

ROY THOMAS' BATTY
COMICS FANTASY

Alter Ego™

**BODACIOUS
BATMAN ARTISTS
DICK SPRANG
& JIM MOONEY**



\$8.95
In the USA

**80 PAGES
FULL
COLOR!**

No. 107

Feb.
2012

Art © 2012 DC Comics
Batman & Robin™ & © 2012 DC Comics



DICK SPRANG

Editor
Roy Thomas

Associate Editors
Bill Schelly
Jim Amash

Design & Layout
Jon B. Cooke

Consulting Editor
John Morrow

FCA Editor
P.C. Hamerlinck

Comic Crypt Editor
Michael T. Gilbert

Editorial Honor Roll
Jerry G. Bails (founder)
Ronn Foss, Biljo White
Mike Friedrich

Proofreader
Rob Smentek

Cover Artists
Dick Sprang
& Charles Paris

Cover Colorist
Tom Ziuko

With Special Thanks to:

Neal Adams	Jack Katz
Roy Ald	Jim Kealy
Heidi Amash	Kirk Kimball
Henry Andrews	Thomas Langridge
Bob Bailey	Dominique Leonard
Jean Bails	David A. Lofvers
Robert Barrett	Jim Ludwig
Tom Batiuk	Ben Markeson
Bill Black	Bruce Mason
Dominic Bongo	Kurt Mitchell
Chris Boyko	Steve Mitchell
Al Bradford	Sheldon Moldoff
Mike Burkey	Brian K. Morris
Glen Cadigan Cantwell	Fred Patten
Shaun Clancy	Barry Pearl
John Cruz	John G. Pierce
Raymond A. Cuthbert	Michael Posner
Teresa R. Davidson	Gene Reed
Dwight Decker	Jerry Robinson
John De Mocko	Buddy Saunders
Shel Dorf	Anthony Snyder
Terry Doyle	Robin Snyder
Michael Dunne	Tom Stein
Justin Fairfax	Marc Svensson
Martin Filchok	Marc Swayze
Danny Fingerhuth	Tony Tallarico
Shane Foley	Jeff Taylor
Patrick Ford	Dann Thomas
Stephan Friedt	Maggie Thompson
Janet Gilbert	Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr.
Golden Age Comic	Delmo Walters, Jr.
Book Stories (website)	Hames Ware
Jennifer Hamerlinck	Gary Watson
Heritage Comics	Ralph Lawson Werner
Archives	Ruthie White
Thomas Inge	Ike Wilson
Alex Jay	Marv Wolfman
Douglas Jones (Gaff)	Bill Wormstedt
Elizabeth Kanegson	Eddy Zeno



**AT LAST!
ALL IN
COLOR FOR
\$8.95!**



Contents

Writer/Editorial: "Be Careful What You Wish For!" 2

"A Legend In The Business" 3
That's what interviewer Shel Dorf called *Batman* artist Dick Sprang—and he was 100% right!

"We Want This To Look Like 'Batman'" 16
Jim Mooney delivered, whether for Fox Comics or DC! Interview by Chris Boyko.

"You're Going Into A Business That Requires People To Be Dressed With Ties" 28
Artist Tony Tallarico soon found out differently—in part II of Jim Amash's interview.

Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt! The Mystery Of The Missing Letterer – Part 6 45
Michael T. Gilbert talks with the widow of legendary *The Spirit* letterer Abe Kanegson

Happy 100th Birthday, Martin Filchok! 53

Comic Fandom Archive: Comicdom In Color! 55
Bill Schelly annotates a cornucopia of color photos from 1960s fandom.

Tributes To Gene Colan & Dave Hoover 66

re: [correspondence, comments, & corrections] 68

FCA [*Fawcett Collectors Of America*] #165 73

On Our Cover: *This isn't quite a never-published Dick Sprang 'Batman' cover. It saw print, in black-&-white, in the DC house-produced fanzine Amazing World of DC Comics (#4, Jan.-Feb. 1975); still, we're overjoyed that, through the good offices of owner Bill Wormstedt, A/E associate editor Bill Schelly, and Sprang's longtime agent Ike Wilson—and with DC's blessing—we've been privileged to showcase it at last the way it was meant to be seen. Bill W. told Bill S. that, when he showed Sprang the original art years ago, the artist said the inking looked to him like the work of Charles Paris; Sprang further noted that "the size of the piece... was not as large as the art used back in the '50s and early '60s. The art itself is about 12" by 15", and the image area 7½" by 11". Based on the size of the art, Dick was guessing it maybe had been created for advertising purposes—but he actually had no memory why." All we know is—it was designed like a cover—and it makes a great one!* [© 2012 DC Comics.]

Above: *An action panel penciled and inked by Jim Mooney early in his career as a "Batman" illustrator. This panel from the story "Case of the Silent Songbirds" in Detective Comics #126 (Aug. 1947) is reproduced from the hardcover Batman Archives, Vol. 6. Happily, although that book's cover features only Bob Kane's byline, Mooney, Sprang, Jack Burnley, Win Mortimer, and Lew Sayre Schwartz, as well as several inkers and writers, are all also duly credited inside.* [© 2012 DC Comics.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of:

**Gene Colan, Dave Hoover,
Dick Sprang, & Jim Mooney**



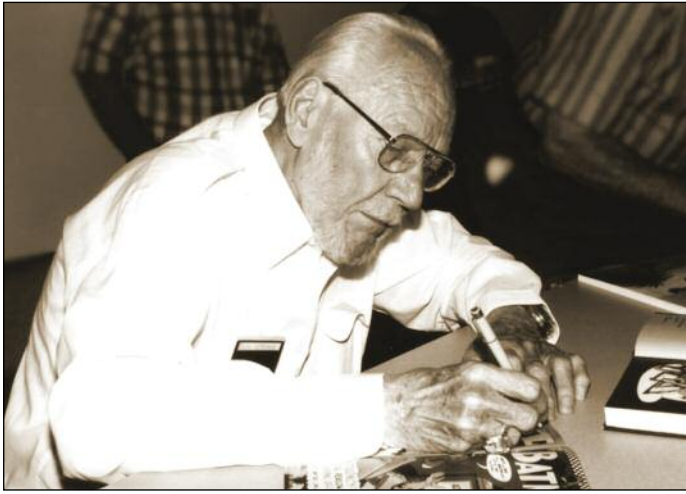
Alter Ego™ is published 8 times a year by TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. *Alter Ego* Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@tinet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices. Eight-issue subscriptions: \$60 US, \$85 Canada, \$107 elsewhere. 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 the USA. ISSN: 1932-6890

FIRST PRINTING.

