

ROY THOMAS' BLOODTHIRSTY
COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™

MARV WOLFMAN
& THE SILVER AGE
RESURGENCE OF
HORROR COMICS!



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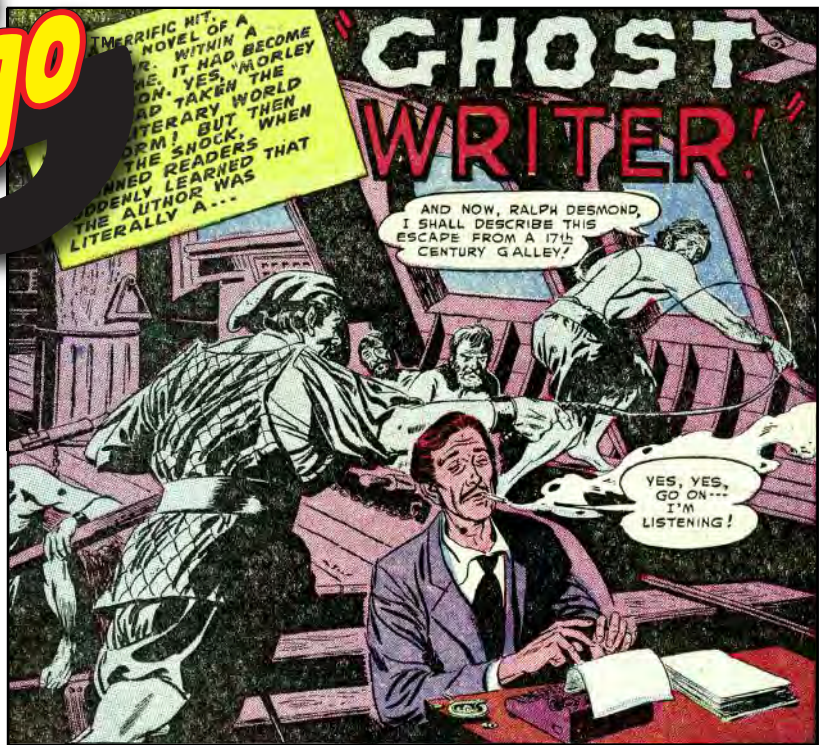
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On Our Cover: *Some years back, genial Gene Colan gifted his longtime Tomb of Dracula collaborator Marv Wolfman with this evocative penciled illustration of the writer and the Lord of Vampires. Thanks to Marv for sharing it with us. [Art ©2012 Estate of Gene Colan; Marvel rendition of Dracula TM & ©2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]*

Above: *Although this issue's final installment of Jim Amash's confab with Leonard Starr deals primarily with the latter's work on newspaper strips, let's not forget that he got his start in the early 1940s in comic books—as per this splash panel from House of Mystery #19 (Oct. 1953), which he penciled and inked. The scripter is unknown; the scan was provided by Stephan Friedt. [©2012 DC Comics.]*

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Eduardo Barreto, Sheldon Moldoff, & Emilio Squeglio



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FIRST PRINTING.

Cry Wolfman!

A Revealing Conversation With MARV WOLFMAN About His Early Career—& Days In Fandom

Conducted by Richard J. Arndt

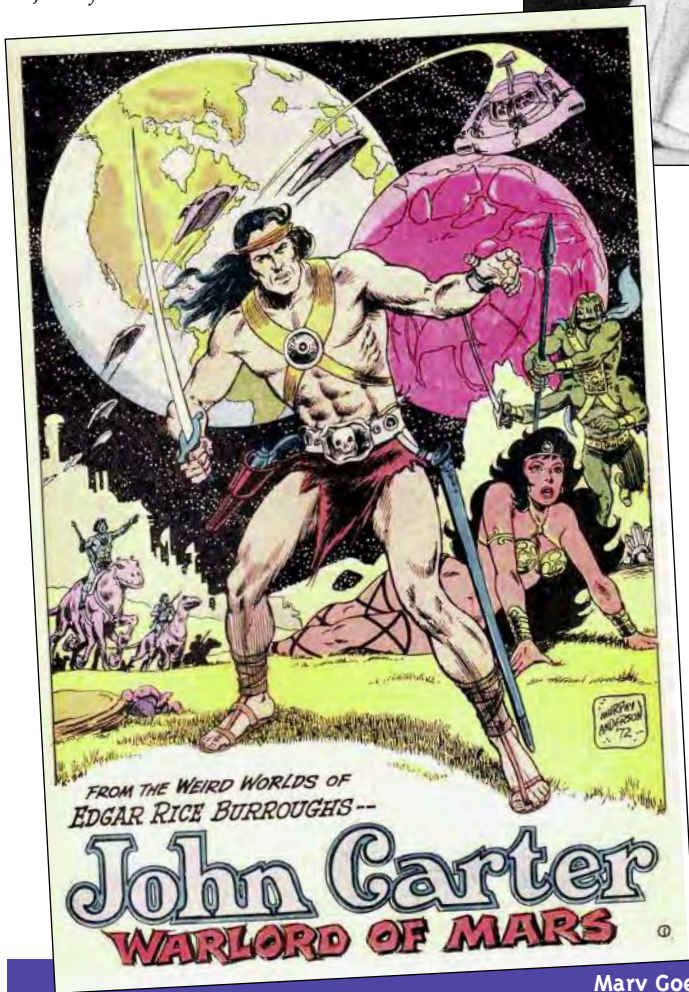
INTERVIEWER'S INTRO: *Writer and editor Marv Wolfman has been working in comics for more than forty years, scripting nearly every major super-hero from either DC or Marvel. In addition, in concert with artists Gene Colan and Tom Palmer, he transformed Marvel's Tomb of Dracula, at the time a faltering horror title, into one of the most acclaimed comics of the 1970s. Besides super-hero and horror, Wolfman has worked in nearly every genre that comics have to offer, including humor, science-fiction, sword-&-sorcery, fantasy, war, and more. This interview about his early career was conducted via e-mail in June of 2011. —Richard.*



"I Got Heavily Into Comics"

RICHARD ARNDT: *Thank you for the opportunity and the interview, Marv. To start with, where were you born and where did you grow up?*

MARV WOLFMAN: I was born in Brooklyn, New York, and lived there until I was 13. My father, Abe, was a policeman in Coney Island, and my mother, Fay, was a housewife until I graduated from high school; then she returned to work. I had a sister, Harriet, who was 12 years older than me. She'd gotten married at 18 and was out of the house when I was only 6, so I have no early memories of her. I only got to know her when I was an



Marv Goes To Mars—Twice!

Marv Wolfman in the 1970s, flanked by two permutations of one of his favorite assignments—namely, scripting comics starring Edgar Rice Burroughs' seminal hero John Carter of Mars, which he did for both the "majors."

(Left:) Murphy Anderson's splash page for DC's *Weird Worlds* #1 (Aug-Sept. 1972), which followed John Carter's earlier series in *Tarzan*; Marv's credit came on p. 4. (Right:) Splash penciled by Gil Kane and inked by Dave Cockrum for Marvel's *John Carter, Warlord of Mars* #1 (June 1977); Marv was also the editor of this series, which was covered in detail in our sister mag *Back Issue* #6 but is outside the purview of this interview concerning his early career. The photo is from the 1975 *Mighty Marvel Comic Convention* program book. [Art & script ©2012 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.]



It's A Bird... It's A Plane... It's Wolfman!

Marv in the 1950s—clearly, after he discovered the *Adventures of Superman* TV show starring George Reeves. The shirt was a Kellogg's cereal premium.

adult. Unfortunately, all are deceased.

RA: Sorry to hear that. When did you discover comics?

WOLFMAN: I don't remember the exact year, but it was in the early 1950s. I was no more than between 5 and 7 when I was at a

friend's house. We were watching the popular kids' TV show *Howdy Doody*, but when it was over, instead of getting up to change the channel to a different kids' show—mind you, this was long before remotes—we kept it on channel 4 and saw *The Adventures of Superman*, which was the next show. At the end it said it was based on the comics. We couldn't believe what we were watching. We'd never seen anything like it before. Once the show was over we ran to the corner candy store and bought our first comics, both *Action* and *Superboy*. I was hooked.

I got heavily into comics and read everything, without exclusion, from the very few super-hero titles that still existed at the time (*Superman*, *Batman*, and *Wonder Woman*) to the science-fiction books (*Mystery in Space*, *Strange Adventures*, etc.) to the Archie, ACG, and Harvey comics. I read pretty much anything except for romance and hot-rod comics. My favorites were the Superman family of magazines, the sf comics, and *Blackhawk*. Of course, I also read *Batman*, *Wonder Woman*, and nearly everything else. As a kid, I never saw the Atlas monster comics or the EC horror comics, although they must have been on the racks. I guess my kid eyes just didn't care about those comics, so I never paid them any attention.

My father hated comics, and despite the fact that, as it turned out, I had the highest boy's reading average in my public school at the time—because, unlike the other boys, I *did* read—when my teacher said comics were bad for you (it was the Wertham era, although I didn't know that at the time), all my early comics were thrown out. We lived in a four-

family apartment building in Brooklyn, two apartments on the first floor and two on the top. We were on the top. I actually sneaked comics in by hiding them in a rolled-up rug in the downstairs hallway. That worked until it rained, and I guess they opened up the rug and found the comics and tossed them. But eventually they stopped caring.

RA: That's funny! My parents didn't mind comics at all, but I always thought they would have been upset to find me paying for them. I didn't steal money, but back then you could collect pop bottles and sell them to the store for 5¢ each. When I bought my comics—three for a quarter, cover logo torn off—I would roll them into the sleeve of my jacket where they fit between my hand and elbow. Years later, it occurred to me to wonder what those store clerks thought about a kid hiding comics when he'd just paid for them. Probably thought I was nuts. [laughs]

