ROY THOMAS' NEAL-LITHIC COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™

NEAL ADAMS REVISITED!

INCREDIBLE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY ALEX GRAND & BILL FIELD AND EMILIO SOLTERO

TWOMORROWS

$10.95 In the USA

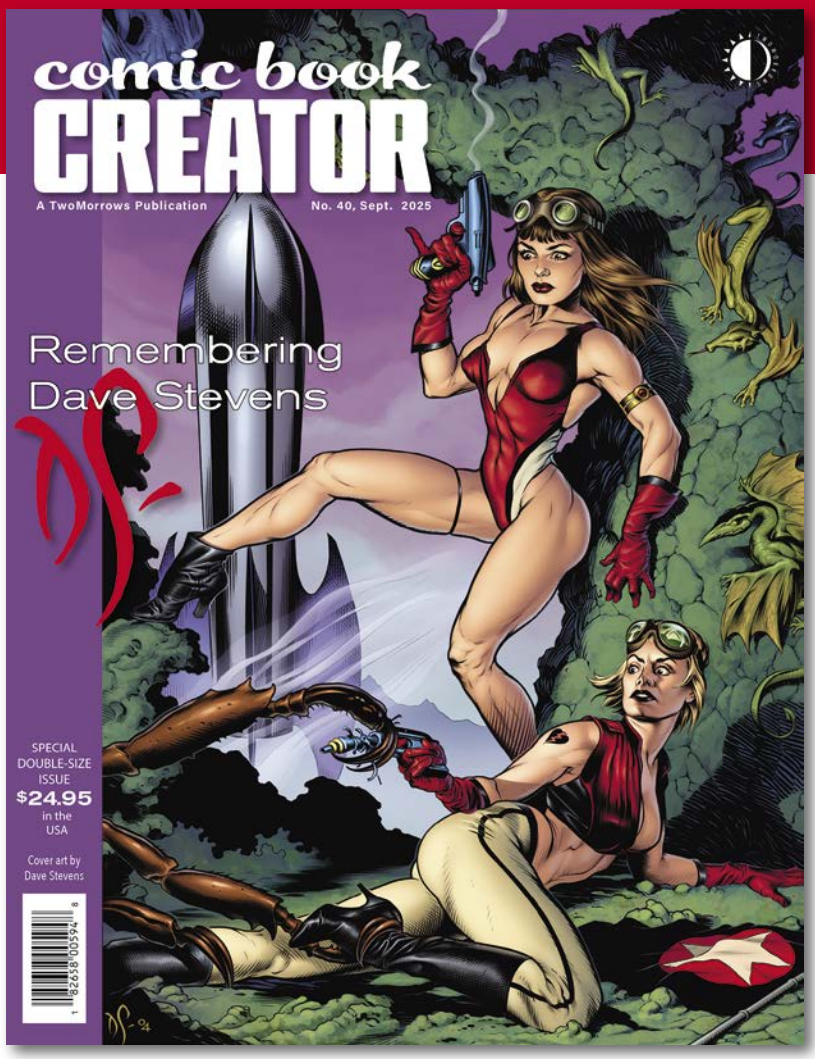
No. 195 Sept. 2025



Art & characters TM & © Marvel Characters Inc.

1 82658 00562 7

COMIC BOOK CREATOR IS NOW BI-MONTHLY!



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #40
(DOUBLE-SIZE DAVE STEVENS ISSUE!)
(counts as two issues of your subscription—save by subscribing!)

Behind a previously unpublished cover, **CBC #40** celebrates the life and art of the great **DAVE STEVENS** in a special double-sized issue completely devoted to the late artist! For this deluxe issue, friends, fans, and family share testimonials, photos, and fascinating artifacts, plus a gallery of amazing artwork by the Rocketeer creator, some never before seen. There's also three interviews with Dave conducted by CBC editor **JON B. COOKE**, two Q+A's with Dave by guest associate editor **STEVEN C. RINGGENBERG**, and **JEFF GELB**'s conversation with the artist recorded during the making of *The Rocketeer* motion picture. Dave's sister **JENNIFER BAWCUM** shares about her brother in an exclusive chat, and we also interview some of Dave's closest friends, including **MICHAEL W. KALUTA**, about their memories of the man. Plus: a conversation with **KELVIN MAO**, the director of the 2022 film documentary, *Dave Stevens: Drawn To Perfection*, about making the movie and its recent success on streaming services, which has resulted in an entirely new generation of Dave Stevens fans. And, of course, no such tribute would be complete without a heartfelt salute to America's sweetheart **BETTIE PAGE**!

(160-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$24.95**
(Digital Edition) **$9.99** • Ships October 2025

NOW BI-MONTHLY!
6-issue subscriptions: $76 US
$95.70 International • $29 Digital Only

All characters and properties TM & © their respective owners.



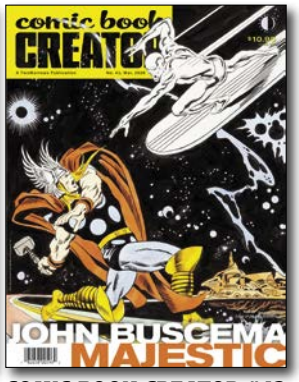
COMIC BOOK CREATOR #41
LEN WEIN's life as writer/editor from creating Swamp Thing and Wolverine, to **MOORE** and **GIBBONS**' Watchmen, and more! Plus the sad demise of **WILL EISNER**'s *P*S Army Preventive Maintenance* magazine, interview with romance and pin-up artist **JAY SCOTT PIKE**, more of **STEVE WILLIS**, and **SHAUN CLANCY** reveals the saga of **ADRIAN LOPEZ**'s *Harpoon/Apple Pie* humor mags! **FRANK CHO** cover!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Dec. 2025



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #42
PAT BRODERICK discusses his career, from the Crusty Bunkers to unforgettable work on Firestorm, Micronauts, Captain Marvel, and more! Plus the 1940s KKK-crushing district attorney **FIGHTING LAWYER**, profile of **PAUL BUHLE**, **SHARY FLENNIKEN** interview, ginchy super-heroes created in 1972 by **WRIGHTSON, REESE, WINDSOR-SMITH**, and others for *Esquire* magazine, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Feb. 2026



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #43
Informative conversation with "Big" **JOHN BUSCEMA** and a biographical essay about the Marvel legend by **JON B. COOKE**, including an awesome art gallery. Plus we share about the life and tragic fate of **BILL MANTLO** (co-creator of Rocket Raccoon and Cloak and Dagger), inside comics printer Eastern Color Printing by **SHAUN CLANCY**, more with **SHARY FLENNIKEN**, chat with **RIC ESTRADA**, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships April 2026



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #44
CARMINE INFANTINO radio interview by **KEN GALE** and **ED MENJE**, **JON B. COOKE** on Carmine's stint as DC editorial director/publisher, **ROBERT KANIGHER**'s 1989 conversation with **STEVE WHITAKER** and **TIM BATEMAN**, *World War 3* Illustrated with **PETER KUPER** and **SETH TOBOCMAN**, **DAVE COCKRUM**'s Aurora model kit pamphlets, **GLEN CADIGAN**'s interview with horror comics writer **JOE HILL**, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships June 2026



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #45
GENE COLAN showcase with **TOM FIELD**, Gene's 75th birthday celebration from Comic-Con 2001, **MARK WHEATLEY** spotlights former boss **MYRON FASS**' *Heavy Metal* rip-off **GASM**, **JON B. COOKE**'s visit to defunct comics publisher **CROSSGEN**, **CAROL LAY** interview, more with **JOE HILL**, **SHAUN CLANCY**'s look at **HILLMAN PERIODICALS** (publisher of *Crime Does Not Pay* and *Airboy*), **HEMBECK,** and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Aug. 2026

TwoMorrows.
The Future of Comics History.
TwoMorrows Publishing • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA

Phone: **919-449-0344**
E-mail: **store@twomorrows.com**
Web: **www.twomorrows.com**

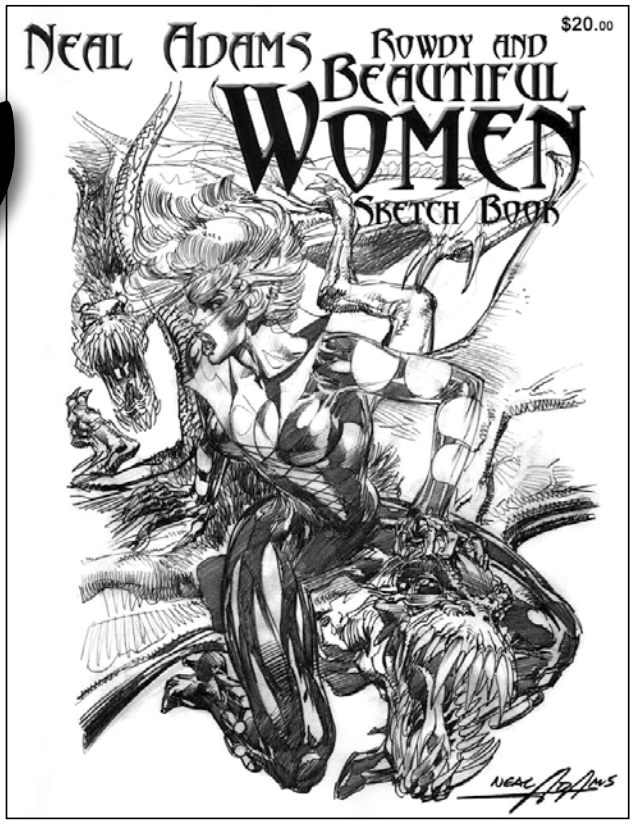
Don't miss exclusive sales, limited editions, and new releases! Sign up for our mailing list:
https://groups.io/g/twomorrows

Vol. 3, No. 195/September 2025

Alter Ego™

Editor
Roy Thomas
Associate Editor
Jim Amash
Design & Layout
Christopher Day
Consulting Editor
John Morrow
FCA Editor
P.C. Hamerlinck
J.T. Go (Associate Editor)
Mark Lewis
(Cover Coordinator)
Comic Crypt Editor
Michael T. Gilbert
Editorial Honor Roll
Jerry G. Bails (founder)
Ronn Foss, Biljo White
Mike Friedrich, Bill Schelly
Proofreader
William J. Dowlding
Cover Artist
Neal Adams
Cover Colorist
Tom Palmer
With Special Thanks to:
Sal Amendola
Heidi Amash
Pedro Angosto
Bob Bailey
Alberto Becattini
Frank Brunner
Bernie Bubnis
Glen Cadigan
John Cimino
Shaun Clancy
John Cochran
Jon B. Cooke
Chet Cox
Ray Cuthbert
John Fahey
Bill Field
Shane Foley
Joe Frank
Stephan A. Friedt
Grant Geissman
Janet Gilbert
Alex Grand
Grand Comics Database (website)
Martin Gray
Heritage Auctions
Alex Jay
Jim Kealy
Dennis Lieberson
Jean-Marc Lofficier
Art Lortie
Jim Ludwig
Doug Martin
Mark Muller
Nigel Parkinson
Pinterest (website)
Barry Pearl
Paul Michael Moon Rogers
James Rosen
Randy Sargent
Anthony Snyder
Emilio Soltero
Bryan D. Stroud
Ronn Sutton
Dann Thomas
Mike Zeck
Alex Saviuk
Randy Sargent
Eric Schumacher
Greg Skidmore
Anthony Snyder
Dann Thomas
Alan Waite

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Alberto Castelli,
José Delbo,
Greg Hildebrandt,
Jules Feiffer, & Hy Eisman



Contents

Writer/Editorial: "If Super-Heroes Existed..." 2
"I Think I *Created* The Golden Era" 3
Neal Adams interviewed by Alex Grand & Bill Field about his years at DC Comics.
"I Brought That Same Competitive Edge" 23
Emilio Soltero asks Neal Adams about Jack Kirby, super-hero comics, & *Conversation between Two Men at a Bar*.
Neal Adams, The Nealiverse, & NEMPCOs 37
James Rosen on integrating Adams merch art into one's daily life, 1976-2025.
Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt! Mr. Mystic's Magical Mastheads! . . 49
Michael T. Gilbert on Bob Powell's luscious logos for Will Eisner's 1940s *Spirit Section*.
Tributes To Alberto Castelli, José Delbo, Greg Hildebrandt, Jules Feiffer, & Hy Eisman 55
re: [correspondence, comments, & corrections] 65
FCA [Fawcett Collectors Of America] #253 71
P.C. Hamerlinck presents Shaun Clancy's chat with Dennis Lieberson, son of Fawcett Comics editor-in-chief Will Lieberson.

On Our Cover: *While he contributed to only four of the nine issues of Marvel's celebrated "Kree-Skrull War" in* The Avengers *in 1971-72,* **Neal Adams** *will forever be associated with that classic storyline as much as he is with, say, the "Green Lantern/Green Arrow" series of "relevant comics" at DC. Thus, since our previous Adams issue of* A/E, *#181, sported a cover depicting Batman and Green Arrow, we decided this one should display The Avengers and The Fantastic Four (or at least, SPOILER ALERT, a trio of shape-changing Skrulls masquerading as Marvel's flagship heroes). Incidentally, Neal wrote the basic cover copy for* The Avengers *#93 (Nov. '71), so Roy T. used his phrasing as the basis of the dialogue on this A/E cover. [Art TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]*

Above: *For his own Continuity Comics in 2005,* **Neal Adams** *drew this cover for his* Beautiful and Rowdy Women Sketch Book. *Well, at least nobody'll ever accuse Neal of false advertising! Courtesy of Mark Muller. [TM & © Estate of Neal Adams.]*

Alter Ego™ issue 195, September 2025 (ISSN 1932-6890) is published bi-monthly by TwoMorrows Publishing, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Alter Ego*, c/o TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614.

Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. *Alter Ego* Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@ntinet.com. ***Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices.*** Six-issue subscriptions: $76 US, $95.70 Elsewhere, $29 Digital Only. All characters are © their respective companies. All material ©their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. Alter Ego is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. FIRST PRINTING.

"If Super-Heroes Existed..."

As I said in last issue's teaser blurb for this one: You can't know too much about Neal Adams.

Two-plus years ago, we devoted *Alter Ego* #181 to Neal, who was almost inarguably one of the greatest comicbook artists of all time. Therein, besides detailing my own oft-troubled (but still admiring) relationship with him, we featured four interviews with Neal, including one conducted by his fellow artist Howard Chaykin.

Naturally, though, these only scratched the surface. This time around, along with a piece on his comics-related merchandising art, we're presenting two additional interviews with Neal, covering such subjects as his decade of work with DC Comics… his perspective on another superstar artist, Jack Kirby… his thoughts about the comicbook industry in general… and his controversial comics-format treatment of his thesis that the dominant scientific theory concerning the movement of Earth's tectonic plates is woefully wrong. Plus a few tidbits of information and opinion in between.

Neal was, by the way, dead serious about that "tectonic plates" thing. I recall vividly how, around 1980, I journeyed back East from LA for the first time in a while, wanting to wander New York City anew alongside my girlfriend of several years, Danette Couto, the future Dann Thomas. And one of the things I particularly wanted to do, despite being concerned that a few scars might still remain from the less than amicable end to our off-and-on-again collaborations of the 1970s, was to introduce Dann to this phenomenal artist I had worked with… Neal Adams.

Calling ahead, we traipsed up to Continuity Studios, located around 48th Street, where Neal sat us down and we enjoyed a brief conversation. I say it was "brief" because both Dann and I swiftly began to recognize that it had basically evolved into a monologue, as Neal began to expound at length upon his tectonic-plate notions, leaving us little chance to agree, disagree, or indeed to do more than nod our heads in a noncommittal way.

After half an hour of said soliloquy, Dann and I politely excused ourselves and went on our way. Outside, I just turned to her and said with a resigned smile, "Well… that was Neal."

But you know what? I'm kind of glad that eccentric encounter occurred, because without it I would've felt I had totally missed what had become one of Neal's magnificent obsessions. And I think a magnificent artist is entitled to *have* his magnificent obsessions, even if they leave the rest of us shaking our heads and saying to ourselves, "What was *that*?"

I'll take the memory of that little mini-TED talk any day, compared to the necessity later of defending myself from my old colleague's equally forceful thesis that the Kree-Skrull War was a concept to which he, not I, not *we*, had brought everything that was good and challenging and revolutionary. Now *that* written monologue, which occurred near the end of Neal's too-short life, was something I couldn't sit still for for half an hour.

But you know what (#2)? I'd even give *that* a try—if it meant Neal Adams was back among us, working his wonders with hand, brain, and pencil, and improving our lives by so doing.

In talking to newsman James Rosen, as recorded on pp. 37-38 of this issue, Neal is reputed to have said:

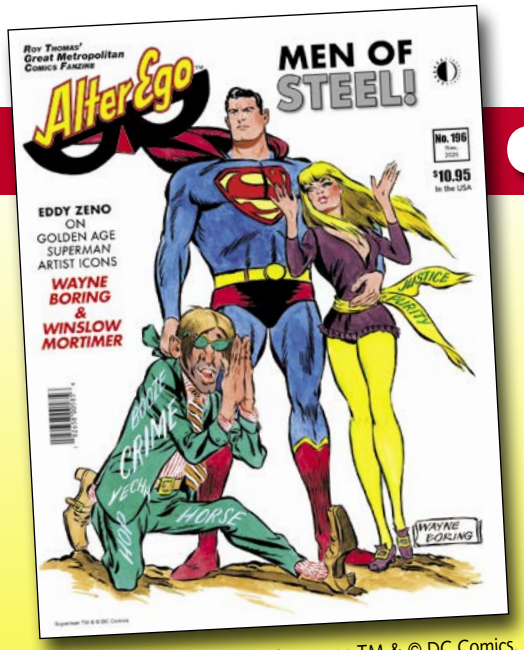
"If super-heroes existed, they'd look the way I draw them!"

And you know what (#3)?

He might just have been *right* about that.

Bestest,

Roy



Superman TM & © DC Comics.

COMING IN OCTOBER #196

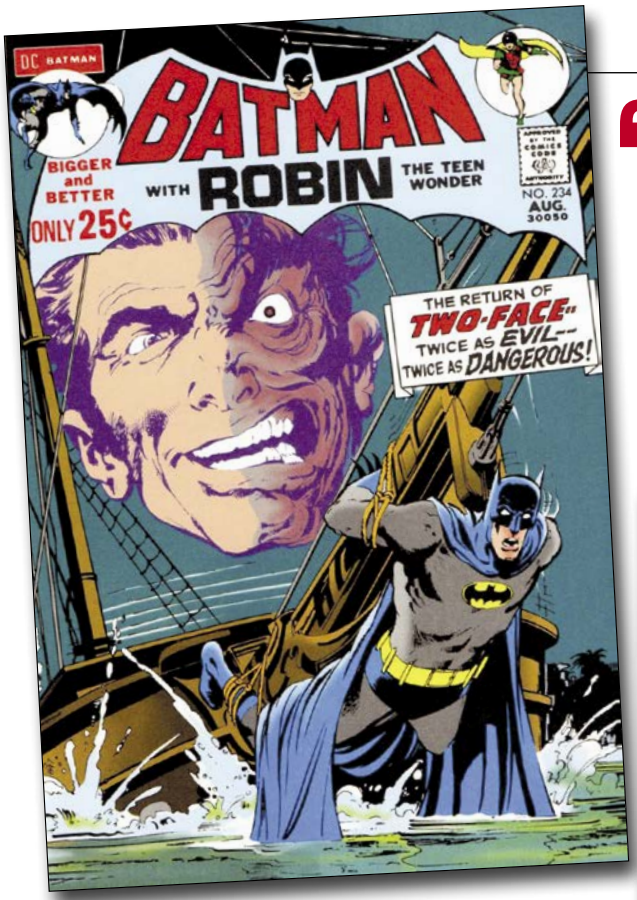
SUPERMAN AFTER SHUSTER!

- Concluding our presentation (begun in *A/E* #193) of **EDDY ZENO**'s book-length study of the early *Superman* artists—focusing on **WAYNE BORING**, **WINSLOW MORTIMER**, **GEORGE ROUSSOS**, & **STAN KAYE**—with a previously unpublished cover by **BORING**!
- Awestruck appreciations of yesterday's Men of Tomorrow by **JERRY ORDWAY**, **PAUL KUPPERBERG**, **TONY ISABELLA**, **DAN JURGENS**, **RALPH MACCHIO**, **PAUL NEARY**, **KEVIN NOWLAND**, **ROY THOMAS**, et al.!
- Plus—***FCA [Fawcett Collector of America]*** looks at *Captain Marvel*'s wondrous one-and-done villains—**MICHAEL T. GILBERT** on **BOB POWELL**'s "Mr. Mystic Magical Mastheads," Part 2—*& MORE!!*

TwoMorrows.
The Future of Comics History.
TwoMorrows Publishing • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA

Subscribe! Six 80-page issues: $76 Economy US, $100 Premium US, $95.70 International, $29 Digital Only

Phone: **919-449-0344**
E-mail: **store@twomorrows.com**
Web: **twomorrows.com**



"I Think I *Created* The Golden Era"

NEAL ADAMS At DC Comics

Conducted by Alex Grand & Bill Field



Neal Adams
in a photo taken while he was being interviewed by Alex Grand and Bill Field—flanked by samples of his primo work for the "big two" U.S. comics companies during 1971: his full-art cover of DC's *Batman* #234 (Aug. '71) and the Avengers-laden splash page of Marvel's "The Inhumans" from *Amazing Adventures* #8 (Sept. '71), as inked by John Verpoorten and scripted by Roy Thomas around the same time. "Inhumans" splash courtesy of Barry Pearl. [*Batman* cover TM & © DC Comics; "Inhumans" splash TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



ALEX'S INTRODUCTION: *"I hit the San Diego Comic-Con floor in 2018. We had interviewed various professionals for the* Comic Book Historian *podcast. We were in the groove and having a great time when, in the distance, we spotted Neal wearing his classic long-sleeve blue shirt and drawing commissions for fans. We walked over, and my wife and I asked Neal if he would be willing to sit with us for an interview. Neal was gracious and said sure, so Bill and I assumed our positions. Natalie was also kind enough to record. Once I asked about Howard Nostrand, he knew I was serious…."*

ALEX GRAND: *Neal, I want to ask you more about when you first got out of the School of Industrial Arts. Is that where you graduated from?*

NEAL ADAMS: Very good. You've done your research.

AG: *Yes. I think one of the rumors out there is that the first panel of yours that was published was in* Adventures of The Fly *#4. There was a transformative box of Tommy turning into The Fly. Was that your piece?*

ADAMS: Not originally. It was drawn originally by Jack Kirby. And they liked mine better as a sample, and they cut it out of my page with a razor and then glued it over Jack Kirby's page, Jack Kirby's panel. They paid me for a third of a page, about $12.50. [**A/E EDITOR's NOTE:** *Actually, the other artist was a Kirby imitator, not Kirby himself.*]

AG: *So you did get paid for that panel, then?*

ADAMS: Oh, yeah, straight-up guys, those guys at Archie.

AG: *So, after that, you assisted Howard Nostrand for—was it* Bat Masterson*? Was that the strip?*

ADAMS: *Bat Masterson*, based on the television series. Yeah. Yeah.

AG: *How was working with Howard Nostrand?*



Come *Fly* With Me!

Back in *A/E* #181, we showed you the bottom panel on the page from Archie's *Adventures of The Fly* #4 (Jan. 1960), in which Neal Adams' very first published artwork was pasted over the original artist's version of the same scene. Here's the *entire* page, the rest of which was penciled by an unidentified artist imitating Jack Kirby. Scripter unknown. Thanks to Art Lortie & Jim Kealy. [TM & © Archie Comic Group.]

ADAMS: Howard Nostrand used to work for a studio called Alexander Chates Studios, which was an advertising studio, and they had people like Bob Peak and a lot of other people there. Then they sort of discovered, which you can't actually say, whether or not the people who ran the agency were taking maybe a little bit more money than they should. Anyway, the artists kind of blew up and they all left, all at the same time. And Chates Studio just went bye-bye. All the artists split up, and the question was, where are they going to go? So four guys went to an apartment on, I think, 50th Street. They rented this apartment and set up a studio there. They would be partners. So one of them was Howard Nostrand, one of them was Elmer Wexler, and then there were two retouch guys… photo retouch.

What was great about that was, I got to go into a studio with two retouch guys and Elmer Wexler and Howard Nostrand, each of which had different skills. So here I am, just turning 18, and I'm in a studio with four professional artists. Each one had different skills, so it was like the greatest thing in the world.

AG: *And then after that you did* Ben Casey. *It was a syndicated TV show at the time.*

ADAMS: Not *after* that. I had about 14 decades between that and *Ben Casey*. It seemed like only a couple years, but it was … I learned a lot. I mean, first of all, I only did *Bat Masterson* for 3½ months, even though it seemed like an eternity, 'cause I worked every day very, very hard. But Howard taught me a lot about commercial art and introduced me to people along the way that I could go to with my freelance portfolio and get work. I also got advice from Elmer Wexler, who basically was an ex-Marine, very hard-knuckled guy, and didn't take any s**t from anybody, and was the opposite of Howard Nostrand. So Elmer taught me how to be a professional. The retouch guys taught me how to have a sense of humor, because they had … they were Spanish. One guy was Spanish, and he would walk around the studio singing the song "Besame Mucho," except he sang it "Besame Curro."

AG: *That's great… that's funny.*

ADAMS: So I was thrown into a really great bunch of guys. From there I thought I would aim high and I would go to the place that Elmer Wexler worked at… not worked at, did work for—Johnstone and Cushing. Johnstone and Cushing did advertising art for *Boy's Life* magazine, the newspapers, and whatever. They also paid about four to six times as much as the comicbook company.



Howard Nostrand

A Bat Of Another Color

(Below:) A 1959 *Bat Masterson* daily comic strip ghosted (all or in part) by Neal Adams. The regular artist was Howard Nostrand; the scripter was Ed Herron. Thanks to Alex Grand. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]





So here I was still 18 years old, going to Johnstone and Cushing, proving myself at Johnstone and Cushing, now making more than any comicbook artist in the world, practically, or certainly in America. So I would get 200 or 400 dollars a page, and they got 40 or 50 dollars a page. I could support a family, and I did have a family. But I was very competitive, and being competitive, I really got good fast. Because I was competitive and because I was pretty smart, I knew how to lay things out, I knew how to structure things, I knew how to write, I know how to put words together, so they had me writing, and designing, and drawing for everybody else. So I became, in effect, top dog.

I did that for several years for *Boy's Life* magazine, and for advertisements for *Chip Martin, College Reporter,* which was for the telephone company. I did it for a rifle company, Savage Rifles. I did ads for Tintex dyes, air conditioners, just so much, really, so much stuff that it was a career. I also did, outside of Johnstone and Cushing, some illustration work for the newspapers and for color. I also met a guy that I did movie posters for. Here I am, 18 years old going on 19, doing movie posters and illustration work, and whatever came along I got to do. I didn't actually do comicbooks until I did the syndicated strip for 3½ years, then I fell backward into comicbooks.

So my travel to comicbooks is a backward, back-assed travel into a medium that I thought was, at that time, inferior to all other mediums.

AG: *So you brought a lot of experience, advertising, design, strips, and then your training.*

ADAMS: Right, and illustration. Painter… I was a painter and illustrator, so that when I came to comicbooks, they thought I fell from the sky. They had no idea… who was this guy, how can he do all this stuff? I also started off as a big-foot guy. A big-foot guy is a guy who, well, okay … we have in the business a thing called big-foot and little-foot. Big-foot is cartooning, 'cause you have little characters with big feet and big hands. Little-foot is super-heroes. They have big giant bodies and little tiny feet. Haven't you noticed that?

AG*: I think Alex Toth mentioned that all the time. I always think of him as soon as I hear the "big-foot, little-foot."*

ADAMS: *Space Ghost* with the little tiny feet.

AG: *That's true, especially in the '90s. The feet got really small in the '90s.*

ADAMS: Pretty damn small now. You look at Jim Lee and all those guys… it's got some little tiny feet down there. Sometimes you don't even see those feet. They're hidden in the mist.

Ben Casey At The Bat

The Neal Adams-drawn *Ben Casey* daily strip for June 21, 1966. Script by Elliot Caplan. Thanks to Anthony Snyder. [TM & © NEA Syndicate or successors in interest.]

AG: *Okay, so after the* Ben Casey *strip, and now it's around 1967-ish or so, was Carmine Infantino… did he open the door for you to come in, or were you already there? I know you were talking to Murray Boltinoff and [Robert] Kanigher.*

ADAMS: Carmine Infantino didn't have the door to open. He worked at DC Comics as a freelancer. What he was trying to do at the time that I showed up was, he was trying to become an art director for DC or Marvel. He was playing each one against each other. So when I came in, I had nothing to do with Carmine. He was just that guy sitting in the corner. The bald guy with the cigars who looked like, I don't know, Edward G. Robinson, only big. I think his illegitimate son…. He just looked like him. Anyway, so I first went to Bob Kanigher, who did the war stories, and that's how I got into DC Comics. I went from *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Vampirella* over at Warren, where I worked too hard doing a story, to Bob Kanigher. But Carmine Infantino saw the advantage of taking credit for having discovered me…. It was a little odd to use the word "discover," since I had had a syndicated strip, I did advertising, I did all this other stuff.

AG*: You had already done a lot of the classy stuff first.*

ADAMS: If anything, I discovered DC Comics; and to my chagrin, I liked it. I'm embarrassed to say that, even though I was just there temporarily… until I could solid myself up with a strip, or illustration work, or advertising work… I intended to leave as soon as I could. I just sort of fell in love with it, and comicbooks to me is, in a weird way, the best medium of all. The rates were terrible, the attitudes were terrible, they didn't have contracts, they were operating in the Dark Ages, they were total ***holes, but the medium is just too good to not appreciate and understand, and it's just fantastic. It certainly its own … [it] feeds all the computer games, it feeds all the television shows, and the movies. We are the starting point of every bit of graphics that are out there across the world. Hundreds of millions and billions of dollars are spent on comicbook movies.

I mean, you can go to a movie and you can sit there and say, well, thank God it's not based on a comicbook and you'll discover it's based on … it says "graphic novel" by so and so, and so and so. It's amazing. It's like, how do you say it—it's a predigested story, a predigested concept, which is better than somebody sitting and writing a script. It's already been digested. People like it.



The War That Time Forgot—In Two Languages!

Here's an oddity: one of Neal's early war stories done for writer/editor Robert Kanigher for *Star Spangled War Stories* #134 (Aug.-Sept. 1967), as reprinted in Spanish—but with the indicia and some other pertinent information left in English! You probably saw the English-language version in *A/E* #181. Script by Robert Kanigher. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

AG: *Your involvement in the war stories is interesting, because you did turn down the* [Tales of the] Green Beret *newspaper strip. It was offered to you, right?*

ADAMS: Well, it was offered to me in a weird way, because Elliot Caplin had the right to do it, and he was looking for an artist, and I was doing *Ben Casey* at the time, and I couldn't really do it. Not that I *wanted* to do it, but I was able to recommend Joe Kubert to do it, and he did it for, I don't know, 3½, four years. It was a very happy time for Joe, because every comicbook artist wants to have a syndicated strip. The fact that I got mine so young made me a little bit spoiled, but Joe had waited decades to get a strip, and so he got *The Green Beret*.

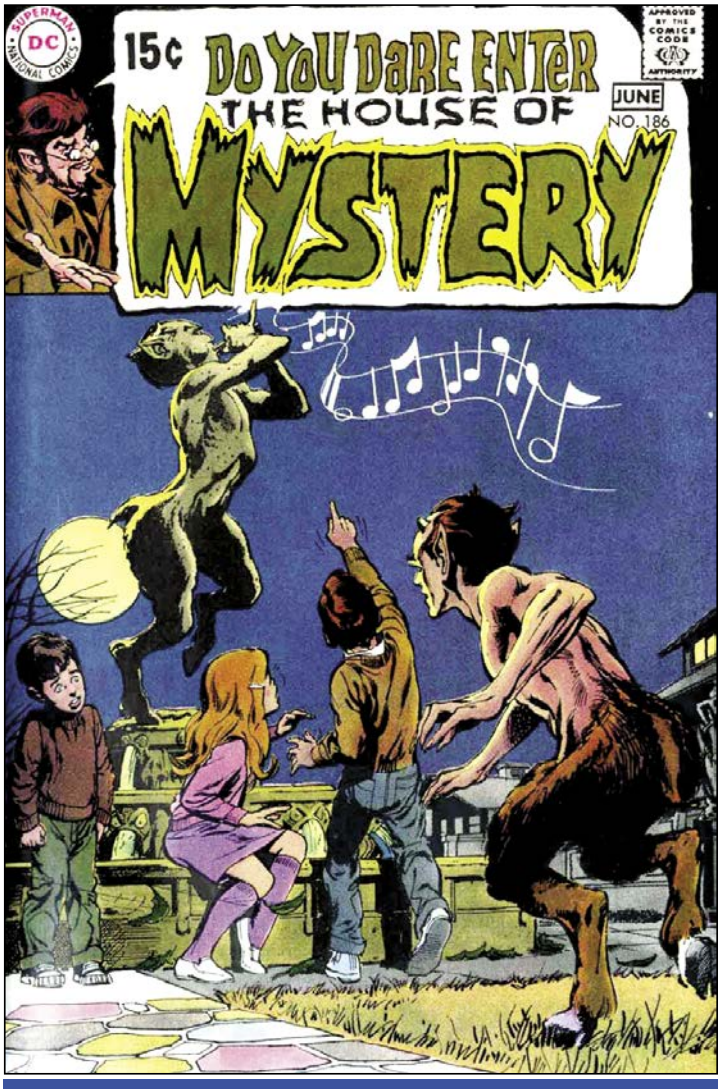
AG: *Some have thought because DC had such tight control and there's only certain numbers, that when Joe went over there, it made it an opening. Or would you have just gotten in anyway?*

ADAMS: DC Comics had no control or lack of control. They were just a bunch of guys walking around, banging into the walls. They had no idea what they were doing. It just suited Bob Kanigher to have another Joe Kubert walk in the door, because they had lost Joe Kubert, and Mort Drucker had gone to *Mad* magazine. So who did he have left? He had Russ Heath and Ross Andru and Jack Abel and people … you know, very minor lights, maybe except for Russ Heath. Russ Heath is still fantastic. To have me walk in there and to be able to give him something imitating or like Joe Kubert was a big deal for him. So that made my way in, but that soon ended. Julius Schwartz got his hands on me.

AG: *And that's essentially what a lot of people know, as far as fans—a lot of your DC work and Marvel work in the late '60s and beyond, into* Superman vs. Muhammad Ali. *I'm going to have Bill ask this area of questions.*

BILL FIELD: *We're in somewhat of a golden era for you, because we're coming into "Batman," we're coming into "Deadman," we're coming into "Green…"*

NEAL ADAMS: When you're saying "golden era," I think I *created* the golden era. There's nothing about when I was doing "Batman" or those other things that made it golden, believe me. It was a crappy business. They didn't have contracts, they didn't return the original art. The golden era came as a result of what I



If You Like It, Don't *Pan* It!

The Adams cover of *House of Mystery* #186 (May-June 1970). Neal would use his growing importance to the covers of such comics to influence editors to give young writers and artists a chance to slip a story into DC's "mystery" mags. This particular issue contained one story each drawn by Neal and newcomer Bernie Wrightson. [TM & © DC Comics.]

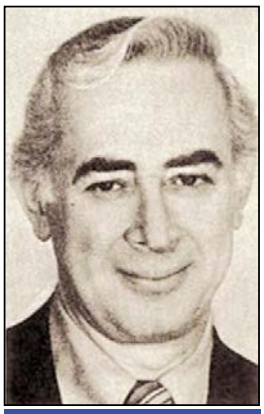
did. It didn't come with it, or in any way with it. What it was, was Marvel Comics was doing better stuff than DC Comics. DC Comics needed something to combat Marvel, and what they needed, they didn't realize they needed—they needed to have new artists, they needed to have new writers. Even though Carmine's job was to get new artists and writers, he didn't know how to do it, nor did the editors. But I did. I hid them out and hid them in a room, so I allowed them—I would feed them to the editors.

So I made more of a contribution there than the drawing. Yes, the drawing was new and different, and it was more illustrative and had better anatomy and all the rest of it, but that was really only part of it. We got guys like Wrightson in, and guys like Len Wein, and Marv Wolfman, and Howard Chaykin, and all these guys would basically hide out in my room or in the coffee room. I'd be able to introduce them to the editors, and the editors would go, "Why am I looking at this guy's stuff?" "Well, you've got backup stories. You're doing the *House of Mystery*, let's stick a guy in there, somebody new." So they had to learn how to introduce new people. They hadn't hired anybody new in ten years. I was the first. The last guy that was hired was working in production, and his name was Mort Drucker, and he went over to *Mad* magazine and was so glad to get out of there, he just stayed away. So it was a primitive kind of place.

Even when I was doing "Batman," they didn't want the… If I walk in and say, "You know, Batman's supposed to be realistic, and a creature of the night, and jump out at guys and scare them," and that's like a big surprise, that's wrong. That's not the way you… *anybody* knows that. Anybody. It seemed like a surprise to them. I don't know how.

BF: *So then you went into socially relevant stories with* Green Lantern/Green Arrow, *something that wasn't …*

ADAMS: Well, we made an impact with "Batman," and the impact was to bring reality to it. So, bringing reality to "Batman" inspired all the artists around me to do the same thing. It also inspired the writers to a certain extent. It also inspired the editors. One of the best artists at DC Comics was Gil Kane. Gil Kane and I were friends, good friends, and Gil had decided for whatever reason to go and do a project outside of DC Comics. That means that he no longer did *Green Lantern*.



Gil Kane

The original and longest-running artist of the Silver Age *Green Lantern*—with the last cover he drew for his run of that title (#75, March 1970) before he left to temporarily pursue a career outside mainstream comics and Neal Adams became the series' penciler with #76. [Cover TM & © DC Comics.]

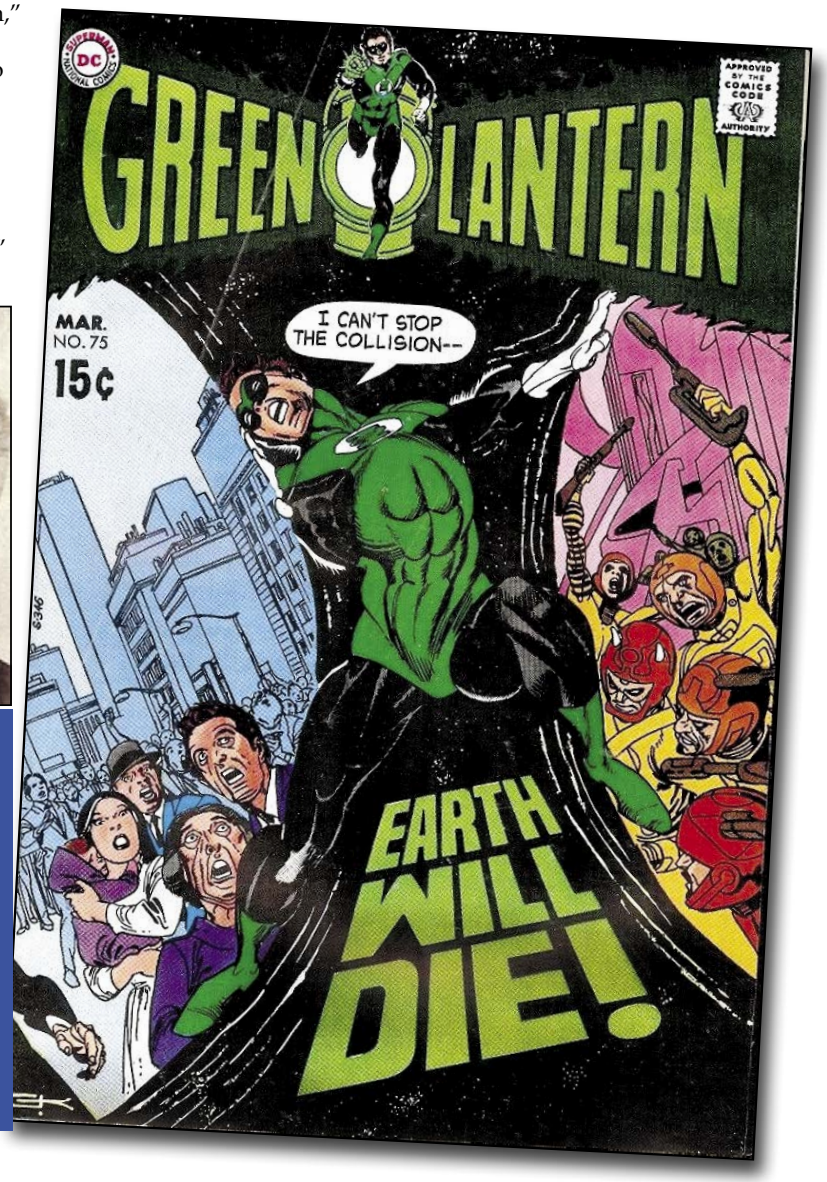
AG: His Name Is Savage?

ADAMS: Yeah, I think so. So it's probably his … and he based it on Lee Marvin as the—

AG: *On the cover*

ADAMS: Yeah, that's very interesting. Anyway, so he went off and decided to do that, and you have this problem of who's going to do *Green Lantern*. Anybody that did *Green Lantern* after Gil, who knew a lot of anatomy, who could draw… he was really ahead of everybody at DC except for say, Joe Kubert, so anybody that did *Green Lantern* really did a not very good job. It's not a criticism of a person as much as a reality. Gil was that good. So I asked Julie Schwartz if I could do *Green Lantern* for a couple of issues, and Julie said, "No, we're going to cancel the book." "No, you shouldn't cancel the book. It's *Green Lantern*." " Well, it's not selling." "Well, let me do a couple of issues." So Julie had the big idea of jumping in on this, modernizing things a little bit, and he was always forward-thinking. He used to represent science-fiction writers with Mort [Weisinger]. The partners, the teenage partners of Ray Bradbury and a bunch of guys.

Anyway, so he came up with the idea of putting Green Lantern and Green Arrow together. We had made a big hit with Green Arrow in *Brave and Bold*, and so he put Denny together with me and really came up with a new storyline, and that was to pit these characters against one another. So now it became, what are we going to do with this? Well, since Denny O'Neil was a reporter, he was more interested in reality. Julie Schwartz, you know—if people say "relevant comicbooks," it started the era of relevant comicbooks. Nobody really was concerned about doing relevant comicbooks. We're interested in doing real comicbooks, and interesting comicbooks, and adding things to it. It's the fact that Denny O'Neil was a radical Irish liberal—put him in a position to vent his spleen on Green Lantern and Green Arrow, and place these guys at opposite ends of the political spectrum. But they really weren't. They were really on the same end, they were just different, not unlike Denny O'Neil and myself. You could call me Green





"The Yellers & The Doers"

Between the increased realism of Denny O'Neil's dialogue and Neal Adams' artwork, *Green Lantern* #76 (April 1970) signaled a sea change in the adventures of the Emerald Gladiator. This is the page that directly precedes Green Lantern's famous exchange with a black citizen, who asks what he's done for the "black skins." Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Julius Schwartz

Editor of *Green Lantern* for the entirety of the Gil Kane and Neal Adams runs—and of the Golden Age *GL* in the latter 1940s before that! Thanks to John Fahey.



Denny O'Neil

in Julie's office in 1970.

Lantern, you could call him Green Arrow.

AG: *That's great.*

ADAMS: In a way.

BF: *I've never thought about that, but it's absolutely true.*

ADAMS: In many ways it is. I'm not the guy that goes… I believe in all the proper institutions and everything else, and I prefer to work through the institutions, and I make changes without marching the streets. Denny marches in the streets, and yells, and carries signs, and stuff like that. That doesn't mean that I don't agree with him, it simply means I would prefer to make the change rather than yell about it. So there's the yellers and then there's the doers. I'm the doer. It didn't occur to us at the time that that was the case, but it sort of was. And maybe that's why it made it good. Now everybody in the field said, "Oh, those guys are preaching, that's all bull****." But as much as they said it, in their hearts, no, that's not how they felt. They could see the reality of what we were doing and that it was a good idea, good direction. And you can tell, it's basically colored everything in comicbooks since then. Things have gotten more real.