“A Legend In The Business”

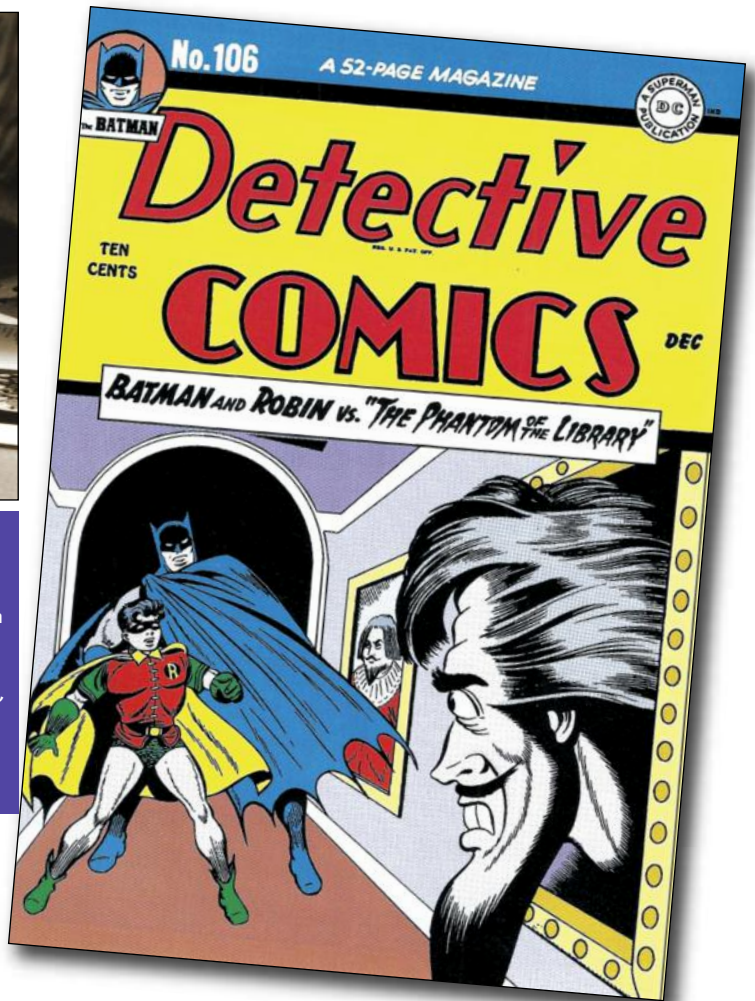
That's What Interviewer Shel Dorf Said About Golden/Silver Age Artist DICK SPRANG—And He Couldn't Have Been Righter!

Conducted by Shel Dorf • Transcribed by Brian K. Morris



Hope Sprangs Eternal!

Dick Sprang signing some “Batman” mags (including one with Go-Go Checks, yet!) at the 1993 San Diego Comic-Con—and the cover he penciled and inked for *Detective Comics* #106 (Dec. 1945). The latter displays Batman and Robin in perhaps their most iconic Golden Age pose—one that was drawn by various artists at various times. Thanks to Ralph Rawson Werner for the photo; the cover is reproduced from the hardcover *Batman Archives*, Vol. 5. Fortunately, much of Sprang’s definitive Batman-related artwork is currently available in DC *Batman* and *Dark Knight Archives* editions, as is much of his “Superman & Batman” work in *World’s Finest Comics Archives*.
[Cover © 2012 DC Comics.]



A/E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *The late Shel Dorf, one of the founders of the San Diego Comic-Con, used that gathering of fans and professionals as an excuse—as if any were*

needed—to conduct a number of informal and casually structured interviews over the years. This one with Dick Sprang, who was a premier “Batman” ghost artist beginning in the mid-1940s and produced many of the best art jobs ever to feature the Dark Knight, was probably conducted in 1993, when Sprang was a guest at that convention... and will serve as a postscript to the coverage given Sprang back in Alter Ego #19 (an issue still available from TwoMorrows Publishing). A photo of Shel Dorf appeared in A/E #102. Our thanks to Ike Wilson, who was Sprang’s agent for the last decade of the artist’s life, for his gracious cooperation with this article.

“I Was Wanting To Write Westerns”

SHEL DORF: *We’re talking with Dick Sprang at San Diego Comic-Con. We’ve had an expo, a trade show, and all kinds of people. We’ve been going for 23 years now.*

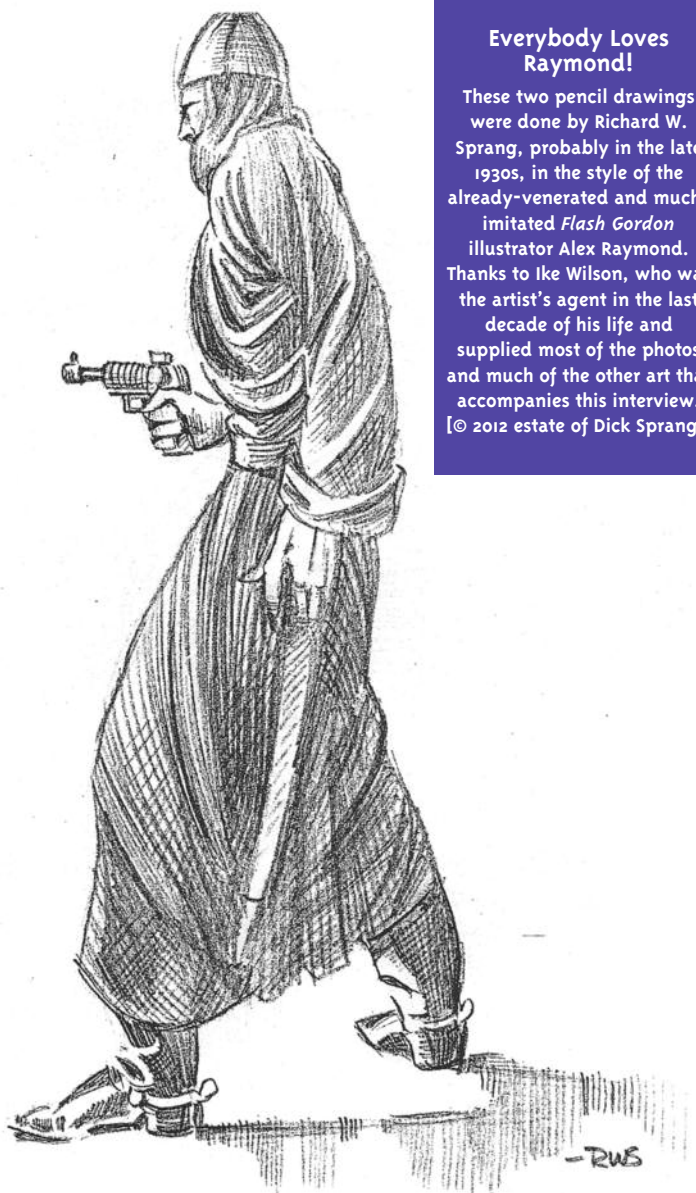
SPRANG: *Well, it’s really developed into a major convention. You know, when they gave me the Inkpot Award, I was really surprised.*

SD: *Well, you’re a legend in the business. I remember, years ago, somebody was talking about you and said that you didn’t want any part of your career as a cartoonist—that you had been in advertising for years and cartooning wasn’t a part of your world any more. When you resurfaced, doing special prints, it was exciting news because you were a favorite of so many.*

SPRANG: *Well, thank you. After I retired, I had this ranch up in southern Utah and I was going all the time. I really loved it. And I was doing a lot of exploring of the country. I was out of comics completely. I didn’t even buy them. And it wasn’t until this print business that my interest picked up. But I didn’t reject comics out of hand or have any criticism of them, anything like that at all.*

SD: *But you had gone into advertising when you left comics?*

SPRANG: *No, I’d been in advertising before that. I worked for Scripps-Howard for two years in Toledo in the art department.*



Everybody Loves Raymond!

