

# Alter Ego™

# CENTENNIAL

Edited by  
**ROY  
THOMAS**



**Celebrating  
100 issues—  
and 50 years—  
of the  
legendary  
comics fanzine**

BUCKLER  
& ORDWAY



Editor  
Roy Thomas  
Associate Editors  
Bill Schelly  
Jim Amash  
Design & Layout  
Christopher Day  
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 Artist  
Rich Buckler (pencils)  
& Jerry Ordway (inks)

Cover Colorist  
Tom Ziuko



110  
after  
ORDWAY  
1985  
after  
HASEN  
1947

**On Our Cover:** *Some years back, Ye Editor commissioned artist Rich Buckler to re-pencil the magnificent interior “cover” featuring the 1941 Justice-Society of America (plus soon-to-be-member Wonder Woman) that he’d drawn for the All-Star Squadron Preview in Justice League of America #193 (Sept. 1981). This time, the art would be inked by Jerry Ordway, who’d embellished the 14-page introductory tale that had followed it—while the incongruous non-JSAer Shining Knight would be replaced, fittingly, by Starman. It’s been one of the treasures of Roy’s personal collection ever since. [JSA TM & ©2011 DC Comics.]*

**Above:** *For this 100th issue, Shane Foley depicted our “maskots” Alter Ego and Captain Ego—and RT himself, garbed like the late-’30s Crimson Avenger—in an artful homage to Jerry Ordway’s cover for Infinity, Inc. #10 (Jan. 1985)—and ultimately to Irwin Hasen’s for All-Star Comics #37 (Oct.-Nov. 1947). Thanks a zillion, Shane—but why The Crimson Avenger? Roy always saw himself as more the Atom type! Oh, and thanks to Randy Sargent for the coloring. [Alter Ego TM & ©2011 Roy & Dann Thomas – costume designed by Ron Harris; Captain Ego TM & ©2011 Roy Thomas & Bill Schelly – created by Biljo White; other art elements ©2011 Shane Foley.]*

## Contents

<b>Writer/Editorial: The First Hundred Issues Are The Hardest! . . .</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>“I Want To Do It All Again!” . . . . .</b>	<b>6</b>
Roy Thomas talks about the 1980s at DC Comics—Schwartz, warts, and all.	
<b>Interlude I: The Wright Stuff—1940s Version . . . . .</b>	<b>26</b>
Pulsating Golden Age pin-ups by our own dazzin’ doctor of digitalization, Alex Wright.	
<b>Interlude II: Stretching A Point . . . . .</b>	<b>31</b>
RT’s 1964 spec DC script—thrillingly illustrated by Larry Guidry & Shane Foley.	
<b>The Annotated Alter-Ego #1 . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
A 1965/2011 look backward at the origins of Jerry Bails’ epoch-making 1961 fanzine.	
<b>The Missourian Chronicles . . . . .</b>	<b>84</b>
Brief tributes to <i>Alter Ego</i> and (ulp!) to its ebullient editor, courtesy of Jerry K. Boyd.	
<b>“A Lot Of These Guys Have Great Stories To Tell!” . . . . .</b>	<b>106</b>
Bruce D. MacIntosh turns the tables on <i>A/E</i> ace interviewer Jim Amash.	
<b>Mr. Monster’s Comic Crypt!: Michael T. – The Fanzine Years! . .</b>	<b>113</b>
The gregarious Mr. Gilbert serves as tour guide to artifacts of his early life and career.	
<b>A Tribute To Mike Esposito . . . . .</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Comic Fandom Archive: <i>The 1964 Super Hero Calendar</i> . .</b>	<b>125</b>
Bill Schelly & Bernie Bubnis & one of the great early fandom projects.	
<b>re: [correspondence, comments, &amp; corrections] . . . . .</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>FCA [<i>Fawcett Collectors Of America</i>] #159 . . . . .</b>	<b>143</b>
P.C. Hamerlinck presents Marc Swayze, Captain Marvel, the All-Star Squadron—and <i>Spider-Man</i> ?	



# “I Want To Do It All Again!”

## ROY THOMAS Talks About The 1980s at DC Comics—Schwartz, Warts, And All!

Conducted by Jim Amash  
Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

**T**he first decade and a half of Roy Thomas' comic book career was spent writing and editing for Marvel, as we discussed in interviews in A/E #50 & 70. For this anniversary issue, we felt it was time to step into the 1980s and see, from Roy's perspective, what it was like working for DC Comics on features such as Wonder Woman, All-Star Squadron, Infinity, Inc., Young All-Stars, Arak/Son of Thunder, Shazam! The New Beginning, Secret Origins, and Captain Carrot, among other titles. One might think scribing stories of his childhood favorites plus a bunch of newly minted heroes would be a pure blessing for any writer, but there were a number of bumps in the road, which Roy doesn't shy away from discussing. While some fans may prefer Roy's previous Marvel work, I find his DC work to be just as interesting and possibly more varied in style and substance than the work that brought him to a prominent position in the four-color world of comics. Not a bad way to spend a decade, huh? —Jim.



### “Grand Gestures”

**JIM AMASH:** You left Marvel for DC in 1980. How did you initiate contact with DC?

**ROY THOMAS:** I didn't. I'd been in contact, off and on. Carmine [Infantino, DC publisher] had talked to me about my coming over to DC around the time I left the editor-in-chief job at Marvel in '74, and even before that, but I really wanted to stay at Marvel, partly out of loyalty to Stan [Lee]. Around the turn of '76, I met [new DC publisher] Jenette Kahn. We even dated a couple of times, since by then I was separated from [my first wife] Jeanie for the final time. I met Jenette through [inker/DC assistant art director] Vinnie Colletta—who else?

She and one or two others at DC made it plain that, if I wasn't happy at Marvel—and they knew that increasingly I wasn't, after Jim Shooter became editor—I could have a job at DC. I couldn't be a writer/editor there, since they didn't have that position then, but I was assured I'd have



### All-Star Squadroom

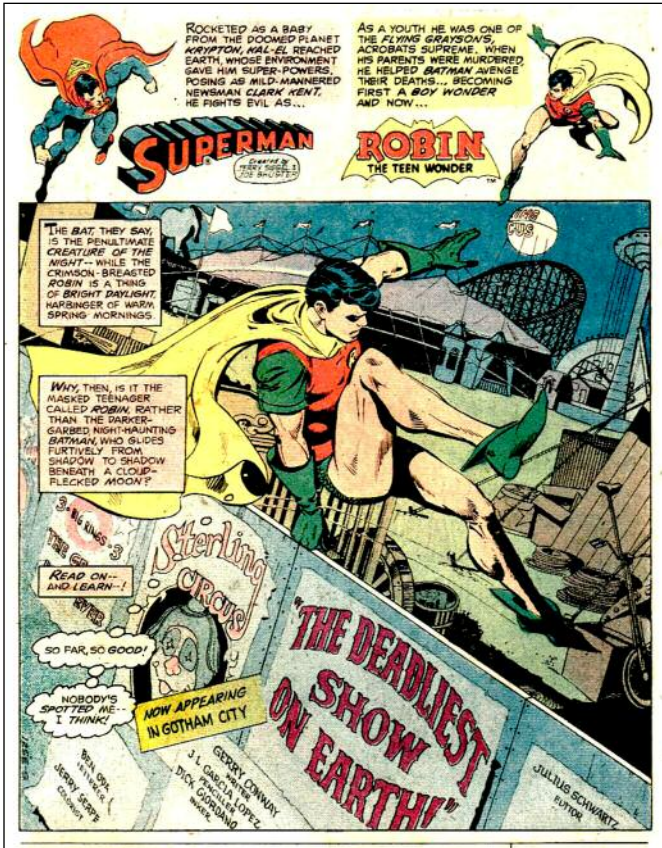
Roy in the 1980s, conducting historical research for *All-Star Squadron* in Winston Churchill's underground London bunker from World War II days—juxtaposed with the Rich Buckler-penciled, Dick Giordano-inked cover of *All-Star Squadron* #1 (Sept. 1981), RT's personal favorite among covers drawn for comics he wrote at DC—or anywhere else! Thanks to Gene Reed for the scan; photo by Dann Thomas. [Cover ©2011 DC Comics.]

something close to editorial authority over the scripts I wrote. So when I had my final blow-up with Shooter, I phoned Paul Levitz—he was editorial coordinator then—and told him I wanted to leave Marvel, since I felt Shooter had dealt less than honorably with me with regard to contract negotiations, something I took very personally and very hard. Paul said, “Fine,” and that was that. I promptly informed Shooter I was leaving when my contract ran out later that year. I didn't try to negotiate with Marvel. Well, actually, [publisher] Stan and [president] Jim Galton had me drop by the Marvel offices to talk when I came to New York to meet with DC in the interim, but by then it was pretty much too late, since they hadn't any real assurances to offer. What was done was done.

**JA:** How did it make you feel to have to give up being your own editor? Because that changed everything for you, really.

**THOMAS:** It was being changed anyway, since part of the disagreement between Shooter and me was that I'd told him I wouldn't sign another contract with Marvel unless it was another writer/editor contract. [NOTE: See A/E #70 for Roy's detailed account.] That was what I felt he'd been dishonest with me about—at the very least, in a Clintonesque





**Now It Can Be Told!**

During the final days of his Marvel contract in 1980, Roy did fudge just a little bit and secretly help out his busy buddy Gerry Conway by dialoguing the above two stories Gerry had plotted for *DC Comics Presents* #31 & #32 (March & April 1981). Roy's memory is that editor Julius Schwartz (shown at the 1998 San Diego Comic-Con, with Roy standing behind him) didn't know about the subterfuge. Hope you can read the art credits! Thanks to Jim Ludwig. [©2011 DC Comics.]

sense. I figured, if I'm *not* going to be an editor at Marvel, what the hell?—I might as well *not* be an editor at DC. Maybe it was time to seize the opportunity to work with the JSA and features like that. It's not that I was all that wild about DC's set-up. But [editor] Julie Schwartz, after all, had been my first real contact in the field—and I thought, well, recent Marvel émigré [writer] Marv Wolfman was doing okay there. So, I figured, after fifteen years at Marvel, I might as well exit while I had a little capital left, rather than let it be frittered away at Marvel over the next few years—assuming I'd have lasted that long, which I sincerely doubted.

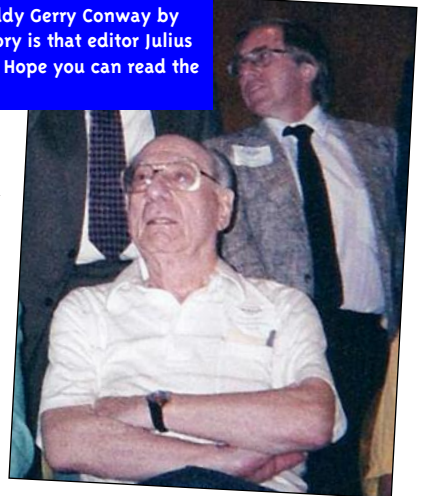
**JA:** Did your DC contract have a length, or a quota of pages per month?