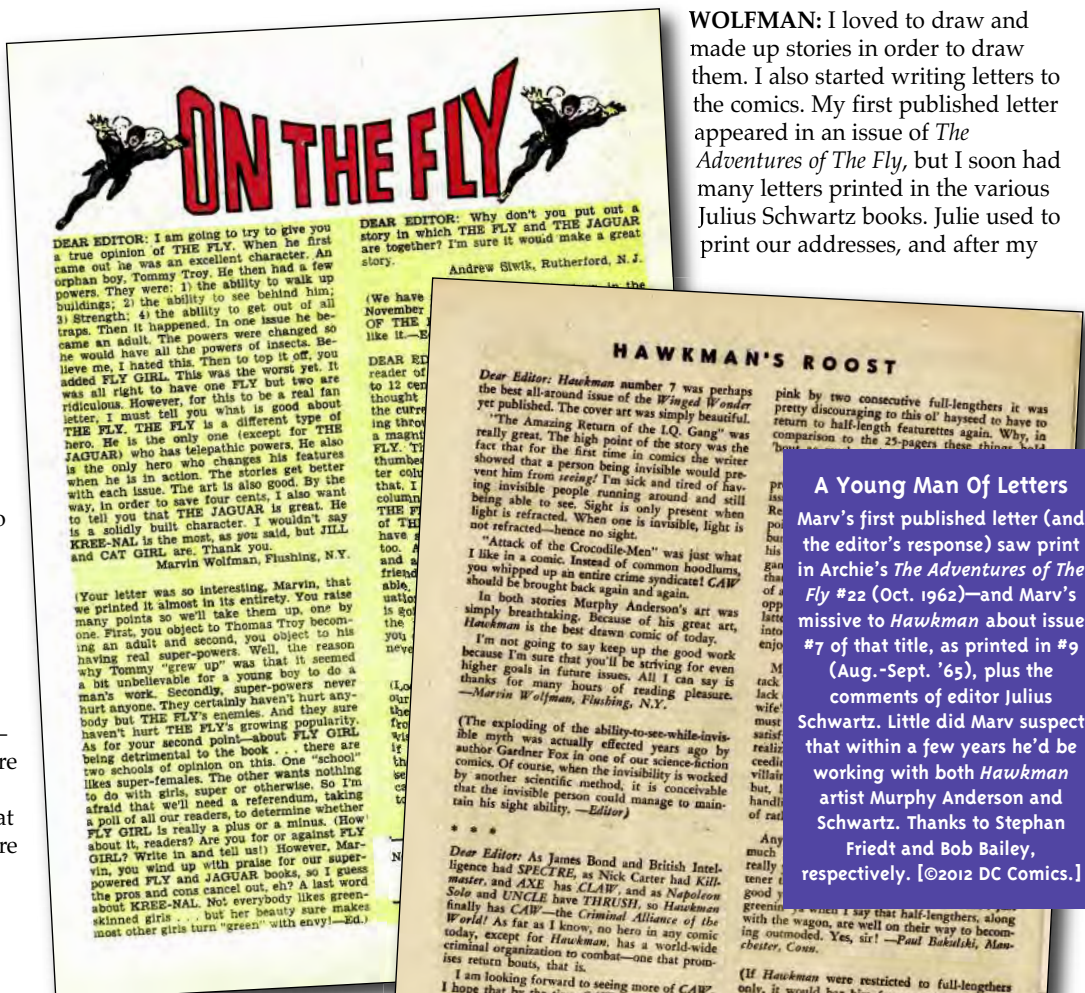
WOLFMAN: Different problems, but the same solution! Anyway, I assume [my parents] just gave up trying to get me to stop reading comics, knowing it was a lost cause. They did try, maybe at my teacher's request, buying me "real" books to read instead of comics, but I used to read the books in one or two days, which meant they had to buy more and more books, which on a cop's salary was probably prohibitive. At any rate, they no longer threw out my comics.

I was reading science-fiction, too, and quickly graduated from Tom Swift and the kid sf books to Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, and the rest. If, in the library, it had a rocket or an atom symbol on the spine, I read it.

"I Began Publishing My Own Fanzines"

RA: Did you have any hobbies that lent themselves to a future career in comics? You were involved in the fanzines of the day, weren't you?

WOLFMAN: I loved to draw and made up stories in order to draw them. I also started writing letters to the comics. My first published letter appeared in an issue of *The Adventures of The Fly*, but I soon had many letters printed in the various Julius Schwartz books. Julie used to print our addresses, and after my



A Young Man Of Letters

Marv's first published letter (and the editor's response) saw print in Archie's *The Adventures of The Fly* #22 (Oct. 1962)—and Marv's missive to *Hawkman* about issue #7 of that title, as printed in #9 (Aug.-Sept. '65), plus the comments of editor Julius Schwartz. Little did Marv suspect that within a few years he'd be working with both *Hawkman* artist Murphy Anderson and Schwartz. Thanks to Stephan Friedt and Bob Bailey, respectively. [©2012 DC Comics.]

(If *Hawkman* were restricted to full-lengths only, it would bar him from participating in a... when I say that half-lengths, along with the wagon, are well on their way to becoming outmoded. Yes, sir! —Paul Bakulski, Manchester, Conn.

first letter to him was printed in *Mystery in Space*, I received two fan magazines in the mail—*The Comic Reader* and the *Rocket's Blast*. Both were numbered 13.

I became a huge fan of the fanzines, and because I was one of the few New York-based fans at the time and because I had the opportunity to semi-regularly visit DC Comics, which conducted tours twice a week—later it became just once a week—I got involved with *The Comic Reader* and supplied them with news. I also started to write and draw stories for other fanzines of the period. I also entered the “Herbie Writing Contest” based on the ACG comic *Herbie*, which I loved. I got second prize for writing a complete script, although you were only supposed to write a plot. I still have the page of original art that I won.

When I was 13, we moved to Flushing, Queens, and I found there were only a few comic fans there in the junior high school. Because I loved to draw, I applied to and got into the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan, which of course made it easier to go on the DC tours, as they were only a few blocks away. Among my teachers—although only for a short time—was Bernie Krigstein, whose work, by this time, I knew from some of the early EC reprints, which had come out in paperback form. I tried to get him to talk about his early days in comics, but he wasn't interested and wouldn't talk about it at all. I think, later on, he changed his mind and gave some interviews, but not then.

My cartooning teacher was a Charles Allen, who'd been an artist on *Captain Marvel*. Interestingly, he was a black man, which meant he was probably one of the very few black artists working in early comics.

I used to draw super-hero comics for my cartooning assignments, but Allen—maybe he was burned out by his comics career, though I don't really know about that—kept pushing me to do humor work, instead. I resisted, but found I actually enjoyed



THE COMIC READER NO. 13

Published by Jerry Bails on November 8, 1962

Dear Comic Reader: Stan Lee is introducing a new character in TALES OF SUSPENSE -- Iron Man! This goes on sale Dec. 10th. Watch for it.

Also on sale Dec. 10th -- an entire mag devoted to THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN! You won't want to miss this one.

Stan also has a new war mag in the making -- SERGEANT FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS. This one won't be out until March 5th, but don't you forget it!

Starting with issue #91 of JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY, Joe Sinnott (who inked FANTASTIC FOUR #5) will be drawing The Mighty Thor. I think you are going to like his work.

Judy Walsh, Correspondent

FANTASTIC FOUR, etc.

(Thanks, Judy, for keeping us supplied with the latest news from Stan's Stable. Fans appreciate your kind response.)

Dear Comic Reader: You may have heard that there were quite a few costumed comic characters in evidence at the Masquerade at the Chicago Science-Fiction Convention over Labor Day this year. A group from L.A. fielded 8 Justice Society characters, and found a duplicate Flash from the East Coast. Also in evidence were Batman and Robin, and Prince Ibis and Tania. A five-person Flash Gordon group won the award for best group. The L.A. group made up their costumes from full-page-illos redrawn from the comics by one of the local fans, Bjo Trimble.

I have been grossly underestimating the size of comic fandom, and considering it a subsidiary of SF fandom. It is possible that I read through ALTER EGO #1 & 2 too quickly, but the first inking I had of the size of CF was COMIC READER #12 and then COMICCOLLECTOR #7. When XERO started running its "All In Color For a Dime" series, I thought it was an excellent bit of nostalgia, in the style of Jim Harmon's column "I Remember Comic Books" in PEON #38 (1954). I considered A-E and other such zines to be the results of Double-Fans -- those who were both comic and SF fans. It took the recent zines to show me my mistake.

Bruce Pelz

738 S. Mariposa, Apt. 107

Los Angeles 5, Calif.

(Bruce, CF has drawn a lot of its strength from Double-Fans; however, yours truly is strictly a comics fan, and I established ALTER EGO, THE COMICCOLLECTOR, and this newsletter to give the comics fan a home of his own. Nevertheless, CF will not be a fandom in its own right until it holds its own convention. Boy, how I wish I had been at that SF Con to see my old JSA buddies! I am sure that all CF will be pleased to see your write-up and photos of the Chicon Masquerade when it appears in ALTER EGO.)

Dear Comic Reader: It may interest you to know that in a film entitled "The Good Humor Man" (which I saw on TV the other night)

Lucky Thirteen

The covers of the first two fanzines Marv Wolfman ever saw: G.B. Love's *Rocket's Blast* #13 (Dec. 1962) and Jerry Bails' *The Comic Reader* #13 (Nov. 8, 1962). The artist on the former is Buddy Saunders, now owner of Lone Star Comics. Thanks to Aaron Caplan. [©2012 the respective copyright holders.]

writing and drawing comedy, which is why I published my humor fanzine and got into humor writing.

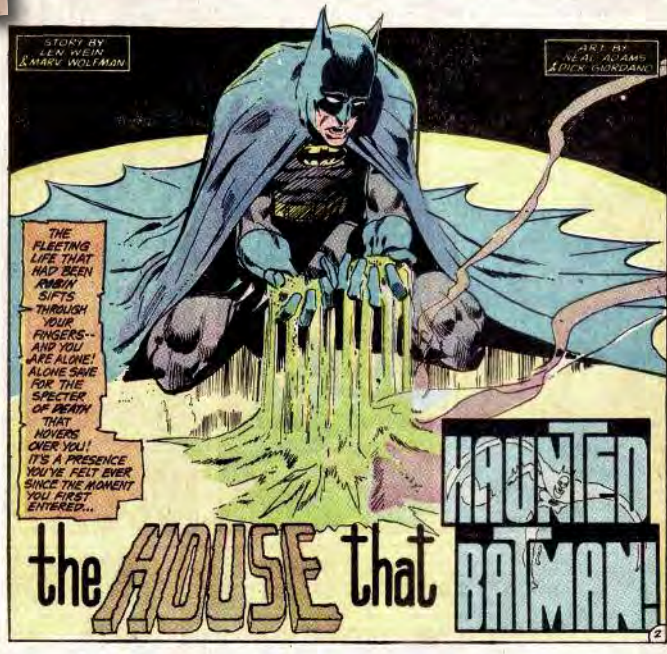
I began publishing my own fanzines—*Super-Adventures*, which was a super-hero fanzine that I inherited from writer-artist Dave Herring, one of my fellow A&D students; there was also *The Foob*, a comedy fanzine with a slightly political bent; *Stories of Suspense*, a horror fanzine (I actually published Stephen King's first prose story—"I Was a Teenage Grave Robber"—which also appeared in another fanzine at the same time); and *What Th ...?*, which was an opinion fanzine.

RA: The Stephen King Companion cites King's first prose story as having appeared in *Comics Review*, edited by you. Was it *Comics Review* or *Stories of Suspense*? Or is the King Companion confusing the title with the other fanzine appearance you mentioned?

WOLFMAN: They're both right and wrong. The story did appear in *Comics Review*, which was published by Mike Garrett. At the same time, my friend Jeff Gelb, who was also friends with Mike, sent me the story, which I published in *Stories of Suspense*. They both, I think, came out at about the same time, so we both published King's first story. By the way, Jeff and Mike are still friends and work together. In fact, a few years back I wrote a short story for their *Hot Blood* horror anthology series.

I remember my mother taking me to Montgomery Ward in Manhattan to buy a ditto machine in order to print the fanzines. Why she put up with that I don't know, but that allowed me to

already a major star at DC and was, I think, being courted by Marvel, said to me at the office that my problem was that I didn't know how to write characters. My dialogue didn't sound real, and unless I learned how to do that I wouldn't ever get regular work in the field. That obviously hurt, and for about three minutes (okay, maybe much longer than that) I probably wanted to strangle him, but he was bigger than me. By the time I got home I turned that into "I'll show him."