These two pencil drawings were done by Richard W. Sprang, probably in the late 1930s, in the style of the already-venerated and much-imitated *Flash Gordon* illustrator Alex Raymond. Thanks to Ike Wilson, who was the artist's agent in the last decade of his life and supplied most of the photos and much of the other art that accompanies this interview. [© 2012 estate of Dick Sprang.]

SD: That's where I met my first cartoonist, Bill Woggan.

SPRANG: I knew Bill very well. He was on *The Blade* [newspaper].

SD: That's right. And Allen Saunders.

SPRANG: Allen Saunders had the desk across the room from him. I was wanting to write Westerns and I wound up doing so. So few artists wrote, too. But Allen encouraged me. So the first pulp story I sold, I quit the paper and went to New York.

SD: Allen was here at one of our cons. So tell me about your early days. Did you have any formal cartooning training?

SPRANG: No.

SD: Why did you become a cartoonist?

SPRANG: Because the pulps were dying. I'd been a pulp illustrator. From there, I'd left the paper in '36, gone to New York, quit Al, just quit. Nothing like the spirit of a dumb kid, you know, who couldn't get a job in the middle of the Depression.

SD: What kind of work were you doing on *The Toledo Bee*?

SPRANG: Art department, and then I had to go out with a photographer if we had some disaster going on and phone in details, and so on. Everybody worked with everybody.

SD: Did you do photo retouching, too?

SPRANG: Oh yes, quite a bit of that.

SD: Yeah, I worked in the art department of the *Detroit Free Press* when I was nineteen.

SPRANG: Well, then, you know all of what goes on in a newspaper art department. We put those papers on the street every day; we had those deadlines.

SD: It was a secure place during the Depression, though.

SPRANG: It sure was.

"Whit [Ellsworth] Introduced Me To Bob Kane Once"

SD: And you left that and went to New York. Why?

SPRANG: To see what New York was. New York, in those years, was one of the best cities. Well, anyway, I got on with the pulps, illustrating, and I wanted to do all of them. But about '40, '41, I could see that the pulps were dying.

So what you do with a trend—you can't manage a trend but you can try to manage the opportunity of trying to create. I wanted to



Raising Kane

Bob Kane posing with his creation (or co-creation)—and a 1993 Kane sketch, 8" by 10". Thanks to dealer Anthony Snyder; see his ad on p. 44. [Batman TM & © 2012 DC Comics.]



leave New York and come West. So I went up to DC, with a page I made up and colored, and showed it to [DC editor] Whit Ellsworth. Whit liked it. I could see that this would be a heck of a good berth, and he put me on "Batman," so, of course, that made it all the more desirable.

SD: But you could never sign your own name. Only Bob Kane's signature was on that?

SPRANG: Ellsworth asked me about that, and I said that made no difference to me as long as my name was on that oblong green piece of paper.

SD: Do you remember the page rate for penciling and inking?

SPRANG: The penciling and inking—I think it was \$33 when I first went to work in '41, '42. And they took me off inking in '45 and paid me \$35. That's a raise.

SD: Do you know what the young artists are getting today?

SPRANG: Oh, my God! [laughs]

SD: It's a different world.

SPRANG: Do you know what \$35 would buy in 1942? It would buy this room easily, at Fourth and Lexington.

SD: And newspapers were three cents. I remember buying Batman off the newsstand for a dime. Sometimes that was my whole week's allowance.

SPRANG: Well, anyway, the point I made with Whit was that after the war was over—and of course, you all knew it was coming, despite what the politicians kept telling us: "They'll never send your boy over there." After the war, I had to prove myself, of course. Whit Ellsworth was a spirited man. I have the greatest respect for Whit Ellsworth of any editor I've ever run in to.

SD: Whit Ellsworth was also a friend of Paul Norris, who did the first "Aquaman." He said Ellsworth gave him a little sketch on a piece of paper

and said, "Here's one of these long-underwear guys," and he had a big cigar in his mouth. He said, "Design a costume for him."

SPRANG: Yeah, that's what he gave you, really. That's all he did. I wasn't around the office. I met few comic artists. I met Charlie Paris in New York around '43, '44. I think I met Jack Kirby once, just to say hello to. And Whit introduced me to Bob Kane once.

SD: Just once?

SPRANG: And I don't know any other—I never met Jerry Robinson until two years ago, here. But I didn't know any of the other boys.

SD: Did you know about the adulation for your work?

SPRANG: No, I had no idea about that until the mid-'80s.

SD: Isn't it great that, [for] something you did so long ago, there's a whole new generation of fans?

SPRANG: It's very gratifying. I appreciate it, but now it's quite a surprise, too, because I know then, we were just doing our jobs. [laughs] You know, there wasn't any adulation then.

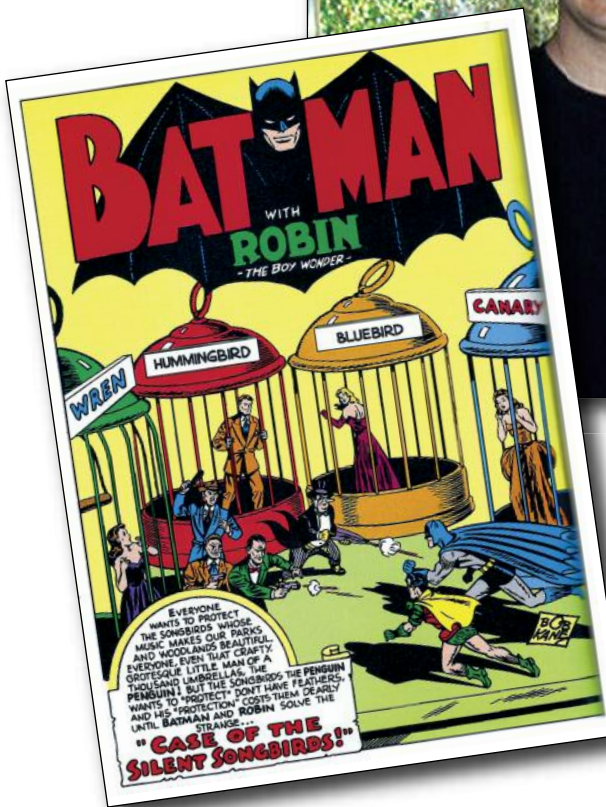
"Fawcett, DC, And Dell Were About The Only Good [Companies]"

SD: Gil Kane once mentioned that, if you couldn't get work in advertising, you went into comic books, and you usually changed your name or they didn't put a name on it at all. Because if word got out that you were

“We Want This To Look Like ‘Batman’”

Whether He was Told This By Victor Fox Or By DC Comics—Artist JIM MOONEY Always Delivered!

