



2009 AURORA AWARD NOMINEE

ISSUE 9

## Table of Contents

Editor's Corner .....	3
RInterview with Fred Hembeck .....	4
Movie Views .....	7
Comic Thoughtsz .....	9
Final Thoughts on Trinity .....	12
Letters .....	13
Zines in Trade .....	17

**The Original Universe** is published 6 times a year on a bi-monthly schedule. Sample issues are available for \$3 Canadian, about the same cost as many comics. You can also subscribe at a cost of \$12 per year.

The zine is also available free for The Usual. The Usual consists of several options:

- i) **LOC (Letter of Comment):** This is the most common method, and recommended even if you use the other methods as well. This is simply a letter to the editor giving feedback on the issue itself, maybe feedback to other contributors as well. This letter can be sent in e-mail.

There are two content rules: a) try to be interesting. B) don't start a fight with another or several other members. I simply won't publish those.

- ii) **Cover art:** I always appreciate this. Keep in mind not to use copyrighted characters without proper attribution, and keep art to PG-13 at most.
- iii) **Interior art:** "fillos" are a longtime tradition for zines: small illustrations to break up sections of text.
- iv) **Articles:** if you write something to share with fellow readers, I'll print it. Please keep article submissions clean.
- v) **Zine trades:** If you produce a zine, I'll be glad to exchange a copy of this one for yours.

To remain on the mailing list you have to contribute The Usual at least once every 2 issues. Failure to do so gets you bumped from mailings. You'll be reminded if you're close to that point.

**Rights:** all articles, art and letters are © to you. In the case of characters and concepts belonging to others, rights revert to them and their copyrights should be mentioned.

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Next Deadline: October 12.

Letters: Lloyd Penney, Dario Sciola, Jeffrey Allan Boman

**About the Cover:** Greg said it was a mixture of alternate-reality Justice League members; sort of a "Justice League Multiverse".

Cover by Gregory Woronchak obviously.

## ***EDITOR'S CORNER***

Thanks to Google Documents I can work on this during very quiet times at my workplace, without running other software! More important: this application is OS-independent. I can work under Windows, Linux or Mac OS X -- and if they're online capable I can just get a browser window open and type.

My PC (Lugosi IV) fried in June. I now have a new machine, so I'm back on Windows now. I'm hoping to finish these zines very soon now.

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As I mentioned in the Special (now delayed again. :( ) we're nominated for an Aurora award in August of 2009. I still have to buy a ticket to the award dinner.

As well as getting Webspaces to promote the zine, I grew my Twitter community to promote it as well. A lot of the people I added I'll Unfollow afterward; I'm not terribly interested in the ads of network marketing folks. Granted some of their tricks work right now though: I've been using viral marketing tricks from them. They serve a purpose at the moment.

I'll purchase my banquet ticket in late June. (DONE) The last day of voting was July 15th. By the time you read this I'll know if we won or not.

===

May 14th this year marked my 42nd birthday. Folks think I'm in my thirties. Hopefully ladies I meet will too. Age is irrelevant to me, but to others it is.

I've been carrying my towel ever since (a Hitchhikers Guide thing. Read the books if you don't know - although most here do). I enjoy the fact that I can now tell people that I'm the answer to Life, the Universe and Everything (ditto)!

===

Script Frenzy 2009 happened in April. My results are easy to announce: I didn't take part this year. With this zine to do and all my computer troubles another project would have been one too many. Beside, I didn't really have a notion of a screenplay this year, and I didn't see any other Montrealers taking part... it would have meant a lot of work all alone. I did make a charity donation though.

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I finally got my Eeebuntu operating system installed on my EeePC! It just took a step that I'd overlooked before to do it.

===

May 16th Tamu Townsend held a 40th birthday party for Emru. He died a shade over 6 months before it, but that wasn't a reason to not celebrate his life and what would have been an historic event for a person. Besides: Emru always loved any excuse for a party!

I finally met his mom (bio-mom, since he was my younger brother in my mind), and his wife. I was floored when I met one of his cousins; except for a difference in hair, they looked almost identical!

I met a lot of new people, and we had a nice meal in the shadow of the Concordia Visual Arts building where we went to school. At the end Tamu gave me a copy of the last CD he listened to. I'll listen to it someday; I'm not ready yet.

===

The fps site still exists, and Tamu says that she will

soon give me posting rights on it (I'm not a knowledgeable animation poster though). On it is a back issue archive for the magazine.

Through it I was reminded that I was a contributor to it as far back as 1996. I have to find my copy in my stuff; I no longer have access to the computer I used then nor the file to check.

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Time to get into the meat of this zine!



### ***INTERVIEW WITH FRED HEMBECK***

Some of you may be familiar with Fred's art. For years he drew gags in the Marvel Age title from (no surprise) Marvel. He also was responsible for several full titles like *Fantastic Four Roast* (1982) and *Fred Hembeck Destroys the Marvel Universe* (1989). I discovered him on Facebook last year, and asked him for an interview.

This was one of the first ones I did, but it took me ages to finish it. I learned some things over that time though, so we have a better talk for it now:

Me: I read a lot of your previous work, and several of my other readers have as well – but for the comicbook newcomers, please give a rough idea of your body of work.