The Wolfman/Wein Team That Haunted "Batman"

At the 1967 "Kalercon" in NYC, Wolfman (on left) and Wein were just on the verge of entering the pro comics field. Soon afterward, they wrote the plot for "The House That Haunted Batman"—a script that was eventually drawn by a determined Neal Adams, with Dick Giordano inks, and printed in *Detective Comics* #408 (Feb. 1971). See interview for the full story.

Photo by Pat Yanchus; thanks to Bob Bailey for the art scan.

["Batman" page ©2012 DC Comics.]

For the next year or so I concentrated on my character and dialogue until that became the major focus of my work, as evidenced in *Tomb of Dracula*. But if Gerry hadn't said that to me, challenged me, I don't think I would ever have gotten better. Years later, by the way, Bob Shreck did the same thing, pointing out that my writing was becoming old-fashioned. That forced me to really look at the current comics and try to evolve my work. I have a tendency to get angry fairly quickly, but I even more quickly turn that into a challenge and the anger is gone.

I believe if you want to be a good writer or artist or pretty much anything else, you have to learn to take criticism and make it work for you, even if at first you get angry over it. If in my soul I didn't really want to be a writer, I would never have listened to Gerry. I would have called him an idiot and just kept doing what I was doing and eventually I would have been out of the industry. Instead, after the anger faded, I pushed aside my ego and listened to his words and thought that maybe my bad dialogue was the reason I wasn't getting work. I had to look at what I was doing wrong and then, if I had the talent to do so, fix it. I think I did.

"There's A Real Story Behind That 'Batman' Story"

RA: What was your reaction to seeing your "Batman" tale illustrated by the top "Batman" art team?

WOLFMAN: There's a real story behind that "Batman" story. When Len and I first came up with the idea, "Batman" was very much in its camp phase, which was based on the approach of the TV show. We both hated that and wanted to make Batman dark and mysterious, the way he was meant to be. I'd already used my fan-oriented view of what was good and what wasn't and written that early "Blackhawk" story, so why not try it again.

We came up with a grim and gritty plot and presented it to

editor Julie Schwartz, but its darker nature was so out of tune with what was going on at the time that he suggested we take out our ending—which I no longer remember at all—and put in a Batman-like death trap to liven it up. That turned out to be what I've always called the giant ping-pong ball machine you see at the end. Batman and Robin were trapped in pneumatic tubes that shot them around, or something to that effect. We did it, but Julie still didn't like it and finally rejected it.

For some reason we were grouching about it to Dick Giordano. Dick asked to read our plot, liked it, and then for some reason showed it to Neal Adams. Neal loved it. Then Neal did something I'd never heard of either before or after, and it's one of the many reasons I have only good thoughts about him to this day: Neal decided to draw the entire story—in secret and on spec. Remember, Neal was DC's top artist at the time and had, I assume, their best page rate. Yet he took the chance to draw an entire story in his copious free time, knowing full well it might still be rejected and he would not get paid for his work.

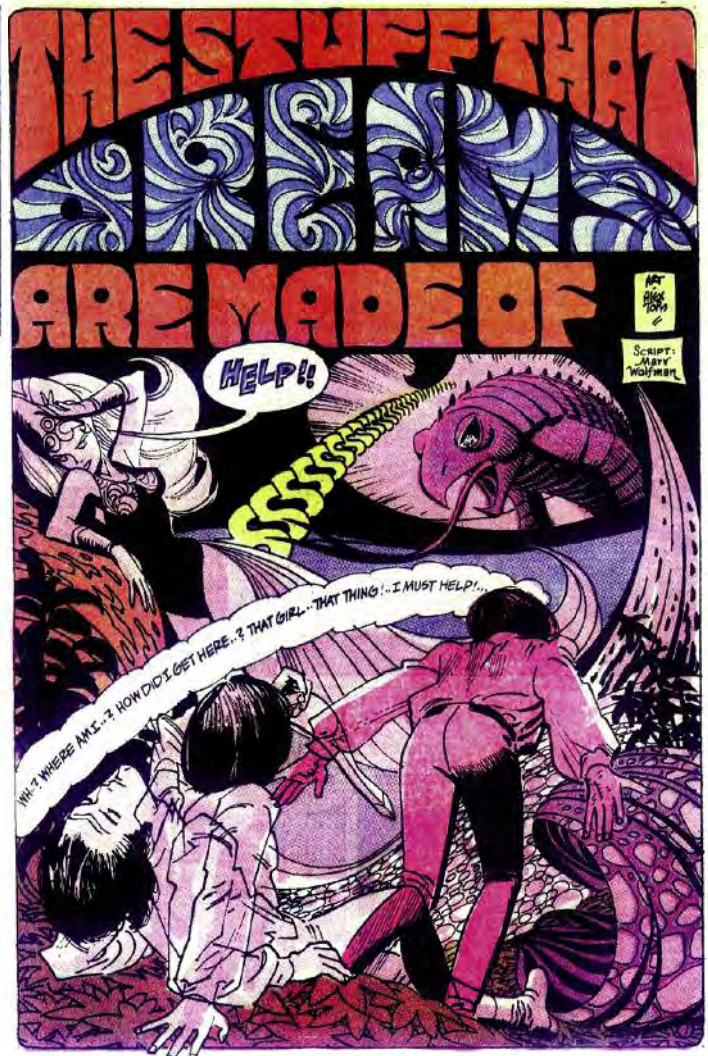
Obviously Neal could only fit in a page here or there, so it was



House of Credits

(Left:) The panel from the Abel-starring intro to *The House of Secrets* #83 (Dec. 1969-Jan. 1970) which wound up gaining Marv Wolfman—and by extension every other writer—printed credit in DC’s mystery mags. Script by Gerry Conway; art by Bill Draut. Thanks to Dave Reeder.

(Right:) The story that began on the very next page originally sported only artist Alex Toth’s byline; Marv’s was added at the last minute, via a patch sent to the printer. See interview for details. Thanks to Dave Reeder & Marc Svensson. [©2012 DC Comics.]



going to take a while to get done. During that time, based on Neal’s darker “Batman” work on *The Brave and the Bold*, it was decided to darken all the “Batman” stories. Writer Denny O’Neil and Neal then began Batman’s complete overhaul, which is essentially still the Batman we see today, with only cosmetic changes.

By the time Neal finished our story, the darkness we were going for was no longer unique, which is why, when Neal finally showed the finished penciled story to Julie, it was no longer out of sync with what was being done.

Julie was, of course, taken aback that Neal had done a story without him assigning it. Any other editor would probably have rejected it without even looking at the pages, simply to assert power. But Julie, bless ‘im, read it, then suddenly remembered it and asked Neal if this was indeed the story we’d written that he’d rejected maybe a year or two before. Neal said it was. Julie said, “Never do that again,” then bought it.

As I say, any other editor would probably have rejected it, then never used us again (Neal would always be used because he was the best, whereas we were still just kids), but Julie was great enough to ignore that hit to his ego and accepted it as a good story. Not only did we sell it, but as an added gift Neal gave us the original artwork for it. I still have my pages, and the one with our credit on it is framed and on my office wall. Neal very much saved our careers back then by breaking every rule in the book, then Julie actually said yes when he could just as easily have said no. Both of them earned my eternal gratitude.

“A Wandering Wolfman”

RA: DC’s mystery titles in the early days usually didn’t carry writer or artist’s credits. There’s an amusing story about how that changed based on your name. Can you tell us what you remember about it?

WOLFMAN: Oh, gosh, that story’s been told so often. To get it out of the way fast: DC’s mystery books always had “hosts” who introduced the stories—Cain, Abel, Destiny, the Three Witches, etc. Gerry Conway happened to write many of these introductions during this time period. Knowing I’d written the story that would follow his page, he wrote something to the effect of “the following story was told to me, long, long ago... by a wandering wolfman....” Well, back then, the Comics Code still forbade classic

monsters from being used in comics. No vampire, no zombies, no Frankenstein monsters, no wolfmen. Unfortunately, the book had already been sent to the printers. DC had to convince them that “Wolfman” was my actual name. The Code office believed them, but insisted that, in order to take away the “monster” stigma, DC had to put my credit on the story. DC sent a patch to the printer, who pasted it into place, and which said: “Story: Marv Wolfman.” That was in *House of Secrets* #83 (Jan. 1970). After that came out, every writer insisted on having their credit, too. So, if my name had been Marv Smith, we’d all still be working anonymously to this day. By the way, I also have the original splash page art with my name pasted on it framed and on my office wall.

RA: You did a number of stories for the black-&-white magazines such as *Major Publications’ Web of Horror* (a story with Bernie Wrightson art), *Skywald’s Psycho*, and *Warren’s Eerie* magazines. What can you tell us about those titles? You actually did quite a few stories for *Skywald*, including a two-part science-fiction story with Rick Buckler and a couple of stories about *The Love Witch*, which were illustrated by Ernie Colón and cover-featured by Jeff Jones.

WOLFMAN: Between the well-documented *Teen Titans* “Titans Fit the Battle of Jericho” fiasco with what would have been DC’s first black super-hero, and a sad mistake where it was thought by DC management that we young fans-turned-professionals were stealing original art from the archives, several of us (including me) were pretty much blacklisted from the company. At the same time this was happening, I’d become an art teacher for a junior high

[continued on p. 16]

presence. Later on, he did a sketch for my mug book.

Remember I had said my high school cartooning teacher, Charles Allen, kept pushing me to write and draw humor? I discovered I absolutely loved doing it, but sadly there haven't been all that many places I could do it for. I could never have become a comedy writer for TV, because I can't talk or pitch funny. I sit at the typewriter, now the computer, and keep rewriting until I think the rhythm of the joke works. But those guys have to be able to be funny fast and on demand. I still love humor-writing and I think it comes out a lot in my other work. You know there were some really funny issues of *Tomb of Dracula*. I'm not kidding.

"Assignments I Never Sought Out"

RA: You did a number of short runs for various Marvel titles in the early 1970s—*Werewolf by Night*, *Killraven/War of the Worlds*, and the *Sub-Mariner*. What are your recollections of them?

WOLFMAN: Nothing much. They were assignments I never sought out. However, the one funny thing about *Werewolf by Night* was that Roy told me he wanted me to write it simply because my name was Wolfman. He thought a Wolfman writing about a werewolf would be hilarious. I did, too, so I did a few issues with Gil Kane and Mike Ploog doing the artwork. Ploog and I did a "Werewolf" story that was a homage to Will Eisner's style, since Mike had worked for Will as his assistant.

RA: While re-reading a number of 1970s comics, I noticed that the Marvel comics of that era are very dialogue-heavy while the DC titles seemed to be better balanced, in my opinion, between art and dialogue. Was that a result of Marvel writers following Stan Lee's lead on writing "the Marvel way"—plot, then art, then dialogue? Lee often made it a point in his scripts of... well, pointing out to the reader that he wasn't putting in dialogue on certain fight scenes. It was a quirk of his that was noticeable because he usually filled each panel, regardless of what was going on, with dialogue. Was there any particular reason for this?