BF: *How did sales progress after you started doing that book?*

ADAMS: Well, if you're doing a historical documentation on the sales, then you would actually have to know what sales are all about, and what is wrong with the sales in the newsstand market, and you don't. There's no way to equate the sales of something that's good with the actual selling and the sales results, because something else was going on. That led to the direct sales market, so there's a very deep, solid core of misinformation that goes into the concept of understanding the sale of comicbooks. Because most good comicbooks didn't sell well.

AG: *And also, what some of the fans might not know is that, back then a distributor could actually keep some of them and then claim that they weren't sold, and then sell it on the side. So a lot of things like that were going on, too, I think.*

ADAMS: They didn't keep them, they sold them to teenagers who would come with their father's station wagons and pick up *Penthouse* magazine, *Playboy* magazine, *Conan*, *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, *Batman*, *Swamp Thing*. They would pick the best stuff because they were fans. Well, when you're a fan, you know more of what your audience is going to buy. So you know what to buy from the local distributor. There were 410 distributors back in those days, all around the country, so you had 410 opportunities for some guy in a town to go and take his father's station wagon and buy this stuff off the back of the distributor. The distributors and the publishers had instituted a concept: affidavit returns. Affidavit returns assumes the honesty of all parties, which is stupid.

I mean, I can't even imagine contemplating such an act. Before that, [the distributors] would strip the titles off a comicbook, wrap them in a rubber band, and send them back to the publisher. Now they were having the distributor sign a piece of paper that he *destroyed* so many comicbooks. What could be stupider than that? So the publishers were getting lower and lower sales, comicbooks were supposedly being destroyed, and all over the country, teenagers and young adults were buying comicbooks, selling them to their friends for not 25¢ but for a $1.50, $2, $5, and they were the beginning of the direct sales market. All those guys that dress regular and act regular, they're all full of crap and they're all basically a bunch, a den of thieves. That's how our business started, and you know what—*lots* of businesses started with a den of thieves. It's just the way it is.

AG: *So how would you contrast* Green Lantern/Green Arrow *with Steve Ditko's* Hawk and Dove*? It's similar, but different.*



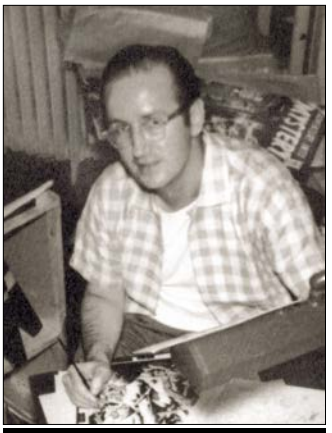
ADAMS: Golly, I would never think of that as a contrast. Hawk was a warmonger and Dove was a peacenik. Green Arrow, for example, was not a peacenik; he was actually a radical liberal that also believed in non-violence. Green Lantern believed in non-violence but through authority. That's the only difference. I mean, yeah, it's very … I mean, I lived through the *Hawk and Dove* time, and it was a very different time.

BF: *So now forward to the early '70s, and "Batman" is taking a darker turn right after the* Batman *TV series. You actually grew Batman up quite a bit, because he had been taken down a peg or two to juvenile camp kind of standards, and you brought it up and made it more cinematic, and probably fostered the way in for movies. Don't you think?*



A Study In Contrasts

Adam West and Burt Ward as TV's Batman and Robin in 1966—and a moody splash page penciled by Neal Adams for *Batman* #237 (Dec. 1971), with inks by Dick Giordano and script by Denny O'Neil. Thanks to Bob Bailey for the latter. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Steve Ditko

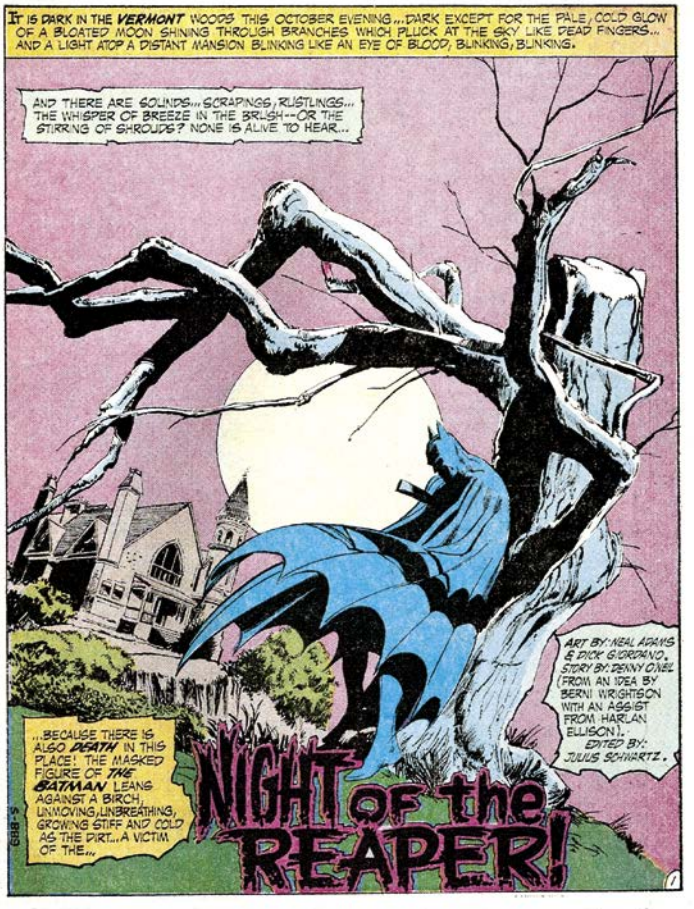
Something For The Birds

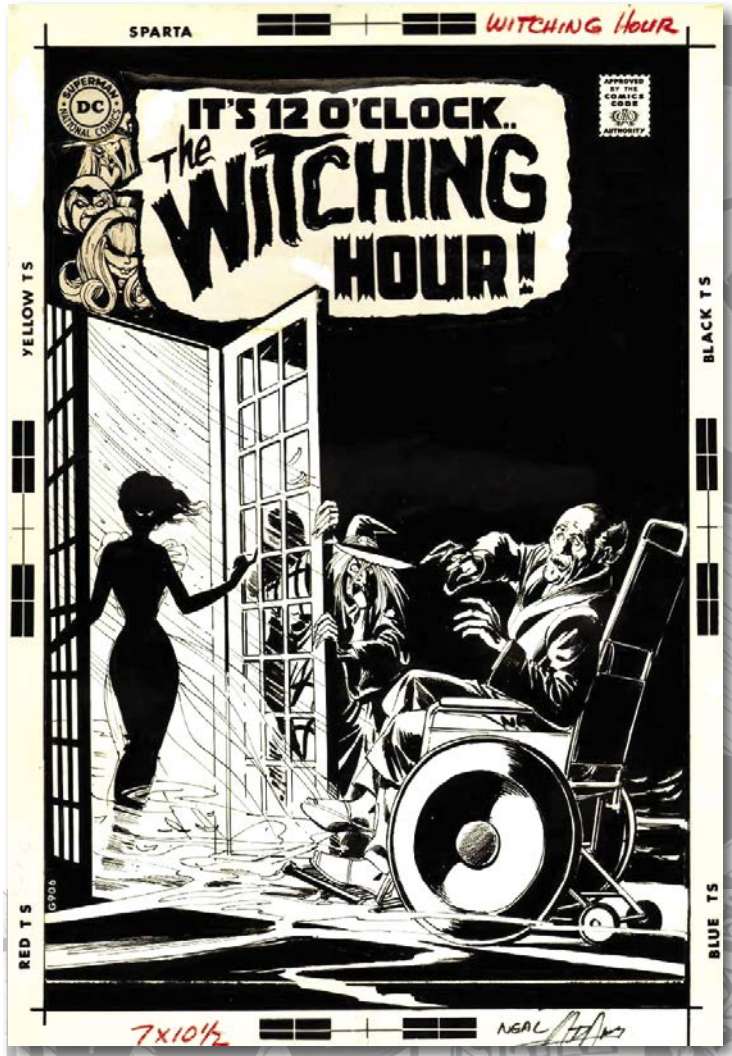
(Left:) Ditko's cover for *The Hawk and The Dove* #1 (Aug.-Sept. 1968), the second issue of the series, which had been launched in an issue of *Showcase.* Thanks to the Grand Comics Database. [TM & © DC Comics.]

ADAMS: No. The *Batman* television show was a satire. It was never intended to be anything but a satire. It was a comedy. We watched it to laugh, and that's what we did. We laughed and it was great. I had a great deal of fun. I mean, it's sort of like going to *Saturday Night Live* and doing super-heroes. It was a comedy, and anybody who might have thought for one minute that it was Batman and Robin, and not a *satire* of Batman and Robin, was out of their minds. And that [DC Comics] thought that may be the case was an indication of how deluded they were by the success of the television show. They should have done a *Batman and Robin* satire book, and then a regular *Batman and Robin* book, but they didn't. They kind of drifted "Batman" toward the television show.

So now you have a guy in his underwear walking around in the daytime, and nobody's pointing at him saying, "Mommy,

[*continued on p. 12*]



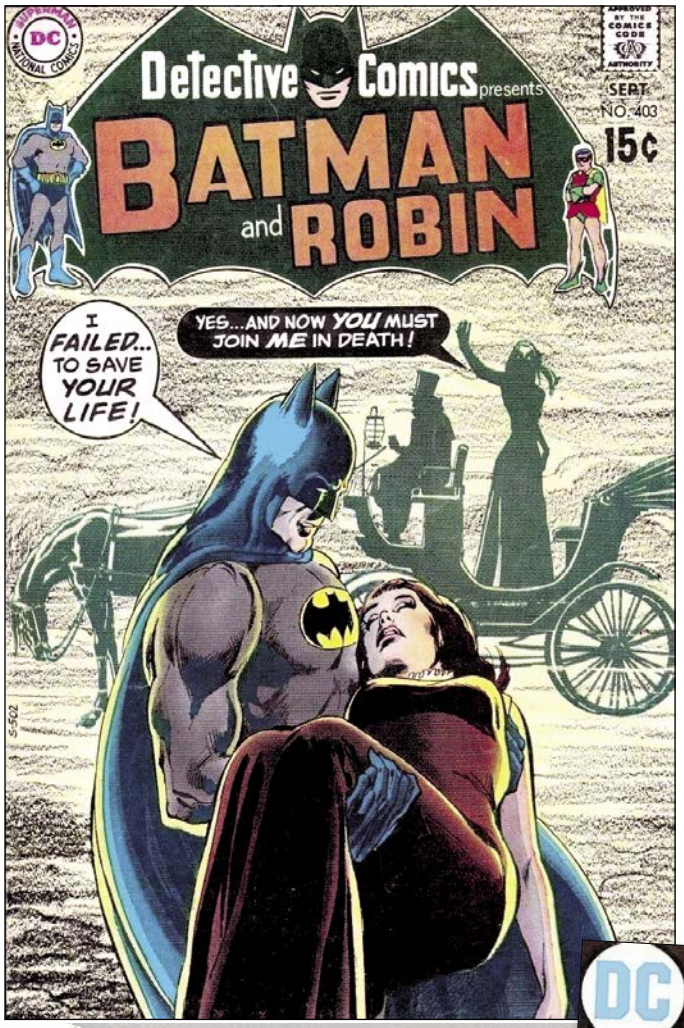


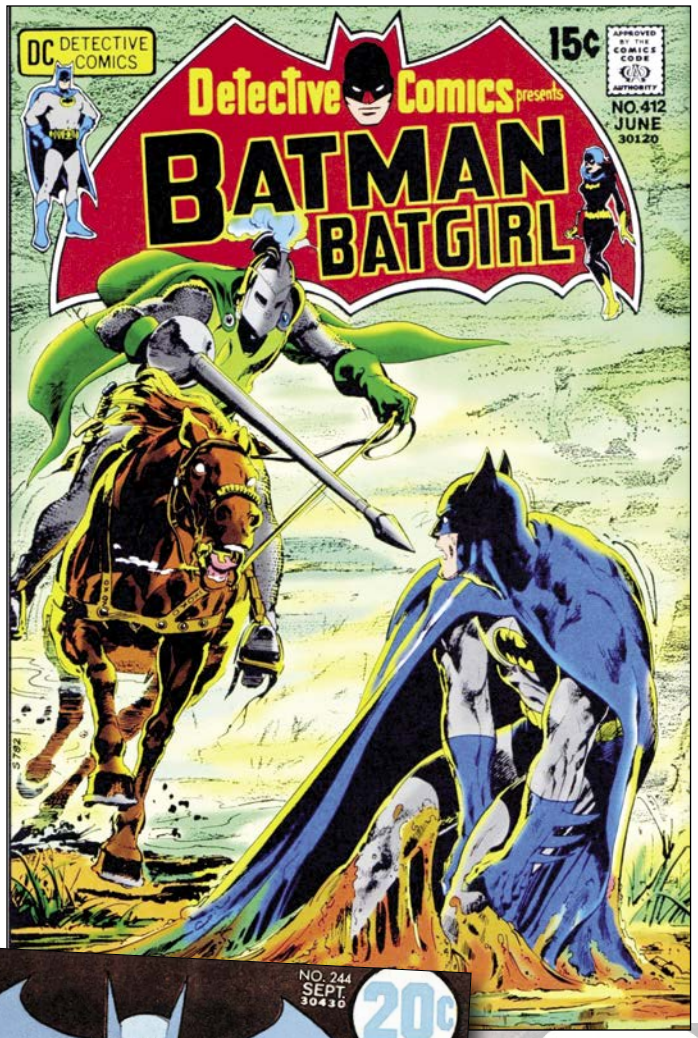


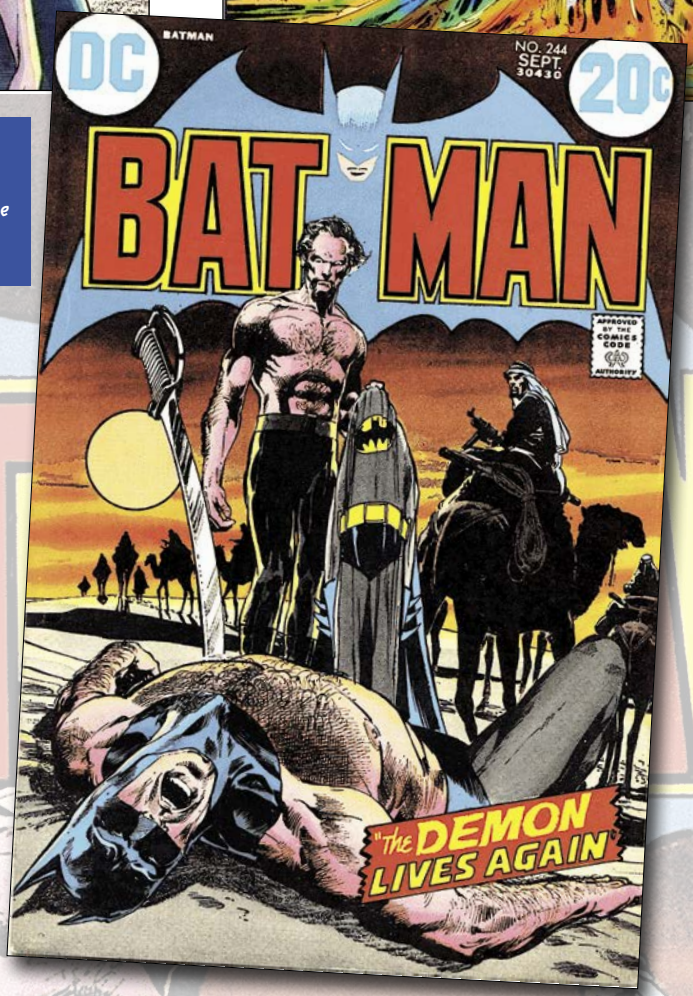
Which Witch?

Sometimes it's best to just savor Neal's art in black-&-white, even if it was meant to be colored. Here, courtesy of super-dealer Mike Burkey, is NA's cover for 1970's *The Witching Hour* #10. And, just for good measure, we've added the *color* version, courtesy of the Grand Comic Database!

[TM & © DC Comics.]







Neal Had Batman Covered!

Three vintage all-Adams Dark Knight covers: *Detective Comics* #403 (Sept. 1970)... *Detective* #412 (June 1971)... and *Batman* #244 (Sept. 1972). [TM & © DC Comics.]

[*continued from p. 9*]

Mommy, that kid's wearing his long underwear!" It was a stupid idea. So this character that I grew up with that was drawn by Jerry Robinson and all these other guys was not in the books anymore. So I asked, "Look, can I do 'Batman and Robin'?" And Julie Schwartz said, "No, get the hell out of my office." So I presented my case in enough ways that Julie actually went and changed the way they were doing Batman and Robin, relative to the licensing and everything else, so that it opened it up for me to do some "Batman" stories, which were successful because I worked with Denny O'Neil, because I was drawing a more realistic Batman, because the Batman I was drawing had real muscles, he had a cape that flowed rather than looked like a log out behind him. And people say, "Neal, you changed Batman." I didn't change Batman. I brought him back to what he was, what everybody wanted to see. That's what everybody loved about Batman.

Yes, they loved the satire. You gotta give credit to the satirists. It's funny as hell, in so many ways. Even Cesar Romero playing The Joker but refusing to shave his mustache is almost hysterically funny. It's sort of like the latest *Justice League* movie where what's-his-name gets his face pasted over and… because he doesn't have… he refuses to take off the mustache? What the hell is wrong with you, buddy?

AG: *That is a funny parallel, and you're totally right. Only in DC does this stuff happen.*

ADAMS: You added a scene at the beginning where they have somebody else's face. If you want to hide it, take out that scene. You know, just don't say anything.

BF: *I thought it was weird that they used Christopher Reeve's face. No, I'm just joking.*

ADAMS: No.

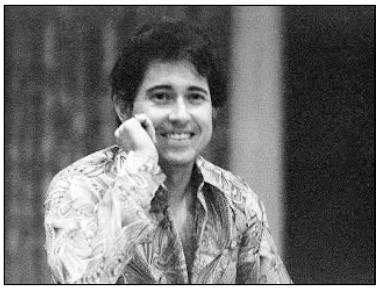
AG: *So, now when you were doing "Deadman" in the late '60s and Steranko was doing* Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., *and you guys, I think, exploded the illustration potential of comicbooks, it would seem like it was somewhat subdued before you guys—did you guys feed off each other? Did you guys vibe off each other at all?*

ADAMS: No, no, no, no. And the joke is that there's some kind of an implication that Jim Steranko and I are alike, or we somehow made the same kind of impact. I was an illustrator who could draw comicbooks, I had a syndicated strip. He was a magician who loved Jack Kirby, and he was trying to idealize Jack Kirby and what he did, which he did. He never presents himself as an artist. He presents himself as an entertainer and he does graphics, and he does these… comes up with ideas and piles the ideas in, and adds that Jack Kirby sensibility. You'll never see him focus on anatomy or any of that other stuff that you need. His direction—it's almost like he's a different type of creature. He's a chimp and I'm a baboon. You know, we're very, very different.



A Real Super Trio

Neal with "Superman" writer/co-creator Jerry Siegel (on right) and artist/co-creator Joe Shuster, in late 1975. Neal got an assist from artist Jerry Robinson and the National Cartoonists Society, but he insists he had to pretty much carry the ball by his lonesome, in trying to win some money for the guys who had come up with Superman back in the 1930s.



Jim Steranko

at the 1971 New York Comics Convention—and his dynamic cover for *Fantastic Fanzine* #10. Photo courtesy of Mike Zeck & Pedro Angosto. [Captain America TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



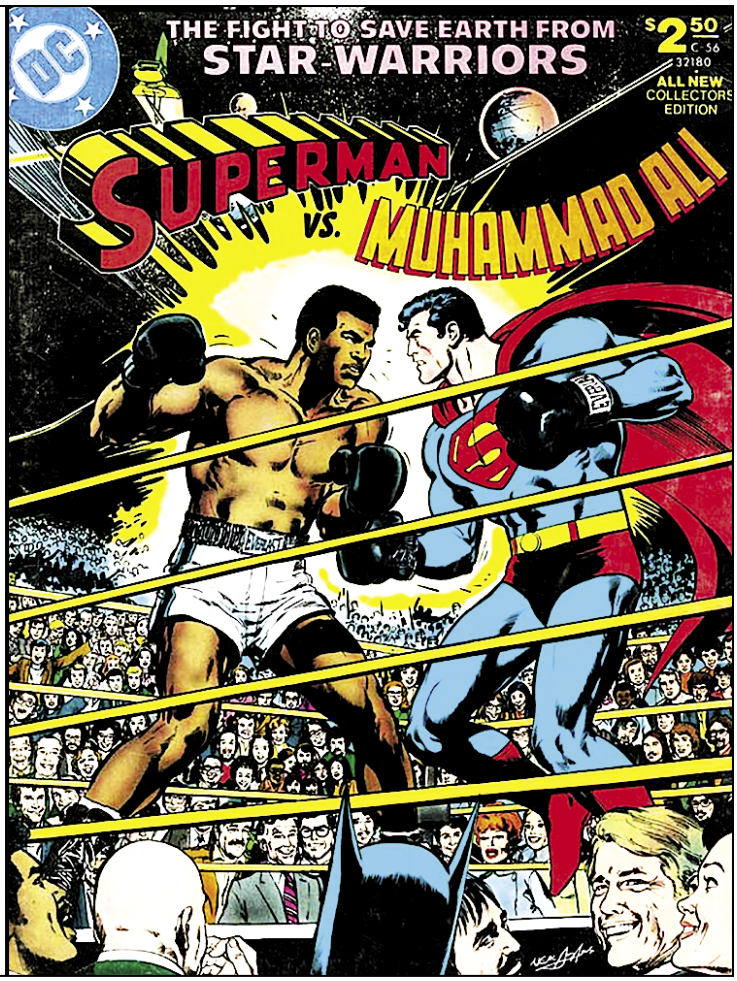
AG: *Yeah, from a different angle.*

ADAMS: But at the same time, we weren't afraid to do the thing that we wanted to do, and the door was open to go ahead and do it. So it wasn't just us—I mean, there was Barry Smith, there was Bernie Wrightson, there was other people doing it. Somehow we were allied together. I don't know how, and I think it's funny. I think Jim probably thinks it's funny, has no idea why it happened. But it happens. You can't argue with fans. They're fans. They are the controller.

AG: *So now let's go into the '70s, and you've made a huge impact on super-hero fans at this point, and in '75, you and Jerry Robinson had some roles in getting Siegel and Shuster credit and a pension.*

ADAMS: It wasn't me and Jerry Robinson. Jerry Robinson came in at the end and he helped me with the Cartoonist Society. It was a long, drawn-out … it was about 3½ months of battling with





Superman Vs. Muhammad Ali

(Left:) The original intended front cover of the 1978 public-relations masterwork, by Joe Kubert, displayed on a cover of Jim Streranko's magazine *Mediascene*—and (right:) Neal Adams' final cover, which had a very similar layout but showcased a cast of hundreds. Thanks to Alex Grand. [TM & © DC Comics.]

DC Comics, but again, it's a long story and if you start the story, you sure have to give the details, and then the details become long and involved, and conversations on the phone, and screaming and yelling, and all the rest of that. It was a big fight. It's as if you're talking to a boxer and you're talking about a match. You know, I could talk about the match, you may then question, "Well, where did you get the stamina to have the fight?" And I'm made for that. I'm made for that kind of a fight. You couldn't find a better person to do it, because I'm a calm person, I don't get riled, I don't get upset, and I don't lose. I'm not the type of person that loses.

If you get into a fight with me, pretty much it's going to go to the end, and you're going to die. That's just the way it's going to be, and I would not wish it on anybody else. I would not say, you know, "Too bad you couldn't do that." No, it's not too bad, because, you know, you'll get high blood pressure, you'll get all bloody and stuff, but not me. That's not going to happen to me, 'cause I don't fade that way. I'm the right person.

BF: *Now, your boxing analogy gives me the perfect segue to 1978 and the wonderful* Muhammad Ali vs. Superman. *A lot of people thought, what the hell. And then they looked at the artwork and honestly, to me, it's some of your best work.*

ADAMS: I think there are people who think that's the best comicbook ever done.

BF: *It was a shocker to me. I couldn't wait to buy it, but it just blew me away. I was a fan of yours up to that point, but I became a real super-fan after that. Some of the things you did with water, some of the things you did with shadow, is just … it's never been equaled.*

ADAMS: You have to remember that, first of all, we lived in a bigoted country in those days. Second of all, we were fighting people in Asia that we shouldn't be fighting and we were killing people. Third, we had a guy who was a world champion boxer who refused to go there, and refused to fight. He didn't believe in it and there was no reason he should believe in it. So we lived in a country where this kind of stuff was going on, lots of politics was going on, but if you had any understanding of the world, you knew that Ali was the champion of the world, even though he wasn't a champion in America. So Julie Schwartz, who is your good old-fashioned New York liberal Jew, is going to be the first one to step up and say, "Hey, we're going to do this."

So it was his idea. It was his idea, and he gave it to us to do, and I ended up writing most of it. In the end, [I] wrote it all the way to the end and drew it, and I did it all the time knowing that people were going to love it. All around the world, it was going to really express DC Comics' license throughout the world, because people would want to see this. A real live person with a comicbook super-hero. It's just too irresistible, too wonderful. So I made it authentic. So if you read that book, you will find boxing moves that Ali did, you'll find speeches that he did, you'll find all kinds of stuff that's real, and valid, and good stuff.

BF: *Did you talk to Muhammad Ali during this period or ever have any contact?*



How Can You Improve On Perfection?

Christopher Reeve as Superman. [TM & © DC Comics.]

ADAMS: No, he was busy. He had his own business. We didn't talk until the end and it was done, and when it came out, when the book came out, he had won the championship for the third time, so he made a big… we did a news conference. I was there, Ali was there, all the attention went on Ali because he's the champ, and they announced that … they talked about the third win, and they talked about the release of the comicbook. So that helped the comicbook sales like crazy. The legendary comicbook. It's beyond me at this point. It's like, wow, that's cool.

AG: *That also coincided with the release of the* Superman *movie with Christopher Reeve. Did you feel that Christopher Reeve … since you knew Superman better than a lot of people at the time, anatomy-wise… did you feel Christopher Reeve was a good Superman?*

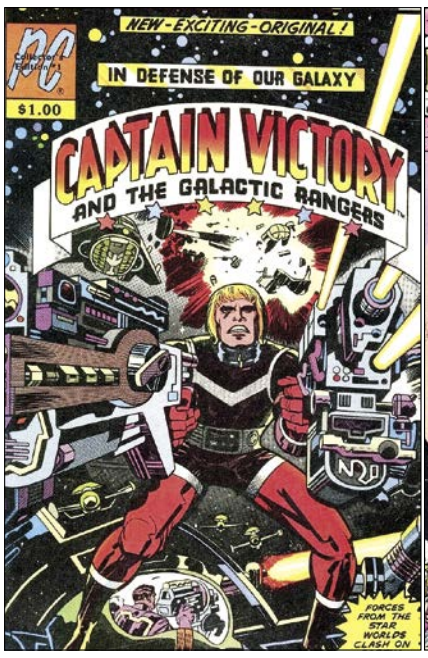
ADAMS: He was a *great* Superman. As far as everybody's concerned, he was the best Superman. I don't repeat things that other people don't tell me, 'cause I don't really have any opinions myself. Everybody will tell you Christopher Reeve was the best Superman and everything about him was wonderful.

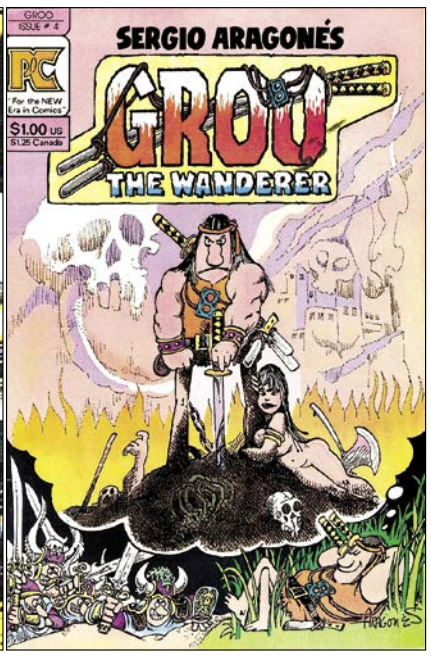
BF: *Let's fast-forward a little bit longer into your Continuity era, and can you explain a little bit about what that was all about, why you went off and did it? I think we kind of know by some of the things you said.*

ADAMS: Well, I just decided that I would do my own comicbooks. I mean, there's nothing that I've done in my career that didn't advance the medium, and I'm doing things now to advance the medium, but by publishing myself, it gave a certain credence to "why don't you do this kind of thing?" Not a fan magazine, or just kind of crappy publishing, but number one ace comicbook people doing their own comicbooks. Soon after that, or during that time, you got Image. So you got a major force doing their own comicbooks. Well, that is the wave of the future. From that you get *Hellboy*, from that you get all kinds of independent projects, from that you get what's going on with the English guy that's doing comicbooks with some of the best artists—Miller, Muller, Mueller—however you pronounce it—and that's no surprise.

That's no surprise because we did Continuity comicbooks. Before that, it was minor artists, minor comicbook people, or people who were unknown that managed to make their way through, but the majors didn't quite do it. It sort of started with-

[*continued on p. 21*]







Pacific Overtures

Three major titles published by Pacific Comics between 1971 & 1984: *Captain Victory and His Galactic Rangers* #1 by Jack Kirby—*Groo the Wanderer* by Sergio Aragonés & *Ms. Mystic* #1 (Oct. 1982). [TM & © the respective trademark and copyright holders.]



Green Lantern, Green Arrow, White Paper

It was a relatively big deal when the "Green Lantern/ Green Arrow" issues of *Green Lantern* were reprinted in paperback books—later in hardcover. Art by Neal Adams. Thanks to Stephan Friedt. [TM & © DC Comics.]





Black-&-White Blockbusters

A trio of b&w sketches by Neal: Black Canary... the ever-anguished Deadman... and the twosome of Bob Hope and his DC Comics late comedy foil Super Hip, drawn for Bob Bailey at Heroes Con in Charlotte, North Carolina, when Bob worked with Neal on his website in 2012. [Black Canary, Deadman, & Super Hip TM & © DC Comics; Bob Hope art TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]





Art Marks The Spot

Neal Adams and fan/researcher Bob Bailey at 2012 Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC—holding the very sketch seen below. Courtesy of Bob.





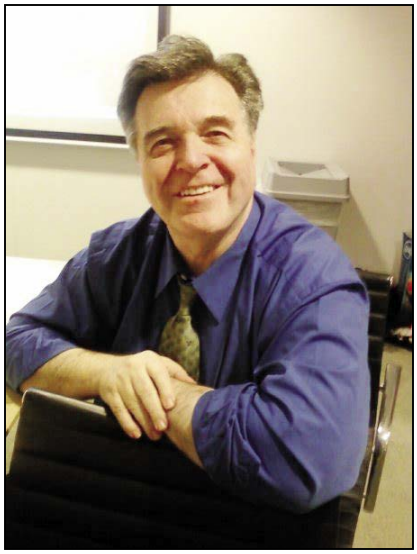
Angel Unaware

At the same time Neal was drawing much of his "Batman" and especially *Green Lantern* work for DC Comics, he was also illustrating for Marvel. Here, from the Internet, is a display drawing he did of The Angel from *The X-Men*. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



The Gang's All Here!

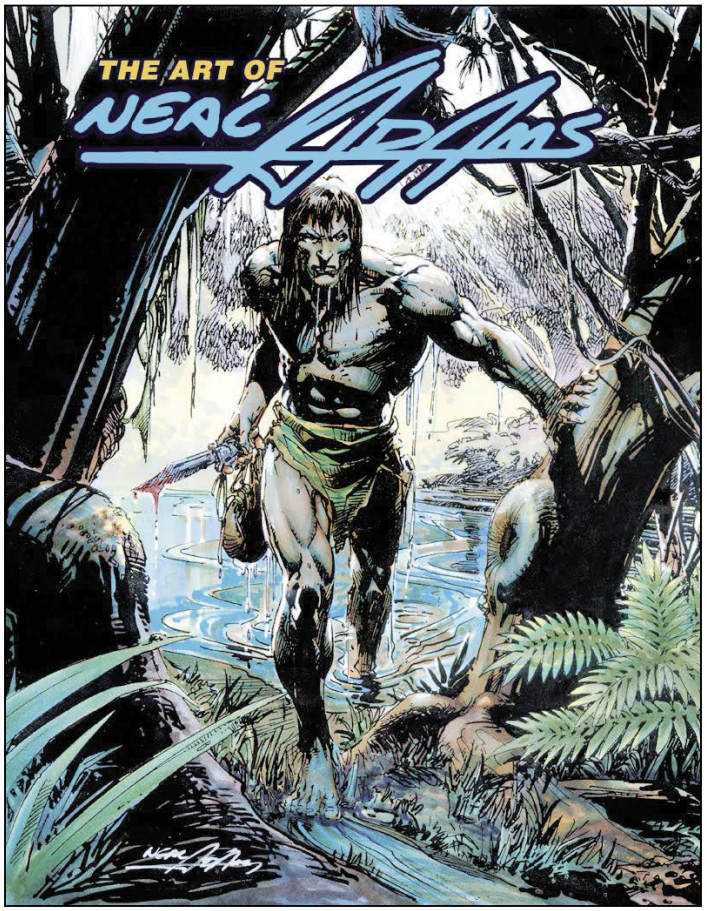
This wraparound cover for the 100-page special *World's Greatest Heroes* in 1971 gave Neal the challenge of drawing an ungodly number of super-heroes! (It was inspired by the cover of *All-Star Comics* #14 back in 1943, but showcases a helluva lot more heroes!) Thanks to Bob Bailey. [TM & © DC Comics.]

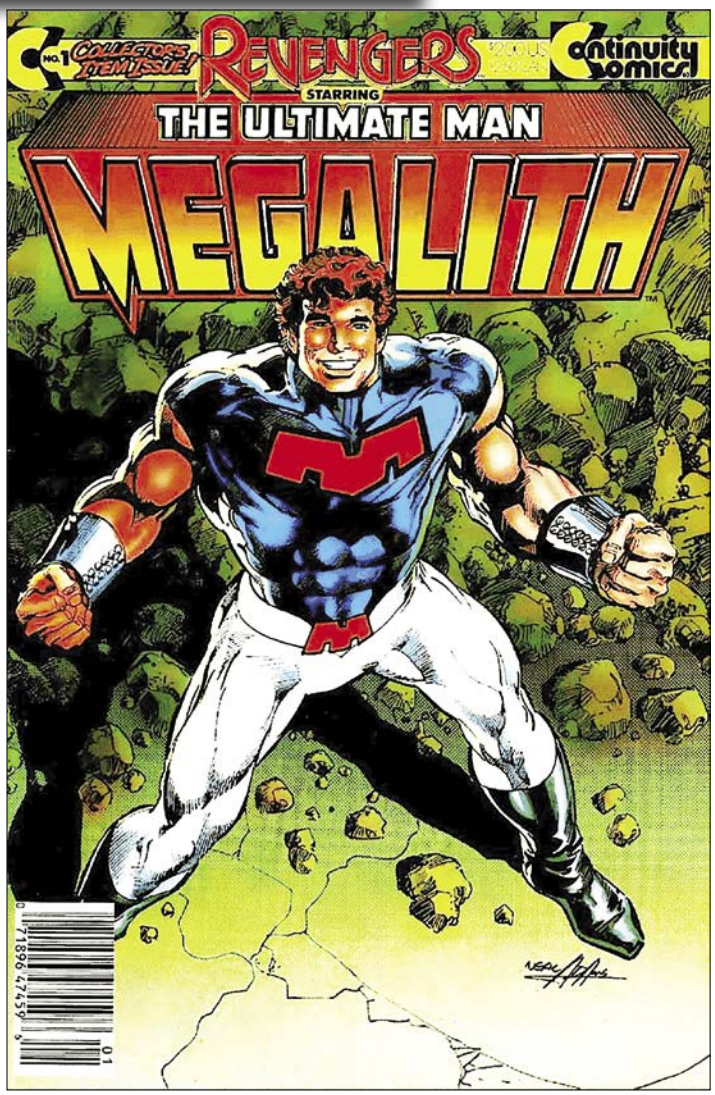


Neal Adams

and some of his work from the panorama of his life and art: a black-&-white Batman illo... the cover of *The Revengers Starring Megalith* #1 (April 1985) drawn for his own Continuity Comics group... and a dramatic painting utilized as the cover of an *Art of Neal Adams* collection. Thanks to Alex Grand and the Internet; photo taken by Nigel Parkinson. [Batman TM & © DC Comics; other art TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]









Let's Throw A Bit Of [Black] Light On The Subject!

This 1974 black-light poster features one of the most famous Neal Adams poses of all. Courtesy of Bob Bailey. Starting on p. 37, you'll be treated to a whole train-load of merchandise sporting Adams art. [Batman TM & © DC Comics.]

[*continued from p. 14*]

BF: Cerebus*?*

ADAMS: No, no, because he was not a major known artist. That was a fringe guy who jumped in. Same thing with *Elfquest*. But then you got Sergio Aragonés' *Groo* and—what's the name of the company?

BF: *Epic?*

ADAMS: No, no. *Groo* and Jack Kirby's—

BF: *Pacific.*

ADAMS: Pacific Comics! They had a bunch of fans who could afford to pay professionals, and the professionals couldn't believe that they were actually being paid better than they were being paid by Marvel and DC, and have their own rights. Those fans couldn't believe that they were getting Jack Kirby, and Sergio Aragonés, and Neal Adams. It was a big shock to them. I had to convince Sergio and Jack Kirby that this was a valid thing, 'cause they couldn't believe it. I mean, it was just a … so they'd call me they'd say, "Neal, what the hell is this? These guys saying I can keep my rights? That's impossible!" No, no, it's not impossible. I guarantee you, it's fine. So you have now a new industry. An industry where independents are creating their own product and profiting by them. That's a big deal, that's a big deal.

BF: *Where are you now and what are you doing now, and where are you taking the medium in the future?*

ADAMS: I disappeared for three decades. You guys don't know that. Think about it. The comicbooks that I did for other companies, that I did interior pages for, and did with *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*. That was it. Then I disappeared. Yes, I came back as a publisher, but that was me as a publisher doing covers supporting Continuity Comics. So I wasn't doing comicbooks. I was doing advertising. I supported my family. We had a studio in New York, we billed $3 million a year on average, so I have the biggest studio of any comicbook artist. We had more people working for us on a regular basis, more reps going out there, except it was for advertising. Nobody knew it because nobody communicates.

So all these people in advertising knew that Neal Adams and nobody in comicbooks … everybody in comicbooks thought Neal Adams died.

AG: *Went off the map.*

ADAMS: Yeah, went off the map. So those guys doing all the advertising stuff, if they would find out that I did comicbooks, they would freak out and go, "You do comicbooks? Really?" And then some little guy in the back room would go, "Yeah, that's Neal Adams!" The guys who were in charge had no idea.

AG: *I saw a commercial I think '79 or '80 and it was like a—*

ADAMS: The Nasonex bee, yeah.

AG: *That was yours?*

ADAMS: And we're not supposed to say this, but it was also Antonio Banderas' voice. That was mine, and that's what put a few million dollars in the bank.

AG: *That's wonderful to hear. So that sounds like a whole other avenue of interest for people to explore your advertising career right there.*

ADAMS: But I encourage that also in artists. There's no reason why artists shouldn't work for Hollywood, shouldn't work for advertising agencies, shouldn't do… they have a right to make a living just like everybody else. They have to think about business, they have to think about their own opportunities, they have to think about basically their bottom line, and not worry about DC and Marvel, 'cause you know, who gives a crap about DC and Marvel when you come right down to it? If they own this stuff and they're not sharing, to the degree that they're not sharing, we don't give a **** about them. To the degree that they share, then we care. Okay? And they do share a little bit, and we care to that extent. But if they don't care more, basically the business is going to be all independents, and DC and Marvel are going to disappear. That's their own… they're making their own basket, or weaving their own basket; they're going to have to live with the water that drains through.

AG: *No, that's wonderful. It seems like you have … that your confidence and balls of steel almost pushed and nudged other creators to kind of also grasp their creator rights. Seems like you're a huge force for that.*

ADAMS: Eh, maybe.

BF: *It works for me.*

ADAMS: I'm down with that.

BF: *Well, listen, thank you for giving us such a long interview. It's been a true honor, thank you so much.*

AG: *Thank you, Neal, it's been a wonderful time.*

ADAMS: My pleasure, my pleasure.

BF: *And we'll keep watching for more Neal.*

ADAMS: Please—oh, you're going to see lots more. We got a lot of plans. Take it easy, guys.

ALEX GRAND *is an award-winning comics historian and author of the book* Understanding Superhero Comic Books *and the* Journey into Mexico *comics series, and the co-author of the graphic novel* Hashman. *He is the host of* Lego Art: Spider-Man *and the Comic Book Historians Facebook Group and YouTube Channel, and was featured as a comics history expert in the Russo Bros.' docuseries* Slugfest, The New York Times, The Today Show, The Wall Street Journal, Hollywood Reporter, *TwoMorrows publications,* The Comics Journal, and the *Life According to Stan Lee* documentary.

BILL FIELD *is a former research analyst, video-game producer, and animator. He spends his free time organizing panels for historical and scholarly discussion at conventions ranging geographically from San Diego to Texas. His passion for comics history shines in all his activities, and he currently utilizes his filmmaking skills toward his profession in advertising.*



Alex Grand



Bill Field

$1,000,000 PAID FOR ORIGINAL COMIC ART!

COLLECTOR PAYING TOP DOLLAR FOR "ANY AND ALL" ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK AND COMIC STRIP ARTWORK FROM THE 1930S TO PRESENT! COVERS, PINUPS, PAGES, IT DOESN'T MATTER!
1 PAGE OR ENTIRE COLLECTIONS SOUGHT!
CALL OR EMAIL ME ANYTIME!

330-221-5665
mikeburkey@aol.com

OR SEND YOUR LIST TO:
MIKE BURKEY
P.O. BOX 455 • RAVENNA, OH 44266
CASH IS WAITING, SO HURRY!!!!!

The WHO'S WHO of American Comic Books 1928-1999

Online Edition Created by Jerry G. Bails

FREE – online searchable database – FREE *http://www.bailsprojects.com/whoswho.aspx* – No password required



This black-&-white illo we found on the Internet may or may *not* have been intended to depict Robert E. Howard's hero Conan—but it's *definitely* by Neal Adams! [Art © Estate of Neal Adams.]



"I Brought That Same Competitive Edge"

NEAL ADAMS On His Contributions To The Comics Field

Conducted (1999) & Transcribed by Emilio Soltero, Ph.D.

Edited by Neal Adams

A/E **EDITOR'S INTRO:** *For this one, we decided to run the interviewer's bio up front. Emilio Soltero received his Ph.D. from the University of California system, with a focus on the use of comics for Language and Literacy instruction. He has presented at San Diego Comic-Con International—"Figure Drawing for Popular Media"—for more than ten years. He is also an educator and an art historian, and the author of* Drawn the Line *and* John Buscema: A Life in Sketch. *He has received endorsements from Dr. Seuss, Ray Bradbury, the POP artist Wayne Thiebaud, and the Dalai Lama, among others—including, in this instance, Neal Adams,*



Neal Adams
at Toycon 2018, juxtaposed with a classic color rendering by the artist of his early signature hero Deadman. Art courtesy of Heritage Auctions. [Deadman TM & © DC Comics.]



who personally edited and approved this interview several years before his passing. He preferred not to have a photograph of himself run with his interview, however.

NEAL ADAMS: So, when I was a kid, the business of comicbooks was, whatever you could buy you would buy, and whatever you couldn't buy you would trade. I got to read all of the comics that were out that I was interested in by trading. That's how we did it. And up until the '60s, maybe in the '70s, that was a very common way of doing it, but it has fallen off because there is so much money around. If you were smart, you might be able to trade two comics for one or one comicbook for two. After a while I built up a pretty good collection.