Fred: Early on, I did those little gags found in the Daily Planet promo pages in the back of late seventies DC comics. After that ended, I jumped into a

monthly two-page feature for *Marvel Age Magazine* which lasted over 100 issues. Most noticeably, I emceed *The Fantastic Four Roast*, compiled the hit list for *Fred Hembeck Destroys The Marvel Universe*, and had my fave *Marvel Age* pages reprinted in *Fred Hembeck Sell\$ The Marvel Universe*. I also did several Spider-Man oriented back-up features, including a run of Spider-Ham tales, and *Petey, The Adventures of Spider-Man LOOOONG Before He Became Spider-Man*, my tribute to the kids comics I grew up reading crossed with the original Lee-Ditko Spidey episodes. And I drew *Zoot Sputnik* in the back pages of DC's "Mazing Man, wrote an *Elvira* story as well as an *Archie Super-Teens* escapade, and even did a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* episode once! So, I've been pretty much all over the place, albeit in the veritable nooks and crannies of the comics field!

Me: There are several works I'll have to track down now! I never read the *Zoot Sputnik* tales, or the *Elvira* one, or the *Super-Teens* story! Are these included in your compiled volume (if the rights don't stand in the way)? I also have to track down that *TMNT* show. I studied Animation in University and graduated as a scriptwriter for it. I try to study everything.

How did you get your start in the industry?

Fred: Before I did any of the above, I concocted a little feature called *Dateline: @# \$!* for the comics fanzines of the late seventies, most prominently the weekly *Buyer's Guide For Comics Fandom*. Using a cartoon caricature of myself interviewing big time (as well as small time) comics icons, the strips managed to get me noticed by the folks running the big companies, and I was soon asked to bring my quirky little strips to the mainstream (after Bill Mantlo had already gotten me to redraw an illustrated letter of comment I had sent him while he was writing *Iron Man*, which was my first professionally printed--and paid for!--piece.)

Me: Did you have any formal art training? From my own art studies it seemed to me that someone used a cartoon style when they already knew the fundamentals to improvise on...

Fred: I attended the two year Advertising Art and Design program at SUNY Farmingdale (the same set of courses Len Wein took several years earlier), then transferred to SUNY Buffalo for two years of Communications Design. I guess I must've picked up a few things along the way, though teaching the intricacies of drawing anatomy was hardly the focus of either program. Which is probably why I still have trouble with drawing hands..

Me: I never noticed that!

Me: We don't see your stuff at Marvel anymore, though they have other cartoonists. Why is that?

Fred: No real reason except that there's always a turn-over in personnel, including a lot of the folks who'd hired me in the past. I still sneak into a Marvel comic upon occasion--recently, I drew a one page Greg Pak strip in a Hulk What If? issue, and before that, contributed a two-pager to the Stan Lee Meets Spider-Man project. I even did few gags in the Daily Bugle promo paper for a while about a year back before they decided to pull the plug on the comics feature--I guess JJJ didn't like the idea that I once worked for Perry White, y'know?

Me: I've seen most of your work at Marvel. Do you prefer their characters over DC ones?

Fred: Nope. though as a kid in the sixties, even after being introduced to comics via Superman and his pals, I much preferred the Marvel COMICS! All those sixties icons are fun to play with--it's the new characters (like, from the last twenty years) that sorta befuddle me. (For the record, my favorite costumed characters are Captain America, Spider-Man, Superman, the Flash, and the Fantastic Four, so there's a pretty even split there.).

Me: In this zine, many of us have spoken about our feelings on the return of the Barry Allen Flash (currently happening) and the death and soon rebirth of Steve Rogers/Captain America. We also generally railed against the changes in Spider-Man. Do you have any opinions on any of these things?

Fred: Well, the truth is, I don't read the current books any longer, so my emotional reaction to these sorta things isn't nearly as white hot as it would've been 10 or 20 years ago. On the one hand, I find it all sorta silly--they're dead!! Wait--no they're not!!--but on the other, I kinda understand how it helps amp up interest in otherwise fairly stagnant characters. The one resurrection I'll NEVER accept, however, is Bucky. The first time I read a Captain America comic, Bucky was dead, and that's the way things stayed all the way up until the time I last read a Cap comic about a decade back. You can't tell me otherwise, even if--by all indications--the stories ARE well done!

(Somewhere Ed Brubaker is feeling a chill now. :-))

Me: I remember in your Marvel days how Brother Voodoo was a frequent joke. You've said you don't read the current output, but did you know that Brian Michael Bendis has made him the new Sorcerer Supreme? How do you feel about that?

Fred: I was tipped off to this amazing turn of events by someone on the internet, who, via email, kindly included a link to the exact page in question. I think it's pretty darn cool, no doubt about it!! Better than making BUCKY the new top mystic, that's for sure!!...

Me: Ironically, it was revealed in New Avengers, a comic where BuckyCap is the Captain America on the team.

Fred: Irony is good. Irony and comics go hand in hand. In fact, someone should name their publishing



business "Irony Comics". And then if someone did, and got real, real rich, and didn't pay me a single cent for giving them the idea, well, THAT'D sure be ironic, wouldn't it?...

Me: Do you have any upcoming projects you could tease us with?