Conducted & Transcribed by Chris Boyko



“Don’t Like Spiders And Snakes”—And Bats

Jim Mooney (on right) and interviewer Chris Boyko, in a photo taken several years ago—flanked by Mooney’s first *Detective Comics* splash page (#126, August 1947) and the first *Amazing Spider-Man* splash page he inked (#65, Oct. 1968). Jim both penciled and inked the “Batman” story, which is reprinted from *Batman Archives, Vol. 6* (“by Bob Kane,” it says on the cover). Thanks to Barry Pearl for the AMS scan. [Batman page © 2012 DC Comics; Spider-Man page © 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



“[Henry Kuttner] Said, ‘Why Don’t You Submit Some Of Your Stuff To The Editor?’”

CHRIS BOYKO: To start at the beginning: in the early 1940s, you did a little bit of work for pulps, right?

JIM MOONEY: Very, very little. In fact, that was one of the things that propelled me into comics. I had a very good friend who was a sci-fi writer, Henry Kuttner, and he was working for *Weird Tales* [pulp magazine] at that time. He knew that I like to draw, and he said, “Why don’t you submit some of your stuff to the editor

INTERVIEWER’S INTRODUCTION: The late Jim Mooney (1919-2008) drew for comics for over 60 years, beginning in 1940, and worked for most major companies, including a nearly 20-year stint at DC in the 1950s and ‘60s and another nearly 20 years at Marvel after that. He both penciled and inked major characters, including Supergirl, Spider-Man, Batman, Ghost Rider, and many, many more. I spoke with Jim over the phone at his home in Florida in August 2002 to ask him about his long history in the comics and his lucrative business selling his original art and specialty pieces on the Internet. Sadly, Jim passed away in 2008—but he left behind a rich legacy.

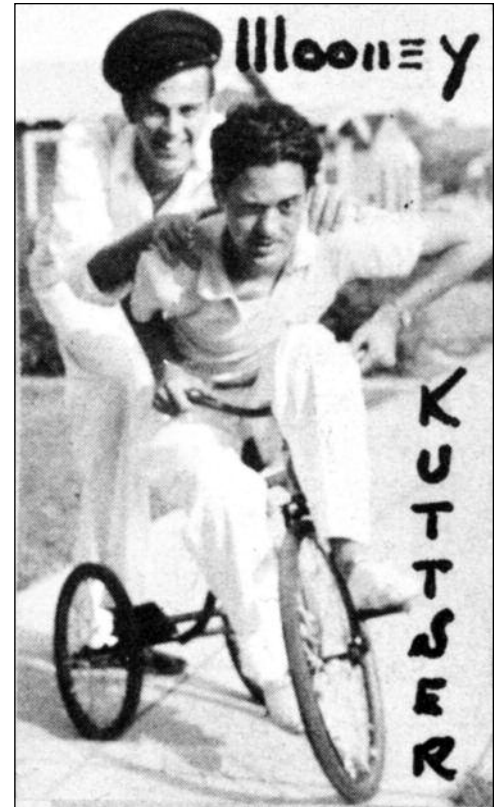


Young Fen In A Hurry

(Above:) Julius Schwartz on left and Mort Weisinger on right, bookending then-sf writer Otto Binder at a 1939 gathering in New York City. The entire photo was first printed in Sam Moskowitz's 1954 book *The Immortal Storm: A History of Science Fiction Fandom*. Weisinger became a DC editor in 1941, Schwartz in 1944. *Alter Ego* has printed the whole pic before, but Julie always admonished Ye Editor to run photos of people mentioned in articles and interviews, so consider this yet another attempt to appease his ghost.

(Right:) Jim Mooney and Henry Kuttner (the latter's the one with the mustache) at play during JM's California days before he turned pro. Jim provided this photo to Chris Boyko. Looks like each of them signed it!

Incidentally, "fen," for those who don't know, was a coined word used as the plural of "fan" by sf enthusiasts, some years back.



[Farnsworth Wright]? Write and see what he thinks of it and maybe you can illustrate one of my stories."

Well, I did submit some stuff, and they did accept it and, of course, I was 17 years old and I was bursting with pride. I had a greatly inflated idea of my ability, which was pretty limited. About that time, [pulp editor] Mort Weisinger and [science-fiction agent] Julie Schwartz came out to visit California and to visit Henry Kuttner, so I got to know both of those guys pretty well in that time before I went to New York to try to break into comics.

CB: *I'm not sure how many comic fans understand how big into science-fiction Julie Schwartz was.*

MOONEY: Oh yes, both Mort and Julie were into sci-fi quite heavily at that time. I belonged to the Science Fiction League in Los Angeles. We had informal meetings at a place called Clifton's Cafeteria. About once a month we'd all meet and try to get a guest celebrity to speak to the group. Forry Ackerman was there—I think he was only 19 or 20, and I was about 17. He's been a sci-fi and fantasy packrat since we were kids. I mean, he was acquiring some of the stuff back when we were in the Science Fiction League. It was remarkable.

CB: *When you started in comics, did you work for DC or Timely first?*

MOONEY: I worked for Timely first. I worked on the so-called "funny animal" stuff, you know—*Terrytoons* and that type of thing. That died out pretty fast; it was beginning to fade about 1946. Most of us who were doing that work were scuttling around trying to find some other type of employment. I think if there had been a McDonalds then, we would have applied! It was pretty rough, and I was just very, very fortunate in that I got a tip in '46 or '47 that [artist] Dick Sprang had taken off to, evidently, do his own thing out in the Far West, and he wasn't producing as much and they needed somebody to try out for *Batman*.

I went up to the [DC] offices and submitted my stuff, but there was no great enthusiasm or anything like that. Most of the people



Like Moths To A Flame...

As we said back in *A/E* #101, when we printed the splash panel of this "Moth" story from *Mystery Men Comics* #9 (April 1940), we fail to see much similarity between this Fox Comics hero and Batman—but National/DC's lawyers did, or at least alleged they did. But, by then, they'd gotten pretty used to suing every hero who wore a cape, and some that didn't. Though signed "Norton Kingsley," the art is apparently by a very young Jim Mooney. Thanks to Chet Cox. [© 2012 the respective copyright holders.]

who were involved and [Batman co-creator] Bob Kane took a look at the stuff, and I remember somebody saying "What makes you think you can do this?" and I recounted something that happened quite a few years [earlier] on one of my first assignments, when I was working for [Victor] Fox, doing a strip called "The Moth," and they said, "We want this to look like 'Batman.'" Well, being a kid and thinking they *really* wanted it to look a lot like 'Batman,' I overdid it! A little later, DC sued them. So I brought that up [to DC] and said, "I don't know whether you recall this or not, but I know some of the early stuff I did was very similar to 'Batman' and you guys sued Fox for it!" So I got a kick out of it and it gave me a shot at ['Batman'] and that worked out pretty well.

CB: *How do you compare working at Timely to the early days at DC? Who was easier to work for, in the sense of who paid better and gave you less hassle about the work?*

MOONEY: Well, Timely was not paying very well in those days. It was pretty low pay. DC was sort of the kingpin at that time, as far as money was concerned—and prestige. I didn't work for them until about 1946 or '47. They were a far more established institution than Timely. Timely at that time was playing around with *Captain America*, as well as the funny animals. They just tried a lot of things but I don't think their sales were that great. I don't know what the bottom line was, but I don't think they were making that much money.