EMILIO SOLTERO: *Did you collect them for [the] characters or did you recognize the art?*

ADAMS: I didn't recognize the art. I didn't know who the artists were, but I did have a favorite character, and I did have a favorite comicbook. When I was six years old I was a heavy reader of "Captain Marvel." I don't know if I read "Superman." I guess I must have. I guess I read everything—there were quite a variety of comicbooks out there. There was also a character called Supersnipe, which was a fantasy about a little boy who, in his imagination, becomes a big, powerful super-hero and went out to fight criminals.

ES: *What company published it?*



Sniping At Hero-dom

Since Neal mentioned it in more than one interview, it's clear he was a 1940s fan of Street & Smith's *Supersnipe Comics,* starring "The Boy with the Most Comic Books in America," who fantasized (as on the above cover of issue #43, Aug.-Sept. 1948) about being a fantastically powerful super-hero. Art by George Marcoux. Courtesy of the Grand Comics Database. [TM & © Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc./The Condé Nast Magazines.]

ADAMS: I don't know. It could have been Supersnipe. *[interviewer laughs]* It was a great character and really related to kids. It was a little silly in its way. The kid would put on this costume that he made out of long underwear and a cape as a towel, and a mask. He really wanted to do good. He wanted to turn into a hero and do good. He did it for all of the right reasons. Then, he would fantasize about it and become this super-hero, Supersnipe, who was a big Captain Marvel-like character who could pick up bulldozers and do all kinds of super-heroics.

ES: *Do you think you were interested in the heroic?*

ADAMS: I think I was interested in the idea that these people, as well as other people, become the super-hero. I was interested in people who can translate this desire that I had to be a hero, to be a good guy, to do great things... in a way that I could read and enjoy. I think that was a big attraction. When I think of myself as a six-year-old reading comicbooks, I think of reading "Captain Marvel" and "Supersnipe."

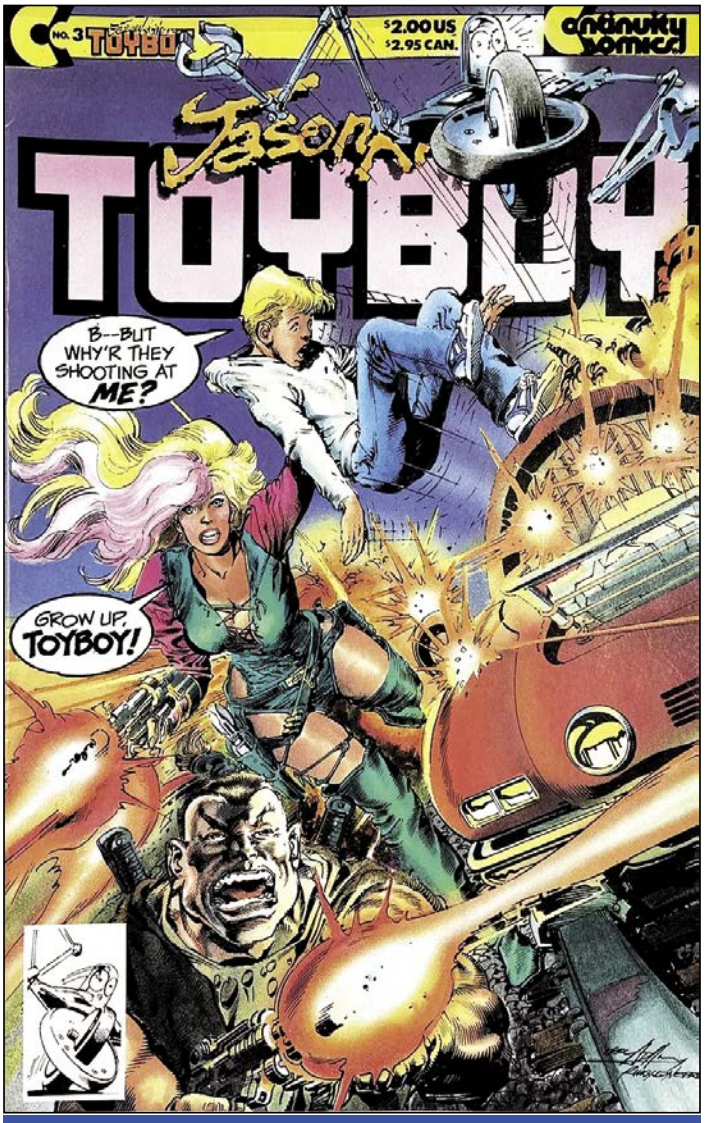
ES: *Well, I see that later in* Toyboy *[Neal's title from Continuity], or some of these other books where the kid has all of the potential that you need to be a super-hero.*

ADAMS: Also, the thing that I thought was so interesting was that he, as himself—he wasn't a super-hero. He didn't have super-powers, only the powers of his imagination. He solved problems and was able to do things because he was clever. He was a get-up-and-go type of kid. It gave you hope. It made you say, "Yeah! I am not a super-hero, but I can still *be* a super-hero." [It is] a kind of fantasy that makes a kid grow up and become a cop.

ES: *How did that connect to when you first said, "Look at these guys [sequential artists], they are actually drawing this [comicbooks]?" Or, "I want to start drawing these [comicbooks]"*?

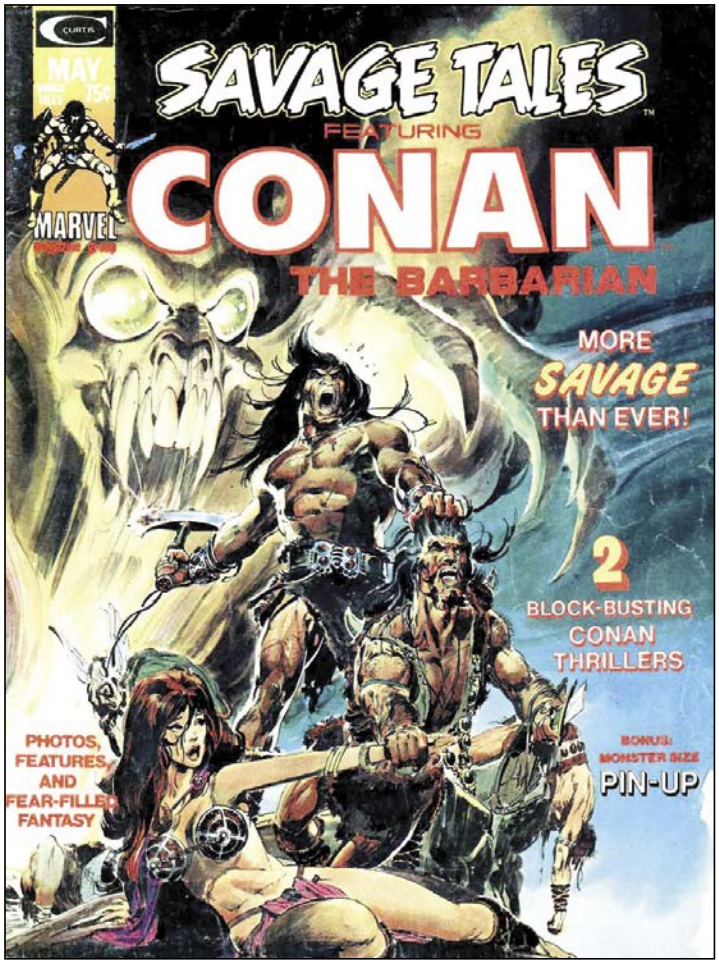
ADAMS: I don't think there was a conscious act. I think most people, who are later asked, make up answers. They want to make sense, and first start by psychoanalyzing and putting some kind of pattern that makes sense. I am sure this was a pattern and I'd be glad to make it up, but it wasn't there when it happened.

When I was six years old, I was drawing way past my age.



Toyboy Story

Adams' cover for his own Continuity Comics' *Toyboy* #3 (March 1987), inked by Rudy Nebres. [TM & © Continuity Comics.]



Barbarian Bravado

Both heroic and savage is Neal's powerful watercolor cover for Marvel's black-&-white magazine *Savage Tales* #4 (May 1974), featuring Conan the Cimmerian. Inside, he and a few others inked Gil Kane's art-adaptation of Robert E. Howard's story "Night of the Dark God." [TM & © Heroic Signatures, LLC.]

There was a time, when I was ten, I could recognize Joe Kubert in *Tor*, and I could recognize Norman Maurer [Kubert's partner at the time], Wayne Boring, Dick Sprang on "Batman." I started to separate and recognize art. There were my favorites and some artists I didn't like, so, you started to get into this critical phase.

In my teens, when I was eleven, we went to Germany. I lived in Germany for a year and nine months. When I got back comicbooks were very different. The comicbook industry went through Wertham and his book *Seduction of the Innocent*. I had left not knowing this stuff had gone on. When I left, I could buy EC [comicbooks]. I was not aware until later on [that] I had come back to a desert of comicbooks—comicbooks that don't deserve to be comicbooks. What a terrible tragedy.

ES: *Did your parents restrict you?*

ADAMS: My mom liked the fact that I drew. My father appreciated and understood his son had potential. My mom was the one who encouraged me. She let me do what I wanted to do.

ES: *What was the impetus that got you into drawing?*

ADAMS: I found a stack of Old Maid cards. Old Maid cards were illustrated. When I was six years old, I sat down at the kitchen table and copied the drawings from the Old Maid cards. Apparently they were such impressive copies that my mother made such a fuss. I did more and more. People become what they become because somebody is there next to them approving it.

ES: *Did your mom or dad buy you art supplies?*

ADAMS: My mom rented out rooms. There was an art student, and he had not paid his rent, so my mom kicked him out. She didn't let him take his stuff. After a while he didn't come by and pay his rent. She took his art supplies and gave me a box with color pencils and rubber cement. Of course, I felt guilty every time I picked up a pencil. My mom would say, "No, no, he didn't pay his rent."

On Jack Kirby:

ADAMS: [*cont'd*] I was never influenced by Kirby until the Marvel books, but strangely enough, as much as I appreciate Jack's work, as much as I understand people like his work, and I like Jack's work, when I was a kid— You must remember history kind of



"Three Cows Shot Me Down!"

The first non-splash page of *Avengers* art that Neal ever drew, featuring four of Marvel's mightiest: page 2 of issue #93 (Nov. 1971), inked by Tom Palmer and scripted by Roy Thomas. Neal's runs on Marvel's *X-Men* and *Avengers* (four issues of "The Kree-Skrull War") remain, along with his *Batman* and *Green Lantern/Green Arrow,* some of his most-reprinted pro-comics artwork. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]





He Made Them His Own

(Above left:) This pulse-pounding Adams illo of the ever-incredible Hulk seems a permutation of the one he had drawn on the cover of *Marvel Feature* #1 (Dec. 1971), the very first "Defenders" story. As his oft-collaborator, oft-sparring partner Roy T. has said more than once: "Most of the time, the moment Neal Adams picked up a pen or pencil to draw a character, his version became, at the very least, something resembling a definitive rendition. He seemed to be able to see, grasp, and then re-create what was essential about the character—usually with his very first try."

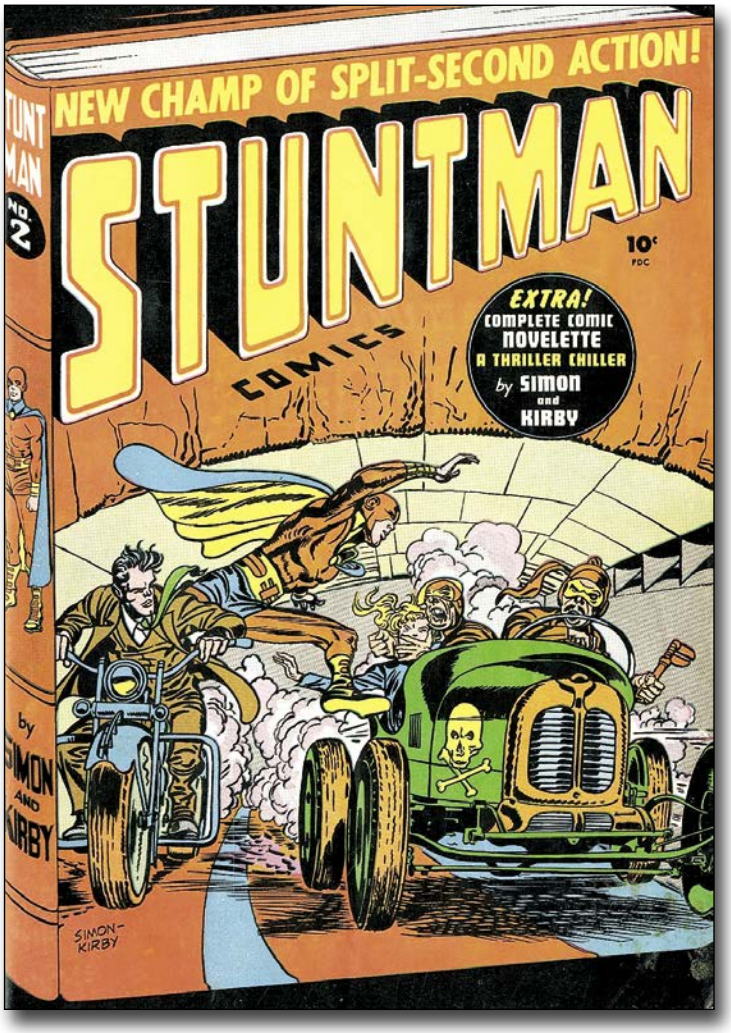
(Above right:) Case in point #2: the Silver Age Vision, designed by John Buscema for *The Avengers* #57 in 1968, but identified likewise with Neal ever since he penciled several issues of the Kree-Skrull War. And here's a chilling stand-alone illo. Courtesy of Pinterest. [Hulk & Vision TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

tends to rewrite itself. If you had a conversation with a kid back in those days when Jack was starting out—Jack would be "the ugly artist." Everybody had big teeth and I would say, "I wonder how this guy got a job." Even as he moved on, unless you were an adult or someone older who would see past that and see more deeply into the work, Jack was considered to be a second-rate artist.



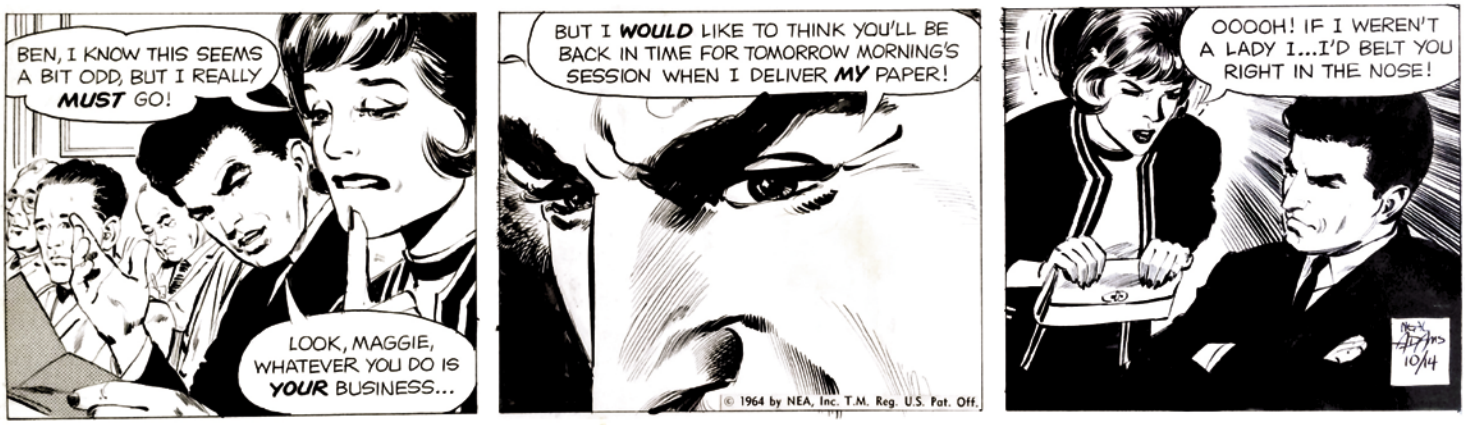
Jack Kirby

As much as I'd like to say let's keep rewriting history, it just wasn't so. He was prolific, he worked



Stunt Driver

(Right:) Roy again: "Whatever part Jack's partner Joe Simon or other hands may have played in Kirby's cover for Harvey's *Stuntman Comics* #2 (May-June 1946), back when Neal and I were both kids, the *last* thing I for one ever considered him was either 'the ugly artist' or 'a second-rate artist.' Perhaps, in this one instance, Neal's predilection for basically realistic art led him astray." Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © Estates of Joe Simon & Jack Kirby.]



Ben There, Done That!

We'll let you track down realistic art by comic strip kings Stan Drake and Dan Barry on your own time—but rest assured, this 1964 *Ben Casey* strip drawn by Neal Adams can hold its own with the best of them. Script by Elliot Caplan. [TM & © NEA, Inc. or successors in interest.]

for a lot of different companies, he probably started lots of ideas. You sort of feel guilty because everybody says, "He is the king," and you say, "Yeah, yeah, exactly." You put aside your own point of view. If you take out [your view] and examine it, you say, "Man, that stuff was ugly."

It's not the way people think it was. It became a dawning realization and he was always trying something new. When everybody gave up, Jack Kirby pulled up along. His place in comicbook history is written by many different people and colored by a lot of different people. His work is as powerful as any, probably the most powerful, but don't kid yourself. In the beginning we looked at Dan Barry, Joe Kubert…

ES: *I can see some connection [in your work] to Stan Drake.*

ADAMS: Remember this: Although there are influences by Stan Drake; when you're influenced, if you are lucky enough to be aware of the influence, you can be aware of the weaknesses and the strengths. One of the weaknesses in Stan's work was that Stan based his work on photos. He would take Polaroids of people and put them in an Art-o-graph and trace them off. Which of course, is what I did in *Ben Casey*. I was also influenced by the illustrators of the day, the Dornes, the Fuchs—Harold Foster, Mort Drucker, Russ Heath, Joe Kubert, Williamson, and all those guys who did comics.

There was a time when I did the *Ben Casey* strip [when] I did a very soap-opera type of strip, and I allowed the discipline of the strip to influence me.

While doing this, I felt I was in competition with Stan Drake and Alex Raymond, Dan Barry, and all of those guys. In spite of the fact that I tried to be a regular guy, which I eventually succeeded in doing in my personal life. In my professional life, I am tremendously competitive. I would buy the newspaper every day and I would compare my strip with everyone else's dailies, all of the top guys in the country. I would be very strict in my judgment and I would look to see that my daily was the best daily that appeared that day. Sometimes I lost. I knew I had an edge because I was younger. I tried to add things to it that no one else would think of. I tried to understand the medium as a cinematographer, classical artist, action-adventure artist, all of these things.

When I came into comicbooks, I brought that same competitive edge. I was not going to stand in the back and



"When Gods Go Mad!"—And Kirby Goes To DC!

When Jack Kirby abruptly quit Marvel in 1970, Neal volunteered to pencil *Thor* for a couple of issues, pushing John Buscema's debut on that title back two months. Rather than by Vince Colletta, however, Adams' stories were inked by Joe Sinnott. Seen here is the third page of "When Gods Go Mad!" from *Thor* #180 (Sept. '70) by the team of Lee, Adams, & Sinnott. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



"The Best There Is..."

Neal turns his distinctive talents on one of Marvel's most formidable heroes—Logan, a.k.a. Wolverine. From the Internet. [Wolverine TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

just do the stuff that was being done. I had learned all this stuff and, now, I was given a full page to lay out. I was not given the restriction of Sunday comic strips. I was given this large area to design.

On Comicbooks:

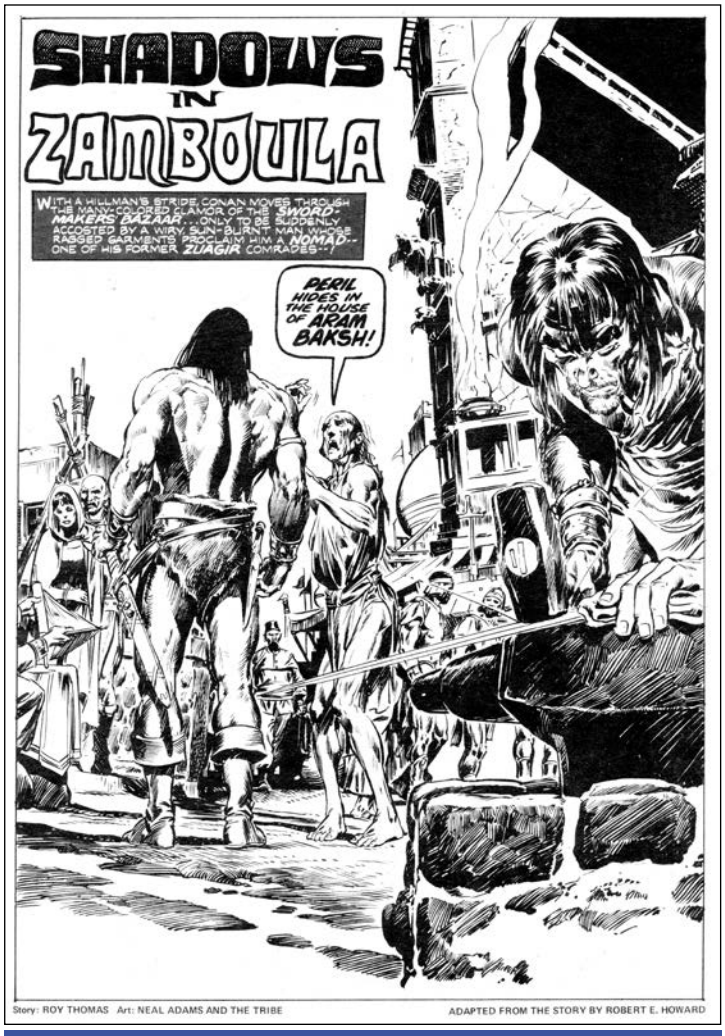
ADAMS: The business had fallen into the dark ages. It was not what it used to be. It was sort of like comparing 1953-1963 to the Dark Ages of history from 400 BC to 1400 AD, when Western culture fell backwards. When people didn't read or write, they didn't have medicine, doctors, scientists, astrologers, and astronomers. They didn't have anything, because Christian religion smashed it down to such an extent that for a thousand years there was backwards thinking. It took the Renaissance to bring it back, and when we came back we've only started to learn through the 15th and 16th centuries. We've just barely caught up to the ancients that lived before Year One (BC). In comicbooks we went through a similar period. We had EC in the '40s and '50s. If you look at the technology, the experience, the artists, and their abilities, and then you look at the '50s (after 1953), we are just now catching up to our potential. [*A/E* **EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Neal probably meant after* 1954.]

ES: *It seemed to me that you were aware of the mechanics of comicbooks. I remember some of your comics with [duotone] screens over them.*

ADAMS: Remember that these things were not just comicbook techniques. These techniques, simple reproduction techniques, were available in magazines, illustrations, and brochures. These are things that I did separately and apart from comicbooks. When I brought these things into comicbooks, it was as though I had begun them, but it is not true. I was just bringing some light of the world into the dark ages of comicbooks. I may have seemed to be revolutionary, but I simply was somebody who lived on the outside and was now coming to a dark place and turning on the light. It's really all there was. I like to think, at times, that I did something special. If I did do something special, it was a rediscovery, not a discovery; it was a re-creation, not a creation. I didn't create duotone or methods of reproduction. In the comic business it seemed as though I was doing all of these new things, but it wasn't true.

ES: *It is true in the sense of your attitude. Say someone else was in advertising and got into comics and they were told, "We don't do that around here." You had personality—and you did bring those advertising techniques into comicbooks.*

ADAMS: Well, I didn't fold. I am not good at folding.



Shadows Over Marvel

Neal Adams teamed up with writer/editor Roy Thomas for the full-issue adaptation of Robert E. Howard's story "Shadows in Zamboula" for the Marvel black-&-white magazine *The Savage Sword of Conan* #14 (Sept. 1976). Actually, the finished artwork was produced by Tony DeZuniga and "The Tribe" over in the Philippines, from Neal's thumbnail pencil sketches, due to severe deadline problems. It was a beautiful issue—but, due to professional frictions, it was also the last time Neal and Roy ever worked together, as detailed in *A/E* #181. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Heroic Signatures, LLC.]



Deadman's Chest

We found this Adams "Deadman" page on the Internet, and we were gonna look up what issue of *Strange Adventures* it came from... but you know what? It doesn't make any difference! We're not sure whether Neal himself or editor Jack Miller wrote this particular script... but we'll let you figure that out for yourself. Us, we're too busy just admiring it! [TM & © DC Comics.]

ES: *I've read where you wanted to write your own stories, maybe some "Deadman" stories.*

ADAMS: It's not a matter of wanting to. I *did* write most of the last bunch of "Deadman" stories. I wrote a short story called "The Game," a lot of "Deadman" stuff. At the time, I was inking as well as writing. It got to the point where they expressed that they needed more work out of me. For the sake of helping the company, I limited myself to penciling rather than writing and inking. Periodically I would write and ink something. There seemed to be an impression that I was just a penciler.

ES: *I was aware of your design concepts, writing, and coloring, especially the coloring as it stood out.*

ADAMS: Not so much because it was great, but because the rest was so bad.

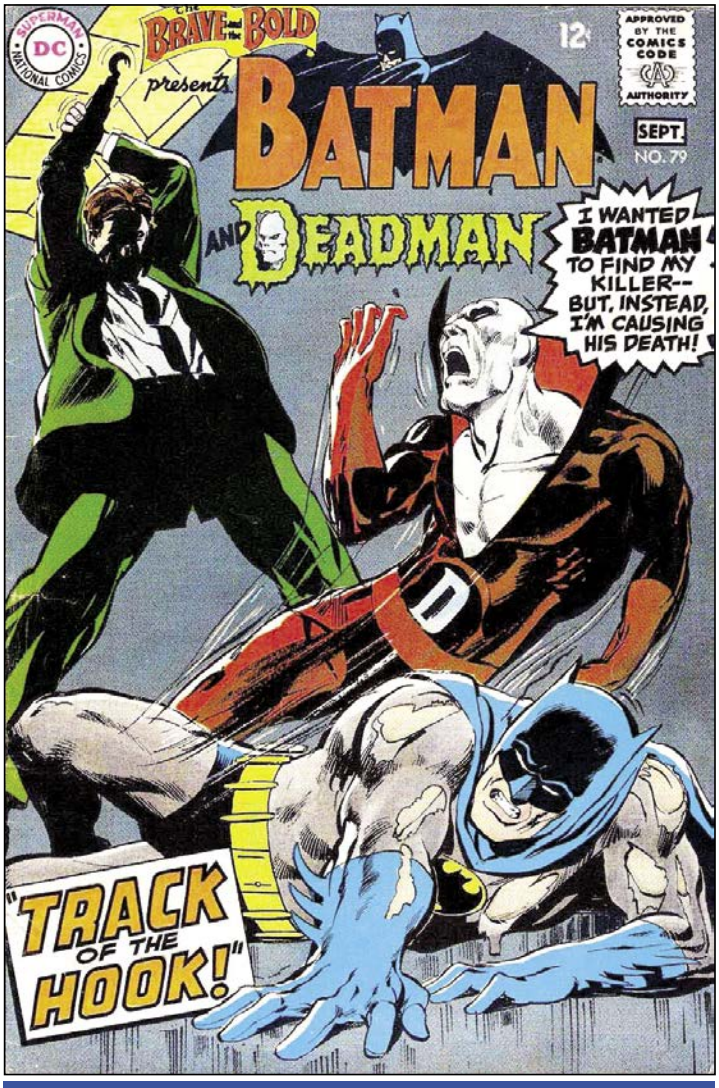
ES: *I remember when there were only so many colors an artist could pick. You were not supposed to venture out into, say, darker ones.*

ADAMS: Not into the darker ones. DC didn't have essentially 50% of the colors that were available to them. The reason they didn't have them is because no one else asked. One day I asked, and on that day they got double the colors.

ES: *You know, what you said earlier, the idea of not folding, is that the same reason you helped put together [a union of comic artists in the early '70s]?*

ADAMS: I don't know. I think there are times, under certain circumstances, when a person has to beware of their own responsibilities. To know that at times you are in a position to make a difference and that you have responsibilities. There were certain things in comicbooks that were so blatantly wrong that it wasn't even questioned. The artwork should not be destroyed. The artist should share in the profit of their work if their work produces a profit beyond what would be considered a fair profit. There are certain things that are self-evident, and not to stand up for these things would be cowardly. I don't berate anybody for acting in a cowardly way. If you are the only one and only you know this, if you have the opportunity to step forward, you have a responsibility.

[*continued on p. 32*]



So Which One Is *Brave*—And Which One Is *Bold*?

You couldn't beat it when Neal got a chance to draw two of his "signature" characters together—in this case, Batman and Deadman, on the cover of *The Brave and the Bold* #79 (Aug.-Sept. 1968). [TM & © DC Comics.]

COMIC-BOOK GREATS

NEAL ADAMS BEGAN HIS COMIC STRIP CAREER WITH **BEN CASEY** AND WITH STRIPS FOR BOY'S LIFE MAGAZINE.

FOR COMIC BOOKS, HE BEGAN AT ARCHIE COMICS WITH ONE PAGE GAGS, AND THEN HE WENT TO DC, WARREN, AND MARVEL.

HE LATER CREATED HIS OWN COMIC COMPANY, CONTINUITY, AND IS A CO-CREATOR OF MS. MYSTIC & OTHERS.

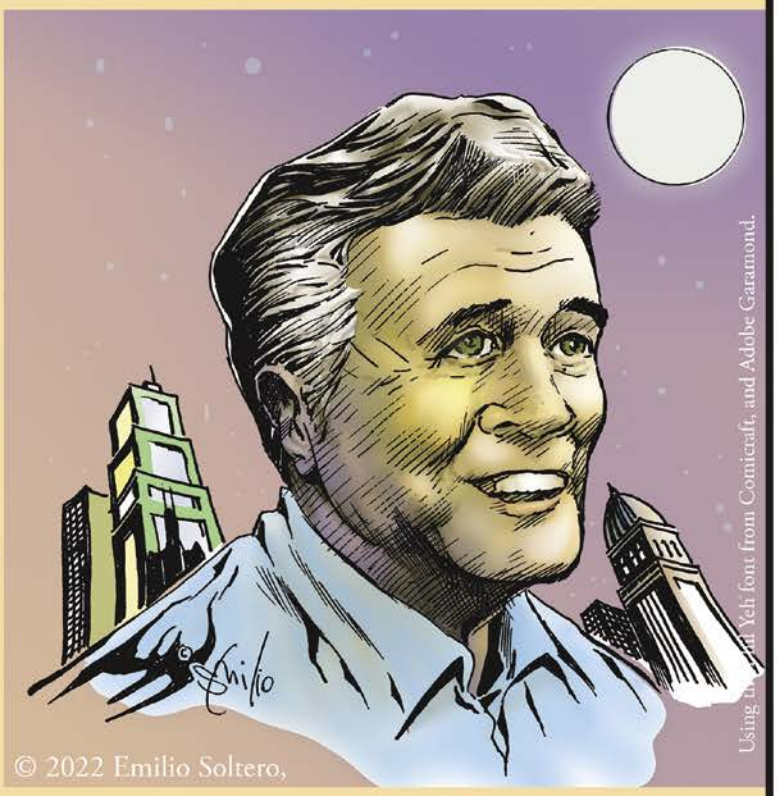
AT DC, NEAL CO-CREATED MAN-BAT, TALIA, AND RA'S AL GHUL.

ALONG WITH DENNIS O'NEIL, ADAMS REVITALIZED BATMAN THROUGH **THE BRAVE & THE BOLD**, THEN WITH MOST OF THE OTHER BATMAN TITLES.

ADAMS ALSO DREW POIGNANT STORIES, WITH WRITER DENNIS O'NEIL, ON **THE GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW** TITLE. NEAL CO-CREATED THE NEW GREEN LANTERN, JOHN STEWART.

AT MARVEL, ADAMS WORKED WITH ROY THOMAS ON **THE X-MEN** TITLE, AND ON **THE AVENGERS**.

WITH PHIL YEH IN THE WEST COAST, NEAL FOLLOWED, IN THE EAST COAST, WITH JERRY ROBINSON & HELPED IN GETTING A BYLINE FOR THE SUPERMAN CREATORS, AND A MODEST PENSION FOR JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER.

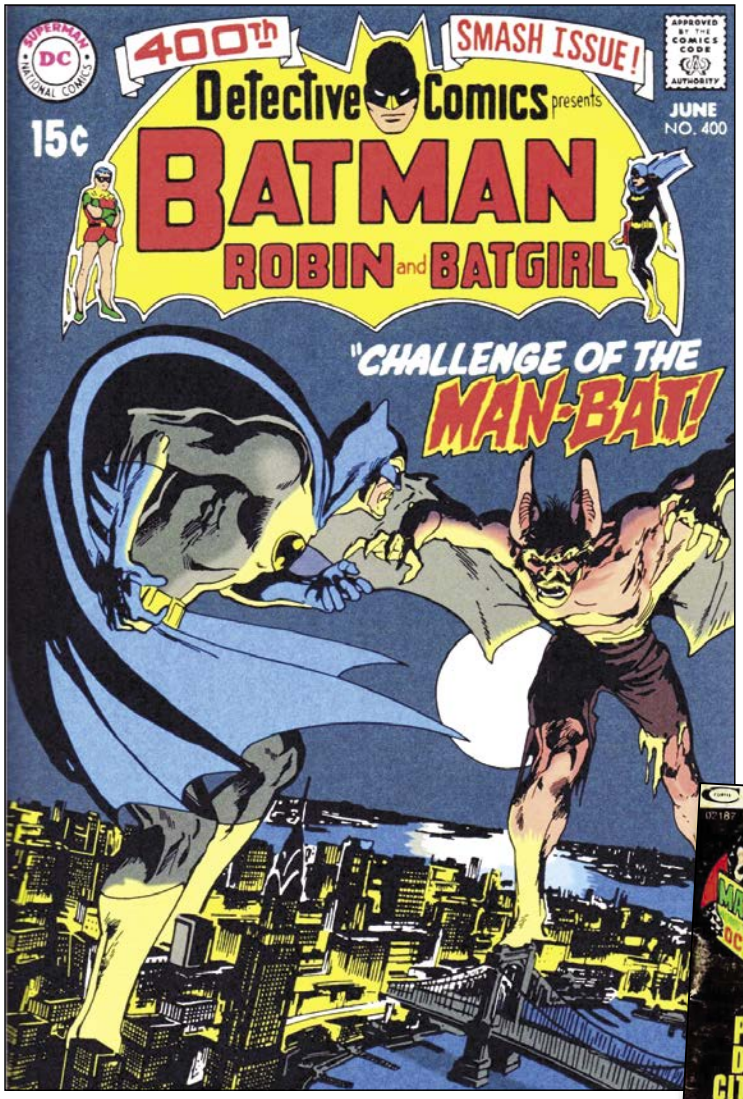


Neal Adams

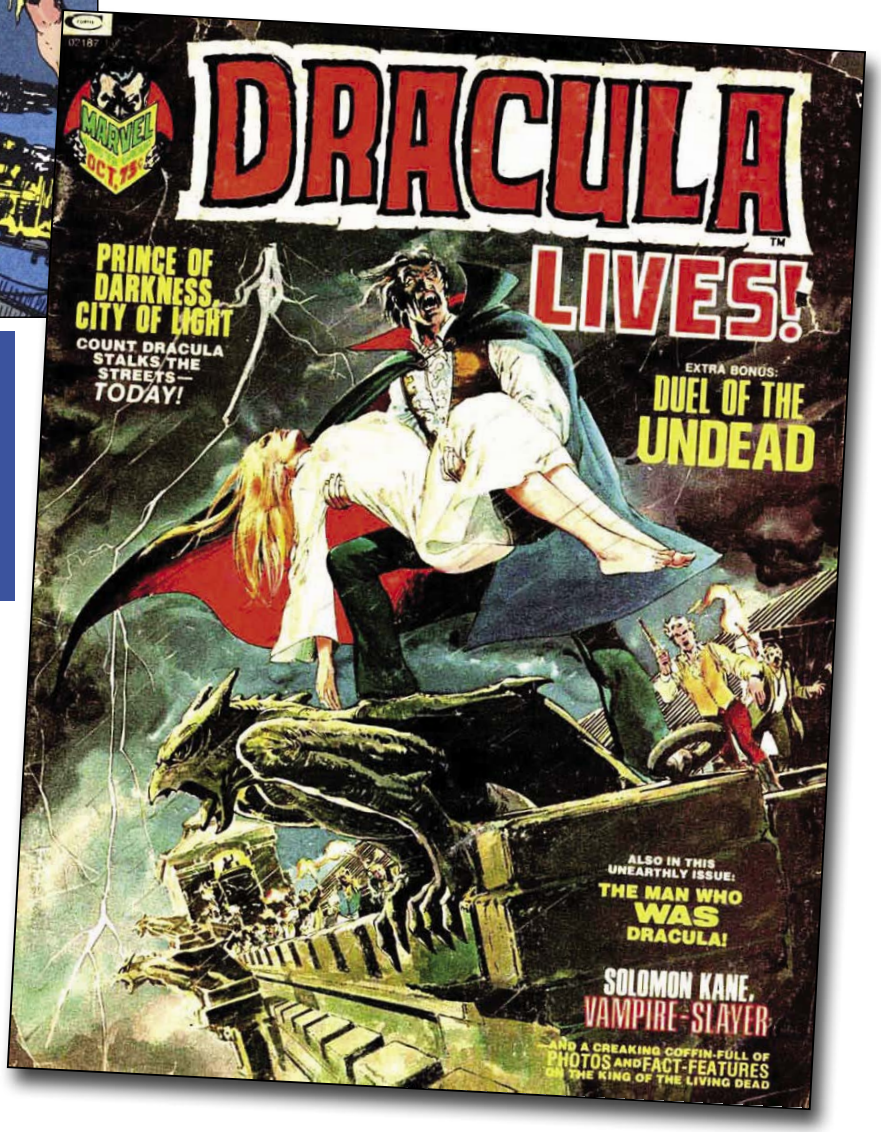
1941-2022

NEAL ADAMS WAS INDUCTED INTO **THE WILL EISNER HALL OF FAME** IN 1998. HE RECEIVED AN **INKPOT AWARD** IN 1976, AND ALLEY AWARDS FOR HIS DEADMAN & X-MEN WORK, IN THE LATE 60S AND EARLY 70S.

A Special NEAL ADAMS Tribute
written & illustrated by Emilio Soltero.







Neal Adams & The Bat-Men

The artist at a personal appearance in 2014, flanked by three bat-related personages with which he became famously associated. On the left, Batman meets Man-Bat on the cover of DC's *Detective Comics* #400 (June 1970)—while, on the right, Count Dracula never looked more stormily menacing than when Neal painted this cover for Marvel's *Dracula Lives* #3 (Oct. 1973). We'll bet Neal could even have made baseball-batter extraordinaire Babe Ruth look scary! [*Detective* cover TM & © DC Comics; *Dracula Lives* cover TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Making A *Spectre* Of Oneself
Adams' cover for *The Spectre* #3 (March-April 1968), which re-introduced Wildcat to DC readers with a bang. [TM & © DC Comics.]

certain point some of it comes to a head.

[INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: *Neal was at odds with the theory that all land masses were once a big giant mass, on one side of the Earth.*]

As a person who has always been interested in science, physics, and as artist, graphic arts, this seemed to be a preposterous concept. I couldn't believe it and I could prove it was wrong. It seemed so illogical when you look at all of the known universe and imagine a planet with a big lump on one side. I looked at Mars. All of the planets seemed to have a texture that goes all around, the same for all of the planetary bodies. Somehow, the Earth seemed to have this gigantic land mass on one side and water elsewhere. I studied it for several years when I could. I came to my own conclusions.

Mentally, all of the continents seem like they fit together. Why should this first explanation that comes along be the explanation? Maybe there is another explanation. The problem with this explanation, if there is another explanation, and if it is true, is that much of what we know and believe in science is wrong. That's a difficult pill to swallow. If the alternative solution is true, then the universe is not exactly built the way we think it is. The question this "little" thing led to was how was the universe built. I had to come up with a solution. Oy! I wrote a 35-page graphic novel and I drew the first nine pages. I couldn't get past the nine pages because I couldn't believe the mish-mosh theory I had to come up with. It wasn't complete.

Twenty years later, I put it all together. I had a greater understanding of science and how the universe works. I made a theory that allows the universe the way it exists but that explains all of the things we find contradictory in science; i.e., why does light travel at such distances in a vacuum, millions of miles per minute? There are ten, twenty, or forty such mysteries that we skip over in science. If I can answer this question, and explain the universe the way it is, then I have a theory that explains the universe better.

ES: *Is it 120 pages long?*

ADAMS: Yeah. I took some pages out and I have an essay, and a video of how the Earth got the way it is. It is all done and we are working on the video part. It will be an interesting discussion, or it

[*continued from p. 29*]

ES: *I don't mean this as flattery, but you have been a role model to many artists. What got you started in the industry—did you have any role models or mentors?*

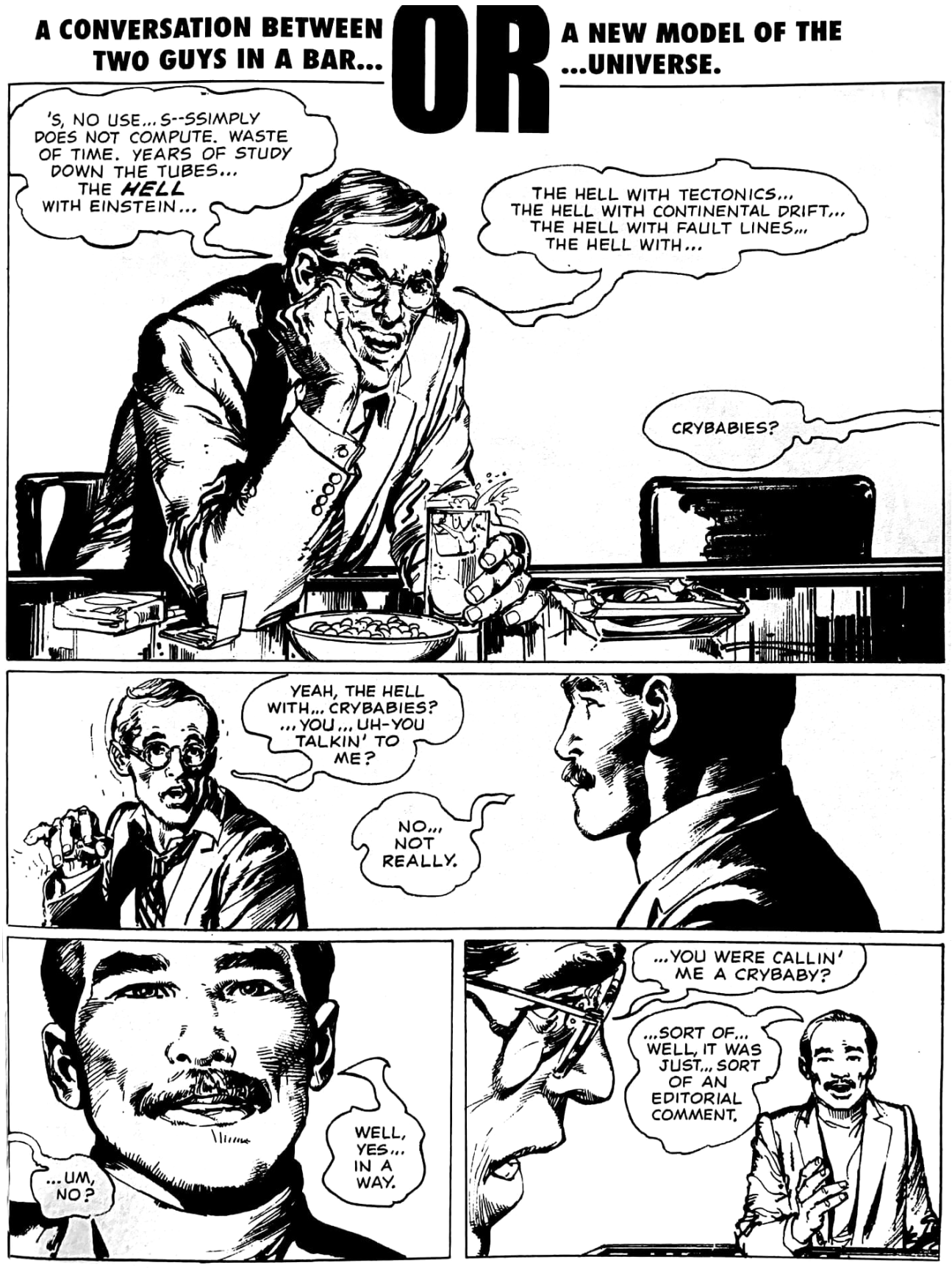
ADAMS: Role models don't have to do specifically the things you do. It is always nice to find someone who does the things you do.

