

# COVER OF HOUSTON CHRONICLE - PRINT - ORGANIZER OF THE EVENT WITH CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM HOUSTON TEEN COUNCIL



TUESDAY  
JANUARY 23, 2007  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE  
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### Forecaster swap going on at Fox

**C**HANNEL 26 weather forecasters Mike Iscovitz and Cecilia Sinclair have swapped shifts. Iscovitz moves from mornings to nights. Sinclair heads in the other direction.

**I'm forecasting that other Channel 26 reporters will make a similar switcheroo. Morning anchor Jan Bennett has prime time written all over her.**

**Today's trivia:** What is the only animal that is born with horns on its head?

**My neighborhood supermarket is giving the shes.**

**Since when did supermarket employees have medical expertise?**

**Advertisement:** "Charger on Arch II, all day Arch up front, please... and Eric, when you're done spraying the window and curbs, we have a lady in pharmacy who needs a hernia long straightener. How are you going to do the hernia music you've been listening to."

**I'm filing a missing-dog report for Radar, the Channel 26 Weather Dog. I haven't seen him nor hair of Radar in a long time.**

**King Booker's Pro Wrestling Alliance will hold its second show Thursday night at the Pasadena Convention Center. First bell is at 7 p.m.**

**The main event has "The World's Greatest Top Team" of Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin appearing off against La Resistance. Last month, Haas and Benjamin took**

**showered King Booker and left him unconscious in the ring.**

**That was of course the debut of the Pro Wrestling Alliance for King Booker — although I've been unconscious at some debates, and it's not necessarily a bad thing.**

**I'm not in a match Thursday, but let's just say I'll be hanging around making sure that Haas and Benjamin don't pull any tricks. Call me a special enforcer." King Booker said.**

**That King Booker, such a Phooie on HOFFMAN, Page 27**



**IN CHARACTER:** Julia Smith, top, and other teens dressed as comic-book characters, listen to author Barry Lyga being a reading from his new book, *The Astonishing* Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl, at Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum.

## Fankids unite

In tapping teen market, *Fanboy* author finds his superpower is not being super lame

By JEANNE SEVER  
PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

**B**ANANA Man was there. He hadn't read the book, but he didn't want to miss a gathering of superheros. Catwoman had read the book, and she reported that it avoided the trap of so many teen books, "which practically scream '13 and under.'" Author Barry Lyga described the plot this way: boys and girls and sex and comic books and geeks.

Which pretty much summed up the scene at the Contemporary Arts Museum Sunday afternoon, when the Imprint Brown Reading Series teamed up with CAM's Teen Council to present Lyga reading from his first novel, *The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl*.  
Photo by SEVER, Page 27



**MODERN TEEN:** Lyga's book is about a high school misfit who reads comic books and is secretly writing a graphic novel.

*Surprise, surprise, she's all in black. Not so much wearing black as swaddled in it — a black poncho that looks like you could make a parachute out of it, along with black leggings and the ever-present black boots. Her arms are bare, poking out at angles from under the poncho as she plants her fists on her hips.*

— FROM *The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl*



RANDY JACKSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

**Idol worship**  
Are the American Idol judges meaner this season? Were the Seattle auditions worse than the ones in Houston? The truth is discovered.

STORY ON PAGE 22

### CD REVIEW

## The Shins get dark, moody and poppish

By ANDREW DANIEL  
PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

**A**LBUMS are caught in the wild or born in the laboratory.

Shining the light across the wild world for the Shins, bands usually join the ranks of safety goggles and white coats.

Shining sounds like a labor of love with an emphasis on the labor, right down to the title. While *OH* featured 10

the band's boldest debut, and Chutes Too Narrow, its best. The top record: second release, had a laser chain, Winster lark's natural tone.

What isn't to say it's with-out charm, it's a Shins record, after all. Promoter James M... see comments in our top inquiry. Photo by [unreadable], Page 27

**EXTRA:** Listen to clips of songs from *Wincing the Night Away* by The Shins. [chron.com/music](http://chron.com/music)



**THEY MIGHT CHANGE YOUR LIFE:** Indie pop band the Shins' new album *Wincing the Night Away* lacks natural ease but is not without charm.



