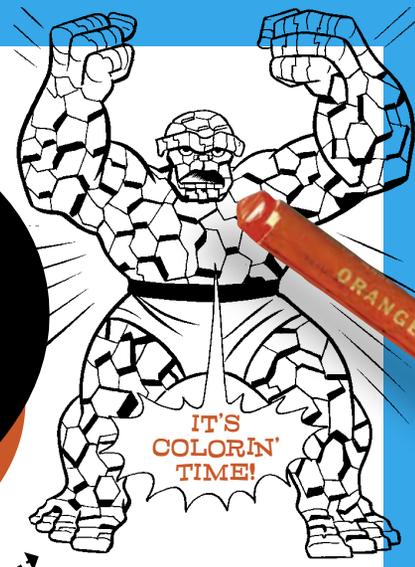




June 2020  
No. 9 \$9.95

# RETRO FAN



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF  
COLORING BOOKS

## Seventies' Captain America REB BROWN

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

## The An EYEwitness Account CYCLOPS

MEET TV'S  
Captain Nice...  
WILLIAM DANIELS



Whipple! Clarl! Madge!  
Behind the  
Commercial  
Characters



SATURDAY MORNING

CARTOON FALL PREVIEWS



Benny Hill Invades America • 8-Track Tapes • Secret ID Quiz & more!

FEATURING ▶ Ernest Farino • Andy Mangels • Scott Saavedra • Scott Shaw! • Michael Eury

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RetroFan fantasy cover by Scott Saavedra

# REB BROWN

## The Motorcycling Captain America of Seventies TV

by Michael Eury

**Muscular, chisel-jawed athlete** Reb Brown started his screen-acting career on the wrong end of a snake attack in the 1973 chiller *Ssssss*. He soon found no end of work making guest appearances in many popular TV series of the Seventies and Eighties including *Kojak*, *Emergency!*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *CHiPs*, *Happy Days*, *Three's Company*, *The Rockford Files*, *The Love Boat*, and *Miami Vice*.

Brown is also no stranger to the big screen, with many of his roles taking advantage of his physicality. His film credits include *Big Wednesday* (1978), *Hardcore* (1979), *Yor, the Hunter from the Future* (1983), *Uncommon Valor* (1983), *The Howling II* (1985), *Death of a Soldier* (1986), *Distant Thunder* (1988), *Space Mutiny* (1988), *Cage* (1989) and *Cage II* (1994), and more recently, *Surge of Power: Revenge of the Sequel* (2016) and *Surge of Dawn* (2019).

Yet to many RetroFans Reb Brown is Captain America, having played Marvel Comics' Sentinel of Liberty in two made-for-TV movies produced by Universal Television that aired on CBS in 1979. Like Christopher Reeve, who at the time had personified DC Comics' Man of Steel in December 1978's big-budget blockbuster *Superman: The Movie*, Brown was the spitting image of the comic-book crusader he portrayed with his broad shoulders, shock of blond hair, and earnest demeanor. Liberties with the subject matter were taken with both *Captain America* movies, sidestepping the traditional World War II setting for a contemporary tale of Steve Rogers, Jr., a drifter/artist given superhuman abilities via the injection of the "FLAG formula."

Pumped up into a super-soldier, Rogers—initially with great reluctance—followed in the footsteps of his father, the original crimefighter dubbed "Captain America," but quickly proved worthy of wearing the legendary patriotic battlesuit.

The airing of Reb Brown's *Captain America* telefilms followed CBS' previous successes with Marvel-inspired live-action series *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Incredible Hulk*, plus a 1978 live-action *Doctor Strange* television movie—all of which were riding a wave of TV super-hero popularity that also included *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Bionic Woman*, and *Wonder Woman*. Despite revving onto the small screen on a red, white, and blue motorcycle—and often bursting into action careening the bike from the back of a van—Brown's Captain America arrived a bit too late to fully enjoy the Seventies' comic-hero trend and his two telefilms unfortunately did not receive the green light for a weekly TV series.



(TOP) Reb Brown revs into action as Captain America. Captain America TM & © Marvel. Photo © Universal Television. Scan courtesy of Andy Mangels. (ABOVE) Reb Brown in 2018 at a store appearance at Krypton Comics in Omaha, Nebraska. Photo by Cornstalker/Wikimedia Commons.

