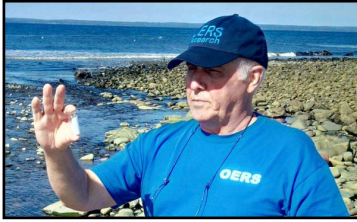


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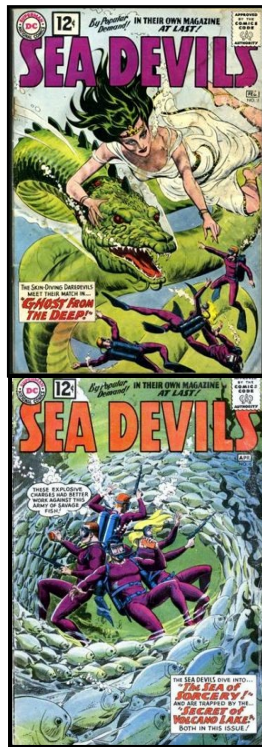
From comic books to science - it might save our world!



I pulled out some old comic books from my youth as I wanted to re-live the sense of awe and excitement I felt when I was in my formative years. I sat

down, started reading them and by the second one I had mixed feelings. Mostly disappointment. By the way, these comic books were the original format of bright colours and square formatted pages. Comics where the good guys fought against the bad guys who had these grandiose schemes of controlling the world usually through some highly scientific means. Definitely not like today's books filled with the dark, sombre drawings and lots of hero soul searching angst and turmoil. I could see why I was drawn to them as a form of escapism and how they aroused a curiosity about the world around me. They taught me to ask questions and find out more about how things functioned.

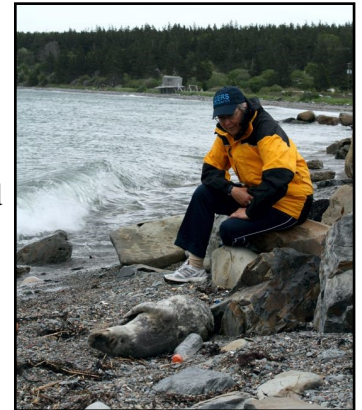
I was always drawn towards comic books that had something to do with the underwater world- Aquaman, Submariner, Sea Devils, Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Yes, most of what was depicted was not factual (giant starfish, man eating whales, sea serpents, underwater aliens and gods) yet they did provide hours of endless adventures and opportunities to question what was happening in our world's oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers. They were the path that led me to having a career in research and science. Today, I am making new discoveries, working beside highly educated and stimulating people,



publishing papers, and working with some of the species that I read about many decades ago.

For me comic books were an educational tool. And that tool allowed the broadening of a mind that saw opportunities and wanted to learn about and explore the world. Not only for myself but in giving others the chance to have the same experiences that I have had. Passing on my knowledge to future generations so that they might accomplish even more. A big concept and a broad aspiration and a lot tougher to bring to fruition. Our group, the Oceanographic Environmental Research Society (OERS) has provided over a thousand university students several opportunities (university courses, research projects, field studies) within marine ecology to learn about the anatomy and physiology of marine mammals, internships dealing with research methodology, interacting with other scientists, researchers, and activists at international meetings, and 'in the field' experiences to understand the ins and outs of field research. It has taken many years to convince those in charge the necessity and importance of such courses and experiences. I firmly believe that it is all our responsibility to pass on to the upcoming generation the opportunity to make their mark in this world, to explore and asking questions, to speak out against the lack of reasonable protection for our various ecologies.

Yes something as simple as comic books can make a difference in this world if we don't limit their influence. The end result is the stimulation of minds and how important it is to give opportunities for the upcoming generations to use this stimulation to save our stressed planet. The effects of humans on this planet have created environmental disasters- climate



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warming, increasing numbers of species going extinct, habitat destruction. Those in charge of protecting our environment turn a blind eye and refuse to see the worsening situation that our planet is experiencing. Comic books might inspire future scientists who just might save our planet from ourselves. And who knows, there might be an undiscovered species of sea serpents lurking around in the vastness of our oceans and seas somewhere!

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