



Orion

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE OF TIME AND SPACE

ISSUE #3 • AUGUST 2005

**ORION'S FIRST
NEW ISSUE IN
22 YEARS!**

FEATURING:

**CANADIANA:
THE NEW SPIRIT OF CANADA**

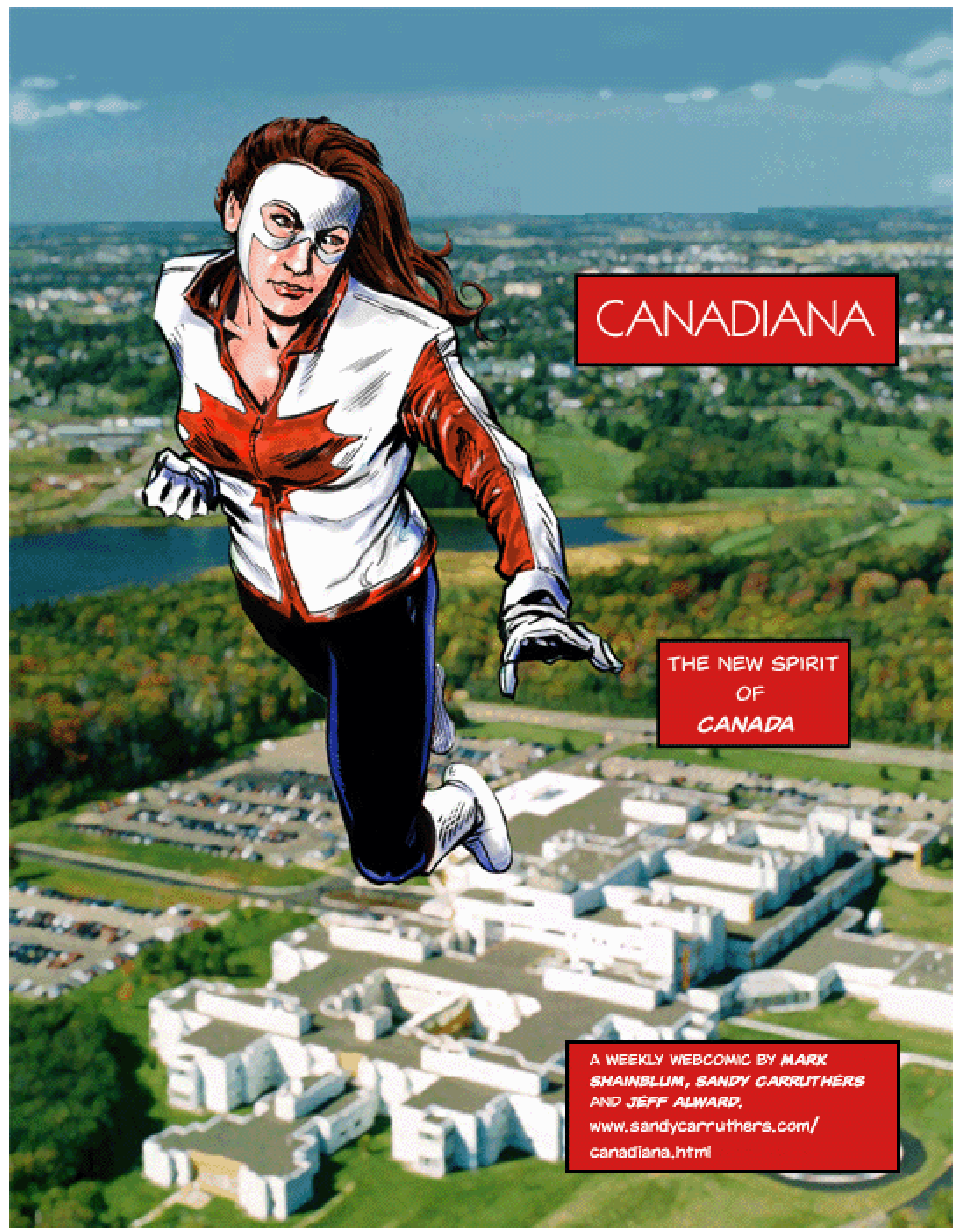
By Mark Shainblum, Sandy Carruthers and Jeff Alward

TECHNO-SQUAD

By Mark Shainblum and Gabriel Morrissette

**MEDIAWATCH!
MURPHY'S LAWYER!**

And much more!