ES: *Is there anything you can share about your new graphic novel?*

ADAMS: I can share something, but it is not my only interest. I am a kind of geek that studies science, religion, physics, and metaphysics. I develop theories that most people are not interested in. I have my geek friends. I can indulge my preferences very easily, but at a



A Dark Knight In Bright Colors
A spectacular limited-edition illustration by Neal of Batman, some years back. [Batman TM & © DC Comics.]



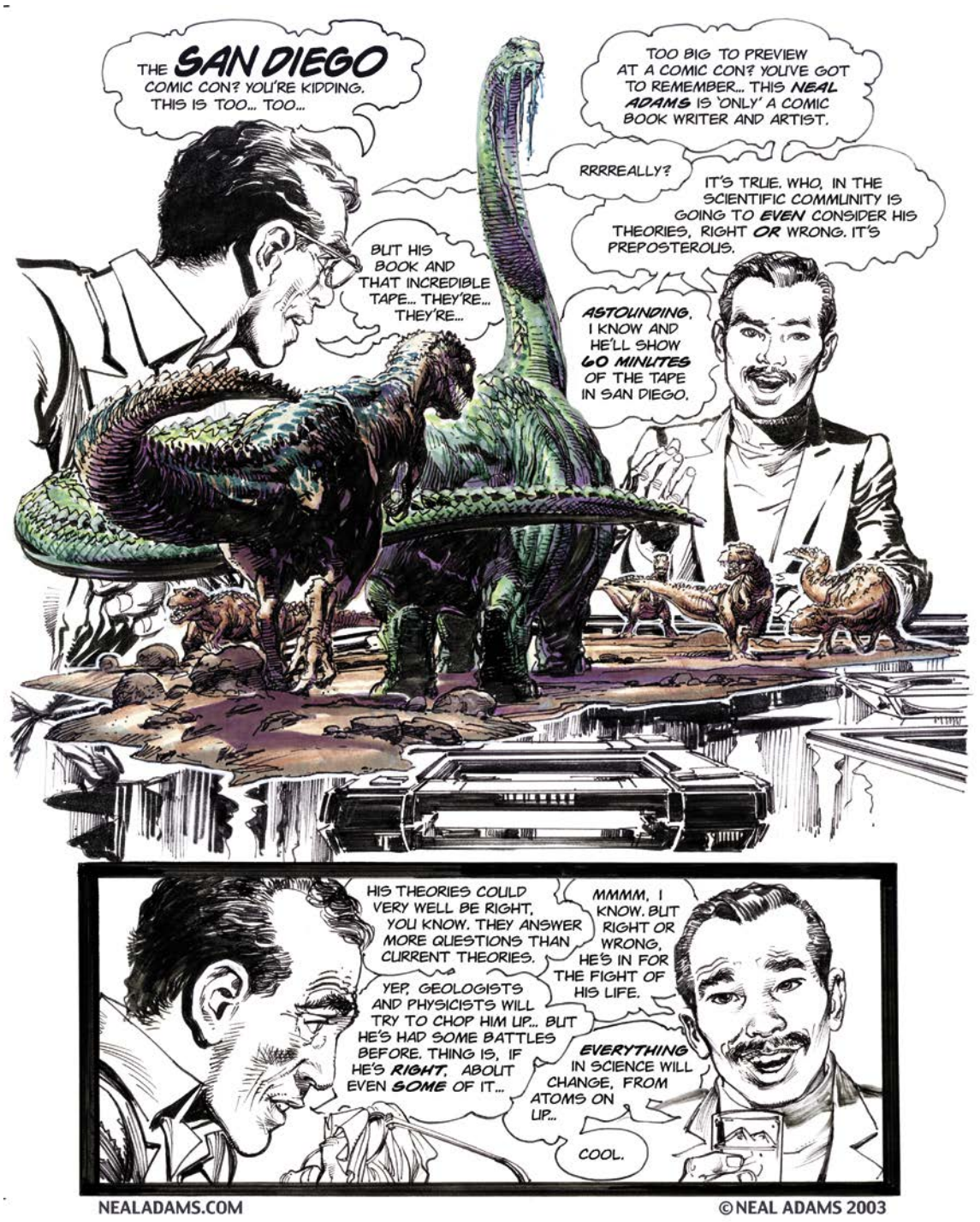
Talking Heads

Neal Adams' illustrated treatise *A Conversation between Two Guys in a Bar* begins quietly... 'cause, basically, it's exactly what the title *says* it is. Thanks to James Rosen, Jon B. Cooke, & Dann Thomas. [© Estate of Neal Adams.]



Fitting *Too* Neatly?

In Neal Adams' illustrated treatise, the mustachioed man, a stand-in for the writer/artist, begins to attack the theory of tectonic plates—in particular, the theory widely accepted in recent decades that all the land masses on Earth were once one gigantic mass, with South America's eastern extremities fitting neatly into the "armpit" of the African continent—although both, of course, had somewhat different shapes in those millions-and-millions-of-years-ago days. Thanks to James Rosen, Jon B. Cooke, & Dann Thomas. [© Estate of Neal Adams.]



A Jurassic Parking Lot

Much of Neal Adams' esoteric *A Conversation between Two Guys in a Bar* is just that: conversation. However, the artist included a visual digression that involved a battle between a brachiosaurus and a carnosaur or two—and who are we to resist sharing this and the next exciting page with you? Thanks to James Rosen, Jon B. Cooke, & Dann Thomas. [© Estate of Neal Adams.]

will be true and we will have to change science. The chances of it being true are .001, but if it's not, it will be hard to disprove. While we are having a long discussion, it might occur to people that we can use the comicbook form for more than just adult comics and kid comics.

Remember, in a basic way, the closest thing to comicbooks are cave paintings, where the artist and storyteller are together. Since those days the artist and writer have been forced to separate. Comicbooks are a basic pure form, like jazz, and the surface has just been scratched. To give you an example: If you took the best writer and artist in the world, and you had them create a comicbook, would it be the greatest piece of art in the world, or does our poor… opinion of a comicbook "destroy it as art"?

We think in terms of pictures and words, visual impressions. The difference between a novel and a comicbook is that the novel allows you to imagine the things you see. The comicbook gives you the story and the imagination, another person's point of view as to how the story goes. As in any other form of writing, you're



[© Estate of Neal Adams.]

allowed to use your own imagination. In comicbooks, you see another person's imagination. It is like having one door (the novel) when you can have two (comicbooks).

ES: *Do you have a title for the graphic novel?*

ADAMS: *A Conversation between Two Guys in a Bar, or A New Model of the Universe.*

ES: *Are you going to color it?*

ADAMS: No, it's black-&-white and no backgrounds. I try to tell people not to buy it because it's boring. For me it's the most interesting and incredible project I've ever worked on in my life. You can keep track of it on the web site.



NEAL ADAMS, The Nealiverse, & NEMPCOs

Integrating Neal Merch Into One's Daily Life, 1976-2025

by James Rosen

***A/E* EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:** *James Rosen, who wrote about the "childhood and origins" of Neal Adams for our previous issue on that legendary artist (#181) is chief Washington correspondent for Newsmax and the author, most recently, of* Scalia: Rise to Greatness, 1936-1986, *about the early life of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. James has recorded more than twenty hours of interviews with Neal Adams for a planned biography.*

Neal Adams ruined comics for me—indeed, life itself.

Once I got hooked on Neal, at seven or eight, the world of comicbooks was forever divided into Nealworks and non-Nealworks.

I could only accept Nealworks.

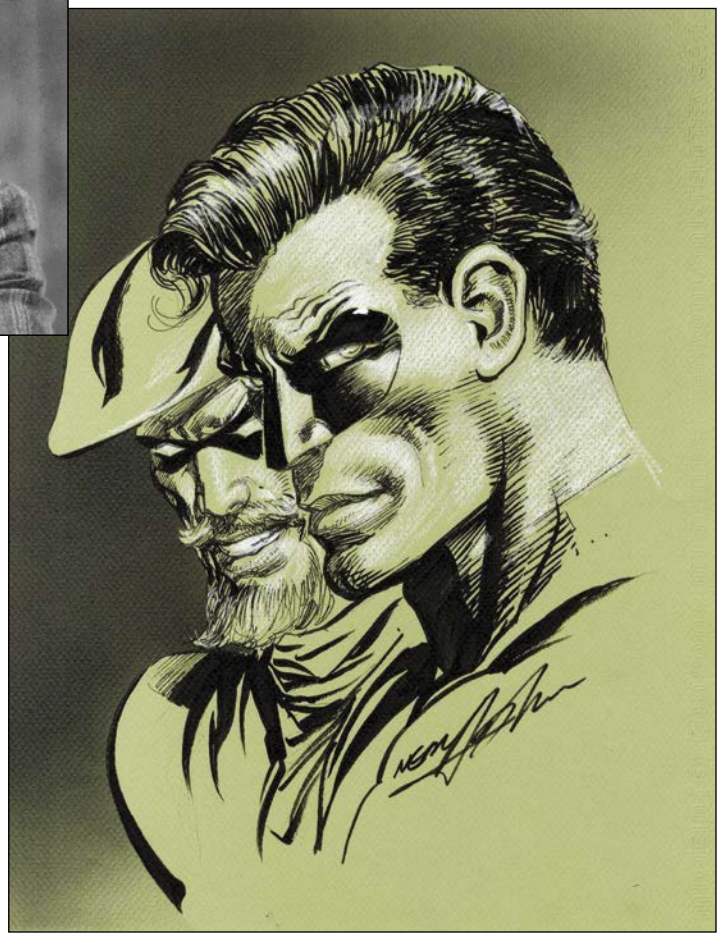
When ads showed seven or eight covers on sale the following month, each tiny in size, I strained to see if any were by That Guy.

Once I learned who "*Neal*" was, I found the world beyond comics was also divided: into Neal Creatures and non-Neal Creatures. Neal Creatures were the kinds of people who, as protagonists, Neal tended to draw, and drew better than anyone: impossibly good-looking men and women, with a fine angularity to their symmetrical features and well-proportioned, athletic physiques, their external beauty convincing you, not always reliably, that they were unfailingly beautiful on the inside, too—strong, brave, virtuous.

Non-Neal Creatures consisted of—*everyone else*: the not-conventionally-attractive, the plain, the homely. One of the great triumphs of my life was that I married a Neal Creature, even though I am, assuredly, a non-Neal Creature.

Needless to say, I don't take all this as seriously as the foregoing suggests. But I'd be lying if I claimed I don't still perceive the world through a Nealian prism. For good or ill, his mastery of every scene, setting, and style, the way his characters, backdrops, vehicles, dreams, and hallucinations all looked exactly as they should—"*If super-heroes existed," he famously boasted, "they'd look the way I*







A Conversation Between *Four* Guys!

Neal Adams (above)—and article-author James Rosen (on far right) bookend a latter-day Adams illustration of Green Lantern and Green Arrow, retrieved from the Internet. 1971 photo courtesy of Pedro Angosto. [Green Lantern & Green Arrow TM & © DC Comics; all art accompanying this article is TM & © DC Comics or TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Making A Display Of Oneself

Some Neal Adams-covered magnets—mostly DCs, with a few Marvels tossed in—from a display case in James Rosen's office—just to set the mood. All photos from this point on are courtesy of James Rosen.

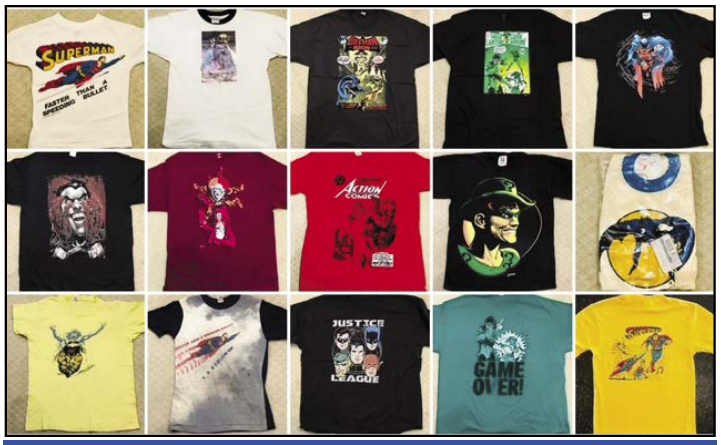
draw them"—still governs my vision of all external phenomena.

My pursuit of Neal was always retroactive. Born in 1968, I became sentient just as his legendary run at DC Comics was nearing its end. I was hooked by the time the calendars came out, in 1976 and '77. With the photograph of a smiling, turtleneck-clad Neal on its rear interior cover, *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali* (1978) marked the first time I learned what my idol looked like: *Impossibly handsome! A fine angularity to his perfectly symmetrical features!* Neal even *looked* like a super-hero—not like the Murrays and Mortys and Marvins under whose *shtetl* tyranny the industry had toiled for forty years....

Collecting Neal's work in those days meant trips to used comic shops. From Staten Island my Dad used to drive us in his red '72 Datsun over the Verrazano Bridge to Bill and Bob's in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. While my Dad made small talk with Bill and Bob, I'd spend an hour vacillating over which Neal books to use my allotted $20 to buy. Then we'd return home and I'd experience the Innocence-Lost letdown to which all Neal fans, of any generation, learn to acclimate: peering beyond a fantastic Neal cover to find the interior drawn by some other artist, by definition inferior.

Such shops were already few and far between, though, and they were never guaranteed to have what you wanted. Later, eBay brought perfect supply-demand efficiency but stripped the pursuit of the serendipity, and sense of adventure, that make collecting a thrilling journey.

I now know, from reading the work of Dan Greenfield of 13th Dimension and other writers, that my Neal Origin Story is not unique. We are to Neal what the "second-generation" (post-breakup) Beatles fans were to the Fab Four. And while most such fans remain aware, eternally and acutely, that they will always be contextually disadvantaged in a fundamental way—*"You Should'a Been There," John Lennon said in the '70s*—second-generation fandom isn't without its rewards.



Adams T-Shirts

(and one pajama top)

While we missed out on having our minds blown by the latest Neal Adams covers leaping out from the spinner rack at the corner drugstore in 1969—*the kind of experiences Arlen Schumer and other first-generation fans have written about*—our cohort got the aforementioned calendars, the Treasury issues, and a wealth of "outtakes" unavailable to first-generation fans: the sketches, prelims, and discarded layouts that began to appear, most notably in *Neal Adams: The Sketchbook* (1999), curated by Schumer, as Neal took on Elder Statesman status. I've always likened it to missing out on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *Sgt. Pepper* but enjoying access to all the studio outtakes from "I Saw Her Standing There" in perfect fidelity.

* * *

By 1999, I was convinced that the Internet and CD-ROMs, and Neal's own efforts at anthologizing his works in slipcase editions, obviated the need for me to hold on to my collection of his back issues, which had begun to overrun my small apartment in Washington, DC. So I enlisted an eBay seller to liquidate the collection—and instantly regretted it.

The regret grew acute once Neal's slipcase editions came out and it became clear that he had redrawn and recolored significant



Another Sampling Of Adams T-Shirts

There are lots more.





Mug Shots
Custom-made by Rosen using Walgreens.com

portions of the peak-period works collected therein. This has been a subject of controversy among successive generations of fans, and more than one argument between Neal and me. He maintained that the revised works reflected what he always wanted them to look like, but had been barred from achieving by the impoverished technology of the era. I argued he could no better re-create what he hoped to achieve decades earlier than Paul McCartney could replicate his singing voice of 1965. He accused me of rank nostalgia and likened me to bald, fat men clinging to their childhood memories. My paeans to the inviolability of great art were dismissed.

There was a period where I focused on other things, other collections; but Neal was never far from consciousness. Around the time I became a Dad, I recognized a desire on my part to make Neal portable somehow; to have him, his works, his genius—*even though I had divested my collection of his core product, the comics*—with me at all times.



Miniature Stickers Produced By Topps, 1969-70

I first began fulfilling this desire by buying coffee mugs; what better way to integrate Neal into your Daily Life? Raising a mug to your lips with Neal's peak-period Superman or Batman emblazoned on it made the experience more inspiring and enriching: a summons to greatness, to embody the excellence of Neal, ever at hand.

Doing so with a cup or mug actually sold in 1973 brought still another sensation: time travel! You could almost taste the morning-java optimism of a denizen of the '70s, before 9/11, Iraq, the Great Recession, and January 6…. Were the individuals who previously used the item Neal fans, or fans of the character? Or was it just another mug to them, a gift?

What about situations where you couldn't lug a coffee mug around—the airport, say? That's when I began collecting Neal-emblazoned stickers. *Now there was portability!* As with the cups and mugs, one could acquire, and distinguish between, those produced contemporaneous to Neal's peak period and those, invariably slicker, produced more recently. Each had its charms. I blitzed eBay and was quickly able to adorn my laptop with a healthy sampling of iconic Neal imagery, most produced in the '70s. Chargers and phones received the same treatment. I even slapped Neal stickers in obscure nooks of our summer home for the next owners to find.

Then I realized I wanted not only to enjoy Neal wherever I went, but to advertise him, to *evangelize* on his behalf, wherever I went. The staring at the laptop from fellow passengers or Starbucks customers wasn't enough… so I started collecting Neal-emblazoned T-shirts. They, too, spanned the early 1970s to latter day, with works from DC, Marvel, and Continuity. Now Neal could accompany me to the park or the beach.

The beach? Are there Neal beach towels? Why, yes, there are! And once again, their date of manufacture could be 1974 or 2004.

And so began my second Neal collection: of mass-produced consumer objects emblazoned with Neal Adams iconography. It now ranges in the hundreds of items, of all kinds. I flatter myself that this collection is more important than the one I foolishly sold, because, more than comics, the mass-produced consumer objects that feature Neal's works speak to a broader cultural permeation by the artist.

Sure, Adams fans read the books; but *these* objects were produced in the millions and used around the world—*manufactured*



Throwing In The Towel(s)—1974 To Latter-Day



in Brazil! Taiwan! Singapore!—by people who never heard of Neal Adams, never read a single comicbook of his, didn't even speak English.

He reached those masses, too. Perhaps the only objectively sad item in my collection is a *Denver Post* photograph from 1980 that captured a poor immigrant child standing outside a food pantry, barefoot and wearing a stained 1971 shirt with Neal's chain-breaking Superman on it.

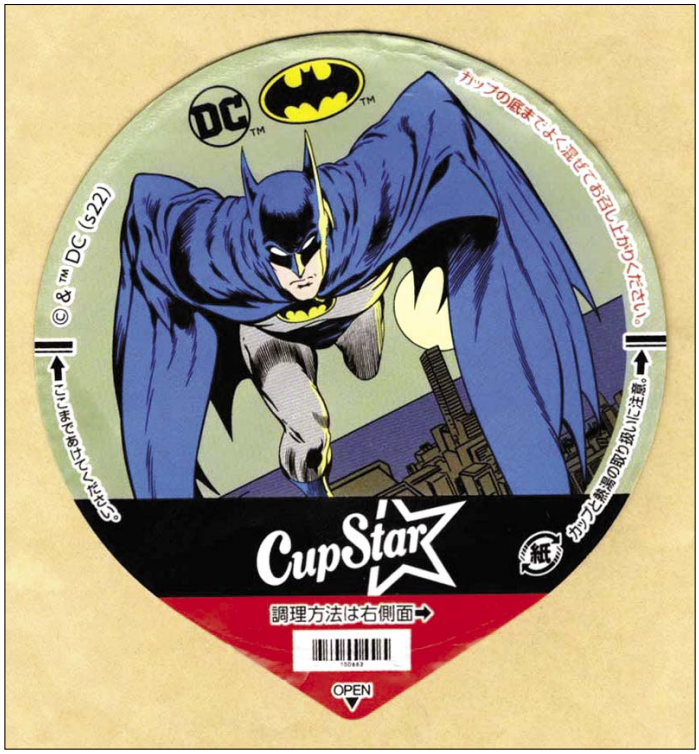
* * *

It so happened that Neal's rise coincided with a boom in super-hero licensing, made possible by the advent of cheaper and more efficient manufacturing technologies and the adoption, at DC and Marvel, of more aggressive approaches to development of revenue streams apart from comics. The coincidence of such developments with Adams' hyper-realistic style and knack for supremely iconic imagery—*think of his 1971 Superman flying pose, later used on the cover of* Superman *#252, as quintessentially mid-century American as anything produced by Schulz, Warhol, or Wyeth*—all but guaranteed the explosion in Neal-emblazoned objects in the 1970s.

To be sure, images of Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, and other heroes, drawn by industry legends such as Carmine Infantino and Jack Kirby, had been licensed for the marketing of mass-produced consumer objects long before Neal. With its debut in 1966, the *Batman* TV show, starring Adam West, sparked a craze that took the existing platform of super-hero merchandising to a new level. Similar paradigms in this area of commerce could be observed with the releases of *Superman: The Movie* (1978) and *Batman* (1989). At each point, Neal's works saw wide use.

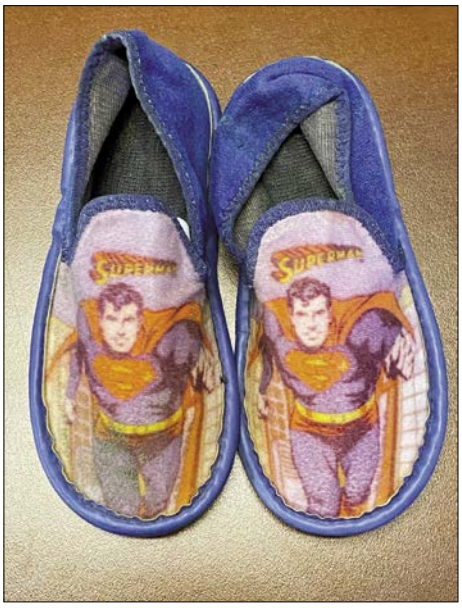
Saner heads, such as Mrs. Rosen's, usually prevail; but one can live *an entire week* of Daily Life, doing all the things you would ordinarily do, from sun-up to sundown, using Neal-emblazoned objects. I'm not sure the same is true for Infantino or Kirby. Consider:

You lift your head from a Neal-emblazoned pillowcase and bed sheet, or emerge from your Neal-emblazoned sleeping bag, straighten out your Neal-emblazoned pajamas, step into Neal-emblazoned slippers, turn the lights on with a Neal-emblazoned switch-plate, grab food from a refrigerator adorned with Neal-emblazoned fridge magnets, drink coffee from your Neal-emblazoned mug, savor juice from your Neal-emblazoned glass, return the glass to its Neal-emblazoned coaster, eat off of Neal-emblazoned paper plates placed upon Neal-emblazoned placemats, wipe your face with Neal-emblazoned napkins, wipe down the Neal-emblazoned table cloth, lather up behind your Neal-emblazoned shower curtain, dry off with your Neal-emblazoned beach towel, style your hair with a Neal-emblazoned brush, check yourself out in a Neal-emblazoned mirror, change into a Neal-emblazoned shirt—*choose from over a hundred varieties, maybe an iron-on?*—throw on your Neal-emblazoned hoodie, pull up your Neal-emblazoned tube socks, lace up your Neal-emblazoned sneakers, angle the brim on your Neal-emblazoned hat, check the time on your Neal-emblazoned watch, throw on your denim jacket with the



Latter-day Japanese Noodle Cup Cover





Slipper-ing Into Something A Bit More Neal

A choice of Superman slippers—and can Batman be far behind?

Neal-emblazoned patch, attach a Neal-emblazoned pin to the lapel—*it could even be the one with Neal's self-portrait on it, No. 53 in the Famous Cartoonist Series of pins*—pour a roadie into your Neal-emblazoned thermos, pack lunch into your Neal-emblazoned tote bag, stuff the tote bag in your Neal-emblazoned backpack, spark up with your Neal-emblazoned lighter, strap on your Neal-emblazoned face mask if so inclined, pedal to work on a bicycle festooned with a Neal-emblazoned bike flag—





Super-Heroes Aren't *Just* For Breakfast Anymore, But...

A Nealoholic guy or gal can turn on his Superman lightswitch—brush his hair with a Superman brush—and then devour a Wonder Woman breakfast cereal, featuring a slightly rarer Adams image.

or ride your Neal-emblazoned skateboard, or ignite your car engine with keys dangling from your Neal-emblazoned keychain—gaze up at the Neal-emblazoned wall display, or maybe the Neal-emblazoned calendar, hung on your office wall, lean back against your Neal-emblazoned lumbar-support pillow, open up your Neal-emblazoned pencil case, select a Neal-emblazoned pen, grab paper from your Neal-emblazoned notebook, spiral or bound, draw-up a to-do list that you then crumple up, because you got something wrong, and chuck into your Neal-emblazoned wastebasket, play an album with a Neal-emblazoned cover on your Neal-emblazoned record player, send off a Neal-emblazoned postcard and a Neal-emblazoned birthday card using Neal-emblazoned stamps, measure something with your Neal-emblazoned ruler, retrieve the thumb drive from the hollowed-out, Neal-emblazoned safe-book, situated among the non-Nealworks on your bookcase, log on to your computer with the Neal-emblazoned stickers plastered all over it, go straight to eBay, and—

You get the idea. As complete as the foregoing litany already is, it doesn't even take into account a vast category of mass-produced consumer objects







"You Can't Have One Without The Other..."

A Nealian *pencil sharpener* (image redrawn by a non-Neal artist) and a Neal Adams *eraser*—manufactured nearly two decades apart.

that would never make so much as a cameo appearance in the Daily Life of a Neal-obsessed adult: *children's clothes and toys*. Oh, the cars and trucks, dolls and belts, games and puzzles, cards and coloring books, Band-Aids and sand buckets, stickers and play sets, pennants and party favors….

Yes, it's an entire universe—*the Nealiverse!*—of Neal-emblazoned mass-produced consumer objects (NEMPCOs). And collecting them offers some gratifications that collecting Neal's comics does not: chiefly, the element of surprise. The professionalization of the comic-collecting enterprise since the 1990s, the proliferation of checklists and detailed fan sites, slabbing and numbered-grading systems, has enabled the comic collector to know exactly what's out there, how many issues of a given book were published, which ones were drawn by which artist, which are worth more, and which, consequently, still need to be acquired in order to reach some pre-determined notion of collection-completeness.

The hunter of Neal-emblazoned objects, however, will be simultaneously hobbled, and thrilled, by the uncertainty that derives from what we might call the Rumsfeld Rule, popularized by the late secretary of defense in the war on terror: There are things we *know* we know; there are things we know we *don't* know; and there are things we don't even *know* that we don't know. eBay can help the savvy user to learn *some*, or even *a lot*, of what he doesn't know; but it cannot, by definition, inform him of *all* he doesn't know, because eBay itself might not know: Some bootlegged Neal-emblazoned item, sold only in China, might not yet have made it there.

Unlike with comics, there is no all-encompassing checklist of NEMPCOs to guide the collector. Because few barriers-to-entry existed for the production of such objects, the number of players in this field far exceeded the number of comic publishers; accordingly, there will never be a full accounting of all the NEMPCOs that have been produced. It's much more of a Wild West than regular comic-collecting. Equally unlike Neal comics, these items are *still being produced*, year in and year out, in products and variations both familiar and wholly new.





To The Bikemobile!

1974 bicycle safety flags featuring imagery, above, from an interior panel in *Detective* #404 (Oct. 1970), and, at right, 1971 corner-box art.



The Mini-Bat Signal

Stickers featuring an extraction from the *Detective* #404 pose used on kids' flashlights in 1975 (left)—and two years earlier (below).



It doesn't help the NEMPCO collector that many such items reflect legal licensing through DC or Marvel, and still others, bootlegs and knock-offs, do not. And unlike the comics buff, the NEMPCO collector must beware the hazard, as common as not, that the relevant item makes use of a *redrawn version* of Neal's work. Unless so poorly done as to offend the senses, even these are to be collected because they, too, in their way, showcase, as artifacts, Neal's broader cultural permeation. The crude re-creation of the *Abbey Road* cover by an unknown artist speaks as much to the Beatles' reach as the ubiquity of the actual album.

* * *

The earliest NEMPCOs were sticker sets issued in 1969-70 by Topps, the premier postwar manufacturer of baseball cards, featuring covers of contemporaneous DC titles. Those represented ranged from top-tier super-heroes to romance and humor lines and included a number of Neal's works, both landmarks (*Batman* #217, when the Batcave was shuttered, or *Tomahawk* #117, with its crimson evocation of Frederic Remington), and less-familiar entries (*Challengers of the Unknown* #70).

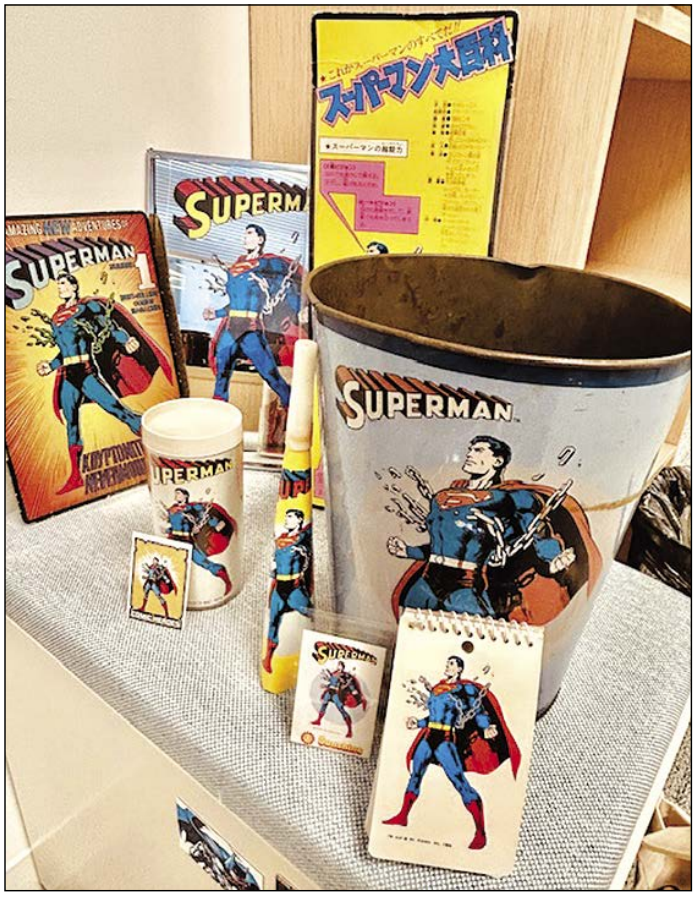
One possible competitor for the distinction of being the first NEMPCO, as the collector and scholar Paul Michael Moon Rogers pointed out to me recently, is the series of tattoo-chewing gum packages issued by Fleer, featuring the Justice League of America, in the same time frame. Among poorly rendered images of the various heroes by one or more non-Neal artists—including Green Arrow, seen wearing the updated costume Neal designed in *Brave and Bold* #85, with its cover date of Aug.-Sept. 1969—the Fleer sets made repeated use of a small detail of Wonder Woman's head, taken from Neal's cover to *Justice League of America* #66, which sported a publication date of November 1968. The individual Fleer gum packets were copyrighted 1969—but the boxes in which they were shipped to retailers listed "1970," making it impossible to tell whether the Fleer sets predated the first Topps sets, issued in 1969.



Tattoo Chew

Neal's Wonder Woman from *Justice League of America* #66 (Nov. 1968) was used by Fleer circa 1969-70.

1971 brought a spate of items featuring Neal's iconic Superman flying pose: two different coffee mugs, a hanging wall display, a number of children's T-shirts. What makes this fascinating, and something of a mystery, is that the image, definitive to so many, did not surface in comics until it was used on the cover of *Superman*



Visions Of Nealiana

The iconic chain-breaking image from the cover of *Superman* #233 (Jan. 1971) has been used on countless objects, from a 1974 wastebasket made in Brazil to packaging for a 1978 Japanese doll to latter-day American items.

#252 ("THE WORLD'S GREATEST FLYING HEROES"). That edition sported a publication date of June 1972, meaning it hit newsstands in early April of that year. These details raise the question—*its answer likely lost to history forever*—of whether Neal drew this image separately, possibly for licensing use, and later repurposed it for *Superman* #252; or whether the cover had been lying around awhile, and was cannibalized for licensing the previous year.

An interior panel of Neal's from *Detective* #404 (Oct. 1970) contained a similarly definitive image of the Caped Crusader, showing him balanced on one foot. This, too, became a go-to for manufacturers. Featured alongside images of Justice League of America heroes drawn by other artists, this image of Batman first appeared in sticker sets marketed by Our Way Studios that were advertised prominently, if not relentlessly, in DC Comics titles starting in 1972. The balanced Batman also showed up on a cup sold by 7-11 in 1973 and on JC Penney children's pajamas in 1975.

When Michael Fleischer published *The Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes, Volume 1: Batman* (1976), the title page was given over to a beautiful black-and-white reproduction of this image. To young readers of Fleischer's seminal volume, the selection of Neal's image for that honor imbued it, and Neal, with primacy in the literature of the character—and in our imaginations. DC recognized as much when it used the image as corner-box art for *Detective Comics* as late as 1976, by which point Neal had largely left comics so his studio, Continuity Associates, could focus on more lucrative work in advertising.

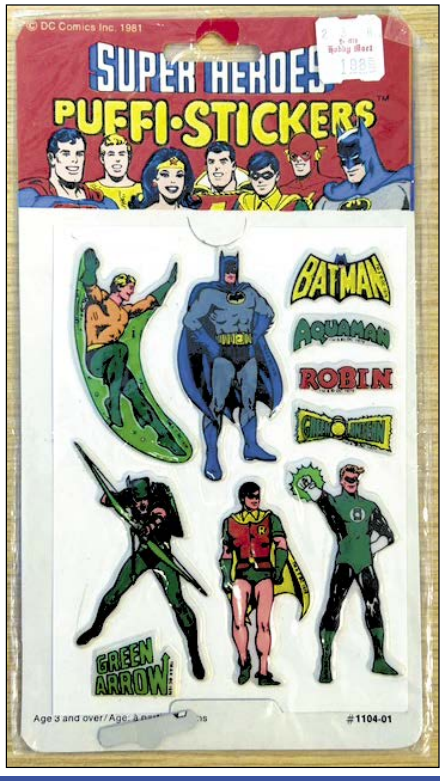
Over time, five or six Neal Adams images of Superman and Batman would appear on (literally) countless mass-produced consumer objects. Use of Neal's works in this capacity reached their height in 1978, as Christopher Reeve took flight; thereafter, Neal moved to storyboards and animatics, and DC shifted its licensing to reflect style-guide work by José Luis García-López and George Pérez.

Neal-emblazoned works persist to the current day, however, with new shirts and wallets and other items popping up constantly, offered by marketers unknown and as prominent as The Gap. The last few years have seen still more new shirts using the fist-extended Superman pose, which first appeared on a 1972 magazine ad for the U.S. Air Force Academy; and a wallet featuring the super heroes-exploding-clockwise imagery that Neal designed for the *Justice League of America* Treasury edition C-46 cover in 1976. Just the Batman pose from the C-46 cover—or redrawn versions of it—has become iconic, used on T-shirts, sweatshirts, towels.

* * *

The photographs accompanying this article show NEMPCOs





Stick It To The Man!

Nealworks used alongside art from non-Neal artists in sticker sets from 1976 and 1981, respectively.



You'll Believe A *Lot* Of Guys Can Fly!

We interrupt this presentation to bring you Neal's wraparound cover for *Superman* #252 (June 1972), a giant-size issue that reprinted tales of flying super-heroes from the Golden and Silver Ages. Thanks to Bob Bailey & Michael T. Gilbert. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Cashing In On Neal
Latter-day wallet featuring imagery from the cover of *Justice League of America* #c-46 (1976).

from the author's collection. If there is sufficient interest, future articles could explore NEMPCOs from different angles: the evolution in the use of a particular image; Marvel NEMPCOs (e.g., a 1975 Triton cup for 7-11, or a latter-day Conan the Barbarian mug, French in origin, featuring an extract from the cover of *Savage Tales* #4).

I'm near the end of my NEMPCO collection. While I'll never know for certain when I've collected every last one that exists, a decade of eBay searching has revealed the contours of this Alternative Earth to comic-collecting; and I've probably acquired 90% of what's out there. Hope springs eternal, however, and success is always just a click away.

Ironically, after all this browsing and buying, the Neal-emblazoned objects I love most are those I produced myself. I own dozens of professionally-produced Neal cups, mugs, and glasses; but some of my favorite Nealworks were never licensed out. So I used **Walgreens.com** to produce four coffee mugs featuring some of Neal's overlooked gems.

The Holy Grail for me, oddly, is a latter-day item: a T-shirt with the 1972 Batman logo Neal designed above his running pose from *Batman* #251. I have only seen this twice. Once was on the blog belonging to comic artist and historian Al Bigley, who posted a shot of himself wearing an adult version of it. Asked where he got it, Al told me he no longer owned the shirt and had no information about it. The second time was in



Computing (Super) Power
James Rosen's 2011 Mac Book Air, decked out with stickers whose manufacture spans from the 1970s to the current day.



The Corgi & The Caped Crusader
And here we thought corgis were the late Queen of England's dogs!



Gap Filled
Latter-day shirt featuring imagery from the aforementioned *JLA* Treasury edition.



Keep On Nealin' In The '90s!
A 1995 pencil case featuring Neal's style-guide work for the movie *Batman Forever*.

Washington, DC, about ten years ago: I saw a child wearing the same shirt—red, like Al's. I thought about offering the boy's parents $100 cash, but realized how bizarre, even unseemly, that might appear, and refrained. The search continues.

The kind of Talmudic scrutiny I and others have devoted to Neal Adams, to his life and works and their place in modern culture, displeased the Master. In 2018, I requested his assistance in obtaining his old report cards, hoping to find some scribbled entry by a teacher in the 1940s who recognized, and flagged, incipient genius in the kid from Coney Island.

Neal said no—with evident irritation. "I am not a historical figure," he texted me.



For The Kid Who Has Everything
A cigarette lighter to set it on fire with! You might call this: "the *lighter* side of Neal Adams."



Bucket List
A 1978 toy.

Paul Michael Moon Rogers *made important contributions to the art accompanying this article. For the past five years, a group of fans of the complete work of Neal Adams (comics, advertising, licensing, theme parks, newspaper strips, etc., etc.) have been collating material at the Neal Adams Appreciation page on Facebook in an effort to showcase Neal's immense contributions and influence. Paul asks that you please join them there, say hello, and explore the vast works of a true master of the craft.*



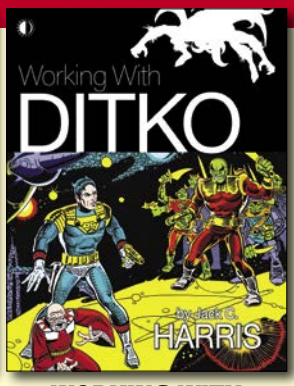
TwoMorrows Books Now Shipping!



AMERICAN COMIC BOOK CHRONICLES: 1945-49

Covers the aftermath of WWII, when comics shifted from super-heroes to crime, romance, horror, and western comics, including **BILL GAINES'** EC Comics!

(288-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$49.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-099-1



WORKING WITH DITKO

JACK C. HARRIS recalls collaborating with **STEVE DITKO** on The Creeper, Shade, Demon, Wonder Woman, The Fly, & more, plus Ditko's unused Batman design!

(128-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$24.95**
(Digital Edition) **$13.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-122-6



JACK KIRBY'S DINGBAT LOVE

The final complete, unpublished Jack Kirby stories in existence: Two unused 1970s DC **DINGBATS OF DANGER STREET** tales, plus **TRUE-LIFE DIVORCE** & **SOUL LOVE** mags!

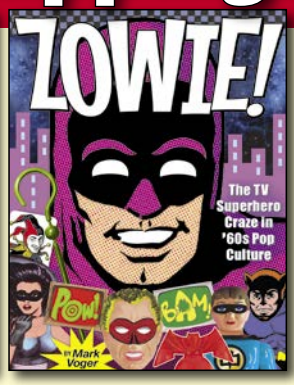
(176-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$43.95**
(Digital Edition) **$14.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-091-5



BEST OF SIMON & KIRBY'S MAINLINE COMICS

Collects **JOE SIMON** & **JACK KIRBY**'s 1954-56 series **BULLSEYE** (the complete run), plus all the Kirby **FOXHOLE, POLICE TRAP,** and **IN LOVE** stories, fully restored!

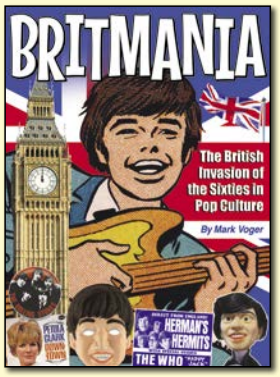
(262-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$49.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-118-9



ZOWIE!

Traces the history of the superhero genre from early films, through the 1960s **ADAM WEST** Batman TV superhero craze, and its pop culture influence ever since, through collectibles, and interviews with TV stars!

(192-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$43.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-125-7



BRITMANIA

Relives the 1960s British Invasion of American pop culture: movies, TV, toys, games, trading cards, lunch boxes, comics, and, of course, the music!

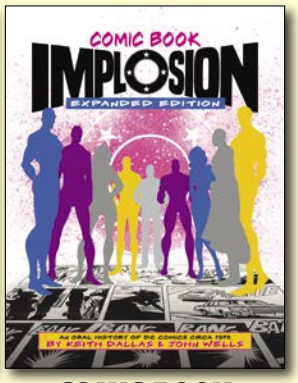
(192-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$43.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-115-8



TEAM-UP COMPANION

MICHAEL EURY examines team-up comic books of the Silver and Bronze Ages of Comics in a lushly illustrated selection of informative essays, special features, and trivia-loaded issue-by-issue indexes!

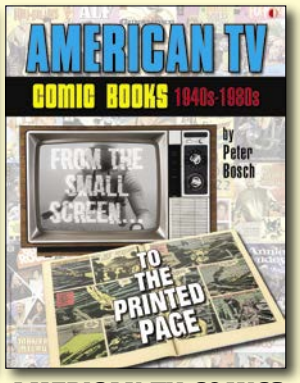
(256-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$39.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-112-7



COMIC BOOK IMPLOSION

Expanded Edition examining the notorious 1978 "DC Implosion" with an exhaustive oral history from **JENETTE KAHN, PAUL LEVITZ, LEN WEIN,** and others!

(144-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$26.95**
(Digital Edition) **$10.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-124-0



AMERICAN TV COMICS (1940s-1980s)

History of over 300 TV shows and 2000+ comic book adaptations, from well-known series (**STAR TREK, PARTRIDGE FAMILY, THE MUNSTERS**) to lesser-known shows.

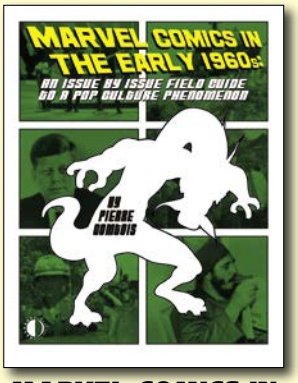
(192-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$29.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-107-3



THE LIFE & ART OF DAVE COCKRUM

GLEN CADIGAN's bio of the artist who redesigned the Legion of Super-Heroes and introduced X-Men characters Storm, Nightcrawler, Colossus, and Logan!

(160-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$27.95**
HC: $36.95 • (Digital Edition) **$14.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-113-4



MARVEL COMICS IN THE EARLY 1960s

Issue-by-issue entries on Marvel's 1961–1965 output, when gunfighters traveled the West and monsters roamed the Earth!

