurid.com/pcr/index.html

STEPHEN SADOWSKI

Born and raised in British Columbia, Canada, Stephen Sadowski grew up collecting everything comic-related he could. He has been publicly "out" for about 18 years or so, and realized his boyhood dream of working for DC Comics, as penciller for the one of DC's biggest successes, JSA. Stephen's work includes Malibu Comics' FIREARM #13 (10 pages un-credited), BOB BURDEN'S MYSTERY MEN #1 and 2 from Dark Horse, and for DC, STARMAN #56 and STARMAN 80-PAGE GIANT, SMASH COMICS #1, ALL STAR COMICS #2, JSA SECRET FILES, PARADISE X: DEVILS, POWER COMPANY and JLA/JSA SECRET FILES. Recent work includes JSA ALL STARS: DOCTOR MID-NITE, THE AVENGERS AND WONDER WOMAN. Stephen hopes to one day return to the JSA to work on a long-germinating project with Geoff Johns.

www.stephensadowski.com

Lawrence SCHIMEL

Lawrence Schimel was born in New York City on October 16, 1971 and is currently living in Madrid, Spain. He is an award-winning author and anthologist, who has published over 70 books in a wide variety of genres, including fiction, cooking, gender studies, sports, poetry, and — at long last — a graphic novel. Illustrated by Catalan comics artist



Sebas, *VACACIONES EN IBIZA* (VACATION IN IBIZA), is published in Spain by Egales (Oct 2003), in the U.S. by NBM Publishing (Nov 2003), in France from Diesel Press (Summer 2004) and in Germany from Heinz und Horst (forthcoming 2004) and charts the adventures of two friends, Bernd and Marek, who spend a week together on that gay island paradise in the Mediterranean. The American edition has been named a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award, with winners to be announced during BookExpo 2004 in June! Lawrence Schimel and Sebas are planning further adventures featuring Marek and Bernd, this time in Paris... Lawrence has also contributed to the comics-related anthologies *Sandman: The Book of Dreams* edited by Neil Gaiman (HarperCollins) and *Super-heroes* edited by John Varley (Berkeley).

www.circlet.com/schimel.html

ARIEL SCHRAG

Ariel Schrag is the creator of the comic books *AWKWARD*, *DEFINITION*, *POTENTIAL*, and *LIKEWISE* published by Slave Labor Graphics. They chronicle her 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade experiences, respectively, as well as her process of discovering her sexuality. Making comics from a young age, Ariel created two comic books when still in elementary school titled *LIFE WITH LUCY HOUND*, about a girl who wants a dog, and *TRACKER*, about a dog that escapes from the farm.

als94@columbia.edu

BOB SCHRECK

Bob Schreck is the Group Editor of all of the *BATMAN* titles in the DC Universe editorial department. He began his career in marketing, promotions and administration, working for Creation Conventions, Marvel Comics, and Comico, and rose to the position of Marketing Director at Dark Horse Comics in 1990. At Dark Horse, Bob changed gears and became Senior Group Editor, where he edited such projects as *SIN CITY* by Frank Miller and *MADMAN* by Michael Allred, and won two consecutive Harvey Awards as editor of the groundbreaking anthology *DARK HORSE PRESENTS*. Bob left Dark Horse in 1996 to co-found Oni Press with Joe Nozemack. There he developed such projects as *CLERKS: THE COMIC BOOK* and *JAY & SILENT BOB* with screenwriter and director Kevin Smith, as well as the Harvey Award winning anthology *ONI DOUBLE FEATURE* and the critically acclaimed *WHITEOUT*

by Greg Rucka and Steve Lieber. Bob currently edits BATMAN, DETECTIVE COMICS, GREEN ARROW, CAPER, and many others.

