



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 10, 2010

## A Gay in the Life of Archie Andrews

It's getting so you can't trust anything marketed as family-friendly entertainment these days. Disney, a holdout against the coarsening of popular culture for more than a decade after its founder's death, long ago gave up the battle. G-rated movies today feature flatulence jokes and other questionable references that would have relegated (elevated?) them to PG status 20 years ago. Even cartoons cannot be relied on to offer good, clean fun.



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Case in point: Archie Comics, one of the last bastions of clean, albeit not necessarily knee-slapping, humor has apparently decided that in order to remain "relevant" it must introduce a homosexual character named Kevin Keller.

[CNN reports](#): "The introduction of Kevin is just about keeping the world of Archie Comics current and inclusive. Archie's hometown of Riverdale has always been a safe world for everyone. It just makes sense to have an openly gay character in Archie comic books," said Jon Goldwater, Archie Comics co-CEO."

The [theory](#) on the part of outside observers is that the company is doing this to attract media attention and thereby to increase its chances of obtaining movie and TV deals for its properties. It's the same reason they ran the "[Archie Marries Veronica](#)" and "[Archie Marries Betty](#)" stories last year, which they also announced to great fanfare.

This is probably true, but what a shame that we have reached the point where a comic-book publisher apparently feels that, in order to succeed in the popular culture of 2010, he must include a character whose defining characteristic is a propensity for deviant behavior.

How far we have come from the days when the [Comics Code](#) declared that "sex perversion or any inference to same is strictly forbidden"! Among those who created the Comics Code Authority in 1954 and then enforced the code was none other than [John L. Goldwater](#), co-founder and president of Archie Comics and father of the man who today is proudly introducing a homosexual character to Riverdale.



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Back in the 1970s and '80s, Archie Comics employed born-again Christian [Al Hartley](#), who frequently wove moral messages into the stories he drew. He eventually was able to convince John Goldwater to allow him to create a separate line of Archie comics with explicitly Christian messages; Hartley ended up drawing at least 19 of them.

Is there any doubt that Hartley would not be welcome at today's Archie Comics and that his suggestion to draw a Christian version would be laughed out of the board room? By the same token, if John Goldwater could see the direction in which his son is taking the company, is there any doubt that he would be greatly dismayed?

*Michael Tennant is a software developer and freelance writer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

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