**THOMAS:** It was a three-year contract; it called for a certain number of pages each month, but I don't recall exactly how many. My Marvel contract had called for 100 pages' worth of writing a month, with some of that covered by editorial work I did. The DC contract guaranteed a similar amount of work; I don't believe I lost much if any money in the switch, though I don't believe I gained any, either. I ended up doing three books a month that were well over 20 pages apiece, plus some specials.

**JA:** You wrote *The Fortress of Solitude*.

**THOMAS:** That *Solitude* tabloid was one of the first things I did for DC. While I was still under contract to Marvel, I met with the triumvirate of Jenette, Paul, and Joe Orlando, who'd flown Dann and me to New York. Jenette made a grand gesture: when Dann and I checked into our room at a nice hotel, it was filled with balloons. We were both amused and touched. But considerably few grand gestures were made at the meeting, and I was left dealing with just Joe after the first few minutes. Before she and Paul left, Jenette said to me, "I know you'd like to do something with the Justice Society." The modern-day "JSA" series had recently been cancelled, so I said I'd prefer to do a World War II mutation of it, and that

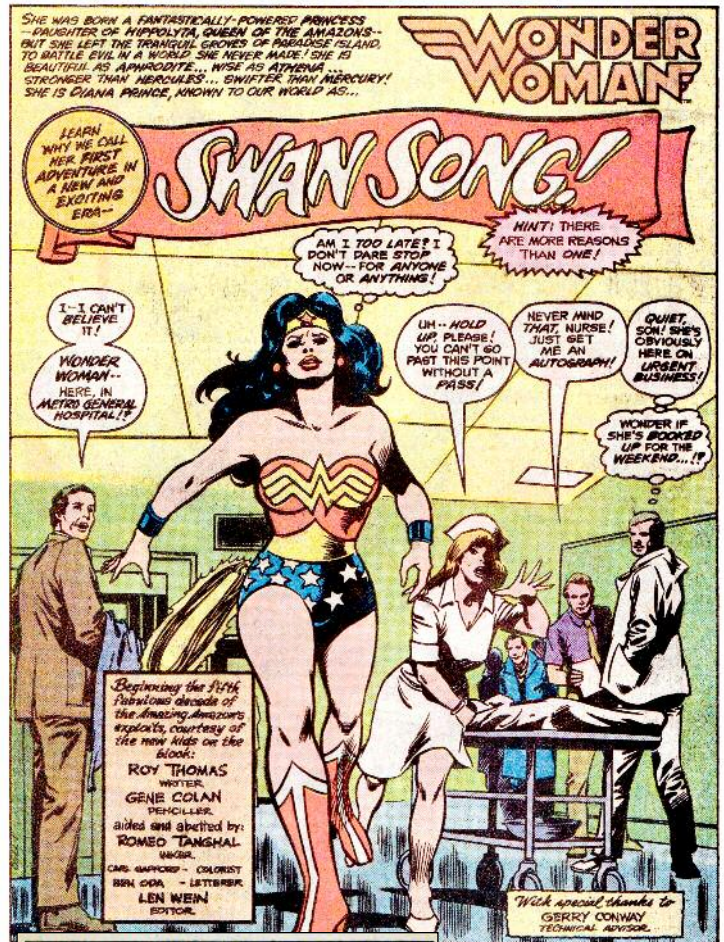
was quickly agreed to. DC also wanted me to create a sword-and-sorcery book, since the main two *Conan* titles had sold so well under me at Marvel. I also said I'd love to do "Captain Marvel," but they weren't interested in starting another *Shazam!* book right away; the feature had recently been discontinued, and besides, they still didn't own those characters outright. They also nixed my suggestion that day of a *Dr. Fate* comic.



Meanwhile, DC had other writers—Bob Rozakis, Jim Starlin, Jack C. Harris—plot stories that I could dialogue as soon as I was free to legally do so. I didn't ask them to do that; I didn't even *want* them to do it. I didn't like the idea that my first DC work would be stories on which I was only the second-listed of two writers, but if that's what they wanted, I felt I shouldn't object. Also, for the *DC Comics Presents* title Julie edited, I gave Gerry Conway my idea for a "Superman/Captain Marvel" story I really wanted to do, and Gerry fleshed it out and of course got plotting credit (and payment) for it [as issue #33]. They also had me writing a special or two the moment I legally could, most involving Superman.

Carmine always reminds me that at one stage he'd wanted me to come over to DC and handle all the "Superman" material... but in 1980 I told Jenette, Paul, and Joe that I didn't want to work on either "Superman" or "Batman" on a regular basis, because there were other writers doing those characters. After all, I'd even given up writing *Fantastic Four* when The





**Everybody's Here But George Clooney!**  
 When Roy read A/E's sister mag *Back Issue!* #41 (July 2010), containing Dewey Cassell's study of the Thomas/Colan *Wonder Woman*, he was startled to behold a penciled splash for #288 (Feb. 1982) that didn't match the one in the printed issue! Roy's synopsis had called for that splash to strongly echo the one Gene had drawn for his very first "Iron Man" story, in *Tales of Suspense* #73 (Jan. '66)—coincidentally, also the first super-hero story Roy had dialogued for Marvel. Gene's initial *WW* splash didn't display a full-figure shot of the Amazon, so Roy must've persuaded editor Len Wein to have Gene redraw it. The second version filled the bill perfectly; Ye Ed hopes and assumes Gene was paid for both! Thanks to Richard Fowlks & Mike Nielsen for the *Wonder Woman* art, and to Barry Pearl for the splash from *TOS* #73. [DC pages ©2011 DC Comics; Marvel page ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

suddenly tosses a "Huntress" feature, written by Paul Levitz, in the back of the book—I think it'd been going on before, but this was supposed to be a big push on *Wonder Woman*, remember. So right away we don't have a full book, and this really teed me off. I mean, nothing against Paul, and The Huntress was a good character—but I felt, if she can't stand on her own in a book, forget about her. Don't chop up the only book *Wonder Woman* has in order to give her a series! I complained. Another pat on the head.

We'd only done a few issues that way when Paul plotted this three-issue story for the entire book that was less a "Wonder Woman" story than a "Let's use every heroine in the DC stable" story: Power Girl, Huntress, Black Canary, Supergirl, Zatanna, *everybody!* It wasn't a bad story, but I felt it belonged in a separate mini-series, not in *Wonder Woman*. All I did was dialogue it. This interrupted Gene's and my flow for three months, right after we'd got started. Really hurt our momentum. And even when it was over, there was still the "Huntress" backup.

So, after a few issues with "The Huntress" on top of the "all-girl orchestra" issues, I said, "This isn't what I signed up for. I've only been



able to do about half the work I should have on *Wonder Woman* by now." So after a few, I think, fairly well-crafted stories, especially the one with The Silver Swan, and just as we were getting started with the Commander Video storyline, I left that book in protest, and Dan Mishkin took over the writing. Gene soon left, too.

I'll admit I was happy when they asked me to come back a few months later to write *Wonder Woman* #300. I worked with Dann on the plotting and even on the dialogue; she became the first female

ever to have a scripting byline on a "Wonder Woman" story, and together we introduced the Earth-Two *Wonder Woman's* daughter—who'd soon become Fury in *Infinity, Inc.*—and we gave an origin to the 1970s Simon & Kirby Sandman. But otherwise I was done with the *Wonder Woman* book. The funny thing is, a dialogue balloon on the cover of #288, which had heralded our new team, had proclaimed, "And *this time nothing* will stop her!" But the fact is that Gene and I were never really allowed to get started!

Please understand—it's not that I feel Paul, Jenette, or anybody else was out to sabotage Gene's and my stint on *Wonder Woman*. I just think





### "I Be Thor!" Yeth, We Can Thee That!

Starting in #6, Adrian Gonzales became the second *All-Star Squadron* penciler, with Jerry Ordway assigned an enhanced role as inker/embellisher on most issues. Seen above are Adrian's pencils for a page from his final issue, #18 (Feb. 1983), which features the All-Stars locked in battle with a hoodlum who thinks he's the thunder god—and the Rick Hoberg-inked printed page of same. Thanks to Jerry O. for saving the photocopies of Gonzales' pencils that DC sent him as reference while he himself was busy penciling #19. See p. 19 for a photo of Adrian. [Pages ©2011 DC Comics.]

wonderfully well—and I suspect that, if Len *had* shown me Jerry's work earlier, I'd have concurred. After all, I've never forgotten that when Stan put this newcomer named Tom Palmer on Gene Colan's pencils on *Dr. Strange* after he'd done nothing but pencil one lackluster issue of *Strange*, I wasn't happy about that, either—until I saw his first inked splash page. It's not that I didn't think Len had good taste in artists; I just wanted to be consulted, not presented with a *fait accompli*.

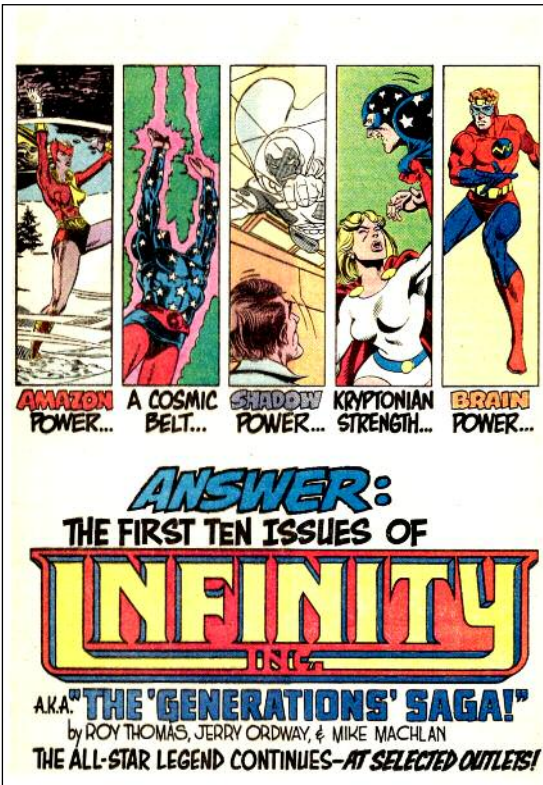
My first two titles I created for DC were tricky, because they required artists willing to draw stories set in the past—the very late 8th century, and 1941-42. Some artists, especially in those days when royalties were just starting to be paid, were reluctant to take such an offbeat assignment. I can't really blame them... but I wanted to do what I wanted to do. When Rich left, due to disputes with Len that partly involved the covers but that otherwise I don't know much about, Len assigned Adrian Gonzales to pencil *All-Star Squadron*, again without consulting me. He just wrote me a note saying that "You're going to like Adrian Gonzales"—and basically I did. Len's reasoning was that Jerry Ordway would fix up the pencils. As Jerry's said, he was given to understand that from this point on *he* was the most important artist on that series; and that was true. Of course, Adrian and Jerry worked out quite well together.