"I Really Never Enjoyed 'Batman' Greatly"

CB: *So DC was obviously the more "corporate" company. Did that mean they cracked the whip more in terms of schedules or deadlines?*

MOONEY: They were pretty rigid in that respect. The main thing I disliked about DC was the sort of uptight attitude. It wasn't fun. I felt, every time I went into DC, that it was not going to be a real pleasant experience. It wasn't that bad, but it was uncomfortable, let's put it that way. Whereas when I switched over to Marvel when I left DC, it was all fun and games!



He Never Said He Wouldn't Touch Batman With A Ten-Foot Pole!

Whatever his reservations about his "Batman" work, Jim Mooney was never averse to doing a commission drawing featuring that hero and Robin the Boy Wonder. This 2006 penciled-and-inked illo was done especially for Belgian fan Dominique Leonard, who kindly shared it with us. [Batman & Robin TM & © 2012 DC Comics.]

CB: *When you worked at DC, did you have favorite titles? Things that you found more satisfying to work on?*

MOONEY: Oh definitely. *The House of Mystery* and that type of thing I enjoyed. I really never enjoyed "Batman" greatly, because to a great extent it had to look a lot like Bob Kane's stuff. And that was kind of a limiting factor in itself. I think I did much better drawing when I was drawing for some of their other books.

CB: *I would assume you were given a little bit more freedom on the other titles?*

MOONEY: Oh yeah. Not only that, I didn't have to worry about "Gee, does this look like Batman? Does this look like Robin? Is this the traditional shtick?" It was something I enjoyed at that time, and there was a certain prestige there: "I'm drawing 'Batman!'" But that wore off pretty fast!

CB: *I assume that you never saw any pages of your original art back from the companies you worked for [early in your career]?*

MOONEY: Well, we had the attitude that it was truly ephemera, it wasn't worth a damn. I remember, years and years ago, occasionally I would pick a page when I was at DC because some of the

neighbors' kids wanted a page and I'd say, "Yeah, I'll see if I can get you one." But I would give it away without actually thinking about what I was giving away or whether it had any real interest or value or not. At that time, I used to occasionally go down in the freight elevator when I'd leave the DC offices, and there would be stacks of stuff that they were taking down to be shredded in the basement.

Now that didn't horrify me at the time—I just figured, "Hell, that's the way it goes, you know? Maybe they'll give me some confetti!" But a little later on, we began to realize we were discarding things that might be as valuable as some of the comic books we discarded even earlier on. I never had any respect for the comic book [pages] that I was working on; I'd put ink on them and treat them rather badly.

CB: *Did DC have some particular policy regarding the original art, or was it just simply "Yeah, if you want some, take it," or did they have a*

“You’re Going Into A Business That Requires People To Be Dressed With Ties”

TONY TALLARICO Soon Found Out Differently—
As We Learn In Part II Of Our Career-Spanning Interview

Conducted by Jim Amash • Transcribed by Brian K. Morris



Two By Tony

Above, Tony Tallarico draws Tony Tallarico—for the 1958 *National Cartoonists Society Annual*—and at right, the final page of “The Corpse Springs Alive!” from *Youthful/Story’s Mysterious Adventures #6* (Feb. 1952). The splash page of this tale was seen last issue. With thanks to Jim Kealy for the horror page—and to TT for the self-portrait. [Tallarico sketch © 2012 Tony Tallarico; other page © 2012 the respective copyright holders.]



“I Had Space In A Studio In The City”

JIM AMASH: Did you see Rocco Mastroserio at Avon [in the late 1940s/early 1950s]?

TONY TALLARICO: Yes, and then later on, he worked for Charlton. He was a quiet guy, but Dick Giordano and he became

INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: Last time around, we discussed the early days of Tony Tallarico's work in comics, starting out as an assistant to the likes of Frank Carin, Burne Hogarth, and Al Scaduto, through his journeyman work for Avon, Youthful/Story, et al. This issue, we finally get around to his debut at Charlton, the company with which he is most identified in comics readers' four-color minds... although we've still got a few other bases to touch first. Thanks again to our mutual friend, Stan Goldberg for putting me in touch with Tony. —Jim.



very good friends. He lived in Connecticut. I didn't get to know him.

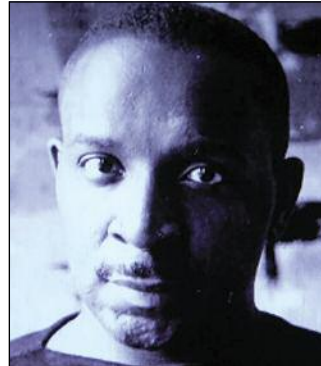
JA: Did you happen to know Al Hollingsworth?

TALLARICO: Oh, yes. A.C. Hollingsworth was quite a character; pompous. He was a school teacher. He was a big heavy guy, and he had an assistant who was like a 98-pound weakling—a white guy who carried this huge portfolio for him. [The latter] would go up to Billy Friedman and say, "Boy, this guy is getting back at all the slavery."

JA: Was he a talkative person?

TALLARICO: Yes, he was a bullfrog. He was beyond talkative; it was always about himself. He was interested in me as far as being a sounding board—to talk about himself to somebody else. Fine!

JA: He wasn't that great an artist, either.



Avon Calling—Again!

(Top left:) Rocco Mastroserio's splash for Avon's *Eerie* #2 (Aug.-Sept. 1951). The full version of this photo of the artist (above left) appeared in *A/E* #41. Thanks to Jim Ludwig and Bill Schelly.

(Top right:) The bylined Alvin/Al/A.C. Hollingsworth splash page from Avon's *Mask of Fu Manchu* (Aug. 1951), as reprinted in *IW's Dr. Fu Manchu* #1 (1958)—plus a less sartorially-inclined head shot of ACH which Jim Amash found on the Internet. Thanks to Stephan Friedt for the art scan.

[Art pieces & photos © 2012 the respective copyright holders.]

TALLARICO: No, far from it. I don't know if he even drew the stories, or if this other mascot did.

JA: I know he had a studio, and for a while he was putting out a lot of work, so we know he had assistants. He worked mostly for small companies, like Ace, Fox, Superior... How did Hollingsworth dress? What did he look like?

TALLARICO: He always wore a tie, suit, rings, a hat—he really looked like he was going to a festive occasion.

JA: Not all the guys dressed like that, did they?

TALLARICO: No, no way.

JA: How did you dress when you went in?

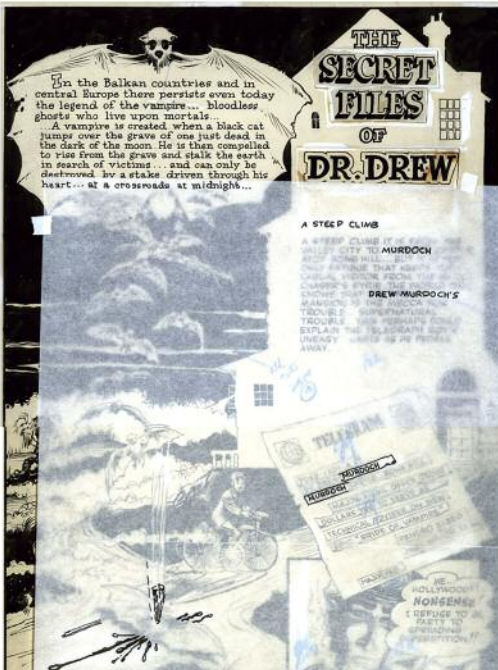
TALLARICO: I always wore a sports jacket and a tie. In high school, I was told, "You must always wear a tie because you're going into a business that requires people to be dressed with ties." [laughs] And I always did.