Vote in our weekly polls at [chron.com/ultimate](http://chron.com/ultimate).

Cast your votes in our Ultimate Houston Reader Picks online polls. This week: Venue to See Houston Bands, Bagel Shop, Place to Watch the Super Bowl and Dance Company.

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## Most Popular

1. After 147 years, this Houston-area ranch is available to buy
2. The best roadside attractions on I-10 from Houston to San Antonio
3. Houston native R'Bonney Gabriel is the new Miss Universe
4. Fewer attend why.

## CULTURE // BOOKS

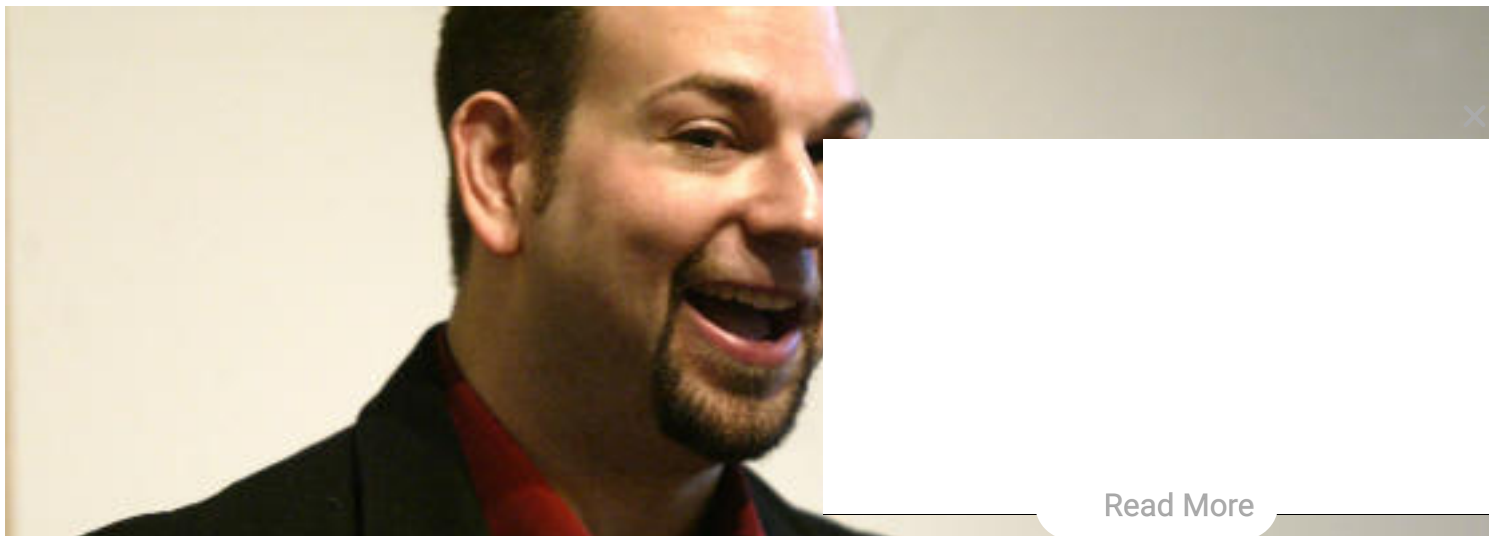
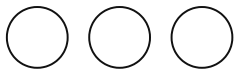
# Fankids unite for book reading

Comics and MingleIn tapping teen market, Fanboy author finds his superpower is not being super lame



**Jeannie Kever**, Copyright 2007 Houston Chronicle

Jan. 22, 2007





Author Barry Lyga's book is about a high school misfit who loves comic books and is secretly writing a graphic novel.  
Jessica Kourkounis/For the Chronicle

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Author Barry Lyga described the plot this way: l  
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The reading was a tentative foray into teen territory by Inprint, the group better known for bringing such literary heavyweights as [Joan Didion](#) and playwright [Terrence McNally](#) to town. With the [Cool Brains!](#) teen series, it is entering the booming field of youth literature.