JAI SEN

Born in Hyderabad, India, Jai Sen is a writer of speculative fiction. He is the author of the Xeric award-winning, Eisner-nominated graphic novels in THE MALAY MYSTERIES series, GARLANDS OF MOONLIGHT and THE GHOST OF SILVER CLIFF. He is also the author of the critically-acclaimed graphic novel THE GOLDEN VINE, an alternate history of the empire of Alexander the Great.

www.shotopress.com



ERIC SHANOWER

SEE PAGE
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This year is Eric's 20th anniversary as a professional cartoonist. Most of the major US comic book publishers have published work of his, many of which have won awards. While Eric's been writing and drawing comics, he's also written and illustrated books, done magazine and trading card illustrations, and drawn pictures for a couple television projects. The comics he's most proud of are the OZ graphic novel series of five volumes, AN ACCIDENTAL DEATH with writer Ed Brubaker, and his



current comic book series AGE OF BRONZE, an exacting and exciting re-telling of the Trojan War, including Eric's interpretation of the two young warriors Achilles and Patroklos. Eric lives in San Diego with his partner David Maxine and their Boston Terrier Road.

www.hungrytigerpress.com

Laurie E. SMITH

Laurie E. Smith is a colorist with many prestigious projects under her belt. Her portfolio includes 22 issues of BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT, 4 issues of BLACK ORCHID, 15 issues of THE X-FILES (for which she received an Eisner Award nomination in 1996), and many others.

www.mts.net/~comicart/portfolio.html

DAVID STANLEY

David Stanley is the editor of the popular Prism Comics review column, "Queer Eye on Comics," and is currently working on a graphic novel called SUMMER IN MYKONOS.

www.summerinmykonos.com

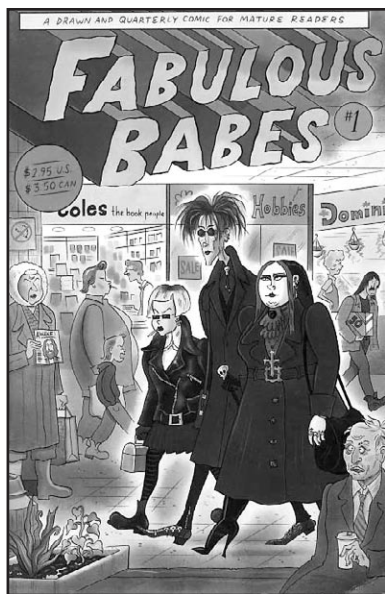
IVAN VELEZ, JR.

Raised in the South Bronx, Ivan was heavily influenced by the chop-socky karate flicks, *Astro Boy* cartoons, blaxploitation films, Spanish soap operas, and Silver Age comic books that filled every second of his free time. So far, that hasn't changed. His work has also been seen in several issues of GAY COMICS, *Details* magazine, *NYQ*, and *HX*. Ivan has written several Milestone titles, especially BLOOD SYNDICATE (which included character design for some of the cast), A MAN CALLED HOLOCAUST, and a year-long run on the acclaimed series STATIC. Both BLOOD SYNDICATE and STATIC have won awards on his shift. Ivan has also written for the mainstream, scripting the last two years on GHOST RIDER and a VENOM miniseries, among others, for Marvel. At DC Comics, he wrote the ERADICATOR miniseries, did some hard time on EXTREME JUSTICE, and a story for Vertigo's FLINCH. He continues to do the odd POWERPUFF GIRLS story at their kid division.

But Ivan is best known as the creator of TALES OF THE CLOSET, a ten-chapter graphic novel that depicts the lives of eight gay teenagers in Queens. He has won a 2004 Xeric grant and will use this to begin publishing the series on his own imprint: Planet Bronx Productions.

Maurice VELLEKOOP

The youngest of 4 artistically-talented siblings, Maurice was encouraged to draw from an early age. He has been illustrating for major magazines, books, and advertising in North America and Europe ever since. You can see his work in the



anthology DRAWN & QUARTERLY, in his small-sized X-rated MAURICE VELLEKOOP'S ABC BOOK: A HOMOEROTIC PRIMER and collected in the VELLEVISION trade paperback. A series of books called MEN'S ROOM is available from Pas de Chance.

www.pasdechance.com

JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA

Born in Madrid, Spain, but a long time Baltimore resident, José Villarrubia is a painter/photographer/digital artist. His fine art photographs have been exhibited internationally and have been featured in the books *The Homoerotic Photograph*, *Lust*, *The Male Nude*, *Uniforms*, and *Male Bonding II*. In comics he is best known for his painted/digital coloring in series such as HELLSHOCK, SENTRY, FANTASTIC FOUR 1234, CAPTAIN AMERICA, CAGE, XEN, THE BROTHERHOOD, and CHAMBER. His digital artwork made a splash in

comics in PROMETHEA #7, written by Alan Moore. He's just completed two illustrated books by Moore: a novel, *Voice of the Fire* and an epic poem in prose, *The Mirror of Love*, both published by Top Shelf. *Mirror* is an important gay text that narrates the history of homosexuality and lesbianism in the form of a passionate love letter and a political manifesto. The book contains over 40 full-page color illustrations. In 2002, Jose's work was selected for the Society of Illustrators Annual Exhibition and he was nominated for a Eisner Award as Best Colorist.