(224-page **TRADE PAPERBACK**) **$29.95**
(Digital Edition) **$12.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-126-4



HERO-A-GO-GO!

Looks at comics' 1960s **CAMP AGE**, when spies liked their wars cold and their women warm, and TV's Batman shook a mean cape!

(272-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$36.95**
(Digital Edition) **$13.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-073-1



JOHN SEVERIN TWO-FISTED COMIC ARTIST

Biography of the **EC, MARVEL** and **MAD** mainstay, co-creator of American Eagle, and 40+ year **CRACKED** magazine contributor.

(160-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$39.95**
(Digital Edition) **$14.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-106-6



ALTER EGO COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS

Compiles the sold-out **DITKO, KIRBY,** and **LEE** issues, plus new material on each!

(256-page **COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$35.95**
(Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-116-5

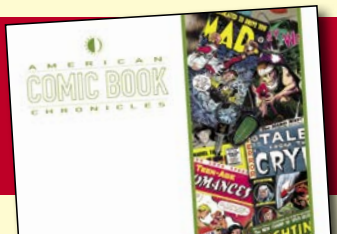


MAC RABOY Master of the Comics

Documents the life and career of the master Golden Age artist of Captain Marvel Jr. and other classic characters!

(160-page **COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$39.95**
(Digital Edition) **$14.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-090-8

AMERICAN COMIC BOOK CHRONICLES
FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER SERIES
documents each decade of comics history!
Full 8-volume Set of the 1940s-1990s: $275



TwoMorrows.
The Future of Comics History.
TwoMorrows Publishing • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA
Phone: **919-449-0344**
E-mail: **store@twomorrows.com**
Web: **www.twomorrows.com**



ABE KANEGSON WAS, ARGUABLY, THE *FINEST* LETTERER OF THE *GOLDEN AGE.* KANEGSON SEAMLESSLY GRAFTED HIS ELEGANT *DISPLAY LETTERING* TO *WILL EISNER'S* CLASSIC *SPIRIT* SPLASH PAGES. TO THIS DAY, THEIR ARTISTIC COLLABORATION STANDS ALONE.

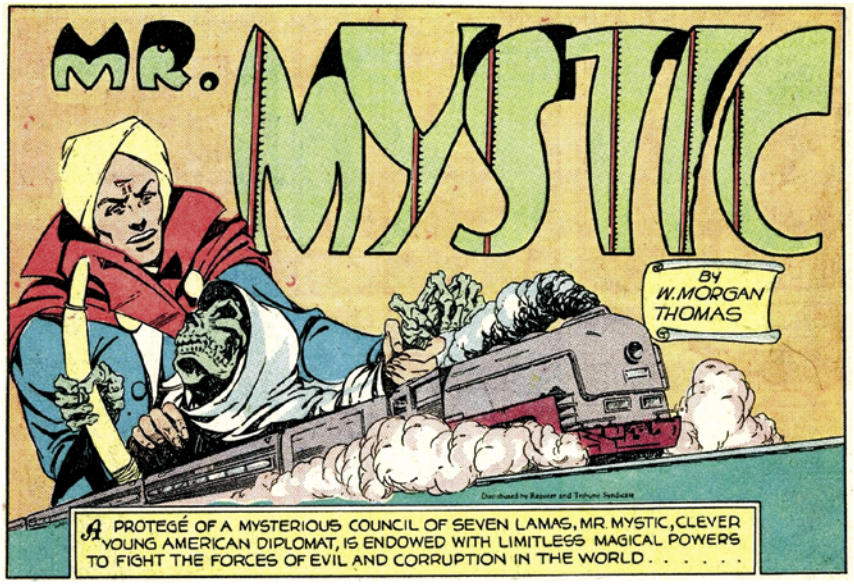
BUT TWO *OTHER* CARTOONISTS IN EISNER'S *SPIRIT SECTION* WERE ALSO HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED *LETTERERS.*

BEGINING IN 1940, EISNER'S *SPIRIT SECTION* WAS A WEEKLY 16-PAGE *COMICBOOK* INSERTED IN SELECT *NEWSPAPERS. THE SPIRIT,* EISNER'S CRIME-FIGHTING *HERO,* TOOK THE LEAD, FOLLOWED BY A FOUR-PAGE *LADY LUCK* STORY, AND ENDING WITH A *MR.MYSTIC* FOUR-PAGER. WHEN *KLAUS NORDLING* TOOK OVER THE STRIP, HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY WROTE, DREW AND LETTERED *LADY LUCK.*

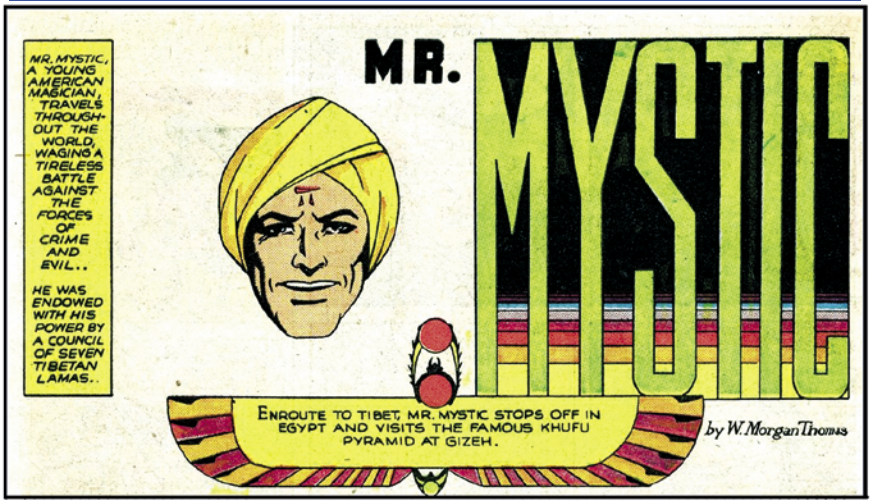
BOB POWELL WAS ALSO A *TRIPLE-THREAT* CREATOR, WRITING, DRAWING, AND LETTERING *MR. MYSTIC,* EISNER'S *SUPERNATURAL* HERO.

WE'LL BE SHOWCASING *NORDLING'S* DISPLAY LETTERING IN A *FUTURE* EPISODE. BUT NOW, CHECK OUT SOME OF *BOB POWELL'S* INVENTIVE LOGOS IN *PART ONE* OF...

MR. MYSTIC'S MAGICAL MASTHEADS!



(Above:) Powell drew this mystical lettering for *Spirit Section* #8 for the *Detroit News* of July 21, 1940, under the W. Morgan Thomas house name. [© Eisner Estate]



(Above:) Powell added a bit of an Egyptian feel to the *Mr. Mystic* logo appearing in *Spirit Section* #18 in the *Detroit News* in Sept. 9, 1940. [© Eisner Estate]

Mr. Mystic's Magical Mastheads

by Michael T. Gilbert

There were some truly amazing lettering artists during comics' Golden Age.

Beginning in 1940, Ira Schnapp designed most of DC's logos and ads. As such, he helped create the overall look of the early DC comics.

Howard Ferguson's bold lettering gave an extra punch to Simon & Kirby's splash pages.

The husband-and-wife team of Zoltan and Terry Szenics were the first to letter Will Eisner's *Spirit*, before Sam Rosen took over. Later, Abe Kanegson (and even Wally Wood!) contributed to the strip's lettering.

Artie Simek first made his mark at Marvel during the Timely years. Later, with Sam Rosen, he helped define the look of Marvel in the '60s.

And let's not forget Ben Oda, who worked for Harvey Kurtzman on *Mad*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, and other EC titles. Also at EC were another husband-and-wife team, Jim and Margaret Wroten, whose mechanical Leroy Lettering gave EC comics their distinctive look.

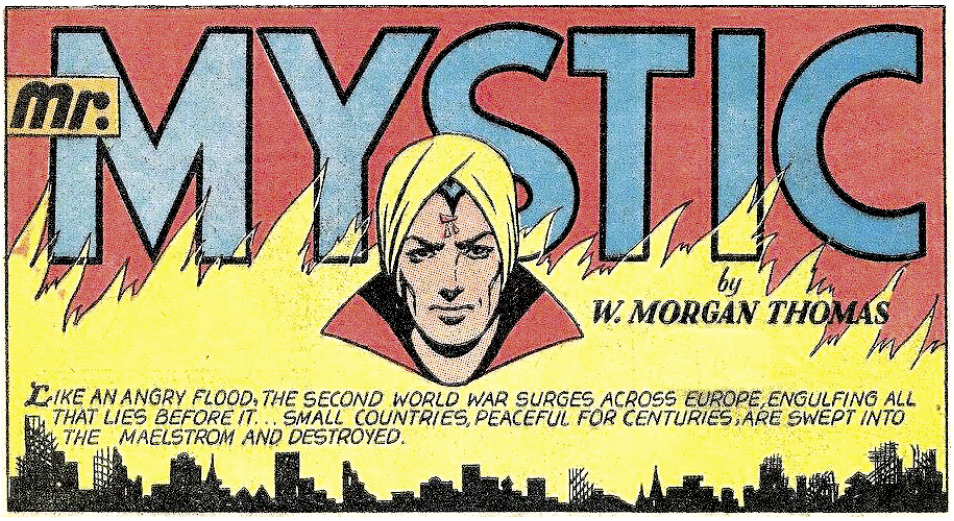
Some cartoonists even did their own lettering. Bill Everett did the honors on Timely/Marvel's *Sub-Mariner* and, later, *Venus* and various other features. Jack Cole, of *Plastic Man* fame, was another. So, too, was Jimmy Thompson, who wrote and drew "Robotman" for DC. All were great letterers.

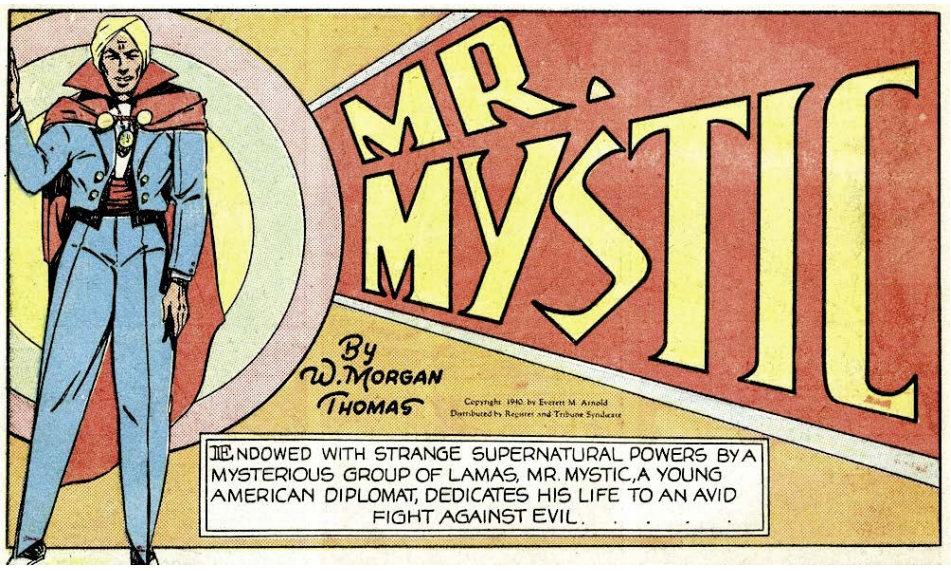
But artists who also lettered their strips were relatively rare. One of those was the great Bob Powell.

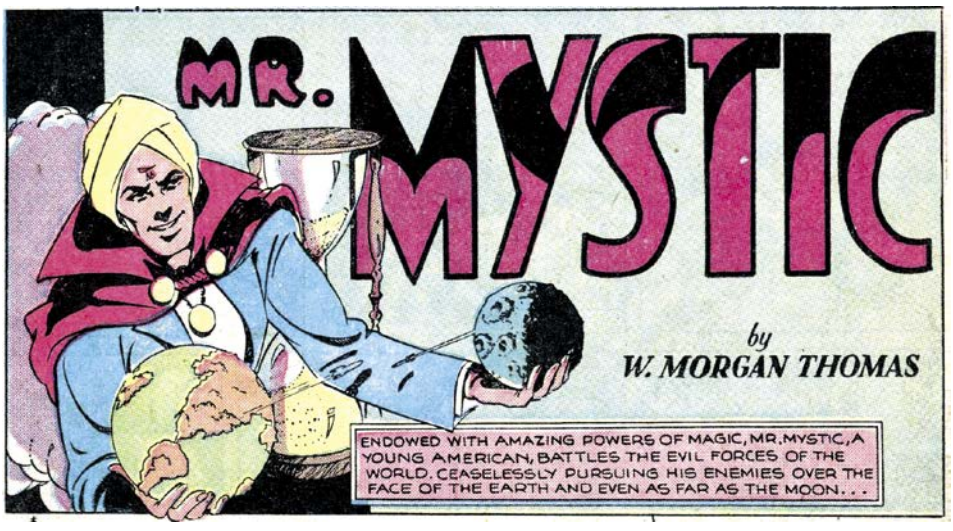
Early Work!

Powell (born Stanley Robert Pawlowski on Oct 6, 1916) studied art at Pratt Institute in the 1930s. His comicbook career began in the Eisner & Iger shop, run by Jerry Iger and Will Eisner. The two packaged comics for fledgling comicbook publishers in the industry's early days.

Powell's first published comicbook art is believed to be the three-page story "A Letter of Introduction," featuring ventriloquist Edgar Bergen (and of course Charlie McCarthy) in Fiction House's *Jumbo Comics*







Three Terrific Logos!

(Top to bottom:) The very first *Mr. Mystic* page, as seen (among many other places) in the *Detroit News' Spirit Section* (June 2, 1940). Next, from the *Spirit Section* #6 (July 7, 1940), also from the *Detroit News*. And finally, another from the *Minneapolis Star Journal*'s *Spirit Section* #13, Aug. 25, 1940. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

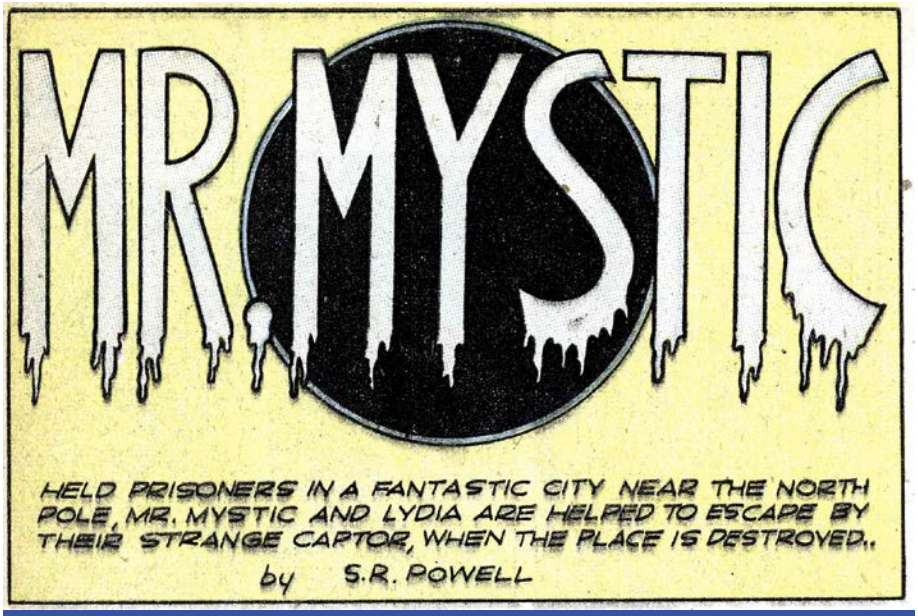
#2 (Oct. 1938). He also drew the "Dr. Fung" feature in Fox's *Wonder Comics* #1 (May 1939).

Powell was both brilliant and prolific. He worked for almost every publisher in the Golden Age, often writing as well as drawing. His publishers included Fox, Quality, Fiction House, Hillman, Harvey, and Street & Smith.

But Powell really had a chance to shine when Will Eisner and partner Everett M. "Busy" Arnold began putting together the *Spirit Section*, a free comicbook insert purchased by select newspapers. The section was initially sixteen pages, though it eventually trimmed down to a svelte eight.

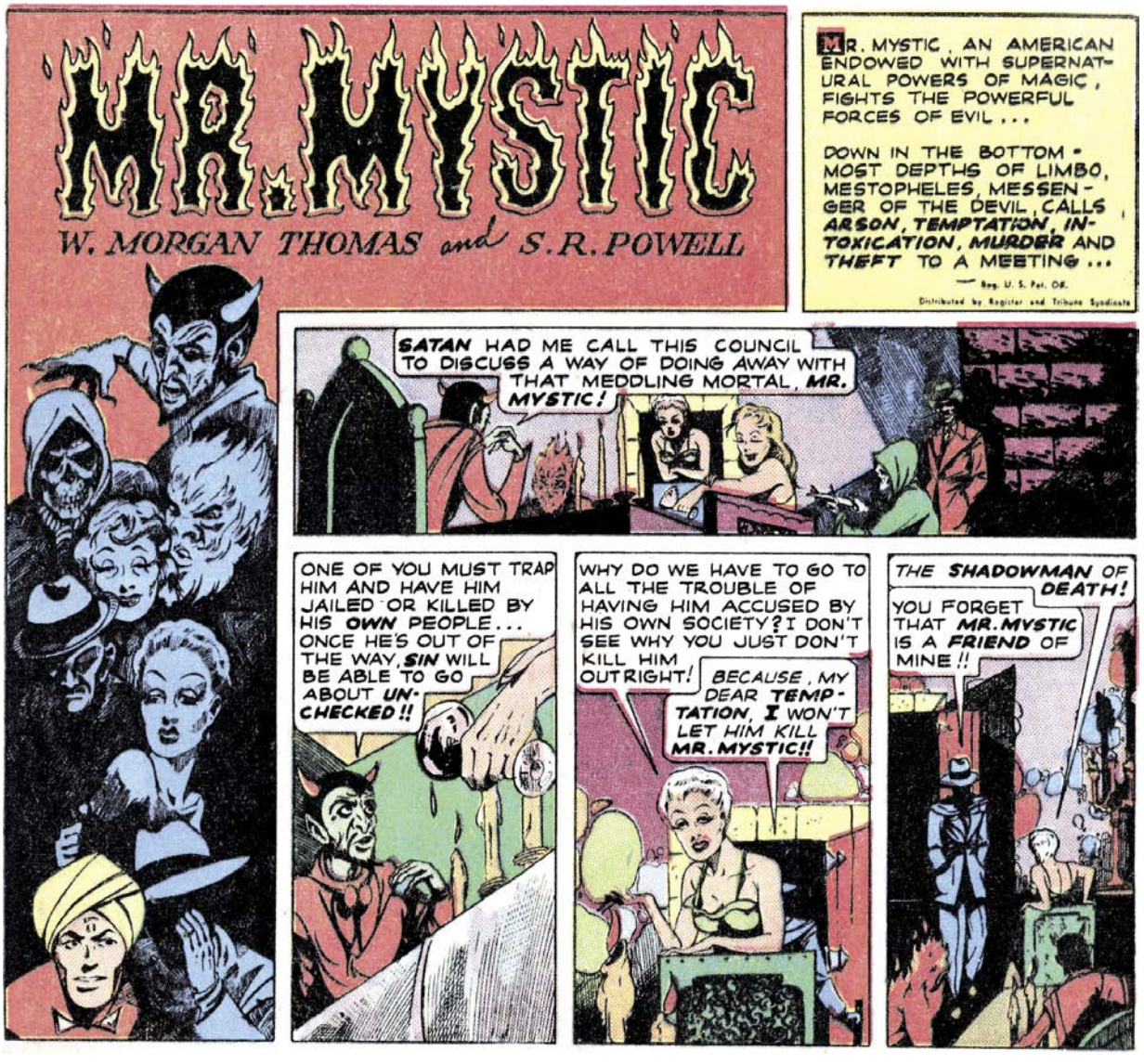
At first, Eisner created and wrote the scripts for all three features in the *Section*. Eisner's *Spirit* led the lineup, with Will producing seven (and sometimes eight) pages each week.

That alone was a handful, so he enlisted help from cartoonists he'd employed at the Eisner & Iger shop. *Lady Luck* was introduced with art by a young Chuck Mazoujian



Hot Or Cold? Powell Did 'Em Both!

(Above:) A chilly *Mr. Mystic* logo from the *Philadelphia Record*'s *Spirit Section* #102 (May 10, 1942). (Below:) A red-hot logo from the *Baltimore Sun*'s *Spirit Section* #44 (March 30, 1941). [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



(credited as "Ford Davis"). At first, Eisner scripted, but by the third episode Mazoujian took over the writing, too. After Chuck left, Nick Cardy stepped in, before eventually handing the reins to the quintessential *Lady Luck* artist, Klaus Nordling. More on him later.

Mr. Mystic!

Eisner tapped Bob Powell to take over the third strip. He knew Powell to be fast, reliable, and extremely talented. After the first few episodes, Will also handed the *Mr. Mystic* scripting chores to Powell, leaving Will more time to concentrate on *The Spirit*.

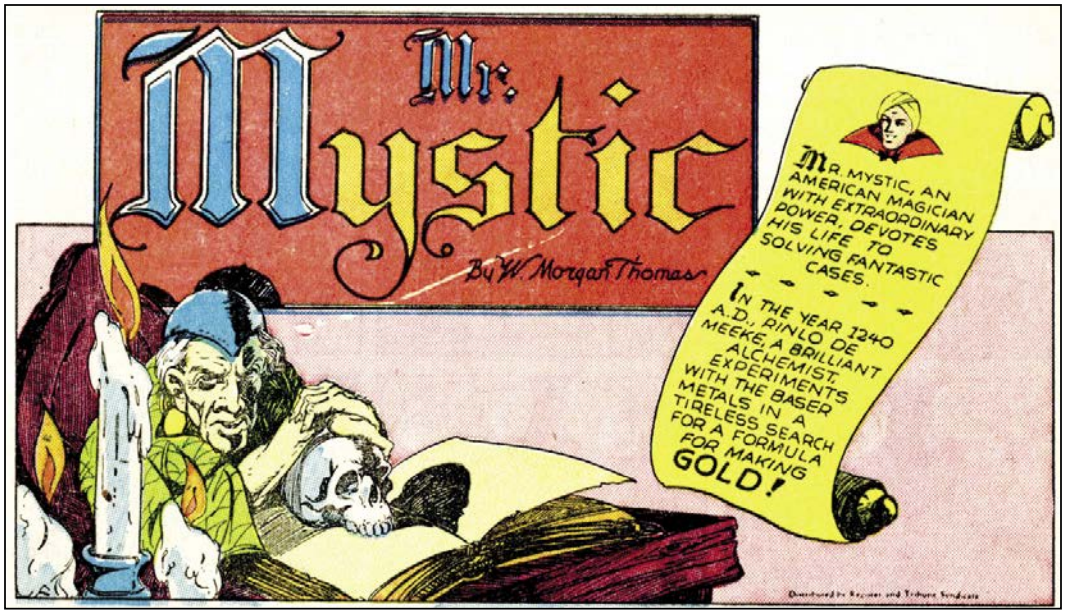
Mr. Mystic was one of those magic guys who learned the mystic arts in mysterious Tibet. His magical powers included levitation, astral projection, and other powers prophetic of Marvel's Dr. Strange. It's quite possible that Dr. Strange, created in 1963 by Steve Ditko (with Stan Lee dialogue), was inspired by Mr. Mystic. As a teenager, Steve Ditko faithfully collected Eisner's *Spirit Sections*. As such, he almost certainly pored over Powell's *Mr. Mystic* after getting his *Spirit* fix.

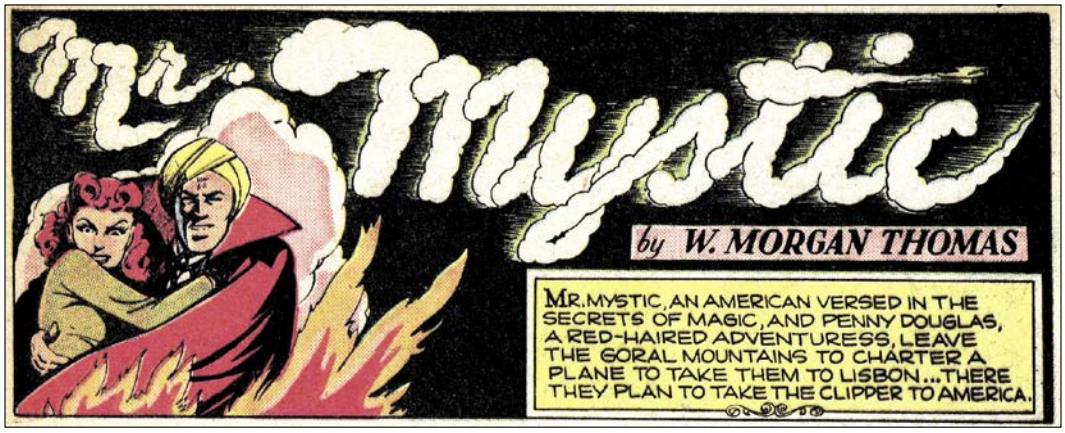
Powell produced the strip every week for three years, until he was drafted. At that point, Fred Guardineer took over, drawing the series until the strip ended on May 14, 1944. The feature was then replaced by Andre LeBlanc's *Intellectual Amos*. It's just as well. By then, *Mr. Mystic* was a pale shadow of its glory days.

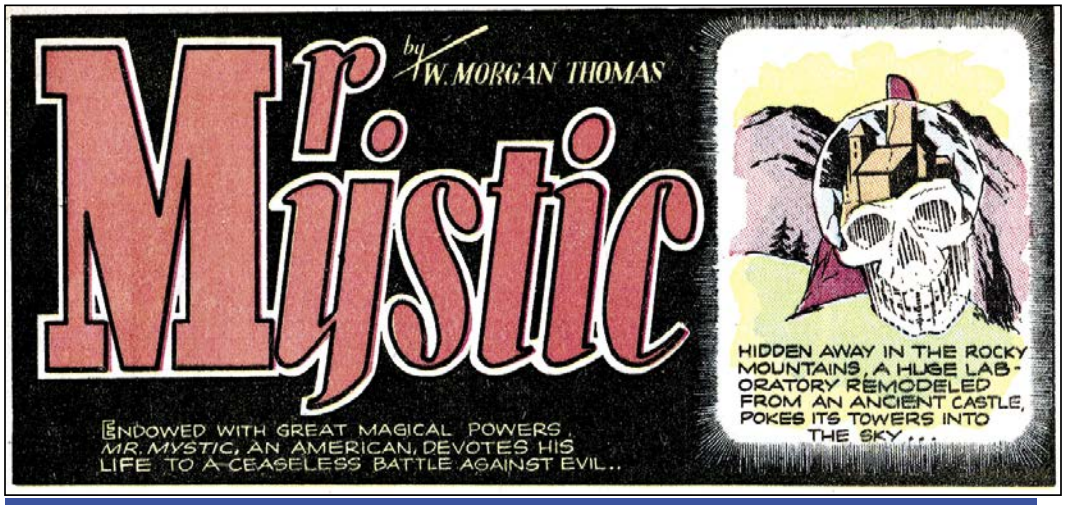
Ch-Ch-Changes!

Then and now, most comic strips sported a single, identifiable logo. Once established, *Dick Tracy*, *Gasoline Alley*, or *Superman* rarely changed the official masthead. Will Eisner decided to make a ton of extra work for himself by creating a new *Spirit* logo every issue (i.e., every *week*). *Lady Luck* and *Mr. Mystic* followed his lead.

That was fortunate for us lettering aficionados. As seen by the examples shown here, Bob Powell was a superb letterer. He drew 175 four-page *Mr. Mystic* episodes from June 2, 1940, to Oct. 3, 1943, so we

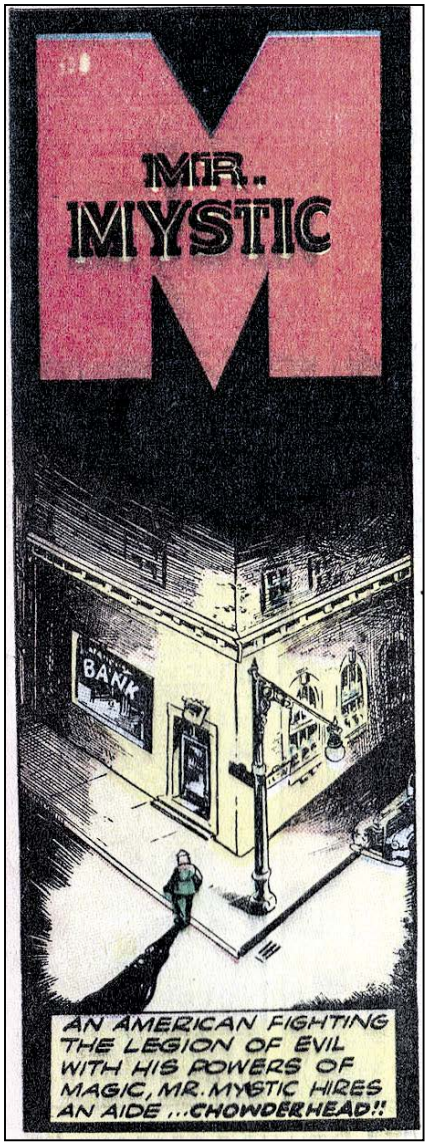


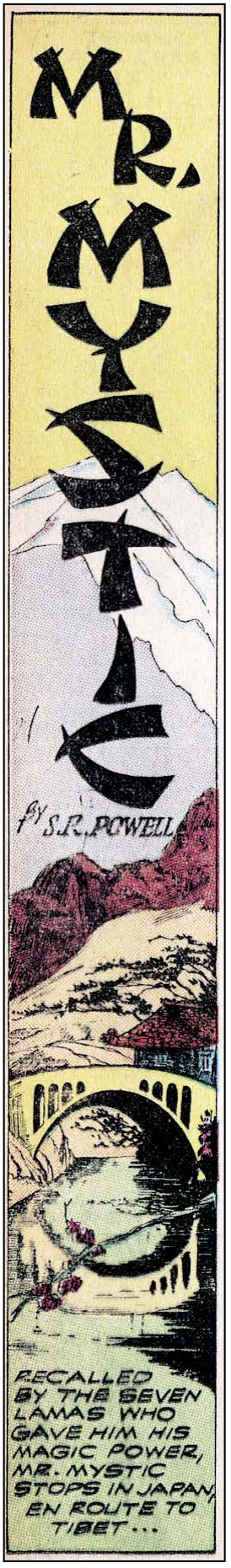


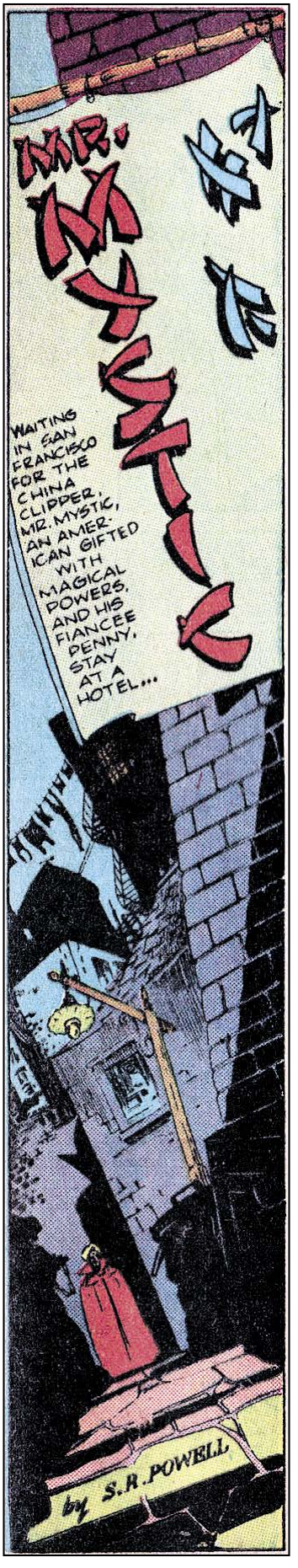


Three More Calligraphic Masterworks

(Top to bottom:) A classic Olde English-y logo from *Star Ledger's Spirit Section* #24 (Nov. 10, 1940). Then, "smoke gets in your eyes" with this mystical logo that ran in the *Philadelphia Record's Spirit Section* #33 (Jan. 12, 1941). And let's end with this beauty from *Spirit Section* #41 (March 9, 1941), courtesy of the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]].

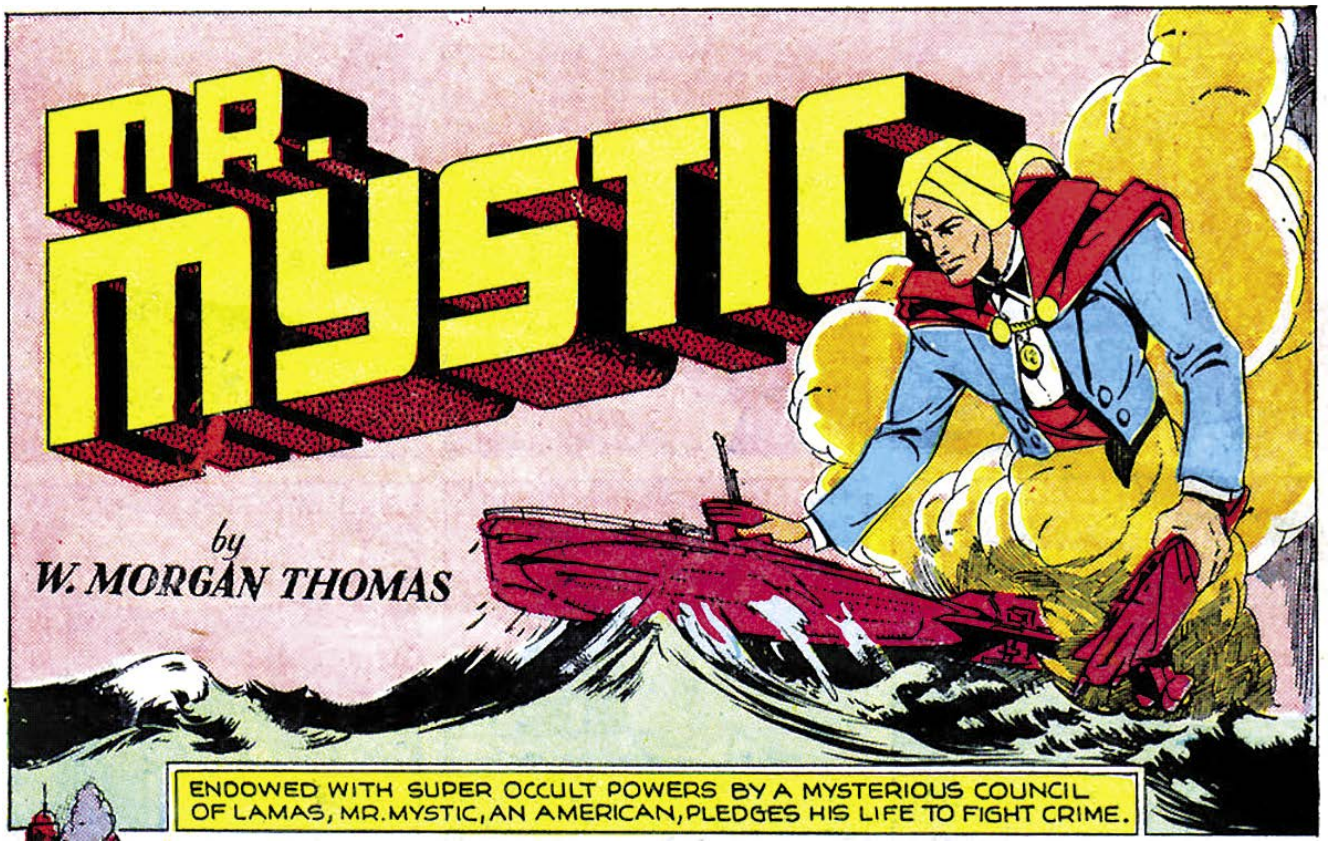






Vertically Inclined!

(Left to right:) *Spirit Section* #67 (Sept. 7, 1941). Next, from the same newspaper, we have *Spirit Section* #70 (Sept. 28, 1941), with a decidedly Japanese flavor. And finally, an atmospheric *Spirit Section* #54 (June 8, 1941). All are from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



Sweet & Simple
(Above:) *Spirit Section* #15 (Sept 8, 1940), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

had plenty of Bob's logos to choose from. And we'll have even more next ish!

Till next time

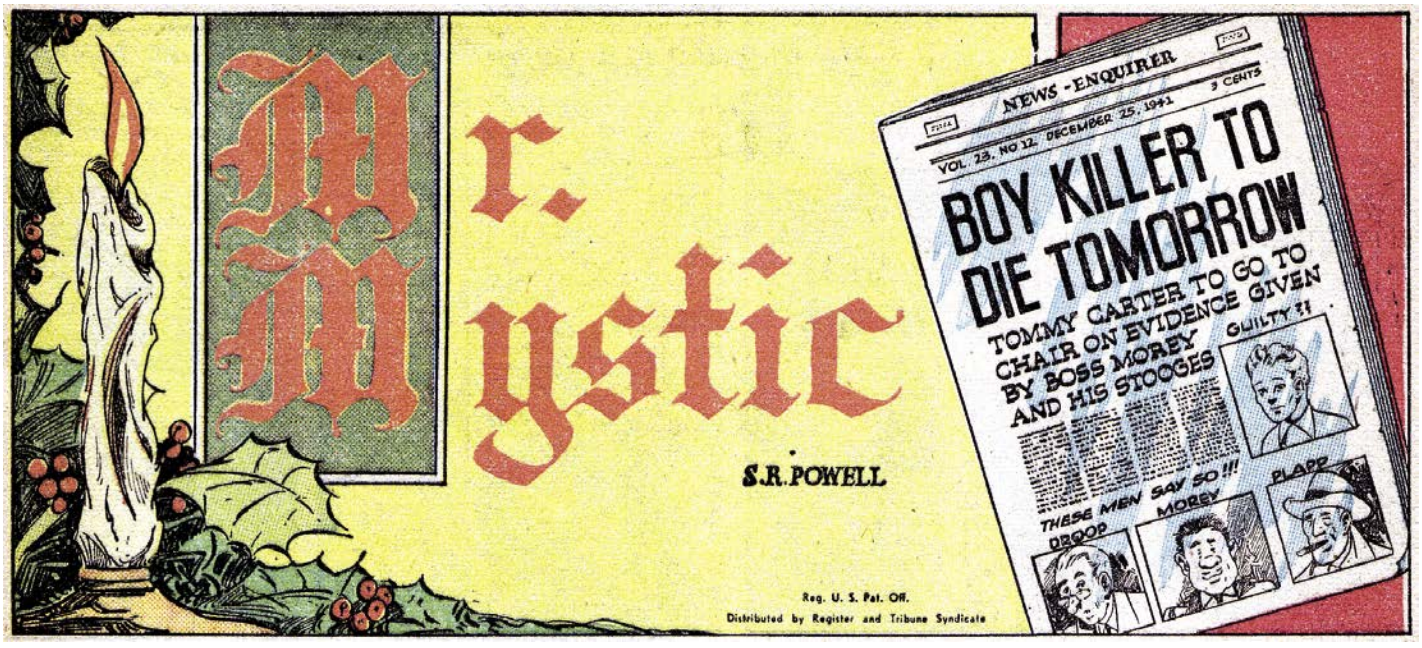
MICHAEL T. Gilbert

Fin

Bob Powell
in 1938. Photo courtesy of Alex Jay.



A Little Touch Of Gothic
(Below:) *Spirit Section* #83 (Dec. 30, 1941), as published in the *Parkchester Review*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



Alfredo Castelli

(1947–2024)

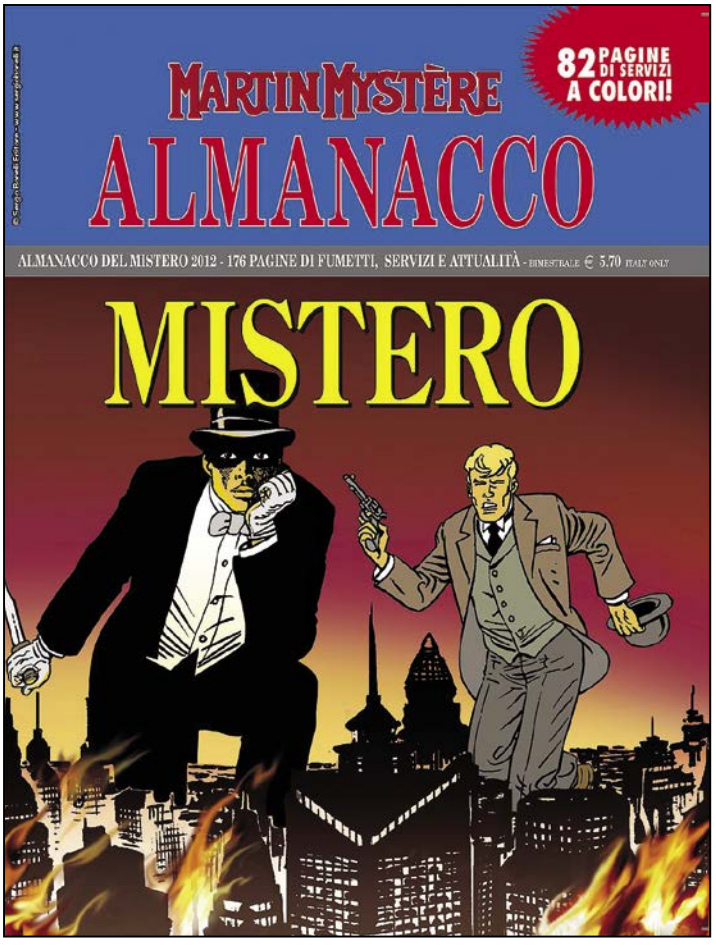
"Writer, Scholar, And Occasional Artist"

by Jean-Marc Lofficier

Alfredo Castelli, an Italian writer, scholar, and occasional artist, was born in Milan on June 26, 1947, and passed away in the same city on February 7, 2024, at the age of 76.

He began his career in comics in 1965 by becoming editor-in-chief of *Kolosso* magazine. A year later, he founded the fanzine *Comics Club 104*. In the following years, he wrote numerous scripts for various comics series such as *Rocky Rider, Pedrito el Drito, Piccola Eva, Tiramolla,* and even *Topolino*, the Italian version of Mickey Mouse. In 1969, he co-founded the humor magazine *Tilt*. He also wrote a version of *Dracula* drawn by Antonio Sciotti. In 1970, he created the magazine *Horror* with Pier Carpi, in which he published the *Zio Boris* series.

From 1972 to 1976 he joined the *Corriere dei Raggazzi* as writer/editor. There he created *L'Ombra, Gli Aristocrati, Otto Kruntz*, and *L'Omino Bufo*, a humorous strip that he drew himself! For *Il Giornalino,* he wrote *Mister Charade*. The same year, he also wrote *Gli Astrotoppisti* and *Chico & Blasco*. In 1973, he created *Mike Merlin* for the German periodical *Zack*. In 1976, he wrote *Eva Kant*, a *Diabolik* spin-off.





Alberto Castelli

Also depicted is the cover of the Castelli-written *Martin Mystère* album (graphic novel) *Mistero*. The art is by Dante Spada. Courtesy of Jean-Marc Lofficier. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

In 1978, he joined publisher Sergio Bonelli, where he began writing scripts for *Zagor, Mister No*, and *Dylan Dog*. He also wrote *L'Uomo delle Nevi* drawn by Milo Manara and *L'uomo di Chicago* for Giancarlo Alessandrini. In 1982, he created his most successful character, *Martin Mystère*, which became an international success and was adapted into an animated series.

In 1992, he launched the series *Zona*, and in 2003, a spin-off of *Martin Mystère, Doctor Mystere*. In 2004, he played himself in a documentary about H.P. Lovecraft, and the following year had a role in the Italian film *Il mistero di Lovecraft*. In 2006, he wrote a major scholarly work on early American comic strips from 1895 to 1919.

On a personal note, Alfredo and I had collaborated on a *Martin Mystère* story entitled *The Shadow of Fantomas,* drawn by Dante Spada and published in 2012.