However, impact that Brown's star-spangled performances made upon comic-book fans and children of 1979 has shadowed the actor for decades. Captain America's more recent resurgence in mass-media popularity in the Marvel Studios films of the 2010s has by extension made Reb Brown a familiar face at comic-cons and Hollywood conventions across the country—and as you'll discover while reading this exclusive *RetroFan* interview, the man behind Captain America's cowl (and motorcycle helmet) has the kindness and conviction of a real-life super-hero.

**RetroFan:** You had a lot of guest-starring roles on television before *Captain America*, but how did you get the part of the Star-Spangled Sentinel?

**Reb Brown:** I was under contract at Universal at the time, and Monique James was the head of talent and she set up a meeting with Allan Balter, who was the producer of *Six Million Dollar Man*. We had lunch together and it was like two bears meeting in the woods—we got along. It just seemed to fit. I looked like what they had in mind, and it just seemed to fit.

**RF:** You definitely looked the part. You were very fit then, but did you have to go through more training after you got the role?

**RB:** No. I've been working out since I was 21 years old, my whole life. I was an athlete—I played football, basketball, baseball, I surfed, and was doing heavyweight boxing and martial arts.

**RF:** You were one of the first actors to play a super-hero who had the physical build of a super-hero. Today, Chris Hemsworth as Thor—he bulks up for that, but there was a time a while back, like with Michael Keaton playing Batman, when they built the suit for him. You fit the suit.

**RB:** Yeah. There was no CGI for my Captain America!

**RF:** How familiar with you with Captain America before you got this role?

**RB:** I read the comic book, and there was a cartoon in 1966, where “Captain America throws his mighty shield.”

**RF:** I love it! [sings] “When Captain America throws his mighty shield!” [laughter] The theme is probably better known than the cartoon itself.



Cap unmasked—and un-helmeted! Reb Brown in costume from 1979's first Captain America telemovie. © Universal Television. Courtesy of Andy Mangels.

## Captain America in the Movies and on Television



◀ **1944:** *Captain America* (15-chapter Republic movie serial)—Played by Dick Purcell



◀ **1966:** *Captain America in The Marvel Super Heroes* (syndicated TV cartoon)—Voiced by Sandy Becker



▶ **1979:** *Captain America and Captain America II: Death Too Soon* (TV movies)—Played by Reb Brown



▲ **1980:** *Captain America Public Service Announcement* (animated commercial)—Produced by the U.S. Department of Energy



◀ **1990:** *Captain America* (theatrical movie instead released direct-to-video)—Played by Matt Sallinger



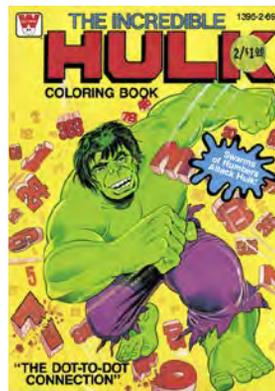
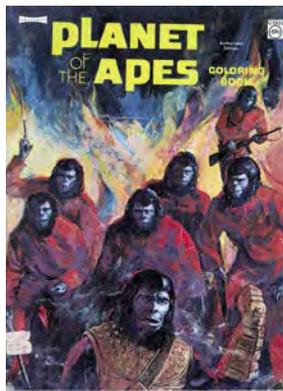
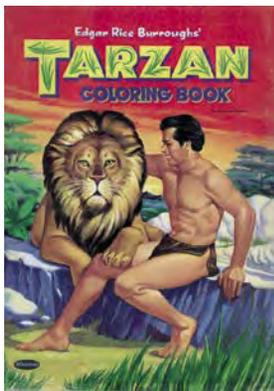
◀ **2011–2019:** *Captain America: The First Avenger* (and other Marvel Studios films)—Played by Chris Evans

Note:  
Captain America has also made numerous appearances in many Marvel animated TV series from the Eighties to today.

Captain America TM & © Marvel.