The same thing happened when Jerry insisted on either becoming full artist of *All-Star* or else he was going to walk. I had a few reservations about Jerry's first few pages, even though they looked promising; but when I flipped through the original art and saw his pencils for the scene where eight JSAs are strapped vertically to a surface inside the *Perisphere*—well, that did it for me. I became as big a fan of Jerry's penciling as I already was of his inking.

I should make it clear, by the way, that Len and I never had any arguments about the stories. He, like Dick on *Arak*, gave me pretty much *carte blanche* on what the stories were, what characters were used. Maybe that's why he insisted on handling the covers with no input from me. Hey, an editor's gotta have something to do... and Len was a good editor. I didn't like it when he insisted that The Atom's lapels be colored red instead of the historically correct orange, but that was a minor glitch.

Later, when Dick made me the editor of the comics I wrote, I put Adrian on *Arak*, figuring I could get Alfredo Alcalá to "Conan" it up. And he did. Over in *All-Star Squadron*, Rick Hoberg did some really nice work later. I'd known Rick out in L.A.; Dann and I often drove down to his and his wife Aleta's place in Orange County for parties. Arvell Jones did some good work on the series, too, adding a Kirbyesque flavor in the later days. But once Jerry left to do *Infinity, Inc.*, I didn't feel DC was trying very hard to help me get suitable artists. That's why I had to go out and scramble for artists myself. I couldn't go crying to Dick all the time. But I felt that, if a good new artist came around DC, I wasn't going to hear about him till the New York editors had all had their chance to snap him up. That's just the way it was... one of the consequences I had to accept for my not being back East.





**"Generations" To Come**

(Left:) This double-page plug for *Infinity, Inc.* drawn by Jerry Ordway & Mike Machlan (and written by RT) appeared in the Sept. 1984 comics shop giveaway *DC Sampler*. After an almost inexplicable delay, considering how many issues were penciled by either Jerry Ordway or Todd McFarlane, DC will finally reprint the early issues of *Infinity, Inc.* (and its three-issue *All-Star Squadron* lead-in) in a color hardcover in June 2011. O frabjous day!

(Below:) Jerry Ordway's pencils for a climactic scene from *Infinity, Inc.* #9 (Dec. 1984). Thanks to Jerry for the photocopies. [©2011 DC Comics.]

penciled by artists they'd chosen but decided not to publish them anyway. The next thing you know, I'm told, "Oh, by the way, your hold on *Shazam!* has expired and someone else now has dibs on it."

JA: Didn't DC own the character by that time?

THOMAS: Yes. But I don't know exactly when that happened, or how much it cost.

### "Infinity, Inc. [Was] A Series Very Definitely With Four Creators"

JA: [laughs] To get back to *Infinity, Inc.*, since that's really your baby—

THOMAS: Yeah, mine and Dann's and Jerry's... and very definitely Mike Machlan's, as well.

JA: How much input did everybody have?

THOMAS: First, Dann and I went to New York on a trip paid for by DC. I intended to sell them on a series I called *The Time Titans*, though I figured the name would be changed because of *Teen Titans*. I suspect the group included The Shining Knight and Tomahawk, maybe some future guy like Space Ranger—but also a few new characters, which I doubt I'd bothered to make up yet. Time enough for that if DC okayed the idea.

Dann and I took a ferry over to see the Statue of Liberty—first time I'd been there since my high school senior trip from Missouri in 1958. Dann didn't care to go inside, so we just stood around waiting for the next ferry and got to talking about this notion of the sons and daughters of the JSAers. By the time we got back to Manhattan, we'd made up this group—not all the members, but several of them. I even knew the title I wanted: *The Centurions*. That would've made a great name for the *Time Titans* group, too. But I soon learned that a new TV animated series with that name was about to debut, so Dann came up with *Infinity, Inc.*, which I'll admit I was never wild about. But I couldn't come up with anything better, and DC liked it, so that became our title.

JA: So she is quite the complete co-creator, then.





# The Annotated *Alter-Ego* #1

## A 1965 & 2011 Look Backward At The Origins Of Jerry Bails' Epoch-Making 1961 Fanzine

Original Article & 2011 Notes by Roy Thomas

### Introduction

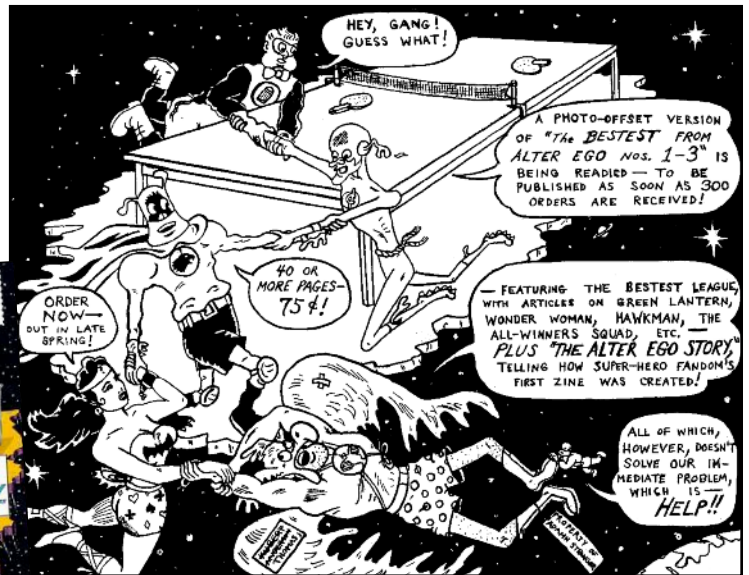
**A**t the risk of repeating myself—and since an impatient few among you may not read the deathless editorial on pp. 4-5:

Fifty years ago this very month—at the tail end of March 1961—Jerry G. Bails released into the U.S. mails the first, frail frigate of what would ere long become an amateur armada: the premier issue of *Alter-Ego*. It can be called the first true comic book fanzine... certainly the first such that had ever been devoted primarily to heroic-adventure comics. I was privileged to have been invited to be the sole other contributor to that historic little publication.

Although by then both of us were well aware of Dick & Pat Lupoff's 1960-birthing, mimeographed science-fiction fanzine *Xero* and its groundbreaking comics-nostalgia series best known as "All in Color for a Dime," Jerry was content to put out his own zine by means of a lesser technology. By #4, however, he would switch to photo-offset printing, a distinct improvement.

In 1962 Jerry decided to turn *Alter-Ego* over to artist Ronn Foss and a couple of his associates, so he himself could concentrate on other projects, such as collecting data on comics creators, the beginnings of what ultimately became the Who's Who of American Comic Books. In late 1962 and 1963 Ronn published issues #5 & 6, dropping the hyphen out of the title. In 1964, Ronn in turn decided to relinquish the zine's reins to a third editor/publisher... our mutual fan-friend Bill ("Biljo") White of Columbia, Missouri. I was slated to be Biljo's editorial helpmeet, much as I'd been Jerry's. However, before he really got started on what would've been his initial issue, Biljo decided he'd prefer simply supplying art rather than writing, editing, and overseeing the printing and mailing. Thus, at his invitation, and with a mixture of enthusiasm and reluctance, I took over *Alter Ego* as editor and publisher, commencing with #7, in the fall of '64.

By the time I produced A/E #8 early the next year, despite my duties as a high school teacher in the St. Louis area, and with Jerry's blessing, I'd decided to put together a photo-offset reprint of the best material from the first three, spirit-duplicator-printed issues. For a special feature therein, I would write "The *Alter Ego* Story"—"telling how super-hero fandom's first zine was created." (I called it "super-hero fandom" in this instance to avoid claiming any chronological priority over Don & Maggie Thompson's mimeographed *Comic Art*, a fanzine devoted to comic strips and comic books as a medium; CA #1 seems to have hit the



### First Look

(Above:) This "house ad" from *Alter Ego* [Vol. I] #8 (Winter 1965), which came out early in that year, included the first mention of the "Alter Ego Story" which Roy intended to write for a publication to be called *The Bestest from Alter Ego* Nos. 1-3. Art & text by RT. [©2011 Roy Thomas.]

(Left:) That art was a parody of the cover of *Justice League of America* #31 (Nov. 1964), the issue that had—finally!—inducted Hawkman into the group. Pencils by Mike Sekowsky, inks by Murphy Anderson. [©2011 DC Comics.]

mails a week or so after A/E #1, but had been in the planning stages months longer. I don't recall ever really thinking of our burgeoning movement as "super-hero fandom." To me, it was "comic[s] fandom.")

Of course, the ideal person to have written this recent history would have been Jerry himself, but he showed no inclination to do so. However, to assist me in scribing my tale of the origins of the fanzine, he sent me copies he had saved of most of the correspondence we had exchanged since November 1960, when we'd first contacted each other. (I wasn't prescient enough to have made carbon copies of my own letters, or for the most part to have saved Jerry's to me.)

I had written the piece just about to the point where we'd commenced work on the second issue before I realized that, because of my new pro-comics job offer in New York, *The Bestest of Alter Ego* Nos. 1-3 wasn't gonna happen... at least not for a while.

As it worked out, my manuscript sat on the shelf until 1997, when my new correspondent and friend Bill Schelly, author of the landmark 1995 book *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom*, and I decided to assemble a compilation of the best material from A/E #1-11, which had been published between 1961 and 1978. Bill's Hamster Press would be the publisher of record; he and I would co-edit, with the blessings of and some participation by Jerry Bails and Ronn Foss.



To give that decades-old material context, Bill and I decided that most of my "Alter Ego Story" should be printed in our book. As indeed it was, along with my 1965 Bestest League cartoon which mentioned the proposed Bestest of Alter Ego Nos. 1-3, the first part of my initial (Nov. 3, 1960) letter to Gardner Fox, and Jerry's thank-you note of Feb. 12, 1961, to Fox and Schwartz for their generosity to him during his New York stay. "The Alter Ego Story" was in 1997, and remains today, the most complete and accurate accounting which is ever likely to exist concerning the events culminating in the publication of Alter-Ego [Volume 1] #1.

Bill's and my trade paperback *Alter Ego: The Best of the Legendary Comics Fanzine* was a modest success in 1997, with some 1500 copies distributed before it went out of print. In 2008 TwoMorrows issued a second edition, which is still in print.

This celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Alter-Ego* #1 seemed to cry out for inclusion of "The Alter Ego Story," utilizing the three above-mentioned art spots plus a few additional ones. However, rather than simply reprint the text, this time I wanted to annotate it fully, examining the article in detail with the advantage of 45+ years' worth of additional hindsight. Accordingly, below, after every un-italicized paragraph or so of the original text, you'll find new comments by Yours Truly, written in italics [and between brackets], toned, and preceded by the bold notation "2011:"

So let's get started. To repeat what Bill and I wrote in 1997:

"Step into your time machine and set the dial for the year 1960—when Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States... when the Silver Age of Comics was a-borning...."