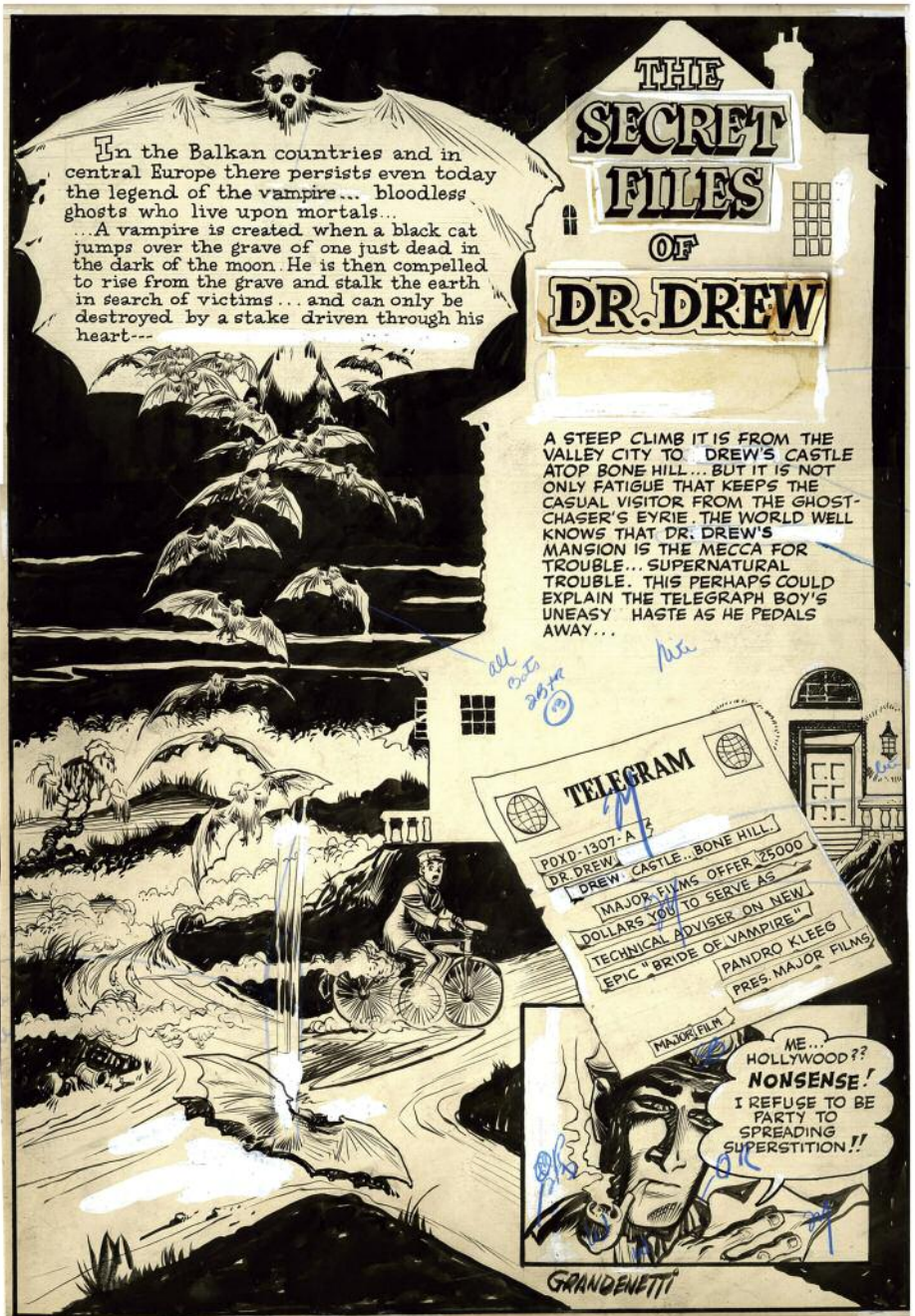
WHO DOESN'T LOVE A GOOD MYSTERY?

For example, take this stunning Jerry Grandenetti *Dr. Drew* splash page. My lightbox revealed secrets hidden for almost *seventy years* beneath *Abe Kanegson's* delicate calligraphy. Peering below the paste-ups and white-out, we can see a sentence has been removed from the first caption. Elsewhere *Dr. Desmond Drew's* name was mistakenly lettered as *Drew Murdoch* --an earlier *Fiction House* monster-hunter! *And look!* Is that a bloody *stake* impaled in the bat at the bottom of the page? Even more *secrets* will be revealed as we conclude...

"THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING LETTERER!"



This crude tracing indicates what lay hidden beneath this page from *Rangers Comics* #52 (Apr. 1950).
[©2012 Fiction House.]



The Mystery of the Missing Letterer—Part 6

by Michael T. Gilbert

We conclude our six-part series on Abe Kanegson—Will Eisner's premier *Spirit* letterer—with an interview with Abe's widow, Elizabeth Kanegson. The two met in the mid-'50s and married soon after. They remained together until leukemia took Abe's life in 1965.

Elizabeth Kanegson Interview—1/23/11

ELIZABETH KANEGSON: You are Michael Gilbert from somewhere in Oregon?

MICHAEL T. GILBERT: Eugene, Oregon—where the rain never stops.

KANEGSON: It's not as cold as it is here, I am sure.

MTG: Where are you located now?

KANEGSON: We are in New York City, and it is currently 27 degrees.

MTG: That's cold enough.

KANEGSON: Yes, how can we help you?

MTG: I was hoping to ask you a few questions about Abe's early life and such. First of all, when and how did you and Abe meet?

KANEGSON: Oh, my goodness. A long time ago—I am trying to think what year. I cannot remember, maybe 1956. Or maybe '55, and we met because I went to some of the square dances he called at and he had a song afterwards. There would be a thing afterwards where he would play the guitar and sing and people would join him. That is how we met.

MTG: And I understand you were about twenty years younger than he was at that point?

KANEGSON: Fourteen.

MTG: What appealed to you about Abe?

KANEGSON: Almost everything. He had, well, he had charisma. In addition, there was almost nothing that he could not do, and he was kind, he was sensitive, he was charming, and he was funny, all very appealing traits.

MTG: After you got married, didn't you two start a school of sorts in Greenwich Village?

KANEGSON: He did, yes. It was called the Village Square Dance School. In addition, I worked with him, and it was the school where Abe primarily taught. Well, he had square dances and he taught folk dancing. Mostly European folk dancing, and he also taught singing, because he believed that there was no one who was tone deaf. There was no such thing as tone deaf.

MTG: He never met me, obviously! [laughs]

KANEGSON: No, he said people—for some reason, they had trouble duplicating the notes they heard. In addition, he was able to help people around that.

MTG: Well, of course, he had a bad case of stuttering, and he was still able to make a career as a singer.