# The Wonderful World of COLORING BOOKS

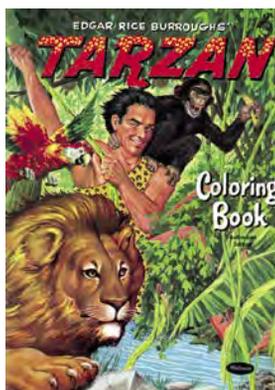
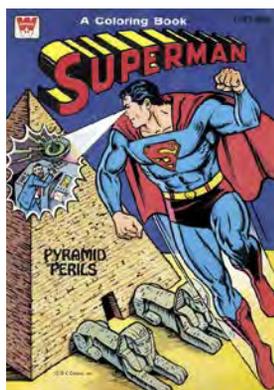
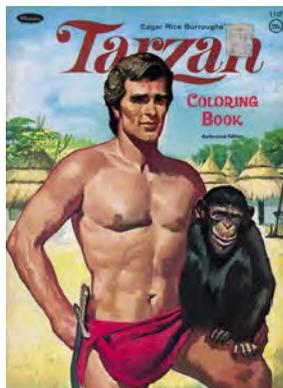
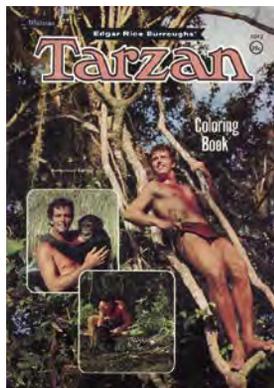
by Joe Pavlansky



Writing on this subject really took me back some decades, to when life was much simpler, cartoons were aplenty, and every shelf at the department store seemed to have a toy on it. I remember many of the joyful activities of my youth, and still today, I attempt to bring some of that feeling back with my many areas of collecting.

But when I started to think about coloring books, not only did my memories come flooding back but also the smell of the paper and crayons. Everything mixing together was almost too much, and I found myself remembering times of being in my G.I. Joe pajamas, eating a bowl of cereal, watching cartoons, and getting ready to color. Let me try and somewhat set the scene for you as I remember it.

The smell of pulp paper fills your nostrils as you lie belly down on the living room floor or take a comfortable seat at the kitchen table. A quick flip of the pages delights your youthful eyes as you see picture after glorious picture of dynamic black-and-white illustrations. The excitement begins to grow as you set the book down and swiftly grab the cardboard box gently resting next to the book. On the cover of the box gleams a bright rainbow of colors that not only draw a smile to your young face, but also starts to get the wheels turning in your head. With so many shades to choose from, the possibilities could be endless. Superman's cape could be green. The sun could be ablaze with a purple glow. The Hulk could be blue mixed with orange and red. Having so many colors and possibilities to choose from, the outcomes could be as endless as our imagination.



Nine of Joe Pavlansky's favorite character-based coloring books. Tarzan © ERB, Inc. Planet of the Apes © 20th Century Fox. Hulk and Captain America © Marvel. Superman © DC Comics. The Shadow © Condé Nast. Courtesy of the author.

# AD MEN & WOMEN

## Favorite Characters From TV Commercials

by Scott Saavedra

When watching television as a kid in the Sixties, if you were too lazy to get up during the commercial breaks (hello) then you were just stuck watching them or doing your best to try and ignore them. This used to be perfectly normal behavior (I guess you had to be there). Channel surfing was only something I did if I couldn't remember what station was broadcasting, say, *Munsters* reruns.

The types of commercials I enjoyed were those for toys and candy, but the memory of them has faded over time. The ones that seemed to really stick featured humorous personalities that described or demonstrated the benefits of the product being sold. The best of these characters were just like you and me but friendlier, and just barely on the sunny side of sanity. Just barely. Remember: repetition is important in commercials. These personas turned out to be well embraced by the consumer. A good thing, because television advertising was pretty lackluster in the previous decade and a half of the medium's short history. Broadcasters treated early efforts as merely radio ads with pictures.

The Bulova Watch Company was the first—in 1941—to broadcast a commercial on television (an image of a clock showing the time). It ran 20 seconds and cost \$9 (a bit less than three pairs of men's socks at Lord & Taylor according to that year's

catalog). Some 4,000 people—exact numbers vary, but about half of all television sets in the U.S.—are said to have seen it. Why, that's fewer people than the 5,360-person population of the fictional small town of Mayberry (watched over by the pair of Fife & Taylor).

Before the use of videotape or film, early commercials were done live. A notorious example of the hazards of that approach was recounted by TV advertising pro Harry Matthei in *American Heritage* (May–June 1977). During a live demonstration of an “easy open” Westinghouse refrigerator, the actress could not cajole the door to open despite her best, most heroic efforts. We late Baby Boomers (and BB-adjacent generations) weren't around to see such sights but we have witnessed (over and over again) Lucille Ball, comically inspired by such incidents, as she tried to sell Vitameatavegamin (a product containing an absurd amount of alcohol) in the “Lucy Does a TV Commercial” episode from the first season of the classic series, *I Love Lucy*. [Editor's note: My wife and I have a “talking” Lucy Vitameatavegamin Christmas ornament!]