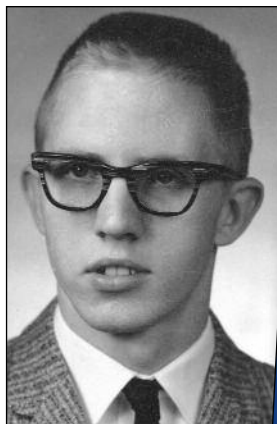
**A**lter Ego owes its existence to the Justice League of America. It's as simple as that, actually.

Having learned to read on *All-Star Comics* as a child of five, I had long harbored a latent nostalgic feeling for the Justice Society and its ilk. In fact, when the last issue of *All-Star* had been followed by the putrid mess known as *All-Star Western*, I had vowed to one day possess every single issue of my favorite comic—and had, in desperation, taken up reading *The Marvel Family* with a new vengeance.

[2011: Too true, except that in 1965 I was way too hard on *All-Star Western*. It wasn't a half-bad comic, containing as it did stories drawn by Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane, Frank Giacoia, and Alex Toth, three of whom had worked on 1947-51 "Justice Society" stories in *All-Star Comics*. Still, it was just another relatively undistinguished cowboy comic, while the Justice Society had been one of the most important concepts in comics history.]

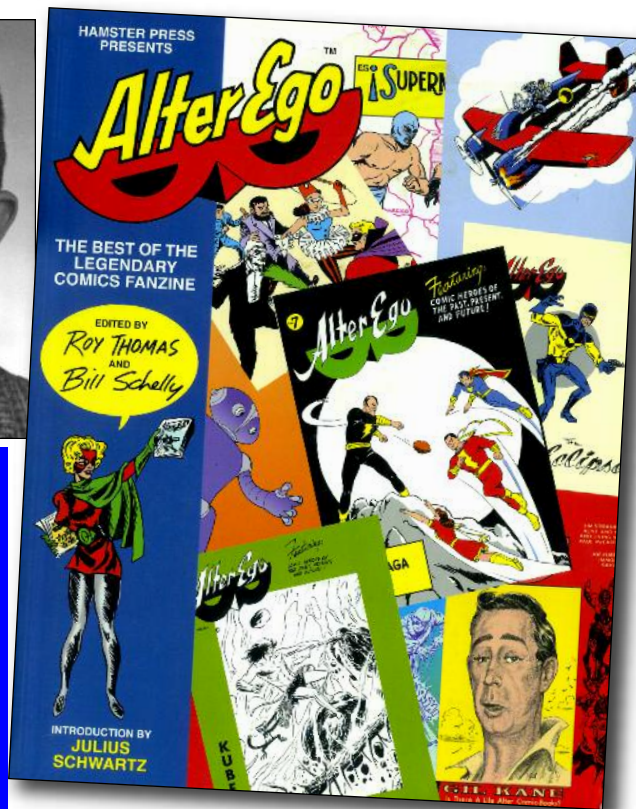
So when, without fanfare, *The Brave and the Bold* began carrying the adventures of the JLA, I was overjoyed. After the last of the three trial issues was read and digested, I could not contain myself any longer. I wrote a letter to editor Julius Schwartz, congratulating him on his superhero comics in general, and the Justice League of America in particular.

I asked if I might know the name and address of the writer of these stories, so I could express my thanks to him in person. In that day before editors of one-shot comic fanzines had cluttered his desk with dozens of



#### Portrait Of The Editor As A Young Whatever

(Above:) Reluctant as we are to print it yet again: a 1961 photo of Roy Thomas, then near to graduating from college at age 20. (Right:) The cover of the 1997 book *Alter Ego: The Best of the Legendary Comics Fanzine*, edited by Roy T. and Bill Schelly. That of the 2008 TwoMorrows edition is virtually identical. The second edition of this nearly-200-page trade paperback is still available from TwoMorrows [Art ©2011 the respective copyright holders.]



requests every day for exclusive 10,000-word autobiographies, Julius Schwartz was kind enough to send me the home address of Gardner F. Fox—who, he added, had also written the first three dozen or so JSA tales. He also suggested that there, rather than at the National offices themselves, was the place to search for the back issues of *All-Star* after which I lusted so vocally.

[2011: From time to time, I've written that Julie sent me Gardner's home address "unbidden"—but my 1965 memory, being only four-plus years after the fact, is doubtless far more accurate. I asked for it... and Julie obliged. Whether or not he first checked with Fox is not known to me.]

Needless to say, the mailman was still on our block when I began to type a nice long letter to Gardner Fox, lauding him for his recent JLA-Amazo episode and offering to buy any old *All-Stars* or related comics collecting dust in his attic.

[2011: Lord knows how I'd have paid for them, being a college senior at the time. By then, I'd even given up my part-time job at the Palace Theatre in Jackson, Missouri. My only hope of financial solvency was to graduate the following summer, having gone through college in three years. Which duly occurred. The graduating, I mean... not the financial solvency.]

Fox's reply was gracious and understanding. He stated, however, that only a few months before the decision to revive the JSA as the JLA, he had sold his remaining *All-Stars* to one Jerry G. Bails, with whom he had been corresponding off and on for years concerning the JSA, its authors, and its artists. He gave me, however, Jerry's address and suggested that we might enjoy getting in touch with each other.

[2011: Since the decision to launch the Justice League had been made at least a year prior to my letters to Julie and Gardner, which followed hard on the heels of the group's third and final newsstand try-out in *The Brave and the Bold* #30 (cover-dated July '60), that tallies with my recollection, based on later seeing letters exchanged between Jerry and Gardner, that Jerry had



# THE REINCARNATION OF THE SPECTRE

By ROY THOMAS

Dr. James Corrigan sat gazing intensely at the weird, blue gem before him on his desk. He was lost in thought, remembering the strange circumstances under which he had received the jewel.....

It was only a few months before, when as a young society doctor bored with his practice, he received a cablegram from his uncle--Dr. Peter Corrigan, a physician in India. As he opened the cable, he was unable to keep from comparing his own easy life, treating rich hypochondriacs, with that of his uncle's, who had given up wealth and fame to minister to the ills of the poor in an over-populated nation.

The cable contained terrible news. His uncle, his only living relative, was dying in a small village near Bombay. Within an hour, the young doctor was on board a plane to India, hoping against hope that he could find a way to save his uncle's life.

When he arrived at the village, he was greeted by his uncle's devoted servant, Ali, who led him to his uncle's side. His uncle was sinking fast, but he recognized Jim at once. Knowing his time was short, the elderly Dr. Corrigan handed his nephew an ornate, jeweled box containing a blue Spectral Sapphire, and gasped the story of the strange gem with his final words.

"A dying Hindu fakir gave me this a few years ago," he said with difficulty, "in return for my making the last days of his life less painful. He told me that it had great and strange powers for both good and evil. He said it will bring out the best that is in man, and also the worst. I--I feel I must give it to you--perhaps you will be the one to unlock its awesome secret."

With these final words Peter Corrigan died.

From Ali, Jim learned the legend of the Spectral Sapphire. Legend says that one man, many years ago, found the secret power of the magic stone, but the legend also says it caused great fires and earthquakes, and huge monsters, to appear from out of nowhere, till finally a great hero came who drove out the monsters and saved the people of the land."

And now once again Jim found himself looking at the sapphire of mystery, before him on the desk. He thought of his uncle's phrase--"the best that is in man, and also the worst." Had his uncle really been compelled to give him the jewel, or had that just

been his imagination in a time of approaching death?

Just then a lone ray of sunlight drifted through the venetian blinds into the dimness of Jim's office, striking the gem and causing that weird phenomenon which only the Spectral Sapphire could produce--a black-and-white spectrum, with incredible degrees of darkness and brightness. Although Jim had seen this phenomenon several times in the past, it never failed to amaze him.

But this time something was different! This time the sun's lone ray struck the gem so that the spectrum fell on Jim's face, bathing half of the young doctor's features in great light and the other half in extreme blackness. Jim felt strange almost at once. His first impulse was to rise, but he stayed in his seat as if held there by a super-powerful force.

Slowly an intense drowsiness descended upon him. As he drifted ever nearer to sleep, Jim was dimly aware of two figures appearing near him, one on each side.



2011 NOTE: Perhaps because the copy of A/E VI#1 reproduced in this section was scanned by Doc Boucher from an early reprinting, Count Dis is pictured above wearing a mask. This is a misinterpretation of the drawing as it appeared in March 1961. (The Spectre's belt got lost, as well.) At left is a pen-&-ink drawing of Dis done around that time by Ye Editor.



# The Missourian Chronicles

## Brief Tributes to *Alter Ego* And—Ulp!—Its Ebullient Editor

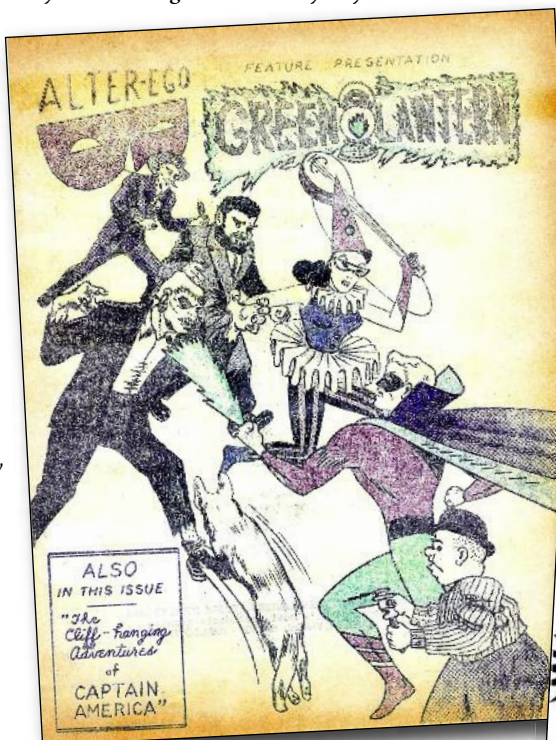
Compiled & Introduced by Jerry K. Boyd

### Introduction

**H**ow often does a fanzine make it to its 100th issue? Not often. Thus, congratulations are in order to Roy Thomas (who's a native of Missouri, hence my splicing together above of his origins with Robert E. Howard's Nemedian source for tales of his favorite Cimmerian) for gathering all that much-needed history for us and for readers and historians yet to come.

And, since I'm talking history and special occasions, *Alter Ego*: Centennial presented a unique opportunity for me to ask a number of *TwoMorrows* contributors, prominent fans, and comics industry professionals to wax philosophical about A/E's importance... or to write about their favorite Thomas-written stories or series over the years... or just to relate experiences they had working with "Rascally Roy."

It became a "surprise party" of sorts, and Roy was receptive to the idea when I first told him about this project—in the fall of '09, when it was already two-thirds completed! Humbly, after he read my initial draft, Roy requested that I add a few more folks who could talk (in his words) "more about *Alter Ego* and less about me," and I complied.

