



## Ms. Heidecker debuts off-Broadway one-woman show

by Sydney Moyer

The word “freak” has many times been the center of a story from the life of Parkland High School AP English teacher Ms. Heidecker. Her classes often take in her outlandish tales with slack-jawed astonishment and a chorus of “I don’t believe you’s.”

Now, in a one-woman show written and performed by Ms. Heidecker, she recounts her ludicrous life experiences. “Freak Magnet” opened at the 21-and-over cabaret comedy club Don’t Tell Mama in New York City on November 21 and is scheduled to run for two more days in December. The show is a musical comedy chronicling Heidecker’s real-life run-ins with the strange and the stranger.

“I like to say that I am the last stop on the way to ‘Freak Mecca,’” said Heidecker of the propensity to find herself in odd situations.

“Freak Magnet” started out as a graphic novel, later evolving into the performance piece that it is today. “The show is actually part of a long-running joke with my friends from college, who used to beg me to tell them stories of random and crazy things that had happened

to me,” said Heidecker. “I used to jokingly say I was a magnet for crazy people. Over time, I started refining the stories and tried to think of the best way to communicate them to others.” It seems that Heidecker’s audience has expanded to more than just her peers.

A group of Parkland High School English teachers took a group trip to see the first showing in November.

Said senior English teacher Ms. Brobst, “Ms. Heidecker was, in typical Ms. Heidecker fashion, fabulous.



The opening of Ms. Heidecker’s show was a huge success with the audience, garnering offers to perform elsewhere in the city and boosting ticket sales for subsequent shows.



Photos courtesy of Katie Sokoler

Ms. Heidecker has always considered herself a magnet for freaks.

She is entertaining without even trying.”

Ms. Heidecker has been performing on the stage since age seven, studying theatre in New York City at Actor’s Studio when she was sixteen and studying voice with an opera coach at the Brooklyn Conservatory the same year. Although majoring in English and Fine Arts, Ms. Heidecker kept up with theatre in college and now teaches theatre classes at Parkland High School.

“Being in Ms.

Heidecker’s class is like watching a Broadway show everyday—you leave the room amazed by the spectacle,” said senior Dillon Collins. Students literally

cry when there is a sub in for Ms. Heidecker because her class is so engrossing. Her students are her audience and she is, in every aspect, a performer.

“Ms. Heidecker’s class is, without a doubt, one of the best I’ve ever had,” said senior Kim Martel.

One thing is for sure—the world has not seen the last of Ms. Heidecker. First stop, freak show, next stop, Broadway.

## Captain America returns to life, both literary and respiratory

by Justin Harrison

Among the arch-villains of the Marvel universe, the Red Skull stands out as particularly menacing. He lacks Magneto’s desire to bring about a better world for an oppressed minority, Doctor Doom’s charisma, the Kingpin’s ruthlessness and Joe Quesada’s questionable storytelling abilities. Instead, the Red Skull claims hatred as his reason for being. His sole goal in life is to crush any ideologies or cultures opposed to his cherished Nazism. As such, it is natural that the Red Skull’s sworn enemy is a hero who embodies all that Nazism despises: Steve Rogers, a young artist transformed by a secret “super soldier” serum into Captain America.

There is one slight problem with their rivalry at present though: Steve Rogers is dead. At the conclusion of 2007’s Civil War, he was assassinated by one of the Red Skull’s minions while being led to court for his beliefs. For Ed Brubaker though, this is far from the end of the story. Since

the launch of Captain America volume five in 2005, the Seattle-based writer’s work has redefined Captain America, successfully revived a character long thought impossible to revive, killed the main character and integrated events from the real world into his story in a way that serves it, rather than merely flopping about as a blunt statement. In the process, he has also won two Eisner awards and a Harvey award, all for “Best Writer,” and been nominated for a “Best Continuing Series” Eisner award.

It is Brubaker’s skill with characterization that earned him those accolades, and nowhere is that skill more evident than with his work on James “Bucky” Barnes. Barnes, Captain America’s sidekick throughout World War II had been dead for sixty years, both in the real world and the Marvel Universe. Previous “revivals” had proven to be illusions or dreams, and Barnes was largely considered impossible to write. Starting with the “Winter Soldier” storyline though, Brubaker brought Barnes back to sweeping critical acclaim.

Instead of simply reviving him as he was in World War II, Brubaker writes Barnes as a man haunted by his actions as the Soviet assassin Winter Soldier, but determined to redeem himself. After Steve Rogers is apparently murdered, Barnes steps into the role of Captain America. The transition is a slow one, with Barnes needing to learn how to be a public figure after years of acting as an assassin. But Brubaker lets him grow, and by the time of the recently trade-collected Man with No Face storyline Barnes has worked through his guilt over the

Winter Soldier’s actions. He also finds himself accepted by his mentor’s peers: Iron Man, Thor, Spider-Man and others.

As for the Red Skull, Brubaker restores the man whom Hitler both trained and feared to “Big Bad” status. Rather than assault the United States with a giant robot shaped like Captain America, which he at one point did do, the Skull chooses to take advantage of the financial crisis. He floods the housing market with sub-prime mortgages, creating civil unrest, and at the same time secretly funds a fringe politician, whose promises of a more secure nation earn the people’s trust. Once that politician wins the presidential election, the Red Skull will effectively control the country he has waged silent war against for upwards of sixty years. Then Captain America stops him.

As of next month, Steve Rogers will return to the world of the living with the conclusion of Captain America Reborn, Brubaker’s take on Roger’s history. Reviews have praised it as his definitive work on the character, as respectful of its audience as it is of its characters. Given the latter so far, that is high praise.