Fred: How about we make that "entice"? On June 4th, Image will publish The Nearly Complete Essential Hembeck Archives Omnibus, 912 (!!)

pages of my aforementioned Dateline: @\$% material and much more--and all for a penny short of twenty five bucks! I COULD tell you more, or I could simply direct you to this link <<http://www.hembeck.com/More/HembeckOmnibusInfoPage.htm>> over on my website, Hembeck.com <<http://www.hembeck.com/index2.htm>>, which will give you a pretty thorough run-down of the book's contents! I'm pretty darn excited about it, and I hope folks will enjoy it! Quality? Maybe. Quantity? Definitely! Go buy a copy--please! (And thanks for listening to my sales-pitch--much appreciated!...)

(That part was last year...)

Me: (now) I goofed to get word out on your omnibus - if available, I encourage readers to reorder it now - but do you have another project on the burners now?

Fred: I recently revived my feature, "Petey--The Adventures of Peter Parker LOOONG Before He Became Spider-Man" with a story where the future webspinner meets the future Brother Voodoo in the pages of Amazing Spider-Man Family 7. That apparently went over so well that I was asked to come up with yet another "Petey" episode. It'll appear in ANOTHER Spider-Man title--dunno which one quite yet--but this time around, young Parker meets the Storm siblings, Sue and Johnny!! I hope to do even more of these stories, as they're always a lot of fun!! Beyond that, who knows? But

please note--copies of the Omnibus are still available directly from yours truly!! Check out my Hembeck.com website for ordering details!!

Thanks, Jeffrey--I very much appreciate your interest!

Me: Excellent!

Too bad I won't see those new Peter Parker strips... due to my dislike of 'Brand New Day' and the huge regression in the Spider-Man character I dropped ASM over a year ago.

Actually, thank you for taking the time for this interview.

You can learn more about Fred on his site (he didn't mention it enough) hembeck.com . The art for this interview comes by permission from there too.



## MOVIE VIEWS

**Zack and Miri Make a Porno (DVD):** I've spoken before of Kevin Smith himself being the comicbook link for all of his films. This one had a large promotional blitz, so I had to see it!

As the title of this film implies the subject matter here is very raunchy: the title characters Zack Brown (Seth Rogan) and Miri Linky (Elizabeth Banks) are friends since high school and dead broke room-mates. To pay their expenses they decide to film pornography of which they'll take part in one scene.

Their decision comes from a high school reunion, from a surprising scene starring Brandon Routh (Superman) as a closeted gay man and Justin Long (the Mac from the Mac vs. PC TV ads) as his lover and gay porn star. It was weird to hear him talking so foul!

This film also had the Indian man from The 40 Year-Old Virgin (Gerry Bednob) the warehouse boss from the American version of The Office (Craig Robinson), "Randall" from the Clerks films (Jeff Robinson), Smith's friend Jason Mewes (Jay; we actually see too much of him!), porn-culture icon Tracy Lords (she began when she was 15, ushering in child porn laws), current adult film star Katie Morgan and fellow Canadian and comedian Ricky Mebe (he almost steals the show).

This film justifies its R-rating: the dialogue is raunchy, the subject matter is... but at its center is yet again a sensitive story (the secret of Kevin Smith movies it seems), this time a love story between Zack and Miri (we never see them nude BTW). This is a bit crude, but Kevin Smith has said this about the film: it's really about the difference between having sex and making love.

Like the Virgin film I mentioned above, with all the

crudeness the characters still become like a family, and the overall film is fun.

As with many of his films on DVD, this one had a 2nd-disc of bonus materials, including the cast conference at the San Diego Comic Con (I still remember when comics were important there), an interesting documentary on the film (how a few seconds of footage nearly made this an NC 17 film instead of an R one boggles my mind), a series of Web shorts (Ricky Mebe is wild here!), and deleted/extended scenes. There's more, much more. I don't want to spoil it all for you.

**Prince Caspian (DVD):** I go from a raunchy R-rated film to a PG one. My interests stretch far!

This was the second film for the Narnia franchise. This was actually C.S. Lewis most successful series, with Christian undertones like all of his novels. It was far more memorable than his Venus trilogy; I remember the subject, but couldn't tell the titles.

This style of fantasy goes even further back in comics than the Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld series at DC Comics.

The producers still have to find a happy median. The first film felt too long; this one moved faster, but at some points the story felt rushed. Caspian went right away from being suspicious to the Narnians to trusted in the blink of an eye. There's also a bit that sees a little romantic tension between Caspian and Susan Pevensie... but except for brief nods, we don't see it much. Just as well; C.S. Lewis wasn't known for romance.

At first I thought a story was missing. Voyage of the Dawn Treader I thought was next, but Prince Caspian story ties into it. It would make more sense of Aslan's comment that the Tamarain are descended of a pirate ship (which must have had some women on it too, or there couldn't be descendants).

This film offers a lot of action and battle, as well as some tremendous effects. The commercials included the rise of a sea god.

My big disappointment with this film was the lack of bonus materials on the DVD.

**The Tale of Despereaux (DVD):** Even further down the ratings scale; this one is G.

The story came from a modern fairy tale: Despereaux Tilley is a young mouse (voiced by Matthew Broderick) with enormous ears and possessing a character flaw (for mice): he has no fear.

A unique rat (Roscuero, voice by Dustin Hoffman) comes to the kingdom of Dohr to try the legendary soup. He accidentally causes the death of the Queen, leading to a grieving king to ban both soup and rats, leading to Roscuero fleeing to the rat kingdom in the sub-levels.

The king's daughter Princess Pea feels trapped, and Despereaux has a knight complex, so he tries to rescue her. His courage gets him banished to the rat kingdom from his home, where he meets Roscuero, and...

