

ROY THOMAS' ON-THE-MARC
COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™



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



A 100th Birthday Tribute to **MARC SWAYZE**

PLUS:
**SHELDON
MOLDOFF**
OTTO BINDER
C.C. BECK
JUNE SWAYZE

and all the usual
SHAZAM!
SUSPECTS!



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BONUS FEATURE!
**THE MANY COMIC ART
WORLDS OF
MEL KEEFER**

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Our 100th-birthday salute to Fawcett super-artist Marc Swayze—plus other special features.

On Our Cover: Obviously, we wished to honor the late Marc Swayze on the cover of this issue commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth—but how to do so? Two of the best of the illustrations of Captain Marvel he had done late in life had already been used as A/E covers (#18 & #41)—as had his paintings of his co-creation Mary Marvel. In the end, we decided we couldn't do better than to print the very first interior illustration ever published that spotlighted Mary—along with Cap and Cap Jr., of course—from the splash of Captain Marvel Adventures #18 (Dec. 1942). You can't improve on perfection. [Shazam heroes TM & © DC Comics.]

Above: As it happens, artist Mel Keefer, who's featured in our lead-off interview, depicted very few masked or costumed heroes during his days in comics—but he did draw one who, in many ways, helped inspire the whole darn genre! Alberto Becattini sent us this fast-galloping panel from the story "The Well" in Dell/Western's Zorro #10 (June-Aug. 1960). Without Zorro, there was probably no Superman—certainly no Batman—nuthin'! Scripter unknown. [©2013 Zorro Productions, Inc.]

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Marc Swayze, Fran Matera, Paul Laikin, & Monty Wedd



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FIRST PRINTING.

The Multi-Talented MEL KEEFER

Forty Years In Comics, Illustration, Animation, & Movies

Interview Conducted, Edited, & Annotated by Alberto Becattini

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *This interview was conducted primarily by e-mail on different occasions between May 2004 and September 2007. I have to thank Mel Keefe for the kindness and patience he showed in responding to all of my questions. I also have to thank Roni Eller, assistant to Joyce and Mel Keefe, for patiently typing Mel's handwritten answers; Giancarlo Malagutti, for providing several illustrations as well as precious insights; and Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., the Who's Who of American Comic Books, and the Grand Comics Database for helping with the checklist; and, of course, thanks to Roy Thomas for publishing it! Lastly, I warmly invite you to have a look at Mel's great website (www.melkeefe.com).*

—Alberto.

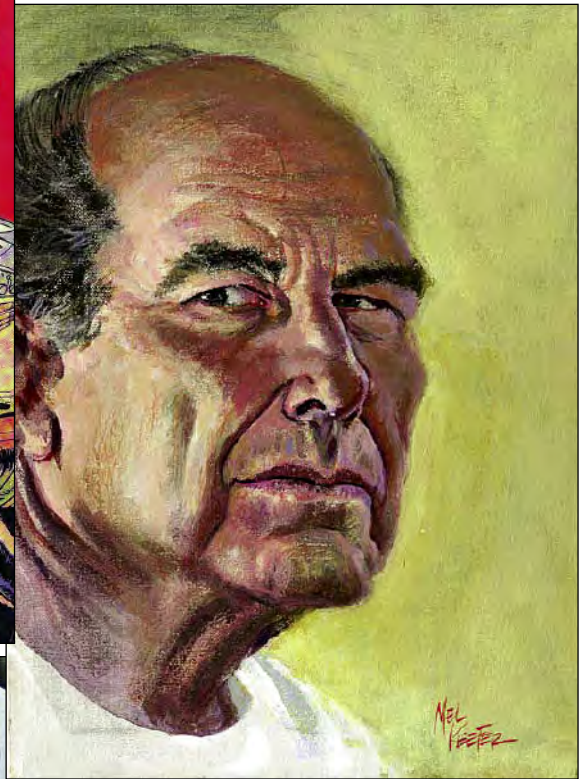
"I Received A Letter... From Norman Rockwell"

ALBERTO BECATTINI: *Okay, Mel, let's start with a simple one: Where and when were you born, and where did you grow up?*

MEL KEEFER: I was born in Los Angeles, California, on July 2, 1926. I grew up in West L.A. in a middle-class neighborhood when Los Angeles was a relatively "small town"—a wonderful place for a kid to grow up in, even though it was during the Great Depression years. My father was a dental mechanic. He made false teeth and worked for dentists. He was very good at his work, and we have speculated that he may have been responsible for some of my artistic talents, as he had great "finger dexterity" and sculpted very artistic false teeth. My

younger sister Phyllis and I did many household chores, while my mother worked helping my father to deliver and pick up from the various dentists. I was 15 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed and when we entered the war. I enlisted in the Navy prior to graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1944, and immediately went into service after graduation, where I remained from 1944 until 1946.

AB: *What were the comics you read as a kid, and who were your favorite artists?*



Tell It To The Movies!

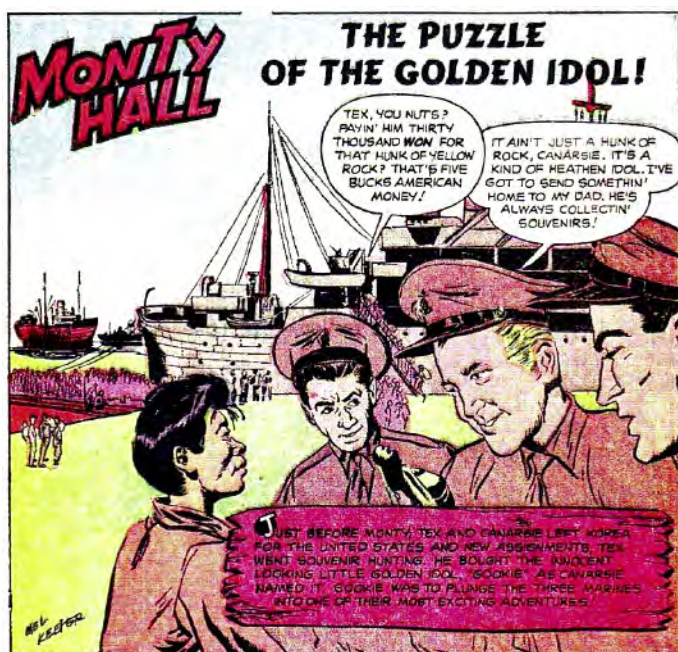
In this 1980s self-portrait, Mel Keefe seems to be pondering two memorable moments from his comics career: his cover for Toby Press' *Monty Hall of the U.S. Marines* #4, (Feb. 1952)—and a lobby card from the 1965 film *How to Murder Your Wife*. Ignore stars Jack Lemmon and Virna Lisi in the foreground of the latter—those are Mel's *Brash Brannigan* strips pinned to the drawing board, produced especially for the movie! (For a photo of Mel, see p. 20.) Unless otherwise noted, all art and photos accompanying this interview were supplied by Alberto Becattini and Mel Keefe. [*Monty Hall* cover & film lobby card ©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

KEEFER: As a kid I read the “funny papers,” as it was one of the main forms of entertainment in those days—before television. My favorite artists were Alex Raymond (*Flash Gordon*), Harold Foster (*Prince Valiant* and *Tarzan*), Al Capp (*Li'l Abner*), Warren Tufts (*Casey Ruggles* and later *Lance*), sports cartoonist Willard Mullin, Gus Arriola (*Gordo*), Fred Lasswell (*Snuffy Smith*), and Ham Fisher (*Joe Palooka*). Most of these were highly illustrated, and that obviously influenced my desire to become an illustrator.

AB: Did you draw as a child, and when did you first decide that you would become a comic artist and/or an illustrator?

KEEFER: I always drew as a child. I copied Norman Rockwell's pictures from the *Saturday Evening Post* magazines. I always drew World War I airplanes fighting air battles. I was much influenced by movies such as *Beau Geste*, *Tarzan*, and *Gunga Din*. I read adventure stories such as *Wagon Westward* and, like the character in the book [*The Amazing Adventures of*] *Kavalier and Clay*, I, too, read the book *The Microbe Hunters* by Paul DeKoof.

AB: Did your family approve of your wish to become a professional artist?



“From The Halls Of Montezuma...”

Keefe's Naval experience may not have provided any inspiration for his later work on Toby Press' *Monty Hall of the U.S. Marines*, but he nonetheless carried it off with aplomb. This splash, like the cover on p. 3, is from issue #4, in 1952. The hero's moniker, of course, was derived from the first line of the Marine Hymn, quoted above.

[©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

KEEFER: Not really. In fact, there was a period in my years of growing up that I did very little drawing. I was very much into sports, playing football and track, and there was also the influence of my folks wanting me to become a dentist! As an added incentive, an uncle stopped by our house one day to have coffee with my mother and noticed one of my paintings on the floor where I did most of my drawing. He asked, “Who did this?” and my mother answered, “Oh, that's Mel's. He's always drawing.” Unbeknownst to my mother, my uncle took the drawing and sent it to Norman Rockwell in care of *The Saturday Evening Post*. About two months later I received a letter, personally addressed to me from Norman Rockwell himself! He said that as a nine-year-old boy I showed a great deal of talent and encouraged me to keep drawing, and even if I didn't become a professional artist I had been given a “God-given talent” and I should always appreciate and use my talent. Well, as a young kid who idolized Rockwell, that was a marvelous incentive! I had that letter during all of my growing-up days, but unfortunately it was lost during one of our moves to a new house.

AB: I know that you spent almost 2½ years in the Navy. I wonder if that experience proved useful when you later drew war stories for comic books—I'm thinking of the “Monty Hall of the U.S. Marines” stories you did for Toby Press, in particular.

KEEFER: Unfortunately, my experience in the Navy did nothing to inspire me to art. I spent over two years dressing battle wounds and attending to GIs back from the “Pacific war” who had contracted tuberculosis while fighting in the jungle. When I enlisted in the Navy, I spoke of having worked with my father in the dental technician business, and, without even informing me, I was promoted to First Class Hospital Corpsman and was sent off to Hospital Corps school.

AB: Did you immediately go to art school after leaving the Navy?