JoseVillar@aol.com

Reed **WALLER**

Reed Waller created the immensely popular anthropomorphic adults-only series OMAHA THE CAT DANCER with his then-wife, Kate Worley. They publicly came out as bisexual in their letters column in 1988, making them the first openly bisexual creators in comics. They have had characters of all sexual orientations in their series, which moved from Kitchen Sink Press to Fantagraphics Books, which has several volumes of OMAHA in print. Reed's work has included stories in GAY COMICS, STRIP AIDS USA, CRITTERS, GRATEFUL DEAD COMIX, and REAL GIRL.

rwaller.blogspot.com

Krista **WARD**

Krista has been a colorist in the industry for over seven years now. She got her start at a studio called Heroic Age and just recently ventured out on her own. She is currently the color separator on the series THANOS from Marvel Comics.

ladykat444@yahoo.com

ELIZABETH **WATASIN**

Elizabeth Watasin is currently transitioning from full-time Disney animator to full-time comic book creator. After twelve years in feature animation she is terribly happy committing to openly queer comics. Her current book is CHARM SCHOOL, published by Slave Labor Graphics, about a teen witch, Bunny, her girlfriend the vampire biker, Dean, and the dilemma of a drop-dead gorgeous faerie named Fairer Than who comes between them. In the works are more new books from Elizabeth, one of which will be the disturbingly campy DR. LEATHER: MONSTERMAKER, also from Slave Labor Graphics. For absolute fun and no profit, Elizabeth also writes *Babylon 5* fan fiction with the characters Ivanova and Talia Winters under the name "metis."

www.a-girlstudio.com



STEVE WHITMIRE

A graduate of computer animation and design, Steve Whitmire works as a graphic and web designer. With interests in art ranging from oil painting and sculpture to animation, he decided to narrow his field and focus on being a comic strip creator in 2002, when he began 52 TIMIL DEEPS. The strip has grown quickly since its introduction on the internet in July of 2002, making it's first full page appearance in *Instinct* magazine in June of 2003, less than one year later. Steve also focuses his time on other comic book projects, such as working as a colorist on both KRYSTAL and HALEY from Femme Fatale Studios.

www.timildeeps.com



Kathryn WILLIAMS

Ms. Williams is internationally known as a North American shoujoai mangaka. Her doujinshi, *A SHADOWLANDER'S DREAM*, has won acclaim for its portrayal of a troubled childhood, as well for the many friendships and loves

between her strong female characters. Ms. Williams is the owner and publisher of *Kat and Neko Manga*, a Toronto publishing company that specializes in finding and nurturing new North American manga talent. Her works have been seen in galleries and shows across in the U.S. and Canada. Ms. Williams has been a guest at several conventions, notably *Anime North* and *Ani-Magic*.

www.KatAndNekoManga.ca

ZAN

This multi-talented fella is probably best-known for his web presence online, having created the super-hero gaming resource site *zan's Super Home* (now *Heroplay*); *AlterWorlds*, the *Gay and Lesbian Roleplaying Game Association*; and the *Northstar APA* website. His first foray into comics is a four-issue series about *CAPTAIN KINETIC*, a closeted super-hero from the forties transplanted to present day Chicago. The series satirizes the squeaky-clean super-hero image of a bygone era while using it to make a dramatic point about public and private personae and the importance of defining one's own morality. The first issue debut at the 2001 *Alternative Press Expo* in San Francisco, and the second issue appeared at *Comic Con International* in August. Both are available for order online at www.captainkinetic.com. *zan* also had his first bit of comics journalism ("*Ultimate Marvel Cock-Up!*") published in a recent issue of the UK magazine *Comics Forum*. He is very excited about his next project, *ONE MAN GUY*, which has no capes or domino masks whatsoever.

www.rabunda.com

WEB SLINGERS

by Bill Rounly

Gay cartoonists create their own worlds on the Internet

Imagine an alternate history of comics — one without a comics code to restrict depictions of gay people, one where newspaper syndicates didn't worry about offending the sensibilities of Ladies' Church Muffin Club. Where gay comics creators could tell whatever kind of story they wanted, at whatever length, and reach readers all over the world.