WOLFMAN: Marvel was a very dialogue-heavy company, and a lot of that was based on Stan's verbose style. But I think that came about more because of the speed we had to write. At DC we were usually six months ahead of print schedule. At Marvel, all too often the previous issue of the book was on the stands before you finished writing the next one. It is much easier to write too much when you're rushing, because you don't have the time to go back



And The Band Blade On!

Tomb of Dracula #10 (July 1973) introduced Blade the Vampire-Slayer, who would become the hero of a trio of popular films beginning in 1998. Seen here are the cover by Gil Kane & Tom Palmer—Blake's debut page by Gene Colan & Jack Abel—and a photo of Marv with star Wesley Snipes on the set of the *Blade* film. Thanks to Barry Pearl and Stephan Friedt for the scans. [Comics pages ©2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.; photo courtesy of Marv Wolfman.]



and edit the work, to rewrite it to use the fewest and best-chosen words possible. The longer deadline you have the tighter and better the script. The shorter your deadline, the more rambling and uncontrolled it can become. It's actually easier to write a lot than a little.

RA: You began a run on *Daredevil* with #124 (Aug. 1975) with the first issue being another team-up with Len Wein. During that run you created Bullseye, who certainly became a major playing character in the Frank Miller run that immediately followed your stint. Tell us anything you'd like to about your *Daredevil* run.

WOLFMAN: Not much to say other than creating Bullseye and The Torpedo, both of whom I liked a lot. I was never that fond of writing *Daredevil*, because I didn't think he had a strong personality, and I didn't think his book was all that unique. He seemed to be a redundant hero, someone who did a lot of what other heroes did but not everything. Unfortunately, back then you didn't have license to change those things, even if we thought of doing so. But a few years later things changed, and Frank Miller (and Roger McKenzie) came in and essentially blew it all up and made *Daredevil* interesting for the first time. Frank used to joke that *Daredevil's* only super-power was that he could see. His swinging from rooftop to rooftop would be pretty ordinary in comic book terms but He. Was. Blind. So that made him special. His power was that as a blind man he could see.

RA: That's a pretty good quote, and quite funny, too.

WOLFMAN: I loved what Frank did, especially with Bullseye. I created [Bullseye], but Frank did a much better job with him than I did.

RA: Who was "Modred the Mystic"?

WOLFMAN: A half-baked idea for a book we suddenly needed to

fill a slot with overnight. Too many books got shoved onto the schedule because we were given orders for 10 new titles—NOW! To be honest, I don't remember anything about him. He may have been really well done, for all I know, but that would be an accident from the writer and the artists, not of the need to create a new book in the next five minutes.

RA: Did you create Skull the Slayer, and what was that series about?

WOLFMAN: *Skull* was a long and winding road, but yes, this was another book we had to do overnight. I'd originally come up with the earliest version of the concept when I was at DC. I'd submitted a series idea to Joe Orlando. His mystery titles only had unconnected anthology stories, but I thought, what if we could make each story stand alone but they would all fit into one longer story? So I came up with the idea of an apartment building that somehow got thrown back into the past. Each 8-page story would be about a different family and their problems surviving. Sadly, it was rejected.

Years later, when we needed an idea at Marvel, I remembered that. But because Marvel was then, and still is, all about the heroes, I removed the anthology aspect and created a lead hero character. I seem to recall Roy may have been pushing for a main hero, too,

but I'm not positive. I always liked *Skull*, but ultimately it was not a Marvel concept. It would have been much better if I'd done it at DC, even as a back-up. Even if it hadn't succeeded, I would have had more fun writing it. I left after three issues, but I did color the first issue.

"Someone Threw A Dart At A Board And Hit My Name"

RA: When did you become the lead editor for Marvel's color comics, and how did that come about? This time period seemed to be a revolving door of editors after Roy Thomas quit the lead editor position.

WOLFMAN: I think it was either in 1975 or 1976, but it's easier for someone to look it up than for me to remember. I think I got the job because someone threw a dart at a board and hit my name. Actually, I was already editing the black-&-white magazines, so it was logical that I'd move over to the color line when the previous editor quit. I hired Archie Goodwin, who was then at Atlas Comics, to replace me on the magazines. Archie was not only impossibly talented but one of the nicest people ever to be in comics. Anyway, hiring him was sort of like hiring Michelangelo to finish your coloring book for you. He had basically invented the



Wolfman Does Werewolf

(Left:) Marv remembers editor Roy Thomas as liking the idea of a "Wolfman" writing *Werewolf by Night*—and voila, the splash page of *Werewolf by Night* #12 (Dec. 1973). Script by Wolfman, pencils by Gil Kane, inks by Don Perlin, who would later pencil the series.

(Right:) Equally amusing to editor RT was having primo 1950s "Superman" artist Wayne Boring penciling Marvel's own *Captain Marvel*—for reasons either known to the reader or too complicated to go into here—and Marv wound up writing that one, too. This splash appeared in issue #24 (Nov. 1972). The next issue, Marv made up a villain named Dr. Mynde (after the original's foe Mr. Mind)—just as, for #22, scribe Gerry Conway had come up with a "Prof. Savannah," in honor of Fawcett's Dr. Sivana. Thanks to Barry Pearl for both scans. ©2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

“There’s Been A Lot Of Characters In This Business”



Concluding Our Four-Part Interview With Comics Legend LEONARD STARR

Interview Conducted by Jim Amash

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

INTERVIEWER’S INTRODUCTION: Leonard Starr began his career as a comic book artist, working for numerous companies, including DC, ACG, and Timely/Marvel, during the 1940s and ‘50s, moving on from there into advertising, as related in our preceding three issues. In 1957 he achieved his desire to see a comic strip of his own syndicated in newspapers: *On Stage*, which on Sundays was soon titled *Mary Perkins On Stage*. Thanks once again to Tom Sawyer for putting me in touch with Leonard.... —Jim.

“I Took [Five Comic Strips] Up To King Features”

JA: You left Johnstone & Cushing—and advertising in general—when you started the *On Stage* strip in 1957. How did you get that strip?

STARR: I was going through a divorce and Johnny Prentice was going through a divorce at the same time and so we found a place together. One day a week, I was developing ideas for newspaper strips. I came up with five strips, and I took them up to King Features because I knew a lot of the guys there, and I also knew editor Sylvan Byck. Sylvan said, “Yeah, this is good, but it’s kind of like something else we have.” He liked what I brought him, but it wasn’t quite what he was wanting. He said, “When you get something else, by all means, bring it in and show it to me.”

JA: When you were developing these strips, were you writing them, too?

STARR: I was setting up the story, but I never intended to write them if I sold a series. I never thought about writing, and I never wanted to write. I was forced into it because I couldn’t find anybody to write for me. I was always a heavy reader, and so I would have something in my head, a meter or some sort of scale or something, and I couldn’t find anybody to match it, so I was stuck doing it myself.

JA: So you did five strips that they didn’t take. Was *On Stage* number six?

STARR: No, it was like #5, and Sylvan said, “You have something. The next idea you got, bring it up to me.” The idea I got was to bring all five up to the *New York Daily News*. [mutual chuckling] They were a little concerned about *On Stage* because

The World’s *On Stage*—And Each Must Play A Part

“Leonard Starr in his New York studio completing *On Stage*’s second Sunday page, 2/17/57.” That’s the caption beneath the above photo in Vol. 1 of *Classic Comics Press’ Leonard Starr’s Mary Perkins On Stage*, which reprints all strips from its debut on Feb. 10, 1957, through Jan. 11, 1958. Seen at left is the art for that Sunday, as repro’d there in black-&-white.

©2012 Tribune Media Services, Inc.]



show-business strips hadn't done well in the past. But apparently, they saw something in what I presented. The editor at the time was Maurice C. Riley, whom I liked a lot. His name was pronounced "Morris," and he was called "Mo."

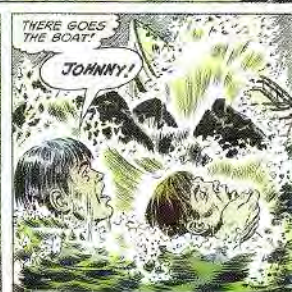
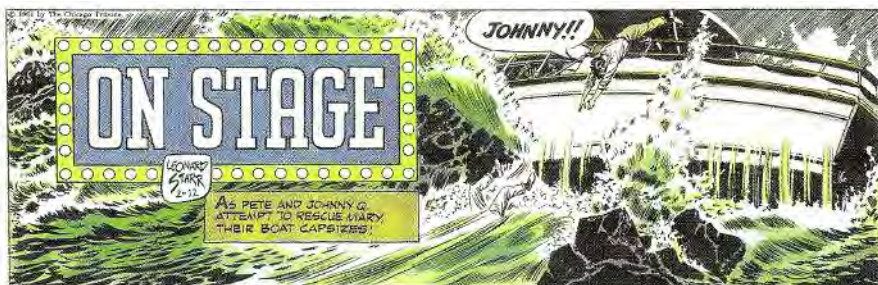
He asked me, "Can you make up a week's worth of dailies?" I had already done a week's worth of another strip, which I brought in. He liked the looks of it and that one, I thought, had the most promise. It was international in nature, but they already had [*Terry and the Pirates*] so Mo was a little concerned about that. They thought about things like that, and I don't know why, because except for the fact that it was roughly international in nature, it had nothing to do with *Terry* at all. It was about a medical missionary. I'd done a lot of research at the World Health Organization at the U.N., so what I had was exotic travel and exotic women in nurses—and sickness and disease, which is always popular. [*chuckles*] The first stories had to do with an Indian village, and the sanitation was bad. They had the outhouses on the outside of the village that contaminated the water, and the tigers would get them there. If they lived on the inside, they had the polluted water. So the fact that the tigers are old and couldn't forage for themselves didn't help things. [*mutual chuckling*] They weren't so old that they couldn't nail you in the shower. It was a problem that had to be

solved. Some people said the tiger was sacred and he should do whatever he wanted... that sort of thing.

I thought it was the best idea, but they went with *On Stage*, and I wasn't crazy about doing it because there were a lot of audiences and backstage stuff and large casts of people. A lot of work. So anyway, I drew up the samples for it, and Mo said, "Good. Let me keep it, I'll let you know." So I'm waiting and I'm waiting and I'm waiting—and don't forget, I'm sharing a studio with John—and Alex Raymond gets killed in a car accident. I'm thinking, "Jesus, Sylvan's going to call me about this," and I'm waiting for my own strip, and sure enough, he calls. I said, "Sylvan, I'm sorry. I'd really like to, but I can't right now. But I've got just the guy for you." And he says, "For God's sakes, send him up, because Alex was only two days ahead on *Rip Kirby!*"

Actually, Johnny's style was closer to Alex's style than mine was. He got the job, and both of us were stony broke because we were wiped out after our divorces. I'm thinking, "Well, I just gave up a very lucrative job, waiting for God knows what."

JA: You weren't even sure that *On Stage* was going to be picked up. That's a hell of a chance to take.



