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Inks by: BARBARA SCHULZ Pencils by: STEVE KURTH

COVER ART BY MARK STEGBAUER

MNCBA FallCon 2025, presented by the Minnesota Comic Book Association.



PO Box 11777 Saint Paul, MN 55111 www.mncba.org

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Welcome to MNCBA FALLCON 2025 by Eric Childs, MNCBA Secretary

From weekly newspaper comic strips, to sneaking into my older brother's room hoping to get a glimpse at their comic books, to Sunday mornings – oh, what a feat – the newspapers had comic strips in full color! My interest and curiosity for comics would continue to grow, seeking out comics everywhere I went, from grocery store magazine racks to convenience store newsstands. Later, onto perusing the spinney racks and comic boxes of local comic shops. For me, life doesn't get much better! Or so I thought... Page after page, panel to panel, savoring every line of dialogue, every action sequence. All that was needed for an amazing day of adventure was a comic book! I would imagine, I would dream. Who knew that the amazingly illustrated stories printed upon newsprint paper with brilliant ink would prove to become a lifelong love for me.

As my family moved, from Kansas City to Colorado, then the Twin Cities. Wherever we landed, I always kept an eye out for places that carried and sold comic books. Although comic books are viewed as entertainment, even an escape, comic books are also a way to connect with the world around you. I've made some lifelong friends around comics. Whether it's to celebrate the stories, to collect and trade comic books as a hobby, or to aspire to work in the industry of creating comic books.

After moving to the Twin Cities in 1991 I discovered and attended my first comic book convention... FallCon! A two-day event, at the historic Thunderbird Hotel in Bloomington, MN. Life for me just got a whole lot better! I continued to attend the then-MCBA conventions every year to date, over all its iterations to the now MNCBA, and eventually became more involved with the convention as a volunteer.

Comic books... What an amazing way to tell a story! We all enjoy them, more importantly we can convene and enjoy them together. MNCBA FallCon was the greatest discovery for me when I arrived in Minnesota. It's the one event that I connected with, felt welcome, and could converge with fellow comic book enthusiasts.

Who would've ever imagined such an awesome event could exist with so many comic book dealers under one roof. MNCBA FallCon is a place to find practically any comic book you could want, meet some of your favorite creators, discover new ones, and find some of the coolest original artwork and collectibles!

From riding my Kent BMX bike to a friend's house to read and trade comics to becoming a comic shop owner and volunteering with the MNCBA, I guess you might say I'm passionate about comic books. This is true. In my opinion comic books are the greatest and most dynamic creative medium on the planet. Engaging with and around its subject matter is where I feel most at home. For MNCBA FallCon 2025, I hope you feel welcome, get inspired, and discover new stories, and even make new friends. One thing is for certain, we'll make new memories, and together we will all write a new chapter in our comic book community history with the MNCBA.

As volunteer, Secretary, and always comic geek. I would like to extend the warmest welcome to everyone! Thank you so very much for attending the Minesota Comic Book Association's FallCon 2025!



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PANEL ROOM SCHEDULE 11 OCT

11:00AM TO 11:45AM

"The Graphic Novel: Then & Now" with Paul Fricke

What, exactly, is a graphic novel? Join us for this panel to learn from MCAD Comics Professor Paul Fricke about the genesis of the term; how it has come to be embraced by cartoonists, teachers, librarians, and publishers; and how it has changed the comics landscape from its beginnings to the present day.

12:00PM TO 12:45PM

"Spinning Plates: Life as a Freelancer" with Dave Wheeler

Dave Wheeler is a jack-of-all-trades in the comic and design industries now having worked across the board for the better part of two decades. Come have a conversation, ask questions and listen to stories about his many adventures and missteps on his journey to creating a successful career as a freelance professional.

1:00PM TO 1:45PM

"Finding Time for Creativity in a Busy World" with A L Raden

Whether you're juggling multiple jobs or projects, family needs, extracurriculars, or beyond, there's a lot of competing activities taking over our time. In this panel, multidisciplinary storyteller A L Raden (she/her) will lead a discussion on how to identify roadblocks that are getting in our way, along with ways to prioritize time and energy for creative pursuits that work with our needs, not against them.