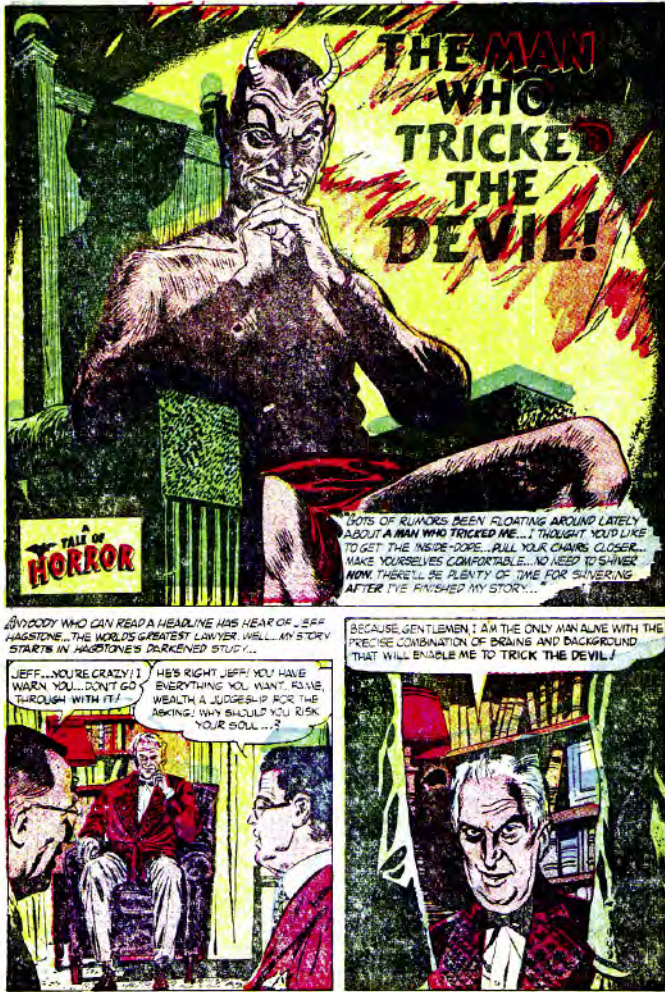
KEEFER: Actually, after leaving the Navy I attempted to go to college to try to become a dentist, probably to please my parents. It took two years for me to realize that I was not cut out to study things that I had no understanding or feel for. So, after wasting two years of free school under the GI Bill, I decided to go to art school. When I quit university, it was after the new school semester had started. I decided to go to the Art Center School, which I had attended when I was a youngster of nine or ten years of age, on Saturday afternoons. A neighbor friend and I would take the streetcar and sketch live nude models from 9 A.M. until noon. My mother would come by at noon to pick us up and was flabbergasted when she walked into the class and saw me sketching naked ladies! That's when I think they tried to discourage me—but I'm getting off the question here. I had had a wonderful teacher named Mr. Reckless. He was very encouraging about my talent and paid me a great deal of attention.

Now, skipping back all these years that I previously described to my decision to go back to art school where Mr. Reckless was still teaching at the Art Center: when I applied to the Art Center School, the new semester had already started and I would have had to wait until the start of the next semester. I looked up Mr. Reckless, who still remembered me from those Saturday morning classes. He asked me to go home and do a drawing and bring it back after the weekend. I did, and I drew a card game that my father and his friends were playing in. On Monday I brought the picture to Mr. Reckless and upon seeing it he said, “Well, I see you can still draw” and said he'd allow me to enroll without waiting for the new semester to start, but I would still have to wait two weeks.

The following weekend I went to the beach and met a cute little blonde who happened to be going to art school right there in Santa

Satan Is Waitin'!

(Left:) The splash page of "The Man Who Tricked the Devil!" from *Tales of Horror* #7 (Oct. 1953). Scripter unknown. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]



of four-letter words! Incidentally, Mell Lazarus wrote a book about the Toby Press and his boss Elliot, in particular—a funny book about all of the antics that went on at the office. The book was titled *The Boss Is Crazy, Too*.

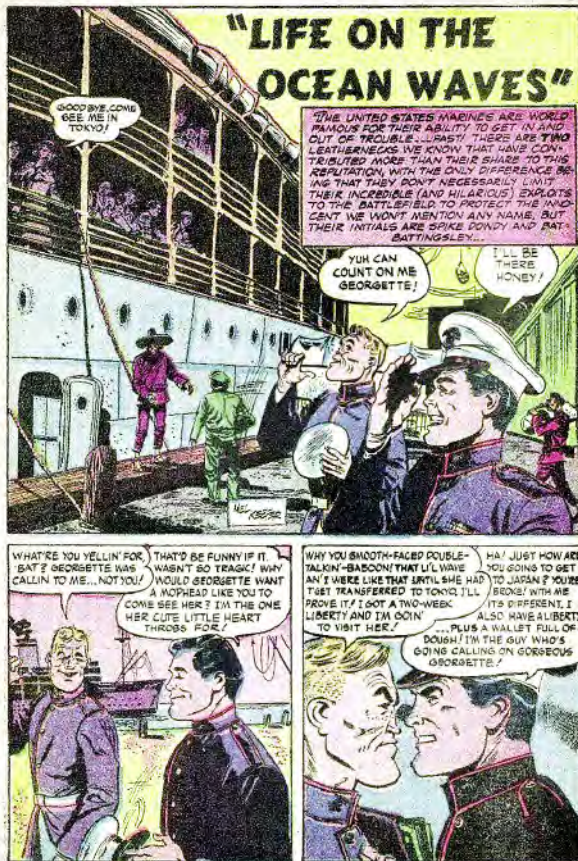
AB: Did you work on staff or freelance at Toby? By the way, do you remember who wrote the stories you drew?

KEEFER: I freelanced there. I don't remember any of the writers, as they all freelanced, also. What I remember is that I used Gregory Peck as a model for Monty Hall, Rocky Graziano as Canarsie. In today's world, if I ever used their likenesses without their permission I'd be sued! Boy, how times have changed.

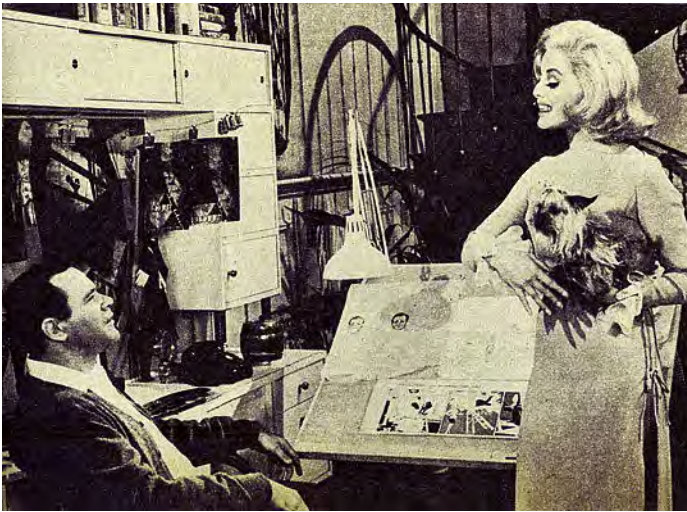
AB: I can see that it was during this period that your style became definitely realistic. Were there any artists in particular who influenced your style? By the way, I think it has something in common with Everett Raymond Kinstler's....

KEEFER: If you remember, I said I never thought about being a cartoonist. I always drew realistically. I'd like to think I got better at my craft as I got more experience. I'm flattered that you compare me with Everett Kinstler. I don't know him, but I admire his work. I think all of the artists that I have previously mentioned have had a great deal of influence on me. I went back to the Art Center years later and took some more color illustration classes. I had a couple of great teachers there. One was Joe Henninger and the other was John LaGatta. Both had been successful artists in their time. In addition to doing the *Mac Divot* strip at that time and other freelance jobs, I took

GR. LOVER ROM. #18P2P2



Toby Tidbits
Two more by Keefer: "Spike and Bat" from *Toby's Danger Is Our Business!* #1 (Dec. 1953)... and a page of original art from that company's *Great Lover Romances* #18 (Oct. 1954). Scripters unknown. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]



You Bet Your Wife

Jack Lemmon and Virna Lisi in a black-&-white still from *How to Murder Your Wife* (1965). Mel Keefer's sketches and strips are visible on the drawing board. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

movie]. I don't know what transpired between Friz and Alex, but I got a call from Freleng to come in to see him, and he explained that Alex didn't want to work on it and they needed me to take over. I was happy with the money that I was offered and had a very pleasant association with everyone. I knew that Toth had done the promotional strip and I just went ahead in my own style. That was the last job that I had taken over from Alex, but it wasn't the first!

AB: *Being Italian, I'm curious to know if you met Virna Lisi—one of our most beautiful actresses, in my opinion, even now that she is in her mid-70s....*

KEEFER: I had a few meetings with Quine and the producer and I met Jack Lemmon once, but unfortunately never had the privilege to meet Virna Lisi, but I agree with you she was gorgeous! I was very disappointed that she wasn't around at the times that I was there.

"The Introduction Of What Was To Become Known As 'Limited Animation'"

AB: *Too bad. Okay, let's go back to following our timeline. 1964 is when you first worked in the animation field... at Hanna-Barbera, right?*

KEEFER: Exactly. [Artist] Doug Wildey called me and said he was recruiting artists that had comic strip experience. Hanna-Barbera was going to do the first adventure comic book-style animation show, *The Adventures of Jonny Quest*. I had never worked in an animation studio. The work that he described was "right up my alley," and the money wasn't too bad, either. We started doing character studies and then layouts. Joe Barbera was a very enthusiastic guy who wanted us to do dramatic, exciting drawings. So we started doing exotic camera angles, interesting lighting—all the things that make up a good comic book or strip. The artists who had to animate (or move) our characters were totally unable to draw or move those heavily dramatic drawings with all of the extreme camera angles, so it was made clear to us new artists that we had to adhere to the traditional moves of animation [NOTE: Mel here draws four connected arrows pointing north, south, east, and west. —Alberto], no more no less.

This "adventure" feature was the introduction of what was to become known as "limited animation." Each scene had some kind of movement, whether it be a blink of the eye, or a finger or mouth moving, which, incidentally was the most common movement.

"Limited" was no exaggeration! Besides Wildey, Alex Toth was part of the team. Also, Hi Mankin and Sparky Moore did some storyboards, I believe.

AB: *Was it after you worked on the Jonny Quest series that you decided to move to Italy? How did that come to be?*

KEEFER: I had resumed my working schedule after recovering from TB in 1956. I was right back into an 18-hour day schedule, doing the *Mac Divot* daily strip and working at Hanna-Barbera, when it occurred to both my wife and me that I had better take some time to "smell the roses." I had the ability to do my comic strip anywhere in the world that I could mail it back to the New York office. We enjoyed traveling, and for our children we thought it would be a great educational experience.

