

Comic books swing into UNC, U.S. pop culture

BY BRIAN MILLIKIN
SENIOR WRITER

They're invading movie theaters with web slingers, X-heroes and an unjolly green giant. They're attacking televisions with Saturday cartoons and hit series like "Smallville."

And now they're swinging into the library with a superhero's salvo. Comic books are back in a big way, if they were ever gone, at UNC's Rare Book Collection in Wilson Library. On July 16, the library received some 26,000 comics weighing more than two tons from local alumnus Dan Breen.

The library has built toward a strong pop culture presence. "But I've been concerned for a number of years that the one literary format we've been missing is comic books," said Charles McNamara, curator of the Rare Book Collection. "For quite a few years I've been hoping someone would come forward with a gift, and when Mr. Breen did I was quite excited."

The collection's library relies almost entirely on gifts, and Breen's is a serious gift, one of the largest donations the library ever has received. Breen proposed the donation, which contains comics and publicity art dating from 1980, in April. Breen devoted 10 weeks to preparing it all, a task he describes as daunting but necessary to close the book on his collecting career.

"I had done it for close to 20 years. I'm pushing 60, and if I was going to have an opportunity it was time now to put it aside and focus on other things," he said. "I'm pushing that time of life when accumulating things is less attractive than giving them away; hence the 26,000 comics to UNC."

Breen's ties to UNC are made of steel. He moved from Manhattan to Chapel Hill in 1975 for graduate school, after which he worked at the Rare Book Collection for a number of years. He even set up a Department of English scholarship in his parents' name.

After leaving the University, he moved a few hundred yards and took over Rosemary Street's Second Foundation Bookstore, the comic book shop he owned for 20 years until last November.



A small number of the 26,000 new comic books are displayed in Wilson Library. UNC alumnus Dan Breen made the large donation in July.

The comic book industry has been on a roller coaster in that time, having declined for decades and hitting bottom when an early-'90s boom crippled stores. Investors began buying comics like stocks, devaluing them in the process. Stores closed, comic makers went bankrupt; it all nearly capsized.

But now a resurgence has occurred, and comics are gaining in popularity, if in relatively minor movements. "It still is not anything like it was 10 years ago," Breen said. "Unit sales figures are still something like 50 percent of what they were in the early '90s, and that pales in comparison to their popularity during the war years, 1935 to '55, when million-selling issues were commonplace if not unusual."

It's unclear if the new popularity is tied to recent major films or something else. "The times are pretty odd; a lot of people are losing jobs," said Anne Allison, chairwoman of Duke University's Department of Cultural Anthropology. "Maybe when things are so uneven in everyday life, maybe that's when people crave these superheroes who are larger than life."

The books are becoming popular with academics as well, and it's

not just at UNC. Edwin and Terry Murray, lifelong collectors and Duke alumni, recently donated an even larger collection of 50,000 books to their alma mater, though the material mostly predates Breen's. McNamara predicted that the rival collections will complement one another nicely.

The Murray brothers' collection will be available for public use this fall, while the Breen collection will wait for what McNamara said could be a year or two. The books must be properly preserved, then extensively catalogued, but McNamara is taking great care.

"I think there's a strong scholarly interest in comics," McNamara said. "They tell us about contemporary American culture and publications, and culturally, the work of the artist is important; there's great interest in that."

"Things we think of as being common as dirt turn out not to be 20 or 30 years down the road," Breen said of comic books' enduring value. "Whatever anyone might think of them, characters like Superman and Batman are icons, recognized all over the world."

Contact the A&E Editor at artskdesk@unc.edu.

Police enforce substance laws

Peers might assure you that it's OK to obtain alcohol while underage — using a fake ID or that of a friend — because it is unlikely that you will be caught and that even if you are caught, the punishment is merely a slap on the wrist. Friends sometimes pass on tales of pot parties in residence halls and imply that enforcement of laws against illegal drugs is virtually nonexistent. However, that is no longer true.

Police officers are required to make an arrest when they observe a misdemeanor. Bartenders and bouncers are required to confiscate any fake IDs and turn them over to law enforcement.

So on any typical party night in Chapel Hill, if you are strolling with a beer in hand or smoking pot or trying to get into a bar with a fake ID or simply sitting in your residence hall room in possession of beer or pot, you can and will be arrested. Upon being convicted of many alcohol-related offenses, you will lose your driver's license for at least one year.



