

# GMSS REPORTER

Volume 10, Issue 1

July 2024

## Artist brings comics to life



**Tom Foxmarnick, left, talks about his career as a comic writer and artist while Shared Living Provider Elke Jones looks on. Foxmarnick is self publishing his first solo comic book through Amazon and it is expected to be available for sale by the end of summer.**



Longtime comic creator self publishes book after Parkinson's diagnosis

By **MARY L. SERKALOW**  
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Like many kids, Tom Foxmarnick enjoyed comic books, especially those like Hot Stuff the Little Devil and Richie Rich. From the age of five, he would often visit the local comic bookstore in Cleveland where he grew up, admiring the choices and getting lost in the stories. It was on one of these visits that he first discovered Marvel comic books – and they made a huge impression.

“I was blown away and bought everything they had,” Foxmarnick said. “I just immersed myself in them.”

Foxmarnick's father, recognizing his son's passion for storytelling and drawing encouraged him to draw. “He said, ‘if you draw for me, I'll give you money to buy more comics,’” Foxmarnick said. “My dad was so supportive.”

When Foxmarnick got older and heard about New York comic conventions, his father took him – twice – in 1973 and 1976. It was during these trips that he realized just how focused he was on artwork.

After spotting an ad for The (Joe)

*See ARTIST, page 2*

# GMSS REPORTER

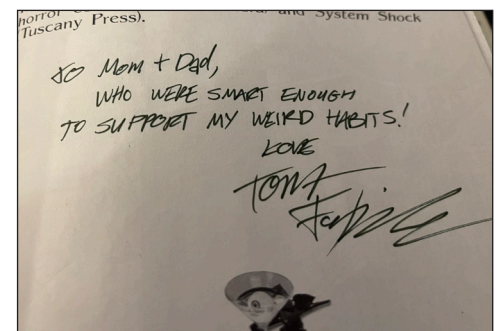
## Artist spent years studying comics

Kubert School opening, he knew he wanted to attend so his parents drove him to the school where Foxmarnick spent two years studying comics. And while he didn't feel he learned much there, he does remember it as a great experience and met other people who were just as enthralled with comics as he was.

It was after completing school and working nights as a desk clerk in a Cleveland hotel that Foxmarnick decided to move to the San Fernando Valley in California. He had been painting pieces during his overnight shifts, honing his craft, but knew there weren't many jobs for artists back then, so he decided to join his family in L.A. Once Foxmarnick arrived in L.A., he sought out various freelancing jobs and stumbled on CARtoons – a magazine that crafted automotive humor for kids. “It was a weird genre but the pay was pretty good,” Foxmarnick recalled. “I kept bringing them the magazine samples and they finally let me write for them, too.”

While working for CARtoons, Foxmarnick would frequently meet up for lunch with other staff who were also working in animation. It was during one of those lunches that another animator who worked for Disney asked if anyone could draw cars. Foxmarnick spoke up and showed him some samples. “And just like that, he said, ‘can you start Monday?’ So I did. Most guys had to start as an intern and work their way up, but that's how I got the job.”

Foxmarnick spent about 20 years



**Tom Foxmarnick flips through pages of some of his works, including a handwritten note to his parents.**

employed by Disney Studios as a production artist. Over the years, he also worked for other groups such as Universal, Warner Bros. Studios, Sony Studios, and Nickelodeon.

The connection, he explained, was to keep socializing with someone from each studio and stay in touch with the “in-crowd.” He

worked on several made-for-tv animated features such as “The Little Mermaid,” “Scooby-Doo,” “Tom & Jerry,” and “The Mummy,” among others. “It was good, it was great. I had a great time. The guys who worked on cartoons treated me like royalty,” Foxmarnick said.