So we decided to live in Rome for a year, at 750 Via Flaminia Vecchia. I would do my strip and hopefully some fine-art painting, which was something I had always wanted to do but never had the time to do with my schedule. Getting all of the details together to make the trip possible would be another volume, so I won't go into any of the details. We put the kids into Marymount International School in Rome. My wife Rosanne and I had so many frustrating and humorous experiences during that year that we were seriously going to write a book about our ventures. The title was going to be *Once More around the Damned Piazza* and I would have done the illustrations, but we never did it!

AB: *Did you do any work for Italian comics while in Rome?*

KEEFER: No, but I did do some work for a British publisher at the tail end of my stay in Europe. In fact I was in Great Britain for twelve weeks before returning to the States. I worked for a company that I believe was the largest publishing company in Britain, if not the entire world! I worked on a strip about a superhero who carried an atomic dagger that was called a "dirk" [a Scottish type of dagger]. I just can't remember the name of the lead character. I know I had hoped to continue working on that strip upon my return to the States, but it never worked out that way.

AB: *In 1966 you went back to the U.S. and to TV animation....*

KEEFER: After having that wonderful year living in Rome and spending much more money than I had ever planned, I came roaring back to work in order to replenish my bank account! You have to understand the animation business. It is very seasonal. When you have finished all the shows that the company contracted for, there is an immediate layoff of

JONNY Quest



In Quest Of Jonny Quest

Display art from the 1964-65 season of *Jonny Quest*. Mel Keefer did not necessarily contribute to this particular drawing from the Hanna-Barbera TV animation series. [©2013 Hanna-Barbera or successors in interest.]

The MEL KEEFER Checklist

[The following Checklist was prepared by Alberto Becattini, with Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr.... with additional information from Jerry Bails' online edition of Who's Who of American Comic Books 1928-1999, the Grand Comics Database, and Stripper's Guide. Mel Keefer is the full artist on all material below unless otherwise noted. **Key:** (d) = daily (Monday-through-Saturday) newspaper strip; (S) = Sunday newspaper strip; (p) = page; (pp) = pages; (nn) = no number; (R) = reprint.]

U.S. COMIC BOOKS, COMIC MAGAZINES, & GRAPHIC NOVELS:

Abraham Lincoln – An All-Pictorial Presentation (Davco):

nn (1976) – “Abraham Lincoln: An All-Pictorial Presentation” (64 pp) [graphic novel].

Battle Stories (I.W./Super):

#12 (1964) – Monty Hall in a “Skirmish with Death” (8 pp) [R *Monty Hall* #6]; Monty Hall in “The Wild Tiger Hunt” (8 pp) [R *Monty Hall* #6]; Canarsie in “Shore Leave Can Be Murder!” (9 pp) [R *Monty Hall* #6].

#17 (1964) – Monty Hall: “The Man-Eating Idol” (7 pp) [R *With the Marines* #2]; Monty Hall: “Kangaroo Court” (7 pp) [R *With the Marines* #2]; Monty Hall: “Marine Saves White Horse Hill” (8 pp) [R *With the Marines* #2]; Monty Hall: “Trojan Camel” (6 pp) [R *With the Marines* #2].

Best of Drag Cartoons (Rex Publishing Co.):

#1 (1/68) – “The Devil and Danny Webster” (4 pp) [R *Drag Cartoons* #4], “Dragaholic” (4 pp) [R *Drag Cartoons* #3].

Big Daddy Roth (Pete Millar Publishing):

#1 (10-11/64) – unknown stories.

CARtoons (Petersen Publishing):

#42 (8/68) – “Sound Idea” (2 pp).

Clyde Beatty Comics (Commodore Productions and Artists, Inc.):

#1 (10/53) – Clyde Beatty: “The Floating Jungle” (10 pp); Clyde Beatty: “Circus Killer” (8 pp); Clyde Beatty: “Big Magic” (10 pp); Clyde Beatty: “The Man from Hollywood” (8 pp); Clyde Beatty: “The Tamed Killers” (10 pp).

Cycletoons (Petersen Publishing):

#3 (6/68) – “Full Circled” (?).

Danger Is Our Business! (Toby Press):

#1 (12/53) – Spike and Bat: “Life on the Ocean Waves” (6 pp).

Danger Is Our Business (I.W./Super):

#9 (1958) – Spike and Bat: “Life on the Ocean Waves” (6pp) [R *Danger Is Our Business!* #1].

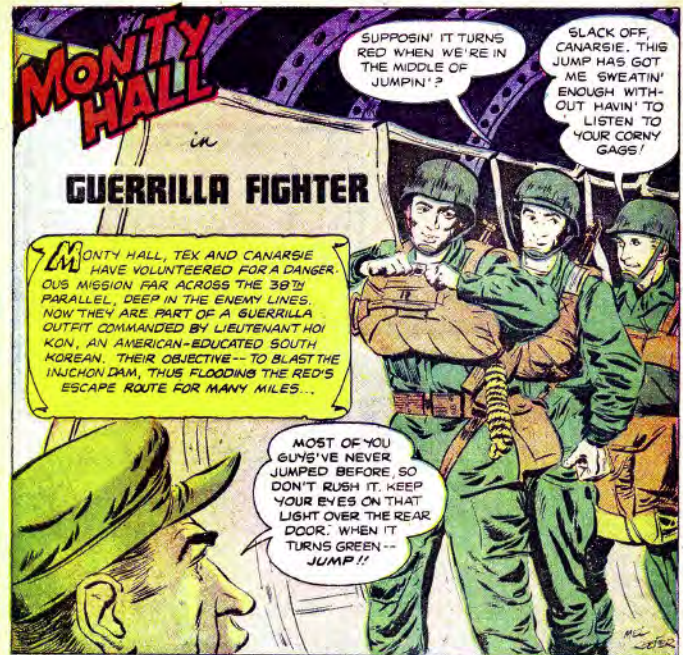
Drag Cartoons (Pete Millar Publishing):

#2 (12/63) – “Crash Gordon” (6 pp); “Caroline’s Car Capers” (3 pp).

#3 (3/64) – “The Dragaholic!” (3 pp).

#4 (6/64) – “The Devil and Danny Webster” (4 pp); “Spoils for the Victor” (2 pp)

#5 (7/64) – unknown stories.



My Brilliant Korea

A splash page by Keefer from Toby Press' *Tell It to the Marines* #11 (Jan. 1955). These stories were reprints from the Korean War era of just a couple of years earlier. Scriptor unknown. Thanks to Gene Reed. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

#6 (8/64) – “Showdown” (1 p); “Big Wheelie” (1 p).

#8 (10/64) – “Shy’s Good Buy’s” (1 p); “A Worthy Opponent” (2 p); “Time for bed, squirt!” (1 p).

#24 (2/66) – “Crash Gordon” (6 pp) [R *Drag Cartoons* #2].

Dream of Love (I.W. Super):

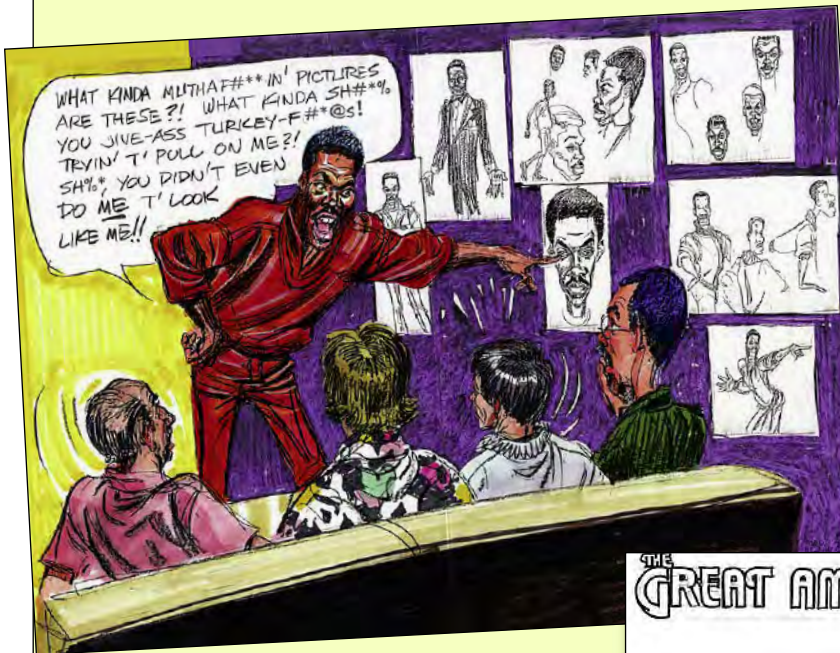
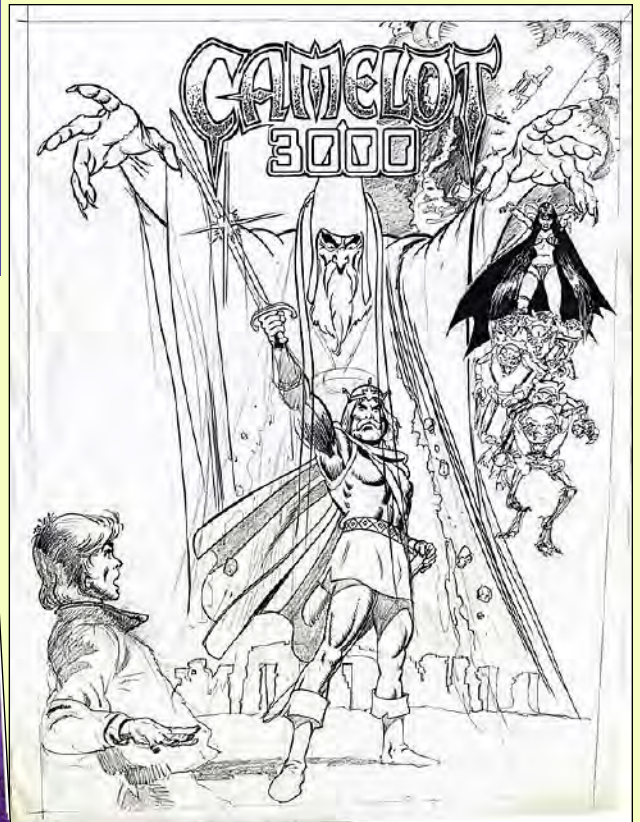
#2 (1958) – “Trip to the Farm” (7pp) [R *Great Lover Romances* #10].

