

## Comic Book Event Great Success

November 9, 2010

Students in the Northwest School Division were given a treat this past week as Jay Bardyla of Happy Harbour Comics and Synergy Credit Union teamed up to deliver an excellent presentation that covered all of the creative aspects behind the production of graphic novels and comics to schools in Neilburg, Maidstone, Lashburn and Marshall.

Accompanied by two artists, Daniel Schneider and Kyle Sams, Bardyla delivered an entertaining and comprehensive overview of the processes involved in the production of modern comics as Schneider and Sams drew characters suggested by the audience. An at-length discussion of the creative duties of storywriters, editors, pencillers, inkers, and colourists, along with beautiful examples of artwork from each stage of the process kept students fascinated throughout the presentation. A lively and equally informative question and answer session followed the presentation.

The idea behind the event came from Synergy's Mickey Mikkelson of the Maidstone Branch, who saw an opportunity to facilitate the Credit Union's promotion of continuous learning and community support. "I'm a big fan of comic books, I knew Jay, and I had heard that he'd been doing educational tours in the Chauvin-Wainwright area that had met with a fantastic response. I contacted our marketing department and Jay to suggest that he consider doing a tour to some Saskatchewan schools because Synergy's all about giving back to the community. I thought it was a great way ...to instill the love of learning in our young people."

"I find it very personally rewarding," said Bardyla, "to see kids get excited about comics, telling stories, writing and drawing. In the digital age everyone just wants to plunk down in front of a computer monitor and the art and creativity seems to be on the slide. To come out and see kids get inspired by this and motivated to actually do more by hand and become more creative is a wonderful thing."

The status of graphic novels and comics has been gradually rising over the years as more and more people come to realize the literary and artistic value of stories conveyed through a combination of sequential art and narrative. "The break through," said Bardyla, "probably came with the publication of Art Spiegelman's "Maus, A Survivors Tale" which won the Pulitzer Prize in the mid-eighties."

Chester Brown's "Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography" and Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis," an account of growing up in revolutionary Iran, are two recent works that have also received critical acclaim.

Synergy Credit Union is donating a collection of twenty-two educational comic books to each school's library as a lasting legacy of the event.

Artist Daniel Schneider, Jay Bardyla and artist Kyle Sams addressing the Marshall student body



Artist Kyle Sams at work while Jay is speaking

