



By Sean McQuaid  
Casual comics readers often cry confusion on trying to make sense of some books' ongoing continuity-- and few comic books have a lengthier or more checkered history than the Justice League. If anything, the League has never been more mixed up than it is now. There are currently three ongoing Justice League books (*Justice League America*, *Justice League Task Force* and *Extreme Justice*), each one featuring a completely separate group calling itself the Justice League.

In all its forms, the Justice League has been an assemblage of the best and brightest DC Comics characters. The original League was the *Justice League of America*, which was inspired by the original comic book superhero team, DC's Justice Society of America. The JLoA lasted about two decades and hundreds of issues, until the cancellation of their series which concluded with the team's disbanding. Almost immediately thereafter, several League members joined with other heroes in the *Legends* mini-series to form a new Justice League. It soon won international diplomatic status and established a European-based roster (*Justice League International*) and a special missions unit (*Justice League Task Force*), plus the home team (which became known as *Justice League America*).

More recently, a series of crises led to the League's official U.N. sponsorship being revoked and the team breaking up along ideological lines as three rival leaders emerged. Wonder Woman remained leader of the core, "original" team (still known as *Justice League America*) while Martian Manhunter and Captain Atom established their own independent Justice League rosters (in *Justice League Task Force* and *Extreme Justice* respectively). All three teams claim the name Justice League even though they work apart (and Captain Atom's vigilante team considers itself a rival to the others).

The dubious *Extreme Justice* book has

already been reviewed in this column. *Justice League Task Force* is okay but unremarkable; its small, low-key cast makes it less appealing than the other rosters, the moreso since the



team lacks a distinctive direction or identity -- heck, they're not even a Task Force anymore (despite their title), just a Justice League splinter group. It's passable reading.

*Justice League America* is the strongest of the three titles, partly because it's the heir to the name and prestige of the original JLA, with a membership culled from the cream of the DC Universe. The current roster is (for the most part) very intriguing, with a mixture of neglected characters (like Obsidian and Blue Devil) and established stars (like The Flash and Wonder Woman), plus Justice League staples like Fire and Metamorpho. It's one of the most interesting JLA rosters ever, and writer Gerard Jones does a good job of characterizing most of them both in terms of individuality and interplay. Problems lie in his narrative captioning (often awkward or intrusive) and his characterization of Obsidian as absurdly pessimistic (a caricature at best of earlier portrayals). Jones should also work to display Nuklon's and Obsidian's full range of

abilities, since he has barely scratched the surface in that area. Still, it is a very interesting group and Jones has a number of fascinating subplots on the go. Storytelling is strong



overall. **SPECIAL BONUS:** Lest anyone be confused, we're throwing in the first-ever Reader's Digest guide to who's who in the Justice League and where they're at. Read on. . . .

**Justice League America members:** Fire, Diana (the original Wonder Woman, currently stripped of her title by rival Amazon Artemis), The Flash (III), Metamorpho, Crimson Fox, Hawkman (II), Nuklon, Obsidian, Warrior, Power Girl, Icemaiden, Wonder Woman (II) and Blue Devil.

**Justice League Task Force members:** Martian Manhunter, Gypsy, The Ray (II), Despero (L-Ron) and Triumph.

**Extreme Justice League members:** Blue Beetle (II), Booster Gold, Captain Atom, Maxima, Amazing Man (II), and Firestorm.

**Active individuals but not active members:** Aquaman, Batman, Black Canary (II), Green Lantern II (alias Parallax, turned renegade), Green Arrow, Atom (II), Elongated Man, Tornado (formerly Red Tornado II), Zatanna,

Vixen, Captain Marvel, Mister Miracle, Doctor Light (II), Rocket Red #4, Lobo, Huntress (II), Orion, Lightray, Superman, Tasmanian Devil, Bloodwynd, Black Condor (II), Agent Liberty, Animal Man, Blue Jay and Maya; Nightwing, Bronze Tiger, Dolphin, and Thunderbolt (one-time Task Force members).

**Deceased:** The Flash (II), Hawkman, Hawkgirl, Steel (II), Vibe, Doctor Fate, Doctor Fate (II), Rocket Red # 7, Ice, General Glory, Crimson Fox (II), Silver Sorceress and Hourman.

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In addition to the above groups and characters, there was a corporate-sponsored division of the U.N.-sanctioned Justice League called the **Conglomerate**. Its founding members were Booster Gold, Gypsy, Maxi-Man, Praxis, Hardline, Vapor and Echo. Now independent of the League, the Conglomerate's members include Templar, Echo, Hardline, Nuklon and Jesse Quick.

There was also a mercifully short-lived **Justice League Antarctica (JLANT)**, whose members included Major Disaster, Cluemaster, Clock King, Multi-Man, Big Sir, The Mighty Bruce, G'Nort and the Scarlet Skier. Assembled by the Justice League as a means of making unobtrusive use of several troublesome hangers-on, JLANT folded when the team destroyed their headquarters while fending off killer penguins.

Last but by no means least, there was a "funny animal" version of the Justice League of America on an alternate earth called "Earth C." This team, called the **Just'a Lotta Animals**, included Super Squirrel, Batmouse, Wonder Wabbit, Green Lambkin, The Crash, Aquaduck, The Martian Anteater, Green Sparrow, The Item, Hawkmoose, Stacked Canary, Elongator, The Rat Tornado, Zapanda and Firestork. These instant classics co-starred in a two-issue *Captain Carrot and his Amazing Zoo Crew* story, and we can only hope they return. After all, to paraphrase Tiny Toon Elmyra, "I just love animals!"

## What really matters

Faith Hunter

Well, the break is over, back to the trenches. So did you all have fun? I know, I know, it's not very kind to speak of gourmet when we're all eating fast-food. But, hey, think of it this way: another month and (thank goodness) it'll be over.

Still, I know that this doesn't comfort many of you, since you have term papers coming out your ears, reading enough to last until Christmas, and only exams-- which we

all love with all our weary hearts-- to look forward to at the end of it all.

And so, I sacrificed my entire break for you (well, okay, more like half an hour of it, but still). I've come up with 10 reasons you should stick out this next month or so. I know that your eyes are already glazing over from reading yet another paragraph, so I'll not delay. Pay attention. Here they are:

1. You're hung-over from the break anyway -- what better place to fall asleep than in a nice cosy classroom with the monotonous tones of your professors ringing in your ears?
2. If you go to class and understand things now, you'll be better off when you start your 8 papers the night before they're due.

3. If you don't have class, you can't skip class (think of the fun you'd miss!).

4. If you leave UPEI, you'll be flipping hamburgers next month. (Why not wait until you graduate before starting that?)

5. Going to class each day is of vital importance because it is the way that many of you remember what day it is. (Think about how confused you get just after a weekend!)

6. If you aren't at UPEI, you won't read the X-Press, and you'll lose the abundance of inspiration and practical advice you get from some very wise and experienced students (like me).

7. Where else but the Pit can you possibly get apple juice, a turkey sub, an exotic view of the RL breezeway, the company of your peers

(stressed-out, but procrastinating students), and the beginnings of lung cancer all at the same time?

8. What about driving around the parking lots each morning? If this were gone, you'd never listen to the news on the radio!

9. If you left UPEI, your parents wouldn't send you cookies.

10. Most importantly, without UPEI, you'd probably never read, you'd never analyze or critically think about the world around you, you'd sleep more than 4 hours each night and eat more than one meal each day, and you'd learn what it means to be truly lazy. Now do you want that to happen to you? Take care & dream big, folks.