Fighting Leathernecks (Toby Press):

#6 (12/52) – Cover; *Fighting Leathernecks*: “Errand of Mercy” (4 pp); *Fighting Leathernecks*: “Flight of Fancy” (14 pp); *Fighting Leathernecks*: “King of Hearts” (5 pp).

A Saturday Morning Lineup For A Parallel Earth

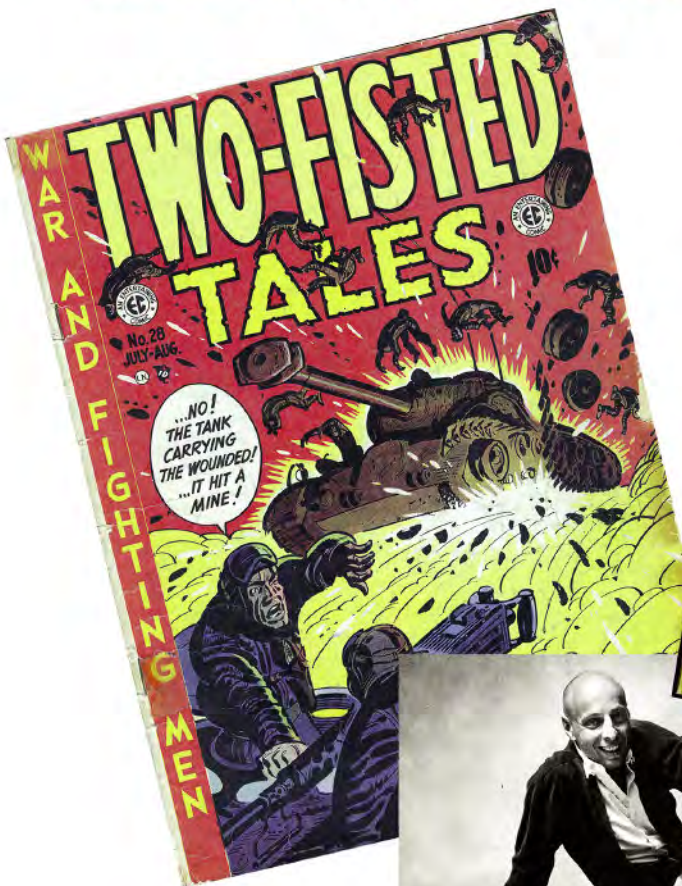
Not every series makes it onto the small screen! Here's some Keefer concept art for projected Hannah-Barbera shows that didn't make it to TV: *Camelot 3000* (based on the DC mini-series by writer Mike W. Barr and artist Brian Bolland—Ye Editor wonders how far H-B got with this one before they realized that at least one of its more adult themes was gonna cause them problems on a Saturday morning show!)... the awkwardly named *Great American Cartoons Show* (apparently set to star Superman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, and perhaps other DC heroes)... *Eddie Murphy*, probably after the *Saturday Night Live* comedian had emerged as a movie star... and *Tarzan*, in which H-B and its artists seem to have been trying to decide whether the series would star an adult Tarzan or a teenage one. [DC material ©2013 DC Comics; *Tarzan* material ©2013 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.; other material ©2013 Hanna-Barbera or successors in interest.]





IF IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY, THEN HARVEY KURTZMAN HAD TO BE FLATTERED SILLY BY RUSS HEATH'S TERRIFIC *BATTLE* #6 COVER! MANY OTHER ARTISTS AND WRITERS WERE SIMILARLY INSPIRED TO BORROW FROM ONE OF COMICS' GREATEST TALENTS. HERE ARE SOME EXCEPTIONAL EXAMPLES FROM . . .

THE MEN WHO WOULD BE KURTZMAN!



(Far left:) Harvey Kurtzman's art graced the cover of *Two-Fisted Tales* #28 (July 1952).

[©2013 William M. Gaines Agent, Inc.]

(Above:) Russ Heath's cover to *Timely/Atlas' Battle* #6 (Jan. 1952). This story was actually published before *TTF* #28, but Heath's art was influenced by earlier Kurtzman covers. [©2013 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

(Photo:) Harvey in the early 1960s. From *The Art of Harvey Kurtzman* (Abrams Publishing, 2009). [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

The Men Who Would Be Kurtzman!

by Michael T. Gilbert

Harvey Kurtzman cast a long, hilarious shadow over pop culture.

Filmmaker Mel Brooks fell under the spell of Harvey's irreverent "borscht belt" humor, as witness films like *Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*. Brooks actually contributed to Kurtzman's *Trump* magazine in the late '50s and later posed as a cover model for Kurtzman's *Help!* On a similar note, the popular *Airplane!* movies of the '80s also had a distinct Kurtzman feel, which was even remarked on in reviews at the time. Underground comix legends Robert Crumb and Art Spiegelman readily proclaim their debt to Kurtzman.

Kurtzman wasn't limited to humor, however. Harvey's whimsical sci-fi stories for EC's *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy* are delightful gems, and his gritty war comics were groundbreaking. Most modern documentary-style comics, from Art Spiegelman's *Maus* to Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, follow in the footsteps of Kurtzman's meticulously researched historical stories for EC. His comics even influenced other comic book publishers in the '50s—especially Atlas, the forerunner of Marvel.

The Atlas Connection

In the early '50s, publisher Martin Goodman, always one to jump on a bandwagon, decided that war comics were the latest fad to imitate. And if you're going to steal, why not swipe from the best? So if Harvey Kurtzman's *Frontline Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales* were selling well for EC, what was to stop Timely/Atlas from pumping out *Battle*, *Battle Action*, *Battle Brady*, *Battle Cry*, *Battlefield*, *Battlefront*, *Battleground*, and dozens of similarly original titles? Nothing!

And so Atlas copied Harvey's brilliant writing and layouts. They even imitated Marie Severin's coloring and Ben Oda's dramatic EC lettering. Ironically, by baldly swiping Kurtzman, the overall quality of the Atlas war comics dramatically improved.

Writer Hank Chapman can take some credit for this. His downbeat anti-war stories were among Atlas' finest, and fully in the spirit of Kurtzman's own scripts. Hank had been working for Marvel since 1940, producing hundreds of stories. He then moved to DC's war comics 1954, but his Atlas work remains his most inspired.

Take Chapman's "Truck Convoy," for example. His script captures the feel of a typical *Two-Fisted Tales* story, especially as realized by Russ Heath's meticulous art. Actually that's not surprising. Russ was also on Kurtzman's wavelength and would eventually work with him on *Mad*, *Humbug*, *Trump*, and *Little Annie Fanny*.

Russ's sense of drama and attention to detail made him ideal for illustrating war comics. Heath later became a major player at DC, drawing stories for *All-American Men of War*, *Our Army at War*, and *G.I. Combat*. He also drew stories for Warren's *Blazing Combat*, another magazine directly inspired by Kurtzman. So why did Harvey use Russ only for a single war story, in *Frontline Combat* #1? Alas, that's one question whose answer we may never know.

In any case, Atlas didn't stay on the Kurtzman bandwagon long. Their war titles quickly degenerated into the typical lighthearted "war is fun" titles typified by Ziff-Davis's *G.I. Joe*

Truck Amok!
(Above & below:) Russ Heath illustrated writer Hank Chapman's EC-ish story "Truck Convoy" for Marvel's *Battle* #6 (Jan. 1952).
[©2013 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Spotlight On BILL SCHELLY

Alter Ego's Associate Editor Talks About His Fannish Past, The Origins Of Hamster Press, & His Recent Books

Panel/Interview Conducted by Gary Brown

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

[Part I of the conclusion to *A/E's* coverage of the 50th Anniversary of Fandom Celebration and related festivities at the July 2011 Comic-Con International: San Diego]

Introduction by RICHARD LUPOFF

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MAY I PRESENT...

...Bill Schelly.

Yes. Introducing Bill Schelly is like... well, let me put it this way: Bill Schelly is a comic book fan. Specifically, a comic book fan historian. That's like saying Maria Callas could hit the high notes. Babe Ruth could hit home runs. Albert Einstein could solve problems. Yes. No. Maria Callas wasn't just a soprano, she was *the* soprano of her generation. Babe Ruth was *the* Sultan of Swat. Albert Einstein was *the* deep thinker of the ages.

And Bill Schelly is *the* historian of comics fandom.

This is the man who stumbled across comics fandom when it was a chaotic, squalling, new-born organism, growing and learning at a furious rate, like all healthy infants. Without Bill's works, I suspect that the history of fandom would never have been written. Or it would have been written half a century hence by a candidate for an academic degree, who would have got half his facts wrong and sucked all the joy and all the exuberant energy out of the other half.

Instead, Bill Schelly has given us a living portrait of a still-young, living, breathing, singing, dancing, shouting organism.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I present — *Bill Schelly!*

—Dick Lupoff

GARY BROWN: *We're celebrating the 50th anniversary of comics fandom, and I'd like to introduce you to an author who is a fan historian extraordinaire, and all-around good guy, Mr. Bill Schelly.* [audience applauds]

BILL SCHELLY: Hi, everybody.

GB: *Bill, let's do some vital statistics first. Where were you born, when, and—?*

SCHELLY: I'm actually a Washington State native. I was born in 1951 in Walla Walla, Washington, but I grew up in Pittsburgh. The people that knew me in fandom in the '60s would probably think of me [as being] from there. But then in 1967 I moved to Lewiston, Idaho, so the last five years of my fan-publishing was from there. I got into fandom in

1964, so I'm not listed in *The Who's Who of Comic Fandom*. I missed the deadline by about three months. [audience chuckles]

GB: *Well, you ended up in Seattle, where you live now.*

SCHELLY: Right. I moved there in 1974 after graduating from college.