See *BOOK*, page 3

# GMSS REPORTER

## Book self-published through Amazon

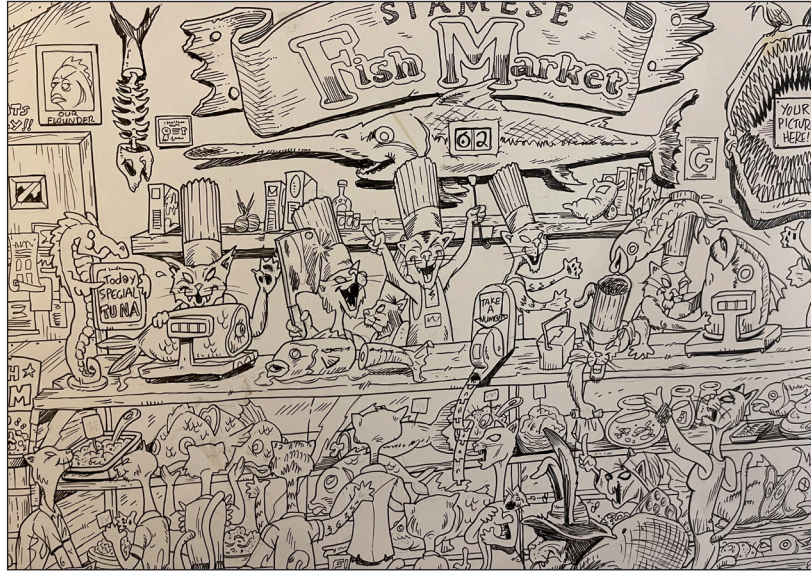
On the weekends, Foxmarnick still took freelance projects and continued to create for CARtoons. “The irony of the whole thing is I knew nothing about cars. I just could draw them,” Foxmarnick stated.

As a fan of biography books and shows like *America’s Got Talent*, Foxmarnick likes to see how changes in a life can unfold into a bigger story. “It’s amazing to see someone’s life change right in front of you,” he exclaimed. And while writer’s block is bound to happen to anyone during the span of a career, Foxmarnick overcame the occasional bout by “getting stoned and just getting over it.”

When asked how many comics he has made during the 25 years of working in the industry, Foxmarnick couldn’t even begin to guess. “I have no idea. A lot,” he said.

After a diagnosis of Parkinson’s a few years back, Foxmarnick decided to turn his focus and energy on writing a book without collaborating with other artists. And for the last four years, he has done just that. His book, titled “The Incredablistic, Fantastico Adventure of March Hare,” is a search and rescue tale. Foxmarnick describes the book as a village of animals where one goes missing so the other animals try to find him with a host of various adventures along the way.

Foxmarnick, who typically gravitates toward creating comics in black and white, says he did this one in color because it just felt right. “There are so many details that the



**LEFT:** A page from Foxmarnick’s self-published book is seen hanging on the wall in his bedroom recently. **BELOW:** A stack of past comics sits on a table.

color just breaks it up a bit,” he said. The images are hand drawn on large paper and then sent away to a company that makes the page smaller. Foxmarnick then puts the comic in Photoshop and adds the color.

“I started the book about four years ago. It has taken a long time to finish because of Parkinson’s,” Foxmarnick explained. The book is being self-published through Amazon and will be available to purchase in August 2024.

Elke Jones, a Green Mountain Support Services Shared Living Provider for Foxmarnick, says “it’s been a battle and we’re trying to stay focused on getting this book published.”

Jones credits the help of GMSS Service Coordinator Danielle Tinker with helping to get the process this far along. “Danielle was a blessing to help get this thing finished,” Jones said.

Vermont native comic book artist



and publisher Stephen R. Bisette, who attended The (Joe) Kubert School with Foxmarnick, looked him up about three years ago when Foxmarnick moved to Vermont. The pair had been friends in school and remained in contact over the years. Foxmarnick said he showed Bisette the new book during a recent visit. Foxmarnick said Bisette thinks it’s great.

“He called it my magnum opus,” Foxmarnick said proudly.