This is already a bit convoluted, but it gets worse. This is taken from a Newberry award-winning novel by Kate DiCamillo, but the story is condensed to a 100-minute film. As a result the story feels crowded, with some characters feeling like they are tacked on with no reason. The master chef of Dohr (voiced by Kevin Cline) has a magical helper named Boldo (Stanley Tucci). We see them at the beginning, but not again until the last few minutes of the film. They weren't tacked on, but they feel like it.

The animation is CGI, as most theatrical pieces are these days. As an old school 2D animator that worked with hand-painted cell art I wish it were

different, but it's not. Here the art isn't innovative, but it's solid.

I checked its entry on IMDB to get all the names right. It had only negative comments.

There are a bunch of extra features. No deleted scenes (understandable... the cost for them would be astronomical), but a good deal of interactive stuff aimed more at youths, and a documentary on the film that was way too short.

**The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (DVD):** Soon there will be a new Doc Savage title. Pulp-style has been a facet of comics for a long time.

Right away this film has a big plus for me: Jet Li Liange plays the head villain. He no longer does martial arts epics ((although he did play the Monkey King in The Hidden Kingdom which I reviewed last issue) but he has shown great charisma whenever he has, just like Chow Yun Fat has been cool as... well, anything. Add Michell Yeoh, and this film already has a cool pedigree!

This film is set after WWII (1946), and years after the past events of the previous Mummy films. The O'Connells are retired, with wife Evy (played by Monica Bello. I didn't recognize her) now a successful author for two novels about a mummy and romance around it. Rick (Brendan Frasier) isn't taking well to retirement.

Their son Alex is an archeology-adventurer now and a young adult. He looks for - and finds - the tomb of a ruthless Chinese emperor Han (Jet Li), cursed by a witch (Michelle Yeoh) for his evil actions. His mummy is awakened to try to find the elixir of eternal life in the mythical Shangri-La.

Unlike the previous mummy, Han has the mystical abilities of the elements as well as the ability to shapeshift. This makes for an even more dynamic set



of visuals. Michelle Yeoh plays the witch. She's immortal, still around to watch over the burial site of Emperor Han.

This is a fun popcorn summer film: nothing brain-intensive, no major plot holes, nothing to do but chill out, enjoy the ride.

I think this will be the final film in the series. There's a nod to a future adventure (Evy's brother Johnathan gets in a taxi saying he's headed to Peru where there are no mummies. The screen next goes blank save for a line: "A few months later, there were mummies in Peru."), but I don't think it would make for an interesting film.

Where this disc fell down for me was the lack of many bonus features. There's a commentary track (I don't listen to them) and a set of deleted/extended scenes - but that's it.

### ***COMIC THOUGHTS***

I have many things to talk of this issue:

#### **Most of the Lantern Corps Have Now Been Revealed**

The current storyline in the Green Lantern title is now devoted to the being called Agent Orange, the leader of the Orange Lantern Corps Larfleeze. The Orange power is distinctive and disturbing: Larfleeze is the only living member of his corps. The rest are constructs of beings that he has consumed and copied.

I studied color theory in University. I found it interesting how all the 'hot' colors are negative (red: anger, yellow: fear, orange: greed) and all of the 'cold' ones are positive (blue: hope, purple: love, green: law, indigo: unknown yet). There's been a good deal of thought put in to them. Black will be all-purpose death. Interesting that the 'Blackest Night' saga is for an event also called the War of

Light...

Black Lanterns don't really follow that motif though; black is considered the absence of light. For it to work well there also have to be White Lanterns, since white is seen as all light together. That may be part of the story resolution - or maybe not, to not appear to have white supremacists as heroes in the DCU.

Like many people I'm really looking forward to this event. According to reviews it began July 15th. I buy my reserve a month at a time, so I'll read it in the beginning of August.

#### **Some of the Black Lanterns Revealed Early**

Between cover previews and solicitations, some of the Black Lanterns have been revealed: Aquaman (he died in the last issue of Sword of Atlantis. I'd stopped reading it long before then, so like many I didn't know), Ronnie Raymond (the original Firestorm. Died in Identity Crisis), Martian Manhunter (no surprise there), Terra (I read The Judas Contract in New Teen Titans years ago. Forget her superfluous death scene during WW III. That was forgettable), and thanks to a gaffe from the action figure makers we weren't surprised to have the Golden Age Superman Kal L (he was killed during Infinite Crisis) revealed as well.

No villains have been announced yet since they are not a draw, but I'm sure there will be some.

#### **𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂 𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂** **(Legion of 3 Worlds So Far)**

Geoff Johns has really penned gruesome scenes of deaths for some characters so far! The large majority of these deaths have been in the 2nd and 3rd versions of the Legion so far. I don't remember the version of Karate Kid that he killed, but many writers seem to like killing the 'Kid, it seems.

I like that he confirmed my theory that the other Legions are from different realities - although the second were originally Batch SW6, clones of the originals.

**SPOILER ALERT!** Everything I Say About LO3W IS From Now On

He undid the deaths of Bart Allen (Kid Flash) and Connor Kent (Superboy) - although he killed him to start with.

He was doing well for me... then came the revelation that the Time Trapper was Superboy Prime.

Although the Time Trapper is a villain of the classic LSH, he never worked for me. Having him revealed as an even more unenjoyable villain though doesn't add appeal to him in my mind either.