GB: *What do you do now, besides write books about fandom?*

SCHELLY: I work for the U.S. Small Business Administration. [NOTE: *Bill retired at the end of 2011.*]

GB: *What was your first comic book?*

SCHELLY: I don't think I can remember my first comic book, because I had to have gotten comics before I was eight. I know I had to. But the first one I remember was that first *Superman Annual* in 1960. I distinctly remember reading it on a train trip where I could focus on it fully without distractions, and... I got so sucked into it. I remember there was a panel in one of the stories where it [said] something about Superman's "mighty mind," when he's really concentrating on remembering something, and I remember

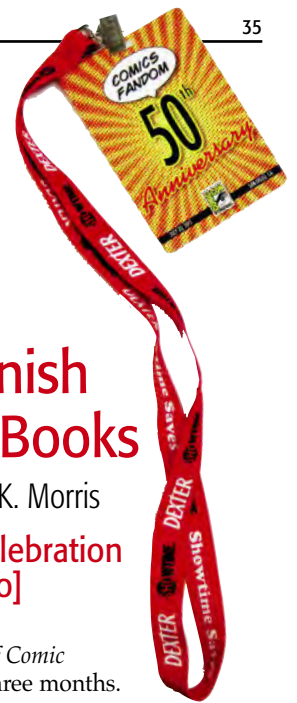


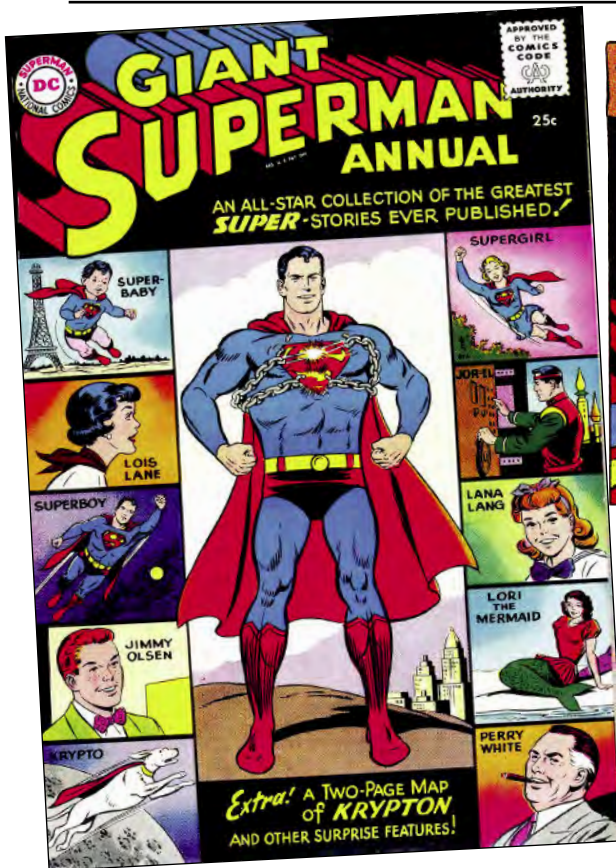
Comic-Con Comets

(Left:) Richard and Pat Lupoff, who were, like Bill Schelly, Guests of Honor at Comic-Con in 2011. The Lupoffs and Bill met for the first time in person on that occasion. Dick kindly offered to write the intro for this piece.

(Above:) Gary Brown (on our left) and Bill on the dais for the Bill Schelly panel. Photo by Aaron Caplan.

Seen at top right is the guest badge for the 2011 Comic-Con, designed by Gary Sassaman.





AND THE MIGHTY MIND OF SUPERMAN REACHES BACK, BACK TO HIS INFANCY ON THE PLANET KRYPTON!



Annual Magnetism

(Left:) *Superman Annual* #1 (June 1960) was a milestone comic book for the Baby Boomers who were just getting into comics—including Bill Schelly. Art by Curt Swan

(Right:) Panel from "Superman's First Exploit!" by Edmond Hamilton (writer), Wayne Boring (penciler), and Stan Kaye (inker), reproduced from the 1998 reprinting in that first *Superman Annual*. [©2013 DC Comics.]

thinking, "Wow, what would it be like to have a mighty mind? What does that mean?" I just got into it fully. Then, later, I realized that most of the stories in that annual were written by Otto Binder; and I ended up, not just coincidentally, writing a biography of Otto. So, in a way, Otto Binder was the one who really pulled me into comics.

GB: Who were your favorite characters and writers and artists at first?

SHELLY: Comics themselves, just as a medium of story and pictures together, appealed to my imagination.... At first I was really into Superman and those related comics. Without knowing the names of the artists, there were some I liked better than others. I really liked Wayne Boring's Superman and also Curt Swan's, less so the others. My Dad would bring them home to me, and then I was buying them on my own. I also liked Batman when I was nine and ten years old. The first Marvel comic book that I bought—I may have read a few that friends had—was *Amazing Spider-Man* #7 with Spidey fighting The Vulture, which came out in September 1963. Then I became a Marvel fan, and of course Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko were my favorite artists after that. I was mostly into the super-hero stuff through the 1960s. When I was in college, I started branching out and appreciating "Sgt. Rock" and EC comics.

GB: At some point, you got your first fanzine. What was it and how did it change your life? [chuckles]

SHELLY: Well, obviously it did have a huge effect. [audience chuckles] There was a plug in an issue of *Justice League of America*, I think #30, that was responsible for about 400 people getting into comics fandom. I was one of them. I wrote to G.B. Love in Florida, and got a flyer advertising the *Rocket's Blast-Comicollector*. He was also selling something called *Fighting Hero Comics* with a

there was no support whatsoever for anybody who was into comics back then. If you were into it as a teenager, you didn't have anybody saying, "Oh, that's cool." If you admitted it at all, you had people wondering why, or just outright making fun of you. So when I saw the fanzines and realized that other people were into comics, it was great finding out that there were people who also saw that comics had other qualities and weren't just children's material. Of course, with the Comics Code, the comics were

character called The Eye. And I remember showing them to a buddy, asking, "What is this? Are there comic books that don't come to Pittsburgh?" He was obviously smarter than me... He said, "You idiot, these are amateur publications that people are doing. They're not like Marvel or DC. You have to send away for them." And I went, "Ah, that's cool," and I ordered a few of those things right away. When I saw *RB-CC* and some others, I was instantly drawn into fandom, just the same way as other people were. It wasn't the fact that you could order back issues that got me, though. The minute I saw a fanzine, it was like I was seized with the urge to publish. I don't know where it came from... but the first thing I wanted to do was publish one. I hadn't read more than a half dozen of them before I was planning to do one.

GB: I know mine was *Batmania*, and the minute you saw it, one of the things was, "I'm not alone! There are others like me out there."

SHELLY: Same here. There were a couple of neighborhood kids [who] had comics, but I had just one buddy who was into them like I was. When you think about it,



A Marvel Moment

The first Marvel comic book Bill ever bought (his actual copy). Note the blow-up insert of the actual on-sale-date stamp barely visible at bottom right. Despite the mag's Dec. 1963 cover date, "Sept. 17, 1963" is the day, or at least the week, when he officially became a Marvel fan. The art, of course, is by Steve Ditko. [©2013 Marvel Characters, Inc.]





Fanzine Artists Not Anonymous

Bill at 15 (in a school photo), surrounded by:

The original art of his cover for *Super-Heroes Anonymous* #1, his first fanzine, featuring his character The Immortal Corpse. Unfortunately, much to his chagrin, the solid black areas of this art printed mostly as a washed-out gray, due to limitations of the early Xerox reproduction process. [©2013 Bill Schelly.]

With #3, the fanzine's title changed to *Incognito*. But, contrary to what *Incognito* #4's cover/logo artist David Eads apparently believed, Bill says he hadn't gone by the name "Billy" for years at the time of this March 1966 issue. [Green Arrow & Speedy TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]

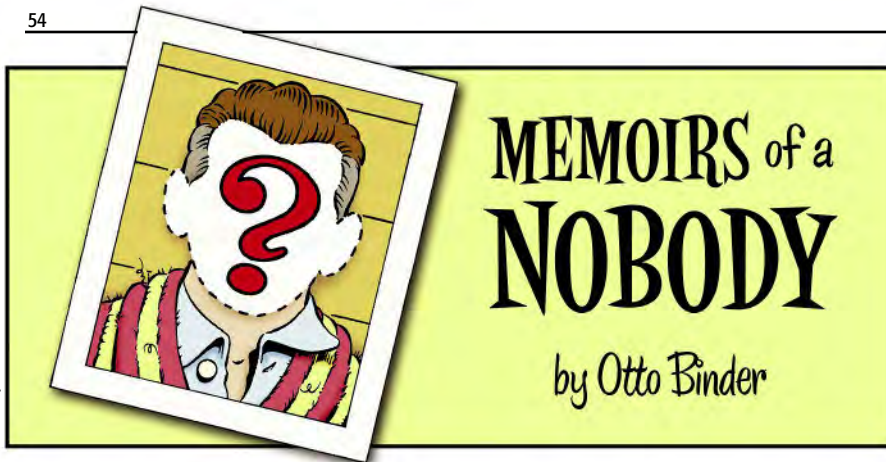
Fantasy Forum #2 featured this fine cover conceived by Alan Hutchinson, whom Bill met in person for the first time at the 2011 San Diego Comic-Con. In a comic book reality, of course, a footrace between The Flash and Marvel's Quicksilver would've been no contest. [Flash TM & ©2013 DC Comics; Quicksilver TM & ©2013 Marvel Characters, Inc.; other art ©2013 Alan Hutchinson.]





LEWIS -2/13-

FOR *MARC SWAYZE* --
WITH ALL RESPECT
FOR A LIFE WELL-LIVED.



Excerpts From A Book By Captain Marvel Master Writer OTTO BINDER

Abridged & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

Otto Oscar Binder (1911-1974), the prolific science-fiction and comic book writer renowned for authoring more than half of the Marvel Family saga for Fawcett Publications between the early 1940s and 1953, wrote *Memoirs of a Nobody* in 1948 at the age of 37, during what was arguably the most imaginative period of the Captain Marvel repertoire.

Save for some brief moments of factual particulars, Binder's capricious chronicle unfortunately resembles very little in the way of anything that is truly autobiographical. Unearthed several years ago from Binder's file materials at Texas A&M University, *Memoirs* is described by its author as "ramblings through the untracked wilderness of my mind." His potpourri of stray philosophical beliefs, pet peeves, theories, and anecdotes were written in freewheeling fashion and apparently without much of a plan other than allowing his mind to flow freely with no interfering fundamental theme or concise conclusion.

That said—as we begin running this condensation of Otto's unpublished manuscript in a series of installments beginning with this issue of FCA—what will follow on these pages will nonetheless give us glimpses into the idiosyncratic and fanciful mind of Otto Binder.

"If this book must have a purpose," Binder revealed, "... I'm going to try to entertain and divert you, if you have any troubles.... [I]f you have a toothache, this book is the lesser of two evils." —P.C. Hamerlinck.

Nancy Faces Life

Nancy's hesitation was over. Holding up her head defiantly, she marched toward the front door of Ramblings Manor. But there was a sudden noise behind her, of a wheezy car, and then a shout from a maddened figure that dashed out toward her, and stopped stricken.

It was Johnny. Johnny Heissenwasser.

