



'Hard Candy' doesn't satisfy

By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

For any comic book fan, more is better. This is not the case with Dark Horse's new release of "Dark Horse Presents #12."

Dark Horse has offered many comics over the years, with some of its most popular being based on film and television, and some newer ones based on video games. They have carried many popular titles that are no longer in print, such as "Fear Agent," and some well-liked miniseries like "The Escapist" and "The Helm."

"Dark Horse Presents" was Dark Horse Comics' original comic book series, which first released in 1986 and has been cancelled and rebooted three times since 2000.

The comic book is a compilation of 12 different comic books, totaling 80 pages. Each one of the comics (except for the last two) are all from different series, some that are more

well-known to Dark Horse fans, and some that are definitely more obscure. Many have very unique visual styles, particularly "Mister X: Hard Candy, part one," written by Dean Motter in a noir-esque style (originally run by Vortex Comics, based in Toronto, Canada).

The majority of the comics were all very strange, with the main focus being based around zombies and the occult, although there was one superhero comic and two (non-occult) detective comics, along with one about foul-mouthed dairy products, conveniently titled "Milk + Cheese = Dairy Products Gone Bad!"

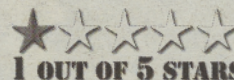
The compilation seems at first to be acceptable for reading by all audiences, by "bleeping out" swear words, but then the violence and uncensored language prevails, clearly defining that it is for mature audiences only.

If you're not into zombies and you've never read any of

Dark Horse Comics' books or graphic novels before, "Dark Horse Presents #12" isn't the one to start with. Granted, it was a compilation of quite a few different comics, but it didn't seem to offer the wide array of material that Dark Horse has to offer. Other than "Milk + Cheese" and "Mister X," most of the comics inside were all about zombies and the occult, which definitely appeals to some fans, but not to all.

After reading the comic, it is understandable as to why the comic has been cancelled in the past, and then, as with the zombies inside, the comic itself was reanimated for your viewing displeasure. Unless you are a huge zombie fanatic, pass on this one.

Dark Horse Comics are available from Things From Another World in Milwaukie, or online at www.TFAW.com.



1 OUT OF 5 STARS

Snow covered road leads Wildman to unforeseen adventure



By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

My fingers were painfully cold after about 30 seconds of attempting to dig out the snow from underneath my car. We had driven about ten miles up the Clackamas River outside of Estacada, in an attempt to locate the Eagle Creek Cutoff Trail #504.

From Oregon Hwy 224/211, I followed my map (provided by the US Forest Service's website) to Fall Creek Road, from which I turned onto Divers Road. The map claimed that I was supposed to turn onto Squaw Mountain Road shortly after, to which, after driving a mile further than the map recommended, Divers Road came to a dead end. As I turned back around, I decided to turn onto Tumala Mountain Road, thinking that maybe someone had made a ridiculous complaint that the road's original name was distasteful.

Three or four miles up the no-longer-offensive road, there were no houses or buildings, in fact, other than the sad, discarded remnants of country-folk parties (campfires, beer cans and spent ammo) there were little traces that anyone had been up Tumala Mountain Road in a great while. The map said that the road/trail should be free of snow from July to October, at which I scoffed, and



Wildman and his hiking partner came across the snow covered Tumala Mountain Road while in search of the Eagle Creek Cutoff Trail #504. Deep tire ruts through the wet snow and jagged rocks prove to be difficult obstacles for ill-equipped vehicles.

look at me now. After 10 miles, I was stuck in the snow in the Subaru, having to attempt to shovel out to get some traction.

Other than the fact that my hiking partner, CCC student Katie Drahota, and I had to dodge large rocks in the road and get out of the car three miles earlier than we'd expected to dig out the tires, it was very pretty and peaceful up there. As we dug at the tires and undercarriage, my fingers felt blisteringly cold, though asking Drahota how her fingers were showed how frail I may have been compared to her. I viewed myself as a mountain man, a Wildman, or so I've claimed, but without companionship, I would have given up digging in no time flat. I would have focused my energies on setting up camp opposed to digging

any longer (although maybe it's because I wanted a reason to have to miss work in the morning).

We successfully made it out of the snow, though we had to use Frisbee golf discs to dig the tires and undercarriage out, due to my lack of bringing a shovel. What can I say? It said July to October, but I thought that due to the recent stint of warm weather that any snow would be melted by now. Even though the car is all-wheel drive, several attempts to drive out ended only in spinning tires, due to the fact that snow was packed in the undercarriage. I got the idea to collect gravel from the nearby mountainside and we packed it behind the tires in an attempt to get traction. Thankfully, due to the support of my hiking partner (no thanks

to my lack of confidence) and a quick prayer, we were able to get the tires to grab; after only an hour of digging with Frisbees and frigid fingers, we were out.

Drahota and I decided that it wouldn't be worth testing the limits and venturing further in the car, which ended up being a wise decision indeed, for the snow only got deeper and more wet from that point on.

After approximately an hour of difficult trekking up the snow covered road, which felt like two hours, the snow was still definitely deep and the elevation only continued to increase, with no sign of our trailhead. Snowshoes would have been very helpful at that point of the journey.

We hiked possibly three miles prior to hearing what sounded like strong wind or a creek that

may or may not have been the elusive Eagle Creek. After turning off onto a nearby offshoot of the road to pass over the creek, we located a clearing that had evidence of clear cutting in the recent past. Hoping for the trailhead to appear was a pipe dream, although the views of the surrounding foothills were very beautiful.

All things considered, it was a good adventure, besides getting stuck in the snow and never locating the trailhead. Unless you own tire chains or a vehicle with tank treads, I wouldn't recommend attempting to make the journey to any trails that claim to have snow, no matter what your intuition, or lack thereof, says, although having someone to share the journey with is totally worthwhile.