2:00PM TO 2:45PM

"How (Not) to Make Webcomics: Lessons From 8 years of Doing it Wrong" with Nathan Lueth

From 2009-20017 Nathan Lueth Illustrated and co-created the Victorian-fantasy webcomic, Impure Blood. In this panel Nathan brings lessons from 16 years of middling results and eventual success in self publishing. Come along on this deep dive into how to structure a profitable self publishing model, how to build an audience, the fundamentals of crowdfunding, the best business practices, and most importantly, How (Not) To Make Webcomics.

3:00PM TO 3:45PM

"Draw a Monster Comic!" with Paul Fricke

Come to this panel with your pencils and sketchbook ready to draw! Just in time for the spooky season, join MCAD Comics Professor Paul Fricke to unlock your comics creativity! You'll create crazy and confounding creatures, weird and wacky situations, and draw your own MONSTER COMIC!

PANEL ROOM SCHEDULE 12 OCT

11:00AM TO 11:45AM

501st Legion, Rebel Legion, and Mando Mercs: Info and How to Join

The 501st Legion, Rebel Legion, and Mando Mercs are international non-profit charity groups who make and wear screen-accurate Star Wars costumes to bring joy and raise money for those in need. Want to learn more? Have a question? You've come to the right place.

12:00PM TO 12:45PM

"It's Not Easy Being Green" with Bill Hedrick

Solid color makeup for cosplay can be hard to make look real. With 30+ years of experience, Master Costumer and Makeup Artist Bill Hedrick will transform his model into Beast Boy and give tips and tricks to make your makeup pop!

1:00PM TO 1:45PM

MNCBA FallCon 2025 Cosplay Contest

The MNCBA FallCon 2025 Cosplay Contest features four categories to compete in — Youth, Novice, Advanced, and Group — with over \$600 in total cash prizes for our winners! Visit our Cosplay Contest page to learn more, then register by 12:00PM on Sunday at the Nomad Ghostbusters of Minnesota booth!

2:00PM TO 2:45PM

LIVE Charity Auction

The fan-favourite MNCBA live charity auction! Participate in our live auction to bid on original, one-of-a-kind artwork, sketch cards, and collectibles! Auction proceeds benefit the MNCBA and the Hero Initiative.

About MNCBA FALLCON 2025 Guest Creator Shannon Wheeler

Appearing for the first time ever at a Minnesota comic convention!



Shannon Wheeler has cartooned for *The New Yorker*, *MAD* magazine, *Forbes*, *Pendulous Breasts Quarterly*, and others. He is most well-known for his character *Too Much Coffee Man*, which is a self-published comic book, an award-winning commercial for Converse Tennis Shoe, and an opera. He will be thankful to not hear people making the joke, "I guess he had too much coffee!" once he's dead.

Too Much Coffee Man won an Eisner Award in 1995 for Best New Series. Shannon also won an Eisner Award for Best Humor Publication in 2011 for I Thought You Would be Funnier, a collection of previously unprinted The New Yorker Magazine cartoon submissions. He received an Inkpot Award in 2018.

Shannon teaches comics, lectures about comics, and is learning French because the French appreciate comics. He is currently working on a book about his father's commune that is being serialized on Substack.

A brief interview with Shannon...

What is your background, and how did you get involved in the comic book industry?

When I moved to Texas, I met several cartoonists who were doing comics. It wasn't long before we were shooting comics with guns together. (*Editor's note: According to his Wikipedia article, Shannon began cartooning while attending UC Berkeley.*)

Who is Too Much Coffee Man and how did he come into existence?

I was trying to sell a collection of my college gag cartoons, *Children with Glue*, and I did a mini-comic, *Too Much Coffee Man*. My theory was that people would buy the mini for 75¢ and later return for the book. They did return, but they only wanted more *Too Much Coffee Man*. So, I drew *Too Much Coffee Man* #1.

What are some of your other past comic projects?

I worked with a composer to do the first opera based on a comic book; a non-children's book with Simon Max Hill called *Grandpa Won't Wake Up*; *Sh*t My President Says*, a book of illustrated Trump Tweets. Mark Russell and I rewrote the Bible in a book called *God is Disappointed in You*. (Mark did all the real work. I just drew the cartoons.) Steve Duin and I illustrated *The Mueller Report*; oddly relevant again.

What's the weirdest thing that has ever happened to you at a comic book convention?