CANADIANA

THE NEW SPIRIT
OF
CANADA

A WEEKLY WEBCOMIC BY MARK SHAINBLUM, SANDY CARRUTHERS AND JEFF ALWARD.
www.sandycarruthers.com/canadiana.html

MURPHY'S LAWYER

MARK SHAINBLUM'S LITTLE PIECE OF MIND

"The Scottish Parliament, which adjourned on 25 March 1707, is hereby reconvened."

- Dr. Winnie Ewing, Edinburgh
May 12, 1999

So where were we?

Oh yeah, we were in 1983. I was 20 years old and still typing on my brand-new Olivetti electronic typewriter, the wonder of the age.



(Unfortunately, the wonder of the age soon developed a glitch which turned it into an Enigma code machine. I'd type in English and it would output Swahili, but that's another story.)

By then I'd produced two issues of my fanzine *Orion: The Canadian Magazine of Time and Space* (a name only an 18-year-old could come up with!) The first issue came out in early 1981 and featured an interview with – and two-colour cover by – Captain Canuck creator Richard Comely. Other features included the parody strip *Captain Chinook* by Jean-Claude St. Aubin and the usual fanzine assortment of reviews, semi-pro fiction and fan art. The second issue didn't come out till early 1983, and featured a full-colour *Teen Titans* cover by Montreal comic artist Geof Isherwood, an interview with Titans creator Marv Wolfman, another interview with the brilliant Canadian comic artist Gene Day, a short story by the well-known SF author Lesley Choyce and, last but not least, Gabriel Morrissette's first published comic art! The comics and SF landscape in Canada was so barren in those days that, almost by default, *Orion* became a significant player in the field, and I started receiving submissions from professional SF writers and comic artists. Some

of my closest friendships and professional relationships, including my 20-plus years of collaboration with Gabriel, began in the *Orion* days.

Unfortunately, *Orion* was also cursed. Seriously! The first issue – cover screaming "**Captain Canuck: The Triumphant Return of the Canadian Hero!**" – was released on the same day that *Captain Canuck*'s publisher went belly-up. Far worse, in 1983, a mere day or two before *Orion* #2 was ready to go to press, I received word that Gene Day had died suddenly, at the age of 36, of an aneurysm caused by a blood clot. I was saddened by Gene's untimely passing, and more than a little freaked out. With my eyes on the comic book business, I let *Orion* slip to the sidelines.



Now, however, after years of talking about it, and talking about it some more, and dithering, and more talking about it, I have finally bitten the rubber bullet and joined *Comicopia*, and I

decided this would be a great opportunity to ditch the curse and bring *Orion* back. Why now, after all this time, and why in *Comicopia*? Well, I'm extremely proud of Mike and the rest of you for devoting yourselves to an APA for a full decade and a half. That's amazing! In a world where the bottom line increasingly seems to dictate everything, people dedicating themselves to the expression of pure creativity is little short of heroic, and I'd like to be a part of it. Moreover, even in these blog day afternoons, you're still making the effort to produce *Comicopia* on paper. I love the web, but online content

sometimes seems to lack – not just the *permanence* of print, but even the basic *reality* of print. Over the last two years I published short stories in a webzine and in a print anthology. Even though they were both paying markets, and even though the webzine actually paid more than the anthology, the story in the anthology somehow felt more real, more *published*.

Anyhow, enough of that. For those who don't



Company first saw the light of day. More recently, I've been writing the regular webcomic

know me, Gabriel and I have been collaborating on comics together since the early 1980's, on projects like *Northguard*, *The Infinite Man*, *Gaijin* and *Angloman*, among other things. I'm also a science fiction writer and journalist, and the once and future publisher of Matrix Comics, where *Northguard* and

Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada with PEI comic artist Sandy Carruthers, who created the strip, and his protégé Jeff Alward. I know that Mike Aragona has been previewing *Canadiana* for you guys, and that will continue in *Orion*, more or less from where Mike left off.

Also in this issue is *Techno-Squad*, a short Shainblum/Morrisette comic strip collaboration you've probably never seen, unless you read high-school career guidance books. It was created for *Look Ahead, Get Ahead: Growing Career Opportunities for Technicians and Technologists*, a book I edited while working at les éditions Ma Carrière.