That alternate reality exists on the Internet, where gay cartoonists are forging new ground, free of the restrictions of traditional printed comics. As more people get broadband access to the Net, cartoonists have flocked to use the medium to present their work.

One sign of the growing maturity of webcomics is the success of NOWHERE GIRL, an online drama about a young lesbian whose life is slowly falling apart. In 2003, the emotionally resonant debut by Justine Shaw became the first webcomic ever nominated for an Eisner Award.

Other Web creators have taken notice as well: that same year, NOWHERE GIRL won four of the Web Cartoonists' Choice Awards, including Outstanding Comic.

Shaw, who works with computers in San Francisco, says that she

initially felt guilty over receiving the Eisner nominations because she's "not even a real comics person." But she first sketched her lead character way back in 1992, and now she appreciates having her years of work recognized.

"I'm pretty much over it," she says. "Heck, it's great... These nominations recognized my work, that I worked so hard on for so long."

NO GENRE RESTRICTIONS

Traditional print comics are still dominated by super-heroes. But on the Web, there are a wealth of genres that don't have to compete for shelf space, including historical fiction, horror, romance, funny animals, and autobiography - and there are gay stories in each.

Zan, president of Prism Comics, says that when you don't have to worry about printing costs "it gives you freedom to explore exactly what you want to do. You can do a romance comic, or a comic about archeology. That was the appeal of underground and small press comics — that's even more so the case with webcomics."

"Webcomics offer delicious freedom," says Sandra Fuhr, creator of the online romance comic BOY MEETS BOY. "I have no editor telling me what to do or what not to

do. No criticisms that my characters are too gay — or not gay enough. It's a fun hobby, and it's nice to be able to follow any creative thread I want."

BOY MEETS BOY beat out a host of hetero comics to win the 2003 WCC Award for "Outstanding Romantic Comic." Although the comic ended in early 2004, all the archives are still available online. And there are plenty of other romance comics on the Web: Fuhr says that her new comic, FRIENDLY HOSTILITY, will soon feature a same-sex couple Positive Liberty. In the meantime, there are plenty of others, and one of the most prominent gay webcomics is YOUNG BOTTOMS IN LOVE, a gay romance anthology. YBIL updates every weekday, telling a self-contained five-part story with a new cast of young gay men each week.

Using the Web, cartoonists can reach the large audience for romantic same-sex stories that might never venture into a comic book shop.

"While the genre is certainly limited in its target audience, it has perhaps the most defined target audience available," says Tim Fish, creator of YOUNG BOTTOMS.

"That's the first draw: I am able to identify, know, and write to a specific audience. Which hopefully makes for better stories.

"I get fan mail from guys often, who never reads comics, except for [YOUNG BOTTOMS]" says Fish.

Erin Lindsey, a transsexual college student, began posting her webcomic VENUS ENVY in late 2001, just as she finished her transition. The series filled what she saw as "a major gap" in the online comics world, but it started as just a whim.

"I was doodling my own cartoons about how absurd this subject was... and a friend told me I should put these up online."

Those first sketches are fairly crude, but the series soon evolved from a simple gag strip to a compelling, sometimes moving teen soap opera. The series follows Zoe, a 16-year-old transgender girl trying to pass at a new high school without anyone realizing her difference, quarreling with her parents, and feuding with FTM transgender student Larson.

Webcomics have even spawned their own unique genre — the journal comic. Like an illustrated blog, journal comics distill a day's experience into a few panels, providing a glimpse into someone else's life that makes for a powerful reading experience.



Neil Babra's vibrantly-colored journal comic, *IMITATION OF LIFE*, provides an intimate look at his struggles with law school, depression, and being gay and Indian-American.

"It was a big decision for me to come out in the comic, because doing so meant coming out to a lot of friends in real life who didn't know that I'm gay," says Babra, who has also contributed a story to *YBIL*. "I had been trying to separate being gay from other events and relationships in my life, to show only that 'straight' side in the comics. But soon it became inexorably true to me that I couldn't be sincere about anything without coming out."