When did Kinetix become a mage too, or did I just forget?

### **"No More Mutants"**

Issue 12 of Young X-Men was the finale of that series, a whisper instead of a bang. Marvel seemed to give up on it mid-stream. That was my final title with an 'X' again.

I've heard from others that New Mutants had a good first issue, and I really liked these characters pre-Rob Liefeld, but I liked the first issue of Young X-Men too. This just sounds like another cash grab from the company, and I won't support it.

I just read a preview for a Chris Claremont penned X-Men Forever series now. My stomach for word

over-run is quite weak. I'll pass on this too.

### **Avengers: The Initiative Disassembled**

This was no surprise: after the Skrulls were revealed to be behind the 50-State Initiative, Norman Osbourne had the ammunition he needed to close the project down. This storyline led to that fact: Ragnarok (the messed up 'Clor' from Civil War) trashed the base, and the cloning of a dead MVP was revealed to the public. Osbourne was there to declare the program ended.

This seemed the final issue of the series. I was ready to bemoan the loss of what has become one of the best titles out... but there's still at least one issue of it. As I write these words at least one more issue is waiting for me in my Reserve (I pick it up monthly). If it continues from there, I'll know. I should have expected it would; the issue I'm talking about (23) ended with unfinished missions.

### **Jeff Blank Must Die**

This graphic novel online is claimed to be in the style of Watchmen. It's not a pastiche like Watchmensch; I got some flack supporting that one... this is just in that same dark tradition, with noir trappings. I'm a film noir lover, so that worked for me.

Here's the press release on the book:

"<http://www.blank-thegraphicnovel.com>

My partner Don and I just launched our graphic novel on Twitter and Facebook. We add two new pages every other day and will continue to do so for the next year while we attempt to build a following through a variety of social media outlets. Here is the info:

Brothers of the Silence Announce First-Ever Graphic Novel Release on Facebook and Twitter.

San Diego, California, May 1, 2009 – Blank, a graphic novel by newcomers the Brothers of the Silence, duo Don Richmond and Ian LeWinter, is scheduled to be released online May 1. This marks an historic event as the first graphic novel ever to make its debut on Twitter and Facebook.

The Brothers of the Silence is made up of writer/creative strategist Ian LeWinter and illustrator/writer/creative strategist Don Richmond.

Blank is a graphic novel in the tradition of Watchmen, with heroes, villains, victims and complex story threads, although the heroes in Blank are more anti-hero and noir.

Blank will be unveiled in real-time to its audience as the graphic novel is created, giving its fan-base a sense of involvement in the story, along with possibilities for plot interaction. Each day a new page will be uploaded to the website and announced on Twitter and Facebook.

Plans to release Blank in print have not yet been pursued, however the Brothers intend to pursue both a publishing deal and motion picture interest.

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/BlankMustDie>  
Facebook Fan Page: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=77930679452>  
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/JohnBlankMustDie>  
WordPress: <http://blanktheblog.wordpress.com/>  
eMail: [john.blank@blank-thegraphicnovel.com](mailto:john.blank@blank-thegraphicnovel.com) "

So far I've only read the first few pages. I've liked what I've seen so far.

### **Free Comic Book Day 2009**

My LCS only had the Gold sponsors this year, limiting my choices a lot. Still, I was able to get the

Green Lantern Blackest Night #0 book as one of the first people in. That title was 'sold out' shortly after. In fact, I had one envious soul who wanted to look at it later on. Not a greedy Orange Lantern though; he didn't take it. :)

The other choice I haven't finished reading yet: an Avengers title written by Brian Michael Bendis. I've read some glowing reviews of it -- but they were written by die-hard Marvel Zombies, so I take them with a grain of salt.

### **Wizardworld Toronto?**

My PC crash gave me the time to cover something a bit more timely. The press release:

" New York, NY - Gareb Shamus, CEO of New York based Wizard Entertainment, announces today that he has purchased the Toronto Comicon, a show that has been consistently awarded The Best International Comic Book Convention (non-USA) by ComicBookConventions.com, for the last 5 years. "We've always had a strong following in Canada, so buying the Toronto Comicon is something that allows me to give back to our fans. These attendees are known to be serious collectors and comic industry followers," said Shamus. "I am thrilled to offer the guests, celebrities, artists, dealers and exhibitors to our Canadian audience for the very first time."

Peter Dixon, owner of Paradise Conventions and former owner of the Toronto Comicon, will still be intimately involved in the show production, his friendly manner ensuring the continuation of the trademarked relaxed atmosphere of the show."

The Paradise City Comic-con is the one that both Dario and I went to last July. I still always hope for a bigger convention here in Montreal (after all many/ most titles are printed here at Quebecor, but outside of the first World Comicon here in the early 1990s, we haven't had anything more than a dealer's room

show with guests to sign books forever. I don't include the 2nd WCC here; it managed to burn its bridge. It sounds as if the new Wizards show will live up to the great things of the past.

Worldcon is my big thing this summer. I suspect if I can I'll go to this Toronto one next year.

### Various Comicbooks in Bullets

Here's my answer to a Lightning Round!

- \* Adventure Comics 0 was a mini-swerve, to use a wrestling term. The feature will be the Connor Kent Superboy, with the Legion of Superheroes, bringing back an historic title and a classic (but slightly changed) premise.