STARR: It certainly was, but one o'clock that afternoon, a Western Union messenger came to the door, and it's a telegram from Mo who was in Chicago. "I've sold *On Stage*, and I'll call you on Monday." Mo was working in Chicago at this point, and was visiting with his daughter who lived in a suburb of Chicago. He's taking the commuting train back to Chicago, he's reading the paper, and he sees Alex died. He's thinking, "Oh, no! They're going to get Leonard to do this," so he got off the train, sent the telegram, and took the next train to Chicago.

"Look, Ma! I'm A Writer!"

JA: Now you had to find a writer. Who did you pick and how did you do that?

STARR: One was Dick French, who was Tex Blaisdell's wife's brother, and he had written a lot of comic books, but somehow, it just didn't work out. With all of the guys who I tried—and there were five, all told, including Bill Finger—I told them the kind of story I wanted, and they would come back with the story I told them, but not done the way I wanted. They were doing comics, and I don't know how familiar you are with *On Stage*, but its reputation is that it was a soap opera that wasn't quite a soap opera. That was what I wanted, and I wasn't getting what I had in mind.

So finally, time was running out, and I had to get it done. I kept writing it and talking to guys who were writing it and talking to guys and

Going Overboard

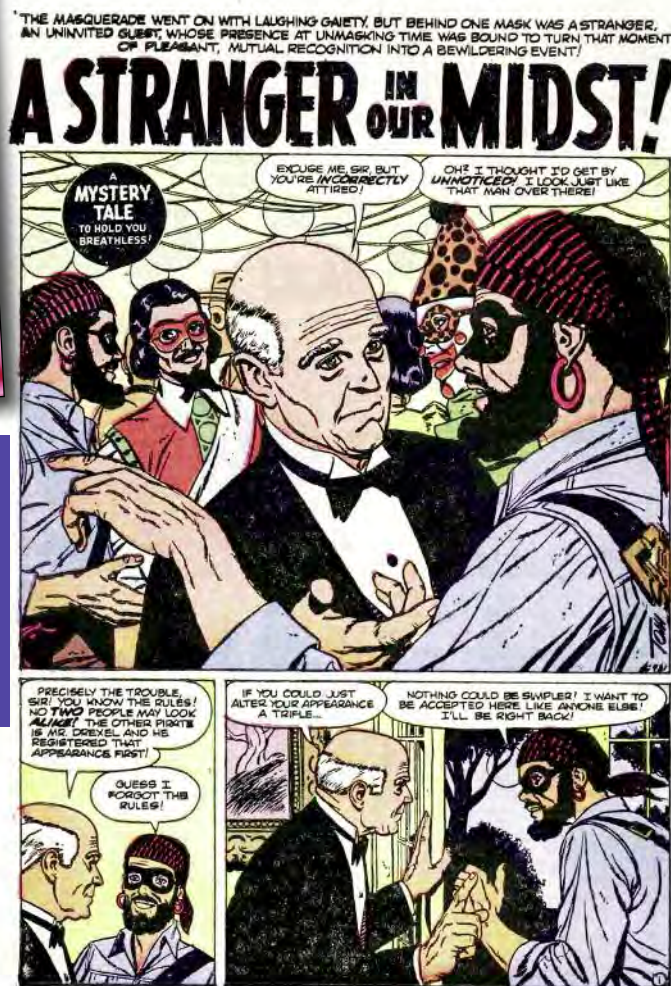
On Stage was hardly a "weeper," as show-biz trade publications used to refer to romantic films. This Sunday, a high-perfect combination of high-photographic realism with exaggerated action from Feb. 12, 1961, appears on the back cover of Leonard Starr's *Mary Perkins On Stage*, Vol. 4, published by Charles Peltó's Classic Comics Press. [©2012 Tribune Media Services, Inc.]

almost as if he lived there for a while. My then-wife was fond of him, and didn't mind him being around. We worked a lot, we laughed a lot, and we partied a lot—that kind of thing. Then Tom went off on his own, and I don't know how much success he had, but ultimately he tried to sell a couple of strips. When we were sharing the studio together, he was doing mainly advertising, some for Johnstone & Cushing, but also for another guy who did those advertising books pertaining to a lot of general subjects.



"You Don't Know About Me Without You've Read An Interview With Tom Sawyer..."

(Left:) This 1992 photo of artists and longtime friends Leonard Starr (on left) and Tom Sawyer was originally printed in *A/E* #77, which featured Jim Amash's interview with the latter. Thanks to Tom. (Right:) A Sawyer-bylined splash page from *Mystery Tales* #35 (Nov. 1955). Thanks to Dr. Michael J. Vassallo. [©2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



JA: But of course, he went on to television and did well.

STARR: Yes, that's the gutsiest thing I know of in my entire life. He was around 40 or so, with at least one very young child, and maybe another on the way, but he goes to California to make a movie. He made a cult movie called *Alice Goodbody*. He's got them on DVD, and he told me he still makes some revenue from it. He still had his drawing board in the garage, and advertising was his main source of income for quite a while. But then he started selling scripts to television shows, and the next thing I knew, he was the head writer/showrunner for *Murder She Wrote*. Astonishing, astonishing! I wouldn't have had the guts. I have to know where my next meal is coming from. [NOTE: For more about Tom and his career, check out *Alter Ego* #77. —Jim.]

"What Drove Me Crazy About Annie..."

JA: So you got the Little Orphan Annie strip. Who offered that to you?

STARR: The head of the Chicago Tribune Syndicate then was Bob Reed, who asked me if I'd like to do it. I thought about it, and then agreed to do it.

JA: This is the thing I find fascinating about you and about Stan Drake: both of you drew in a photo-realistic type of style. Then both of you turn around—he draws *Blondie*, you draw *Little Orphan Annie*. Did you find the switch in styles difficult?

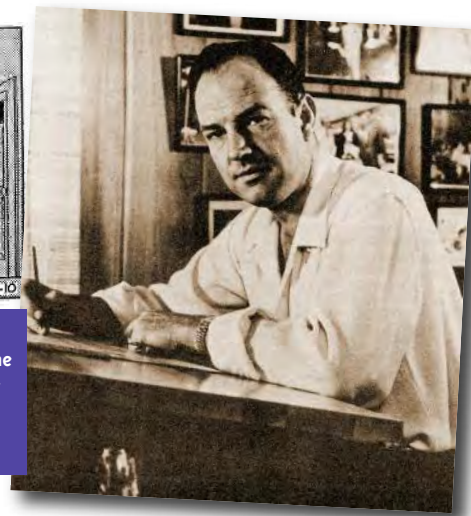
STARR: Only at first. Cartoon artists usually can't adapt to a straight style. But the straight guys—if they have to copy an established character, it's a portrait. They can draw anything. It's much easier for a straight cartoonist to do the simplified stuff or even the cartoon stuff. You know, Dagwood's leg articulates halfway up the shin. Once you've got that figured out, you can draw it. But until then, it's kind of tough.

What drove me crazy about *Annie* was drawing her hair. It took



A Heart-To-Heart Talk

Stan Drake (photo) titled his celebrated newspaper strip *The Heart of Juliet Jones*—but her sister Eve had all the fun! Drake's strip lacked the action of *On Stage*, but sported its own fair share of lush art! The photo and the daily for April 10, 1953, appear in *Classic Comics Press'* first volume of *Stan Drake's The Heart of Juliet Jones*, published in 2008. You owe it to yourself to pick up these Drake and Starr goodies! [©2012 King Features Syndicate, Inc.]





Ripped

Flash Gordon original artist Alex Raymond in 1946, the year he began *Rip Kirby* after mustering out of the armed services—and two RK dailies from a decade later, by two different artists.

(Top:) The beautifully lit Raymond strip for Jan. 18, 1956.

(Bottom:) John Prentice's daily for Nov. 13 of that same year—from the first (and unbylined) story he illustrated after Raymond's death—as seen in Brian Walker's 2002 book *The Comics since 1945*. The hardcover series *Alex Raymond's Rip Kirby* is currently available in several volumes from The Library of American Comics, with John Prentice's tenure on the strip set to follow soon. [©2012 King Features Syndicate, Inc.]



me about a year or two before I could get easy with it, where I could just scribble it in the way [creator Harold] Gray had, and make it look okay. At first, I traced it off Gray's work in order to just get loose with it, and as I say, that took time. But once I got going on it, essentially, I realized that Gray was drawing as well as he could, so that realization gave me the opportunity to take his style a few years into the future, the way he might have done it if he had the ability.

JA: Your version was very clean, very modern-looking.

STARR: Yeah, but it's still *Annie*, you know. The three most popular strips in history at that time were *Dick Tracy*, *Little Orphan Annie*, and *Blondie*. So why did I want to go my own way? The idea was to make it as close to what Gray might have done if he wasn't a reactionary swine. [Jim laughs] Truly, I couldn't write about the politics the way he did. You know, he killed Daddy Warbucks because President Franklin Roosevelt got re-elected. And he brought him back to life later, and I forget exactly how all of that worked, but Harold Gray was very, very far to the Right. I did cover some social issues, though, like Medicare. I did all the writing on *Annie*.

JA: When Stan Drake took over *Blondie*, do you think it was much of a switch for him?

STARR: About the same as me. It took him a while to dope it out, then he drew a portrait of the characters. Being as good as he was, essentially, he just copied what it was. Kids copy comics all the time. So you figure you take that up about a hundred dimensions, and make it Stan Drake, how tough can it be?

JA: One thing that surprised me about him: here he was doing *Blondie*, and then he began inking comic books in the late 1980s and into the mid-1990s. Why?

STARR: Money.

JA: He just needed money? I would have figured that *Blondie* paid pretty well.

STARR: He had married a very nice woman with two children, and they had the usual expenses and all. With the addition of two kids that he's raising to go to college, and all of that, Stan was very responsible in those ways.

JA: Gill Fox told me a story. One time, he was in a bar with Stan Drake, and Stan was getting inking royalties—and we're talking about 1990s here—he showed Gill a check, and the check was for—as Gill put it—an astronomical amount. Thousands of dollars of inking royalty for what he was doing for Valiant Comics.

STARR: I don't remember that, and I don't remember him doing work for Valiant. I know he did some stuff for Marvel. He was just filling in time in order to make some extra bucks. Somehow, his standard of living was much higher than his income.

JA: Before we change subjects, I'd like to know what Stan Drake told you about the automobile accident that took Alex Raymond's life and nearly his own.