DOROTHY BERNHOLZ
STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES

Students often are permitted to avoid prosecution either by taking an alcohol education course offered by Student Health Services or by performing community service. However, you will have an arrest record and have the honor of making the crime report published in The Daily Tar Heel.

University police are searching more residence hall rooms for drugs and issuing more citations for possession of marijuana. Students found guilty of drug violations are placed on drug probation and required to attend a substance abuse program. More importantly, violations become part of students' transcripts until they finish a probationary period;

they remain part of students' disciplinary files for 10 years.

Upon a report to University police, an officer will visit a residence hall room and request permission to enter. Often, if drugs are found in the room, all students present are charged with possession even though they might not have purchased or used the drugs. Students have the right not to give permission or consent to a search.

Student Legal Services will provide legal advice at no additional cost to students who have paid an activity fee. While we don't provide in-court representation in criminal cases, our three licensed attorneys assist students in evaluating the seriousness of charges and, where appropriate, advise students on how to seek deferred prosecution and community service.

To find out more about the service, check out <http://www.unc.edu/student/orgs/sls> or come to Union 222.

Contact Dorothy Bernholz at bernholz@email.unc.edu.

Family Weekend 2003

October 3 - 5, 2003

Attention All Students... Don't miss the fun!
Invite your family to capture the feeling of Carolina!

You have been talking about life at Carolina... now it's time for your family to join in and capture the feeling! Invite them for an action-packed Family Weekend 2003. They can experience life the Tar Heel way with good food, football, field hockey, soccer, variety shows and musicals, historic walks and fun runs, art exhibits and family visits & lots more. This is a weekend to wander, explore, discuss, learn, laugh, reminisce, relax and unwind Carolina style.

Some lucky mom or dad will win a free in-state semester's tuition for their student at the Carolina Parents Association Annual Meeting, to be held Saturday, October 4th at 9:30am.

Participants must register online at Parents Office website at <http://parents.unc.edu>. Continue to check the website for further information and updates. Parents and students may contact the Parents Office with further questions at parents@unc.edu or by phone, 919-962-8304.

Something for Everyone!

- UNC vs. UVA football
- Field hockey, soccer
- Tar Heel BBQ
- Parent seminars
- UNC-Chapel Hill Show Choir
- Clef Hangers & Loreleis
- Company Carolina Theatre
- Family Brunch
- Student/sibling games

CAROLINA PARENTS OFFICE

Wave Futon
\$169
Compare at \$299

Venus Futon
\$199
Compare at \$399

All futons come with an 8" thick futon mattress.



Back to School

Tar Heel SALE!

FIRM \$59 MATTRESS FIRM
TWIN SET \$118
FULL SET \$168
QUEEN SET \$188
KING SET \$298
TWIN MATTRESS

COMFORT PLUSH \$119 MATTRESS FIRM
TWIN SET \$208
FULL SET \$308
QUEEN SET \$328
KING SET \$498
TWIN MATTRESS

SUPPORT PILLOWTOP \$189 MATTRESS FIRM
TWIN SET \$278
FULL SET \$378
QUEEN SET \$398
KING SET \$598
TWIN MATTRESS



Bring in this coupon to get a **FREE BODY PILLOW** with a set purchase of \$150 or more. Offer valid thru 09-01-03 while supplies last. (20"x54")

Store Hours: M-F 10-9, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6

- CHAPEL HILL DURHAM
5446 New Hope Commons Dr. (Next to Wal-Mart).....919-489-8440
- DURHAM
1515 North Pointe Dr. (Across from Costco).....919-220-1772
- CARY
2330 Walnut St. (Across from BJ's Warehouse).....919-233-7611
- GARNER
2564 Timber Dr. (Next to Home Depot).....919-779-9913
- RALEIGH-CAPITAL BLVD.
5260 Capital Blvd. (Next to Michael's).....919-787-9655
- RALEIGH-SPRING FOREST
910 Spring Forest Rd. So. (Next to Men's Warehouse).....919-873-0008
- RALEIGH-GLENWOOD
6812 Glenwood Ave. (Just South of Millbrook).....919-787-9655

MATTRESS FIRM

Sleep Tight Tonight