- \* Speaking of Superboy: DC must have the rights back to use the name; not only is Superboy back they call their villain Superboy-Prime now.

- \* Love and Capes 10 I ended up ultimately getting from creator Thom Zahler.

- \* I had this confirmed by her: the red-head dancer in Secret Six 8 is named Liana Kerzner. That's the name of my friend and the subject for the Special! She's friends with author Gail Simone, and Gail promised to put Liana in the book.

- \* There's been a lot of press over Archie proposing to Veronica. It still won't make me read Archie comics; regardless, I expect a swerve, and one that won't last. About a decade ago Cherry Blossom was introduced to break the triangle for good. She didn't last either as an Archie interest. (There was also an adult underground Cherry Blossom, drawn in the Archie style, but that's different.)

\*

- Shojo Beat, the manga for girls, is going bankrupt. I already dropped it from my pull list. I don't think I'm the reason it went belly up; many others must have dropped it. Pity; we need more stuff for people other than young boys.

- \* It's finally happening, -and-a-half years later: as I mentioned in my interview, Steve Rogers (Captain

America) reborn. Yet another "I won't buy it - I don't care" book.

- \* With issue 12, Squadron Supreme ended with a whimper, not a bang. I remember when JMS made it a hot property again at the MAX line, but mainstream, his own boredom with the storyline, then a new writer and art team... well, the writing was on the wall. Next book!



### *FINAL THOUGHTS ON: TRINITY*

The weekly series is over now. Did it fare well?

Overall it was definitely better than Countdown. There were some good things about it, some bad. More good than bad, mind you.

### **The Good**

**Consistent Art:** Writing too... everything was written by Kurt Busiek and Fabian Nicieza. The backup stories were drawn by either Tom Dennerick or Scott McDaniels.

**Big Encompassing Storyline:** There were many characters involved in this storyline, mostly as background color. As well as the Big Three, Gangbuster, Hawkman, Tomorrow Woman (now brought back to life) and the main supporting cast of the Big Three (Alfred, Lois Lane, Dick Grayson,

Supergirl, Donna Troy and Nemesis) also played a big role.

A version of Triumph (from the Justice League) who wasn't a jerk also appeared (years ago writer Christopher Priest told me he was intentionally a jerk!).

**Villains Too:** The main villains of the Crime Syndicate got a lot of play (hopefully their last for a while; they've grown tedious to me), as did Morgaine LeFay and the classic Despero and Kanjar Ro.

### Interesting New Characters

The Dreambound provided interesting new characters for another writer to pick up. They weren't fully developed yet, leaving room to work with. I could see them as new members of the Doom Patrol.

Likewise the alien Xorn could be an interesting character.

**Consistent Schedule:** No issue shipped late. Every week's issue came out on time, nothing delayed.

### The Bad

**Repetitive Storytelling:** After reading 4 issues in a row of heroic and villainous trinities I was ready to throw the book at a wall yelling, "I get it already!"

Because of the nature of a weekly book and a shorter weekly script, some elements had a shorter cycle - but odds are the readers read every issue, so odds are they got it too.

**Villains Grew Too Annoying:** Because we saw Morgan Lefaye almost every week, she became a shrill voice in the title. Hopefully she's one of the Kirby creations locked in another alternate world. I loathe reading the harpy now!

**Still No Love for Wonder Woman:** Even though she's treated as one of the Big Three, she didn't really get a lot of face time here again. Donna Troy still got several pages for her importance to the DCU, but her current flame Nemesis was drawn here and named, but he didn't do anything.

I won't go into why the character doesn't work well in this zine. I already have a link to an article about this on our fan page. This series failed to change that view though. Longevity is irrelevant in comicbooks without good writing to support it -- and Perez' and Brubaker's runs weren't long enough to change this.

The good outweighs the bad here. Wednesday Comics will only be 12 weeks and a completely different thing, but hopefully this still taught some good lessons!

*HEY KIDS:  
LETTERS!*

Here are member letters:

1706-24 Eva Rd.  
Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 2B2  
April 18, 2009

Dear Jeff from Djibouti:

As I type, Yvonne and I are in Niagara Falls, New York, attending Eeriecon 11. We don't need constant convention excitement, so I thought I'd relax by writing up a loc on The Original Universe 8.

Interesting cover. Why is everyone angry? Somebody forget to brew fresh coffee or something? Anger management lessons for everyone!



***Well, they are the Legion of DOOM after all. :)  
- JaB***

If I haven't written it before, congratulations on your Aurora nomination. May we both take home a sharp, pointy trophy!

At this convention, we've already had the obligatory "Canada sucks because" discussion, started by American friends, followed by how they have freedom of speech, but we don't because we're not American. Huh?

I'm enjoying Avatar, but one thing that didn't ring true...if one of the characters has buzz-cut hair, it can't be long enough to blow in the breeze.

***That was an attempt at a character trait that didn't work. - JaB***

The 11th Star Trek movie, a re-imagining (I'm beginning to hate that word) of the original franchise, comes out in May, and I think that we will be going to see it. Now that I've been getting more involved with Ad Astra (and looks like I will be rejoining the committee for 2010), I've been getting to know folks like Steve and Liana Kerzner, and they are great folks. Yvonne will continue with her managing the space and science track for Ad Astra, so it will feel like old times. Liana is on the Ad Astra Board of Directors.