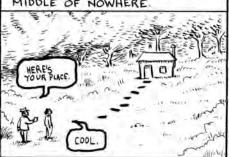
I stumbled in a giant room filled with silent people gesturing wildly. It turned out, it was a deaf bowlers' convention. Great people.

What are you working on now and/or do you have planned for the future?

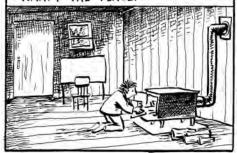
The book about my dad is taking a lot more time than I'd like. There's a lot of material to cover. For example, my dad's neighbor tried to give his land back to God. Great stuff.

COUNTRY LIFE SHANNON WHEELER

THE WINTER OF 1986, I MOVED TO A SHACK ON MY FATHER'S FORMER COMMUNE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.



I WANTED TO GET TO KNOW MY DAD AND BE FREE FROM THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE CITY AND DRAW CARTOONS. I BUILT FIRES IN A SMALL STOVE TO WARM THE PLACE.



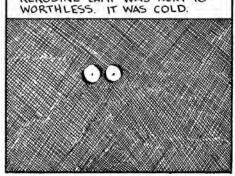
MOST DAYS WERE SPENT CHOPPING WOOD WITH A DULL AX. I BOILED WATER FROM A SPRING TO MAKE COFFEE, IT TOOK FOREVER.



I'D BUY FOOD IN TOWN AND CARRY IT DOWN THE ACCESS ROAD IN MY BACKPACK. I'D ALSO CARRY OUT MY TRASH. I ATE CHEESE SANDWICHES. MY BATHROOM WAS A HOLE IN THE GROUND COVERED BY A TOILET SEAT NAILED TO A PLANK OF WOOD.



THERE WAS NO ELECTRICITY.
I'D GO TO BED WHEN THE
SUN WENT DOWN. MY TINY
KEROSINE LAMP WAS NEXT TO
WORTHLESS. IT WAS COLD.





Read more at: https://substack.com/@shannonwheeler



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We also have 2 locations where we sell our comic books in vintage antique stores. Stillwater Antiques in downtown Stillwater and at Rum River Relics in Princeton MN.

We hope to see you soon.

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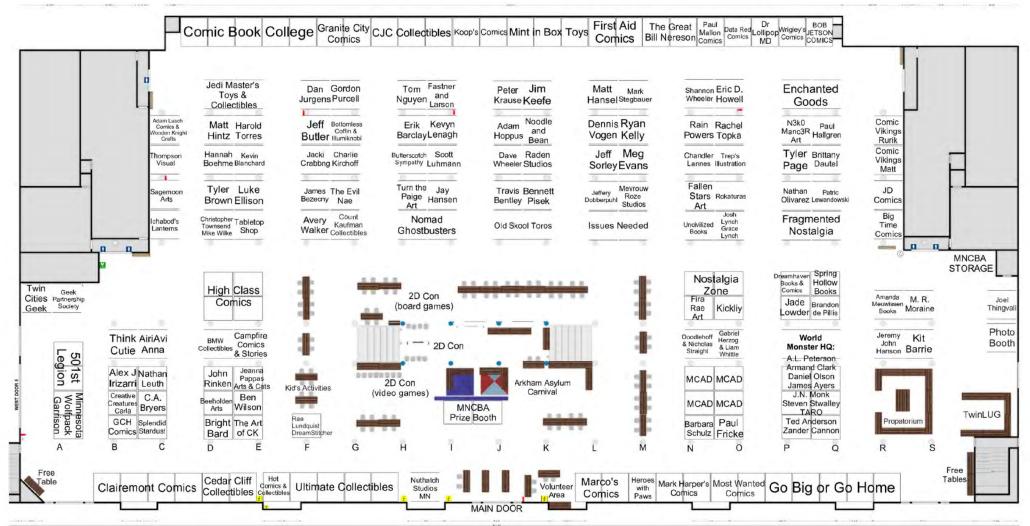
is one of the country's oldest (since 1977) and most honored comic book stores. We have one of the largest selections of comics and comics-related collectibles found anywhere. We offer friendly, personal service and

are happy to find that special item you're looking for.

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Our Panel Room and Cosplay Contest are located on the second floor of the Grandstand on the West side of the building. From the top of the central staircase, the Panel Room will be to your left. There is also a publiclyaccessible elevator located outside on the west end of the building.