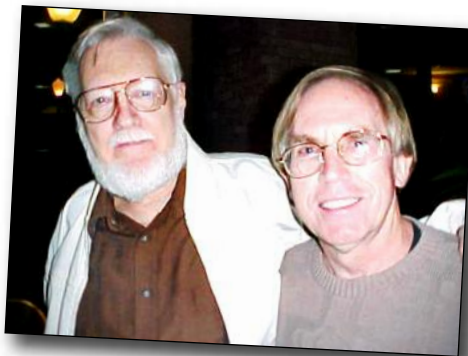


### Hitting A Triple

(Clockwise from directly above:) A/E founder Jerry G. Bails' cover for A/E [Vol. 1] #3, a montage of work by various Golden Age "Green Lantern" artists, which has faded a bit since it rolled off his spirit duplicator (in color) in 1961— Roy Thomas with Jerry Bails, at their last meeting (in Detroit, 2002) before Jerry's Nov. 26, 2006 passing; photo by Dann Thomas— And the flyer that was handed out at 1999 comics conventions to advertise A/E, Vol. 3, #1.

A personal note from Roy re "The Missourian Chronicles": "I feel I should state up front that I'd hoped this piece would deal only with *Alter Ego*, not with my comics career. Still, Jerry K. Boyd had already basically put it together by the time I first saw it, so there was little I could do but accept his heartfelt fait accompli and say... thanks, Jerry." Photo by Dann Thomas. [Green Lanterns, Streak, Solomon Grundy, Harlequin, Vandal Savage, Gambler, Flashes, Atom, Jade, Fury, Batman, & Hawkman TM & ©2011 DC Comics; Spider-Man, Thing, & Silver Surfer TM & ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.; other art ©2011 Jerry Ordway.]

So let's take a few pages to celebrate the 100th issue of A/E, Vol. 3—plus the 50th anniversary of Jerry Bails and Roy's *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1] #1 in March 1961—as well as writer/editor Roy!



Many responses were sent via e-mail; others were made via phone calls, and I'd like to thank several of the participants for including unpublished or rarely seen art to go along with their commentaries....

**RICHARD LUPOFF**  
writer; editor of 1960s fanzine *Xero*

*Alter Ego* #100?! That's hard to believe. Fifty years?! You've gotta be kidding! It was only a couple of weeks ago, wasn't it? Pat and I had barely got our fanzine *Xero* off the ground, Don and Maggie Thompson were busy starting up *Comic Art*, and Roy Thomas and Jerry Bails were putting together the inaugural issue of *Alter Ego*.

**ALTER EGO**™ **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!**  
**IS GOING SOLO!**

Yep, you heard us right! In JUNE 1999, the world's first super-hero comics fanzine will be published regularly again as a SEPARATE MAGAZINE from TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, edited by co-founder ROY THOMAS!

**HERE'S THE SPECIAL, ALL-NEW JERRY ORDWAY COVER FOR A/E, VOL. 3, #1!**

**AND HERE'S A SNEAK PEAK AT THE BACK (FLIP COVER BY GOLDEN AGE GREAT IRWIN HASEN!)**

**ALTER EGO #1**

**PARTIAL CONTENTS:**

- STAN LEE GETS ROASTED** in Chicago, 1996, by JULIUS SCHWARTZ, among others!
- THE UNSEEN WONDER WOMAN** by GARDNER FOX, "CHARLES MOUTON," & H.G. PETER!
- Interview with ALL-STAR/ GREEN LANTERN artist **IRWIN HASEN!**
- THOMAS & ORDWAY on **INFINITY, INC.!**

**PLUS:** Special features by **MICHAEL T. GILBERT GRASS GREEN BILL SCHELLY**

**ADDED BONUS:** REGULAR FEATURE—J.C. Hammerlinck's FCA (FAN/CET COLLECTORS OF AMERICA) with rare work by **MARC SWAYZE**

Fans worldwide agree: No one knows comics history like ROY THOMAS, and no publication brings it to life like ALTER EGO! Don't miss it!

**TwoMorrows. Bringing New Life To Comics Fandom.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$20 for 4 issues in the US (\$27 Canada/Mexico, \$37 elsewhere) from TwoMorrows • 1812 Park Drive • Raleigh, NC 27604 USA • Phone: 919-833-8892 • Fax: 919-833-8023 E-mail: twomorrowstail.com • web: www.twomorrowstail.com





Historians can argue to their hearts' content over who was the initiator of comics fandom. And in fact there had been articles about the comics—*Buck Rogers*, *Brick Bradford*, *Flash Gordon*, *Superman*, *Alley Oop*—in the fan press ever since the 1930s. And there was the EC Fan-Addicts Club in the '50s. Hey, I was a faithful member.

But this was a new generation, in truth a new fandom. *Xero* was actually first off the press (or more accurately, out of the mimeo tray), but *Xero* was always a hybrid comics/science fiction fanzine. *Comic Art* took in the whole field of cartooning, emphatically including newspaper strips. And *Alter Ego* was the first to cast its lot with super-hero comic books. Or at least, that's the way I recall it.

Late 1960—early '61. Why then? Why hadn't any of those earlier fumbblings toward a real comics fandom ever taken root and flourished? And why did comics fandom soar once those three fanzines made their appearance? I'll leave it to some social science major looking for a thesis topic to figure that one out. To borrow a phrase I've come across in another context, maybe it was just "comic book time."

Who would have imagined a comics fan world with hundreds of thousands of members, collectibles selling for a million dollars or more ("...and all in color for a dime"), super-hero movies among the biggest blockbusters coming out of Hollywood—a graphic novel winning the Pulitzer Prize—reprints of Golden Age comics lovingly produced on fine paper and bound in expensive cloth, and ancient Sunday pages in full size and color, comic book stores prospering in every city worthy of the name?

We pioneers—I guess you'd have to call us that—didn't set out to change the world. At least, Pat and I didn't. We were just a couple of youngsters having fun. But it seems as if we did exactly that—at least, to a sizable piece of the world.

Of course we've moved in different directions since 1960. Don Thompson and Jerry Bails, sadly, are both deceased. Maggie Thompson is a leading light in professional journalism, still covering the field of comics and cartoons. Pat Lupoff is a longtime professional bookseller, and Dick Lupoff has worked in various areas of cultural history when not writing novels and short stories of his own. But Roy Thomas is still at it, tending the home fires, defending the faith.



### From Xero To 50

Dick & Pat Lupoff (she's on right, standing), co-publishers/editors of *Xero*, took time in 1966 to help friends Maggie Thompson (seen at left) and her husband Don—who probably took the snapshot—assemble copies of their equally legendary mimeographed fanzine *Comic Art*. Photo supplied by Maggie.

Fifty years? One hundred issues? *Alter Ego* is just getting started. I expect it to last another fifty years and another hundred issues at least—with Roy Thomas still at the helm!

### RICH BUCKLER – artist/creator

What can I say about Roy Thomas? Let's see... I've known Roy and his work since the early fanzine days of the '60s. I have gone on record many times stating that he is my favorite comic book writer. Well, he was probably my favorite editor at Marvel Comics, too. If not for Roy, no Rich Buckler on *Fantastic Four* or the *Jungle Action* "Black Panther" series—and no *Deathlok*.

It was remarkably easy and rewarding to work with him a decade or so ago when he and I collaborated on two independent comics, *The Forever Warriors* and *The Invincibles*. Unfortunate that only one issue of each saw print. Maybe an opportunity will open up again for Roy and me to launch "Death Machine," a character we co-created around that same time.



### That's Rich!

Rich Buckler was seen on p. 21, so at left is a drawing of the super-hero Aegis, from *The Invincibles* one-shot comic he and Roy T. did a few years ago. The lads are determined it won't be their last co-venture; in fact, they're currently developing (believe it or not) a brand new World War II super-hero group, echoing the early days of *All-Star Squadron*. All they need is a publisher! [Aegis TM & ©2011 Rich Buckler & Roy Thomas.]

On view above is Rich's original sketch for the cover of *A/E*, Vol. 3, #7 (2000). We figured you might enjoy seeing a few behind-the-scenes moments from the past 100 issues of this incarnation of *A/E*, spread throughout this article and issue. [JSA & JLA TM & ©2011 DC Comics.]



What made these stories chart toppers? Wonderful cartooning by Marie Severin (Marvel's all-time best at the funny stuff!), Tom Sutton, and Gene Colan (all terrific talents!) all helped made it work. Yes, Roy's reached perfection in his chosen field... and given us some of his own "classic moving pictures" worth remembering.

**DR. MICHAEL J. VASSALLO**  
 – TwoMorrows contributor

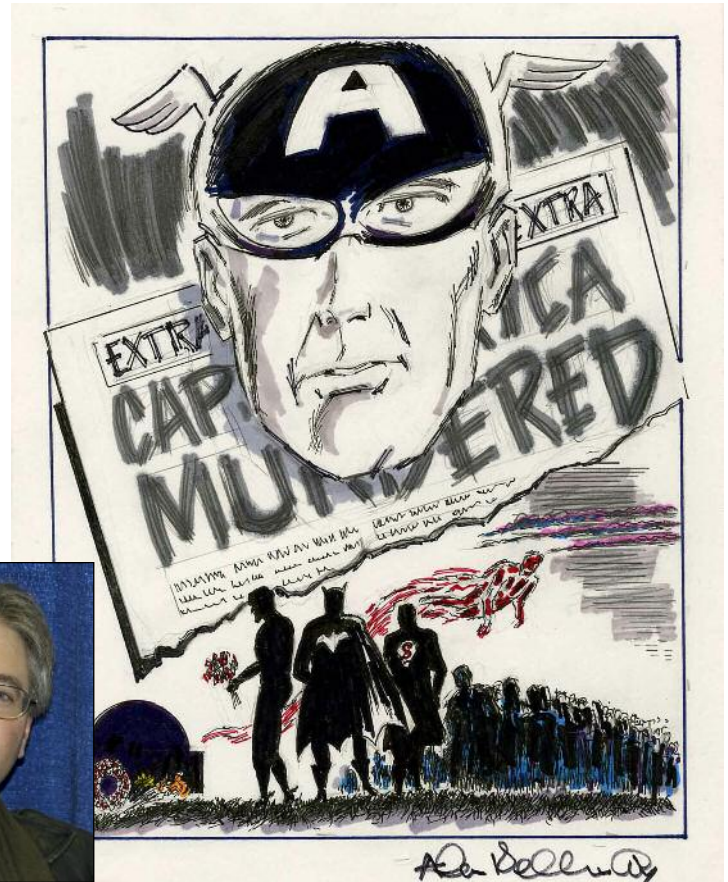
In its third incarnation, Roy's *Alter Ego* is a national treasure. There has never been a publication that allowed the deep ongoing dissection of comics history, month after month, as these 100 wonderful issues have. Nearly every major figure has been examined, company publishing histories evaluated, characters highlighted, and incredible interviews with creators both well-known and long-lost, have been conducted by Jim Amash, helped by an array of the finest fan historians and industry professionals. The material presented over the years will provide reference for future research and scholarship for years to come.