Jingles, dancing cigarette boxes, and animated mascots like Alka-Seltzer's Speedy (voiced by Dick Beals) became popular as advertisers worked to compete with each other. Human product trademarks were also featured. In the Fifties, “Betty Crocker” would appear near the end of the television ad to help make the sale. But “Betty,” sadly, was a bit of a stiff.

As I said, that changed by the Sixties. The agreeably odd product salespersons were the stars of the ads and not a tacked-on sales device. And when they became popular (and helped move product), we devoted TV viewers saw their weirdly

(ABOVE) *I Love Lucy* features many beloved episodes out of the 180 produced, but the first season's “Lucy Does a TV Commercial” has got to rate among the best. Here Lucy as played by Lucille Ball is beginning to feel the unsteady effects of the product she's trying to sell, Vitameatavegamin. © CBS.



In this 1966 commercial, Josephine the Plumber, as played by acting veteran Jane Withers, really likes her Comet. © KIK Custom Products, Inc. (BELOW) Before she ever put on plumber's overalls, Jane Withers was a successful child star of the Thirties. Withers and an unsettling ventriloquist's dummy (is there any other kind?) share this half-sheet for *45 Fathers* (1937). © 20th Century Fox.



specific, repetitive adventures play out in 30-second increments over months and even years. Let's meet some of them, okay? Okay.

### Josephine the Plumber and the Swamp Wizard

I always accepted the notion of Comet cleanser's Josephine the Plumber as a plumber. She wore appropriate work clothes and was often seen around sinks, which was, I assumed, a popular focus of plumber attention. She even fixed a sink or two. Of course, no plumber anyone has ever hired concerned themselves so much with getting out stains "that other leading cleansers can't" as did Josephine. Josephine's single-minded pursuit of excellence in sink cleaning lasted over a decade, from 1963 to 1974, making her a hugely successful creation with as many as 20 different (I use that word loosely) installments of her story told each year.

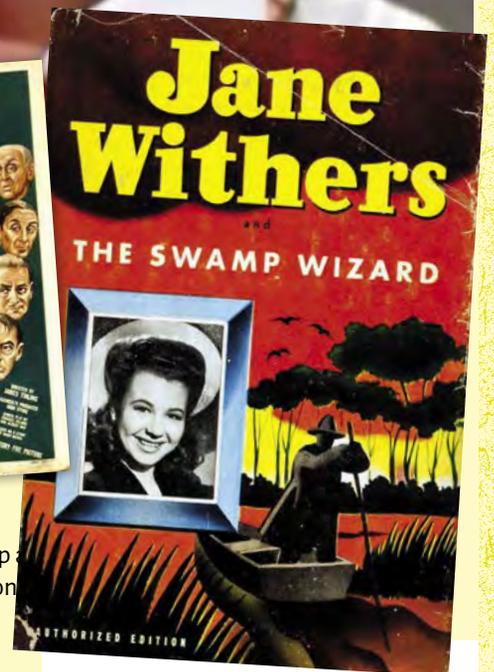
One of the more shocking Josephine commercials featured a very young Robby Benson as a lad preparing to put on a sandwich board. The front of the board read, "Josephine says DON'T USE COMET." Robby, clearly upset, thinks that such a sign was, and I'm quoting here, "naughty." Josephine comforts young Robby by showing him the other side of the sign, "USE NEW SUPER STAIN-REMOVING COMET." Robby was eye-poppingly relieved as

Josephine then held up a can of Comet and had the craziest look on her face.

Josephine was played with a certain amped-up flare by actress Jane Withers. Withers' acting career began, well, before she was even alive. Her mother wanted a girl so the child could have the show business career she herself missed. Withers frequently told the story of how her mother (pre-child birth) would look at movie theater marquee

and try to come up with a name that would look good up in lights and go with the family name. Say what you will about Mother Withers' plan (and I'm trying hard not to say anything), she was right and Jane Withers was born—in 1926—a natural.

Withers' big break came when she was cast as a mean kid opposite sweet little Shirley Temple in the 1934 film, *Bright Eyes*.