TALES FROM THE CODE

The Sequel

by Richard J. Arndt

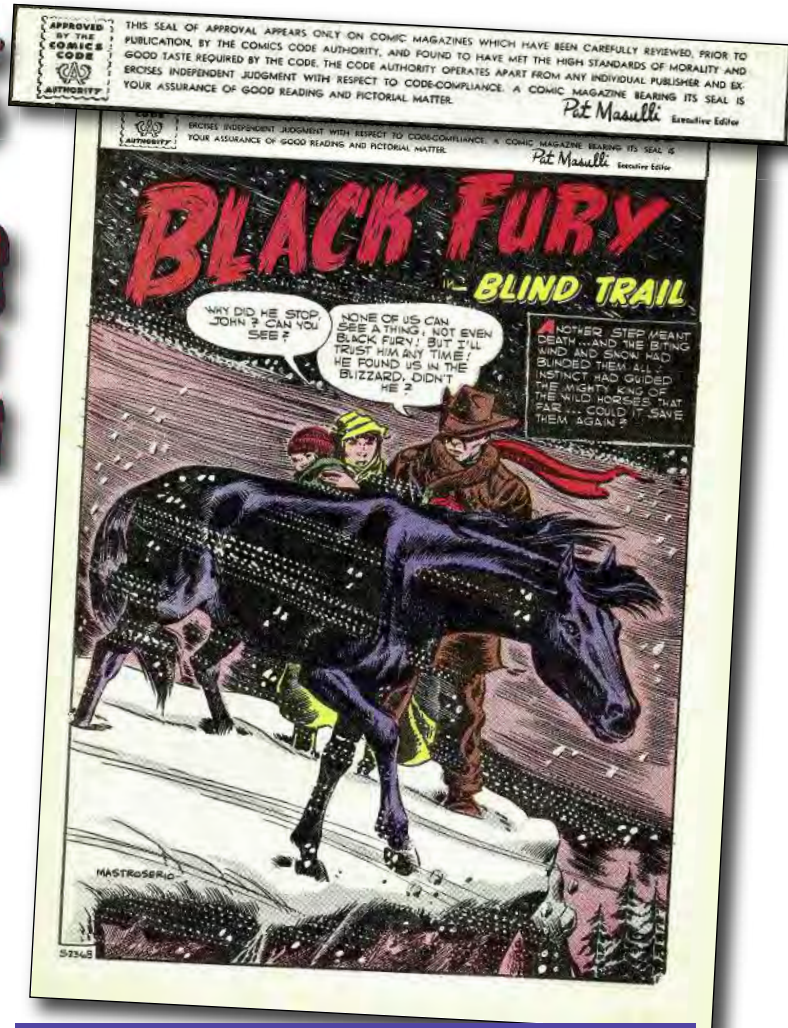
Welcome to Part 2 of "Tales from the Code." Here, in a follow-up to the cover feature of last October's *Alter Ego* #105, is another batch of curious, odd, and downright confounding examples of the rulings of the Comics Code Authority related to the companies that subscribed to the Code.

"Them!"

Before we begin examining actual changes wrought by the Code Office, however, I can't resist the temptation to showcase a comic book that the Code passed as OK for the reading public, but probably shouldn't have. It's an issue we mentioned briefly in *A/E* #105 but didn't go into great detail about because it was discovered too late in the editing process. It's the benign-looking but rather deviant *Wonder Woman* #185 (Dec. 1969).

This comic was published midway through the 1969-1971 "depowered Wonder Woman" era, during which the Amazon dropped her traditional costume and donned a white jumpsuit, left the Justice League of America, and answered to the name Diana Prince far more than she was addressed as Wonder Woman. This particular issue was written and penciled by Mike Sekowsky and inked by Dick Giordano. The editor was Sekowsky himself, who had taken over the title from Jack Miller with #182.

The story is entitled "Them!" Clearly that pronoun was significant: whenever the villains of this issue were mentioned, the word



The Common Code

(Below left:) In its early days, the Comics Code office produced and distributed regular advertisements for itself throughout the comics industry. This is one of its distribution sticker seals, which presumably could be stuck on a rack of comics by a responsible retailer to show he was towing the line, er, we mean, responsibly looking out for young minds. (There was also a vertical version of this basically horizontal sticker.)

(Above:) Although the Code folks may well have written the text for the legend (enlarged) that ran at the top of some Charlton comics circa 1957, it was signed here by Charlton's executive editor, Pat Masulli. This splash page, drawn by Rocco Mastroserio, is from *Black Fury* #11 (Nov. '57); the script is very likely by Joe Gill. Oh, and thanks again to Al Dellings for our logo! [©2012 the respective copyright holders.]



"Them" was always colored in red and lettered twice the size of the surrounding dialogue. So who were "Them"?

Well, although the L-word is never mentioned in either dialogue or captions, it's pretty clear that "Them" is a trio of mannish, even butch, lesbians. Our first glimpse of "Them" reveals a huge, hulking, masculine woman named Moose Mama—a rather homely woman dressed in cowboy duds named Pinto and Top Hat, an attractive middle-aged woman dressed in either a Mad Hatter's outfit or possibly just a particularly garish version of a 1970s-era pantsuit.

Ongoing coverage of the relatively new gay and lesbian political movement was big news in 1969. The New York City police raids of the Black Cat Tavern had happened



A Lot On His Plate

Of the above 1955 book plate, collector Jim Korkis writes: "A friend found this book plate in an old library book of *Tom Sawyer* that he bought in a used book sale [several years ago]. I can't imagine any red-blooded young boy happily exchanging ten of the comics from his prized collection for a copy of *Tom Sawyer* with a parent over his shoulder." The reach of the comic book censors was long in those heady days. [©2012 the respective copyright holders.]

only two years earlier, during a time when to simply be openly gay and in the company of other gays in public were grounds for arrest. The Gay Liberation Front, which advocated that homosexual men and women should "come out of the closet," had just come into being in early 1969, while the Stonewall riots, also in New York and generally considered the incident that birthed the gay pride movement, had occurred only that June. *Wonder Woman* #185, with its cover date of Dec. 1969, would have come out in early October or late September. Given a scripting lead-time of several months before publication, Sekowsky was clearly basing this story on events either directly or very recently in the news. That's not to say that his story's viewpoint is favorable to the gay or lesbian lifestyle. It is not.

During this period, Diana, after losing her Amazon powers, had become a karate/kung fu master and adventurer. In her spare time she also ran a clothing boutique, living in an apartment just above it. Only in the 1960s could you be a boutique owner/martial artist/adventurer!

One night, she discovers a

petite and very young-looking girl named Cathy hiding in her store. Cathy is dressed in baggy and far too large army fatigues which make her look about 12 years old, although the story indicates she is at least out of high school. When Diana asks the obviously terrified girl of whom she is so afraid, she blurts out: "Them!" Then the three mannish women show up, demanding that Cathy, whom they call "slave," put her dog collar and leash back on and leave with them. When Diana objects, the trio's leader, Top Hat, suggests that Diana should put a collar on, too or Moose Mama will force Diana to wear the collar.

Diana punches all three of them out and tosses them out of her shop.

Then, in a bizarre sequence, Diana takes Cathy upstairs to her apartment over the store and starts ordering the obviously traumatized teenager around telling her to strip and take a bath (one in which Diana washes Cathy's hair). Diana discovers that Cathy has been whipped savagely with Top Hat's umbrella. The girl tells Diana a story that could have come straight out of a Greenleaf Classic's porno template:



Well, At Least "Them" Ain't Giant Ants This Time!

Mike Sekowsky cover and splash page (actually page 3) for *Wonder Woman* #185 (Dec. 1969). Script, pencils, & editing by Sekowsky; inks by Dick Giordano. Those were the days, my friend.... Thanks to Richard Arndt for the scans. [©2012 DC Comics.]





GREETINGS, READERS!
 IT IS I, *NORGIL THE MAGICIAN*,
 AS ABLY ILLUSTRATED BY
STERANKO THE GREAT!

TODAY A STRANGE *SECRET* WILL
 BE REVEALED--ONE THAT CONCERNS
 THE LEGENDARY COMICS CAREER
 OF *JIM STERANKO!*

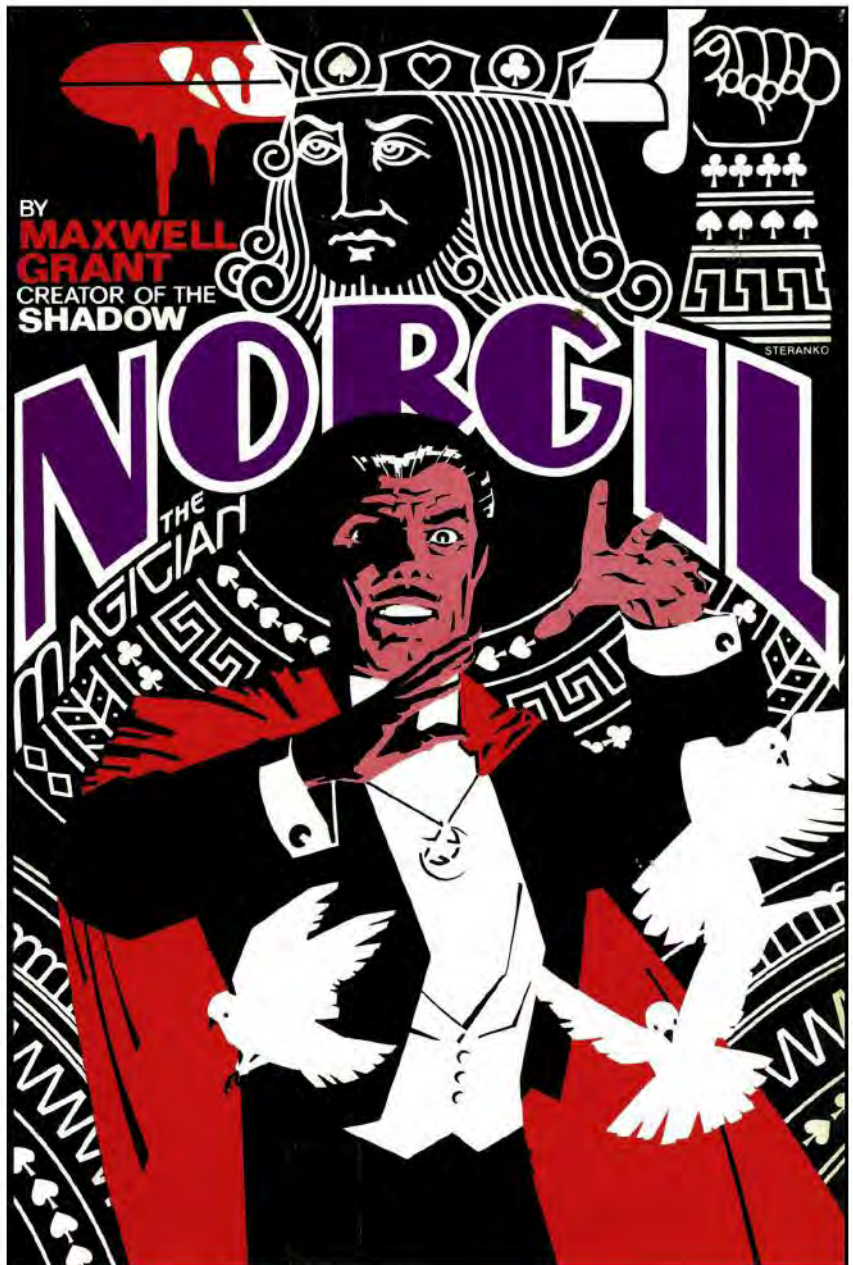
COMMON KNOWLEDGE HAS IT
 THAT HE BECAME A PRO IN THE
 LATE SIXTIES, WHEN *HARVEY*
COMICS EDITOR *JOE SIMON*
 HIRED HIM TO DESIGN CHARACTERS
 FOR THEIR SHORT-LIVED
 SUPER-HERO LINE. THEN IT WAS
 ON TO *MARVEL*, WHERE HIS
 WORK GARNERED INTERNATIONAL
 ACCLAIM. IF TRUE, THEN *1966*
 MARKS THE START OF HIS
 PROFESSIONAL CAREER.

