

PANELOLOGY

This Week: *Bloodstrike vs. Newmen*

Among various Image Comics' are two with very contrasting books, *Newmen* and *Bloodstrike*. Both offer the reader excellent art work, which is common with most Image comics, but the similarities stop there.

Newmen chronicles the adventures of a group of nu-gene positive teenagers banded together by a mentor by the name of Proctor. *Bloodstrike*, that being the "all-new, all-different" *Bloodstrike*, focuses on a one man killing machine who gets back up help from the Experts. Now that you've been brought up to speed I'll proceed to tear them apart for you.

While *X-Factor's*, sorry, *Newmen's* story sounds like a rip-off of a more popular comic, *Bloodstrike* is more original. It is also less confusing, as the *Newmen* saga likes to start stories in the middle and go back to the start, the whole time not making much sense.

Bloodstrike and his band of merry men (and women) offer the bloodthirsty something of interest as they hold little regard for sparing lives. When reading the two comics together this makes the *Newmen* look like major league wimps. In a sense, they are just that, since they don't want to harm the image of nu-genes around the world. Yawn. Blowing

the *&@% out of everything tends to make a comic more interesting, especially since the writers aren't really all that hot.

Despite the weak storylines, the dialog is solid. The panels are also relatively easy to follow, although *Bloodstrike* again has the edge. Few mistakes are made in the inking and other areas of production, so you aren't distracted from the story, when there actually is one you can follow.

The biggest complaint stems not from the comics themselves but from the thinking of Image Comics. To be able to follow one series you have to follow

them all, as cross-overs occur every two issues. This is, of course, an attempt to increase profits, but it makes it hard for new readers to become involved. Both titles lose out in this area.

Containing more differences than similarities, *Bloodstrike* and *Newmen* offer the reader a choice. My choice would clearly be *Bloodstrike* but I wouldn't place the burden of reading either on anyone who actually has a social life and not three hours a night free to spend figuring out a comic book.

-- Lorne Caborn

Book Reviews

Everyone Needs their Own Spot

Mary Engelbreit
(Andrews and McMeel)

This little book features adorable illustrations by Mary Engelbreit. Pulling the tabs creates new pictures, to delight of adults and children alike. While it is directed towards, the accompanying text is more appropriate for an older reader. As much as I like this book, the appeal is limited because of the ambiguous age group. It would be a great gift or stocking stuffer, for that person you don't know what else to buy.

-- Aldera Chisholm

Dinopix

By Teruhisa Tajima
(Chronicle Books)

A very interesting book. *Dinopix* is a collection of photographs depicting dinosaurs outside their natural habitats. Tajima specializes in digital design and photography and has fun placing dinosaurs in modern situations. Some of the more interesting locations include a Barosaurus in Edmonton, a Tyrannosaurus in San Francisco, and a Pentaceratops crossing a road.

Another interesting feature of this book is that there is a brief profile of each dinosaur pictured. Facts include height, weight, diet and scientific classification. This book is a great learning tool, providing factual information, as well as showing the sizes of dinosaurs relative to more modern images. The pictures are great. The only drawback of the book is its high price.

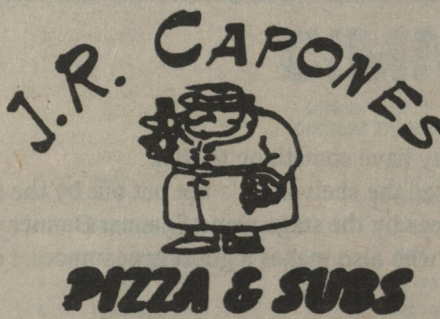
-- Yvonne MacKean

Something to do (when there is nothing to do)

Mary Engelbriet
(Andrews and McMeel)

This book features outlined versions of Mary Engelbreit's most popular illustrations. These can be coloured and transformed into posters, greeting cards and decorations. The book features a velcro closure so kids can keep their finished pages together in a portfolio. I am a firm believer in encouraging artistic talent in young children and colouring books like these are an excellent way to do that. The activities in this book are great entertainment for rainy days.

-- Aldrea Chisholm



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