My own connection with *Alter Ego* came in the form of articles detailing Timely and Atlas creators of the 1940s and 1950s, my main area of interest and research. I thank Roy tremendously for giving me the opportunity and venue to present my own interviews of lesser-known Timely creators, wonderful artists like Allen Bellman and Marion Sitton, talents deserving to have their stories and experiences told. I was happy to shed light on Vince Fago's Timely funny-animal line and all the great creators that contributed to it. And lastly, Roy and *Alter Ego* gave me the opportunity to show fandom just how fantastic and prolific an artist Joe Maneely was for Stan Lee's Atlas line in the 1950s. Roy, congratulations on an incredible run, and may it long continue. I'm eagerly looking forward to the next 100 issues!



**ERNIE COLÓN – artist/creator**

I'm tempted to state that Roy Thomas is the premier writer in the history of comics.



**Capping Things Off**  
 "Doc V."—and a drawing done a couple of years back by Golden Age Timely bullpenny Allen Bellman in response to the "Death of Captain America" storyline. Thanks to MJV & Barry Pearl for the photo, and to Allen for the art. We've no idea who the silhouetted funeral attendees are! [Captain America, Sub-Mariner, & Human Torch TM & ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Before anybody starts throwing ripe, vaguely organic clods at me, let's consider his output. Others have produced as much, and some few even more, material than Roy. Many have worked in as many genres as he—whether *X-Men*, *Arak*, *Son of Thunder* (which I happily worked on with him), or *Captain Carrot*. But Roy imbued his stories—not only with inner logic—but with a sense that there was real-life logic to the goings-on. A rarity in comics—a given in Roy's work.

*Arak*, of course, is my favorite of all his work. Never a fan of super-heroes, I jumped at the chance to draw this great character and wonderful premise. I'd gladly be drawing it still, had *Arak* been allowed to develop.

**FRANK BRUNNER - artist/creator**

Back in the early '70s, I had Roy Thomas' ear, so to speak. After all, he had hired me to draw "Dr. Strange"... so when I heard he was reserving future adaptations of Robert E. Howard stories of Conan, I quickly got on his list and reserved Howard's "The Scarlet Citadel"—one of my very favorite Conan stories of when he was King Conan!

When the time came, Roy sent me the paperback edition... and simply

**Another Fragrant Hint Of Colón**  
 You already saw a photo of Ernie Colón on p. 15—where you were reminded that, three decades before his and writer Sid Jacobson's bestselling graphic novel adaptation of *The 9-11 Report*, Ernie penciled the *Arak/Son of Thunder* series he co-created with writers Roy & Dann Thomas. These pencils from the splash page of *Arak* #2 (Oct. 1981) appeared in the magazine *Comics Feature* #11 (Aug. 1981). [Art ©2011 DC Comics.]



# “A Lot Of These Guys Have Great Stories To Tell!”

## JIM AMASH Talks About His Pro Career—And About Being *Alter Ego's* Star Interviewer

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Bruce MacIntosh

**A/E** EDITOR'S NOTE: For roughly 90% of the life of this volume of *Alter Ego*, Jim Amash has been a virtually every-issue contributor—and, for nearly as long, one of its two associate editors. In the course of human events, he's conducted in-depth interviews with everybody from Lee Ames to Les Zakarin. So Ye Editor decided that it was high time Jim himself was interviewed in these pages. A while ago, Bruce MacIntosh sent in a long talk with Jim that had appeared in the pages of CFA-APA, the *apa-zine* of a group of avid comic art collectors. (“Apa” stands for “amateur press alliance,” a term from science-fiction fandom which refers to a group of fans who print and mail their own smallish fanzines to a sort of “central mailer”—Jerry Bails’ term—who assembles them all into one big package or fanzine and sends them out to members only. And that’s all ye know or need to know about that.) The interview was, alas, far too long to be printed in its entirety, but we’ve excerpted major parts concerning Jim’s life and training, his interest in comics and their history, the comics conventions he helped put on, his pro artwork, and—because this is, after all, the 100th issue



### Sit-In

(Above:) Jim & Heidi Amash with artist Joe Sinnott in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 2009, taken by Joe’s daughter Kathy Kiriny. (Left:) A caricature (or perhaps an almost photographic likeness) of genial Jim drawn by Joe. Jim has filled in for Joe from time to time on the long-running *Spider-Man* newspaper strip, whose Sunday page Joe regularly inks. [Art ©2011 Joe Sinnott.]

of this volume of *A/E*—his relationship to this magazine and to the professionals whose lives and careers he has so ably chronicled for the past decade. It will surprise no one who’s followed *A/E* for any reasonable part of the past decade that they’ll find numerous insights about Golden and Silver Age comics talents in the pages that follow—and see the end of the interview for information as to how to access the entire conversation. You won’t be sorry. —Roy.]

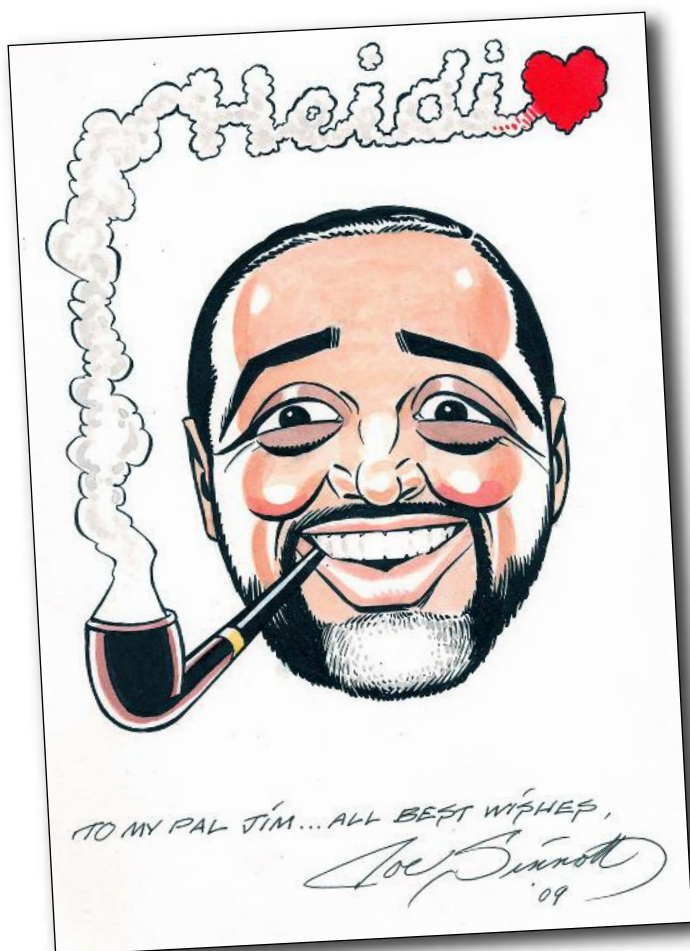
### Catching The Comic Book Bug

**BRUCE D. MacINTOSH:** Let’s start at the beginning. Tell me about your background, where you were born...

**JIM AMASH:** I was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania... the home of the railroads. There were a lot of railroads there. You know the old saying, “across the tracks”? That’s exactly where we lived. The house we lived in was probably built in 1886. I sometimes think one of the reasons I like history is because I kind of grew up in it.

I’ve always loved history. I can still remember what the cover of my first grade history book looked like. And in that book, there were some paintings, some engravings, and etchings of historic events and personalities like Daniel Boone. Stuff like that. That really got me interested in drawing.

The thing that *really* got me interested in drawing, though, was George Reeves. As a little kid, I’d watch him on a black-&-white set, flying



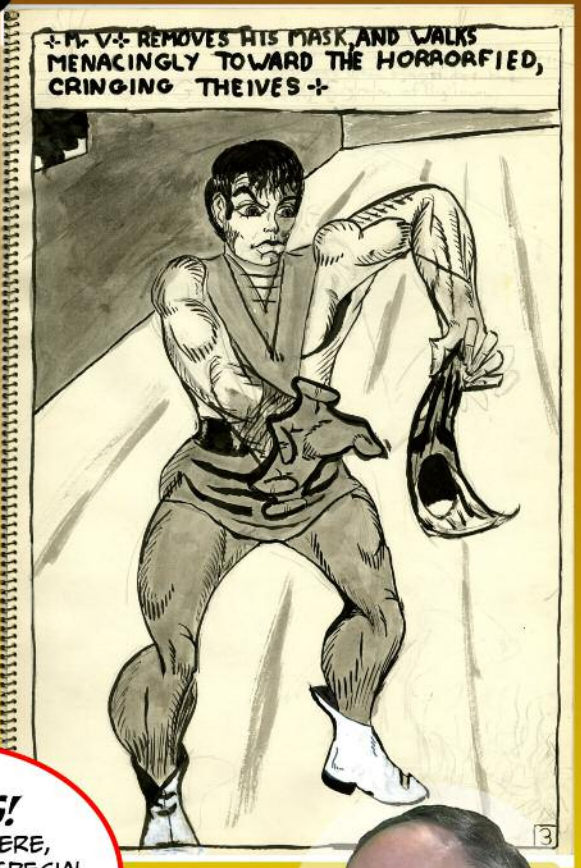
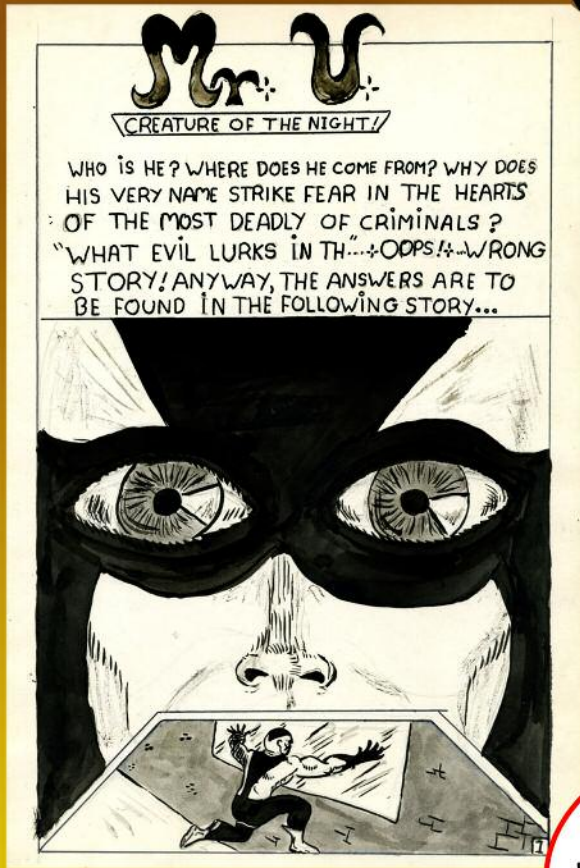


**DOGSTEARN**

# MR. MONSTER

**MR. MONSTER'S COMIC CRYPT!**

BY MICHAEL T. GILBERT MR. MONSTER © AND © 2011



LET'S CELEBRATE WITH A TRIP DOWN *MEMORY LANE*, JUST EAST OF *SCENIC SENILITY DRIVE*! CHECK OUT MY VERY *FIRST* COMIC BOOK STORY, STARRING THE MYSTERIOUS *MR. V*. -- A *VAMPIRE* HERO I DREW IN 1966 AT AGE 15! AND IF YOU'RE "*HORRORFIED*" BY MY *SPELLING*, YOU AIN'T SEEN *NOTHING* YET! BUT YOU *WILL*, AS WE EXPLORE...