AH, BUT THAT *ISN'T* THE CASE!

JIM'S COMIC CAREER ACTUALLY
 BEGAN YEARS *EARLIER*, UNDER THE
 TÚTELAGE OF *ANOTHER* LEGENDARY
 COMIC BOOK ARTIST!

DON'T *BELIEVE* ME? THEN READ
 THIS RARE *1961* ARTICLE--AND
 DISCOVER...

**THE UNKNOWN
 STERANKO!!**



NORGIL THE MAGICIAN © 1977 MYSTERIOUS PRESS.

The Unknown Steranko!

by Michael T. Gilbert

The legend of Jim Steranko's career has been told many times: How the 26-year-old magician, musician, and commercial artist conquered the comic book world. How he approached Marvel in 1965, portfolio in hand, only to be rejected. How he rebounded, landing his first professional comics job with editor Joe Simon at Harvey a year later—creating *Magicmaster*, *The Gladiator*, and *Spyman* in the process. And how he struck paydirt at Marvel that same year, transforming the floundering spy strip “Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.” into a fan favorite.

It's a wonderful story, and true, as far as it goes.

But there's more to the tale, as you'll see in this rare article reprinted from the February 1961 issue of *The Linking Ring*. The focus of the magazine was magic, with the discussion of Steranko's embryonic comic book career mere background in the article. But what background!

While it's generally believed that Steranko's first published comic book work was the cover of *Spyman* #1 in September 1966, Steranko reveals for the first time that his four-color career actually began years earlier—in a sweatshop run by another well-known cartoonist. And who was this artist? Ah, a good magician never reveals his secrets. But the article will!

Even at the young age of 22, Jim's knack for self-promotion—and style!—was evident. I had to chuckle as the article's author, the late Frances Marshall, described Steranko as coming “right out of Beatville.” That bearded fellow in the photo may have shocked the dear lady in 1961, but the '60s would bring far worse. Regardless, Mrs. Marshall took it all in good humor.

Frances Marshall, a magician herself, co-founded *Magigals*, a club for female magicians, in 1938. She married Laurie Ireland, owner of L.L. Ireland Magic Co. in Chicago in 1940 and took over the company following his death in 1954. A year later she married magician Jay Marshall, and in 1963 their company, the L. L. Ireland Magic Co., was renamed *Magic, Inc.* Mrs. Marshall passed away in May 26, 2002, at the age of 92. Our thanks to Mr. G. Johannigmeier for sharing this rare article, and to Ronn Sutton for supplying art samples.

And now, on with the (1961) show!



**Jim Contemplates
The World!**

From *Steranko's World
of Escapes*.
[©2012 Jim Steranko.]



James Steranko

Steranko's "Beatnik Moment"

(Above:) This photo was the only visual accompanying the original “Who Is Steranko?” article in early 1961. [©2012 Frances Marshall.]

Who Is This Steranko?

by Frances Ireland Marshall

Humans are funny. Magicians are human. Ergo, magicians are funny. We magicians are anxious to swell our ranks, build up our magic clubs, increase the importance of magic in the world. But at the same time we are suspicious of the newcomer, cold to the stranger, aloof to the unknown. By so doing, we take a chance on missing some very interesting people who might cross our path.

These thoughts come to me when I think about Steranko. He appeared on the general magic scene rather all-of-a-sudden (or so it seemed) and several people said: “Who's this guy Steranko?” with the inference that he should have had the decency to stay under whatever rock had housed him until now. This didn't bother me too much because in my day I have heard the same remark about Marlo, Jerry Andrus, Brother Hamman and others, all of whom have long since been taken to the hearts of the magickers.

Herewith is a photograph of Steranko during one of his beatnik moments — to prove to you he is as modern as tomorrow. By the time you meet him, he may have assumed a different character, but when this picture was taken, he was right out of Beatville. Steranko doesn't show it here, because you can't see artistic talent, but he is a marvelous artist, perhaps one of the best magic has been lucky enough to have. He is also a musician. He is also very young, having been born way back in 1939 [AE NOTE: *Steranko's* birthday was actually Nov. 5, 1938]. Like all today's young, he is very intense,



The “50 Years Of Comic Book Fandom” Panel —Part II

More From The Celebration at Comic-Con International 2011, San Diego

Here’s the second part of A/E’s transcript of this panel which occurred in San Diego, California, on July 23rd, 2011, earlier on the same day as the Fandom Reunion Party we highlighted in issues #108-109 as part of our multi-issue coverage of the wonderful “50th Anniversary of Fandom” events at Comic-Con. (This is installment #6, if you’re keeping track.)

Last issue, panel moderator Mark Evanier welcomed the convention’s Special Guests—Jean Bails, Roy Thomas, Maggie Thompson, Richard Kyle, Dick Lupoff, Pat Lupoff, and Bill Schelly—and got the ball rolling. We thank Brian K. Morris for his transcription of this panel discussion, which has been edited slightly both for length, and because some parts were indistinct on the tape. —Bill Schelly.

MARK EVANIER: All right, let me ask everyone here: to what extent did you find being involved with comic fandom supplemented your real, your regular life?

MAGGIE THOMPSON: In my particular case, I grew up basically in science-fiction fandom. There’s an anecdote involving a major, wonderful writer, a science-fiction fan named Walt Willis. He spoke of overhearing his daughter, I believe it was, being visited by some fellow children, and the other kids said, “What are all those on the table?” Her response was, “Those are fanzines, silly.” That was the world in which I grew up. Yes, [fandom] was an alternate universe, but I grew up surrounded by it my entire life, and I always thought it was more important than the people I knew in school, because fanzines were [written by grownups]. I was reading grownups writing about things I cared about, which included comics once in a while, though I was reading mostly about science-fiction. But yeah, these were the interesting people. That was always the way it was for me.

EVANIER: When I got involved, I found science-fiction fandom was enormously hostile to comic book fandom. There was this notion, particularly in Los Angeles, that comics fandom was the little kids’ version, and they didn’t want science-fiction fandom to be tainted by comic books and comics fandom. Did anybody encounter that sentiment?

THOMPSON: It just depended on who you talked to. There are the snobs who don’t know what the hell they’re talking about. I don’t care what generation it is. [audience applauds] Not only were Dick and Pat Lupoff as Captain and Mary Marvel a sensation at the Pittsburgh World Science Fiction Convention in 1960, but in



The Dais Of Our Lives

On the dais, left to right: Moderator Mark Evanier (longtime comics and TV writer)... Maggie Thompson (publisher, with her late husband Don, of the fanzine *Comic Art*, which first appeared in April 1961)... Pat and Dick Lupoff (whose *Xero* debuted at the 1960 Science Fiction Worldcon)... Richard Kyle (early writer for comics fanzines and inventor of the terms “graphic story” and “graphic novel”)... Bill Schelly (author of *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom*, 1995)... Roy Thomas and Jean Bails (representing the fanzine *Alter-Ego*, first published in March of 1961). Yes, the late Jerry Bails’ wife is there, peeking out on the far right. Photo by Aaron Caplan.

1962 members of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society came to Worldcon dressed as The Justice Society. Bjo Trimble talked John Trimble into coming as Sandman because it was the most outrageous costume in the world. You know, it’s like, what, the green jacket and the orange whatever and the brown hat and chem-gas mask, so that was cool. But the classic was Jack Harness, whom they talked into being Hawkman, and I have a photo of the group. [NOTE: See A/E #106 for photos of some of the JSA costume contingent in 1962, including Hawkman. —Bill.] Fred Patten’s The Flash, but here’s Jack Harness. They had the Hawkman costume, but they hadn’t really worked out about the wings, so he had the wings, but they weren’t suspended by the straps, and the idea was he’d hold the wings like this. [extends arms upwards] Now you have to understand that the costume competition lasted for like, what, an hour? Two hours? And so slowly, slowly... [slowly lowers arms] the wings just sat there. And the only person that Don overheard respond to that costume was, “Look! It’s Hentry Hawk!” [audience laughs]

An Audience With The Founders

This panel was held in a large room which filled up nicely. Many of the audience members, such as prolific author Michelle Nolan (right), showed up later that Saturday for the Fandom Reunion party. (A/E #107 & 108 carried a cornucopia of photos from that memorable event.) Photo by Aaron Caplan.





Fifty Years After

(Above:) Maggie Thompson signs an exceedingly rare copy of *Comic Art* #1 (April 1961) at the Fandom Reunion; that cover was depicted in *A/E* #110. Photo by Russ Maheras.

(Right:) The cover of 1966's *Comic Art* #6, edited/published by Don & Maggie Thompson, featured the artwork of comic great Ed Wheelan, creator of *Minute Movies*. [Art ©2012 the respective copyright holders.]



Taia, the elaborate costuming involved a suit, a turban, a red dress for me, a yellow belt, and a yellow thingie. We were looking for the effect—and man, I was cheap, and that was those days. Now, look at the costumes in the Hall of Fame!

BILL SCHELLY: Another thing that came from science-fiction fandom was the Amateur Press Alliance. In fact, the person who named *CAPA-alpha* [the first comics apa] is here at the convention this year, Johnny Chambers. He was a member of *FAPA*, the venerable, long-running science-fiction amateur

press alliance, and Johnny was the one who said, "Well, for comics, it should be 'CAPA,' with the 'F' which stood for fantasy being replaced by a 'C' for comics. So *CAPA-alpha* it was. That was just one more way that comic fandom took something from the earlier fandom and just adapted it to who we were. By the way, I think

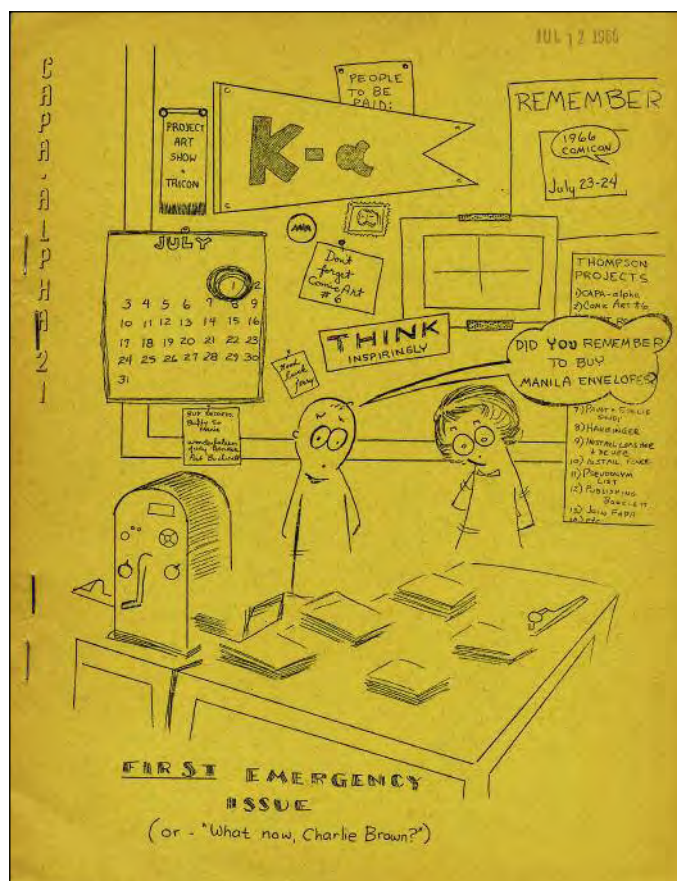
EVANIER: Roy, did you indicate you have something to add?