KANEGSON: He did not stutter when he sang at all. You know, that is not one of the things I remember about him. It was true he did stutter. But it's not something that I remember—you just reminded me.

MTG: Hmm! That's funny. I wonder if he trained himself or whether he just naturally didn't stutter when he sang?

KANEGSON: I don't know the answer to that. I truly don't. We never talked about it.

MTG: OK. Well, of course, I'm doing this for a comic book-oriented magazine, *Alter Ego*, and I was wondering if Abe ever spoke to you about his comic book career?

KANEGSON: About his comic book career? Oh yes, he did the printing.

MTG: The lettering, yes.

KANEGSON: Yes, and I remember there was a time when I was pregnant with, I think, our first son Ben, and he had a project to letter. And he brought some wine home and we drank some wine. He was usually very tense and nervous around the lettering. He always thought it wasn't good enough. And when we had a few drinks of wine he said, "Look, it's no effort. The lettering is going fine." [laughs] So that was just one instance of my remembering about his lettering.

MTG: Oh, OK. Now I'm thinking that he mostly quit doing comic book lettering, as far as I know, in 1951, which would have been before he met you?

KANEGSON: Yes.

MTG: So this would have been some other project, some other art project that he was doing?

KANEGSON: Yes.

MTG: Did he ever speak about any of the people that he used to work with, like Will Eisner or Jules Feiffer?

KANEGSON: Oh yes. There wasn't anything specific. Will Eisner—and



Play It, Abe!

Abe lettered this *Spirit* story, "The Curse" (Oct. 16, 1949).
© 2012 Will Eisner Studios, Inc.]



Wanna Dance?

This ad for Abe's school appeared in New York City's *The Village Voice* on Jan. 18, 1956.

Comicdom in Color!

The Wonderful World Of 1960s Four-Color Comic Fandom—In All The Hues Of The Rainbow

Introduction & Annotation by Bill Schelly

One of the slight frustrations over the twelve-year publishing history of *Alter Ego* (Vol. 3) is that we've been celebrating what is primarily a four-color medium in monochrome. Now, don't get me wrong: I love black-&-white movies, and I hate colorization. But when it comes to fandom photos, a small but significant number of them are in color.

Now, for the first time, we're tickled (pink?) to be able to present a selection of the best color photographs from comics fandom of the 1960s. Sorry that we don't have room to relate much about the accomplishments of the folks who are shown—but most of them have been mentioned, some

even featured, in earlier issues. (Others will be covered in more depth in future issues.) Some of these photos have been printed in the past, either in *A/E* or elsewhere, but are seen here for the first time in color. Hope you enjoy this special feature!

And, if any of you wish to share your own photos (color or not) from early fannish days, we'd love to see them. You can e-mail me directly at hamstrpres@aol.com. JPEG files work best, and it's best if the filename identifies those depicted, with a date if possible.

And now... *The Wonderful World of Colorful Comicdom!*

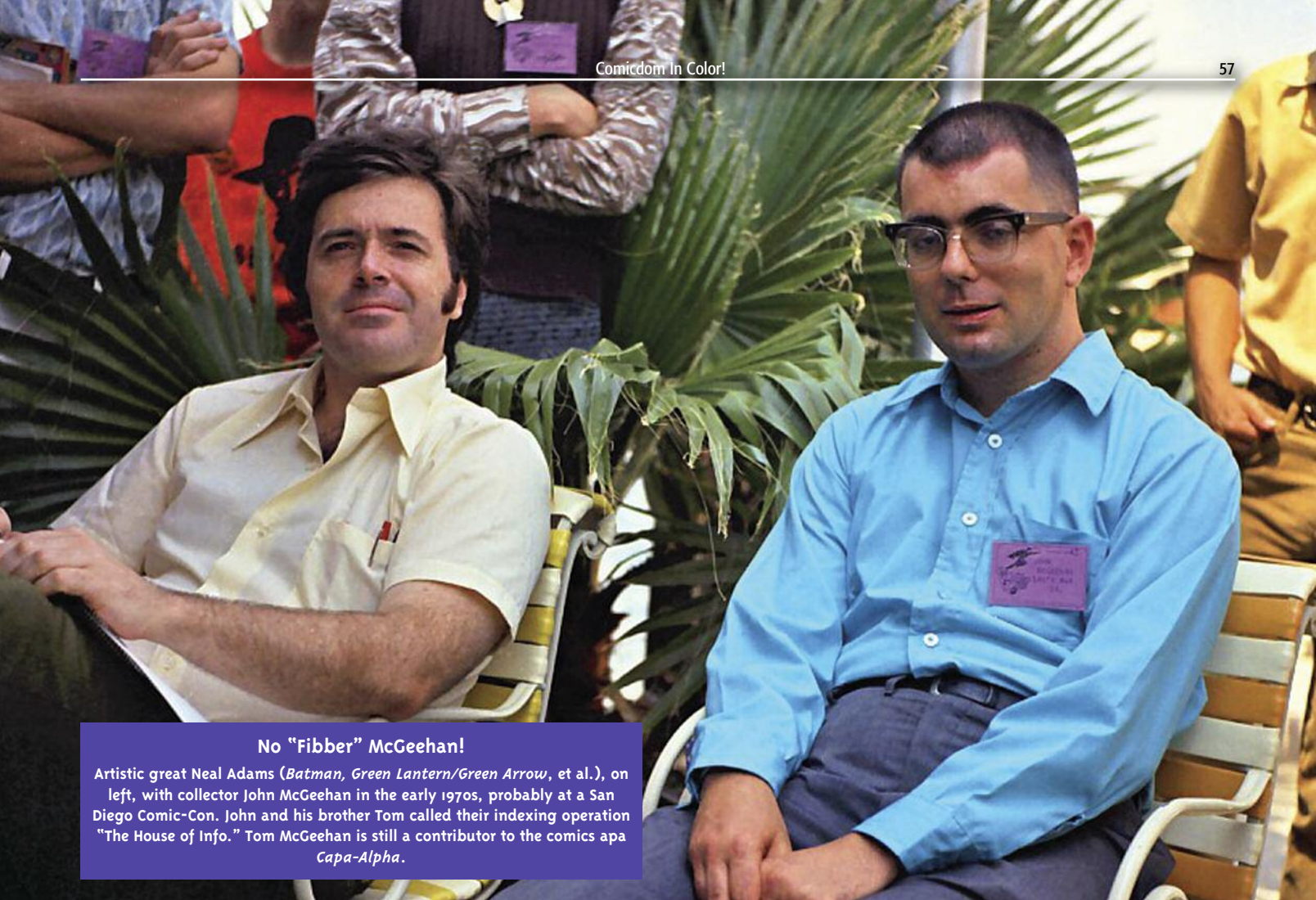


All In Color In Their Prime

(Left to right, top row:) Glen Johnson, Rick Durell, John McGeehan, Eugene Henderson, Bill Spicer. (Front row:) Bob Foster, Chuck McCleary, Richard Kyle, Mike Royer. Perennially prominent fans—publishers—pro artists—you name it! We'll have to leave it to you to come up with their bona fides, but take it from us—they've each got 'em! Photo taken at a California fanclave on December 20, 1965.