Fin

Don't STEAL our Digital Editions!

C'mon citizen, **DO THE RIGHT THING!** A Mom & Pop publisher like us needs every sale just to survive! **DON'T DOWNLOAD OR READ ILLEGAL COPIES ONLINE!**



Buy affordable, legal downloads only at **www.twomorrows.com** or through our Digital Storefront at **www.comicshistory.org**

& DON'T SHARE THEM WITH FRIENDS OR POST THEM ONLINE. Help us keep producing great publications like this one!

GET READY FOR A BRAND-NEW COMICBOOK ISSUE OF

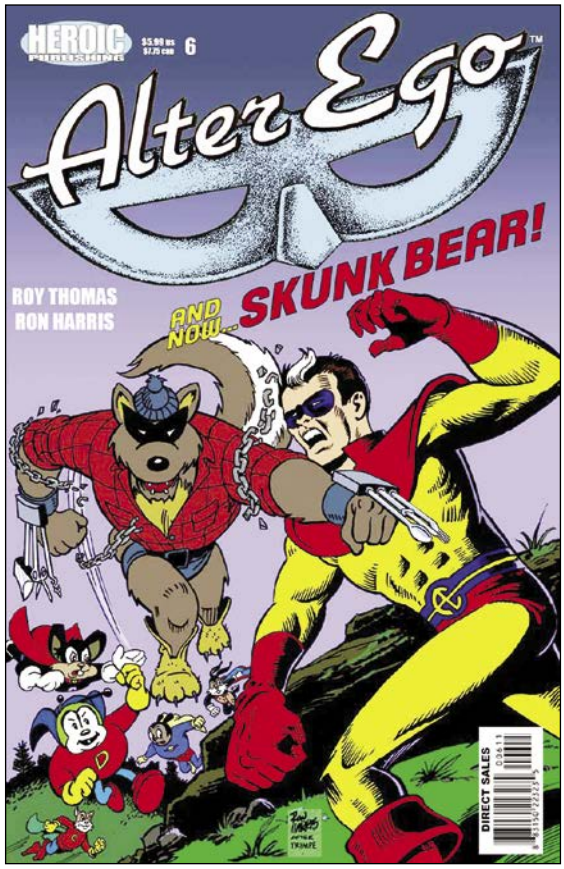
Alter Ego™

by ROY THOMAS & RON HARRIS

FIND OUT MORE—
PLACE AN ADVANCE ORDER!

www.heroicmultiverse.com/alterego

HEROIC PUBLISHING



BRUNNER

ATTENTION: FRANK BRUNNER ART FANS!

Frank is now accepting art commissions for covers, splash panels, or pin-up re-creations!

Also, your ideas for NEW art are welcome!

Art can be pencils only, inked or full-color (painted) creation!

Contact Frank directly for details and prices. (Minimum order: $500)

Visit my website at:
http://www.frankbrunner.net

Previously Unpublished Brunner Artwork!



[Red Sonja TM & © Red Sonja Enterprises, LLC.]

José Delbo

(1933–2024)

"Fascinated By The World Of Comics"

by Bryan D. Stroud

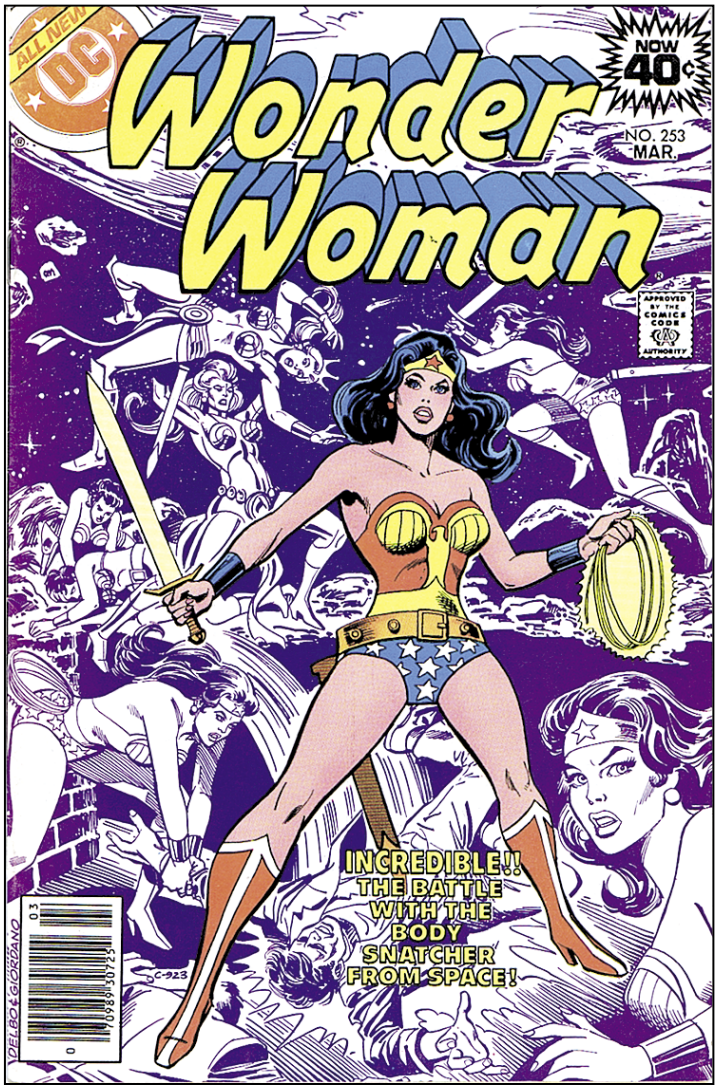
This prolific comicbook artist, later a beloved instructor at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, passed away on February 5, 2024, at the age of 90.

Born December 9, 1933, in Argentina, José Delbo was fascinated by the world of comics from an early age, starting his career at 16 under the tutelage of Argentinian artist Carlos Clemen, later becoming his assistant. Moving to the United States in the mid-1960s, he quickly began his professional career working for Charlton Comics, with a notable run on the *Billy the Kid* title. In a 2011 interview with this writer, José acknowledged his great love of the Western genre and was particularly pleased to have been able later to do work on *The Lone Ranger,* one of the most legendary Western features of all time.



José Delbo

Among his numerous comicbook assignments during his long career was a heralded and lengthy run on *Wonder Woman*, as illustrated (bottom left) by the cover he penciled for issue #253 (March 1979), as inked by Dick Giordano. Courtesy of the GCD. [*Wonder Woman* cover TM & © DC Comics.]



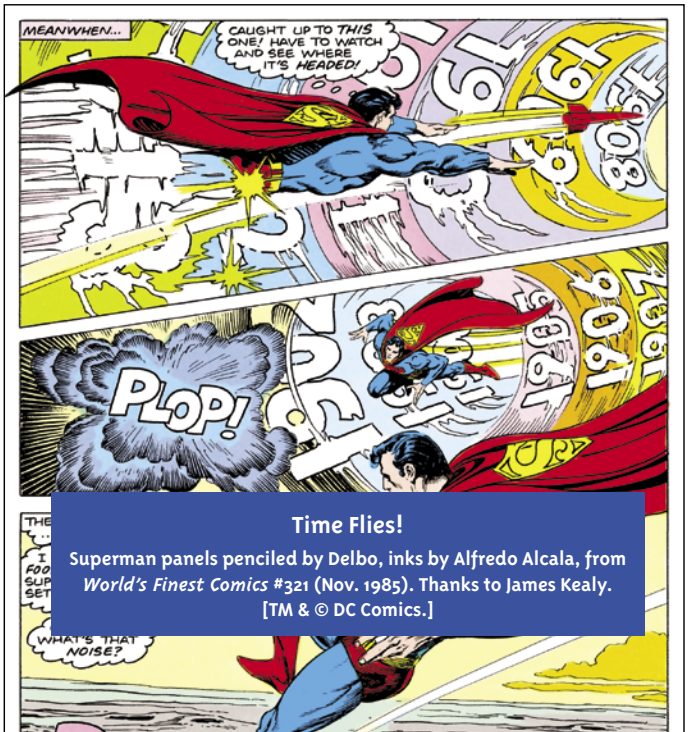
José worked for multiple publishers over the course of his nearly seven-decade career, including Dell, Gold Key, DC, Marvel, and Valiant, with notable runs on *Wonder Woman, The Transformers,* and *ThunderCats.*

He also recounted his pleasure in working with such greats as Al Williamson, Dick Giordano, Joe Giella, and Al Gordon.

In addition to his impressive body of work in comicbooks, José had stints on daily syndicated comic strips such as *Superman* and *The Phantom,* and found a lasting legacy as a teacher both at the Kubert School and later in a cartoon camp of his own design in Boca Raton, Florida, aimed at developing the talents of school-aged children.

José Delbo is remembered fondly by the many students he influenced.

Fin



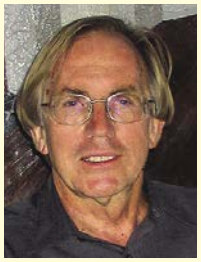
Time Flies!

Superman panels penciled by Delbo, inks by Alfredo Alcala, from *World's Finest Comics* #321 (Nov. 1985). Thanks to James Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Alter Ego™

Edited by ROY THOMAS

The first and greatest "hero-zine"—**ALL-NEW**, focusing on **GOLDEN AND SILVER AGE** comics and creators with **ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS, UNSEEN ART,** P.C. Hamerlinck's **FCA** [Fawcett Collectors of America], **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, **BILL SCHELLY'S** Comic Fandom Archive, and more!



EISNER AWARD Winner
Best Comics-Related Periodical

Go to www.twomorrows.com for an ULTIMATE BUNDLE, with all the issues at HALF-PRICE!



ALTER EGO #183

Golden/Silver/Bronze Age artist **IRV NOVICK** (Shield, Steel Sterling, Batman, The Flash, and DC war stories) is immortalized by **JOHN COATES** and **DEWEY CASSELL**. Interviews with Irv and family members, tributes by **DENNY O'NEIL, MARK EVANIER**, and **PAUL LEVITZ**, Irv's involvement with painter **ROY LICHTENSTEIN** (who used Novick's work in his paintings), Mr. Monster, FCA, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #184

Known as one of the finest inkers in comics history, the late **TOM PALMER** was also an accomplished penciler and painter, as you'll see in an-depth interview with Palmer by **ALEX GRAND** and **JIM THOMPSON**. Learn his approach to, and thoughts on, working with **NEAL ADAMS, GENE COLAN, JOHN BUSCEMA**, and others who helped define the Marvel Universe. Plus Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, FCA, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #185

Presenting **MARK CARLSON-GHOST**'s stupendous study of the 1940s **NOVELTY COMICS GROUP**—with heroes like Blue Bolt, Target and the Targeteers, White Streak, Spacehawk, etc., produced by such Golden Age super-stars as **JOE SIMON & JACK KIRBY, CARL BURGOS, BILL EVERETT, BASIL WOLVERTON**, et al. Plus **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, **FCA**, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #186

Spotlights **ANGELO TORRES**, the youngest and last of the fabled EC Comics artists—who went on to a fabulous career as a horror, science-fiction, and humor artist for Timely/Marvel, Warren Publishing, and MAD magazine! It's a lushly illustrated retrospective of his still-ongoing career—plus **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America), **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #187

Focuses on great early science-fiction author **EDMUND HAMILTON**, who went on to an illustrious career at DC Comics, writing Superman, Batman, and especially The Legion of Super-Heroes! Learn all about his encounters with **RAY BRADBURY, MORT WEISINGER, JULIUS SCHWARTZ**, et al—a panoply of titans! Plus **FCA**, **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #188

DOUBLE-SIZE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE! The Marvel side includes mini-interviews with **JOHN BUSCEMA, MARIE SEVERIN, JIM MOONEY**, and **GEORGE TUSKA**—plus "**STAN LEE'S** Dinner with **ALAIN RESNAIS**" annotated by **SEAN HOWE**! On the DC side: talks with **CARMINE INFANTINO, JOHN BROOME, JULIUS SCHWARTZ, JOE KUBERT**, & **MURPHY ANDERSON**—plus a **GARDNER FOX** photo-feature, and more!

(160-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$24.95**
(Digital Edition) **$9.99**



ALTER EGO #189

JOHN ROMITA tribute issue! Podcast recollections recorded shortly after the Jazzy One's passing by **JOHN ROMITA JR., JIM STARLIN, STEVE ENGLEHART, BRIAN PULIDO, ROY THOMAS, JAIMIE JAMESON, JOHN CIMINO, STEVE HOUSTON, & NILE SCALA**; **DAVID ARMSTRONG**'s mini-interview with Romita; John Romita's ten greatest hits; plus FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, & more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #190

MITCH MAGLIO examines vintage jungle comics heroes (Kaänga, Ka-Zar, Sheena, Rulah, Jo-Jo/Congo King, Thun'da, Tarzan) with art by **LOU FINE, WILL EISNER, FRANK FRAZETTA, MATT BAKER, BOB POWELL, ALEX SCHOMBURG**, and others! Plus: the comicbook career of real-life jungle explorers **MARTIN AND OSA JOHNSON**, FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #191

#191 is an **FCA (FAWCETT COLLECTORS OF AMERICA)** issue! Documenting the influence of **MAC RABOY**'s Captain Marvel Jr. on the life, career, and look of **ELVIS PRESLEY** during his stellar career, from the 1950s through the 1970s! Plus: Captain Marvel co-creator **BILL PARKER**'s complete testimony from the DC vs. Fawcett lawsuit, **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and other surprises!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #192

MARK CARLSON-GHOST documents the mid-1950s super-hero revival featuring The Human Torch, Captain America, Sub-Mariner, Fighting American, The Avenger, Phantom Lady, The Flame, Captain Flash, and others—with art by **JOHN ROMITA, JOHN BUSCEMA, BILL EVERETT, SIMON & KIRBY, MIKE SEKOWSKY, MORT MESKIN, BOB POWELL**, and other greats! Plus FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #193

An abridgment of **EDDY ZENO**'s "Drawn to Greatness" book, showcasing Superman artists who followed **JOE SHUSTER**: **WAYNE BORING, PAUL CASSIDY, FRED RAY, JACK BURNLEY, WIN MORTIMER**, and others. With appreciations by **ORDWAY, KUPPERBERG, ISABELLA, JURGENS, WAID, MACCHIO, NEARY, NOWLAN, EURY, THOMAS**, and more! Plus FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**



ALTER EGO #194

ROY THOMAS celebrates 60 years in comics! Career-spanning interview by **ALEX GRAND**, e-mails to Roy from **STAN LEE**, the history of Wolverine's creation, RT's 1960s fan-letters to **JULIUS SCHWARTZ**, and his top dozen stories compiled by **JOHN CIMINO**! With art by **BUSCEMA, KANE, ADAMS, WINDSOR-SMITH, COLAN, ORDWAY, BUCKLER**, FCA, Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and cover by **TONY GRAY**!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99**

TwoMorrows.
The Future of Comics History.

TwoMorrows Publishing
10407 Bedfordtown Drive
Raleigh, NC 27614 USA
919-449-0344

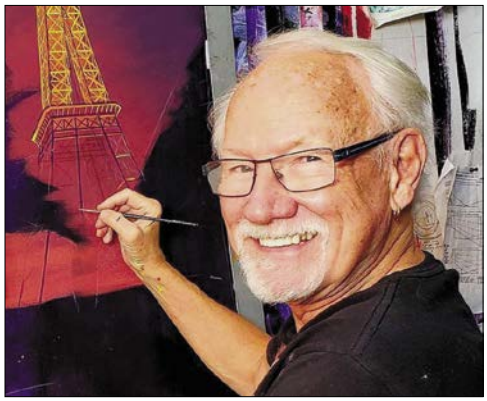
E-mail:
store@twomorrows.com
Order at
twomorrows.com

Greg Hildebrandt

(1939–2024)

"Painting Is My Specialty"

by Bryan D. Stroud



Greg Hildebrandt

and (at bottom left) a re-creation he did of the famous 1977 *Star Wars* poster originally painted by him and his twin brother Tim—and a portrait of Galactus. Photo from spiderwebart@instagram, via Internet. [Art TM & © Disney & Marvel Characters, Inc., respectively.]

Greg Hildebrandt, one half of the twin-brother artistic team known as the Brothers Hildebrandt, passed away on October 31, 2024, at the age of 85.

Greg and brother Tim were born in Detroit on January 23, 1939. Tim passed away on June 11, 2006. The brothers attended the Menzinger Art School and began their professional painting career in 1959, quickly gaining a reputation for their work in the fantasy and science-fiction genres with such notable efforts as their *Lord of the Rings* calendar illustrations and *Magic: The Gathering* work.

Likely their best-known and most iconic piece was the poster for the original 1977 *Star Wars* film, which was produced in a shockingly short period of 36 hours. Further work included projects for both Marvel and DC Comics.



Additionally, Greg instructed at the Kubert School in the late '70s. In a 2010 interview, he described his experience there: "It was a thrill for me to teach at Joe's school and to have the opportunity to work with other teachers that were great artists…. I believe I did a pretty good job of conveying [artistic information] to my students, and I had a really good time doing it. Painting is my specialty. My course was about light and its impact on color."

Walter Simonson recalled: "I was familiar with their [the Hildebrandts'] work when I had a chance to write *Superman: The Last God of Krypton,* with painted art by the brothers. I visited Greg's home and hung out with the pair for a bit, discussing the story and going over pages of storytelling…. Greg was a very sweet man who loved making pictures more than any other artist I've ever known."

Fin



Coming Soon From HEROIC PUBLISHING

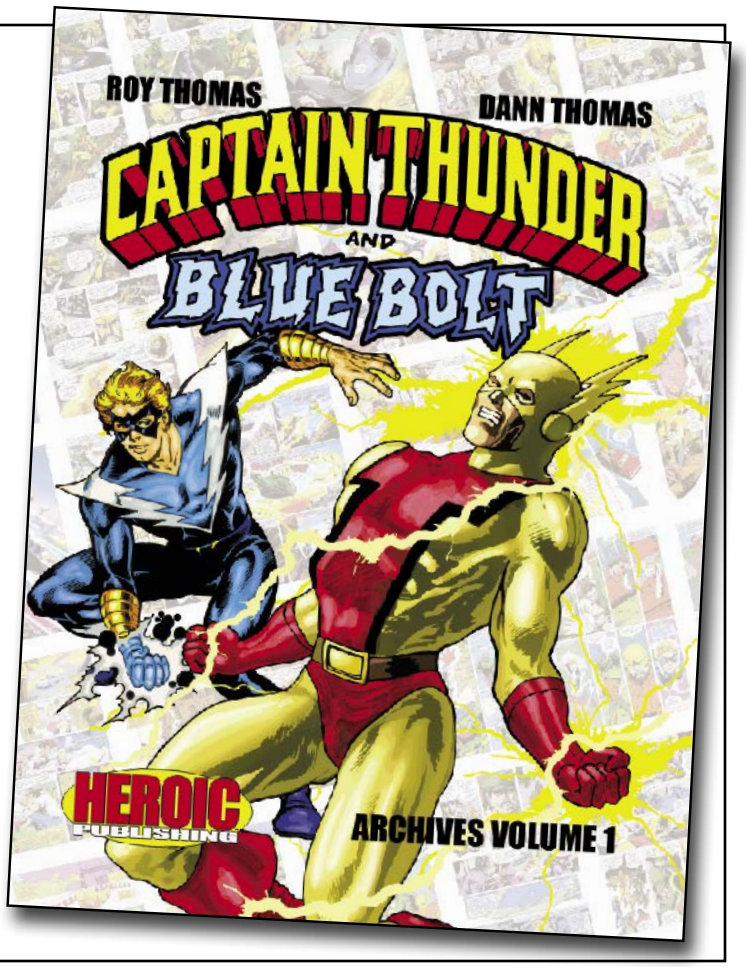
CAPTAIN THUNDER™ AND BLUE BOLT™

ARCHIVES VOLUME 1

Complete in one hardcover volume—
Every adventure of the greatest
father-and-son hero team
in the history of comics!

by ROY & DANN THOMAS

with DENNIS MALLONEE,
BENITO GALLEGO,
E.R. CRUZ, DELL BARAS, et al.





EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS™
JOHN CARTER
WARLORD OF MARS™

Script by ROY THOMAS
Art by COREY FURMAN

ALL-NEW **FULL-COLOR** ADVENTURES
—NOW PLAYING ON AN INTERNET NEAR YOU!

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS' GREATEST HEROES— NOW IN FABULOUS ONLINE COMIC STRIPS!

NEW SEQUENCES CONSTANTLY BEING ADDED!

Website now also features ongoing comic strips of ***Tarzan, Carson of Venus, Pellucidar, Land That Time Forgot,*** and many others— only $1.99 per month!

Official Website:
http://edgarriceburroughs.com/comics/

TM & © 2025 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

Hy Eisman

(1927-2025)

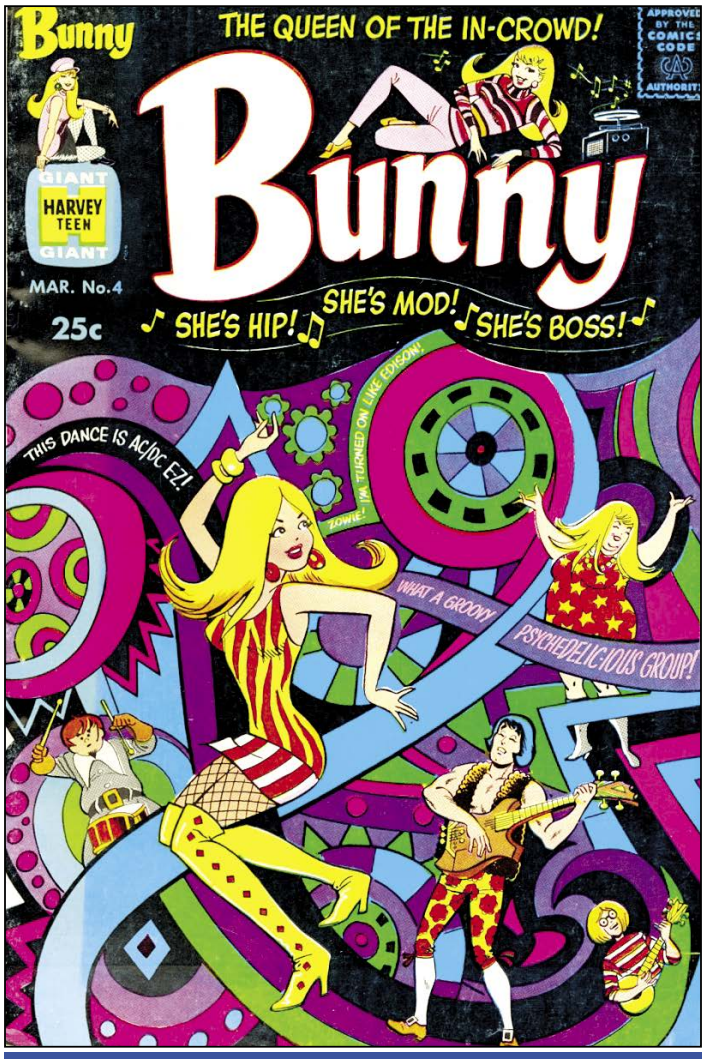
"A Long & Fruitful Career"

by Bryan. D. Stroud

A long and fruitful career came to a close on March 27, 2025, his 98th birthday. Hyman "Hy" Eisman was born on March 27, 1927, in Paterson, New Jersey. His multi-faceted work kept him close to his Garden State origins, and he began working on comic strips in 1950, following a short stint in the Army as a draftee during World War II and subsequent graduation from the Art Career School.



Hy Eisman
demonstrates drawing *Little Iodine*, a very popular comic strip for many years.



The Bunny Hop
Eisman's cover for Harvey Comics' *Bunny* #4 (March 1968). Thanks to Anthony Snyder. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

Hy had his earliest drawing credits in the 50s were adventure and mystery strips for the American Comics Group. His talents in that genre were formidable, but his gifts for humor work led to many published pieces in both strips and books, including such notables as *Smokey Stover*, *Bringing Up Father*, and *Blondie* for the former and *Tom and Jerry*, *Little Lulu*, and the Archie titles in the latter. In 1966, a toy company came up with a doll to compete with Barbie, and Hy was tapped to draw *Bunny* for 19 issues from 1966-71 under license to Harvey.

Beginning in 1967, he took over the *Little Iodine* syndicated strip, drawing it for 17 years until it was discontinued. In 1976, the year the Joe Kubert Art School was founded, Hy began as an original instructor in the disciplines of lettering and other art instruction—persevering until 2019, a 43-year tenure.

For King Features from 1986 to 2006, he both wrote and drew the *Katzenjammer Kids* feature and in 1994 he added writing and drawing duties on the *Popeye* Sunday strip, the latter for 28 years. Hy finally stepped away from the deadline treadmill in 2022, after over 70 years of cartooning excellence.

In a 2010 interview, Eisman described his motivation: "I grew up during the Depression, and my father was out of work from about 1933 to 1942. He would pick up odd jobs, but never any long-term work during that whole time and it made life very precarious, so part of the drive is not to depend on anything but myself to make sure there's enough so that I don't have to ask for any help from anyone."

Hy received the Outstanding Instructor Award from the Kubert School, and the National Cartoonists Society award for best comicbook cartoonist for both 1975 (for Gold Key's *Nancy*) and again in 1984 for *Little Lulu*. He was also honored with the Milton Caniff Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019.

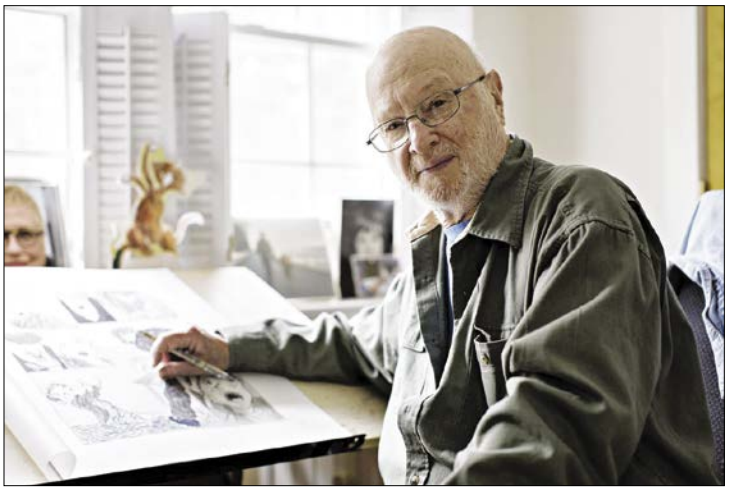
Fin

Jules Feiffer

(1929-2025)

"[He Remained] Relevant For Nearly Eight Decades"

by Bryan D. Stroud



Julies Feiffer

in his later years. Seen below is his *Feiffer* cartoon for March 24, 1965, which has always been a personal favorite of *A/E*'s editor, capturing the essence of that era's "nostalgia boom." [Cartoon TM & © Estate of Jules Feiffer.]

Jules Feiffer, born January 25, 1929, in New York City, enjoyed a long and highly fruitful career as a creator, crossing over between several media and remaining relevant for nearly eight decades until his passing on January 17, 2025, a handful of days shy of his 96th birthday.

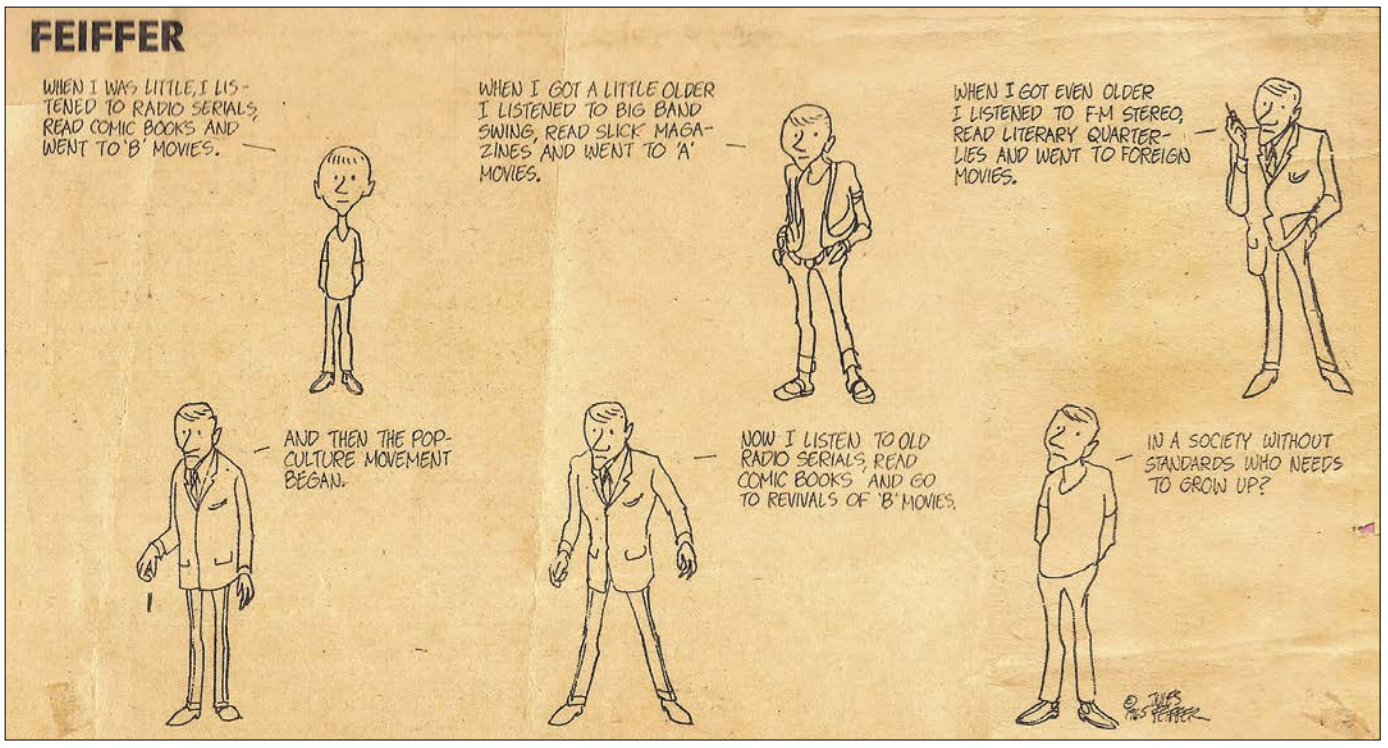
Feiffer's interest in comics began, as so many did in the early days, through reading and enjoying the daily newspaper syndicated strips. His career began as a young assistant at the age of 17 to Will Eisner, and his contributions included work on the *Spirit* feature.

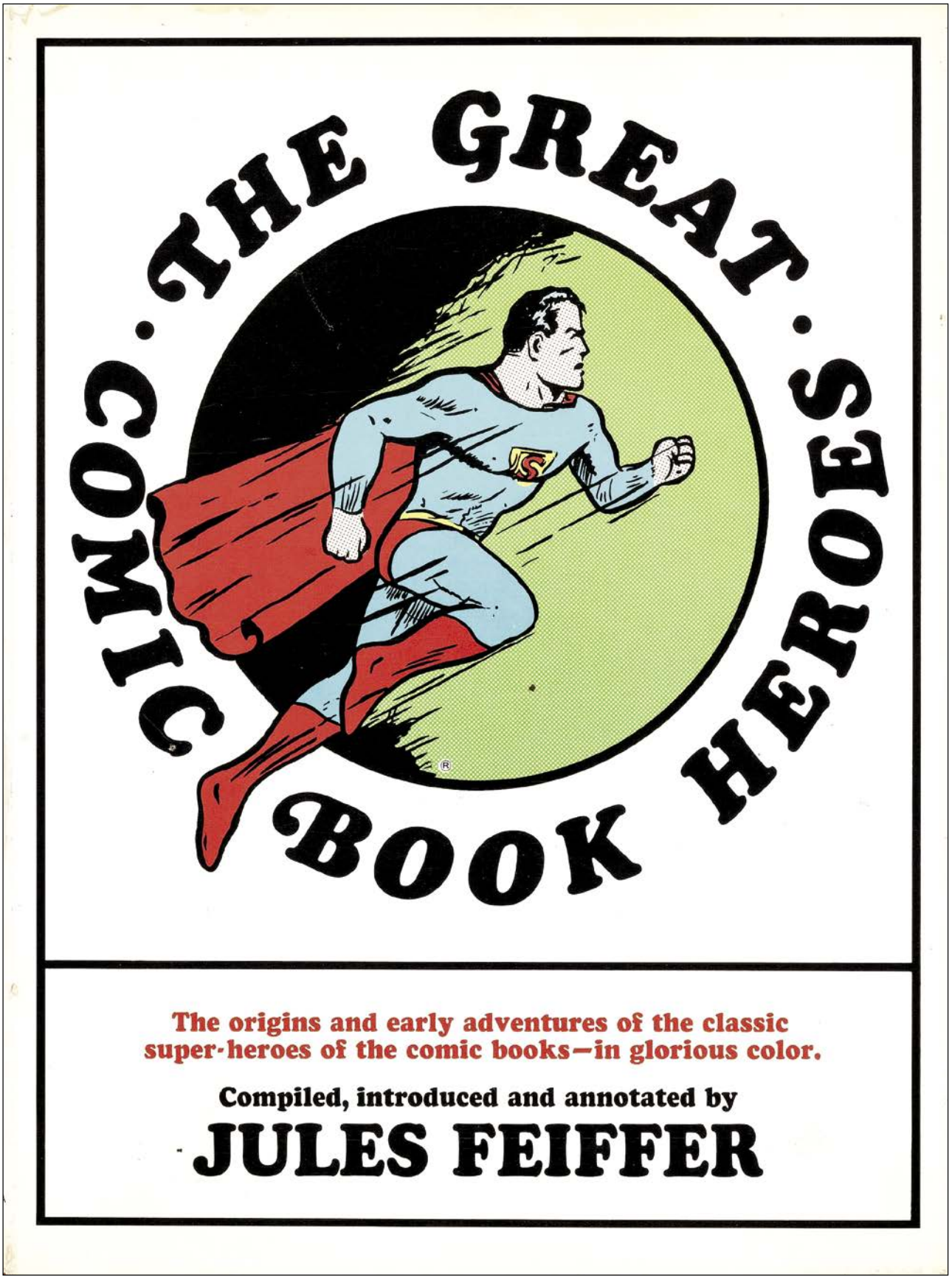
Later working for the *Village Voice* as a staff cartoonist, Feiffer's cartoons and commentary helped to showcase his sardonic wit and observations for over forty years.

His book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, published in 1965. offered readers a firsthand look at the earliest days of the industry from one who was there to witness the unfolding. It played the very important role of introducing a new generation to comics' forebears, including full-color reproductions of landmark stories from DC/National's stable of early heroes including Superman, Batman, The Flash, et al., along with Marvel Comics' earliest efforts with The Human Torch, Sub-Mariner and Captain America. Other examples included Fawcett's Captain Marvel, Eisner's Spirit, and Quality Comics' Plastic Man. Feiffer included annotations to help set the stage for exploration of these original characters, effectively reintroducing the Golden Age of Comics.

Further achievements over Jules Feiffer's career include working as a playwright and screenwriter, notably on the film *Carnal Knowledge* and the Robin Williams vehicle *Popeye*. He also spent time as an art instructor at several universities.

Feiffer was the recipient of numerous awards and honors, to include the Pulitzer Prize for political cartooning, an Academy Award, an Inkpot in 1989, 2004's induction into the Comic Book Hall of Fame, and the National Cartoonists Society's Milton Caniff Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.



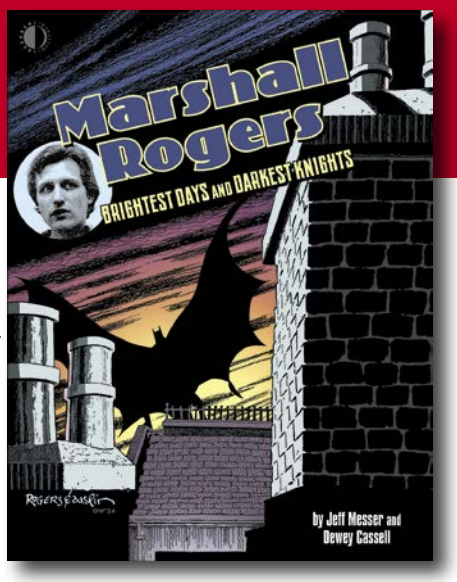


The Great Comic Book Heroes

The Joe Shuster cover of the 1965 Dial Press book that led to a nostalgic collision between the Silver Age of Comics and its 1940s Golden Age. Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert. [Superman art TM & © DC Comics.]

TwoMorrows 2025

UPDATE #1 www.twomorrows.com • store@twomorrows.com

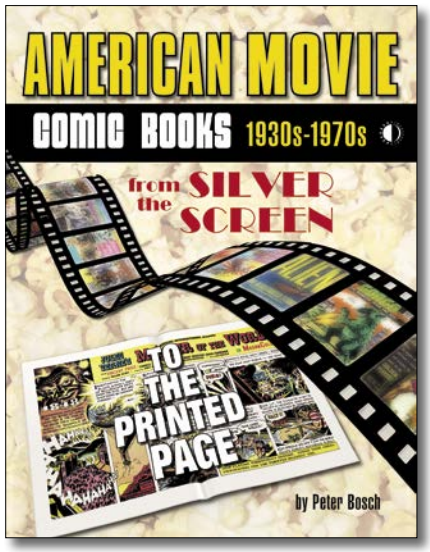


MARSHALL ROGERS BRIGHTEST DAYS & DARKEST KNIGHTS

by JEFF MESSER and DEWEY CASSELL

From underdog to icon, **MARSHALL ROGERS** helped redefine Batman for generations, inspiring readers and up-and-coming artists alike. Initially savaged by editors at DC Comics, his style was uniquely complex with vast and angular architectural design anchoring his storytelling, and it immediately caught on with fans for his depictions of the Darknight Detective, Hugo Strange, The Joker, Silver St. Cloud, Dr. Strange, Cap'n Quick and a Foozle, and more. Now, Rogers' story is told by friends, collaborators, and family members, delving deep into a complicated and conflicted man and his art, as we feature inker **TERRY AUSTIN**, friend and fellow artist **MICHAEL NETZER**, **DAN GREENFIELD**'s extensive interview with writer **STEVE ENGLEHART** (conducted for 13thDimension.com), and others recounting their time and camaraderie with Rogers, alongside an in-depth interview with **MARSHALL HIMSELF**, and a wealth of art both familiar and rarely seen. Written by **JEFF MESSER** and **DEWEY CASSELL** (authors of the Eisner Award-nominated *Mike Grell: Life Is Drawing Without An Eraser*), this book shines a light on the fan-favorite artist's brightest moments and darkest days. Featuring a new cover collaboration by **MARSHALL ROGERS** and **TERRY AUSTIN!**

(160-page **FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$37.95** • (Digital Edition) **$13.99** • **ISBN: 978-1-60549-130-1** • **NOW SHIPPING!**



AMERICAN MOVIE COMIC BOOKS (1930s–1970s) From the Silver Screen to the Printed Page, by PETER BOSCH

In **AMERICAN MOVIE COMIC BOOKS** (1930s-1970s), author **PETER BOSCH** continues his remarkable history of Hollywood's ongoing love affair with comic books. The sequel to **AMERICAN TV COMIC BOOKS**, this new book looks at hundreds of Tinseltown's motion pictures that made the jump from the silver screen to the comics page, starting from the days of **CHARLIE CHAPLIN** and continuing through to the wonders of **STEVEN SPIELBERG**. Along with comics story pages from the industry's greatest talents—including **JACK KIRBY, RUSS MANNING, AL WILLIAMSON, FRANK FRAZETTA, ALEX TOTH, DAN SPIEGLE, WALLACE WOOD, STEVE DITKO, JOHN BUSCEMA, GEORGE PÉREZ**, and **WALTER SIMONSON** (to name just a few!)—you will discover full-color photo covers, posters, original art, and much more! It's the ultimate reference for films from the Thirties to the Seventies that were adapted to comics, including *The Wizard of Oz, Ben-Hur, Around the World in 80 Days,* Disney's cinema classics and animated movies, *Yellow Submarine, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Star Wars, Alien, The Planet of the Apes* series, and many others. Don't miss this blockbuster, perfect for anyone who enjoys movies and comics alike!

(192-page **FULL-COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$34.95** • (Digital Edition) **$15.99 ISBN: 978-1-60549-129-5** • **NOW SHIPPING!**

All characters and properties TM & © their respective owners.

FUTURISTIC by MARK VOGER

ROCKETS, ROBOTS AND RAYGUNS OF SPACE AGE POP CULTURE



Blast off to the **SPACE AGE**, when the future was always bright! **FUTURISTIC** is a **FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER** about a time of limitless possibilities... and anxieties. It covers all aspects of 1950s and '60s pop culture from the "duck and cover" era of the Cold War, the Space Race, the UFO Craze, and the 1969 moon landing. Read about the movies (*The Day the Earth Stood Still, Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), TV shows (*Tom Corbett: Space Cadet, The Jetsons*), and collectibles (robots, rockets, comic books, TV tie-ins) that had us looking to the stars. Also featured are interviews with such comic book creators as **WILLIAM GAINES, JOE ORLANDO, JULIUS SCHWARTZ, ROBERT KANIGHER, ROSS ANDRU, MIKE ESPOSITO,** and **LARRY LIEBER** about their sci-fi work, plus recollections from sci-fi movie stars (**KEVIN McCARTHY, PETER GRAVES, LINDA HARRISON**), TV cast members (from shows including *Lost in Space, Star Trek,* and *The Invaders*), and others. A graphically immersive experience written and designed by **MARK VOGER** (*Monster Mash, Zowie!*), **FUTURISTIC** is a time trip to a future that never exactly came to pass, but lives on vividly in our imaginations!

(192-page **FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER**) **$49.95** • (Digital Edition) **$15.99**
ISBN: 978-1-60549-127-1 • **SHIPS OCTOBER 2025!**



FIRST COMICS COMPANION by RICHARD ARNDT & JON B. COOKE

The **FIRST COMICS COMPANION** is the only book dedicated to the history of Chicago's groundbreaking independent comics publisher, which took on the Big Two by storm between 1983–91. From a modest promotional comic hawking theater subscriptions, First soon blossomed into an ambitious, aggressive imprint with achievements that included adapting the fabled sci-fi play **WARP**; reviving beloved '70s Charlton hero **E-MAN**; luring **MIKE GRELL** over from Pacific Comics to continue **STARSLAYER** and launch **JON SABLE, FREELANCE**; and releasing one of the '80s greatest comic book series, **AMERICAN FLAGG!** by **HOWARD CHAYKIN**. Soon followed **ELRIC, GRIMJACK, NEXUS, SHATTER, DREADSTAR, LONE WOLF AND CUB**, super-hero **ALTER EGO,** and a resurrection of **CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED**. Featuring the recollections of founders **MIKE GOLD, JOE STATON**, and dozens more, this book continues **RICHARD J. ARNDT** and **JON B. COOKE**'s exhaustive "carpet-bombing" approach to documenting comics history in fascinating detail—first, last, and always, **THE** definitive account! Featuring new **CHAYKIN** cover art!

(160-page **FULL-COLOR SOFTCOVER**) **$34.95** • (Digital Edition) **$15.99** • **ISBN: 978-1-60549-128-8**
SHIPS NOVEMBER 2025!



Roy here, abandoning the royal/editorial "we" for this letters section, as per usual. Our thanks to "maskot" artist **Shane Foley** *and colorist* **Randy Sargent** *for doing a Captain Ego homage to the work of this issue's featured creator, the late great Neal Adams, inspired by one of Neal's illustrations for his and my late-1960s* X-Men *collaborations (not that I helped Neal draw that pic, mind!). [Captain Ego TM & © Roy Thomas & Estate of Bill Schelly; created by Biljo White.]*

Since our "re:" section got squeezed out of our previous issue, we're doubling up this time to catch up—or at least so we don't fall any further behind. The first of two issues we're dealing with this time is **Alter Ego #186**, *which spotlighted the comics- and* Mad*-drawing* **Angelo Torres**. *We'll start out with a missive from fellow artist* **Ronn Sutton***:*

Hi Roy,

I'm delighted to see Angelo Torres step into the spotlight. Who could be more deserving? It's reassuring to know that, if you quietly do a thing very well for 70 years, people will notice. I wish the interview [with him] had been longer and more current, but in the case of Mr. Torres, I'll take whatever I can get. Well done, everyone!

