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## More than tracing

The man behind the "Tube" reveals his humble beginnings

BY BOBBIE EFTEKHAR  
The Battalion

"Tubularman," one of two new comic strips in *The Battalion* as of January, is really not new at all. "Tubularman" made its first appearance in *The Battalion* in May of 1990 and continued through 1994.

"Tubularman" was created by Boomer Cardinale, who graduated from Texas A&M University in 1994.

His first comic book, "The Comic Book," written in 1982, featured "Super Guy."

"Super Guy" laid the foundation, eventually developing into "Tubularman."

"When I first applied for *The Battalion* in 1989, I originally submitted a set of strips about some aliens that got marooned [no pun intended] on earth," Cardinale said. "Well, I didn't get hired, so I decided [after meeting Matt Kowalski, creator of "Spade Phillips," for the first time] to try again in 1990 with a more simple concept. I went with superheroes.

"The superhero looked a lot like the many different superheroes that I've drawn over the years since about age 5.

"The name Tubularman came about while I racked my brain thinking of any kind of name that had not been used before. Superman, Spiderman, etc. were all used, so I went with one of the words from growing up in the '80s - Tubular. As in "Totally tubular, dude!" I was hired by *The Batt* to draw "Tubularman" in April 1990."

Cardinale said he bases Tubularman on himself.

"Tubularman/Ross Wainright is based a little on myself and my own experiences," he said. "The rest of my inspiration for 'Tubu-



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

larman' comes from the crazy world of mass media and all-night parties."

The setting of the comic strip is in Space City, where Tubularman is trying to make it as a big-league superhero.

His alter-ego, Ross Wainright, attends Space City University in his spare time. Ross lives with his roommate, Wade Poole.

Cardinale said he bases Wade on every roommate he has ever had.

Tubularman's villains not only consist of his many ex-girlfriends, but also the Evil Dr. Van Brewski and ECO-MAN the tree hugger.

Dr. Van Brewski was introduced into "Tubularman" in January 1991 as a mad scientist residing in Austin who was paid by

a unidentified to destroy Tubularman. ECO-MAN was introduced in September 1991 and has Tubularman's ever since.

Cardinale "Tubularman" the basic comic strip is about crime and partying. "It's about what happens when a tarnished professional deals with various situations, against an array of super villains, friends, social whole, etc." The result, hopefully, is a morose experience.

Cardinale has ten other comic strips: "Fast Track," "Cy-Creek High," "1988," a high school strip; "Bar" (1993), the cop culture; and "The Lost Year" (1993). "Tubularman" started a company in Houston called Satellite Studios to distribute "Tubularman" newspapers across the States.

"Satellite Studios operates like any other syndicate," Cardinale said. "The same set of strips are distributed at the same time in different papers all over the country."

In 1998, Matt Konami, "Spade Phillips" joined Satellite Studios and as of January, Konami's universities run "Tubularman" and/or "Spade Phillips." *The Battalion* is the only Texas newspaper to run "Tubularman."

Satellite Studios' customers consist of college newspapers. Cardinale hopes to expand to newspapers as well.

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