*Jane Withers and the Swamp Wizard* (1944), by Kathryn Heisenfelt. The fascinating [www.series-books.com](http://www.series-books.com) calls the ending "bizarre and unsettling" and leaves the reader feeling "creepy and repulsed."



# Captain Nice

*The Short and Happy Flight of America's Insecure Superman*

by Dan Hagen

"Watch out for the fallout!" Carter called. "I'm going to take the potion!"  
"Do it, boy!"

There was a blinding explosion! A cloud of smoke billowed up from behind the couch! A sulphurous odor filled the air! Then a figure, choking, eyes tearing, stepped from the smoke. It was:

Captain Nice!

He spread his arms, lifting his cape, revealing the lettering on the chest of his red, white and blue uniform. His muscles bulged, his jaw jutted, his steely eyes glinted.

"And to think!" Mrs. Nash murmured. "A moment ago, that was my finky son, Carter!"

"It's still me, Mother," Captain Nice said. "No matter what I become, I'll always be your son."

— William Johnston, *Captain Nice* paperback novel (1967)



On the evening of January 9, 1967, NBC viewers were treated for the first time to these sprightly, though not deathless, lyrics:

Look! It's the man who flies around like an eagle.

Look! It's the enemy of all that's illegal.

Look! At the muscles on those arms, they're like hammers.

Look! It's the nut who walks around in pajamas.

That's no nut, boy, that's Captain Nice.

Nice! Nice! Nice! Nice! Nice!

The theme song was written by Brooklyn-born composer Vic Mizzy, who'd also penned the catchy themes to *Green Acres* and *The Addams Family*. Mizzy didn't find *Captain Nice* funny, and the show's creator Buck Henry, in turn, didn't care for Mizzy's theme song. He'd have preferred to punctuate his comedy with an instrumental theme, like the one Irving Szathmary had written for Henry's other parody sitcom, *Get Smart*.

ABC's *Batman* had become TV's surprise hit the year before, a fact not lost on the other two networks. Debuting the same night

(TOP) Able to bend steel in his bare hands! William Daniels in a publicity photo for *Captain Nice*. © NBC. (ABOVE) Jack "King" Kirby's promotional poster for NBC's *Captain Nice*. Courtesy of The Jack Kirby Collector. © NBC.

as *Captain Nice*, actor Stephen Strimpell gained the strength of a thousand men and the ability to fly in another Superman spoof, the CBS sitcom *Mr. Terrific*. Pretty much a yawn.

*Captain Nice* ran opposite CBS's sitcom *The Lucy Show* and ABC's World War II adventure *Rat Patrol*. The critics ran from cold to lukewarm to warm, at least preferring the show to *Mr. Terrific*.

In the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, Bob Hull said *Captain Nice* and *Mr. Terrific* were "embarrassing likenesses in theme,

costume and gag." But both the *Boston Globe* and the *Detroit Free Press* used the phrase "Nice is nicer."

In the *New York Times*, George Gent said *Captain Nice* "...at least gave some evidence of a sense of style." In the *Washington Evening Star*, Bernie Harrison called the show smartly written, brisk, and ingenious.

In retrospect, it's clear that NBC had the fresher approach. "The show was just irreverent enough to make it work both as spoof and super-hero," recalls fan Chuck Rothman. "Carter was never as dumb as Maxwell Smart, but often had problems trying to live up to the super-hero lifestyle."

Buck Henry, in creating his clever but largely unappreciated show, anticipated with comic effect something that might happen in real life if some masked, super-strong fellow were to fly around doing good deeds.

We imagine helpless, grateful citizens being overawed, and look-up-in-the-sky-ing, but very, very quickly we'd get used to him, just as we get used to every impossible thing that happens—men landing on the Moon, Japanese nuclear reactors poisoning the Pacific, walking around with *Star Trek* communicators in our hands, and so forth.

Henry's satire was deft. I remember laughing at an episode in which a highway bridge, ruined by corrupt contractors, collapses during its dedication ceremony. When police chemist Carter Nash (William Daniels) appears as Captain Nice to catch the bridge and save the day, the mayor wonders if he wouldn't mind just standing there to support the bridge permanently.

Cheryl Spoehr, a fan of *Captain Nice*, recalls, "I loved the way he defended the whole concept of comic-book heroes, as well as showing how a real person might be if they got powers. He never liked the taste of his super-serum, often getting a stomach ache from it... and he was the only sane and moral man in his hometown."