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ECLIPSE COMICS

The Forefront of Indie Comics 1977- 1994 by Nick Palodichuk

Eclipse Comics was a template of independent comic book publishing, and the structure that many would follow by giving creators rights to their art and stories as well as granting royalties. It was not a division of a larger publishing company, like Charlton Comics, which unlike Eclipse Comics, kept its wages low for their writers and artists and didn't share any royalties or rights. Distinctly, Charlton Comics controlled all aspects of making and selling their comics; something almost no other comic book publisher did.

No, Eclipse Comics was different; and in many ways, it would be revolutionary, though they might have seen it as conventional at the time. First, their headquarters' office moved multiple times to small cities, almost giving a nomadic wanderer sense to the company that felt like rock and roll. Second, it was among the first to publish graphic novels. Third, Eclipse Comics was known for its amazing creators. During its heyday, it would pull in incredible talent and notable names such as writers Alan Moore, Timothy Truman, Don McGregor, Scott McCloud, Max Allan Collins, Doug Moench, and Trina Robbins; and artists like Dave Stevens, Gene Colan, Paul Gulacy, and Marshall Rogers, along with many more. Eclipse Comics became synonymous with the absolute definition of indie comics. There was nothing out there like it. They were bold and daring. There was a hint of danger to them. They were unpolished, rough, and edgy. It felt rebellious – almost punk-like – to buy, hold, or possess Eclipse Comics.

If you were a kid in the mid and/or late 1980s and had a jean jacket with high-top shoes and a switch blade in your back pocket, no doubt you would have been into Eclipse Comics. It is no coincidence that its run correlated with the birth and rise of alternative independent music, ending just as grunge was dwindling. Eclipse Comics' run would finally end when Todd McFarlane bought their assets for a mere \$25,000.

How did that happen when Eclipse had accumulated a hardcore devoted fan base over a seventeen-year run, along with a supportive and encouraging base for writers and artists to showcase their works? It, of course, occurs with multiple small setbacks and two different types of floods: one of natural occurrences, and another of an economic saturation of supply. On top of it all, it was found to have accounting irregularities.

Founded by Jan and Dean Mullaney in 1977, who were sons of rocker Dave Mullaney of the band Hot Butter, *Sabre* was the first comic book they would publish. Created by Don McGregor, it was a story of a romantic charming marauder in a dystopian United States in the year 2020. *Sabre* was one of the first graphic novels, although at the time sold as a "comic novel." McGregor would call it a "comic novella." With a 68-page story priced at \$6, it was a hard sell as the Mullaneys would say in the late 1970s. Uniquely released solely to the direct market, *Sabre* became one of the first graphic novels in history, and more importantly, it was an outright success for Eclipse. With the success of selling the graphic novel, *Sabre* had its own series from 1982-1985. The history of *Sabre* most certainly could earn its own essay. There is so much detail and information about *Sabre* alone; a blurb doesn't do justice to how it revolutionized the comic book industry. Groundbreaking, for sure.

Following that, Eclipse would publish an anthology magazine. (No doubt to compete with *Heavy Metal* magazine.) In it, they would feature many iconic characters that would go on to have their own titles, like Max Allan Collins' crime buster *Ms. Tree*, Steve Englehart's native superhuman *Coyote*, and B.C Boyer's superhero *Masked Man*. The anthology would also have Trina Robbins' revision of Sax Rohmer's novel *Dope*. This helped propigate the characters into the comic book readers' consciousness before their own title release – a smart move to see what would sell to readers before investing in them.

Somewhere between the release of *Sabre* in the early 1980s, and the mid-1980s with the anthologies and those characters' own titles, Jan Mullaney was doing less with the company and Cat Yronwode was brought in. With Yronwode's assistance, Eclipse Comics would publish Scott McCloud's *Zot*, Dan Steven's *Rocketeer*, and Garry Leach's *Miracleman*. In 1985, Yronwode and Trina Robbins teamed up to present a non-fiction comic book title, *Woman and the Comic*, featuring notable women artists' works and their biographies. Not academic by any means, but it shined a light on the dazzling work of many artists who had been overlooked merely because of their gender. It is gem to find for any collector. Dean Mullaney and Yronwode married in 1987.



