

## The Moss' Sessions: An Interview with Ken Glanc - Part II: Taking the initiative

May 20, 2009 by: George L. Stewart

*(Note: [Monday](#), we were introduced to Kenneth W. Glanc, branch manager of the Lorain County corporate headquarters of First Merit Bank and Chairman of the Elyria Comic Book Initiative. Today, we pick up right where we left off...)*

**Ken:** “We’ve had one project that we’ve undertaken and that was to announce our self through the “Free Comic Book Day” (**Free Comic Book Day** -scheduled on the first Saturday of May- is an annual [promotional](#) effort by the [North American comic book](#) industry to help bring new readers into independent [comic book stores](#)). We’ve now based a social calendar around a season...so that start of our season from now on will be the FCBD and then, here in Elyria – because we have this phenomenon called the Apple Festival – we’re going to bookend the calendar year...

*(...at this point, the waiter shows up with our meals...)*

“...So we’ll use those two events to bookend the year and then launch some of the school programs around them. The next project that we’ve just undertaken – and I had a meeting this morning (about it) – is we’re going to promote the Summer Reader Program through the library. Specifically, we want to promote that you can go to the library and get trade paperbacks and graphic novels and you can read them for free. We’re going to promote literacy through that. We’ll take a look at the circulation of those materials during that time frame and how that stacks up to last year.

“Lastly, for this year, (what) we’ll be engaged in is working with the Elyria schools with an aspect of classroom participation. As we develop this, its going to be more of an after-school type of program, where we’ll work with the schools to give them a theme...we’re building a curriculum on how to start the manuscript...defining your characters, the story idea and plotting it out...and then infusing some of the artwork with it as we go.”

*Have you talked with any local artists/ creators?*

“As far as local creators...as I start to do (web) searches — for local creators...Elyria comics, local comics...Cleveland comics, Cleveland comic creators – I’m starting to uncover a variety of individuals that are out there. I mentioned that initially this started off as a three pronged initiative...well, we’re quickly moving into a fourth phase and that’s building a database and a network for local creators. Because... there are so many people that are out there ... and the idea of promoting literacy through comics...we’re looking at sixth grade on up...and as they progress through the schools — we’ve already aligned ourselves now with Elyria Public Schools, we’re aligning our selves with the JVS, Lorain Community College, Oberlin College — as there are engaged in this process, they are career opportunites that can present themselves.

“...and I must make reference to this: One of the aspects of the Comic Book Academy...if you’ve got these individuals who are coming together to collaborate, the idea there is to have that turn into something tangible — Whether it’s a Comic Book, a Comic Strip, an Online Comic, or storyboards used in video production or video game production. At LCCC, they actually have a degree on Video Game Development and Simulation. So there are a lot of stepping stones and building blocks that are available to launch individuals into different careers.

“Additionally, there’s an opportunity for those instructors and possibly industry mentors to become involved and help guide some of those individuals along the way. So I think its

crucial to reach out to the local collaborators and creators, to let them know what is happening. Because this is so new, and it cuts such a broad cloth of individuals, we're finding it difficult right now just to get the word out. So that's our first ...\* is just to announce it and try to give them a portal for them to contact us, to build that database.

"We're working on a website right now...it'll be a little while because this is non-profit that we're moving at the pace of ...but the more local people that we can have involved – current local people, but also past icons. You know, we've got a very rich history of the comic book industry throughout Cleveland and its general footprint: All the way from *Superman* and *Funky Winklebean*...*Calvin and Hobbes*' Bill Watterson's from Cleveland. Don't forget Harvey Pekar. We've got a broad spectrum of individuals that we can draw from...(Comic Book Writer, Playwright, and Screenwriter) Brian K. Vaughn...don't forget Mr. (Brian Michael) Bendis\*\* ... he's from Cleveland –"

*–Wow, I did not know that!*

"...There's a wide population of individuals yet to tap on the shoulder and say 'this is what we're doing (and) here's how you can get involved'."

*(I kinda veered the conversation towards all things Bendis for a good five minutes...which really had nothing to do with the interview itself. By the time we got back on track, I'd completely lost my place. Luckily, Ken jumped right back into the meat of our dialogue stew without need of prompting...)*

"...Some events we're hoping to be a part of this year: It was just announced that there's going to be a comic convention this July in downtown Cleveland. Its actually part of the Innovation Seminar that's being held in downtown Cleveland...it's the weekend of July 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>...that weekend. They're going to be talking about (Joe) Shuster and (Jerry) Siegel –some of the Superman stuff that was going on – and naming a street or something after them...and hoping to preserve one of the houses that Superman was created in. But its bringing back a convention to Cleveland that, I believe, hasn't been back for about 8 or 10 years. So it'll be exciting to see that.

"Also, the Mid-Ohio Con will be taking place in October (and) hopefully we'll be a part of that. As a non-profit, this is all volunteer based so...we've got a board, and some of our board members have the flexibility where they *could* go and participate. I would love to go to each one of those...you know, have a booth there and register people for the initiative...get them on our mailing list and let them know what's happening. We think we've got a good story to tell."

*("The Moss' Sessions" concludes Friday.)*

*\*Unfortunately, this word was obscured by the very lovely waitress taking the order of someone seated behind us. I listened to that ½ sec of tape for 10 mins and still couldn't make it out.*

*\*\* for those of you not in the know, Brian Micheal Bendis is "one of the most successful writers working in mainstream comics, with his books selling consistently highly for nearly a decade"(source-wikipedia). You unknowingly know him from his work on Ultimate Spider-man, from which the highly popular "Spider-man" movie franchise draws much of its inspiration...except for the third one...I don't know who was responsible for that...*