BREAKING THE BOUNDARIES

Many gay comic strips, such as *DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR* and *THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS SOCIAL LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN* have an Internet presence. But comics that are native to the medium have developed their own forms and traditions. There are no size restrictions, for instance: pages can scroll for an infinite space, or take as many panels as they like to finish a story.

Gay cartoonist Howard Cruse, the creator of the acclaimed graphic novel *STUCK RUBBER BABY* and the strip *WENDEL*, has adapted many of his old cartoons on his Web site, recognizing that the new format required a new layout.

"We're like in the early stages of television, when most TV shows were radio shows with pictures, or the early stages of any medium," says Cruse. "People haven't yet figured out the special characteristics to the medium."



Despite the potential versatility of the Web, however, most cartoonists still borrow a form either adapted from the newspaper comic strip (three or four panels, often with a punchline) or from the comic book, creating 'pages' of images.

There are differences, however: Unlike self-contained daily newspaper strips, web-comics often have plots that stretch on for months. Because archives of previous strips are often freely available, new readers can simply click back to catch up on the story.

The interactive nature of the web also allows readers to communicate with the artists easily. Many web-comics offer message boards and comment areas, where fans can discuss the current storyline, argue about their favorite characters, and post encouragement to the artist.

This interaction encourages an informal tone in many strips, and also a sense of community with the readers. Artists may draw themselves into the strip, or apologize to readers when the strip is late.

Sometimes artists will even hand over control of the strip, creating a "guest week," posting fan-created art, or allowing another web-based cartoonist drawing the strip.

"Having a comic available only online automatically puts you closer to your audience, and you definitely get input on what they like and what they don't," notes Fuhr, of *BOY MEETS BOY*. "The audience lets me know when I'm doing something right, when the story is engaging, and if I'm making them smile... On the negative side, a few people get very upset if the story does not go in the direction they want."

And surprisingly, gay creators haven't found themselves being flamed by homophobic viewers.

"All that stuff about everyone online being a jerk who's just there to flame everyone else anonymously? Not true, at least not in this corner of the web," says Shaw. Response to *NOWHERE GIRL* has come from all kinds of people: gay, straight, men and women, though many of her readers are in their teens and 20s. "I've emailed back and forth a lot with some of these folks. They're great people. A number of them are really unhappy with their lives, really sad, and I wish I knew better what to tell them. I've been that person, and I got lucky."

VENUS ENVY has also prompted an outpouring of support, which leaves its creator mock-exasperated. "This is annoying. It's almost entirely positive. I keep sneaking in little offensive bits and hoping I'll piss somebody off, but people seem to like me... It screws with my perception of reality."

"Someone who is going to react badly to a character being gay simply because they are gay is unlikely to actually go and read a comic featuring a queer character in the first place," observes Bevis Musson,



creator of *QUEEN OF DIAMONDS*, a webcomic about a flamboyant gay super-hero who fights ruffians while clad in a belly-shirt. "I have had a couple of people who are a little uncomfortable with the Queen being so camp and overtly gay but they've generally actually been gay people who think that he's a stereotype. He is, but he's also based on me so I don't see that as being a problem."

ON TO PRINT?

But despite the advantages of the web, most creators have their eye on an eventual print publication — either as a collection of strips, or as a full-fledged comic book.

"I do, in a lot of ways, prefer print comics," says Musson. "There's something about being able to pick up a comic and turn the page that makes it much more satisfying (and easier to read) than a webcomic but the problem if you're doing it yourself is just getting the thing out there in the first place."

“Just about every fan I meet says, ‘I love the comic... when is it going to print?’” says Fish. “Or I meet people at conventions who flip through my print outs and say, ‘This looks great... but I only read printed comics.’ The feedback I get currently is that print is still preferable.”

Fish now has three collections of YBIL comics for sale at his web-site and at conventions, which brings up the other major advantage of print comics: being paid for your work. It is difficult, if not impossible, to make money from Web comics. NOWHERE GIRL, for instance, has been on hiatus for more than a year while Shaw concentrates on her day-job. Debate is currently raging online of various methods to make money. Despite some intriguing experiments with “micropayments,” a workable system for getting paid seems a long way off.

“I like having my stuff available online for free: it goes with the kinda ‘spirit of the web,’ says Shaw. Keeping it free also keep her comics accessible to queer youth. “Most kids don’t have credit cards, so if you’re 15 and you want to read a comic online and it asks for your credit card, what are you going to do... Seriously, most kids don’t have the means, even if they have access to a computer.”