**HI, GANG!**  
MICHAEL T. HERE, WITH AN EXTRA-SPECIAL 100TH EDITION OF *MR. MONSTER'S COMIC CRYPT!*



**MICHAEL T:  
THE FANZINE  
YEARS!**

**1000**

ABOVE: MR. V, PAGES 1 AND 3. MR. V. © 2011 MICHAEL T. GILBERT



# Michael T.: The Fanzine Years!

by Michael T. Gilbert

*It's all Gardner Fox's fault!*

In 1998, my wife Janet discovered that Fox—a comic book writer since the late 1930s—had bequeathed his papers to the University of Oregon library, a stone's throw from my Eugene studio. Naturally, I had to check it out.

While there, I stumbled on a box of '60s-era letters, some from fans who later became pros. Roy Thomas, with whom I'd worked back in the '80s on Pacific Comics' *Elric* series, was one of these young scribes. I sent copies of the letters to Roy, figuring he'd enjoy seeing them.

Coincidentally, Roy was about to revive his 1960s fanzine *Alter Ego* as a part of Jon B. Cooke's *Comic Book Artist*. He suggested I write a column on my discovery. One column led to a second, then a third. Now, twelve years later, I find myself with 100 issues of *Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt* under my belt. (Actually, a few more than 100 columns, if we include the *CBA* issues, but for neatness' sake let's just count the *A/E* issues.)

First off, I'm incredibly grateful to Roy and publisher John Morrow for granting me this forum, and to the late great Jerry Bails for creating *Alter Ego* way back in 1961. It's been a genuine honor to contribute to this award-winning magazine. But with great power comes great responsibility! When I realized we were almost to issue 100, I had a heck of a problem. What to write about?

Then it hit me.

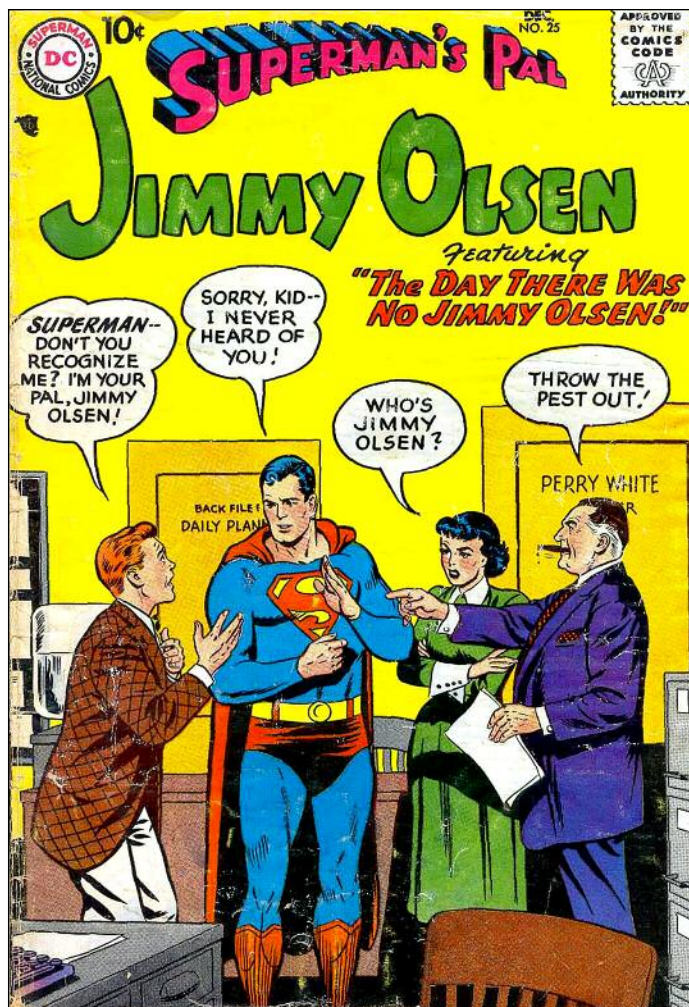
The century mark is traditionally a stopping-place to look back and reflect. In past columns I've explored the early lives of cartoonists Will Eisner, Bob Powell, and Wally Wood, as well as many lesser lights. So why not look back at the beginnings of my *own* comics career and my half-century love affair with comics?

While some may accuse me of self-indulgence (*Guilty, your honor!*), this brief memoir will hopefully be more than that. Like me, many of you fell in love with comics as kids and never stopped. I hope my own fond memories will jog a few of yours!



Super, Man!

Panel from Michael's 2000 graphic novel *Mann & Superman!* [©2011 DC Comics.]



O' #1!

Michael T.'s first comic, *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #25 (Dec. 1957).  
Check out the cool Curt Swan cover! [©2011 DC Comics.]

## First Love!

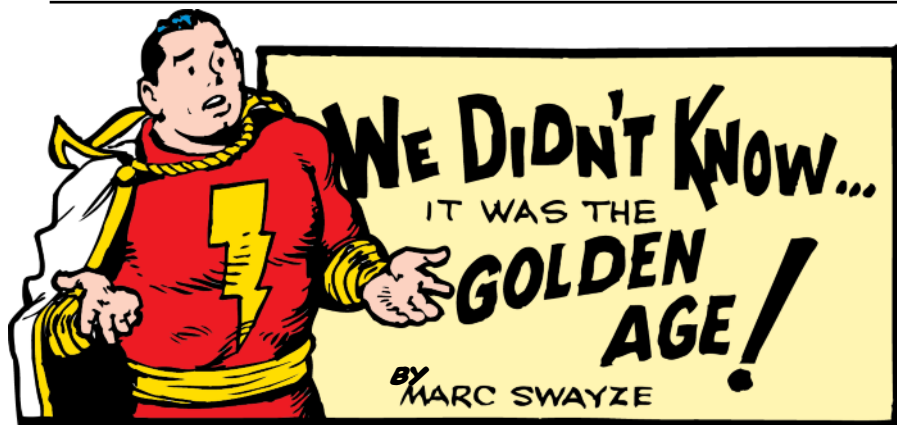
The little scrawl at the bottom right is the earliest drawing in my files, drawn on the back of a 1957 *Li'l Abner* Civil Defense comic. It was a gift from my Grandma Nurock, the woman most responsible for my lifelong obsession.

A volunteer at New York's Montifiore Hospital, Gram regularly raided the hospital's kiddie ward to keep me supplied with comics. The very first was *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #25 (Dec. 1957)! I was born on May 7, 1951, so you do the math!

The cover illustration for "The Day There Was No Jimmy Olsen" had Lois Lane asking "Who's Jimmy Olsen?" Oddly enough, I wondered about that, too. Just who was this red-haired pest?







[Art & logo ©2011 Marc Swayze; Captain Marvel © & TM 2011 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 Mary Marvel (Captain Marvel Adventures #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). This time around, we reprint, for the first time in the pages of *Alter Ego*, Marc's interview from FCA #11 (Nov. 1978), conducted by Matt Lage and FCA founder Bernie McCarty ... and including additions to the initial interview which were later published in *Bill Harper's FCA & ME, Too!* #5 (FCA #41), Spring 1988. —P.C. Hamerlinck.]

**M**arcus D. Swayze is one of those special, multi-talented guys who make a lasting impression on everyone they meet. Artist, writer, musician, athlete ... above all, Marc is charming and gracious, possessing that rare ability to make instant friends.

This interview is primarily concerned with Swayze's career as artist-writer for Fawcett [Publications]... and will attempt to illustrate the fact that he was one of the top people connected with the Golden Age of comic books. But it would be unfair to the man if discussion here were limited only to Marc's association with Fawcett. He was also a newspaper comic strip artist and writer... and a professional jazz musician.

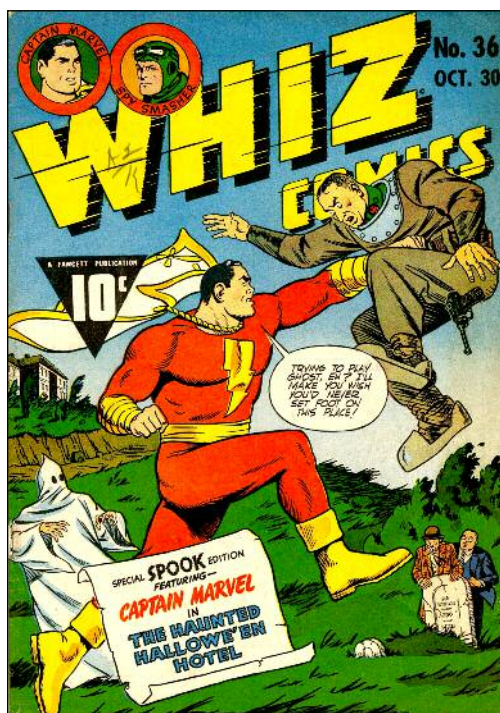
When he learned Swayze was being interviewed, former chief [Captain Marvel] artist C.C. Beck commented, "Swayze is a remarkable person, a fine Southern Gentleman, a great, great, artist, and a beautiful guitarist, pianist and violinist. In addition, he has a beautiful wife and family, a fine Southern mansion, and a marvelous sense of humor. He's an outrageous punster. Last time I saw him he was working as a gypsy fiddler in a tea room and loving every minute."

Former Fawcett editor Rod Reed, in an interview [FCA #5, Oct. '74], gave Swayze just recognition for creating the pictorial concept of *Mary Marvel*. Reed noted, "Although Jack Binder is acclaimed for his work

on *Mary Marvel*, Marc Swayze did the first portraits. I have before me the number one issue of her very own magazine, and her garb is amazingly mod with short skirt and boots to the knees. Swayze, of course, wanted to do the whole *Mary* series himself and it was my distasteful job to convince him that he couldn't be spared from the *Captain Marvel* team."

FCA: When did you decide to study art?