A full list of Foxmarnick’s work can be found at <https://m.imdb.com/name/nm0289330/>

# GMSS REPORTER

## Program support team reorganized

**D**ear GMSS Community, We are in the midst of reorganizing our program support team and I want to let you know about some exciting changes. First, we have transitioned our Communication Support Specialist and SLP Program Manager positions from the Clinical and Operations Teams into the Program Team. These moves are already facilitating improved communication and teamwork. We also decided to eliminate the vacant Program Director position and instead do some restructuring, both to recognize and build on current employees' strengths and to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. Stephanie Lindgren and Makayla Carpenter have both been promoted to the position of Assistant Program Director. They will be working, with me, as a senior programmatic leadership team and will together be responsible for the oversight of intake, service coordination, housing safety and accessibility, communication supports, employment supports, and community support. Both of these dedicated employees bring unique skills and strengths to the position and this

collaboration will benefit the agency by creating both depth and resiliency. Sonya Hazen has also been promoted from Senior Service Coordinator to Program Manager and will work alongside long-serving Program Manager Kareen Luan-grath.

It's always a pleasure to be able to promote from within and we are very excited that our strongest applicants for these positions were all internal candidates. GMSS strong!

The community music jam in celebration of Older Americans' month at the end of May was a great success and we were so pleased by the great turnout. There was singing, clapping, playing, laughter, and a lot of dancing. Those who were able to attend had a great time. After more than a year in which we necessarily had to look mostly inward, it is exciting to be breathing more deeply and able to turn outward to our broader community once again. We look forward



**ELIZABETH  
WALTERS**

*EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR*

to hosting more events like this.

In other good news, we have taken delivery of two WheelPad units which are presently being installed at our apartment duplex in Wolcott. These units will provide a private, fully accessible bedroom and bathroom attachment to each of two apartments. We are fortunate to have financial support for this project from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and grateful that they saw the alignment between their mission and our own.

In closing, we are also pleased to share that the board has just welcomed a new member, Kay Randall. In the months the board meets, which is most months, the board meets on the fourth Thursday at 6:00 pm. During the good weather months, the meetings are hybrid, both in person and with a Zoom option. The Zoom link has just been updated so that we can fully use our new (grant-funded) video-conference equipment. You can always find information about the current month's meeting schedule, and the meeting link, on our website at [gmssvt.org](http://gmssvt.org).

With appreciation for your dedication to GMSS,  
Elizabeth

# GMSS REPORTER

## NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**GMSS welcomes Nicole Turner to the team!**

I live in Morrisville with my husband and 3 boys. I enjoy helping others succeed and accomplish their goals. In my free time, I like outdoor activities such as kayaking, hiking, and biking. On those nice days you will catch me on the boat or having a BBQ with friends and family. I also love animals. I have 5 cats, (2 that are sphynx), 4 dogs, fish, and chickens.



**Nicole Turner**  
DIRECT SUPPORT  
PROFESSIONAL

## NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**GMSS welcomes Holly Gonyaw to the team!**

My name is Holly Gonyaw. I am excited to be joining the GMSS team! I attended CCV and studied early childhood education. For the last 20 years, I have worked with children of all ages in many capacities. Most recently I worked as an Inclusion specialist in a preschool setting. Working with children and families has always been my passion. I like the connections I make with them and hope I am making a difference in their lives, and I know that the time I spend with all of them makes a difference in mine. I live in Hardwick but grew up in Newport and have always lived in the NEK and love the fact that I can give back to my community. I love spending time with my two adult children. We often find ourselves out hiking and enjoying nature when we get time together.



**Holly Gonyaw**  
SERVICE COORDINATOR

## Mental Health Resources for Flood Recovery

The Vermont Department of Mental Health

Going through another round of flooding, especially on the anniversary of last year's disaster, can be deeply retraumatizing. While physical recovery is important, mental recovery is crucial too. You don't need to be directly affected by the floods to experience their mental health impacts. The following resources are available to assist you during this challenging time.

### Who to Call:

**\*\*Starting Over Strong Vermont** Helps with disaster recovery through community outreach and mental health services. **Dial 2-1-1** to connect with outreach workers and resources.