Literature, as in the story of a 15-year-old who is secretly writing a graphic novel in his basement bedroom, and Kyra, the mysterious goth girl who dubs him "Fanboy." Fanboy wants three things: A new computer. A copy of Giant-Size X-Men No. 1 in mint condition.

And the third?

Fanboy's not telling. Lyga isn't, either.



He knows, he said when the question came up Sunday, but he won't say. Readers can submit their own suggestions to his Web site, however — [www.fanboyandgothgirl.com](http://www.fanboyandgothgirl.com) — and the best answer will win an iPod.

Lyga grew up reading comic books, and not even a degree from [Yale University](#) made him stop. He spent a decade working in marketing for the comic-book industry before quitting to write *Fanboy*.

CAM's Teen Council, a group of high school students formed to draw kids to the arts, sponsored a comic-book-art exhibit by local teen artists in conjunction with Lyga's appearance.

That's what drew [Henry Flott](#), a 15-year-old sophomore at [Klein Collins High School](#) who had a piece in the show. He came for the reception honoring the teen artists but didn't stick around for Lyga's reading.

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"I'm not a fan of books that much," he said.

Oh, well.

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He wasn't dressed as a superhero, either, but no one held that against him.

Still, once Banana Man ducked through the doorway, it was hard to look at anyone else.

He was so yellow, for one thing.

"Yeah," [Wiley Jennings](#) shrugged. He's a senior at the [High School for the Performing and Visual Arts](#) and a member of the Teen Council, and he wore the giant banana costume, accessorized with yellow shoes, with a casual élan. He hadn't read Lyga's book, he admitted, but he didn't want to miss the event.

How often do you get to cruise Westheimer in a big banana costume?

Catwoman, better known as [Alice Dennard](#), another Teen Council member and a senior at HSPVA, had actually read *Fanboy*, which was as well as worthy of kids her age. So many books are targeted at kids in middle school or younger, sh

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## MOST POPULAR

1. **Tigner Ranch near Houston listed for \$8.8M after 147 years in same family**
2. **The most unique roadside attractions from Houston to San Antonio**
3. **Houston native R'Bonney Gabriel wins the title of Miss Universe**
4. **Fewer Americans are attending church but congress remains largely Christian**
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People asked Lyga about writing and comics and wanted to know what kind of comics *Goth Girl* had in independent comics, he answered. Definitely not

*Fanboy* doesn't shy away from tough topics, one said they liked about the book.

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That is an issue in writing for teenagers, although Lyga said he's comfortable pushing the line. "Kids see a lot of stuff on TV," he said. "They see a lot on the Internet. You can't pretend it doesn't happen."

So, although he doesn't mention [Columbine High School](#) by name in the book, Fanboy fantasizes about someone breaking into the school and killing all the kids who have bullied him, a constantly shifting list. "I don't think you can shrink from those things," Lyga said.

But *The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl* is more hopeful than horrifying, and Sunday's reading was mainly just for fun.

Even if you weren't a teenager.

[Michelle Mower](#), a 34-year-old screenwriter, liked the fact that the book was written for teenagers without writing down to them. ✕

"There's an edginess to this that we didn't have she said.

Besides, she identified with Goth Girl. "I truly believe Kyra was me when I was in high school," Mower said. "I was goth before goth was popular."

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Written By  
**Jeannie Keever**

Reach Jeannie on

Jeannie Keever joined the Houston Chronicle's energy team in September 2012.

A native of West Texas, she has been at the Houston Chronicle since 1997, working in the features department for 10 years before moving to the city desk, where she reported on higher education, the 2010 Census and health care before moving to the business desk.

She previously worked at the Sarasota (Florida) Herald-Tribune, the San Antonio Light, the Longview (Washington) Daily News, the El Paso Times and the San Angelo Standard Times.

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