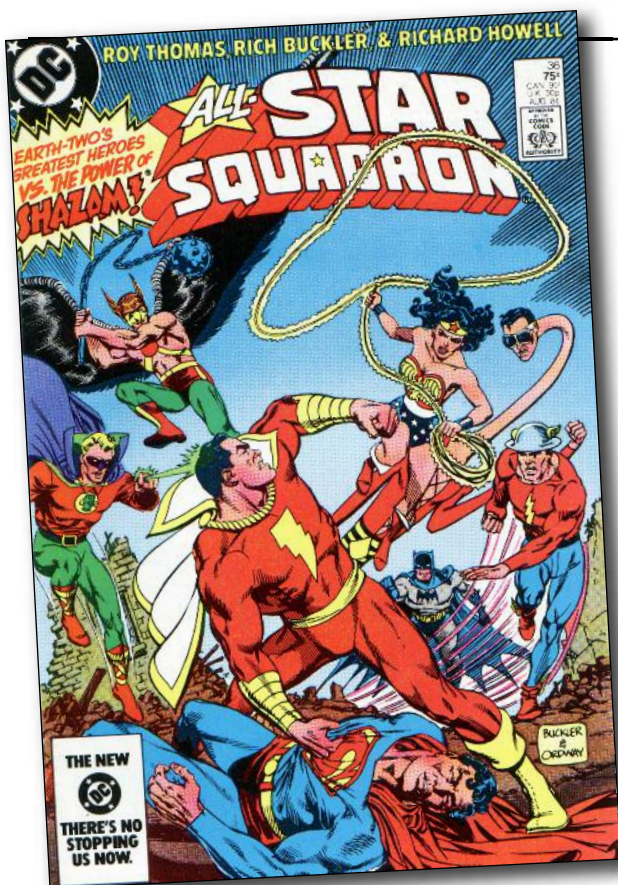
SWAYZE: When I got my degree [from Louisiana Tech] I went back to work at my uncle's dairy farm delivering milk. I got an offer for a job through one of the faculty members, whose cousin, Russell Keaton, was doing *Flyin' Jenny*. It was an important contact ... and I look at it as a valuable apprenticeship that I was fortunate to get, as Russell was a first-rate comic strip artist and gentleman as well. I had left home to work with Russell and when I decided to move on up to something else I sent applications and got a reply for an interview with Fawcett as well as some others.



### Shazam-Twofold

When Fawcett Publications hired Marcus D. Swayze in 1940, it was to exclusively work on *Captain Marvel*. He later created the first drawings for *Mary Marvel* and drew her earliest adventures. Otherwise, it was just he and the *World's Mightiest Mortal* until the artist left in 1942 to serve in World War II. And while in the military he wrote CM stories on a consistent basis. Seen here are Marc's covers for *Whiz Comics* #36 (Oct. '42) and for *Wow Comics* #10 (Feb. '43). [Shazam! heroes TM & ©2011 DC Comics.]





# The Very First (In One Sense, Anyway) Superman/Captain Marvel Clash

## An All-Star Meeting Of Shazam's Squadron

by John G. Pierce

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

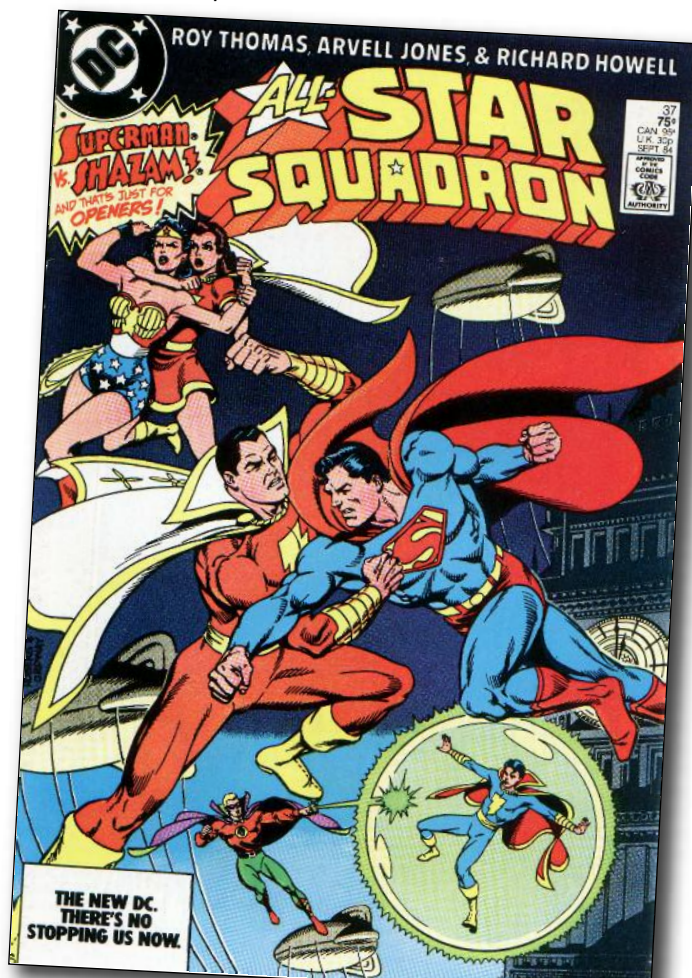
**T**he late comics/radio/movie serial historian Jim Harmon wrote, in his seminal 1961 *Xero* essay “A Swell Bunch of Guys,” that “At times we kids fantasized ... meetings between Superman and Captain Marvel—his nearest compeer in the comics pages ... After all, every man—even Superman—needs a friend. Even Superman had to feel himself part of society. And in due course, Superman’s publishers provided him with an appropriate society. It was the Justice Society of America.”

One might wonder, too, if the early comics readers ever fantasized about a meeting of Superman *and* Captain Marvel *and* the JSA.

Roy Thomas just might have done so—but, unlike other readers, he later had the opportunity to turn his fantasy into reality, when he wrote his own tribute to the JSA in the 1980s series *All-Star Squadron*. There, not only did Superman have his Society (far more so than he had experienced in the '40s, when he had interacted with the JSA only twice), but he also met Captain Marvel and Family.

Since DC had subsumed the major Fawcett characters into their line in the 1970s, Superman and Captain Marvel had met on several occasions, a number of which might lay claim to having been “the first.” But, in terms of timelines, the *Squadron* story was the first such meeting, given that it was set in 1942.

Before we get to that, though, perhaps we should explain that the All-Star Squadron might be called “the JSA on steroids,” for it included not only the members of the Justice Society as it had existed in the pages of the 1940s *All-Star Comics*, but numerous other heroes, as well: not only other extant DC characters of the early '40s, but also heroes from the later-acquired Quality Comics line—plus a couple of brand new heroes retroactively created in the '80s for gender and ethnic balance. In other words, Thomas “revealed” that the JSA had actually been part of a much larger umbrella group, the All-Star Squadron. Had any kids of the '40s wondered why, say, Aquaman never interacted with the JSA, even though he was around? Well, in this version, he did (although admittedly not often). Did they go further and fantasize a meeting of Plastic Man or the Phantom Lady with DC heroes? Less likely, perhaps, but if they'd just hung around the comics



### All-Star Marvels

(Top of page:) The Rich Buckler/Jerry Ordway cover to *All-Star Squadron* #36 (Aug. 1984) and (directly above) the Rick Hoberg/Ordway one for #37 (Sept. '84). Roy Thomas' usage of The Marvel Family in the 67-issue series was minimal, due to DC not yet owning the characters outright. [©2011 DC Comics.]



# Alter Ego™

## A DOUBLE-SIZE TRIPLE-THREAT SPECTACULAR!

Celebrating:

100 incredible issues of *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3!  
50 years of *Alter Ego* fanzine—1961 to 2011!  
& Roy Thomas' star-splashed 1980s decade at DC Comics!

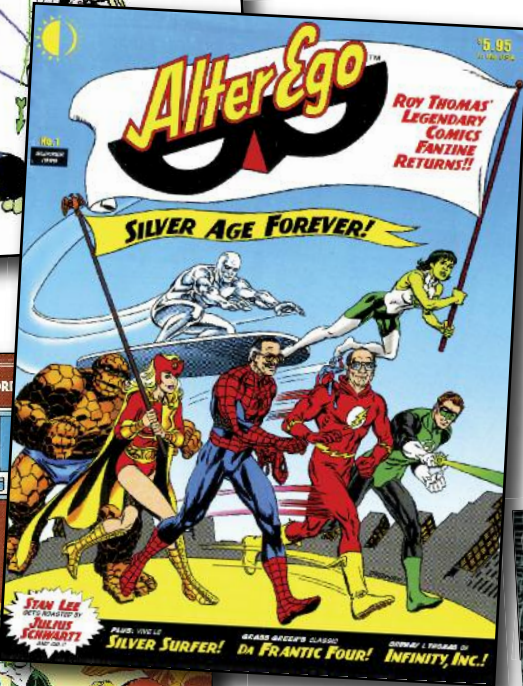
Featuring:

- The entire first issue (March '61) of *Alter-Ego!*
- "The *Alter Ego* Story!"—annotated!
- The secret origins of *All-Star Squadron—Infinity, Inc.—Arak, Son of Thunder—Captain Carrot—America vs. the Justice Society—Young All-Stars—The Ring of the Nibelung—Shazam!*—and, oh yes, *Secret Origins!*

**ALTER EGO: CENTENNIAL** celebrates 100 issues, and 50 years, of the legendary super-hero fanzine, with twice as many pages as the regular magazine, plus special features just for this anniversary edition! Inside, editor **ROY THOMAS** is interviewed by **JIM AMASH** about the 1980s at DC, uncovering secrets behind Roy's remarkable work of that era! Plus there's special anniversary editions of *Alter Ego* staples **MR. MONSTER'S COMIC CRYPT**, **FAWCETT COLLECTORS OF AMERICA (FCA)**—and **ALEX WRIGHT's** amazing color collection of 1940s DC pinup babes! Starring art & artifacts by the likes of:

ALCALA • AMASH  
ANDRU • AYERS  
BAILS • BAIR • BECK  
BELLMAN • BOYD  
BRUNNER • BUCKLER  
BÜSCEMA • COLAN  
COLÓN • CONWAY  
COOKE • DEZUNIGA  
DITKO • ENGLEHART  
FOLEY • GARCIA-LÓPEZ  
GILBERT • GIORDANO  
GLANZMAN • GONZALES  
GUIDRY • GULACY  
HAMERLINCK • HOBERG  
ISABELLA • KANE  
KAYANAN • KIRBY  
KUBERT • LEE  
LEIALOHA • LUOFF  
MACHLAN • MANDRAKE  
MANNING • McFARLANE  
MORRISON • MORROW  
NEWTON • ORDWAY  
PÉREZ • RANDALL  
ROMITA • SCHELLY  
SEVERIN • SHAW!  
SINNOTT • SWAYZE  
THOMPSON • WHITE  
WOLFMAN • WRIGHT

and a whole bunch of other talented guys & gals!



[All-Star Squadron, JSA, Infinity, Inc., *The Ring of the Nibelung*, Flash, Atom, & Green Lantern TM & ©2011 DC Comics; Spider-Man, Thing, & Silver Surfer TM & ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc., other art elements © 2011 the respective copyright holders.]



TwoMorrows Publishing  
Raleigh, North Carolina

**\$19.95**  
In The US

ISBN 978-1-60549-031-1

ISBN-13: 978-1-60549-031-1  
ISBN-10: 1-60549-031-8