So *Orion* returns from fanzine limbo after 22 years in *Comicopia's* 15th anniversary issue. Very appropriate, don't you think?

Thanks for having me aboard! It's going to be a blast!

Mark Shainblum
Montreal, Summer 2005



Orion

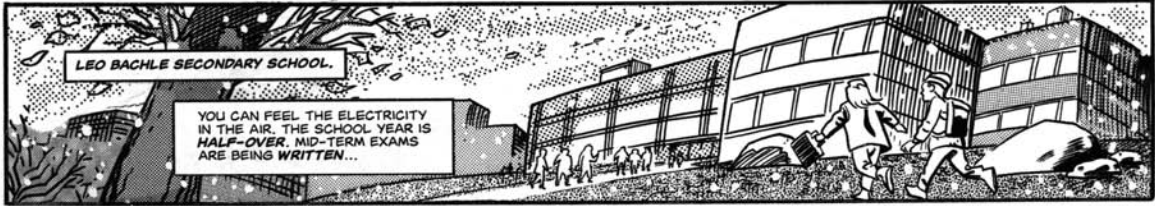
THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE OF TIME AND SPACE

ISSUE #3 • AUGUST 2005 • FOUNDED 1981 • MARK SHAINBLUM, EDITOR

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Matrix Comics • 5150 Queen Mary Road, Box 42521 • Montreal • Quebec • Canada H3W 3H7
Tel.: (514) 484-6076 • mark@matrixcomics.com • www.matrixcomics.com and ww.northguard.com/mbs.



LEO BACHLE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

YOU CAN FEEL THE ELECTRICITY IN THE AIR. THE SCHOOL YEAR IS HALF-OVER. MID-TERM EXAMS ARE BEING WRITTEN...



...PLANS FOR THE FUTURE ARE BEING MADE...

HEY, MARIA! HEY, ERIC! YOU LOOK WAY TOO SERIOUS.

YOU DIDN'T FAIL YOUR EXAMS?



NO WAY, MIKE! ACED 'EM ALL! I AM NOW ALMOST OFFICIALLY DONE WITH HIGH SCHOOL!



NOW WE JUST NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT.

AHH, THE OLD, "WHAT DO I DO WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE?" CONUNDRUM.

YUP. I'M JUST NOT SURE WHAT I WANT. I THINK I'D LIKE TO BE IN THE SCIENCES SOMEWHERE, BUT IN WHAT?



WELL, IT'S COMPUTERS FOR ME! I WANT TO BE OUT THERE HITTING THE KEYS RIGHT NOW!

I'VE ALREADY WRITTEN TONS OF SOFTWARE CODE!

MUST BE NICE TO HAVE SUCH A CLEAR PATH AHEAD OF YOU.



I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I WANT, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO MOONLIGHT AS A BANK ROBBER TO AFFORD THE TUITION!



HOPE WE'RE NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING...

JUST THE DESPERATE MEWLINGS OF ADOLESCENT CAREER ANGST!



OOO! AAAH! OW! BIG WORDS... BRAIN HURT.

HA! YOU DON'T FOOL ME WITH THAT DUMB JOCK ACT FOR TEN SECONDS, JEREMY-BOY!



HEY JACKIE! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN LATELY?

I TOOK SOME TIME OFF TO RESEARCH COLLEGES AND STUFF. ALL THE APPLICATION DEADLINES ARE COMING UP.

FUNNY, WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT THAT...



THEN YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT I'VE BOOKED US ALL IN A CAREER COUNSELLING SESSION WITH MS. DUNCAN.

WHAT?!

WHO'S MS. DUNCAN?



YOU KNOW, SHE'S THE TEACHER-COUNSELLOR.