Ronn Sutton

Thanks, Ronn! Like we said at the time, Alter Ego *has been, from its start in 1961, a magazine devoted primarily to "heroic" comicbooks, with emphasis on super-heroes, and the terrific Mr. Torres has illustrated relatively few of those, especially if one excludes his* Mad *parodies. However, both his talent and the span of his career made it irresistible to me to reprint the lengthy and tribute-laden program book of the Society of Illustrators' exhibition in Angelo's honor, as put together by Robert L. Reiner. And we're overjoyed that the artist is still around to enjoy its "second edition" as he did its first!*

Ronn graces our letters pages from time to time—while longtime fan **Bernie Bubnis** *tends to comment on virtually every issue (and we're glad he does)—so let's see what* he *has to say about #186's atypical approach:*

Hi Roy,

I liked this issue's experiment with your usual format. A lot of folks were telling their Torres stories, but each added a new fact to this "continued" story. It made for great reading. It was interesting to see how many of the writers also visited the *Mad* offices, just as Len Wein, Ron Fradkin, and I once visited DC and Marvel.

That 10-minute Bryan Stroud telephone interview sure came in handy, too. It was good to "hear" Angelo's voice as the capper on this tribute issue.

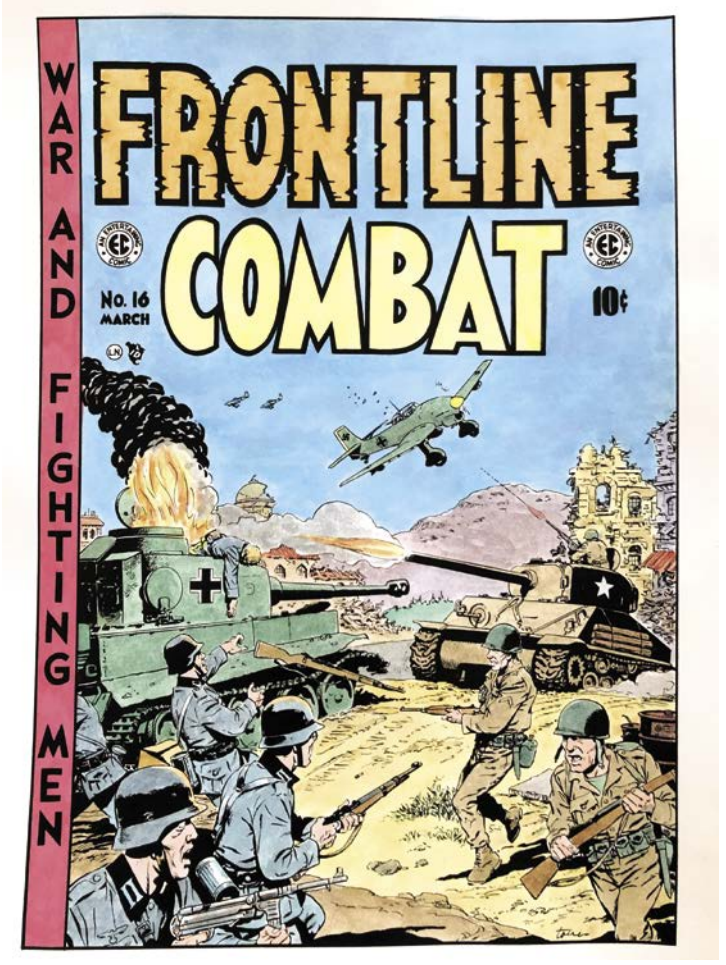
I knew the ending of the Wally Wood story when I began reading a few issues ago. Ralph Reese did a great job of crafting this last chapter… although Jim Warren seemed like an OK guy instead of the villain, with his offers to "help" a clown like Wood.

This *A/E* featured two *very* talented guys, Torres and Wood. One enjoyed life, and the other hated his own existence. Guess it does not matter how much talent you have. It's just skin-deep for some guys.

I thought the quantum-physics guys already time-traveled. I wish I coulda joined them. Would love to again feel that dopey-kid-starry-eyed-innocence I once had watching "The Silent Caper" on my 12" b&w TV screen. This episode debuted 21 days before I turned twelve in June 1960. Not too long after I "met" Roy Thomas and Jerry Bails. Roy, life is just a circle, ain't it?

Bernie Bubnis

Lord, I hope not, Bernie—as there are a few people from my early life



War Games

Another of the various commissioned "faux covers" drawn by Angelo Torres to salute the glory days of EC Comics. This one's for *Frontline Combat* "#16," a color print courtesy of EC expert Grant Geissman. [Logo TM & © William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc.; art © Angelo Torres.]

that I don't care to bump into again in completing such a circle!

Next up, a letter about #186 that arrived before *the issue was published, from comic strip historian* **Alberto Becattini** *in sunny Italy:*

Hello, Roy,

Seeing that an Angelo Torres issue of *Alter Ego* is upcoming, I thought I might provide his lesser-known newspaper strip credits—all of them as an assistant or ghost artist. Someone might be interested, who knows? Here they are:

Big Ben Bolt: daily (p&i) c. 1965-1968 [e.g., 19 Feb. 1968 – 24 Feb. 1968]; Sunday (p&i) 1972-75

Rip Kirby: daily (p) 31 Oct. 1966 – 31 Dec. 1966; (p&i) 1 Jan. 1968 – 6 Jan. 1968, 11 March 1968 – 16 March 1968, 9 June 1969 28 June 1969; (p) 30 June 1969 – 16 Aug. 1969; (p&i) 18 Aug. 1969 – 23 Aug. 1969 – 23 Aug. 1969; (p) 25 Aug. 1969 – 20 Dec. 1969; (p&i) 22 Dec. 1969 – 27 Dec. 1969; (p) 29 Dec. 1969 – 10 Jan. 1970

Secret Agent Corrigan: daily (p&i) 17 July 1967 – 22 July 1967

Alberto Becattini

Grazie, *Alberto! That kind of info might have been a little too detailed to squeeze it onto our "Angelo Torres Checklist" in that issue—but we're sure glad you sent it along, since it gave us an excuse to print the Torres-ghosted strip seen below! With all that data at your command, you're an* inter-*national treasure!*

Now we come to the part of the "re:" section in which readers get to correct a few of the errors that, it seems inevitably, sneak into a magazine that contains many thousands of words and hundreds of illustrations. But, since we intend Alter Ego *to be a fountainhead of historical information—*correct *information—not just entertainment and perhaps a bit of nostalgia—what choice do we have?:*

Art Lortie *points out that, on p. 37, there's reference in a blurb to "Alberto Becattini's invaluable Stripper's Guide."* "Both Alberto and I," *Art notes,* "are contributors to **Allan Holtz***'s Stripper's Guide. See* **Stripper's_Guide (strippersguide.blogspot.com)**." *Art also notes that the comic strip* Rip Kirby *was never a Sunday, always a six-times-a-week daily, throughout its existence, contrary to what's noted in the "Angelo Torres Checklist." Mea culpa, no doubt, Art!*

John Cochran *informs us:* "Torres' illo of the EC 'Ghoulunatics' polishing of their rival hosts pictures a tombstone for Mr. Crime with his final year as 1945. As far as I can tell, and this was not an exhaustive search, Mr. Crime hung on until *Crime Does Not Pay* #88 from 1950."

Joe Frank *remarks how much he enjoyed learning about Torres' work, but that he spotted an error in my editorial, perhaps because I confessed that I was "an admittedly irregular reader of* Mad*":* "Torres, who began appearing [in *Mad*] in 1969, didn't replace Mort Drucker; he supplemented him. Both were in the magazine for decades to come. Angelo stopped contributing in 2005; Mort in 2008."

With that, we turn our focus to bouquets and brickbats (whatever the hell a "brickbat" is) with regard to **Alter Ego** ***#187*** *and its laser-like focus on the life and career of science-fiction and comicbook writer* **Edmond Hamilton***, beginning with a note from* **Ray Cuthbert***, who's been around—and more than occasionally contributed material to* A/E*—ever since this mag arose from the ashes more than a quarter of a century ago:*

Hi Roy and all—

I very much enjoyed the feature on Edmond Hamilton in *A/E* #187. When it came to his comic work, one of the things that both he and Jerry Siegel managed to accomplish in their mid-60s writing was an emotional relatability to their characters. Hamilton made Luthor into someone with motivations beyond the hate of Superman; it showed he could love and could set priorities at an even higher sense of need than his hate. Both Hamilton and Siegel managed to show pathos in a manner that very few comic writers were able to accomplish. There are several examples of stories written by either Siegel or Hamilton which could bring a reader to tears—something unlikely to comicbook readers.

Hamilton with his SF background also had a clever ability to diminish Superman's powers when necessary. In *World's Finest* #145, he reasoned that, since Superman's powers were a combination of lesser gravity and yellow-sun rays, if he put Superman on a planet where a sun filter could be used, Superman's abilities would be reduced—a clever notion that no other writer seems to have duplicated—at least to that extent.

Ray Cuthbert

No doubt about it, Ray—Edmond Hamilton was one of the great "Superman" scripters to follow in the footsteps of co-creator and friend Jerry Siegel. I've always regretted that, though I got to know Jerry to some slight extent when he worked for Marvel for some months in the latter 1960s, I never got to shake hands with Hamilton—or with his talented wife Leigh Brackett, who co-wrote one of my favorite screenplays, for Howard Hawks' Rio Bravo.



Ripped!

According to provider and expert Alberto Becattini, this *Rip Kirby* daily strip for July 18, 1967, was penciled and partially inked by Torres. The official artist, who probably completed the embellishing, was John Prentice. [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]



A Matter Of Kandor

Splash page of the second part of a major Hamilton-scripted serial in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #69 (June 1963). Pencils by Curt Swan; inks by George Klein. Thanks to Bud Lortie and Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Hamilton cast a shadow abroad as well as in the States, as per this comment from France, from my good friend **Jean-Marc Lofficier***:*

Hi Roy—

Another outstanding issue of *A/E* (the Edmond Hamilton issue).

An anecdote: In the early 1960s, French publisher Editions OPTA decided to publish a French book club edition of Hamilton's classic novel *The Star Kings* and wrote to him to ask if he had any extra stories to contribute. As it happened, Hamilton had written one short story that was a sequel to *Star Kings*, but looking at an earlier handsome volume in the same collection (one collecting two novels by Catherine L. Moore, his wife) felt compelled to write more stories, and that became a new novel, *Return to the Stars*, that was first published in France before it eventually found a publisher in the U.S.

Jean-Marc Lofficier

So that Hamilton novel was first seen in French rather than in English, eh? I've written a few things that took that circuitous route myself—though they were doubtless less worthy of duo-language publication than Hamilton's!

Up next, a mild complaint from **Martin Gray***:*

Dear Roy,

I'm enjoying the latest issue, but sheesh, six pages of footnotes after Glen Cadigan's neat—nay, magisterial—piece on Edmond Hamilton! I'm reading a comics fanzine, not judging a thesis. No one is doubting Glen's research (but do feel free to sack the "autocorrect" that brought us "Dick Spring").

Martin Gray

Yeah, I'm sorry about the "Spring" for "Sprang" typo, Martin—but I can't apologize for running the half-dozen pages of footnotes Glen Cadigan provided for his Hamilton article. I've made a point, in recent years, that, whenever possible in articles as opposed to interviews, sources of information need to be given to back up statements. Besides, more than half the space in those "six pages of footnotes" was actually taken up by art spots and captions, so it was really slightly less than three *pages.*

And here's **Joe Frank***, back again, this time with cogent comments on various aspects of* A/E *#187:*

Dear Roy,

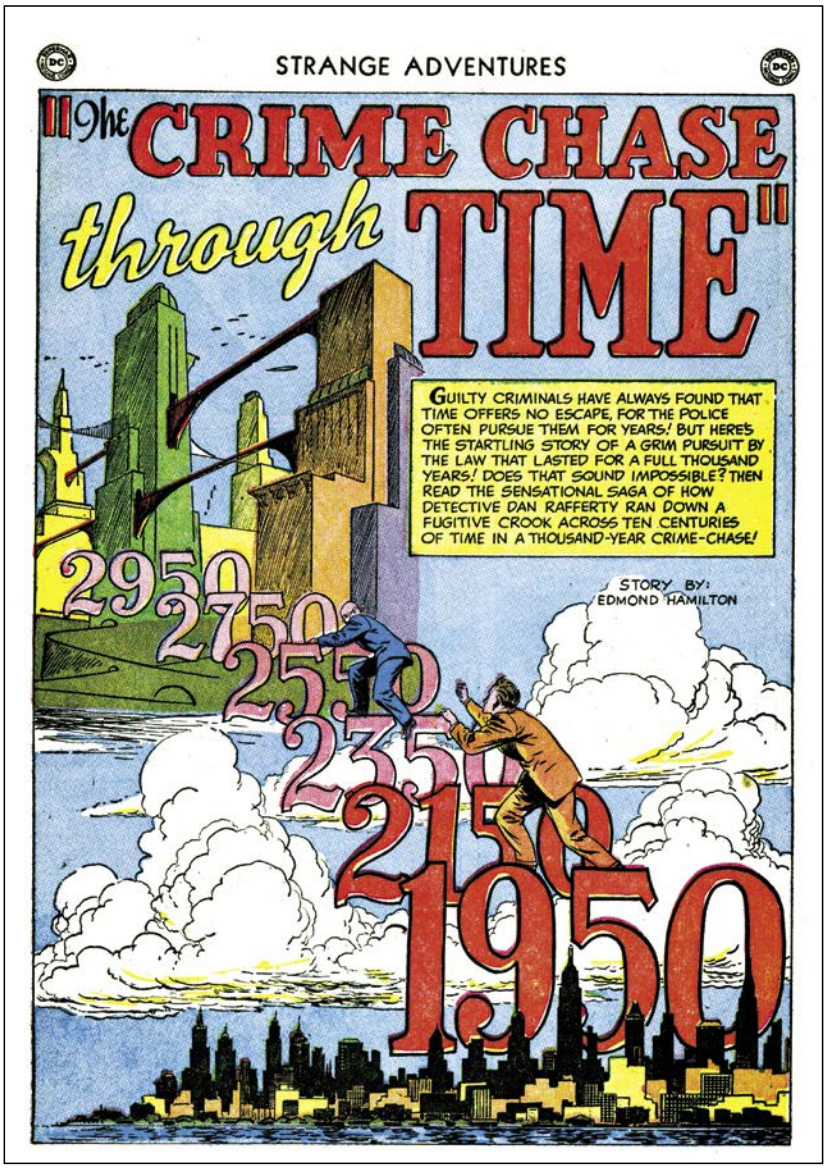
Lots of insight—and laughs—with the *FCA* look at Beck/Costanza advertising. I thought it must have been shortly after Fawcett, but no, it was concurrent. That threw me, as I believed that in the days of Captain Marvel, even with assistants, they must have been buried in work. Regardless, looks like they had plenty of other projects and accounts….

My favorite was "Captain Tootsie," who sagely suggested to an impressionable child to increase his energy by snarfing down more Tootsie Rolls. We know his secret identity is *not* a nutritionist. The kid has enough problems going around spouting lines that might've made Burt Ward cringe, like "Hootin' Zoots!" Was that line *ever* said by anyone in history other than by Rollo in this ad?

Surprisingly, since I'm not a great fan of science-fiction novels in general and the Legion of Super-Heroes specifically, I was expecting this Edmond Hamilton retrospective to be light on points of interest. Just the opposite. By taking a personal approach, focusing more on his interaction with longtime friends and family such as his wife, it was an engaging read with lots of intriguing tangents. Especially loved the irony, for a writer like Hamilton, to receive some compliments for the best portion of his writing on a project partially ghosted by his wife.

Plus, his stay in comics, for some twenty years, was explained not as a preference for that sort of writing but as pragmatism. The science-fiction outlets were drying up. Even his eventual departure, in 1966, was not from disdain for the field but because of a desire to travel.

The highlight of the material, for me, is how many science-fiction fans from the earliest days were known to and interactive with one another. Here we read of them prior to their becoming well-known and admired, mostly as enthusiasts just before or at the start of their careers: Edmond Hamilton, Julius Schwartz, Mort Weisinger, Forrest J. Ackerman, Jerry Siegel, Ray Bradbury, etc. Even



Where Credit Is Due

Strange Adventures' **original editor, Julius Schwartz, came from a science-fiction (rather than a comics) background, so he believed in authorial credits for the scripters of the SF stories in the early issues, such as this one for Edmond Hamilton from *SA* #4 (Jan. 1951). But there was no byline for artist Ed Smalle. Thanks to Bud Lortie & Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]**

their professional careers, later on, had some overlaps. Hamilton and Siegel both wrote for Weisinger, for example.

Finally, an unexpected surprise: the unused Dick Rockwell "Giant-Man" splash page [in "Comic Crypt"]. While interesting and of curiosity value, naturally, it's hard to judge what he could have accomplished with more time and learning on the feature. Honestly, I much preferred Steve Ditko's version—a front shot, and he also emphasized The Wasp far more in multiple poses. Both pages suffer from too many captions and, especially, that banner with the title cutting off Giant-Man in each version. Rockwell placed more emphasis on the gathered audience, where, in the Ditko version, they're more implied but left on the sidelines so the stars could shine in the spotlight. Still, I'm glad you found and printed it. A glimpse of what might have been. Seems, for all the patience and experimenting, the feature never quite caught on. Yet I thought they were both interesting characters in your *Avengers* ensemble. Go figure.

Joe Frank

I was never much of a Giant-Man/Goliath fan myself, Joe, though he contributed a few fine moments to The Avengers. *I've always suspected one reason for his lack of popularity was the fact that, even though he was by far the* biggest *of the Marvel heroes, he was still inferior in strength to smaller-statured stalwarts like Thor, the Hulk, the Thing, Sub-Mariner—and I suspect guys like Spider-Man and Iron Man could've given him a good tussle as well. I much preferred Hank Pym as Ant-Man—although I never thought of the Yellowjacket incarnation I gave him as anything but a temporary alias.*

I'm sure that you, like me, will enjoy the extended feature on "Captain Tootsie" slated to appear in an early FCA *edition!*

One feature in #187 was Bud Plant's tribute to his (and our) late colleague Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., as commented on by frequent A/E *contributor* **Jim Ludwig**:

Roy—

I did not see one of Jim Vadeboncoeur's extremely important contributions to the comic world in his memorial [in *A/E* #187]. Jim was passionate in his desire to freely share the comics he loved. In 2007 or 2008 he began to lend out his comics to scanners to provide digital comics for all to experience. If one goes to either **comicbookplus.com** or **digitalcomicsmuseum.com**, you can see comics he provided that most would never have been able to see without him. His lack of concern for condition allowed him to not care if scanning damaged his comics. Granted, many were already in poor condition. I am proud to have been a part of the project and having held some rare gems in my hands. To see how vast a contribution he made, here is a list: **https://comicbookplus.com/?cbplus=jvjarchive_s_s_0**.... If you see "narfstar" as the uploader, that is me.

Jim Ludwig

Jim was generous with his comicbook collection, all right, Jim. He loaned me several of his Airboy Comics *for years, and never took me up on offers to send them back. Eventually, he had sold or donated them someplace, so I shipped them off there. His heart was as big as his knowledge of comics and illustration—and that's pretty big!*

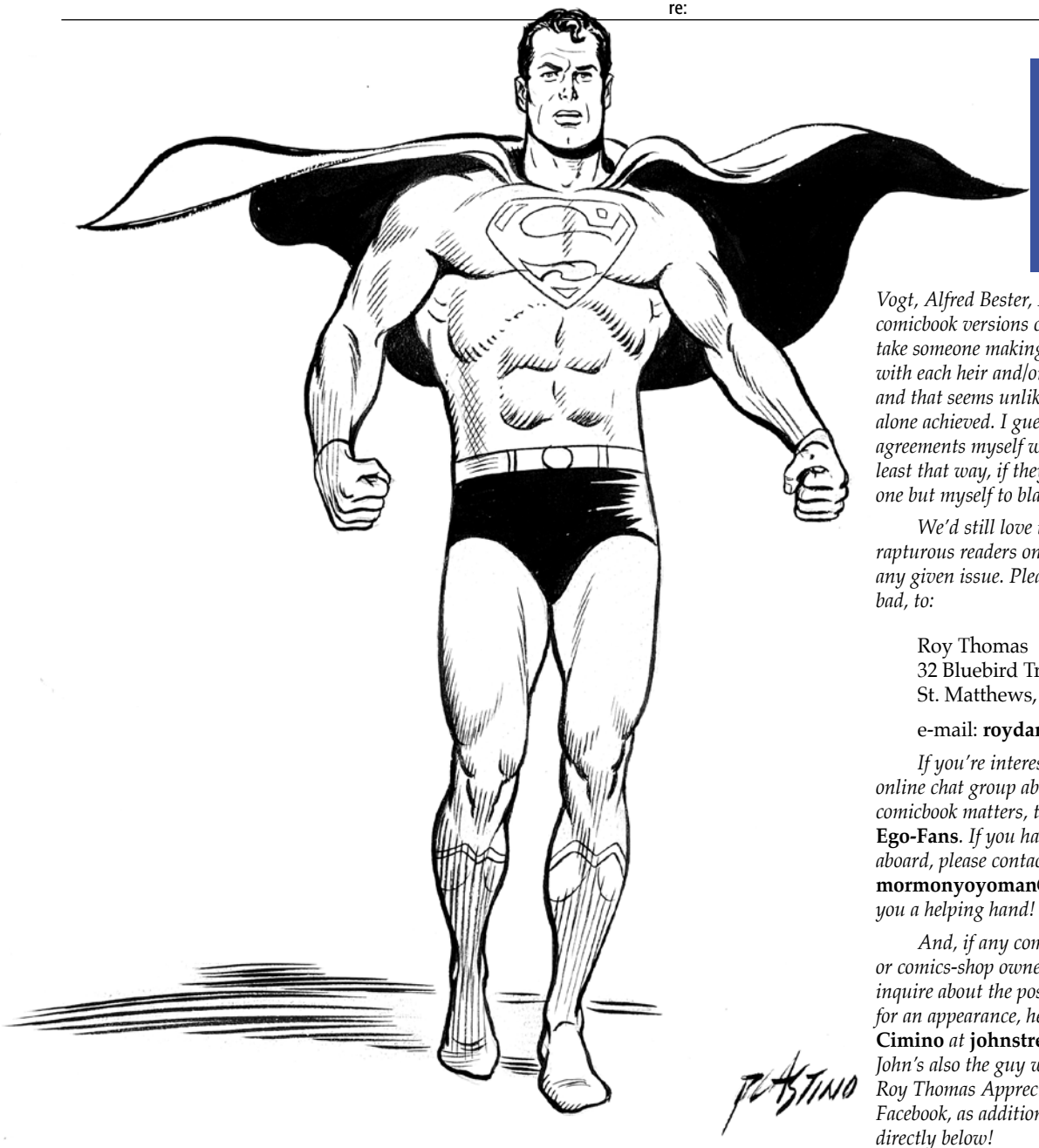
Okay, so now we're at the point where we have to admit to our errors (and to those of others) that wormed their way into A/E *#187. But at least these errors are being pointed out by none other than* **Glen Cadigan**:

Hi, Roy!

I was just looking through my copy of *Alter Ego* #187 and noticed a couple of things that need correcting:

Page 13: That's not Mort Weisinger on the right [in the photo], but his brother Ed.

Page 42: The checklist lists Hamilton as having written comics for Better, Nedor, Standard, etc. That's not true, and it's a mistake that's been propagated for years. The *other* Ed Hamilton—the artist and letterer—*did* work for them and did sign some splash pages "Ed Hamilton"; not knowing that there were two Ed Hamiltons, a lot of people have mixed them up and given Edmond credit for having written those stories, which he didn't. (Which is funny, because there's a note not to confuse the two in *Who's Who* itself.)



Super, Man!

Hamiltion bio-writer Glen Cadigan sent this dramatic black-&-white pose of Superman by Al Plastino, which we didn't quite manage to squeeze into *A/E* #187... so we're working it in now! [Superman TM & © DC Comics.]

Vogt, Alfred Bester, Harry Bates, and others, those comicbook versions can't be reprinted. It would take someone making new arrangements separately with each heir and/or estate of the original writer, and that seems unlikely ever to be undertaken, let alone achieved. I guess I should've held onto those agreements myself when I stepped aside in 1974; at least that way, if they'd still gotten lost, I'd have no one but myself to blame.

We'd still love to hear from even more of you rapturous readers on the plusses and minuses of any given issue. Please send comments, good and bad, to:

Roy Thomas
32 Bluebird Trail
St. Matthews, SC 29135

e-mail: **roydann@ntinet.com**

If you're interested in joining an "old-style" online chat group about Alter Ego *and related comicbook matters, try* **https://groups.io/g/Alter-Ego-Fans**. *If you have any trouble clambering aboard, please contact moderator* **Chet Cox** *at* **mormonyoyoman@gmail.com** *and he'll give you a helping hand!*

And, if any comics convention promoter or comics-shop owner out there would like to inquire about the possibility of booking Roy T. for an appearance, he/she/it should contact **John Cimino** *at* **johnstretch@live.com**. *John's also the guy who runs the Roy Thomas Appreciation Board on Facebook, as additionally plugged directly below!*



Edmond Hamilton only ever worked for DC [in terms of comics].

Also, I was happy you included pages from Gil Kane's adaptation of "He That Hath Wings," a comic I wasn't aware even existed until recently. Of course, having played a role in getting it published, you knew what I didn't. I'm glad you remembered it!

Glen Cadigan

How could I forget, Glen? Gil had often mentioned to me his admiration of that particular Hamilton story, so I decided to turn him loose with it. I believe it was an excellent adaptation. It's a shame that, because those who followed in my editorial footsteps at Marvel managed to misplace the author-agreements I had arranged for the adaptations of stories by greats like Hamilton, Theodore Sturgeon, Harlan Ellison, A.E. Van



(Photo taken at CCXP23 in São Paolo, Brazil, Dec. 2023)

WEB ADDRESS: comicsrevue.com

COMICS REVUE



GARTH

Krazy Kat





Roy Crane's BUZ SAWYER

CHRIS WELKIN PLANETEER

MANDRAKE

Sir Bagby



STEVE CANYON

RICK O'SHAY

Tarzan

CASEY RUGGLES by Warren Tufts

Flash Gordon

SUNDAY STRIPS ALL IN FULL COLOR

DRAGO

[ ] Please send a sample copy of Comics Revue : $20 ($30 outside the US, sent airmail)
[ ] Please send one year of Comics Revue : $59 ($89 outside the US, sent airmail)
[ ] Please send two years of Comics Revue : $118 ($178 outside the US, sent airmail)

Your name _____
Your address _____
City/State/Zip _____

We accept paypal! Go to www.paypal.com and make payment to ricknorwood70@gmail.com

Manuscript Press, PO Box 336, Mountain Home TN 37684 Rick Norwood, editor

NOW ON FACEBOOK

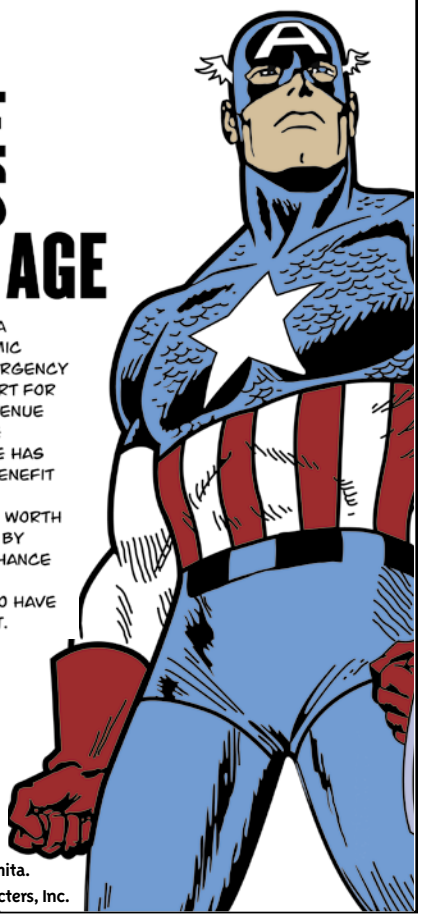
HEROINITIATIVE.ORG

EVERYONE DESERVES A GOLDEN AGE

THE HERO INITIATIVE CREATES A FINANCIAL SAFETY NET FOR COMIC CREATORS WHO MAY NEED EMERGENCY MEDICAL AID, FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIALS OF LIFE, AND AN AVENUE BACK INTO PAYING WORK. SINCE INCEPTION, THE HERO INITIATIVE HAS BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BENEFIT OVER 50 CREATORS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH OVER $500,000 WORTH OF MUCH-NEEDED AID, FUELED BY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS! IT'S A CHANCE FOR ALL OF US TO GIVE BACK SOMETHING TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE GIVEN US SO MUCH ENJOYMENT.

HELPING COMIC CREATORS IN NEED

HERO INITIATIVE



Art by John Romita.
Captain America TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.

Advertise With Us!

Magazine Ad Rates

RetroFan • BrickJournal • Cryptology
Back Issue • Comic Book Creator
Alter Ego • Jack Kirby Collector

Back cover or inside cover: $900 ($800 for two or more)
Full-page interior: $700 ($600 for two or more)
Half-page interior: $400 ($350 for two or more)
Quarter-page interior: $200 ($175 for two or more)

AD SIZES:

COVERS & FULL-PAGE: 8.375" wide x 10.875" tall trim size, add 1/8" bleed. (7.625" x 10.125" live area.)
HALF-PAGE: 7.625" x 4.875" live area (no bleeds).
QUARTER-PAGE: 3.6875" x 4.875" live area (no bleeds).

Call or e-mail for frequency discounts!
Run ads across our full magazine line for even greater savings!

Send ad copy and payment (US funds) to:

TwoMorrows Publishing
10407 Bedfordtown Drive
Raleigh, NC 27614
919-449-0344
E-mail: *twomorrow@aol.com*

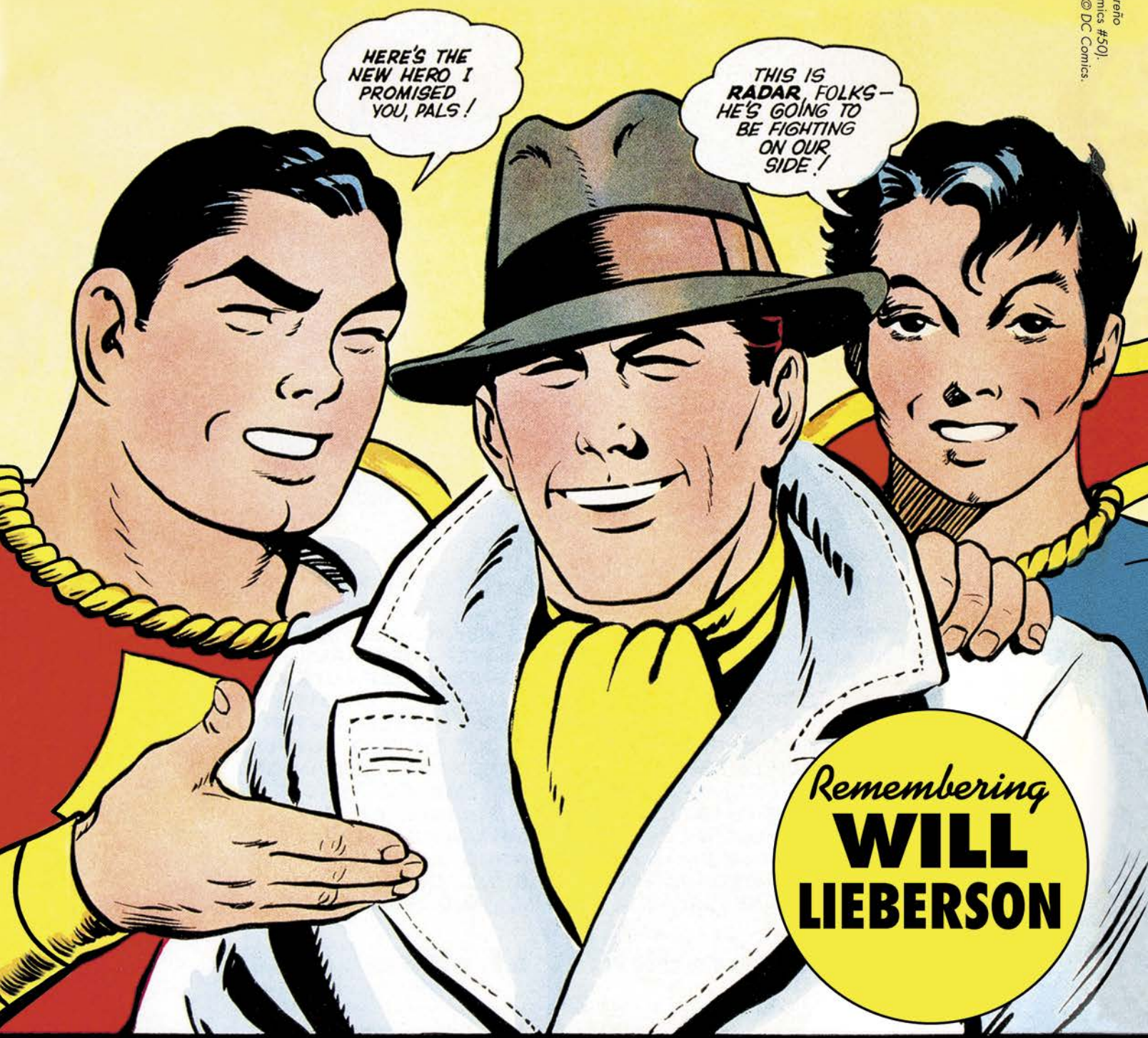
We accept check, money order, and all major credit cards; include card number and expiration date.

These rates are for digital ads supplied (PDF, JPEG, TIF, EPS, or InDesign files accepted). No agency discounts apply.

P.C. HAMERLINCK'S
FCA
Fawcett Collectors of America

#254
Sept. 2025

Art by C.C. Beck and Al Carreño (from the cover of Master Comics #50). Shazam heroes, Radar ™ & © DC Comics.



Remembering
WILL LIEBERSON

CAPT. MARVEL AND CAPT. MARVEL JR. INTRODUCE RADAR • THE INTERNATIONAL POLICEMAN!

"He Was Surprised When Comics Became Recognized As An Art Form"

A Chat with DENNIS LIEBERSON—Son of Fawcett Comicbook Editor-in-Chief WILL LIEBERSON

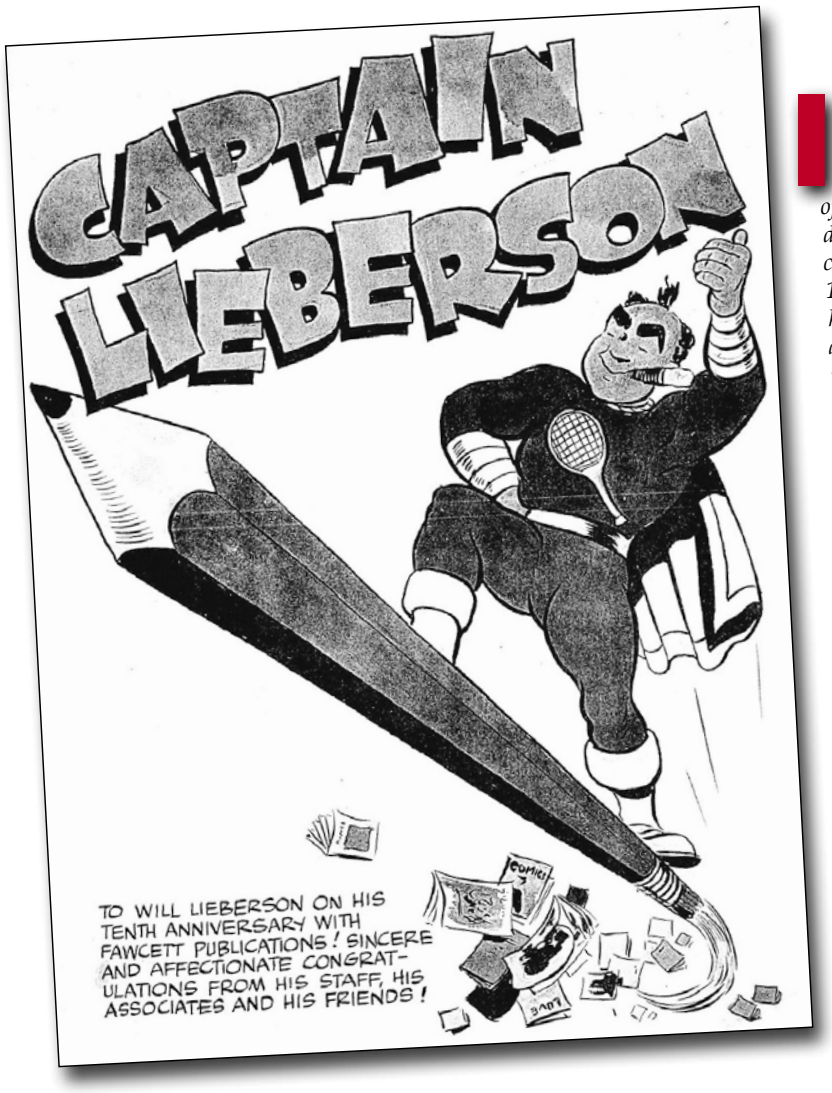
by Shaun Clancy

Edited by P. C. Hamerlinck



Where There's A *Will*...

(Above:) Will Lieberson at NYU, 1937. Courtesy of Dennis Lieberman. (Below left:) "Captain Lieberson"—as depicted by Al Jetter in 1952 for a special card given to the comicbook editor-in-chief on his 10-year anniversary at Fawcett in 1952. [© the respective copyright holders.]



NTRODUCITON: *Last issue, we presented Shaun Clancy's interviews with Edna Hagen, formerly of Fawcett's comics production department, and Dagny Weste Crowley, the wife of celebrated comics editor Wendell Crowley. Both women had at different times been the secretary/assistant to Fawcett's executive comics editor William Henry Lieberson (b. Jan. 9, 1916—d. Jan. 15, 1995). To wrap up this series of discussions, Shaun shares with us his conversation with Lieberson's youngest son. While born years after his father's time at Fawcett, and not a comics connoisseur whatsoever, Dennis Lieberson even so provides fascinating insights into his father's life and works.***—PCH.***

SHAUN CLANCY: *Where was your dad born? I know his brother Martin did some writing assignments for your dad during his Fawcett years and post-Fawcett. Were there any other siblings?*

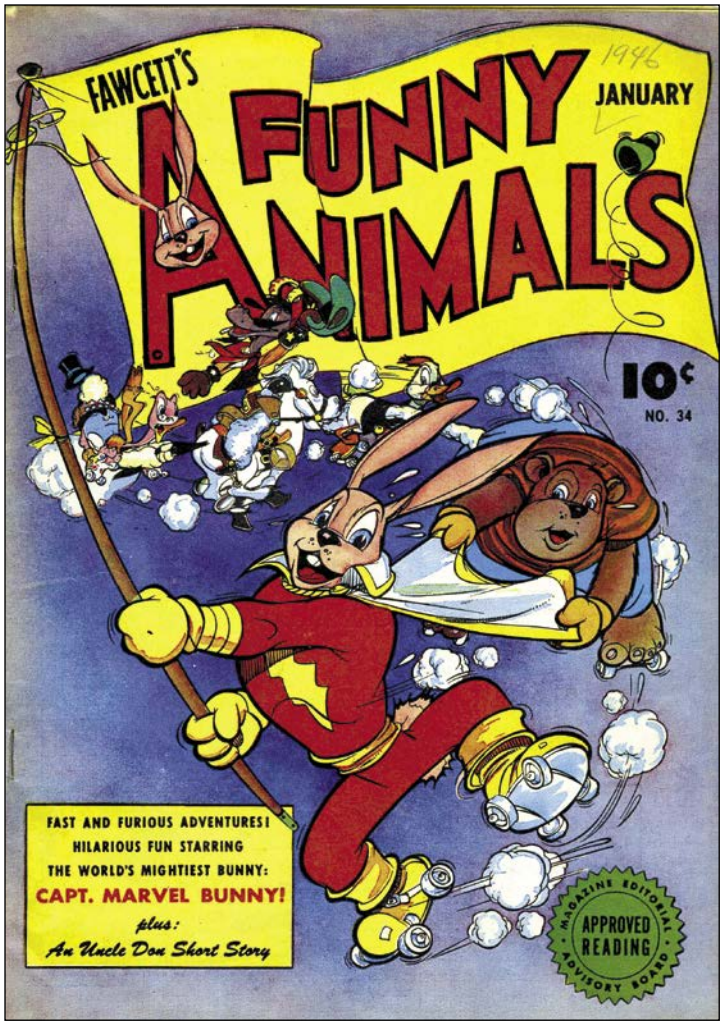
DENNIS LIEBERSON: My dad was born in New York City, January 9, 1916. His brother Martin followed two years later. There were no other siblings. Martin's family lived in the same Manhattan apartment building as us. We were all very close. I am still in close contact with Martin's son Ken, who was born in 1957. I believe Martin worked most closely on the *Fawcett's Funny Animals* series.

SC: *How did your parents meet?*

LIEBERSON: They met on a double date with Irwin Schoffman, a Fawcett comics writer.

SC: *Did any people from Fawcett attend their wedding?*

LIEBERSON: I remember my parents saying that they had a private wedding and that only the immediate family were present.



The Rabbit Habit

Fawcett's Funny Animals #34 (Jan. 1946); cover by Chad Grothkopf. Will Lieberson's brother Martin wrote stories for Fawcett's comics, primarily for *FFA*. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

SC: *Did your dad serve in the military?*

LIEBERSON: No, he was exempted because of ulcers. His brother Martin was also exempted, due to a bad knee he had damaged from college baseball.

SC: *Did the brothers attend the same college?*

LIEBERSON: My dad went to NYU [New York University]



Those Wedding Bells Are Breaking Up...

Martin Lieberson's wedding day, 1948. (Left to right:) Charlotte (Martin's wife), Martin, Will Lieberson, Jayne Lieberson (Will's wife). Courtesy of Dennis Lieberson.

and graduated from there in 1937. His degree was in Public Speaking, because the school didn't have a playwriting major. Martin went to the City College of New York and graduated that same year; he was the smart one and skipped grades. My dad didn't have the grades to get into City College.

SC: *Did your dad write for the college newspaper?*

LIEBERSON: Yes, he was the editor-in-chief of the *Medley*, NYU's newspaper.

SC: *Did he have any drawing ability?*

LIEBERSON: No, Martin was the better artist. However, my dad was the go-getter. He used to claim that he got his brother every job he ever had. My uncle Martin passed away in 2023.

