

HOT ARTIST: J. BONE

By Jeff Harison

After not making the cut to get into Sheridan's esteemed Animation program in 1993, J. Bone decided to spend the year in Illustration honing his talent. After seeing the stress filled, sleepless nights of his animation roomies, he was glad he'd been passed over and stuck with his second choice. Past graduation, a few years with Nelvana's location design department taught him a lot of the tricks of the trade and by 1999 he went freelance to pursue his love of drawing and inking comics full-time.

By 2000, after barely surviving on peanut butter and crackers, he met Canadian talent, Darwyn Cooke, and over the course of several years inked his *Spider-Man*, *the New Frontier*, and *The Spirit*.

Pink Play Mags: So what are you currently working on?

J. Bone: Currently I'm drawing covers for the *Super Friends*, with occasional forays into the interiors. I truly love drawing the big DC characters in that fun kid-friendly style. It's probably one of my favourite ongoing jobs. I'm just about finished an issue of the *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* comic book based on the new Cartoon Network series. The style is so exciting that I begged to be on the book.

PPM: Why beefcake and pin-up guys?

J. Bone: Because I'm a homo. [Laughs.] Seriously, I love 50s artwork and the innocence of the tease. Always been a big fan of Betty Page and cheesecake as well as Bob Mizer and the beefcake photographers from that era. I'd like my art to evoke the time period but still have a modern feel to it.

PPM: Who are your biggest artistic influences?

J. Bone: It's a long list, but I'll try to name the major continuing influences: Jack Kirby, John Buscema, Bruce Timm, Darwyn Cooke, Glen Hanson, Tom of Finland. I'm discovering new people all the time, guys whose work inspires me



to try something new. Also, I've got to say that I hang out with a very talented group of comic book artists and illustrators who influence me. They'll dig what I'm drawing, but at the same time can be counted on to give me an honest critique to help clear up a story point or anatomical goof. We call ourselves the "Superman Club!"

PPM: Gay comics and pin-up guys seem to have really exploded on the scene in the last half decade or so. We've had everything from Justin on "Queer as Folk" drawing them, to Patrick Fillion's superheroes creating a modern day raunchy version of Tom of Findland's gigantically endowed men of the '70s. Why do you think there's been such a huge surge in popularity?

J.Bone: I feel it's the increased visibility of gay men in the public eye. As well as the increased acceptability of gay culture, which includes the metrosexuality of the hetero man. We've seen woman in comics drawn as sex objects for years and now the guys are getting their turn in the sun. I see so many covers now that, whether consciously done so by the artist or not, portray the male hero in a sexually provocative manner. Check the newsstand and look specifically for a knee level, looking up shot of your hero character. Alex Ross does it *all* the time!

PPM: Do you think there's something in comics and super heroes that gay kids (and adults) really identify with?

J.Bone: The idea has been explored by much more eloquent people than myself, but it's all the same common ground that helps the gay man identify with being a visible minority, like the X-Men, who are hated for their differences and yet continue to be heroic and save mankind at every opportunity.

PPM: Most of the gay comic guys out there now, seem to be all about the sex; how do you navigate those tricky waters? Sex sells, and yet you are more of a teaser than a shower, why?

J.Bone: My own sense of ethics, I guess. I decided really early on that I wouldn't portray full frontal nudity in my artwork. There's a lot of that type of art (good or bad) all around us and I didn't want to add to the pile (or perhaps get lost in it). I think I can stake a bigger claim by NOT drawing full nudes and focus more on teasing or suggesting sexuality through poses. The reality is almost never as delicious as the fantasy.

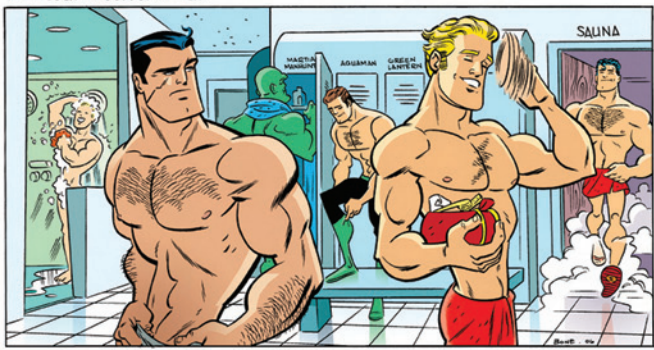
PPM: Let's jump back to your current projects. I know *Jett Vector* is one of them, can you give me any kind of tease about what to expect from that

series? Is that something our readers can expect to see in the near future?

J.Bone: Gee, I really hope so. I've taken on a lot of extra mainstream work lately so that I can fund a few months of personal work, which will include *Jett*. Basically he's a space-cop, a member of the Universal Peacekeepers—or UP-keepers—who patrol the galaxy righting wrongs and catching bad guys. *Jett* will be a male Barbarella in that the pages will be full of beefcake pin-ups and handsome aliens. There is also a ship full of female pirates because I do, after all, still love drawing cheesecake as well!

PPM: You're also getting ready to self-publish a book rammed full of all your beefcake guys, pin-up boys and rough illustrations. What can we expect to

IN THE LOCKER ROOM OF THE JLA.



find inside and can you be brave and give the readers a time when to expect it out?

J.Bone: Ooh...a timeline. I want to say by fall of this year (2009) you will see a collection of Beefcake by me. I'm working this summer, with my helpful and handsome assistant, to first gather up all of my beefcake drawings from years past. Once I've got it in hand I'll sort by theme and start putting together the book(s). It's going to be a big job but I think with a month of solid effort it will come together.

Be sure to check out J.Bone's blogs at www.gobukan.blogspot.com and www.bonesmen.blogspot.com and look for details on how to order your very own copy of *Bone's Men* beefcake book, coming at the end of the summer at www.cafepress.com/gobukan.

Jeff Harrison is the Editor-in-Chief of our *Pink Play Mags*. He is also a Toronto based freelance writer whose work has appeared in *Eye Weekly*, *Gay Guide Toronto.com*, *fab* magazine, *Xtra!*, and *Instinct*. He's decided to stop running around like a maniac meeting deadlines this winter. Instead, he's thinking of dusting off his novel and diving back in. See you in the spring!

ILLUSTRATIONS by J. Bone

pretty in pink