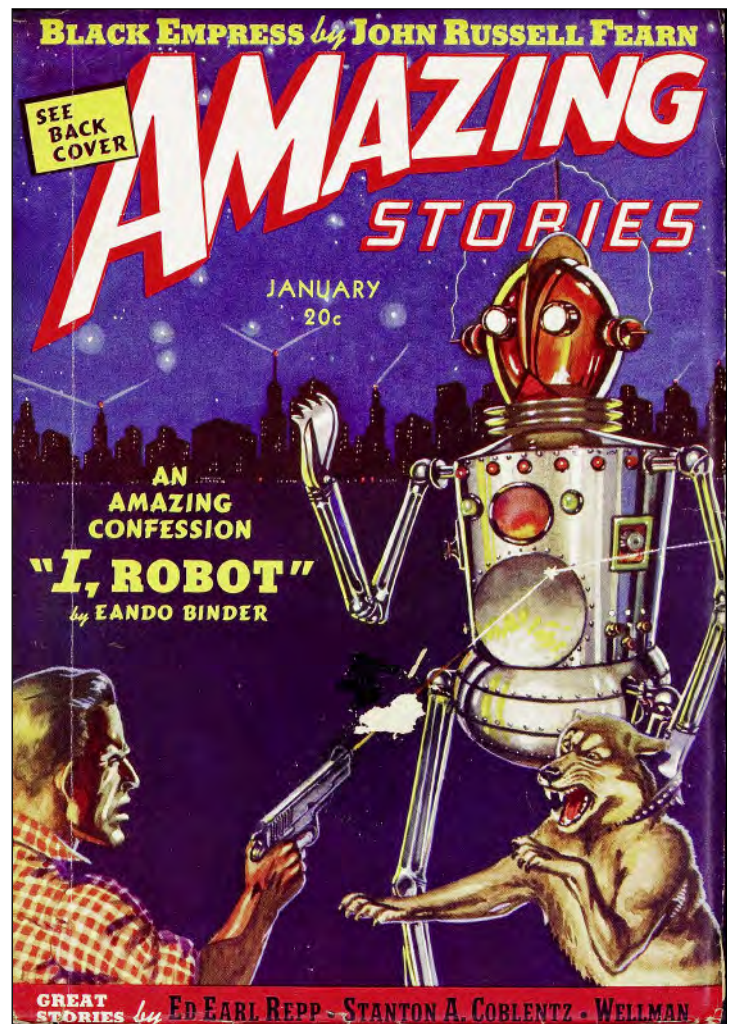
"Nancy!" he yelled. "I saw you heading this way. I followed. Don't go into that house, Nancy. Come home with me."

At the same time, the front door opened and the slim, suave figure of Bosworth Goulden appeared, smiling invitingly. "Well, Nancy?" he said.

Nancy stood halfway between the door and the outer drive. Halfway between Johnny and Bosworth. Halfway between honor and dishonor....

Surprise!

Well, now that I got our heroine in a nice tidy trap, let's leave her there. Do her good. Besides, I don't particularly care just what she does. Do you?



The Non-Missing Link

Before comic books became his livelihood, Otto Binder was a prospering pulp science-fiction writer. Above is the cover of *Amazing Stories*, Vol. 13, #1 (Jan. 1939), featuring "I, Robot"—the first installment of Binder's popular Adam Link series. The "Eando" name stands for "Earl and Otto"—but by this time Otto was no longer working with his brother, though he kept the pseudonym because it was already established. That issue also featured a tale by Binder's colleague and fellow future "Captain Marvel" writer, Manly Wade Wellman; the cover was illustrated by one of Otto's high school chums, Robert Fuqua. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

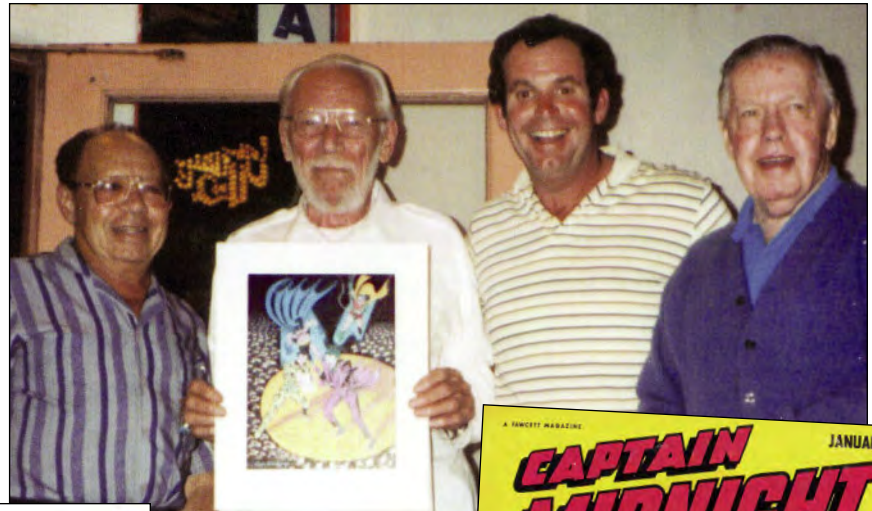
“A Job Is A Job”

SHELDON MOLDOFF's Final FCA Interview

Conducted by P.C. Hamerlinck

Sheldon “Shelly” Moldoff (1920-2012)—the industrious comic book illustrator best known for his early work on “Hawkman” and as one of Bob Kane’s primary ghost artists on “Batman”—in due course emerged as one of the central figures in comics history, with an extensive body of work that included stories and covers for Fawcett Publications during the 1940s and ‘50s. While FCA featured Sheldon in a brief article years ago, I felt that a slightly more extensive interview emphasizing his output for that company was long overdue. My thanks go out to David Siegel, who put me back in touch with the gracious and amiable artist, whom I interviewed via telephone and mail ten months before “Shelly” passed away.

—P.C. Hamerlinck.



Once Upon A Crime...

This fourth story in *Captain Marvel Jr.* #3 (Jan. 1943) is one that P.C. believes was probably drawn by Sheldon Moldoff.

[Shazam hero TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]

Moldoff At Midnight

The above image from the 1993 San Diego Comic-Con depicts (left to right) Sheldon Moldoff, fellow “Batman” artist Dick Sprang, Golden Age fan David Siegel, and Vincent Sullivan—who as DC editor bought the first “Batman” story from young Bob Kane in 1939. [Photo ©2013 Charlie Roberts.]

(Right:) Moldoff’s cover for *Captain Midnight* #16 (Jan. 1944)—identified by the artist to FCA as his work. He drew the radio-spawned aviator before and after serving in the military during World War II. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]



P.C. HAMERLINCK: It was long believed that your first job for Fawcett Publications was in 1945 (“Capt. Marvel Jr.”). However, in my book *Fawcett Companion* (2001, *TwoMorrows*), I reproduced an old Fawcett freelance artist rates sheet, originally from the files of editorial director Ralph Daigh and executive comics editor Rod Reed. Among the artists listed on the sheet is “S. Moldoff,” receiving \$15 per pen and ink page. The memo is dated March 29, 1943.

SHELDON MOLDOFF: I did some “Captain Midnight” stories for Fawcett before I was drafted into the service. After the war, I got a “Captain Marvel Jr.” job, and then went on to do a lot more “Captain Midnight” as well as some “Don Winslow of the Navy,” “Tex Ritter,” and others. I got the jobs mostly from chief editor Will Lieberson and editor Ginny Provisiero. I became good friends with Will.

PCH: Were you still strictly on a freelance basis with Fawcett at the time?

MOLDOFF: Yes, I always was; I did the work from my home in the Bronx.

PCH: Do you recollect anything about drawing "Captain Marvel Jr.?"

MOLDOFF: No, other than [that] Mac Raboy had a clean, beautiful style on the character. Unfortunately, I don't think that look was powerful enough for super-heroes.

PCH: It's difficult to identify which "Captain Midnight" stories and covers you drew. I know that, throughout your career, you had demonstrated an ability to adapt your artwork to pre-established styles.

MOLDOFF: I'll try to spot some of my "Captain Midnight" work for you. Before I started on the character, Fawcett editor Stanley Kauffman gave me some *Captain Midnight* comics to study so that I would stick with the same art style of the book. One of my talents was to keep the look of characters exactly the same. I was able to ink in any style where it would be hard to tell the difference between my art and that of the originators. Later, when I inked Curt Swan's pencils on "Superman," Mort Weisinger told me that my inking always maintained the integrity of Swan's pencils... but he said when other artists like Murphy [Anderson] or [Joe] Kubert inked Swan they'd turn it into their own style. When I did the "Batman" stories, I preserved the original style. But when I originally drew "Hawkman" and Hawkgirl, I took an Alex Raymond approach to it.

PCH: Who was your favorite inker?

MOLDOFF: Charles Paris, on the "Batman" stories.

PCH: Did working on the Batman syndicated strip [1966-67] differ much from producing regular comic book pages?

MOLDOFF: No, not at all. A job is a job.

PCH: Your story "Robin Dies at Dawn" [Batman #156, June '63] proved that serious/solemn subject matter could still be effectively handled in a traditional cartooning/comic art style.

MOLDOFF: The artists of today are taking out all of the fun in comics without the use of cartooning; most of these guys are very good illustrators... but they're not cartoonists by any means!

PCH: Do you recall drawing early "Kid Eternity" stories for Quality Comics?

MOLDOFF: The only thing I recall about "Kid Eternity" was that they decided to try out other artists after I did it. I have a better memory [of] doing plenty of issues of *The Black Terror* [Better/Standard], who was a very popular character.

PCH: Let's return to discussing your Fawcett work during those post-war years. What led you to go back to Fawcett after the war?



More Moldoff At Midnight
Two more Moldoff's covers for *Captain Midnight* which he ID'd as his work: #19 (April 1944) & #37 (Feb. 1946)—and the splash page of his "Captain Midnight" story from *CM* #36 (Jan. 1946). Unlike most other Fawcett heroes, Midnight never appeared in any title except his own—save for *America's Greatest Comics* #6 (Winter 1942), in a team-up with *Spy-Smasher*. [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]



MOLDOFF: Well, after I returned to New York, I went up to see [DC Editor] Sheldon Mayer, but he turned me away from any more work there, so I began hunting for freelance jobs, starting first with Fawcett. When I went up to their offices, Will Lieberson was more than glad to give me plenty of "Captain Midnight" stories to do, as well as a few for "Don Winslow of the Navy." I later created and sold horror titles to Fawcett [*This Magazine Is Haunted*, *Worlds Beyond*/*Worlds of Fear*, et al.]; I drew most of the covers and lead stories for them. Dealing with Fawcett was very different from working with the other publishers; Fawcett was less big business and more like one big happy family. The editors—Will Lieberson,

Advice For Young Artists

by C.C. Beck

[Written February 18, 1978]

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

As I travel around the country attending conventions, I meet countless young artists with bright, eager faces and shining eyes. They all want advice from me about getting into the art business.