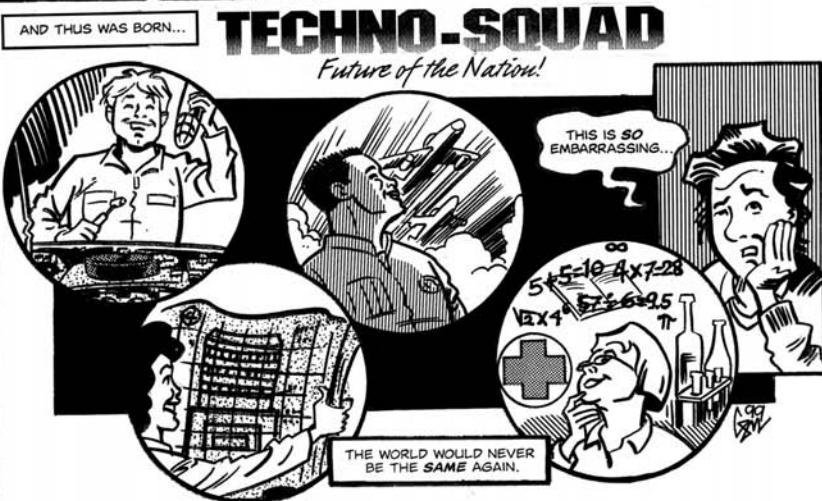
SHE THINKS IF WE MEET AS A GROUP, WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER WITH OUR FUTURE EDUCATION PLANS.

HOW VERY SWEET. COUNT ME OUT. I HATE THAT TOUCHY-FEELY GROUP STUFF.

Story: Mark Shainblum Art: Gabriel Morrissette Lettering: Jeff LeBlanc







MEDIAWATCH

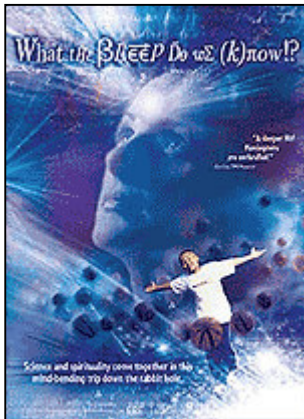
REVIEWS AND OVERVIEWS OF THIS AND THAT

What the Bleep Do We (K)now!?

DVD, 2004, 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

Directed by William Arntz, Betsy Chasse and Mark Vicente

It's hard to define *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* It's a wild and fascinating hybrid of documentary, drama (starring Marlee Matlin), comedy and 3D animated film, without being any of the above for very long. That's appropriate, in a way, because it's a deep, and deeply entertaining exploration of the mysterious world of quantum physics, where knowing less as



you learn more is a way of life. (Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, anyone?) If you can imagine one of those old *ABC After School Specials* as taught by Gandhi and Stephen Hawking, that's sort of what this film is like. People interested in SF, comics, spirituality and becoming more than human will find it fascinating.



Word Wars: Trials and Tribulations on the Scrabble Game Circuit

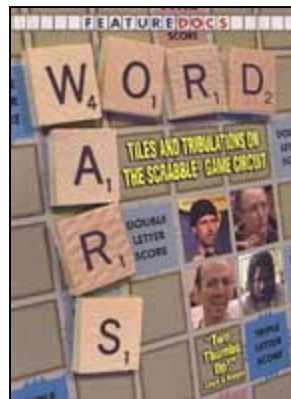
DVD, 2005, Anchor Bay Entertainment

Directed by: Eric Chaikin and Julian Petrillo

Okay, this isn't our world and the fandoms we know. This is a world inhabited by Scrabble fanatics so fanatical that they play friendly \$1000 matches on their own time, and spend

most of their lives learning to spell words like "Qat," "Qaid," and "Qintar." (Yes, those are real words. Challenge at your peril.)

That said, Scrabble fandom is still a fandom – even if you won't find "fandom" in the official Scrabble dictionary -- and its denizens are surprisingly recognizable. *Word Wars* follows the trials and tribulations of four engagingly weird and intense wannabe Scrabble champions in the months leading up to the National Scrabble Championships in... wait for it... San Diego! It tells a hell of a story through the eyes of four truly unforgettable Scrabble acolytes.



I, F, Y, O, U, W, A, N, T, T, O,
G, E, T, A, S, E, N, S, E, O, F,
W, H, A, T, O, U, R, F, A, N, D, O, M,
L, O, O, K, S, L, I, K, E, T, O,
T, H, E, O, U, T, S, I, D, E,
W, O, R, L, D, C, H, E, C, K, O, U, T,
W, O, R, D, W, A, R, S, I, T, 'S,
A, T, R, U, L, Y,
I, L, L, U, M, I, N, A, T, I, N, G,
E, X, P, E, R, I, E, N, C, E.





