

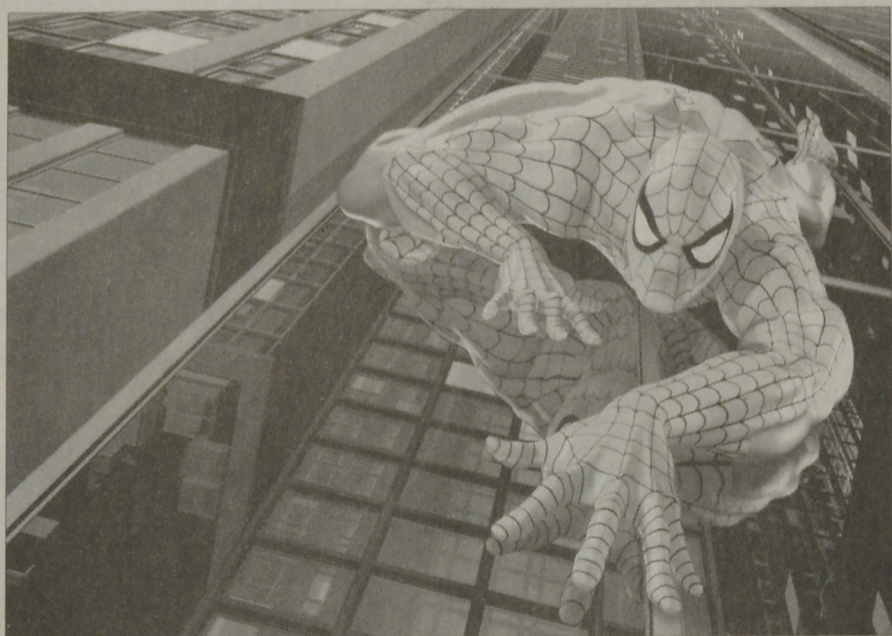
Tangled Web puts a new twist on Spider-Man

Wordballoons looks at Marvel Comics' *Tangled Web* series

by Stefan Robak

Marvel Comics has improved a lot over the past year. First it removed the Comics Code from their books, which was a dinosaur left over from the McCarthy era. Then it began extending the olive branch towards creators they had wronged in the past and paid for their mistakes. But best of all, they gave writers a much higher degree of creative freedom and invited creators who are best known for their work on independent comics into their fold. This is quite evident in the incredible Marvel Spider-Man-related anthology *Tangled Web*, where creators few would have expected to work on Spider-Man write self-contained stories about the superhero and the people whose lives he affects.

The series first began with "The Coming of the Thousand", a tale from *Hitman* creators Garth Ennis and John McCrear. In it Spider-Man comes face to face with a bully from his past who has acquired super-powers. Then came "Severance Package", a chilling and



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Spider-Man : with great power comes great responsibility.

powerful tale by crime novelist Greg Rucka who shows that although the Kingpin of Crime is merciless, unforgiving and murderous, he is also fair. In "Flowers for Rhino", Peter Milligan allows us to sympathize with the stupidest super-villain of all, and shows us what he really wants: dignity.

The series, unlike most anthology books, is consistent in quality of both

the art and the stories. The series tends to take perspectives and use ideas rarely seen in comic books. In "Severance Package", we get to see that even a henchman of the Kingpin would do anything for his family. In "Flowers for Rhino" the Rhino, a character treated as a joke by all the other super-heroes and villains, gets to have his day in the sun. Some of the more humorous tales,

such as "Open All Night", act as a retro-style romantic comedy where two girls wait in the same coffee shop for Peter Parker, who is unconscious in an alley. It turns out that Peter accidentally made both dates while distracted by thoughts of both paying the rent and how to defeat the super-villain du jour.

The reason why the series *Tangled Web* works so well is because the writers understand the characters and treat them with respect. Even Garth Ennis (who finds superheroes goofy in principle) writes Peter very well (especially in a hilarious scene in which he awkwardly starts up a conversation with self-absorbed fashion experts and models). The series also has the strength of being very versatile, and ranges from being dark and creepy ("Gentleman's Agreement", "Severance Package") to light-hearted and humorous ("Ray of Light", "Open All Night").