A couple of decades after the show's early demise, Daniels put it down to the audience's inability to cheer for an "insecure Superman." But after all, Henry's *Get Smart* featured an inept super-spy and ran five seasons. Later, Daniels said CBS's decision to air *Mr. Terrific* a half-hour before NBC's *Captain Nice* really hurt both shows.

*Mr. Terrific* starred Strimpell as Stanley Beamish, a filling-station operator whose unique biochemistry permitted him

## FAST FACTS

### Captain Nice

- ▶ **No. of seasons:** One
- ▶ **No. of episodes:** 15
- ▶ **Original run:** January 9, 1967–August 28, 1967
- ▶ **Primary Cast:** William Daniels, Alice Ghostley, Ann Prentiss
- ▶ **Created by:** Buck Henry
- ▶ **Network:** NBC

to pop a government-developed power pill and become a flying, super-strong secret agent for a maximum of 100 minutes.

To the general audience, both *Mr. Terrific* and *Captain Nice* were obviously Superman parodies. But the two protagonists also resembled a largely forgotten DC Comics superhero, Hourman. He, too, had gotten his time-limited powers of strength and speed from a wonder drug. In fact, both sitcoms were sometimes criticized because of America's growing uneasiness about drugs.

With the *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman!* musical having just closed on Broadway and four live-action superheroes (*Batman*, *The Green Hornet*, *Captain Nice*, and *Mr. Terrific*) on TV's three networks, maybe it was just a case of "capelash," as one wit suggested.

But in fact, Daniels' "insecure Superman," played for laughs, anticipated the evolution of less campy super-hero stories in later decades.

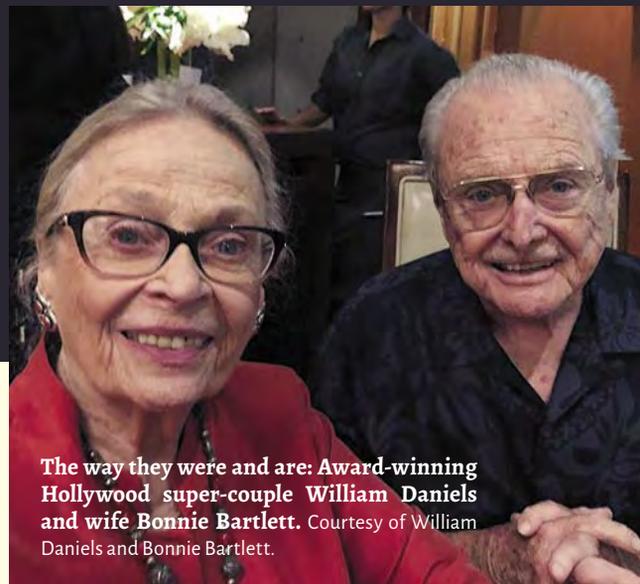
Publicity photo of *Captain Nice* stars William Daniels and Ann Prentiss. © NBC.



# William Daniels and Bonnie Bartlett

by Dan Hagen

RETRO  
INTERVIEW



The way they were and are: Award-winning Hollywood super-couple William Daniels and wife Bonnie Bartlett. Courtesy of William Daniels and Bonnie Bartlett.

He's been, among other things, John Adams, the Graduate's dad, a super-hero, a surgeon, and the voice of a car.

Born in Brooklyn in 1927, William Daniels was a child performer from the age of three who, in 1960, earned critical acclaim and an Obie Award in Edward Albee's play *Zoo Story*.

He's had notable roles in numerous memorable movies, including *A Thousand Clowns* (1965), *The Graduate* (1967), *The President's Analyst* (1967), *Two for the Road* (1967), *Marlowe* (1969), and *The Parallax View* (1974).

Daniels originated the role of John Adams in the 1969 Broadway musical *1776*, and played the part again in the 1972 film version.

His starring TV roles included *Captain Nice* (1967), Mr. Feeny in the ABC sitcom *Boy Meets World* (1993–2000), and two TV series at once during the Eighties. Daniels was Dr. Mark Craig in the critically

acclaimed *St. Elsewhere* (1982–1988) and the distinctive voice of KITT the supercar in the popular *Knight Rider*

(1982–1986). Daniels won two Emmys for *St. Elsewhere*, and Bonnie Bartlett—who has been Daniels' wife since 1951—also won one. He was president of the Screen Actors Guild from 1999 to 2001.