It's now the 21st, and finally back home and I've got the time to finish this off. Growing up, I knew a little about Bettie Page, but not as much as American guys who saw her as perhaps the safest bad girl they knew. I gather she got to see the movie based on her life before she died. She had mixed feelings about it, but knew that it was probably too late to do anything about it.

I see from my letter that what I heard about Emru Townsend's so-called successful marrow transplant

was nonsense. A young man is dead only because there was no one to help him with the right marrow. I think that Paradise Comicon is dead...besides the FanXpo in August, there's not much for the average comics fan here. Ad Astra had tried a small comicon for a few years, but it wasn't drawing in the numbers needed to make it a regular part of the convention. So, FanXpo seems to be the annual big con for comics fans. Other letters...Forry Ackerman is gone, as is Philip José Farmer, and just a few days ago, J.G. Ballard. Our SFnal world we grew up in is losing so many names. I hope we'll preserve their memories, and stop them from being forgotten by the succeeding generations.

***More on this next issue, but Emru did get the transplant. I have photographic proof. - JaB***

Time to wrap, there's so many more zines just pouring into my mailbox and IN box these days. Take care, see you soon, and definitely at Anticipation.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

===

Dario Sciola  
Ottawa, ON

I've been busier than usual so I hope you forgive the last minute LOC for issue 8 of TOU. Here goes...

***When I'm running late on production, you're not. - JaB***

First I would like to thank Matthew for the comic reading suggestions. I've already read some of what he suggested (especially the Alan Moore stuff.) I also know that some of what he suggested

are right up my alley. The "Tomb of Dracula" is definitely something that I want to pick up in a Marvel "Essential" format. I've both bought and read a number of the Marvel Essential books to catch up on many of the original Marvel titles and have also picked up and read a number of the similarly formatted DC showcase books. Nothing like sitting down with a phonebook sized compilation, even though they are only black and white. The Essential that is at the top of my list is Essential Monster Of Frankenstein as it has art by Mike Ploog, one of my personal favorites.

To answer Matt's question as to 'what do I like?', the answer is not as easy as it sounds. I like Moore, old EC horrors (and Science Fiction), Robert Crumb, the DCU mainstays (Superman, Batman, and Green Lantern), the Marvel originals (Spiderman, and F4, and Daredevil standout), Lobo, and especially anything even remotely connected to the original "Planet of the Apes". I also like oddball and fringe indy comics. I'll give just about any comic a chance.

I've even expanded my comic horizons significantly even in the short interim since the last zine. I read Gerrard Jones' impeccable history of comics in "Men of Tomorrow - Geeks, Gangsters and the History of the Comic Book". A 'no holds barred' peek behind the scenes of the titans that shaped the industry in its infancy. I seem to enjoy books about comics almost as much as the comics themselves. I also read Joe Matt's Peepshow, which I picked up on a whim and found myself enjoying immensely. As an autobiographical comic about the author's day to day events, it was very much about the comic biz, as well as the neurotic antics of a wonderfully weird guy. I also finished reading a 50 issue run of the Grant Morrison run in Doom Patrol. And last, but not least, picked up and read the first trade

of Vaughn/Guerra "Y the Last Man". Will definitely be reading a lot more of that.

Another great source of comic information that I've stumbled upon is the Comic Geek Speak podcasts for which you are partially responsible, as you had them listed as one of your Facebook groups. These guys are great and I've become a big fan of their podcasts. And with hundreds of backlogged episodes, I can listen for long time. The only drawback to the podcasts is that they are so long clocking in at an average 90 minutes. In itself, this is actually good news, but with all my MP3 players lacking a bookmarking feature or even a basic memory when turned off, I end up only being able to listen to the first half of most of the shows on my daily commutes. I've already researched most of the podcast friendly players, but have yet to get one. The only other drawback of listening to the CGS guys is that I keep on noting more and more stuff that I now want to read. Great, but frustrating as well.

***My MP3 player isn't podcast-friendly either, but I still listen to CGS on it. - JaB***

Great cover art by Greg Woronchak on issue 7. I think it been the best TOU cover yet.

I liked your writeups on both the Bettie Page movie DVD review ("The Notorious Bettie Page") and the tribute you wrote. I have yet to see the movie, but have always enjoyed her iconic imagery.

I want to clear up the fact that I never did visit the Ackermansion (or the Acker-mini-mansion), but that it was a big wish of mine that I only got close to achieving.

I recently found out that Toronto won't be hosting the Paradise Comic con this year because of sched-

uling conflicts. To bad. We had a good time last year and I was thinking of doing it again. But I will be seeing you at Anticipation this year. Can't wait for that one.

***Same here. - JaB***

One suggestion for the zine. Could you put a some sort of a separator between all the feedback posts? I sometimes find it hard to see where one ends and the other begins. Either a small graphic paragraph separator, or a line or something along those lines.

***That's why I ask for fillos. I have a separator for now. - JaB***

Ciao

Dario

===

Jeffrey Allan Boman  
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Montreal, QC H4V 2Y9  
CANADA  
theoriginaluniverse@gmail.com

June 28, 2009

Hi TOU gang!

My campaigning for votes has gone into Facebook, my Wetpaint site, my Livejournal, Plurks, Tweets, a Tumblr site and bulletins on Comicspace. I registered a domain name and will work on a Website once this zine and the Special are done (most likely before the special now). These will be it until after Anticipation. I hope I have good news.

