

By the WAY #16

by W. Andrew York
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We're back with the second issue of 2008. Spring is springing here in Texas and the political ads are filling the airwaves - Obama has had the most, with Clinton far behind, who is closely followed by Ron Paul. I recall only a couple for Huckabee and none for McCain. This is the most presidential advertising I can remember for any primary that I can remember. The level for local and state-wide races is about the same as in years before.

Also, this week was the big debate between Hillary and Barack that took place about 10 blocks north of where I work. The Clintons have had a number of appearances around central Texas and Friday Obama is having a large rally just south of the capital building that is to shut down a big area in central Austin. Early voting started this week to apparent record turnouts. I'll vote next week as there is still one race (to replace a retiring member of the House) I'm looking into. We'll see what happens on March 4!

As for the column, I'm still mulling over the overhaul. Hopefully some progress by next time.

Commentary

I recently was watching Boston Legal and one of the cases the attorneys accepted was to determine the responsibility for the death of a high school student. She had died in a traffic accident caused by fatigue. The mother decides to sue the school system as the primary responsible party for the death. Some of the reasons to place the responsibility on the school included offering too many advanced placement classes, providing and encouraging students to participate in extra curricular activities and giving too much homework. Along with that, the argument was placed that the culture in the school encouraged success and achievement by setting high goals and advising students of key steps to enhance their ability to get into high profile universities while not taking direct action to counter peer and social competition from other students.

Since watching the episode, I've been mulling over a few things. First off, schools should be encouraging students to achieve, assisting in setting high (but reasonable) goals for them and preparing them for their next step, be it college, university or moving directly into the workforce. To do this, they should provide a wide variety of experiences, educational opportunities and activities to allow their students to learn, explore their potential and grow into adults. On the other hand, not provide the choices is to stifle the students who relish and flourish with those opportunities - and, sadly, many do not effectively do so.

Secondly, the parent's role in this situation hasn't been fully represented. At one point, she does state that she had some responsibility and acknowledged that she should have foreseen the consequences of her child's actions. However, it is implied that the mother was not very active in her daughter's life. Further, the enrollment in the AP classes and participation in numerous activities was the daughter's choice and supported by the mother, either by direct concurrence or indirectly by failure to review and limit her child's decisions.

Lastly, the mindset in America today of "something bad happened to me, therefore someone else is responsible and should compensate me" is strongly presented. In these situations, the question is the real, not perceived, culpability of the party being sued and the level of personal responsibility of the person initiating the suit. All too often, lawsuits like these are primarily aimed at the "deep pockets" rather than the truly responsible party, if any, so that the person initiating the suit has the best chance to get some money.

This storyline is part of a multiple episode arc. In this, the last episode prior to the Writers' Strike, they introduced the case and had an initial hearing on whether there were ground to sue. The attorneys portrayed on Boston Legal won that round with the judge ruling that there was enough evidence to go to trial. I hope that the storyline eventually exonerates the school system and, instead, finds that parents should fulfill their, well, parental role and be fully involved with their children's lives.

LOCs - none received this time, but are always enjoyed.

Review: The Red 5 Comic line has consistently impressed me since it came to my attention a few months back. So much so, that at the comic shop, I've a standing weekly pull for anything put out by them. From what I've seen, they run limited series with top quality writing and artwork. The folks at the comics store have said that they are a small print publisher that concentrates on presenting a limited number of titles to concentrate on the best quality stories and illustrations.

The comics are affordable, and a bit cheaper, than the average comic, at \$2.95 each. On the downside, from my observations, the issues aren't necessarily put out on a strict schedule. However, that doesn't bother me if it helps maintain the quality of the comic. One additional bonus, the covers tend more towards card stock and the interior pages are a bit heavier than the standard "comic" paper.

Some of the titles currently out:

Atomic Robo (on issue 5 of 6) - some of the best, and witty, scripting I've enjoyed in comics. Centered on the adventures of a robot created by Tesla, it leads a team that is billed as the best group to deal with any extreme events or problems around the world.

Midnight (on issue 2 of ?) - Just picked this one up and haven't read it yet (though, as soon as I get *BTW* done, it is first on my list). It follows the lives of a husband (Midnight) and wife (Kningtingale) crime-fighting team.

Abyss (on issue 3 of 4) - a son finds out his dad is the greatest super-villain in the world. How does he react to his father's latest evil plot?

Afterburn (on issue 1 of 4) - A solar flare blasts half the world, all but depopulating Asia and Europe with the remaining humans suffering radiation damage. The comic follows the adventures of an American who hires out to do salvage and recovery work in the damaged side of the planet.

Look 'em up!

Movie Watch: U2 3D (A-), There Will Be Blood (A)

Observation: The City of Austin recently did a study on red light traffic cameras. It is likely their use will be approved in the near future. It is troubling to me that authority to fine for violations of the law is being outsourced to the private sector (yes, I know that they are called "civil" actions, not criminal). Policing powers are given to the state, not corporations or companies.

Playlist for this issue: TV - Kyle XY (First Cut is the Deepest), Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles (Dungeons & Dragons), Jamie at Home (Rhubarb); Music - August Rush soundtrack, Trish Murphy self-titled CD

===== **GAME SECTION** =====

On *TAP*:

A new "Everyone Plays" game (Join in Then - Open to Anyone at Any Time!)
Let me know what else you're interested in seeing here.....(sorry, we're out of Moulson)

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SCATTERGORIES! RIP

For those of you who commented on the Scattergories! commentary last time, I appreciate it. It wasn't until I set down to do the subzine that I made up my mind to drop the game. So, in my typical fashion, I didn't have anything ready to immediately replace it. So, any suggestions or preferences?

Right now, I'm not strongly considering a BPD game, it might lead to BPD overload with Doug's game along with the BPO version. However, if there is demand, I might come up with a themed version to differentiate from the games in *Eternal Sunshine*. There are a couple of others that I've tossed around, Sea of Despair is one (who is the last person in the lifeboat?) or Scrabble with a few others whose names escape me at the moment.

Submit Email entries and comments to wandrew88 of gmail.com or

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Deadline is: March 22, 2008 at high noon Central Time