"When strangers recognized me in public they still didn't know my name, but they remembered the uptight doctor in that hospital show," Daniels recalled in his memoir *I'd Rather Be Elsewhere*. "It's an odd way to live, but there are many actors and actresses who have had the same experience. ... We don't end up on the cover of *People* magazine. But many of us without name recognition make a fine living, put our kids through college, and, if we're lucky, enjoy long careers precisely

because we can play many different kinds of roles. We're not typecast. That's the reason I am still working in my late 80s.

"As a character actor I became a star, but a very small one, and I saw time and again how the big stars—the leading men—surrounded by sycophants, lost their sense of reality and then lost everything: their families, their marriages, and, in some cases, their lives."

**RetroFan:** Are your grandchildren aware that you were once a comic-book super-hero?

**William Daniels:** I don't...

**Bonnie Bartlett:** Yeah, Liam.

**WD:** Does Liam know that?



# Saturday Morning Preview Specials

Jack Burns and Avery Schreiber are surrounded by ABC's stars in this promo for the 1973 *Saturday Morning Sneak Peek* program.

## Part One: 1968–1977

by Andy Mangels

**Welcome back to** *Andy Mangels' Retro Saturday Morning*. Since 1989, I have been writing columns for magazines in the U.S. and foreign countries, all examining the intersection of comic books and Hollywood, whether animation or live-action. *Andy Mangels Backstage*, *Andy Mangels' Reel Marvel*, *Andy Mangels' Hollywood Heroes*, *Andy Mangels Behind the Camera*... three decades of reporting on animation and live-action—in addition to writing many books and producing around 40 DVD sets—and I'm still enthusiastic. In my *RetroFan* column, I will examine shows that thrilled us from yesteryear, exciting our imaginations and capturing our memories. Grab some milk and cereal, sit cross-legged leaning against the couch, and dig in to *Retro Saturday Morning!*

**Normally in this** column, I have spotlighted one series or set of series, giving you behind-the-scenes stories, cool factoids, and interviews. In this column and the next, I'll instead be giving you the *Retro Saturday Morning* treatment of one of the most anticipated shows every fall from 1968 forward... the *Saturday Morning Preview Special*.

In the September 26, 2008 issue of *TIME* magazine, *Family Guy*'s Seth MacFarlane gave his own thoughts on the

phenomenon: "I was obsessed. Every year, the Friday before the new Saturday-morning shows would premiere, the networks would do this big preview special, and I was always glued to the TV. As horrible as they were, they were entertaining at the time. There was a lot of showmanship from the networks based around the new lineup."

The problem with nostalgia for the *Preview Specials* is that they were never ever aired *once*. They were never rerun, never offered in syndication, and never released on home video, DVD, or streaming. Because of the cross-platform licensing rights for clips and music, they never *can* be legally released. Some of them exist in parts and pieces on YouTube—a few of them exist completely there—but by and large, this set of shows is a missing part of television history. Very little has been written about them, and even Wikipedia has many of its crowd-sourced facts wrong.

Until now.

Now there's *RetroFan* to the rescue. Utilizing this author's amazing resources, here is as much information and material that could be dug up on the astonishing phenomenon of *Saturday Morning Preview Specials!* Beware, though... proceeding without caution can bring untold emotions, unfettered joy, and quite possibly, madness!

### 1968 NBC - Meet the Banana Splits

**Airdate:** Friday, September 6, 1968, 9pm, 30 minutes

**Song:** "You're The Lovin' End" (Banana Splits)

Produced by Hanna-Barbera Productions

This is the first Saturday Morning Preview Special ever aired, and the formula for such shows was not yet in place. As NBC had only one new series debuting in the fall on 1969, this special mostly previewed that series only. The half-hour show was hosted by the Banana Splits, and contained segments of early episodes of the series that would debut the following morning: *Kellogg Presents The Banana Splits Adventure Hour*.

The Banana Splits were four large, furry creatures who lived in their dream house Banana Pad, and played in a rock band. They were FleeGLE the dog guitar player (suit actor: Jeff Winkless a.k.a. Jeffrey Brock; voice actor: Paul Winchell), Drooper the lion guitarist (suit actor: Dan Winkless a.k.a. Daniel Owen; voice actor: Daws Butler), Bingo the gorilla drummer (suit actor: Terence H. Winkless a.k.a. Terence Henry; voice actor: Daws Butler), and Snorky the semi-mute elephant keyboard player (suit actor: Robert Towers). Other elements from their show, introduced on this special were the live-action serial *Danger Island*, and two animated segments, *The Arabian Knights* and *The Three Musketeers*.