I have been an artist for more than fifty years. My once-shining eyes are dim with age and my face looks about like that of an old mud turtle. Inside, of course, I'm still as bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as I was when I started out, but nobody can see this today. Nowadays I'm called "feisty" and "opinionated" and "an old curmudgeon." One reporter wrote that I was a "miniature Colonel Sanders mouthing obscenities into his beard." Others have been less kind.

So, my first advice to young artists is *grow a skin like a rhinoceros*. You'll need it to fend off remarks like "Why don't you forget this art business and get an honest job?" and "I don't know nothin' about art but I know what I like," and such. Above all, you'll need a thick skin to be able to put up with art directors who can't draw, editors and writers who don't know beans about editing and writing, and big-business types who look on all artists as effeminate weirdos akin to dancers or interior decorators.

Next, I tell young artists, *you must develop a strong back*. You'll need this in order to sit hunched over a drawing board for days, months, years. You can forget about health spas, jogging, bowling, tennis, and such. Artists work days, nights, weekends, and vacations with no let-ups. When deadlines approach, artists work 24 or 48 or 96 hours in a row to meet them. Their bosses may be playing golf or relaxing at luxurious resorts, but the artists are hunched over their work tables like monks in a medieval monastery.

The third requisite is *learn everything you can about everything*. Being able to draw well is just a start, about as important as being able to type well is to a writer. There are many fine typists around—every office building is filled with them—but very few writers. There are many fine draftsmen and color separators and production people around, but very few artists.

An artist must be able to *draw anything and everything on demand*. In my own career I have drawn automobiles and furniture and buildings and "pie-charts" and graphs. I have painted signs and lettered show cards; I have made drawings of everything, from vast real estate developments to fruit can labels. I have designed logotypes, and I have made hand-painted lampshades.

You see, an artist is a very special kind of person. He is the person people come to as a last resort when they can't find a pattern or a plan or a "paint-by-numbers" design already in existence. He must create, out of nothingness, a new pattern for others to follow.



Magic At His Beck And Call

Is that the old wizard Shazam, or Captain Marvel's co-creator Charles Clarence Beck, imparting wisdom to youngsters in the Twin Cities at the 1982 Minneapolis Comic Convention? Photo by Alan Light.

I did this in late 1939. I created, with the help of a very able writer named Bill Parker, the comic book character known as Captain Marvel. Hailed as "The World's Mightiest Mortal," Captain Marvel went on to great heights and still continues today, although I have nothing to do with the character now. Today, his publisher doesn't need creativity; they want only to just keep him going forty years after he started.

The last thing I tell young artists is *never prostitute yourselves*. Believe in what you're doing, do it in spite of stupid editors and publishers and clamorous fans. Don't give in to demands for nudity or blood-and-gore or weird layouts and eye-catching, out-of-this-world techniques. That way lies oblivion.

Remember 3-D movies with stereophonic sound? Remember wrap-around slide shows and Smell-O-Vision? Probably not. They were phony, producer-ordered tricks not worthy of the money invested in them. The artists who went this route went down the drain with their products.

It's much better to be remembered fondly for having created something fine in the way of art than to have people say, "Oh, was he the idiot responsible for that monstrosity? Yukkk! He ought to have been strangled in his cradle!"

“Wishing Will Make It So”

An Interview With JUNE SWAYZE

Conducted by Richard Arndt

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

INTERVIEWER’S INTRODUCTION: *June Swayze, the wife of artist Marc Swayze, was never directly involved in comics themselves, but was very supportive of them. In addition, she and her husband were highly active in a musical career that ran concurrently with Marc’s years with Fawcett Publications. This interview was conducted July 20, 2012, only a few days after Marc’s 99th birthday and, sadly, only about three months before his passing. —Richard.*

RICHARD ARNDT: *To start off, where were you born and raised?*

JUNE SWAYZE: In southeast Arkansas, in Desha County. One of our daughters is named Desha. Not because of the county, though. It’s a family name.

RA: *Where did you get your initial experience in music?*

JS: I was born into a very musical family. Everybody loved classical music. That’s what I was taught all my life. I learned to play the piano... classical piano. I sang in high school and I majored in voice and minored in piano when I went to college here in Monroe at Northeast Louisiana State.

RA: *How did you get your start as a professional singer?*

JS: One night I was at a dance at the Frances Hotel [in Monroe, LA]. They had a real big dance floor on the top floor of the building. I was dancing with my date and he spoke to the band director—Milton Coverdale—about me. After we danced, I was surprised when this boy asked me if I would sing [with the band]. I did and sang a pretty song called “Wishing Will Make It So.”



Singing For Her Supper

June Swayze (center) singing with the Charles “Collie” Fontana Combo at the Frances Hotel in Monroe, Louisiana, during the 1940s. (Left to right:) Drummer Jack Gatlin, Harry Shifflet, unidentified standup bass player, June, Fontana (with saxophone), and Marc Swayze on piano. Daughter Desha Swayze, who sent the IDs (made by June, who is recovering from a fall) says she’s “not crazy about the mustache” her dad sports here. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman.

After I started to sing, I noticed that somebody had come up beside me to sing with me, which was pretty bold. It was this good-looking guy who played the guitar. It turned out to be Marc. It really kind of irked me that he’d gotten up and started singing with me. I remember, at the break when the band went backstage, he made a pass at me! I scorned him, of course.

RA: *I guess it was fortunate for the two of you that Marc was a little brash and stepped forward to sing with you.*

JS: Yes! Anyway, I ended up singing with that band, The Milton Coverdale Band, for I don’t know for how long. I was going to college at the time. I didn’t really sing with any of the big bands of the day. Later on, though, I sang with a combo—and this was with Marc, too. The band was fronted by Charles “Collie” Fontana. Collie’s son was Carl Fontana, who was a world-famous jazz trombonist. Carl got his start with his dad and he used to play with us all the time. Marc had a little trio at the time as well. I played piano and sang for that, too.

RA: *Did Marc’s trio have a name?*

JS: No, I don’t think so. I played piano, Marc played guitar, and Carl Fontana played sax. There were probably other musicians who sat in, but we three were the regulars.

RA: *Carl would have been a teenager at the time?*

JS: He was. A *young* teenager! If he hadn’t been with his daddy, I think [most parents] would not have let him do it. Carl had a brother who came along shortly after that. We called him Bootsie. He’s a dentist down in Houston now,



Take Five

June and Marc Swayze and the rest of the Collie Fontana Combo take a break during a 1940s gig on the rooftop of the Frances Hotel. (L. to r. :) Harry Shifflet, June, Marc, Collie Fontana, and Vic Chaplin. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman.

The Phantom Eagle's Last Flight

MARC SWAYZE's "The Flight Of The Bee" From *Wow Comics* #69 (Aug. 1948)

Introduction by P.C. Hamerlinck

From *Wow Comics* #30 (Oct. 1944) through #69 (Aug. 1948), Marc Swayze created complete story art on all "Phantom Eagle" stories in that magazine for Fawcett Publications, as well as writing a good portion of the stories; all the lettering was done by his sister, Daisy Swayze. (NOTE: There were no Swayze "Phantom Eagle" stories in *Wow* # 54 & 56, but the artist did two "PE" stories in issues #42 & 43.)

And, even when Marc didn't write the "Phantom Eagle" story he'd happen to be illustrating, he would still go in and judiciously modify the scripts to his liking. Fawcett comics editor Wendell Crowley and Marc used to laugh about how one of the writers simply left descriptions blank on his "PE" scripts because he knew that Marc was going to depict the story the way he wanted to anyway.

In 1999, Marc reminisced about working on "The Phantom Eagle":

"I didn't even know the kid. When asked recently why I chose 'The Phantom Eagle' from all the Fawcett comic book features, it was necessary to go to the research shelves to find out about this Mickey Malone.

*"There wasn't much to be learned. Seems he first appeared in *Wow Comics* in mid-1942, about the same time as 'Commando Yank' and slightly before 'Mary Marvel,' and was overshadowed by both from the start. For about a year he wore black goggles and thus resembled many masked heroes of the era. Very little is known about 'The Phantom Eagle.' In the sources available, there is nothing about who originated the concept, who wrote the first story, or who drew the first character sketches. Before I took over 'The Phantom Eagle,' various artists had drawn the character, including Bert Whitman and Charlie Tomsey of the Jack Binder Shop.*

"So why would I have wanted to

write and draw 'The Phantom Eagle'? Perhaps it was out of sympathy. Here was a character as mired in obscurity as I was. With no criticism of the work that had gone before, I felt that the feature was in need of help and maybe I was the one to provide it.

*"Whatever the reason, I drew 'The Phantom Eagle' and wrote many of the stories as I had time for, until *Wow Comics* closed the store in 1948. And it was a fun job. The characters and environments were easy to draw and the stories easy to write.*

"By the time it was all over, I got to where I really liked the kid... even more than Captain Marvel or Mary Marvel. I guess 'The Phantom Eagle' was my all-time favorite comic book work."

We're proud to present in its entirety the tale that marked the final appearance of The Phantom Eagle, and consequently Marc Swayze's concluding work on the character, from the last issue of *Wow Comics* #69 (Aug. 1948). It's not know if Marc wrote the story—but he drew it, and that's enough for us.



As The Eagle Flies

Penciled (and even some inked) sketches of The Phantom Eagle by Marc Swayze, originally sent to Roy Thomas some years ago by Jerry C. Bails.

[©2013 Estate of Marc Swayze.]