Front cover: When I first saw 'Legion' as the filename I thought of the Legion of Superheroes. I

have a one-track mind I guess. :D / The only character that I couldn't recognize was the upside down one. Who is that supposed to be?

Hey Kids: Letters!

Lloyd: I gaffed with my EeePC months ago trying to install Eeebuntu (Ubuntu for the Eee) directly. That works on models with larger internal hard drives, but not this one. Until I configured an SD card for it in April I had to run the OS off a USB key. Yes, I'm a gearhead so I understand all these terms. :) / Place Bonaventure is near (but below) Place Ville Marie, home of the Jazz Fest -my favorite time of the summer in town. / Re: the panels at Con\*Cept... sadly the one I was most looking forward to - the zine panel - was the one I zoned out in, leaving you and Keith Brathwaite talking with me dozing between you. Hope I didn't snore! In any event, I'm taking steps to make sure that won't happen at Anticipation again.

Dario: I haven't read "Needle". I'll have to ask you what's similar at Anticipation. "Heroes" came after my idea, BTW. / I bought a 2nd-hand copy of the second Hulk movie as I've bought every supers DVD except for Rise of the Silver Surfer (fortunately). My review will be next issue -- hopefully a better opinion than yours!

Greg: I'm hoping that by the one in September I'll be able to promote the zine as an award winner... same with Con\*Cept in October and Expozine in November!

Matthew: I'm up to 19 fans on our Facebook Page. Hopefully the link on my upcoming Website will bring us more -- and a few more members too, of course. / If the Paradise Con becomes a Wizard World as I mention earlier, I'll have a lot of panels to mention in the future. / Re: Countdown... some of the results are being used. The Jesse James Trickster is dead and replaces. The Martian Manhunter will

indeed return, but as a Black Lantern; undead. /  
Onto your issue 7 comments now!

Re: the problem tenant... he's still here, but he was made to give up his dog. I feel bad for Kia (the dog) because it may have been put down. The poor dog didn't deserve such a sad life. / I'll be getting the final issue of Legion of Three Worlds in a few days, but I'm already hearing about it. One negative: the book was very often late.

Read you all next issue,

Jeff

===

This wraps up the LOCs for issue 9 and the issue itself, a few days before Worldcon. Hope we have good news for issue 10, and that I have the Special out by then.

JaB

#### Zines in Trade

A majority of these are science fiction-related, but there is a good exception!:

The Zine Dump #22: Guy H. Lillian III ed. ghliii@yahoo.com . Guy Lillian III is the most prolific zinester I know, has a deserved Hogo 2009 nomination, and as I learned has a big part in comicbook fandom too. This is a zine review title. In fact it led me to my first zine in 2005 (The Knarley Knews. I'm still with it) and it helped me to find one of the zines I review here. It has no letter column, but it doesn't need one.

Challenger #29. Guy H. Lillian III ed. ghliii@yahoo.com. \$8 sample3. This zine is usually online, and I can understand why: with covers, this Winter 2008-2009 issue is 101 pages! Mailing costs

## Next Issue

**This issue was rushed because of my PC crash. Next zine - our first in double digits! - will include (I hope):**

- **chapter 5 of Avatar: Rebirth;**
- **future interviews with comic professionals;**
- **as I mentioned in e-mail, contributions by fellow members;**
- **letters;**
- **news on the Aurora Awards.**

**See you in a few months.**

for all would be enormous. The publishing schedule is irregular - understandably.

Each issue is based on a theme, and most of it is written by others. The theme this issue, surprising for SF fandom, is sports. It's not enough to get me interested in them, but the articles are good. Both Mike Resnick and Gregory Benford are members, which is neat. There's a great LOC section, with of course Lloyd in in. He is our generation's T.M. Maple.

WARP #70 & 71. Cathy Palmer-Lister ed. cathypl@sympatico.ca . This is the clubzine for MONSFFA, the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (I'm not a member). The last time I saw it was around issue 5 with an interview with Todd McFarlane. That interview was amateurish; these issues were not. I was very impressed by the production values, and the articles are far better quality. A LOC section including Lloyd; he was Fan

## ***TODO LIST FOR 2009***

- Anticipation (it's here!)
- Con\*Cept 2009
- Finish the zine Website
- Finish my Mutants and Masterminds updates
- Kindredspacde

## ***TODO SOMEDAY***

- Toronto Comic Con
- San Diego Comic Con

### **Trades (Continued)**

GoH at Con\*Cept here in the nineties.

Comic Effect 45 & 47. Jim Kingsman ed. jkomeff@aol.com . \$3.50 sample. I found this in The Zine Dump, so far the only other comicbook-related zine I've found. A very slick digest with scholarly articles about our hobby. Issue 45 is about Superman and Superboy comics. 47 is a tribute to Julie Schwartz Greatest hits chosen by many luminaries like Tony Isabella and Roy Thomas... and a lettercol regular named Guy Lillian III! This must have been before my time.

Unfortunately no LOC section; for a 52-page zine that's understandable.

Junk DNA Fiction: <http://junkdnafiction.tumblr.com> This is dark SF fiction. NC-17 stuff. If you're at all sensitive this isn't for you!

*You have \_\_\_ issue(s) left for The Usual. Then you're off the mailing list. Please avoid that sad fact.*

*If you're a subscriber you have \_\_\_ issue(s) left of that.*