I have to admit, when Sandy Carruthers approached me with his concept for *Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada* – a new Canadian



superheroine, I was dubious. Sandy and I had already worked together on the daily comic strip version of Richard Comely's *Captain Canuck*, and later collaborated on our own Elseworlds-type one-shot called *The New Original Captain Canuck: Utopia Moments*. In my immediate past was *Northguard*, *Angloman* and his Canadian-politics inspired supporting cast including *Canada!Man*. You can see why I'd be worried about getting typecast.

However, Sandy's concepts were so interesting, and his vision of the character so compelling, that I just couldn't resist his invitation to write the series. After all, it's not like trying to write *Spider-Man* or *The Avengers*, with 40 years of continuity hanging from your neck like an adamantium albatross. Sandy sketched out a very basic outline of the character and her history and let me run with the rest. Frankly, I had my doubts about my own resolve and ability to stick to a non-profit webcomic on an

ongoing basis, but here we are, over a year later and 34 episodes in, and we're still going strong.



Mike's been previewing *Canadiana* in his own section, so I've picked up more or less where he left off, with page 24 and the story sequence Sandy calls "The Thomson Rift".

If you're having trouble picking up the plot threads, remember, the whole series is online in living colour at

www.sandycarruthers.com/canadiana



Canadiana fan art by Sarah Loubiri



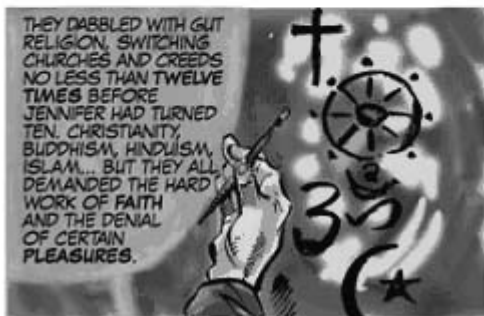
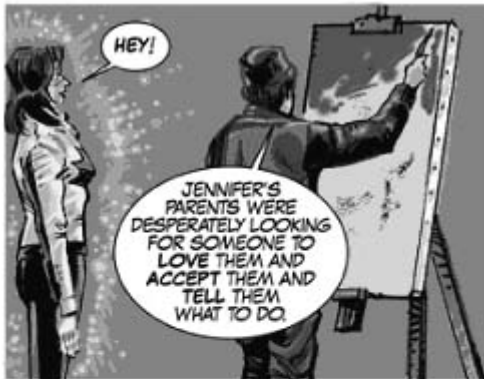
Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 24 • "The Thomson Rift"
Writer: Mark Shainblum • Artists: Sandy Carruthers and Jeff Alward



NEXT: WHAT ELSE? THE TERRIFYING GRAND MYSTERY OF IT ALL!



Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 26 • "The Thomson Rift"



Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 27 • "The Thomson Rift"



Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 28 • "The Thomson Rift"



go, pretty child, and bear this flower
unto thy little saviour;
and tell him, by that bud now blown,
he is the rose of sharon known.

-robert herrick (1591-1674)

NEXT: REVERBERATIONS!



OKAY, I'VE HAD MY SAY, MISS. THAT'S ALL.



I'M SORRY THAT...

YOU SON OF A...



SHOULD'VE SEEN THAT COMING, I SUPPOSE. I JUST WASN'T BROUGHT UP TO EXPECT A SUCKER PUNCH FROM A WOMAN.



SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP ABOUT HOW THINGS WERE IN YOUR GODDAMNED TIME! I DON'T LIVE IN YOUR TIME! I LIVE IN MINE! I LIVE....



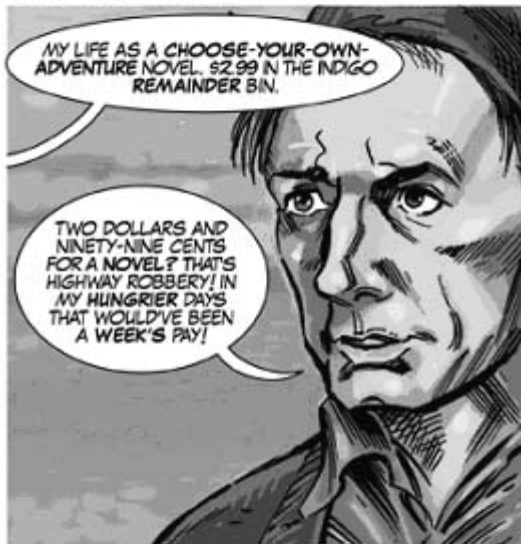
I... LIVE....