**\*\*Pathways Vermont Support Line** Call or text **833-888-2557** for confidential, non-judgmental peer support for Vermonters 18 and older. Available 24/7.

**\*\*988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** Call or text 988 for immediate support from trained crisis counselors who can offer emotional support and local resources.

**The SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline:** Call or text **1-800-985-5990** for free, confidential crisis counseling available 24/7, on all days of the year

**\*\*Denotes Vermont-Based Resources\*\***

**\*\*Vermont Mobile Crisis** Vermont mobile crisis teams provide in-person support and crisis intervention. **Dial 988** to reach your local community mental health centers.

For more information on flooding resources, tips for coping, visit [mentalhealth.vermont.gov/flood](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/flood) or scan the QR code:



### Contact your local county Designated Agency

Designated Agencies provide mental health care in your local communities, they are ready and available to provide you with support.

Clara Martin Center (Orange): 802-728-4466

Counseling Service of Addison County (Addison): 802-388-6751

Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (Windham & Windsor): 802-886-4500

Howard Center (Chittenden): 802-488-7777

Lamoille County Mental Health Services (Lamoille): 802-635-7174

Northeast Kingdom Human Services (Caledonia, Essex, Orleans): 802-748-3181

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (Franklin, Grand Isle): 802-524-6554

Rutland Mental Health Services (Rutland): 802-775-2381

United Counseling Service of Bennington County (Bennington): 802-442-5491

Washington County Mental Health Services (Washington): 802-479-4083



For a full list of Lamoille County resources, please visit: <https://uwlamoille.org/learn/july-2023-flooding.html>

## UPCOMING GMSS BOARD MEETING

The next GMSS board meeting will be held **Thursday, July 25th, 2024, from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at GMSS. All members of the GMSS community are welcome to attend board meetings. The board will designate a public comment period at each meeting during which community members may ask questions or offer comments.**

## Therapeutic Options

- \* **Aug. 14th from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.** — Full Course for new hires
- \* **Sept. 11th from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** — Re-Cert Virtual
- \* **Oct. 9th from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** — Re-Cert In Person

\* Training registration links can be found on our website's SLP resource page.

## Newsletter changes

The GMSS newsletter will be switching from monthly to quarterly. Regular updates and invitations to events and activities will be sent out through email as they arise. Please submit any announcements, photos, content, etc., through our website's submission form on our SLP Resource page at <https://gmssvt.org/slp-resources>

## July Employee Anniversaries

Elizabeth Walters – 7/01/2004 (20 years)  
Danielle Tinker – 7/18/2016 (8 years)  
Ashley Lafirira – 7/17/2023 (1 year)  
Alysia Coolum – 7/31/2022 (2 years)  
Jeanine Chalue – 7/13/2008 (16 years)  
Lisa Tilton – 7/18/2016 (8 years)

## July SLP Anniversaries

Jill Sweet – 7/15/2021 (3 years)  
Danette Powers – 7/1/2021 (3 years)  
Richard Mandigo – 7/1/2020 (4 years)  
Elizabeth Manfredi – 7/1/2019 (5 years)  
Deborah Allen – 7/7/2017 (7 years)  
Judy Boyce – 7/1/2016 (8 years)

Green Mountain Support Services  
93 James Road  
Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone: (802) 888-7602  
Fax: (802) 888-1182



Ensuring Our Neighbors with Disabilities  
are at Home in their Community.

[gmssvt.org](http://gmssvt.org)

Follow us on Facebook!

## BINGO DATES

*Any changes will be posted on our Facebook page and at the agency.*

**9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.**

July 17, 2024  
July 31, 2024  
Aug. 14, 2024  
Aug. 28, 2024  
Sept. 11, 2024  
Sept. 25, 2024  
Oct. 23, 2024  
Oct. 30, 2024  
Nov. 6, 2024  
Nov. 20, 2024  
Dec. 4, 2024  
Dec. 18, 2024