It is unclear whether or not other returning Saturday morning NBC shows were mentioned in the special, though it is likely they were. The season also included *Super Six*, *The Flintstones*, *Top Cat*, *Underdog*, *Birdman and the Galaxy Trio*, and *Super President*.



Press photo for the 1969 ABC Special, showing Edward Mulhare's sea captain ghost on the television, and Hope Lange's Mrs. Muir looking on. © 20th Century Fox Television (INSET) An ABC Super Saturday Club sticker.

### 1969 ABC - The Ghost and Mrs. Muir Present the ABC Super Saturday Club Special

**Airdate:** Thursday, September 4, 1969, 7:30pm, 60 minutes

Produced and directed by Bob Henry

This awkwardly named special crystallized the form almost every successive special would take, combining live-action stars, music, clips from a variety of series, and non-canonical appearances by television characters not in their natural habitat. In this case, the stars were from an ABC series titled *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, in which Hope Lange played widowed writer Carolyn Muir, and Edward Mulhare haunted her as the ghostly sea captain Daniel Gregg. Also appearing were fellow cast members Reta Shaw, Charles Nelson Reilly, Kellie Flanagan, Harlan Carraher, and dog Scruffy. Making a guest appearance in the episode was Jonathan Frid, in character as his 175-year-old vampiric Barnabas Collins from the ultra-successful gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows*.

During the special, the live-action band the Hardy Boys (Deven English, Nibs Solpysiak, Bob Crowder, Reid Kailing, and Jeff Taylor) materialized in one scene, to perform a song and to promote their new Filmation series, *The Hardy Boys*. Other shows promoted on the special were new entries debuting that weekend: *Smokey the Bear*, *The Cattanooga Cats* (including segments of *Motormouse and Autocat* and *It's The Wolf*), *Hot Wheels*, and *Sky Hawks*.

In addition to this special, ABC advertised and promoted a Super Saturday Club for kids to join. Members received a pinback badge, membership card, pennant, montage poster of cartoon characters, stamp album, sticker decals, a club membership book, and premium coupons. Promised for the future were newsletters.



Promo image for the *Meet the Banana Splits* special. In the back (LEFT TO RIGHT) are FleeGLE, Snorky, and Bingo, while Drooper sits in front. © Hanna-Barbera Prod.



# The Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention

by Michael Eury

Imagine a minefield of movie posters, celebrity autographs, DVDs of rare films and TV shows, trading cards, comic books, Baby Boomer-era toys, cartoon collectibles, LPs and 45s, and cinema-related books (of all vintages), loaded to explode with warm memories at every step. Whether you're looking for an original *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* one-sheet or an autograph of Lash LaRue or a *Captain Kangaroo* comic book or a *Frankenstein* T-shirt, this is your destination. Now picture a 24-7 movie room with classic and cult film showings, plus late-night horror screenings. And a full slate of scintillating seminars exploring everything from the long-credited *Batman* co-creator Bill Finger to old-time radio reenactments. And an assemblage of familiar faces from the small and big screens, like Loretta Swit, *M\*A\*S\*H*'s own "Hot Lips" Houlihan, live and in person, waiting to meet you. No, this isn't an impossible dream—this extraordinary three-day event exists, once a year. It's the Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention (MANC), held each September in Hunt Valley, Maryland, just outside of Baltimore.

I attended MANC for the first time last year, on September 12–14, 2019, to promote *RetroFan* and other TwoMorrows

publications. When I'm a guest at these conventions, whose audiences skew older than this magazine, I often cast about the convention aisles, hoping for a moment of my way to discover my warehouse of vintage comics-history magazine *Batman* (and other comics-history books). But a moment later—a man out—I was among my friends wearing a *West* T-shirt. And the Yul Brynner *Seven Years in Tibet* T-shirt. And the friendly fan that interviewed me about my portrayal of random Mayberry episodes of *The Andy Griffith Show*.

## Convention History

From programming to guest appearances, the Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention is a blast of throwback to what conventions were. The convention's organizer Martin Grams, Jr., the author of books and articles about some of the same topics you find in our very pages

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