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Tell us Sparky sent you

In the late 1980s, Eclipse Comics was at their pinnacle. They were selling half a million comics per month, were the third-largest publisher behind Marvel and DC, and they were even publishing annuals to comics. They were kicking out multiple titles and issues and garnering enough kids' and collectors' attention that stores had to dedicate shelf space to them. Now more than a side note in the comic book realm, the small independent comic book company presented a wide spectrum of comics that were unable to be ignored. There is no question that Marvel and DC were monitoring their growth with some concern.

Eclipse Comics published westerns, mystery, science-fiction, comedies, superheroes, and of course, horror. At times their books were cartoonish or salacious, but they were always bold and daring. As a kid in the mid-to-late 1980s, it felt a little dangerous to creep over to the corner of the store to pick up your Eclipse Comics titles.

It was at the height of Eclipse Comics' success that a disaster occurred that would begin the cracks leading to their demise. In 1986, the Russian River flooded following heavy rainfall in northern California. The flood reached the second floor of their offices. While Dean Mullaney was able to salvage some original artwork by moving it to the third floor, their entire inventory of back-issues was destroyed. The damages were estimated to be \$200,000. Coinciding with the flood, Eclipse Comics launched one of their most successful titles, *Airboy* by Chuck Dixon, a revitalization of the Golden Age comics about a WW2 pilot. *Airboy* kept 1986 from becoming a total loss for the company.

After that, Eclipse got into non-sport trading cards. They began publishing some manga as well in the late 1980s; a decision that would ultimately lead to their demise, although it initially seemed to be another success. Eclipse Comics teamed up with Viz to publish English adaptations of some of their earlier manga. Their biggest hits included *Area 88*, *The Psychic Girl*, and *Kamul*.

Following the flood, with no inventory, Eclipse Comics had to rely solely on new comics to make money. There were possibly other debts associated with the flooding. Adding manga to their publications made profits, but was short sighted, because manga required licenses and fees to publish. Then the person they relied on for their translator licenses left for Dark Horse Comics and demanded to see Eclipse Comics' books – where

he discovered irregularities in each of their deals.

With that, it was discovered that Eclipse Comics was running two sets of bookkeeping. Dean Mullaney claimed he did it to cover for a sour deal he had with HarperCollins so he could continue paying his creators, but it led to Eclipse Comics being sued for the \$100,000 difference and a loss owing \$120,000. It should be noted that Mullaney never filed a lawsuit against HarperCollins. Mullaney would eventually drain the rest of the money and find a new love interest, divorcing Yronwode and leaving her to clean up the mess.

In the early 1990s, the comic industry was also experiencing a surge of supply in the market, while demand remained steady or even declined. Comic fans were flocking back to DC with its *Knightfall* and *Death of Superman* stories. Marvel was hitting big numbers in sales with *X-Men* and the emergence of the *Infinity Gauntlet* series. Image Comics was founded, and people were buying *Spawn* and another breakout hit, *Youngbloods*. By 1994, the market space Eclipse Comics fought so hard to claim was saturated and slowly overtaken by other independents using their own formulas. Yronwode auctioned off the remaining Eclipse Comics assets to *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane.

During its existence, Eclipse Comics saw the kind of success that many independent publishers today can only dream of. One of the main reasons for its success was timing – it emerged when people were hungry for alternative choices in comics. It also knew how to respect and treat its creators, drawing in incredible talent, which consequently pulled in readers. We can only wonder what Eclipse Comics would have become if it hadn't endured flooding and accounting irregularities. What would they be doing now, if they still existed? I venture to believe they would be doing what they always did – something radical but also very traditional.



My name is Mark Harper, and I am a lifelong Comic Book Collector. I started in 1968 when I was 9 years old. I remember buying Silver Surfer #1 off the rack at the local pharmacy.

Recently, I started setting up at local shows and selling my collection. During my sales journey, I have made some new friends who share the same passion for comics that I do. I enjoy the MN Comic Book Community. I like all of it. I like buying comics and selling comics.

Do you have a collection you want to sell? Please feel free to contact me by phone or email. I will provide you with a fair estimate of the value of your collection and what I can offer in payment for it.

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Shortbox's Fun Corner

Locate the words listed below. Words can run forwards or backwards either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

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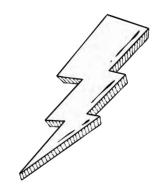
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- *All our Attendees
- *All the People we forgot!



*And of course all the volunteers, without whom this won't be possible.

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