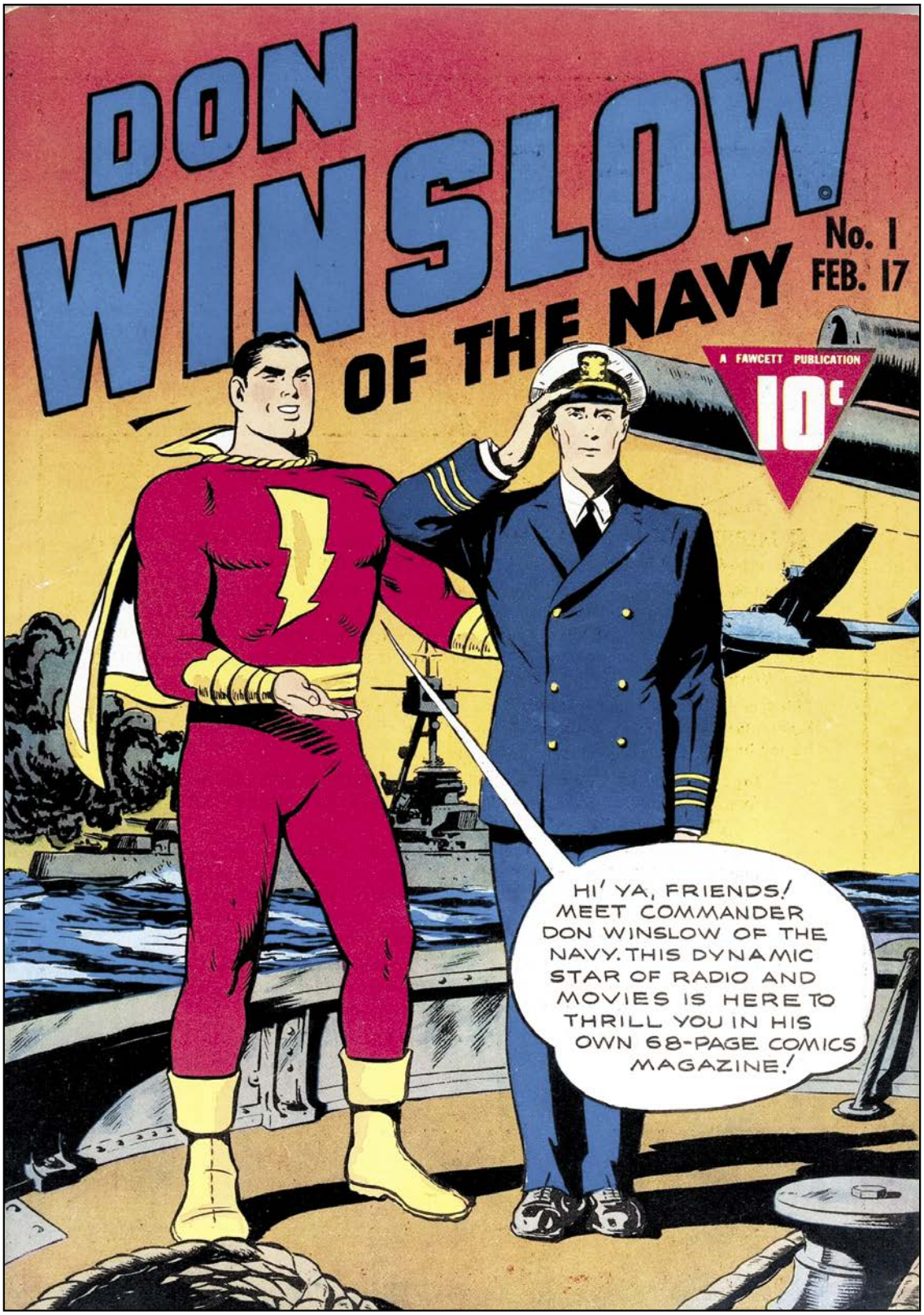
SC: *On the card for Will Lieberson's 10-year anniversary at Fawcett in 1952, artist Al Jetter drew your dad as a super-hero with a tennis racket on his chest. I assume he liked to play tennis?*

LIEBERSON: Oh, yes. Tennis was a religion in our household. Our whole family used to be dragged to the courts on the weekends,



Steamboat 'Round The Bend

Steamboat was a supporting character originally created by editor Ed Herron. Editor-in-chief Will Lieberson was responsible for eliminating Steamboat from Fawcett's comic pages. "The World's Mightiest Dream"—*Captain Marvel Adventures* #48 (Aug.-Sept. 1945)—marked the final appearance of the racially-stereotyped sidekick. Script: Otto Binder; artwork: C. C. Beck/Pete Costanza. [Shazam hero, Billy Batson, & Dr. Sivana TM & © DC Comics.]



The Navy Gets The Gravy...

Will Lieberson arrived at Fawcett in the late summer of 1942. Comics editor Rod Reed assigned him to develop/write the upcoming *Don Winslow of the Navy* comic, based on the syndicated newspaper strip. Reed stepped down as chief editor the following year and Lieberson took his place. Reed, editorial director Ralph Daigh, and the four Fawcett brothers were all impressed with Will's story sense and his playwriting background. The well-respected editor-in-chief maintained his position until the demise of Fawcett's comics line in 1953. *Don Winslow of the Navy* #1 (Feb. 1943); cover by C. C. Beck & Edd Ashe. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics; *Don Winslow of the Navy* TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

while other kids were dragged to church.

SC: *Did your dad ever mention his removal of the Steamboat character from the "Captain Marvel" stories?*

LIEBERSON: I remember him boasting on a number of occasions how he encouraged Fawcett to get rid of the stereotyped characters.

SC: *During his editorship, do you know if he also wrote comic scripts on the side or did any other kind of writing?*

LIEBERSON: I know that my dad wrote a number of stories for the comics, unaccredited. I am not aware of the payment arrangements. I also know that he assigned stories to his brother Martin and other acquaintances, and these were unaccredited as well. He wrote an occasional story under aliases, I believe, but generally threw stories someone else's way. Theatre was my dad's passion, and editing was what paid the rent. He was writing all through his time at Fawcett, including his Broadway play. He was also a gag writer. He and Martin wrote a season or two of the *Mennen Shave Time* radio program for Lew Parker and Ann Thomas, which was sort of a knockoff of *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*. The *Mennen* show was broadcast in 1948—right during Fawcett's comic heyday.

SC: *Were you and your siblings interested in your dad's comics career, or own anything from the Fawcett days?*

LIEBERSON: I was born in 1958, several years after the demise of Fawcett's comics line, so I have no firsthand knowledge of those times. My brother Richard was nine years older and had some knowledge of it, but he has passed. My sister Barbara is the middle sibling, but she doesn't seem to know anything more than me. I do have a couple of boxes of my father's comic files buried away in a closet. I live in my parents' old apartment, after all.

I still have my horribly worn-out Captain Marvel sweatshirt. I wore it to my junior high school graduation when I refused to wear a cap and gown. I should have a Captain Marvel tie here as well. To us—and to my father, I suspect—the comics were just a job. I believe he was flattered but surprised when comics became recognized as an art form.

SC: *I was in contact with renowned film critic Stanley Kauffmann, who was once a comics editor at Fawcett. Did you ever meet him or hear your dad talk about him?*

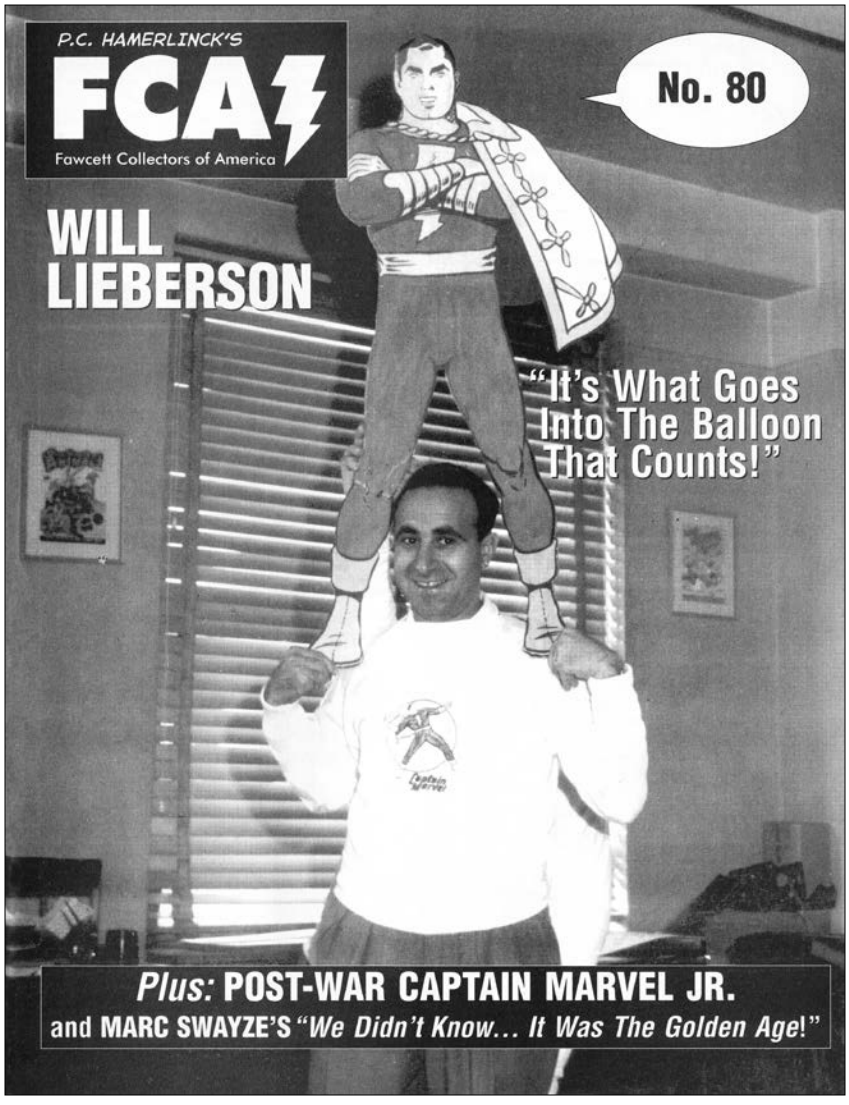
LIEBERSON: My dad talked about Stanley Kauffmann a lot. I met him a number of times, most likely at film screenings. As a matter of fact, I just picked up a copy of his novel *The Philanderer*. While recently researching Kauffmann, I found out by accident that Patricia Highsmith was a Fawcett comic writer. I just grabbed her volume of diaries and found at least a dozen references to Fawcett, some where she describes her interactions with Kauffmann.



The Next Generation

(Above:) The Junior Marvels: Richard, Barbara, and Dennis Lieberson in 1958. Courtesy of Dennis Lieberson.

(Right:) Our photo cover for *FCA* #80 (in *A/E* #21, Feb. 2003) featured Will Lieberson in 1947 wearing a Captain Marvel sweatshirt, and giving his favorite hero a piggyback ride. Will's youngest son, Dennis, still has his own CM sweatshirt.





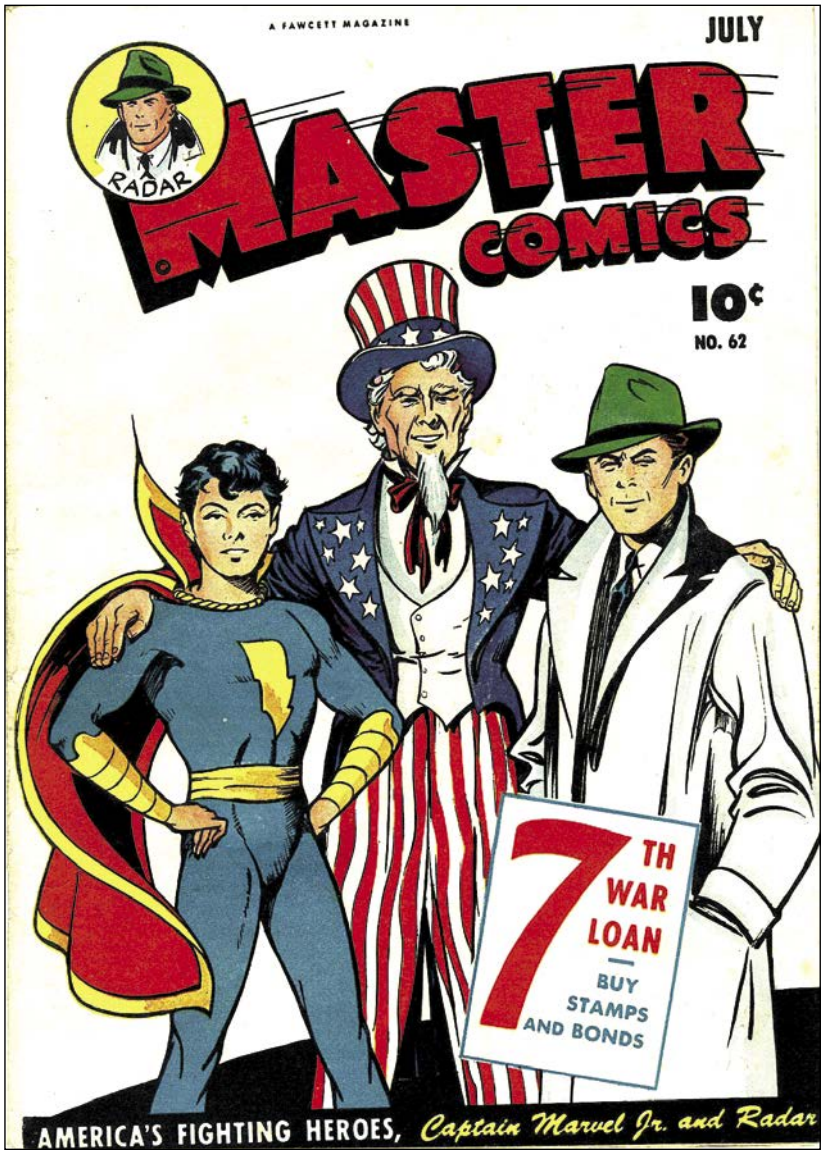
Stanley Kauffmann
in 1971. Photo by novelist Jerzey Kosinski.

SC: *Who were some other friends your father made in comics?*

LIEBERSON: I vividly remember many of my dad's friends that I later learned were Fawcett comicbook writers and artists: Harvey Janes, Vic Martin, Bill Brady, Jon Messman, and Sheldon Moldoff. They were all very friendly to me when I was a little kid.

Harvey Janes and my dad were close. I remember him being a really nice guy. Vic Martin was an artist who worked with my dad for many years. He had kids my age and they grew up in our neighborhood. Vic was also friends with *Fawcett's Funny Animals* artist Bill Brady—a good friend to all of us. Both Bill and Vic stayed close to the family.

Bill was quite a character. He was brought up in an orphanage in extreme poverty and became an artist of some promise. He had artwork in museums, including The National Gallery, but he remained quite a loner. When he died in the 1970s it was revealed that I was the only beneficiary on his life insurance policy. I was a teenager at the time and was upset that my dad made me split the money with my brother and sister and with Jon Messman's son, who was also close to Bill.

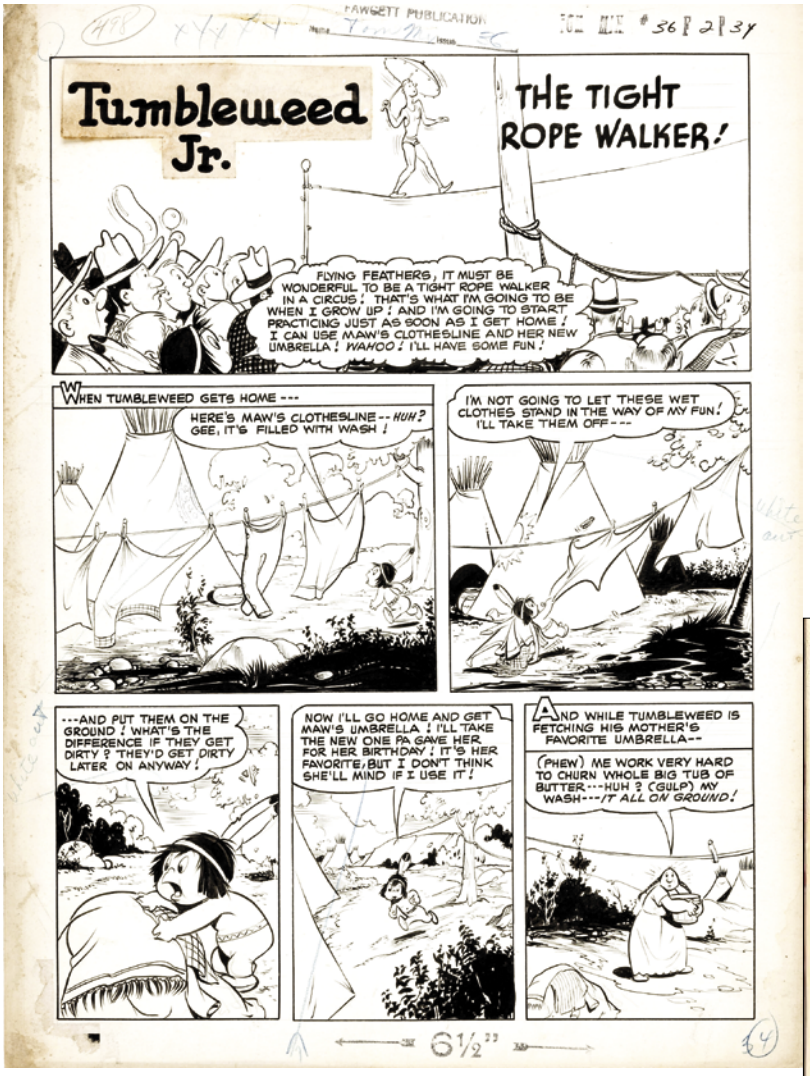




It's On Our *Radar!*

(Left:) Bud Thompson's cover for *Master Comics* #62 (July 1945), featuring Radar, the International Policeman, created by Will Lieberson for the U.S. government's Office of War Information. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics; TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

(Right:) Will Lieberson outside of the Fawcett offices in 1946, dressed for an advertising skit.



The Tumbling Tumbleweed Jr.

A "Tumbleweed Jr." page by Bill Brady, from *Tom Mix Western* #36 (Dec. 1950). Brady also drew various strips in *Fawcett's Funny Animals*. Scan courtesy of Heritage Auctions. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

SC: *Will edited some joke books for Fawcett's Gold Medal imprint in the mid-'50s. It makes me wonder exactly when he left Fawcett in the post-comics years.*

LIEBERSON: I assume anything he did for Fawcett after the comics was done freelance. I don't believe he had another salaried position until he joined Bradbury Publishing.

SC: *What do you know about* TV Junior *magazine, which was edited by your dad? A few issues contained comics stories of a Captain Marvel imitator called Captain TV.* [See *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #8, Spring 2001, pp. 15-16.]

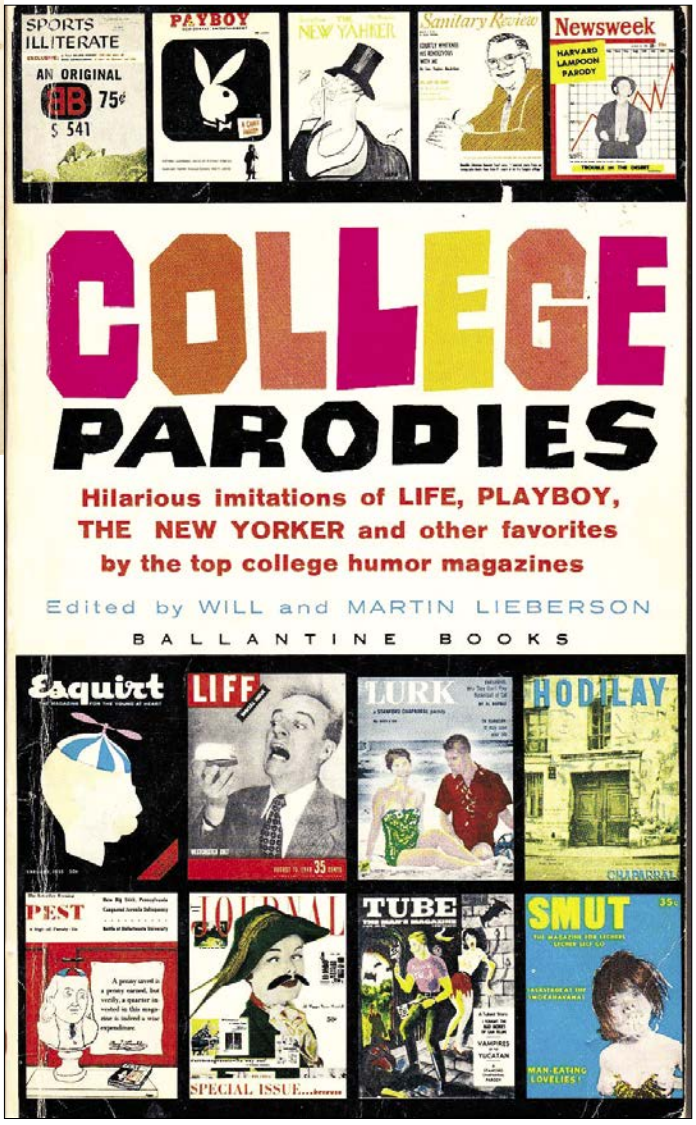
LIEBERSON: I have bound copies of all the *TV Junior* issues. Within them are a lot of pictures of my brother and sister with television personalities. I was still in diapers at the time. I know the goal of the publication was to create a kid's version of *TV Guide*—even the *TV Junior* logo was a direct rip-off of *TVG*; I'm surprised there wasn't a cease-and-desist order. The *TV Junior* office was on Columbus Circle. We used to go there to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.

SC: *I interviewed [earlier Hillman & Ziff-Davis editor] Herb Rogoff, who worked with your dad on* TV Junior. *He had introduced me to another person he worked with in comics by the name of Ed Silverman, who mentioned that his wife Lila was your mom's cousin.*

LIEBERSON: My folks never mentioned Ed or Lila, who was my mother's first cousin. Perhaps Ed was a cartoonist at the military supplement that he edited for many years after Fawcett. During the time my father was at Fawcett, he courted and married my mom. When she died we found out there was a very interesting personal narrative we had been excluded from—mainly that her dad was a gangster of some renown. I'm curious if anyone who knew them at the time was privy to this, as we hadn't been.

SC: *Herb Rogoff remembered reading in the newspapers all the bad reviews of your dad's 1951 Broadway play,* Springtime Folly.

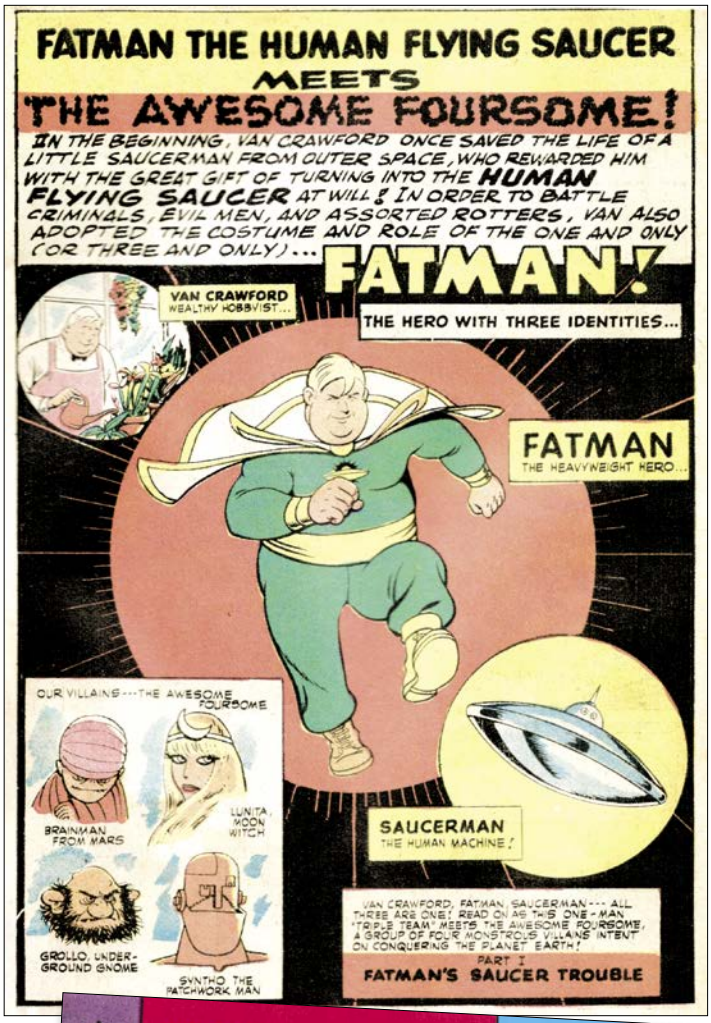
LIEBERSON: My father's approach was that it was better to have tried and failed than never to have tried. He was never



College Daze

***College Parodies* (Ballantine Books, 1961), compiled post-Fawcett by the Lieberson brothers, Will and Martin. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]**





Lightning Comics Strikes Out...

Will Lieberson's return to comics gave us three issues of *Fatman the Human Flying Saucer*, dated between April & September of 1967. Clockwise—the introductory pages from #1 & 2, and the cover of #3. Art by C.C. Beck. Lieberson himself may have written the contents pages and cover. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]





Third Time Unlucky

(Left:) The combined splash and intro page from *Fatman the Human Flying Saucer* #3. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



"B" Is For...

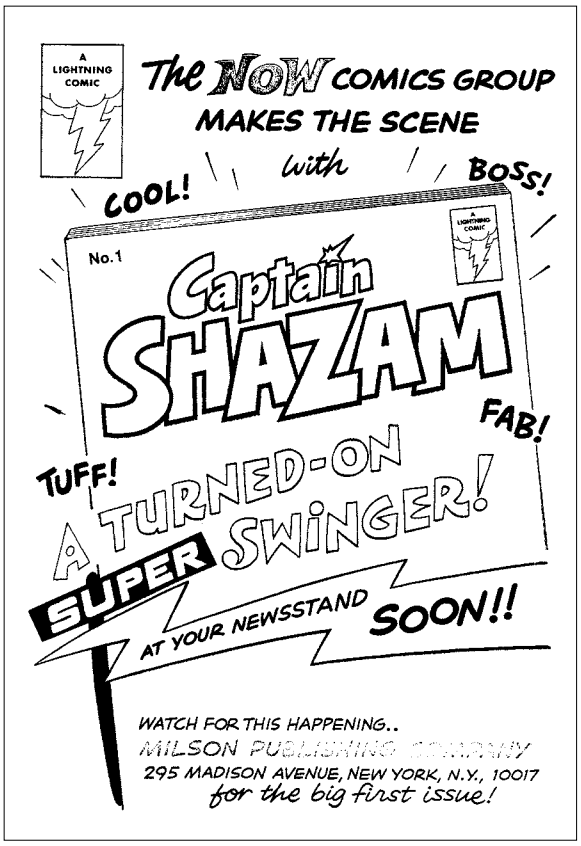
(Above, left to right:) Jack Binder (Otto's artist brother), C.C. Beck, and Otto Binder, during the Fawcett days.



Carl Pfeufer

at a Fawcett reunion.





Lightning Strikes Out ...Twice! (And Almost *Thrice!*)

Milton (Lightning) also published *Super Green Beret* (the cover for #1 is shown at far left), perhaps not Otto Binder's finest concept. Artwork by Carl Pfeufer, who drew "Don Winslow," "Tom Mix," "Commando Yank," "Mr. Scarlet," and many more for Fawcett. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

A third title was talked about—*Captain Shazam*, no less!—before Milson (Lightning) got tired of losing money and pulled the plug on their comics operation.



"She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah..."
The Fab Four take over the cover of *TV Junior* (July 1964), edited by Will Lieberson.
[TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

ashamed to say that the play lasted only one night. What's kind of funny is that I abandoned my own "career" as a stage director many, many years ago after receiving similar bad reviews, and my father accused me of being a quitter. He stayed away from the stage for at least twenty years after *Springtime Folly*.

One story about the play: In a playwriting class my father took shortly after college, there was a fellow student, Mel Brooks, and they became acquaintances. My father claimed that in Brooks' 1967 film *The Producers*, when the characters look for the worst play ever written—*Springtime for Hitler*—it was a slap towards him. I think this is unlikely, but still amusing.

SC: *As a child during the mid-'60s, did you know at the time about your dad's short-lived return to comics with Lightning Comics/Milson's* Fatman the Human Flying Saucer *and* Super Green Beret*?*

LIEBERSON: I was aware when all that was going on, but I wasn't interested. I was never a comics person. Milson was a portmanteau for the Miller brothers (Bernie and Joe)—they put up the money, and the Lieberson brothers (Will and Martin) hired the talent.

SC: *Under the pseudonym "Will Martin," your dad and uncle edited two "girly" magazines during the '60s—*Monsieur *and* Jem*. Do you know how that job came about?* Fatman the Human Flying Saucer *had even been promoted by a "Will Little" in* Monsieur*!* [See *Alter Ego* #88 (*FCA* #147), Aug. 2009.]

LIEBERSON: Heh, heh, heh. I know about those magazines very well. They were low-grade *Playboy* rip-offs. My dad bought the two titles from Canadian bodybuilder Joe Weider. Will and Martin worked together on them, but my father had no intention of doing it as a full-time job, and he eventually went to Bradbury. So he left *Monsieur* and *Jem* in the hands of Martin who, by producing them, was able to put two kids through private college.

One funny story about the magazines: When our families went to various bungalow colonies in the Borscht Belt during the summertime in the early '60s, my dad and uncle—apparently to save a few bucks—conducted the magazine's photo shoots in our apartments. There is a particularly great shot in my bunk bed—with the model holding one of my stuffed animals. Another funny story: My grandfather used to handle the subscriptions to those magazines! The sight of a 70-year-old man stuffing that junk into envelopes in our middle class Jewish living room was quite unique!







CRYPTOLOGY #3

See **MARS ATTACKS** banned cards, model kits, comics, and a few words from the film's deranged storyboard artist **PETE VON SHOLLY**! Also, the chilling poster art of **REYNOLD BROWN**, terrifying puppets from film, and more comic books they'd prefer you forget! Plus, more Hammer Time, **JUSTIN MARRIOT** on obscure '70s fear-filled paperbacks, another Killer "B" film, and more to satiate your sinister side!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



CRYPTOLOGY #4

Get **ALEX ROSS'** gory lowdown on his Universal Monsters paintings! Spend Hammer Time with the "Brides of Dracula", and 3-D horror movies and comics of the 1950s! Learn the origins of slasher films, chill to pre-Code artwork of Atlas' **BILL EVERETT** and ACG's 3-D maestro **HARRY LAZARUS**, see a Killer "B" movie, and more by **NORMANTON**, the **KRONENBERGS, LEESE, VOGER,** and **VON SHOLLY!**

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



CRYPTOLOGY #5

SKULL & BONES ISSUE! Ghost Rider from comics to movies, skeleton covers from Atlas Digests and pre-Code horror comics, **HY FLEISHMAN**'s 1950s skeleton covers and stories, Disney's skeletons, '70s *Pirates of the Caribbean* models and Last Gasp's Skull Comics, the films of William Castle, and Killer B films: *House on Haunted Hill, The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake,* plus our Hammertime section!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Sept. 2025



CRYPTOLOGY #6

ZOMBIE ISSUE! The films *White Zombie* and *I Walked With A Zombie*, **GEORGE ROMERO** and **LUCIO FULCI**'s zombie apocalypses, zombie pre-Code comics, **BERNIE WRIGHTSON**'s undead creations, horror comics of Brazil, the contributions of black stars of classic horror cinema, Hammer's *The Plague of Zombies*, Fantaco's *Night of the Living Dead*, France's *Revenant*, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Nov. 2025



CRYPTOLOGY #7

VAMPIRES! The career of **BELA LUGOSI**, Universal's *Dracula's Daughter*, *Blood of Dracula's Castle*, **MARV WOLFMAN** discusses his **TOMB OF DRACULA** comic (with art from **GENE COLAN, TOM PALMER** and **GIL KANE**), the roots of comic book vampires, Underworld's **KATE BECKINSALE**, vampire toys, Hammer's legion of the undead, and *The Return of Dracula* and *Grave of the Vampire*!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Jan. 2026



ALTER EGO #196

Concluding our presentation of **EDDY ZENO**'s book on the early SUPERMAN artists from **ALTER EGO #193**—with a focus on style-setting **WAYNE BORING** and classic cover illustrator **WINSLOW MORTIMER**! Featuring a fabulous, previously unprinted cover by **BORING**! Also: **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America), **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more! Edited by **ROY THOMAS**.

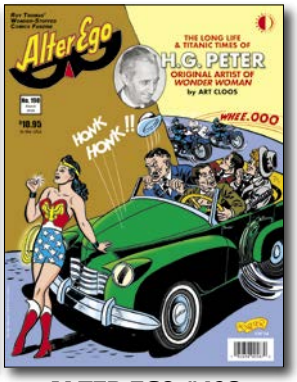
(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Oct. 2025



ALTER EGO #197

The incredible inside story of **HILLMAN PUBLISHING**—1940 to 1953—by **MARK CARLSON-GHOST**! Airboy—aviatrix Valkyrie—The Heap—Skywolf, et al.! Art by **KIDA, SCHROEDER, LEAV, INFANTINO, ZOLNEROWICH**, and some of comics' finest artists! Plus **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America) and **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** visits Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt! **DAVE STEVENS** cover!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Dec. 2025



ALTER EGO #198

H.G. PETER was the original artist—and some say the co-creator—of WONDER WOMAN, greatest super-heroine ever! **ART CLOOS** does an in-depth dive into the life and career of one of comics' most individualistic artists! Plus **MARSTON—GAINES—MURCHISON—KANIGHER**, etc. Also—**FCA** and **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt! With an unpublished **H.G. PETER** Wonder Woman cover!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Feb. 2026



ALTER EGO #199

P.C. HAMERLINCK reveals the secret—often bitter—early-1970s combat by correspondence between *SHAZAM!* artist (and Captain Marvel co-creator) **C.C. BECK** and DC editor **JULIUS SCHWARTZ!** It'll take more than one magic word to avoid a head-on collision between these two titanic talents! Plus **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America), **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships April 2026



BRICKJOURNAL #91

20th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE! Looking back at the magazine's beginnings with now-retired LEGO executive **TORMOD ASKILDSEN**, Senior LEGO Designer **MARK STAFFORD**, and others who were key to its development! Plus **BRICKNERD**, **BANTHA BRICKS**: Fans of LEGO Star Wars, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions by **CHRISTOPHER DECK**, and Minifigure Customization with **JARED K. BURKS**!

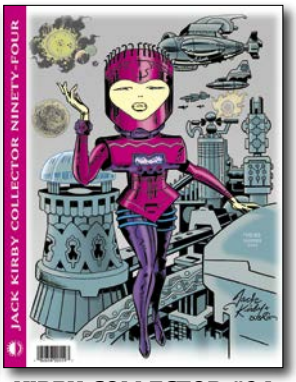
(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Oct. 2025



COMIC BOOK CREATOR #39

THOMAS YEATES career-spanning interview about the Kubert School, Swamp Thing, Eclipse Comics, and adventure strips Zorro, Tarzan, and Prince Valiant! **GREG POTTER** discusses his '70s Warren horror comics and '80s reboot of Wonder Woman with **GEORGE PÉREZ**, **WARREN KREMER** is celebrated by **MARK ARNOLD**, plus part one of a look at the work of **STEVE WILLIS**, part two of **ERROL McCARTHY**, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



KIRBY COLLECTOR #94

SPACE RACES! Jack's depictions of cosmic gods and life on other planets, including: how Ego, Tana Nile, and the Recorder took Thor to strange new worlds, OMAC's space age future, time travelers in Kirby's work, favorite Kirby sci-fi tropes in his stories, plus: a 1967 **LEE/KIRBY** interview, **MARK EVANIER** and other columnists, never-reprinted Simon & Kirby story, robotic pencil art gallery, cover inked by **TERRY AUSTIN**!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



KIRBY COLLECTOR #95

MADNESS! Kirby's most deranged work: Dingbats, Goody Rickels, Destroyer Duck, the Goozlebobber, Not Brand Echh, and wild animation concepts! Plus, a 1980s Kirby interview by **JAMES VAN HISE**, a look at Jack's psychedelic coloring, Kirby's depictions of Dr. Strange, Forever People art gallery, **MARK EVANIER**, a crazy 1950s Simon & Kirby story, behind an unused Machine Man cover inked by **STEVE LEIALOHA**!

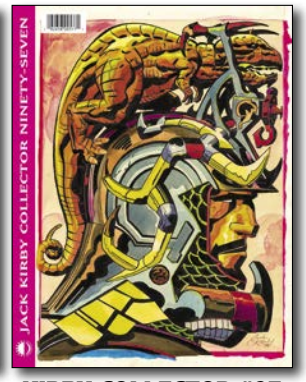
(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Fall 2025



KIRBY COLLECTOR #96

QUESTIONS! Kirby's unpublished/unknown work, Heroes & Villains Sketchbook variants, Jack's *Phantom Force* involvement, his daughter's 1960s pop star career, revealing **STAN LEE** interview, exploring the *Kamandi* #1 Earth A.D. map, mysteries behind *Thor* #169's Galactus origin, the 2024 Baltimore Kirby panel (featuring **WALTER SIMONSON, MARK BUCKINGHAM**, and **KARL KESEL**), **MARK EVANIER**, and more!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Winter 2026



KIRBY COLLECTOR #97

TO BATTLE! Warriors and peaceniks in Kirby's Fourth World, Jack's TWO Two-Gun Kids, **WILL MURRAY** interviewing Kirby on the origins of Captain America, a never-reprinted Simon & Kirby tale, the Kirbys' battles over creator credit, **MARK EVANIER**'s 2025 Jack Kirby Tribute Panel from Comic-Con, plus: If Kirby drew a character's first cover appearance, does that make them his creation or design? Cover by Jack himself!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Spring 2026

New from TwoMorrows!

TwoMorrows needs your help!

DIAMOND COMIC DISTRIBUTORS FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY IN JANUARY without paying for our December and January magazines and books, leaving us with enormous losses—and we still have to pay the expenses on those items, and keep producing new ones. Until payments from our new distributors begin in the Fall, we're staying afloat with **WEBSTORE SALES**.

Every new order (print or digital) and subscription will help TwoMorrows get through this, and emerge even stronger for 2026. Please download our **NEW 74-PAGE 2025 CATALOG** and order something if you can:
https://shorturl.at/gA9Fv

Also, ask your local comics shop to change their orders from Diamond to **LUNAR DISTRIBUTION**, our new distributor. We've had to adjust our release dates for the remainder of 2025 while we wait for orders from our new distributor, so you may see some products ship earlier or later than originally scheduled. We should be back to normal by end of Fall 2025; thanks for your patience!



RETROFAN #40

Here comes TV's Dennis the Menace, with stars **JAY NORTH, GLORIA HENRY**, and **JEANNIE RUSSELL**! Plus: Hogan's Heroes turns 60, TV Western Have Gun–Will Travel, Big Little Books, The Incredible Hulk in animation, **MICKY DOLENZ** as Circus Boy, and more! Featuring columns by **ED CATTO, ANDY MANGELS, WILL MURRAY, SCOTT SAAVEDRA, SCOTT SHAW**, and **MARK VOGER**.

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



RETROFAN #41

We kick off with TV's original *Kung Fu* starring **DAVID CARRADINE**, a **NANCY DREW** history, Disney animator **FLOYD NORMAN**, **TOM CORBETT: SPACE CADET**, collectible '60s and '70s cereal premiums, in search of **SAM GOODY**, and more! Featuring columns and contributions by **HERBIE J PILATO, ANDY MANGELS, WILL MURRAY, SCOTT SAAVEDRA, SCOTT SHAW, MARK VOGER**, and editor **ED CATTO**!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Oct. 2025



RETROFAN #42

We profile TV Batman **ADAM WEST**! Plus: Sigmund and the Sea Monsters, Rankin/Bass' *The Year Without A Santa Claus*, celebrity TV commercials, real-life 'Indiana Jones' **ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS**, '70s paperback heroes, and more! Featuring columns and contributions by **ANDY MANGELS, WILL MURRAY, SCOTT SAAVEDRA, SCOTT SHAW, MARK VOGER, RICK GOLDSCHMIDT**, and **ED CATTO**.

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Dec. 2025



RETROFAN #43

BRADY BUNCH interviews with **MAUREEN McCORMICK, BARRY WILLIAMS**, and **EVE PLUMB**! Plus a look inside the **MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW**, hard-knuckled features on **GENE BARRY**'s 1960s detective series **BURKE'S LAW** and satirical tough-guy **NICK DANGER** of the **FIRESIGN THEATER** radio comedy troupe, Saturday Morning's **HOT HERO SANDWICH** teen variety show, and more!

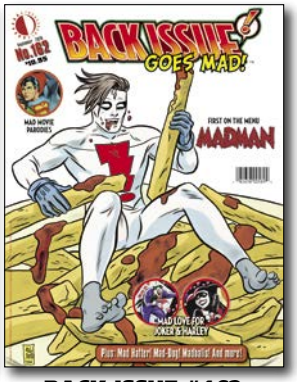
(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Feb. 2026



BACK ISSUE #161

MUTANT MAYHEM ISSUE! BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH's Weapon X Wolverine, the romance of Havok and Polaris, Rogue and Nightcrawler limited series, Brood and Arcade villain histories, "Mutant Massacre" crossover, and more! With **JON BOGDANOVE, JOHN BYRNE, CHRIS CLAREMONT, DAVE COCKRUM, LOUISE SIMONSON, MIKE WIERINGO**, and more! **WINDSOR-SMITH** cover.

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Now shipping!



BACK ISSUE #162

BACK ISSUE GOES MAD! Things get crazy this issue as we cover Madman, *Batman: Mad Love, MAD* superhero movie parodies, the Mad Hatter, Madballs, and more! Featuring the work of **MICHAEL ALLRED, BRUCE TIMM, PAUL DINI, GERRY CONWAY, DOUG MOENCH, MIKE W. BARR, JEPH LOEB**, and others. Madman cover by **MICHAEL ALLRED**! Edited by **ROGER ASH**.

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Sept. 2025



BACK ISSUE #163

MONKEYING AROUND! Featuring simian favorites including Gorilla Grodd, Gorilla-Man, King Kong, Angel and the Ape, and more monkey business. With the work of **CARMINE INFANTINO, JOHN BROOME, CARY BATES, GERRY CONWAY, MARK WAID, STEVE ENGLEHART, SAL BUSCEMA, DON SIMPSON, PHIL FOGLIO, HOWARD CHAYKIN, PHILIP BOND**, and others. Gorilla Grodd cover by **ARTHUR ADAMS**!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Nov. 2025



BACK ISSUE #164

ALIEN INVASION ISSUE! Starro the Conqueror, Aliens, Predator, Alien Legion, D.R. and Quinch, and more! Featuring the work of **DAVID MICHELINIE, GERRY CONWAY, BART SEARS, MARK VERHEIDEN, MARK A. NELSON, CHRIS WARNER, RANDY STRADLEY, CARL POTTS, FRANK CIROCCO, LARRY STROMAN, CHUCK DIXON, ALAN DAVIS**, and others. Cover by **BRIAN BOLLAND**!

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Dec. 2025



BACK ISSUE #165

RIVALS ISSUE! Featuring The Kree-Skrull War, Superman and Flash races, Thing and Hulk battles, Archie Andrews vs. Reggie Mantle, and more epic clashes. Spotlighting the work of **ROY THOMAS, NEAL ADAMS, DAN JURGENS, JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-LÓPEZ, GERRY CONWAY, JIM STARLIN, AL MILGROM, PETER DAVID, DAN PARENT, MARK WAID**, and others. Avengers cover by **SAL BUSCEMA!**

(84-page **FULL-COLOR** magazine) **$10.95**
(Digital Edition) **$4.99** • Ships Feb. 2026

All characters TM & © their respective owners.

2025

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES Print subscribers get the digital edition free!	ECONOMY US Poly mailer, backing board	PREMIUM US Faster delivery, rigid mailer	INTERNATIONAL $15.95 per issue, rigid mailer	DIGITAL ONLY No print issue
Alter Ego (Six print issues)	$76	$100	~~$117~~ $95.70	$29
Back Issue (Eight print issues)	$102	$130	~~$155~~ $127.60	$39
BrickJournal (Four print issues)	$53	$70	~~$82~~ $63.80	$19
Comic Book Creator (Six print issues)	$76	$100	~~$117~~ $95.70	$29
Cryptology (Six print issues)	$76	$100	~~$117~~ $95.70	$29
Jack Kirby Collector (Four print issues)	$53	$70	~~$82~~ $63.80	$19
RetroFan (Six print issues)	$76	$100	~~$117~~ $95.70	$29

NEW LOWER RATES!

TwoMorrows.
The Future of Pop History.
TwoMorrows Publishing • 10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614 USA

Phone: **919-449-0344**
E-mail: **store@twomorrows.com**
Web: **www.twomorrows.com**

Don't miss exclusive sales, limited editions, and new releases! Sign up for our mailing list:
https://groups.io/g/twomorrows

PRINTED IN CHINA

Download our NEW Free 2025 Catalog of available books and back issues!
https://www.twomorrows.com/media/TwoMorrowsCatalog.pdf