ROY THOMAS: Well, I was thinking in terms of the fact that—and I think this is true for over half the people on this panel—when we grew up, we didn't have fandom as a support. Basically, we'd have been happy if we'd been like Maggie and been born in science-fiction fandom. We didn't have that secret pen-pal life that Bill talked about. [NOTE: See Part 1 last issue. —Bill.] When I was a kid, friends of mine read comics. I remember one friend of mine trying to sneak out of my birthday party with a *Wonder Woman* comic that somebody else had given me. That's the kind of friends I had. [audience laughs] I didn't think people really saw me often with comics, and yet, whenever I go back to school [reunions], I'm always remembered as reading comic books. I must've had them sometime or another, but I never took them to school.... You could see that the entire world kind of looked down at the comics. When *Alter-Ego* came out, we got a letter [from Ted White] saying it was too "gosh-wow," and to the extent that was true, it was maybe because we were trying to keep it sort of light... and not be real critical.

There was always a kind of snobbishness, but even though I was never really a member of science-fiction fandom, I was always fascinated with it, because I liked science-fiction and I always saw the two as being together. We took some things from science-fiction fandom, [including] the term "fanzine" that eventually entered the language slowly over the years. We just kept bringing things in, a lot of attitudes and so forth. Jerry was never really interested in science-fiction fandom like other people on this panel are. Most of us were at least science-fiction fans of a sort.

DICK LUPOFF: Before we leave the costuming aspect of this, which we sort of branched off to, nobody's said anything about a pair that I saw in an early science-fiction convention that just blew me away. None of the costumes were so elaborate; they were very nice, but they were so perfectly authentic and on-target. It was *Ibis* the *Invincible* and *Princess Taia*. Maybe Maggie can talk a little bit about that...? [NOTE: *Ibis* and *Taia* were played by Don and Maggie Thompson at this masquerade. See *The All-Star Companion*, Vol. 4. —Bill.]

THOMPSON: I would just mention that, of course, regardless of



Have A Cuppa CAPA

When *CAPA-alpha* founder Jerry Bails decided to move on to new projects, Don and Maggie Thompson leaped into the breach to rescue the venerable apa ("amateur press alliance"). Their "first emergency issue" was *K-a* #21, above, which was mailed out in early July 1966. Cover by Maggie.

P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA 

Fawcett Collectors of America

#172
October 2012

Presenting:
A Special Tribute To
**EMILIO
SQUEGLIO**
(1927-2012)

This issue's FCA is dedicated to Emilio Squeglio, who left us on March 12 of this year after a lingering illness. Emilio, who was a Fawcett Publications production artist in the late 1940s and early '50s, primarily on the "Captain Marvel" titles, was memorialized by Jim Amash in *Alter Ego* #110 (June 2012), an issue whose cover Emilio had penciled for inking by his friend Joe Giella.

There were numerous other friends and colleagues, however, who wished to express admiration and affection for Emilio. We are pleased to give them—and ourselves—the opportunity to do so.

—PCH.



[2006 art on this page by Marc Swayze; colors by Randy Sargent; with thanks to Dominique Leonard. Shazam hero TM & ©2012 DC Comics.]

A Fond Farewell To A Fawcett Friend

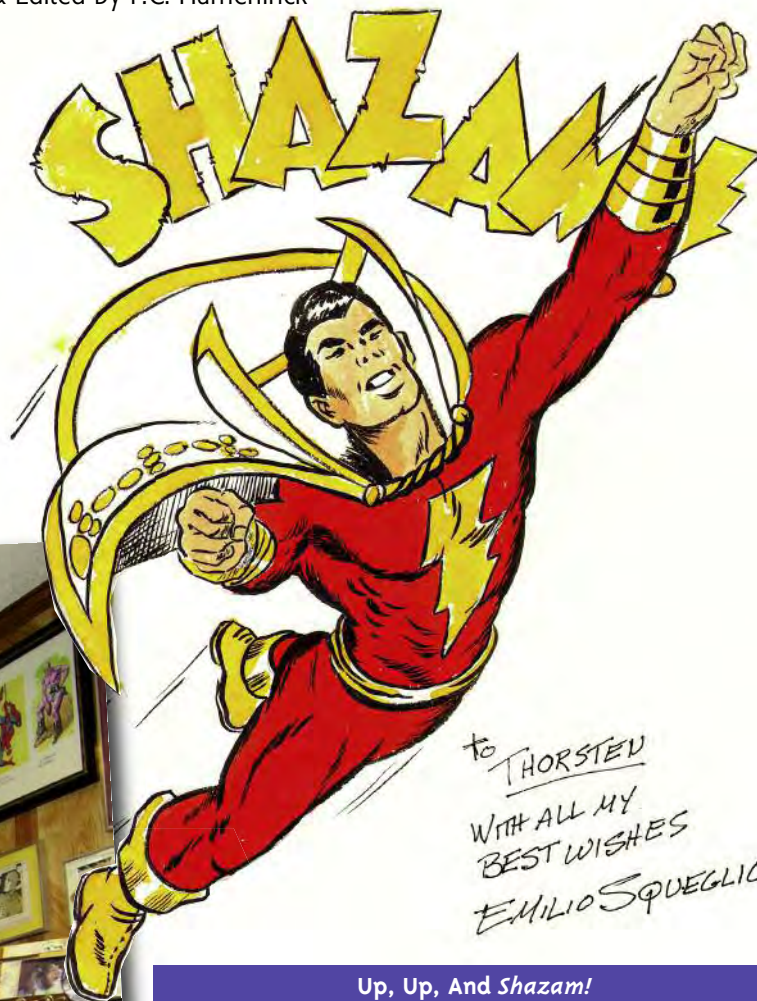
EMILIO SQUEGLIO: 1927-2012

Compiled & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

Superstar

A helpful tip from former “Captain Marvel” artist Chic Stone led to Emilio Squeglio landing a job at Fawcett Publications’ comics department in 1947 at the age of 18, when he was fresh out of high school. Emilio remained with Fawcett for the next nine years. And, when the company folded its comics line, he shifted over to magazine design before leaving the publisher to become art director at *American Artist* magazine and embarking on a successful career as a prolific, highly sought-after book designer.

Jim Amash’s enlightening interview with Emilio in *Alter Ego* #41 (Oct. '04) was followed up by three engaging, no-holds-barred Emilio encores in *A/E* #s 64, 65, & 91, in addition to providing several *FCA* covers in



Up, Up, And Shazam!

(Left:) Emilio Squeglio amid a lifetime’s worth of office memorabilia, in a photo taken by German fan Thorsten Bruemmel during a 2007 visit. See Thorsten’s account on p. 78.

(Right:) A beautifully graceful Captain Marvel commission drawn by Emilio for Thorsten. Thanks to TB for the scan.
[Shazam hero TM & ©2012 DC Comics.]

between those issues.

While many might consider an obscure figure from the Golden Age of Comics to be nothing more than a minor footnote, I’ll always consider Emilio a true superstar in every sense of the word. Warm-hearted... open and honest... humble... helpful... kind... funny... positive... gracious... these are all words that described the man, and it is rare—especially in these times—to run across someone with such noble characteristics.

Chatting with Emilio over the phone was always a capti-



"A" Is For "Absolutely Beautiful"! (Left:) Emilio and his beloved Model "A" Ford—his "dream car." See Jim Amash's account on p. 80. (Below:) Naturally, Emilio wanted his artist-buddy John Romita to pose with the car, as well. Not that Jazzy Johnny seems to have minded!



vating adventure. With his faithful dog yelping in the background, he would routinely want to know how my family was doing and what I was planning for future FCAs. I'd sit back and listen to this wonderful teller of tales share with candor things about his life and career... the enduring friendships he formed at the School of Industrial Arts in Manhattan... the folks he loved working with at Fawcett... bringing first-hand recollections of the National vs. Fawcett court trials... and his remarkable tales surrounding the 900+ books he designed and the prominent people whom he met along his journey.

As one of *Alter Ego's* most passionate and enthusiastic supporters, he'd always offer me appraisals of each issue. (He wanted it on the record that he *wasn't* the one who by comics editor Roy Ald at a Fawcett Christmas would make me laugh at things like calling Uncle in the neck" and referring to Mr. Mind as "that d considered Fawcett "the epitome of what a busin and treasured his time with them.

I'm going to miss my lovable friend ... now a heavens.

A World Of Friends

I met Emilio Squeglio when I entered the Scho Art in Manhattan in 1944, my freshman year. He and we became friends immediately. That's the w made friends very easily, and kept them for life. Cartooning major (too few to make a class), I beg Illustration while Emilio concentrated on Advert shared other classes and lunches, too, where we talking about comics and our dreams for the futu fellow students—Joe Giella, Al Scaduto, and Sey life-long friends)—went on to great careers in art time for study and play.

We drifted apart after graduation, all scrambling to get work in comics. Emilio quickly found a job as a production artist at Fawcett, mostly working on "Captain Marvel" stories. I was not as lucky. I got a job as an office boy at a lithography house, doing

Coca-Cola ads for three years. But like the others I mentioned earlier, I did get to live out the dreams I used to tell Emilio about during our lunch hours.

We lost touch for a long while. Luckily, we met in the subway one day, and it was if we had just seen each other yesterday. Emilio never let us drift away again. No matter how seldom I'd call him, he made sure to phone me, always cheering me up with his infec- best friend he was.

It publishing comics in 1953, Emilio began a diting, then became one of the most sought- in New York, winning several awards along ovie stars, illustrators, and world famous of his world of friends. Emilio's friends... a dly part of.

—John Romita (Artist: *The Amazing Spider-Man*, et al.)

Walk On Hot Coals

ings about Emilio that come to mind as I write a few random thoughts. For instance, Emilio which was a large part of his life. He used to s of operas, country-western, classical, and of it very rare. We spent many hours es of the musical scores, usually comparing t artists. Once in a while, we'd disagree on d do so without argument.

gave lectures to the Berndt Toast Gang (the of the National Cartoonists Society), he held ly that you could hear a pin drop as he talked Norman Rockwell, Salvador Dali, Norman Kent, Robert Fawcett, Vincent Price, and many other people. He was a wonderful storyteller, and we never tired of hearing about the great people he had known. Emilio did a lot of artwork for friends, always for free. He wanted to share his work with his pals.

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