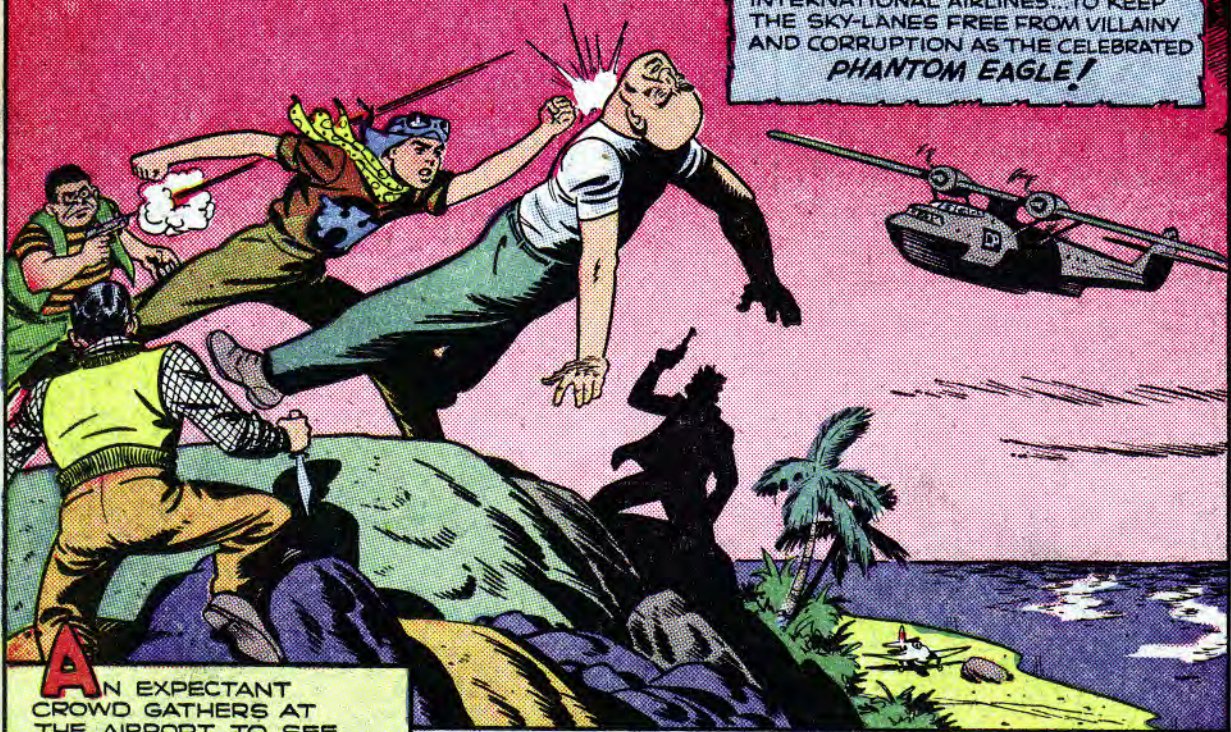
WOW COMICS

THE PHANTOM EAGLE

IN THE FLIGHT OF THE BEE!



MICKEY MALONE, BOY MECHANIC DURING THE WAR WHO LED THE FAMED PHOENIX SQUADRON AGAINST ENEMIES OF THE ALLIED FORCES IN HIS SECRET IDENTITY, HAS BEEN APPOINTED GUARDIAN OF THE AIRWAYS BY INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES... TO KEEP THE SKY-LANES FREE FROM VILLAINY AND CORRUPTION AS THE CELEBRATED PHANTOM EAGLE!



AN EXPECTANT CROWD GATHERS AT THE AIRPORT TO SEE THE FIRST FLIGHT OF THE ZOOMER... SENSATIONAL NEW PLANE DEVELOPED BY DESIGNER HUGH WARD...



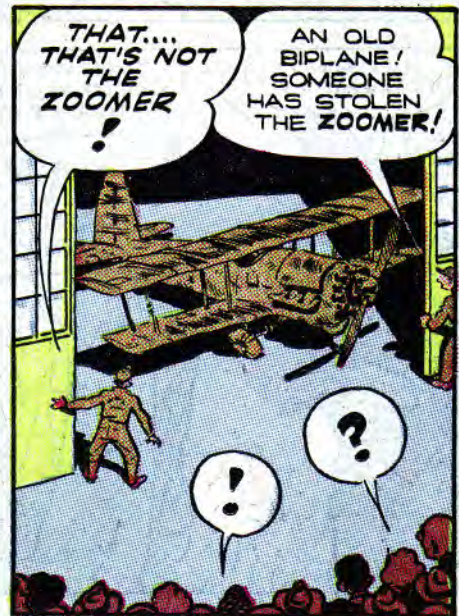
THE ZOOMER IS SAID TO BE THE FASTEST PLANE EVER BUILT!

YEAH! AND THE TEST PILOT IS PHANTOM EAGLE!



LOOK! THEY'RE OPENING THE HANGAR!

AT LAST WE'RE TO SEE THE ZOOMER!



THAT... THAT'S NOT THE ZOOMER!

AN OLD BIPLANE! SOMEONE HAS STOLEN THE ZOOMER!

[This story ©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

A 100th-Birthday Tribute to MARC SWAYZE

FCA EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *Our respected friend and cherished colleague, Marc Swayze, graced hundreds of pages of this magazine with his enduring chronicle, "We Didn't Know... It Was the Golden Age!" Marc's continuous, regularly-published memoirs were unprecedented amongst his peers, but the humble artist viewed himself the unsung hero, "the most forgotten of the unknowns... or the most unknown of the forgotten," as he used to say. He never sought the spotlight, but I firmly believed that such a gifted and treasured individual as Marc duly deserved a destiny that was more than just a faded footnote.*

While our beloved comrade may have left us on October 14, 2012, at the age of 99, rest assured that his presence will continue to live on here in our publication. For the moment, in honor of what would have been his 100th birthday this month (July 17th), let's dust off and open up the Marc Swayze photo album and celebrate his golden, extraordinary life....

—P.C. Hamerlinck.



Portrait Of The Artist As A (Very) Young Man

Marcus Desha Swayze was born July 17, 1913, the fourth and youngest child of Mildred Turner and steamboat captain Lewis Herbert Swayze.

Marc had two older sisters, May and Daisy—the latter would later letter his comics stories—and one older brother, Lewis Herbert. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman.

Yes!
(Right:) A triumphant Mary Marvel was painted by her co-creator, Marc Swayze, in the mid-'90s. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman. [Shazam heroine TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]



Play A Simple Melody

Marc Swayze plays a melody on January 20, 2011—with his framed *Alter Ego* #18 cover on top of his piano. Special thanks to Lindsey Wilkerson of the University of Louisiana at Monroe Office of Public Information; photo by Terrance Armstard. Check out the feature on Marc by the ULM Alumni Association at: www.ulm.edu/alumni/features/swayze



“You Should See The Other Guy—Name Of Sivana!”
 Marc in the 7th grade with broken arm and black eye after a scrap with a neighborhood boy. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman.



Graduation Day
 From 1940-42 Marc Swayze was a staff artist at Fawcett Publications, assigned to draw “Captain Marvel” stories and covers. In addition, Marc co-created Mary Marvel with writer Otto Binder, and also wrote several “Captain Marvel” stories—and he continued to write them on a freelance basis while serving in the U.S. Army from 1942-44. Above is a Swayze-drawn panel from “The Training of Mary Marvel” (*Captain Marvel Adventures* #19, cover-dated Jan. 1943). [Shazam heroes TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]

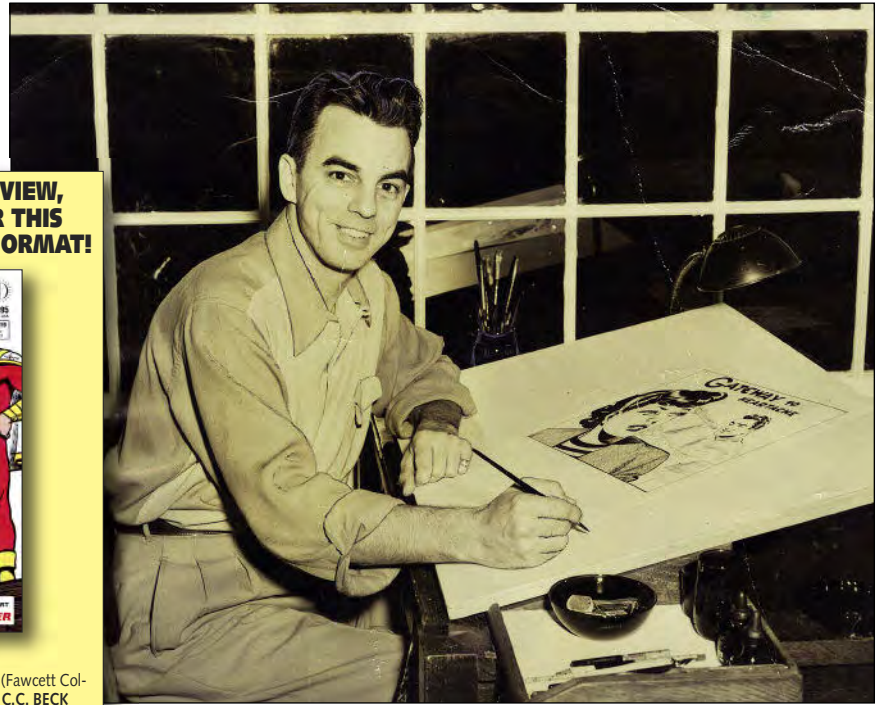


Music,
 There was great camera crew. In this 1942 snapshot, Marc is with his friend/comics editor Otto Binder at their residence in Malverne, California.

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS PREVIEW, CLICK THE LINK TO ORDER THIS ISSUE IN PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT!



ALTER EGO #119
MARC SWAYZE TRIBUTE ISSUE, spotlighting FCA (Fawcett Collectors of America)! Salutes from Fawcett alumnus **C.C. BECK** and **OTTO BINDER**, interview with wife **JUNE SWAYZE**, a full Phantom Eagle story from Wow Comics, plus interview with '950s Dell/Western artist **MEL KEEFER**, **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, and a **SWAYZE** Marvel Family cover art from the 1940s!
 (84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) **\$8.95**
 (Digital Edition) **\$3.95**
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When Romance Was In The Air—And On The Drawing Board
 Marc was seen here working on a romance comics story in the '40s after he had returned back from New York City. Marc freelanced for Fawcett from Monroe, Louisiana, where he had worked on “The Phantom Eagle” and drew the *Flyin’ Jenny* Sunday newspaper comic strip for Fawcett to syndicate—and added the feature’s daily strip after his mentor/FJ creator Russell Keaton died in 1945. From 1948 to late 1953, Marc worked exclusively on Fawcett’s romance comics, producing approximately 80 stories for such titles as *Sweetheart Diary* (which sold near the two-million mark each month) and *Life Story* (with a circulation of over 700,000.) Picture taken by Marvin DuBois. Photo courtesy of Judy Swayze Blackman.