Upcoming stories include tales of the son of a truly pathetic supervillain, a gang of villains swapping tales of the webslinger and a 13 year old girl who has a crush on Spider-man... which drives her super-villain father nuts! And though it isn't part of the *Tangled Web* books, look out for The Megalomaniacal Spider-Man, a one-issue tale written by *Hate* creator Peter Bagge.

Spanish Night tasty as ever

by Jill Delaney

Excitement was in the air at Spanish Night 2002. The event was hosted by the Latin American and Spanish Society to celebrate the traditions of their Spanish-speaking countries. A strong turnout showed the support of the community and was encouraging for the event's organizers.

However, the excellent turnout was likely also the reason the night got off to a late start, as the serving of food took longer than anticipated. The menu, representing cuisines of many countries, was a hit. One could try Pollo con Mole (a Mexican chicken dish), Carne Asada (Guatemalan roast beef), Arroz Primavera (spring rice), and more.

The entertainment that followed featured Spanish songs, dance, and even poetry. A fashion show with traditional Latin American outfits provided a nice touch to the program.

President Dave Bernabela spoke of the society's other activities, such as weekend immersion nights, and dance lessons (as music and dance is very important in Spanish cultures). He also mentioned that the society did extremely well this year; they operated with no initial budget, but were successful in their fundraising.

Another member, Pedro Omana, emphasized the fact that anyone can join the society. Everyone is welcome to come practice Spanish, learn to dance, and share other aspects of Spanish culture.

Overall, the evening was a noteworthy accomplishment in its efforts to give us a taste of this lively culture. To find out more about the Latin American and Spanish Society feel free to e-mail oespanol@unb.ca.

Most of the wonderful cultural events at UNB have been held with the help of the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, which is always looking for volunteers. It can be reached at 454-8292 if you would like to take the opportunity to meet many people of the global village.

Gosford Park: new twist on old cliché

Capital Film presenting final film of semester

by Jeremy Elder

After a well received limited release, comedy/mystery/drama *Gosford Park* (2001) makes its Fredericton debut at the Capital Film Society. The plot is, on a basic level, a murder mystery, but director Robert Altman takes the classic

plot lines and give them a good twist. The result is a brilliant movie that explores the foibles of the British class system in a deep yet clever manner.

The film is set in the 1930s at the country mansion of Sir William McCordle (Michael Gambon) and his wife Lady Sylvia (Kristin Scott Thomas). The couple invites a multitude of friends for a shooting party. These wealthy, upper-class guests bring with them their servants.

The film's early scenes explore these relationships, and move along in a

manner that allows us to learn the various names and statuses of the large cast of characters. Many of these people share stories, and the web that emerges is complex and widespread. We soon see that the servants, who are expected to be confidential and passive, lead a much different life once they get to the servants quarters.

During the first night at the mansion, one of the guests is killed and everyone is asked by the police to stay in the house. From here, the story focuses on one of

the characters, who leads the viewer through the rest of the film up to the discovery of the culprit.

Gosford Park is a complex, yet well structured story, and while I'm certain that every student is reaching the point where everything is hectic, if you can muster the focus for this film, it is well worth it.

Gosford Park plays Monday, April 15 in Tilley 102. Tickets are, as usual, \$3.00 for members, \$5.00 for non-member students and seniors, and \$7.00 for others.

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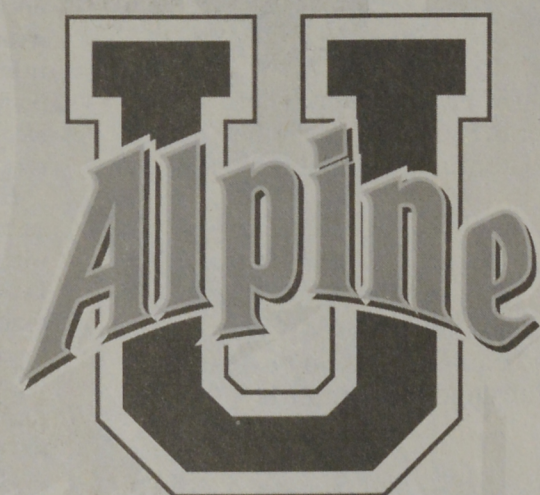
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