NEXT: TRUTH, CONSEQUENCES, AND ALL THAT JAZZ.



Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 31 • "The Thomson Rift"





Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 33 • "The Thomson Rift"



Canadiana: The New Spirit of Canada • Page 33 • "The Thomson Rift"

COMICOPEDIA

MARK SHAINBLUM'S MAILING COMMENTS

Okay, this is my first time doing this, so please forgive me if I break some plates and spill Dr. Pepper on the white sofa.

Though I've known some of you for many years, this can't help but feel a little like the new kid in a different high school in a strange town in a new country, so I'll keep my comments somewhat brief and general until I get the lay of the land.

Cover

Nice concept, Dan. It reminds me of an ad that I co-published with Comico back in the old Matrix Comics days, when we were both publishing Bernie Mireault. The layout was essentially the same, with Bernie's The Jam character on the top of the playing card, and Grendel (which he was illustrating for Comico) on the bottom. Or was it the other way around? Can't remember.

At first I couldn't figure out why you were paralleling Green Lantern and Blue Beetle, characters with very little in common, but then... duh!... Blue Beetle just kicked off this mortal coil, while Green Lantern has returned from the dead.

(Has anyone given any thought to what religion must be like in the DC and Marvel universes? People die and are resurrected on almost a daily basis! New religions must spring up constantly!)



The Sore Thumb Strikes

Welcome back, Greg, I can't tell you how much I missed you! (Mainly because I wasn't here. But that doesn't mean I'm not glad to see you back!)

Fun comic strip, even if I'm not familiar with your characters. Do I detect a slight Vaughn Bodé influence?



Millennium Grafix

Excellent work, Chuck. Really like your magazine-like graphic design. You'll note that I'm trying my best to emulate you, though I'm nowhere near the graphic artist you are.



FloodGates of the Mind

Oh my God, Mike! When do you have time to eat, sleep, parent and give people your word@? I've had the current issue of Comico in-hand for over two weeks now, and I still haven't been able to read everything you've written!

The Shuster Awards! Cool! I *knew* you were the man for the job. Thanks for filling us in on all the background.

The *Mysterious Minute-Men* is really funny ("Sons and Daughters of Die T. Cola??" Love it!) I really should read it from the beginning before I offer any additional comments, though.



The Old Detective's Watering Hole

Hey, Jeff, it's really wonderful to finally read your writings! Should have done this much sooner.

I don't know exactly what "tragedy" in your life the others were referring to, but I'm very sorry to hear about it, whatever it is. I won't say anything treacly and Hallmarky, but I know you haven't had the easiest ride, and you deserve better.

On that note, I was very upset to hear about the passing of Kate Worley. I was a big fan of *Omaha* in the day, and if I remember correctly, both Kate and Reed were in a terrible car accident some years ago too. Sigh.



A Ramble Through the Woods

Great cover art, Alan. Your style reminds me quite a bit of R.G. Taylor, artist of the *Wordsmith* and *Silencers* comics. And welcome to the world of freelancing! I've balanced you out in the great cosmic scheme of things by recently returning to full-time employment at McGill University. We'll swap again at some point, I'm sure!

Really enjoyed your section on Beatles comics, too! Do you also remember that bizarre Beatles TV cartoon from the mid-60's?



I was about four or five years old at the time, and it's my only firsthand memory of the Fab Four. I'm not sure I was even aware that they were real people until much later. (I'm told that I was a fanatical *Monkees* fan, however, though I have no memory of it. Again, the distinction between Monkees, Beatles, Byrds and Banana Splits was very vague to a pre-schooler.

The same company that produced the Beatles cartoon also did a Jackson Five cartoon a couple of years later. Remember this?



Brrrrrr. Pretty eerie now, eh?



The Endless Struggle

Jay, welcomes to you, as well. Cool art! Good writing. What more can I say? More soon!



ComicsPOV

Wow! What ambition! Good, useful reviews (especially as I get back into reading comics on a more regular basis), nice design... Excellent stuff!



Dog Savage

Who *is* this guy? And how dare he mock our Prime Minister?! I would never do such a seditious thing! Horrible! Just horrible! ☺