Most webcartoonists post their work reasons other than the money: to express themselves, to reach out to people, or just to get some practice drawing and telling stories.

“VENUS ENY has always been practice,” says Lindsey. “It’s teaching me about layout and storyboarding — it’s an on-the-job



training thing... Just being able to tell a story has been my goal.”

But the biggest advantage is just the ability to get their work out there. Now, anyone with a pencil, a scanner, and a vision can reach a world-wide audience.

“A lot of these young gay and lesbian cartoonists, they don’t get much attention and they need it,” says Cruse, who began his career in the underground comics movement. “What you see is the next generation of gay and lesbian cartoonists. What used to be underground comics is now on the Web.”

Bill Roundy has his own journal comic, modestly titled THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF BILL, at www.billroundy.com.

An edited form of this article first appeared in the Washington Blade.

WEBCOMIC CREATORS

Neil **BABRA**

Imitation of Life

www.neilcomics.com

Glimpses into the real life of a gay student in Pittsburgh.

Neil Babra also draws the webcomic *Cloud Factory* at www.serializer.net

J. **BROWN**

The Littlest Curmudgeon

www.leviathanink.com

The life of a comics artist and his friends.

Chris **COOPER**

Queer Nation

www.queernation.com

Part satire, part soap opera, and part super-hero comic, by Cooper and various artists.

Howard **CRUSE**

www.howardcruse.com

The creator has designed his site “so full of things that no one could ever see it all in one visit, so they’ll have to come back.” Includes an extensive listing of queer comics online.

Michael **DERRY**

Troy Comics

www.derryproducts.com/TroyComics.html

“Troy” lampoons the everyday trials and tribulations of today’s young, urban gay men.

Tim **FISH**

www.timfishworks.com

Young Bottoms in Love

www.popimage.com

Gay romance stories, updated weekdays.

Greg **FOX**

Kyle’s Bed & Breakfast

members.aol.com/KylesBnB/index.html

The online strip about a gay bed & breakfast and all that goes on there.

Sandra **FUHR**

Boy Meets Boy

<http://boymeetsboy.keenspot.com>

Romance comic about a happy couple and their friends.

No longer updating.

Friendly Hostility

<http://www.friendlyhostility.com/>

Erin **LINDSEY**

Venus Envy

venusenvy.keenspace.com

Humorous strip about an MTF transgender 16-year-old. Updates three times each week.

Chuck **McKINNEY**

From The Cellar

www.danielnardicio.com/ftc.php

Writer/creator McKinney draws upon his own experiences of being a bartender in downtown NYC.

Erika **MOEN**

I Like Girls

www.projectkooky.com/erika/comics/girls/index.htm

A refreshing webcomic about... liking girls.

Justine **SHAW**

Nowhere Girl

www.nowheregirl.com

Gorgeously illustrated coming-of-age story. Two chapters available.

RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS • AMATEUR PRESS • WEBSITES

ALTERWORLDS

The Gay and Lesbian Roleplaying Association AlterWorlds is an online resource for gay and lesbian roleplaying gamers of all stripes. Currently, the site features an extensive member database (searchable by location) so you can find other "gaymers" in your area to connect with. More resources are planned in the future.

www.alterworlds.com

ATDNSIN

(The APA That Dare Not Speak Its Name) ATDNSIN, an Amateur Publishing Association (APA) for lesbians, gays, bisexuals & transgendered people, was begun in response to the 1989 San Diego Comic Con "Gays in Comics" panel. The APA has discussions on comics of all genres, how they relate to queer people, and the varied lifestyles.

Amateurs and professionals have interacted over the years, sending in their individual 'zine sections which may have art, cartoons, stories or personal discussion to the Central Mailer who collates the sections and sends the completed magazine to members. ATDNSIN contains adult content; you must be of legal age to join.

For a sample issue please send \$5.00 to: *Mike Phillips, Central Mailer, 1032 Irving Street, PMB - 614, San Francisco, CA 94122-2200*

www.northstar-atdnsin.com

THE GAY COMICS LIST

An excellent resources from François Peneaud, with lots of reviews of gay-themed comics, a gallery of "The Male Body in Comic Book Art" and other goodies.

