

Comic books

The comic book. When people today think of comic books, usually superheroes come to mind. With the introduction of Superman in 1938, this trend grew through the golden years and later with dozens of superheroes created. Big names like Stan Lee come to mind, who has become so big he was given his own reality show, [Who Wants to be a Superhero?](#) which lasted for two seasons. Many comic-book heroes have made their way to the TV screen in the form of cartoons and live-action shows, and have been making it big in movies as well. Within the last few months we have had Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, and the much-anticipated soon-to-be-released Dark Knight (Batman).

However, superheroes are just one of many genres of comic books. Among the years westerns, war, sci-fi and fantasy, detective, horror, and many others have had some big hits and long-running series over the years. While I have read several different genres as a kid, one really stuck with me, or maybe they are a couple different ones. Harvey comics, which brought us the likes of Casper the Friendly Ghost and Richie Rich are of a genre which you might call funny comics. I don't know the true genre name for these but they were close to my heart growing up. Another series I have always enjoyed was kind of a genre unto itself, though others have tried to duplicate its success. Like many superhero comics, this series has been going strong since the golden age of comics. It has spawned some cartoons, at least one live TV series (plus a pilot that never got off the ground), and even a movie. The series I'm talking about is the Archie comic book series. Since 1941, readers have been able to follow the high-school antics of Archie and his gang, which has periodically changed to fit the times. The most recent incarnation made the characters more anime-like.

Recently, while at the library I encountered two DVD collections of the old cartoon series. One set was for

[Sabrina the Teenage Witch](#) from the early 70s, which unlike the later cartoons and TV series actually resembled the Sabrina I know from the comic books. It was actually not shown on its own originally, but part of [The Archie Comedy Hour](#). I also found a DVD collection for the original cartoon, [The Archie Show](#). The latter was apparently a smash hit 40 years ago in 1968, before I was born. Each cartoon contained a new dance move and a new song from The Archies, a band that was put together for the show not unlike The Monkees, but instead of becoming a band unto themselves they hid behind the cartoon faces of Archie and friends. This one show apparently cornered a whopping 55% of the viewership when it was on. In any event, I wound up checking both of them out and just finished watching the Archie DVDs (and not too soon, as it is on reserve and not able to be renewed- it's due today) and two of the three Sabrina DVDs. As typical for cartoon series of the time they were done on the cheap with static backgrounds that when made to move like when a character is walking or running will repeat, and a few voice actors doing all of the voices. Okay, these sort of things are *still* done, even with the voice actors in hits like The Simpsons, but they are still done to keep the costs down. Some of the voices the actors came up with left something to be desired in my opinion. I really didn't like Jughead's or Veronica's voices. A couple others, like Archie and Mr. Weatherbee grew on me as I watched, and still others I had no problem with at all.

Now that I am nearly finished with these two collections I look forward to being able to watch other series, except maybe the recent Sabrina cartoons which were actually a spinoff of the 90s TV series, which in turn was a modern remake. I haven't read the recent anime-style comics for the same reason I didn't enjoy the TV series, and for that matter don't enjoy the modern Battlestar Galactica- nostalgia. They are simply not the same characters I grew up with. The ones I do want to watch range from Archie's TV Funnies, US of Archie, and Archie's Fun House from the same company that brought us the

two I watched (Fimation); to later incarnations like the New Archies and Archie's Weird Mysteries which may or may not be relevant to my nostalgia. I also would like to pick up any Richie Rich cartoons I might find, and any other Harveytoons which are like the comics I read, and any comic collections that are released on computer similar to MAD's CD set from about ten years ago. I understand there is one for Archie now that can be had at archiecomics.com. When I have some income again I will have to pick it up.

Preparing students for middle school?

When subbing for a regular classroom teacher in an elementary school one would expect to have the same class for at least *most* of the day, granting of course switching for math which is common in the intermediate grades. Aside from the start of the day and a very short time in the morning for snack, I did not have the same class until after 2:30 PM! They had a special in the morning so that accounted for part of it, but then they came back, had snack time, and left just 15 minutes later to go to another classroom for science while another class came in for social studies. Following that was math, which of course all four 5th grade classes mixed up according to ability which as mentioned is pretty standard. After lunch they came up, I took afternoon attendance, and then they split for reading- and I don't mean a few students left for resource while the majority stayed. I mean just the opposite: most left while only a few stayed. The students were doing a [Roald Dahl](#) unit and the students who came in were reading [The BFG](#). Other classes were reading different books. Finally, after reading the class came back together again... and promptly left for

recess. **Finally** I had the class together, working together for language arts. I don't know why I bothered making a seating chart when I came in. ☐

I have heard of preparing students for middle school, but I have never seen it to this extent. The closest I had seen before was a school where they actually had a set of lockers which the fifth-graders would take turns using to practice for middle school, but even there I don't think they switched classes so much. I know I never did when I was in fifth grade. At least I don't remember doing so aside from specials. But that was the early eighties we're talking about, somewhat removed from today's teaching methods.

By the way, [The BFG](#) reading assignment included making a comic strip based on the chapters they read. So, to make a connection here I will give you a couple of links for your reading enjoyment. Of course since this blog is primarily about education these won't be your regular comics.com (hah! You thought I would give [a link](#), not just the name! Uh, whoops... ☐) newspaper comics. On both sites they have links to purchase their 'toons, but they are free to view on the web so you don't need to bother. Well, enjoy!

[Cartoons by Randy Glasbergen](#)

[EDUCATION CARTOONS](#)