**What's Black-&-White
And Green All Over?**
Richard "Grass" Green, one
of the best of the early fan-
artists, was the subject of a
feature story in the Nov. 18,
1978, edition of *The News
Sentinel Roto Magazine*.
[© 2012 the respective
copyright holders.]





No "Fibber" McGeehan!

Artistic great Neal Adams (*Batman, Green Lantern/Green Arrow, et al.*), on left, with collector John McGeehan in the early 1970s, probably at a San Diego Comic-Con. John and his brother Tom called their indexing operation "The House of Info." Tom McGeehan is still a contributor to the comics apa *Capa-Alpha*.



Talented Twosome

Neal Adams again, bearded this time, with ambitious young artist Rich Buckler (*The Avengers, Fantastic Four, et al.*) at one of the Detroit Triple Fan Fairs of the early 1970s.

All Comics Fandom Needed Was Love
(Below:) Gordon Belljohn (G.B.) Love, editor/publisher of *Rocket's Blast-Comicollector*, the adzine juggernaut that played a central role in fandom of the 1960s. Photo probably taken in the early 1970s at a Houston con.



P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA

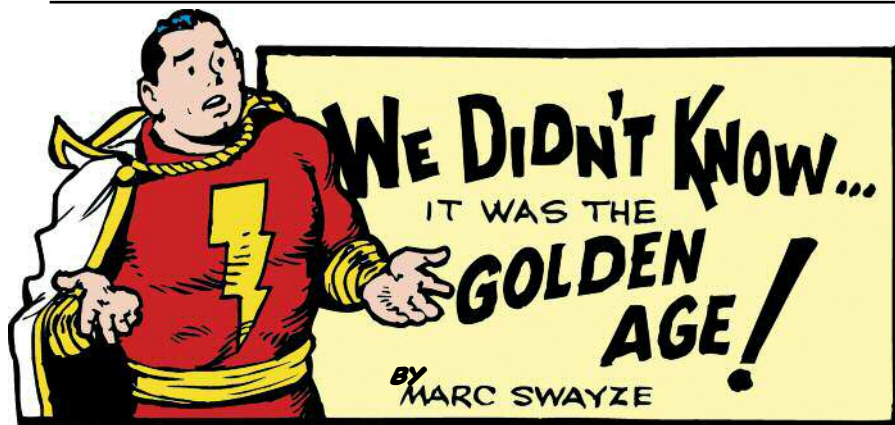
Fawcett Collectors of America

No. 166 Feb. 2012



ROY ALD

Art by Carl Pfeufer & John Jordan - Don Winslow #60, August 1948.
Don Winslow of the Navy TM & © 2012 the respective copyright holders.



[Art & logo ©2012 Marc Swayze; Captain Marvel © & TM 2012 DC Comics]

[FCA EDITORS NOTE: From 1941-53, Marcus D. Swayze was a top artist for Fawcett Publications. The very first Mary Marvel character sketches came from Marc's drawing table, and he illustrated her earliest adventures, including the classic origin story, "Captain Marvel Introduces

ALTER EGO #107
Big BATMAN issue, with an unused Golden Age cover by DICK SPRANG! SHEL DORF interviews SPRANG and JIM MOONEY, with rare and unseen Batman art by BOB KANE, JERRY ROBINSON, WIN MORTIMER, SHELLY MOLDOFF, CHARLES PARIS, and others! Part II of the TONY TALLARICO interview by JIM AMASH! Plus FCA, MR. MONSTER'S COMIC CRYPT, BILL SCHELLY, and more!

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$2.95
http://twomorrows.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=1003

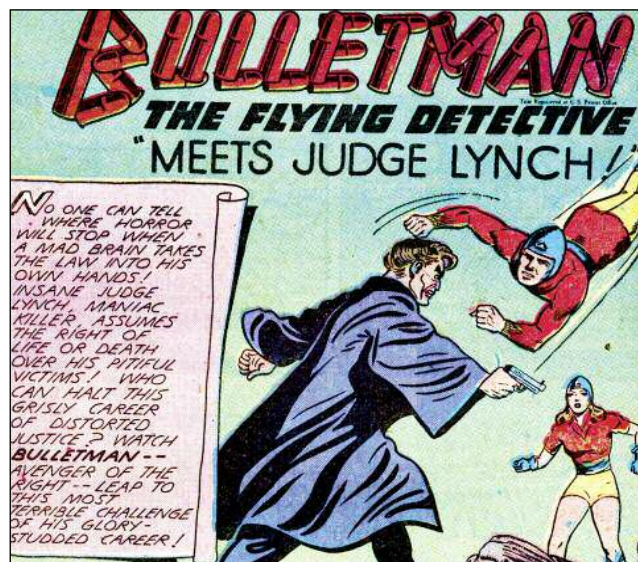
Mary Marvel (Captain Marvel Adventures No. 18, Dec. '42); but he was primarily hired by Fawcett Publications to illustrate Captain Marvel stories and covers for Whiz Comics and Captain Marvel Adventures. He also wrote many Captain Marvel scripts, and continued to do so while in the military. After leaving the service in 1944, he made an arrangement with Fawcett to produce art and stories for them on a freelance basis out of his Louisiana home. There he created both art and stories for The Phantom Eagle in Wow Comics, in addition to drawing the Flyin' Jenny newspaper strip for Bell Syndicate (created by his friend and mentor Russell Keaton). After the cancellation of Wow, Swayze produced artwork for Fawcett's top-selling line of romance comics, including Sweethearts and Life

Story. After the company ceased publishing comics, Marc moved over to Charlton Publications, where he ended his comics career in the mid-'50s. Marc's ongoing professional memoirs have been a vital part of FCA since his first column appeared in FCA #54 (1996). Last time, I discussed with Marc the bylines he used to patchily receive in Wow Comics, as well as his view of Superman. This time around, I asked Marc about two of his Golden Age colleagues... and one minuscule but infamous Captain Marvel villain.

—P.C. Hamerlinck.]

I once asked Marc to share a little about his friendship with the respected Fawcett comics editor, Wendell Crowley:

MARC SWAYZE: I had met with Wendell a couple of times on trips to New York after my discharge from the Army... and, prior to his death in 1970, he came to our house almost annually after the comics ended and after he took over his father's lumber company when on business trips and, we like to believe, to visit with us. Our kids loved the big tall guy... just as we did. When he went to church with us, he lifted his voice singing the hymns as if he had been born and raised in our church.



Comic Camaraderie

Wendell Crowley was the well-regarded editor of *Captain Marvel Adventures*, *Marvel Family*, and related titles, and was literally a giant in directing the myths of the World's Mightiest Mortals, and Marc Swayze warmly remembered about Crowley's visits with him and his family years after Fawcett had ceased publishing their comics line. Above is the C.C. Beck/Pete Costanza-drawn cover for *Marvel Family Comics* #2 (June 1946), edited by Crowley, featuring Shazam's extended family crooning together, just as Wendell did on an occasion with Marc and his family. To its right is a "Bulletman" opening panel from *America's Greatest Comics* #8 (Summer 1943), with inks attributed to Pete Riss, another colleague from the Golden Age that Marc muses over this issue. Penciler unknown. [Shazam! heroes, Bulletman, & Bulletgirl TM & © 2012 DC Comics.]