<http://gaycomicslist.free.frp>



THE GAY LEAGUE

(or GLA) is an online federation of queer comics fans from all over the world. The GLA website contains information on gay characters, storylines and creators in comics. It's also home to a lively group who interact and share art, reviews, and stories.

www.gayleague.com

GLA Yahoo Group

A great deal of the GLA members' interaction takes place via its e-mail lists at Yahoo! Groups. The regular list, called simply the GLA, is a great way to get to know other gay fans through the lively e-mail discussions they hold.

GLAFILES2 Yahoo Group

The GLAFiles2 is a companion list for members to share photos, drawings and more discussion. Due to some adult content, you must be of legal age in your locality to join the GLAFiles2.

GAYS & COMICS FORUM AT DELPHI

A comics forum for queer comics fans and their straight sympathizer friends! The moderators of this forum are Andrew Wheeler and Christopher Butcher. They are warm, caring people who will take you down if you misbehave.

forums.delphiforums.com/gaycomics

HOMNI: COMICS

A massive listing of queer material in comics, with lists of gay characters, creators, online cartoons and comics and a quick-jump menu that takes you to queer comics sites online.

www.geocities.com/homni_ca/comics



NORTHSTAR

NORTHSTAR is the nation's fastest growing APA for LGBT comics fans, and was founded in 1989. Members submit self-made 'zines on comics and popular culture to the Central Mailer, who distributes the collected issue to the members. Nominal membership fees cover the cost of postage. NORTHSTAR celebrated its 50th Anniversary Issue in January of 2000.

'Zines often include stories, art, reviews, discussion, adult content, and provide a depth of personality that is hard to find online. Sharing creative juices and building lasting friendships are the focus.

For a sample issue please send \$5.00 to: *Mike Phillips, Central Mailer, 1032 Irving Street, PMB - 614, San Francisco, CA 94122-2200*

www.northstar-atdnsin.com



OUTWORLDERS

Outworlders is a science fiction, fantasy, and horror fan group

that supports and promotes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender themes within these genres. Everyone is welcome. An interest in the genres and an open mind are the only requirements. Our members are as diverse as their interests, and enjoy exploring fandom in a welcoming community of like minded people.

www.outworlders.info



QUEERNET

Founded in 1996, the queercomix mailing list has been a discussion area and "safe space" on the Internet for talk about queer issues in comic books. Anything directly relating to queer concerns in comic books and the comics industry is appropriate for discussion, including in-story and personnel issues. Queer characters, creators, storylines and themes, and even queer-phobic creators, publishers, and/or comic book stories are all discussed regularly by the members. The queercomix list is not a general-purpose "home base" for queer fans to discuss anything comics related (or even unrelated) — it has a narrower focus, and off-topic discussions are not encouraged.

groups.queernet.org

All internet resources in this book — creator sites, email addresses, resources and more — are collected on our website at www.prismcomics.org

Prism Comics is proud to thank the people who have supported us in the past year. As an all-volunteer organization, we depend on community contributions to do our work. With you, we work toward our goal of a more diverse comics industry and promote great comics that deserve wider recognition.

Thanks to our donors and volunteers, we've not only been able to take on large projects like providing creators and fans booth space at conventions, but also smaller ones like mailing our guides to members of the press and keeping our feature-rich Web-site current and exciting.

Every gift is important and appreciated, whether it's original artwork, comics to stock our convention booths and online store or a monetary donation. Please support Prism Comics today to further build on our successes in advancing the awareness of the gay community in comics. You can visit our website at www.prismcomics.org and make a donation quickly and easily.

Thank you!

The Volunteers at Prism Comics

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Michael Lovitz
Ross Katz
Anton Kawasaki
Rich Thigpen

Bronze: Up to \$250

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Stephen Sadowski
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Comics are for sissies.

(Not that there's anything
wrong with that.)

Looking for the latest and greatest in LGBT comics? Visit **PrismComics.org**. Over 140 creator profiles, links to online resources, great original features and an online store with adventure, humor, erotica, romance, nonfiction minicomics and more.



See comics in a whole new light.



Always we loved.

*How could we otherwise,
when you are so like me,
my sweet,
but in a different guise?*

From **THE MIRROR OF LOVE**
text by **ALAN MOORE**
images by **JOSÉ VILLARUBIA**

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SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS