

ROY THOMAS' FOREVER-MAURER COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™

SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON

NORMAN MAURER

—GOLDEN AGE ARTIST OF CRIMEBUSTER, DAREDEVIL, CRIME DOES NOT PAY—



\$9.95
In the USA

No. 155
November 2018

—&, OH YEAH, THESE GUYS— HIS INCOMPARABLE IN-LAWS!

THREE STOOGES



CRIMEBUSTER

Trouble is cheap!

SOME SUPERSTITIOUS PEOPLE SAY THAT TROUBLE COMES IN THREES! NOT BEING THAT WAY MYSELF, I HATE TO ADMIT THAT TROUBLE SOMETIMES HAS A WAY OF GAINING MOMENTUM AND CAN FLOOD YOU OVER LIKE A TIDAL WAVE IF NOT CHECKED IN TIME! IT'S EASY TO MISTAKE TROUBLE FOR ADVENTURE. A BOY WHO SAILS HIS HOME-MADE RAFT DOWN THE STREAM IS LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE. BUT IF HE WERE SAILING DOWN THE NIAGARA RAPIDS ON HIS SAME LITTLE RAFT, HE'D BE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE! THERE ARE TWO SORTS OF HEADED ADVENTURERS IN THIS CRIMEBUSTER STORY WHO COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE—AND ODDLY ENOUGH, THEIR TROUBLE CAME IN THREE PACKAGES!

Charles Biro



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On Our Cover: From the early 1940s through the mid-1950s, artist **Norman Maurer** did the majority of his comics work for two publishers, specializing in Daredevil Comics and Boy Comics (starring Crimebuster) for editors Charles Biro and Bob Wood at Lev Gleason Publications—and The Three Stooges and Whack at St. John Publishing Co. Solid, often inspired work—which we tried to do justice on our montage cover assembled by layout guru Chris Day. The photo is courtesy of Mrs. Joan Maurer, via Shaun Clancy. [Pages © the respective copyright holders; DD/Iron Jaw drawing © Estate of Norman Maurer. Daredevil is now a trademark of Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Above: Another **Norman Maurer** moment—this one, an excellent splash page of Crimebuster from the pages of Boy Illustories # 64 (April 1951), just as things were beginning to heat up again concerning “crime comics.” Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert. For the probable reason why Boy Comics became Boy Illustories—see p. 17. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



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FIRST PRINTING.



This issue is dedicated to the memory of
**Norman Maurer,
Fran Hopper, & Bill Harris**

JOAN MAURER Remembers NORMAN MAURER

Celebrating The Golden Age Artist of
Daredevil, *Boy Comics*, *Crime Does
Not Pay*—& *The Three Stooges*!

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: Joan Maurer's husband was the artist, writer, and film producer Norman Maurer. He entered the comics field in 1942, illustrating stories for Lev Gleason Publication's titles *Crime Does Not Pay*, *Boy Comics*, and *Daredevil Comics*, drawing characters like *Daredevil* (the 1940s version), *Bombshell*, *Robinhood* [sic], and *Crimebuster*. During a stint in the military during World War II, where he still drew after duty hours for the comics, Norman met Joan at a party and they soon married.

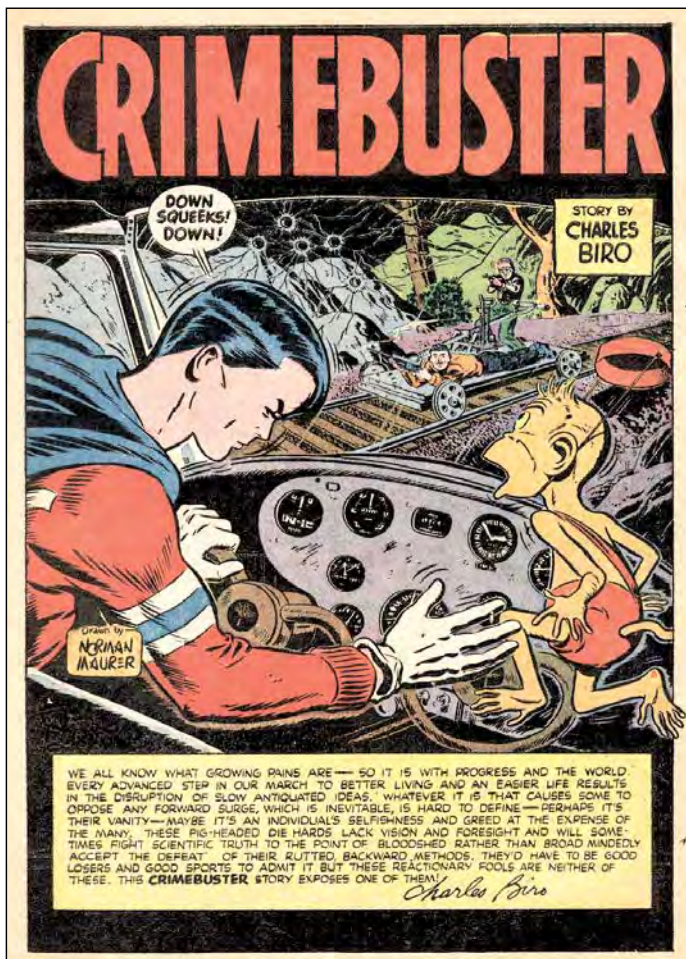


Norman & Joan Maurer

(top right) in a photo taken Nov. 1, 1983, by San Diego Comic-Con co-founder Shel Dorf—above examples from two of Norman's most noted comicbook series runs.

(Left:) A "Crimebuster" splash drawn for Lev Gleason Publications' *Boy Comics* #33 (April 1947). This story, like most in that and other Gleason titles, was officially credited to editor Charles Biro, but various other writers probably wrote some of the scripts under his direction, and his "story" credit probably often reflected his merely giving the actual scripter a concept for a story.

(Directly above:) Maurer's cover for *The Three Stooges* #1 (Feb. 1949), the premiere issue of the first of two different *Stooges* series he wrote and drew for St. John Publishing Company, under its earlier name "Jubilee." Thanks to Comic Book Plus website. [Boy page TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders; The Three Stooges are a registered trademark of C3 Entertainment, Inc.]



After the war, Norman continued to work for Lev Gleason through 1956, now concentrating on *Daredevil* and his kid gang—the Little Wise Guys—who by 1951 took over the magazine. In 1949 he drew the Three Stooges in a comic book for the first time, for *Jubilee* [St. John] comics. Norman had a unique “in” for the title, since Joan’s father was none other than Moe Howard, and her uncles were Curly and Shemp Howard—three of the four people who made up the Three Stooges during their amazingly successful 1934-1956 run of comedic theatrical shorts! That first comicbook series lasted only two issues, but Norman again took up the Stooges in 1953 for *St. John Publications*. That version lasted for two years and seven issues.

Following the collapse of both *Lev Gleason* and *St. John* in the mid-1950s, Norman produced mystery, war, and Western comics for *Atlas*. When that work dried up, Norman began working as the Three Stooges’ manager and, eventually, as producer on their feature-length films and the 1960s cartoon show. In the late 1960s he produced several fine non-Stooges comedies, including the excellent 1967 film *Who’s Minding the Mint?* When his work in film began to dry up, his old friend and classmate Joe Kubert convinced him to return to comics at DC, where he drew the “Medal of Honor” back-up segment for editor Kubert’s war books for much of the 1970s. He also worked, yet again, on Three Stooges comics with *The Little Stooges for Gold Key* in the early 1970s. Norman passed away in 1986, at the age of 60. This interview was conducted by phone on May 23, 2016....

“Joe Kubert... Became His Lifelong Friend”

RICHARD ARNDT: Thanks for agreeing to this interview, Joan. Norman was born in 1926...

JOAN MAURER: Yes, I was born in 1927. I’m a year younger.



The Maurer The Merrier!

There were three Maurer brothers—in descending order of age: Lenny, Norman, & Robert. (Left to right above:) Norman and Lenny as kids—Norman in 1939, at age 13—and youngster Robert with Lenny. All photos provided by Robert Maurer, via Shaun Clancy, who had conducted his own interview with Joan Maurer but kindly shared these pics with us.

The high school cartoon drawn by Norman is from Joan Maurer’s memoir/proposal *Life in 3-D*, dealing with her husband, herself, and her famous film family. Wouldn’t it be great if some enterprising publisher did indeed produce an entire book about this remarkable extended family—which also includes a couple of sons who gained prominence in the world of TV animation!

[Art © Estate of Norman Maurer.]

RA: How much do you know about Norman’s early life?

MAURER: Quite a bit. He was born in Brooklyn on May 13, 1926. His home wasn’t too far from Ebbets Field, where the Brooklyn Dodgers played. The crowd noises were loud enough during games that they would keep him up at night. In retaliation he became a Giants fan! [laughs]

Norman always wanted to be an artist and loved to draw. He did some very interesting work for the high school newspaper. He was drawing things at a very young age. He became fascinated, as many young people were at the time, with syndicated comic strips in the newspapers, and from that to the comicbooks. In later years, after meeting my dad, he became equally fascinated by film. There were so many parts of comics that lent itself to films.

RA: Many films are based on storyboards, which is basically comics-style format, following a comicbook story right down the line.

MAURER: Right. When he was seventeen, he went to the Manhattan’s High School of Music and Art. That’s where he met Joe Kubert, who became his life-long friend. They used to cut class together so they could work at a comicbook company erasing pages.

RA: Joe started as a professional at an extremely young age. I think he was only twelve or thirteen.



A Lifelong Mutual Admiration Society—And Deservedly So!

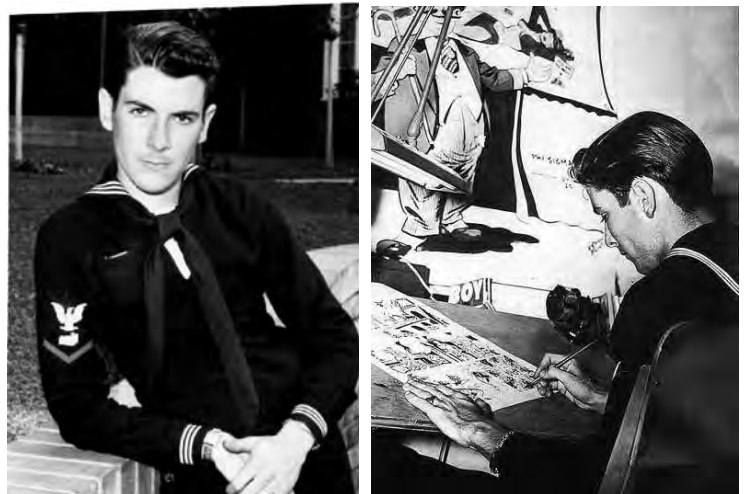
Joe Kubert and Norman Maurer were friends from the 1940s through the latter's death in 1986. Joan Maurer contrasts Kubert's dynamic depiction of the human body with her husband's clear storytelling—though of course both men were adept in each department. Seen above are Joe's splash page from *Tor*, Vol. 1, #3 (May 1954—actually the *fourth* issue, since there'd been two 3-D editions between #1 & #3), and an action page from Norm's "Medal of Honor" story of John Mitchell, a U.S. Navy hero of the Boxer Rebellion in China, as related in DC's *Our Fighting Forces* #135 (Jan.-Feb. 1972). The artists also scripted both tales. Thanks to Ye Editor's bound volumes and Jim Kealy, respectively. Photos of Kubert can be seen on pp. 7, et al. [*Tor* page TM & © Estate of Joe Kubert; *OFF* page TM & © DC Comics.]

MAURER: Joe was really good at anatomy and drawing the human body. Especially when I look at *Tor* or books like that. Norman couldn't draw the human body like Joe could, but he could do other things that Joe had a more difficult time at. I think what Norman was best at in the comicbook field was that you knew what the characters on the page were doing. He had a way of dramatizing things. You knew what was going on even without reading the dialogue balloons.

RA: I would assume that Joe and Norman had, well, perhaps not so much a friendly competition, but a sort of support system for each other....

MAURER: I would say it was more support. Norman leaned towards humorous art that wasn't all that realistic. Joe, because of his ability at anatomy, did things in a more realistic way. So, there was never competition between them.

Norman joined the Navy when he was eighteen. This was during the [World War II] war years. He worked as a photographer for them. One of his Navy photos, taken from a blimp at the Bikini Atoll bomb test site, appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*.



The Navy Gets The Gravy...

Two photos of Norman Maurer in the Navy, circa 1945—the first, courtesy of Robert Maurer via Shaun Clancy; the second, showing Norman "moonlighting" drawing a comicbook story, courtesy of Comic Vine website.

"I Hadn't Bothered To Tell Him My Dad Was Moe Howard Of The Three Stooges"

RA: You met Norman at a party, is that right?

MAURER: Yes. We met in... oh, about 1945.... and he was very verbal. He would tell me things about himself that I remember. Years ago I wanted to do a biography on him, and I put together a little proposal two or three years ago, spelling out what his life was like when he was younger and when he met Joe Kubert, etc. With each little chunk of time I had a little illustration. It was called *Life in 3-D*. I only contacted one person with the proposal, and then he went out of town and I never heard anything back. That was the end of it. I thought it was interesting.

Anyway, I had a girlfriend who was trying to cultivate this fellow that she really liked a lot, so she threw this party so he'd be there and she'd be with him. A lot of fellows were in the service then, so she, or a member of her family, called the USO or the Stage Door Canteen in Los Angeles, as those were the organizations that found things for sailors to do on a Saturday night.

So Norman was asked if he wanted to go to a party, and he said yes and came. I did a lot of artwork myself, but was never very good. However, I was fascinated by what he could do. He drew *Daredevil* on a cocktail napkin for me. I think I still have it somewhere. I've been living in my house for sixty years and there's so much stuff! Both from my dad, Moe Howard, who was famous as a member of the Three Stooges, and Norman. Norman tripped over a box in the attic one time and it was full of my dad's cancelled checks. Every one of them with a genuine Moe Howard autograph!

I sold all those checks by putting an ad in *Rolling Stone* magazine, and I said that for \$10 you could have a genuine Moe Howard signed check. However, they had to make their payout out to the City of New Hope. I raised close to \$40,000 for that charity. Dad would write out checks for a dollar or two dollars because the other Stooges didn't pay for anything. Dad would pay for it with checks so he had a record of what he spent.

Anyway, that had really nothing to do with Norman. When Norman drew on that cocktail napkin at the party, I was hooked! I brought him home to meet my parents and he was shocked when my dad walked in. I hadn't bothered to tell him my dad was Moe Howard of the Three Stooges. Oops!

Curly and Shemp were my dad's brothers. Larry Fine wasn't related. As an added note, my mom was a cousin of Harry Houdini.

RA: When Norman was in the service, there doesn't seem to be any interruption of his work.

MAURER: There wasn't! Norman drew comics in his off hours while in the Navy. There was a lieutenant—I'll never forget his name, it was Lt. Featherstone—who was very jealous of Norman, because Norman was making far more money than his superior officer!

We dated for two years and married when he got out of the service. I met Joe Kubert for the first time at our wedding.

RA: You lived in California, so Norman must have been stationed there?

MAURER: Right. The reason we met was that he was stationed at Roosevelt Base—I can't remember if that was in San Diego or Long Beach. I didn't meet him in San Diego, though. I met him in the Valley, at my girlfriend's house. [A/E EDITOR'S NOTE: When people in the L.A. area mention "the Valley," they're invariably referring to the San Fernando Valley, a suburban area north of the city proper.]



An Early Screen Test For *Snow White And The Three Stooges*?

Joan Howard Maurer with the Three Stooges in 1952, as their movie-shorts career was winding down. (Left to right:) Moe Howard (Joan's father), Shemp Howard (her uncle), Joan, & Larry Fine (not a blood relative, but always treated like a member of the family). The late "Curly" Howard, too, had been Joan's uncle. Thanks to Joan Maurer & Shaun Clancy.

For the record: Moe Howard (1897-1975) was born Moses Harry Horwitz... Shemp (1902-1955) was really Samuel Horwitz... Larry Fine (1902-1975) was Louis Feinberg... Curly Howard (1903-1952) was Jerome Lester Horwitz.

RA: I knew of Norman from his "Medal of Honor" series in the DC war books when I was a young man, but I've been surprised at how varied and accomplished his career was.

MAURER: While doing research for the book proposal, I'd forgotten about him doing the art for *Dennis the Menace*. Not the syndicated comic strip but the comicbook version. I've found three or four pages of that here. It's cute!

Norman used to tell me a story about a Japanese letterer in the 1940s. His name was Hitoshi Watanabe. Norman always chuckled when he said, "You know he changed his name from Hitoshi Watanabe to Irving Watanabe!" [laughs]

RA: From what I've been able to dig up, Norman must have become a professional artist at around age seventeen, during the same time he attended the school with Kubert.

MAURER: That's right, you've got it. I have doodles of his... it almost looks like paint-by-numbers, but it isn't. This art is oil paintings, done when he would have been in junior high. It's really fun to look back at that stuff and see how much he improved.

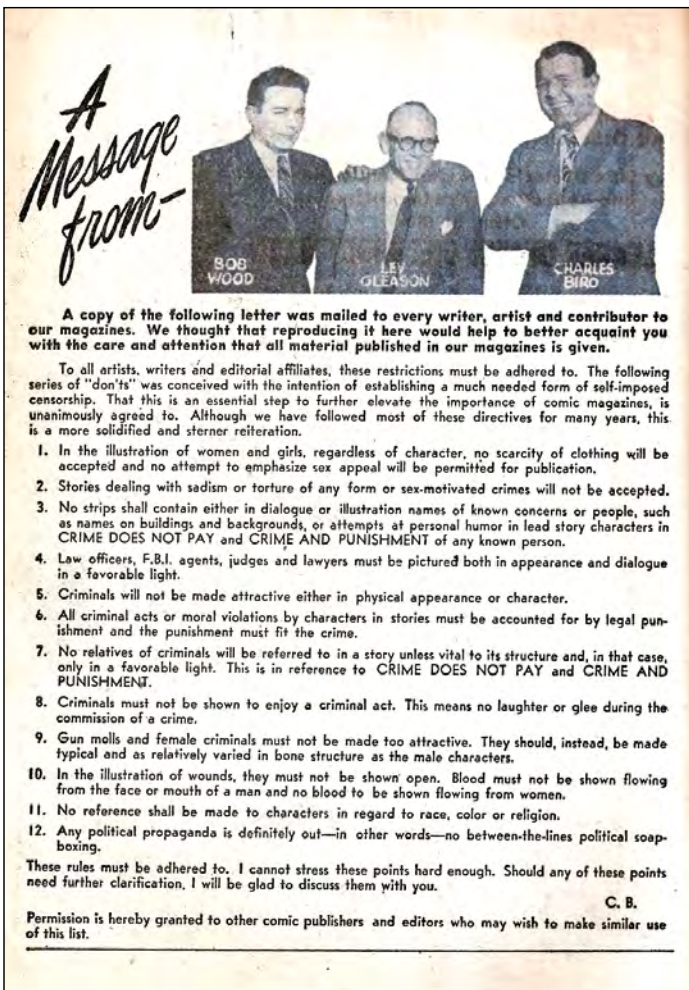
Norman loved detail in his work. When he was attending Manhattan's High School of Music and Art with Joe Kubert, the instructors tried to get him away from so much detail. If you were going to draw a brick wall, you were supposed to indicate it a little with shadow and light, but Norman had to draw every brick. [chuckles] That was just part of his personality.



Maurer & Maurer Daredevil

A clockwise quartet (from top left) of *Daredevil* splash pages, all apparently drawn by Maurer, though one is unsigned and the last is pseudonymously bylined "Bob Q. Siege." Thanks to Jim Kealy and the Comic Book Plus website for the splashes of: *Daredevil* #26 (Aug. 1944)... #30 (May '45)... #34 (June '46)... and #35 (March '46). Note that the Little Wise Guys were a fixture in the feature from virtually the beginning of this period under editor Biro, to whom all the scripts were officially attributed. [© the respective copyright holders.]





The Triple Pillar Of The [Comicbook] World
 Editors Bob Wood and Charles Biro flank publisher Lev Gleason in this message allegedly directed to their staff, from the inside front cover of *Boy Comics* #40 (June 1948). Thanks to Comic Book Plus. © the respective copyright holders.]

[Continued from p. 8]

MAURER: I don't remember that! Maybe there were issues I never saw. Norman had boxes of that kind of thing. Not all the books, but some of them. I'll have to check and see when the Little Wise Guys started. See, I didn't meet Norman until 1945, so what we're talking about here is before I knew him.

Would you believe this? As beautiful and detailed as Norman drew, Biro had a thing that he personally had to draw the heads on the main characters in *Boy Comics*. He would send these little heads in to Norman, and Norman had to paste them on the original artwork. [laughs] It was a simple face, not one with a beard or complicated head-gear, just a simple kid's face.

RA: That is a little odd. What I've got says the "Little Wise Guys" took over the lead spot in *Daredevil Comics* with #70 (Jan. 1951), one issue after *Daredevil* was phased out, and continued as the lead feature to the end of the series with #134 (Sept. 1956). Norman drew those characters for quite a while, first when they were supporting *Daredevil* and then for more than five years when they were the lead characters in *Daredevil Comics*. There were four characters to start off with, but one of them died of pneumonia very early on and was replaced by a bald kid. One of them had hair like Gyro Gearloose from the Donald Duck comics, a sort of bird's nest clump of hair perched up on his head.

MAURER: That was Scarecrow! There was also a very little kid called Pee Wee and a normal-looking boy with glasses.

RA: He must have been Jock, because the bald boy would have to have been Curly. [INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: Here I need to inject that Joan and I went on for a few minutes, describing the Little Wise Guys. Her memories and my research clashed quite a bit. However, it turns out that we were both right, even though we sound a bit confused. See, Lev Gleason actually had two sets of "Little Wise Guys" kid gangs. One, as Joan remembered, ran in *Boy Comics* and debuted only an issue before Norman's first official comicbook credit. The Grand Comics Database lists Charles Biro as possibly being the writer and artist of that strip. However, Joan's mention of Biro's head drawings that were pasted on other artists' actual work may indicate that Norman drew both groups of Little Wise Guys, with Biro taking credit for the artwork on the first set. It's entirely possible that Norman was the uncredited ghost artist on those early "Little Wise Guys" stories. This first group apparently ran for only a couple of issues of *Boy Comics*, beginning with #4 (June 1942). They were kind of a violent bunch. Then, just a few months later, in *Daredevil Comics* #13 (Oct. 1942), the second group of "Little Wise Guys" appeared in supporting roles in the "Daredevil" feature. Norman drew almost all those appearances. The two groups of kids had the same gang name but were totally different groups of kids.] Norman also drew a very popular character named Crimebuster.



Hold That "Tiger"!
 Another Maurer entry in *Crime Does Not Pay*—this time from #69 (Nov. 1948). Scripter unknown. Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert. © the respective copyright holders.]



All The World's A Stooget!

The Three Stooges, in their earlier, most famous grouping. (L. to r.): Larry Fine... Curly Howard... & Moe Howard.

Norman's second run would have been at the same time he was working with Joe Kubert at St. John's. In fact, two issues of the second run were 3-D comics.

MAURER: OK, but Kubert never worked on the Stooges material at all. He was probably doing *Tor* at that time. There were 3-D

Tor comics, as well. They worked together on the 3-D material, and I think they may have done a humorous romance comic or something like that together. Norman did some humorous books at the same time that weren't related to *The Three Stooges*.

RA: Did Norman help make the deal with St. John? In other words, did his connection with your father help Archer St. John decide to first do a Stooges comicbook, especially since there'd only been one previous comic dealing with the group, and was his writing and drawing it a part of the publishing deal?

MAURER: Well, it was Norman's idea. My dad was a pretty good businessman, but I don't think he was even aware that comics could or would do magazines licensed by and built around entertainers. Dad had tunnel vision. Dad was the business manager for all three of the Stooges. He took on a lot of the responsibilities for the group. But it was Norman who brought it up to my dad. Dad thought a lot of Norman. They got along great.

Some of those early *Stooges* books were based on the early Stooget shorts. Norman would take the plot of a picture and turn it into a comic story. He might not have done it exactly the same, because film doesn't translate totally into comics, or vice versa, but the general idea might work. Norman would add an original character like a heavy for the comics to give it a little more interest.

RA: Do you know why there was a four-year gap between the first series and the second?

MAURER: It could be that Norman went off to do something else. He didn't just do comics all the time. He was working on films, although that was later. At some point, as you mentioned, Dell published them, and Norman wasn't involved at all in that. The only thing that would have taken Norman away in 1949 was that other work came up and he just didn't have the time to do everything, because with the *Stooges* comics that Norman was involved with, he did the writing and art, or at least most of it. When he got involved with film, that ended.

This was also the period of time that he drew those *Dennis the Menace* comics, and I think that was done because Gleason and St.



The Three Stooges #1 (Feb. 1949)

Two splash pages from the first issue of St. John's first *Three Stooges* series. Both yarns were adapted from the comedy short-subjects in which the Stooges starred for Columbia Pictures, starting in 1934. Art & script (adaptation) by Norman Maurer. This issue's cover was depicted on p. 3. Thanks to Comic Book Plus. [© the respective copyright holders; the Three Stooges are a registered trademark of C3 Entertainment, Inc.]

“[Being In Comics] Was An Important Time In My Life”

An Interview With MADDY COHEN, A.K.A. MIMI GOLD

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

INTERVIEWER'S INTRO: Mimi Gold entered the comicbook field via a rather unusual process: she had a blind date with Jim Steranko. (For details, see below.) She was briefly Stan Lee's secretary in the waning days of the 1960s. She soon moved on to become an editorial assistant and to write scripts for Marvel's mystery titles, as well as stories for Iron Man and "The Black Widow." She was also a colorist, working on many of Marvel's main titles, including most of the first dozen issues of Conan the Barbarian. In 1972, she moved to DC, first working in production for Sol Harrison and Jack Adler; she soon became an assistant editor (under Dorothy Woolfolk) on the romance titles and Lois Lane. After that, she left comics for an editorial position at McGraw-Hill. Along the way, she legally changed her name to Madeline Cohen and is currently a partner in a film production company in New Jersey. This interview was conducted by phone on Dec. 7th, 2013.



RICHARD ARNDT: I guess the first question would be: where did the "Mimi Gold" name come from and where did it go to?

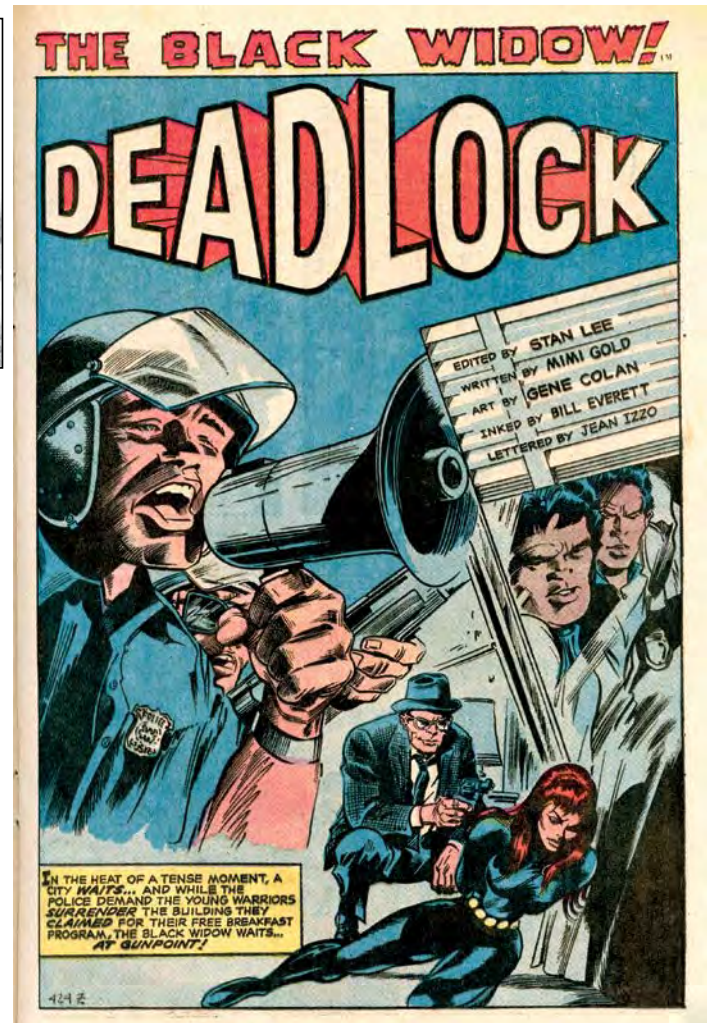
MADDY COHEN: My given name when I was born was Miriam. From the time I was a toddler, my nickname was Mimi. I basically used that nickname for many years until I changed my name to Madeline and my nickname became Maddy. That happened about 24, 25 years ago. I was Mimi until I was about forty. My full last name was Goldenberg, but when I first got into comics I was dating Jim Steranko. I was a writer. I was always a writer and a filmmaker—no matter what the medium was, I wanted to write. That's not how or why I got into Marvel Comics, but as soon as I was there, working as a secretary for Stan Lee, I wanted to be a writer, because that's what everybody at Marvel wanted to be. So

Jim Steranko and I were talking and he said, "Look, you just can't use your full name. It's not commercial enough. It's not snappy enough. Let's shorten it." So he made the Goldenberg "Gold" and I became Mimi Gold. It was that name not only throughout my time in the comicbook industry but through my next couple of business moves in



"Me And Skippy"

Little Miriam Goldenberg in 1949, with the family dog. Photo courtesy of MC.



Mimi Gold (Now Maddy Cohen)

in 1970, by the River Thames in London—and the splash page of the "Black Widow" story she scripted for *Amazing Adventures* #4 (Jan. 1971), with powerful pencils by Gene Colan & incredible inks by Bill Everett. The photo of Mimi was snapped by artist Barry Smith (now Windsor-Smith), when she was visiting him in England. Thanks to Maddy for the pic, and to Barry Pearl for the comic art. [Page TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

book publishing. Gold stuck with me for fifteen years and Mimi for twenty.

RA: Was there any particular reason you changed it?

COHEN: Yeah. By the time I was forty, I hated everybody calling me Mimi. I hated that nickname! It was something my mother

started when I was just a little kid and I didn't like it. So I said, I've got to have a name that has a better nickname attached to it. So Maddy, by way of Madeline, and my last name through marriage.

RA: *That makes sense. I've known a couple of people who've done something like that over the years. My dad, for one.*

COHEN: When I sent out the name change notice, I got so much reaction from people! The first time I got married, I added another name onto Gold and when I got divorced I got rid of it. Then I got married again and added the new first name on top of the new married name! People were going crazy!

To make sure that people paid attention to it when I sent out the name change, I filled the envelope with metallic confetti as a sort of celebration. But people get a lot of mail and they don't always pay attention when they're opening envelopes. So when the envelopes were opened, confetti got all over the place. I got a lot of complaints, but I knew people were paying attention!

RA: *That's for sure! What, if any, were your experiences with comics as a kid?*

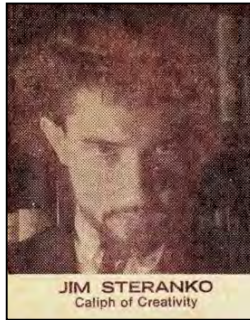
COHEN: Basically, from the time I was six years old I knew I wanted to be a journalist. I started my own little kiddie newspaper. I made up stories. That was my little hobby. When I entered junior high I was a reporter, then the editor, for the school newspaper and did the same thing when I went to high school. Due to the influence of an English teacher, Mr. Brown, I decided to study cinema. I went to the film school at NYU as a film major, and for three of my four years there my primary cinema production teacher was Martin Scorsese. He is a very intense person. A very "A-type" personality. He made you understand that you needed to totally embrace whatever it is that you're doing. Of course, you know what he's done in the film industry over the past 45 years.

So I graduated and I was thinking, "What do I do now? How do I get a job?" See, I didn't know enough and was too naïve to understand that there was a "boys' network" operating in industry at that time. It wasn't always just boys, of course, but if you didn't

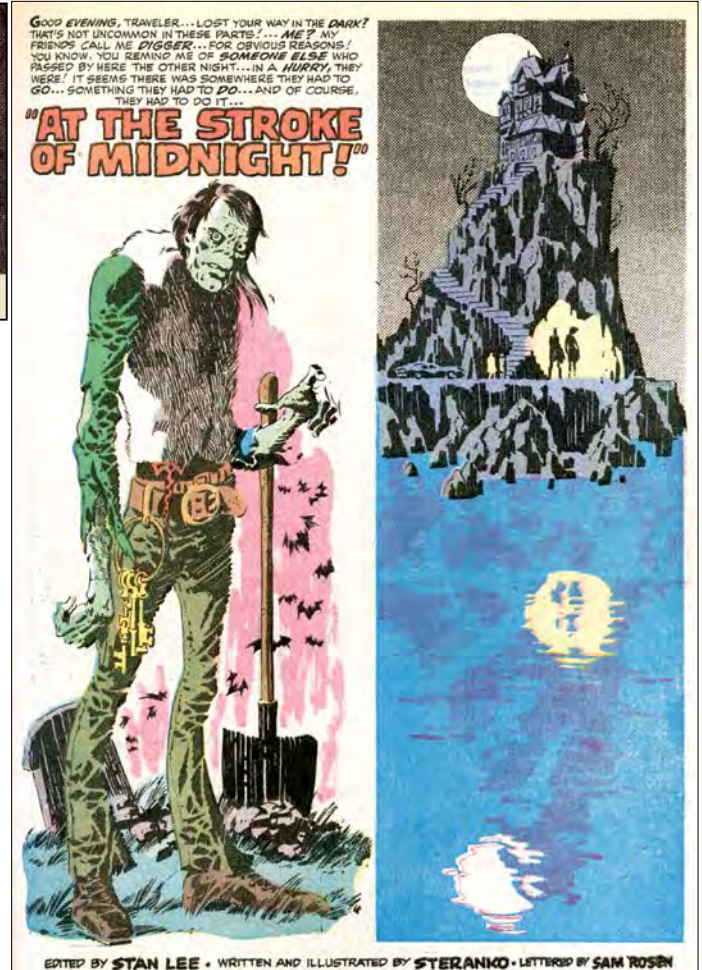


"Are You Talking To Me?"

Mimi/Maddy's film teacher Martin Scorsese went on to other things—like directing the 1976 Academy Award-winning film *Taxi Driver*. He's seen here (at right) on a New York City set with Robert De Niro, whom the movie would make a star. In one scene in the film, Scorsese portrays a rage-filled passenger in the cab of De Niro's "Travis Bickle." [TM & © Columbia Pictures or successors in interest.]



JIM STERANKO
Caliph of Creativity



Jim Steranko

served as Mimi Gold's entry to the comics field—and even suggested that she shorten her last name! Around the time they met in mid-1969, Steranko's story art and script was making a rare appearance in the first issue of *Tower of Shadows* (Sept. '69)... although his cover art for the issue was sadly (and probably foolishly) rejected by the publisher. Photo from 1969 *Fantastic Four Annual*. [Page TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

belong to some kind of inner circle that helped you get into unions or get work on a set, you didn't get in. If you didn't have the contacts you were really nowhere and that's what happened to me. I had no idea what to do.

Then, a week before college graduation, one of my friends from film school asked me to do them a favor. They had a friend coming in from out of town, and they wanted

to fix him up with me on a date. I said, sure, why not? The guy was Jim Steranko. We went out and hit it off. About two weeks later, there was a comics convention at the Statler-Hilton and he invited me to be his guest.

I went, and that convention was my first major exposure to comics. It was exciting! I met people like Harlan Ellison, Neal Adams—people who would become my friends. At that time, Stan didn't have a regular secretary. Steranko, who'd introduced me to Stan at the convention, knew about that and said to me, "Would you like to be Stan's secretary?" I needed a job, so I said, "Of course!" Right? That convention had been exciting and everybody seemed very passionate about what they were doing. So he brought me over to Stan and said, "Listen, she's looking for a job. She knows film. She can write. She can handle all your stuff." Stan said, "Great! She can start Monday!"

That's how I got into comics. There was an empty chair.

When I started as Stan's secretary, my desk was right next to Roy Thomas' in the production room, and so was right by Stan's office for the first six months or so. Roy sat in back of me, and Sol Brodsky and John Verpoorten were on the other side of the room. The four of us were in there. Roy was a very driven and very sweet



The "Widow"-Maker

A gorgeous "Black Widow" fight page from *Amazing Adventures* #4 (Jan. '71)—penciled by Gene Colan and inked by Bill Everett. And scripted, this time, by a duly credited "Mimi Gold." The story's splash was printed back on p. 37. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

decide what I had meant.

I loved the fantasy stuff and still do. *The Lord of the Rings*, whatever. I loved medieval-style fantasy or a period piece or a make-believe world. That was just the most intriguing thing to work on.

As for the writing, I was really just getting my feet wet. Trying to find my way. I did those mystery stories. Then I convinced Stan to let me write—and I don't know which came first—either an *Iron Man* or a "Black Widow." I just bought a really thick book of reprints, the *Essential Iron Man*, Vol. 3, and my story was in there. I was just so tickled. I showed my kids some of this stuff. They're in their twenties and they don't care all that much, but when I showed them a book [I was in], that made a real difference!

RA: Well, just to give you a heads-up, I believe they're reprinting all of those "Black Widow" stories in a new *Daredevil Masterworks* volume. Vol. 8. They'll be in color.

COHEN: It's really amazing how many variations or reinventions those characters have gone through. What I really wanted to do was to take the Red Sonja character from *Conan* and develop that notion into graphic novels, but I'd been out of comics for a long time, and

when I investigated I found out that someone already had. I loved that character, though. That would have been a fulfilling project at this time in my life to work on.

I still think about which heroine would make a really good character for a graphic novel or film, and the truth is that super-heroines in film haven't really worked out well. For the upcoming *Wonder Woman*, they cast the woman from the *Fast and Furious* franchise. Not Michelle Rodriguez but Gal Godot. She got killed in one of the *Fast and Furious* films, I believe.

RA: It's tough casting women in super-hero movies, because they have to be not only able to act but do all the fights and moves and then look right for the role. Lynda Carter was a godsend to the casting director for the *Wonder Woman* TV series back in the 1970s.

COHEN: The only woman I think who's ever been successful playing a super-heroine was Angelina Jolie as Lara Croft, who was a character from the *Tomb Raider* video game, not a comic. I think she was great. But I've always wanted to do a female character, and I know enough people that I could reach out to.

I have a small independent film company. I'm working on a screenplay right now, but that has nothing to do with comicbooks. It's a bit in the vein of *Moonstruck*, the movie with Nicholas Cage and Cher. I'm trying for the same feeling that that film has. It deals with a bunch of older Italian ladies coming into their own. It's about woman power. No matter how old.

But it would be fun to work on something that had to do with a super-hero that comes from the fantasy genre. I like the stylization that Roy and Barry found in *Conan* and the world that they created. To me, that world is one of the best visualizations of a fantasy world that I've come across.

I look at comics today—the slick paper, the beautiful color, and I think, "Oh my God, look what they can do with computers!" It's very impressive, but there's still something to be said for the way it used to be. However, the way that artists and writers were treated—well, I remember going to meetings where they talked of forming a union and how badly they were treated, paid, and just not respected. And it was everybody, from the guys starting out to the stars of the comics. I honestly don't know how it is now, but back then, it started to seem to me that everybody was desperate to be in the business but everybody seemed to hate their lives! It was a very weird time.

RA: They still haven't got a union or a guild to protect themselves and negotiate standards. In some respects I suspect it hasn't changed that much.

COHEN: At one point there was one important meeting. Everyone had sort of reached the boiling point, and this meeting was going to be the one big meeting where unionization would take place. People were standing up and making speeches and so on. So Gil Kane stood up and uncharacteristically started yelling so loud. He was very angry and his anger just spilled out of him. For him to do that was very powerful. It's a little odd, sometimes, the moments that stick in your mind for years and years afterwards.

I don't want you to think it was all gloom and doom. I really remember the people I worked with back then—Bill Everett and Marie Severin. Tony Mortellaro, Herb Trimpe, John Romita. They were all so funny! They made every day a crazy adventure! I could hear them over the wall talking and joking around all day. Stu Schwartzberg was there, too, and did all the Photostats. He somehow managed to get through every day facing absurdly quick deadlines and having emergency jobs dumped on him and he managed to get through it.

Bill Everett doesn't seem to get mentioned as much as he should these days. He was an amazing talent. He wasn't always well, so he wasn't as reliable as some might wish. Still, when he was there, everyone was glad.

John Romita was the best. He was the center of bullpen cheer and joking around. I just loved him!

The freelancers, so many of them, who did the inking and lettering. I was talking to Alan Kupperberg not too long ago about Frank Giacoia. Frank was so unable to meet deadlines! He was always late with everything! It was such a burden. When I first started working at Marvel, I didn't live in New York yet. I was out on Long Island living with my parents. Frank was in East Meadow, also on Long Island. I would pick up stuff from the office and bring them home, and Frank would pick them up because it would be same day instead of next-day messengering. Then he'd bring the work back to me and I'd take the pages back in to the office. It was both funny and sad. He was a good guy, but it was a lot of pressure for him.

Marie [Severin] was the queen of covers. My God, she knocked out those covers! She was amazing. Kind of my inspiration for wanting to color. Marie worked in the side room with production assistants Stu and Bill, and I don't think she liked all the fooling around that went on in the main bullpen where John and Tony worked. The production assistant position kind of revolved, but I do remember Stu Schwartzberg being at that machine so dependably.

There were two desks in the small front office. I worked there with Allyn Brodsky, who wasn't related to Sol. Allyn wrote, too, because it was impossible at Marvel to be surrounded by all these writers and not want to do it yourself. You had to tell a story because *everyone* was telling stories.

Artie Simek and Sam Rosen were the freelance letterers there. Stan Goldberg and Larry Lieber did some work at the time I was there, as well. We sent packages out to Jack Kirby all the time, as he was living in California when I started at Marvel. I never actually met Jack. I just knew him by address. He lived in Tarzana. We sent packages to him nearly every day.

Sol Brodsky was a doll. He was very nice. To me, he was kind of like the uncle who looked after you. He was very, very tenacious and reliable. He kept things running at Marvel, while he was there. He was the one who started giving me coloring work and I was grateful for that. He was just a decent and kind-hearted person.

A lot of what I did was proofreading and copy-editing. But I also answered *all* the letters



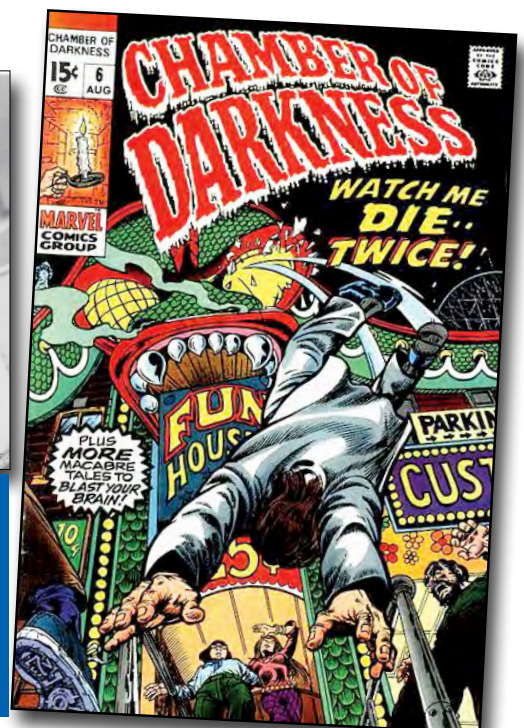
Fearless Frank Giacoia

inked this Don Heck splash page for *Chamber of Darkness* #1 (Oct. 1969).
Script by Gary Friedrich. Photo from *F.O.O.M. Magazine* #17 (Fall '77).



Mirthful Marie Severin

hard at work at her drawing board in 1969—and the cover she penciled that went with the Mimi Gold-written script "Put Another Nickel In!!!" in *Chamber of Darkness* #6 (Aug. 1970). Of course, Stan—or someone—called it by a different title on the cover. Inks by Bill Everett; coloring probably by Marie. Photo found by Mike Mikulovsky.
[Cover TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



“Paris When It Sizzles”

Part VI Of JOHN BROOME's *My Life In Little Pieces*

A/E EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Since A/E #149, we've been presenting, a few pages at a time, the “little pieces” (i.e., vignettes and anecdotes) of the 1998 reminiscence by John Broome (1913-1999). Broome was a comicbook writer in the Golden Age and, in the Silver Age that began in 1956, was the primary writer of tales of both “The Flash” and “Green Lantern,” along with a fair amount of science-fiction comics yarns for DC Comics. In the mid-'60s, he, his wife Peggy, and their daughter Ricky moved to Paris; he would spend the final two decades of his life teaching English in the schools of Japan. Our thanks to Ricky Terry Brisacque for permission to serialize her father's book, and to Brian K. Morris for retyping it onto a Word document for editing. In this installment, John recalls a few memorable days on the boulevards of gay Pairee.

Oh, and we should warn you up front: one or two of these memories are a bit spicier (though not by that much) than the usual fare in Alter Ego. Parental discretion is advised... though in most of our cases, it's a bit late for that.... that's just in case the title quasi-quotation above from a famous Cole Porter song lyric didn't already clue you in....



Paris – The 1960s

Mclintyre was a minor poet from Canada with a reputation for having, in his salad days, disassembled the furnishings of a couple of Montparnasse cafes, but when I knew him, he was near seventy and a massive stroke had just felled him. It couldn't kill the man, but did its damndest, leaving him completely paralyzed and bedridden the last five years of his life. He could still drink and smoke if someone filled his glass and lit his cigarettes. And he could still listen to dirty stories. He loved dirty stories. I used to save up for him any new ones I heard and tell them as best I could on my occasional visits. Though it was always an ordeal to watch a laugh try to work its way up through that frozen visage and emerge from that defeated but still indomitable wreckage of a face—one eyeball all white and rimmed with blood—in sounds not resembling laughter at all, or only in a ghastly sort of way.

Marion, Mac's still youthful wife, had taken a job to make ends meet, but they had a hard time keeping a maid to take care of Mac.

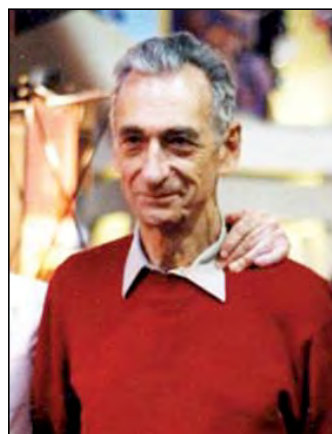
As may be imagined, he was no easy patient. Once, Marion told us, they had had a likely prospect, a young mademoiselle fresh from the provinces whom she had liked especially, but that one's stay proved to be particularly short.

As Marion put it, “She took one look at Mac's rigid digit and fled for her life.

“It was then I realized that that part of a man might be the very last part of him to die.”

Tatsy and I were sitting in the Coupole watching a pair of lovers on the banquette just across from our table. The girl was a bewitching blonde, in a mini-skirt of course, this being the '60s, and she was all over the boy so that you could hardly get a glimpse of him—as if we cared about that.

The girl's restlessly moving



John Broome

at the 1998 San Diego Comic-Con—and don't worry, he wasn't a contortionist. That's a friend's hand on his shoulder. From Comic Vine website.

(Left:) Probably one of the earliest stories Broome wrote that had as its locale his later-beloved Paris was the Flash chapter of “The Justice Society of America” yarn “The Mystery of the Vanishing Detectives” in the Golden Age *All-Star Comics* #57 (Feb.-March 1951), the final issue. Someone is stealing the famous gargoyles atop Notre Dame Cathedral—and not a Hunchback on hand to stop them—so enter the Fastest Man Alive! Pencils by Arthur Peddy; inks by Bernard Sachs. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

The REALLY SECRET Origin Of The Justice League

by Larry Ivie

A/E EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Issue #152 of this magazine saw one of the longest pieces ever to appear in its pages: pro artist Sandy Plunkett's masterful study of his late friend Larry Ivie (1936-2014), who had been one of the most prominent comics fans of the late 1950s and the 1960s, and who'd had a modest career as a comicbook professional during the mid- and late '60s. Left unpublished in A/E #152, due to space limitations, were a number of penciled, scripted, and occasionally even inked pages that Larry had prepared in the latter half of the 1950s as examples of what a revival of the 1940-1951 "Justice Society of America" could look and read like. Those pages will appear next issue.

In the meantime, I remembered that, several years before he passed away, Larry had sent me an article meant as a follow-up to one he'd written for *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #5, back in 2000. He had titled the earlier one "DC vs. the Justice Society of America," because he was convinced that DC in general—and 1948-51 All-Star Comics editor Julius Schwartz in particular, though he didn't refer to JS by name—was committed to only the most juvenile approach to scripts and art, both of which Larry felt were mired in "silliness." That A/E issue is long out of print, though available via digital download from TwoMorrows Publishing.

For various reasons—not least because Larry's second article repeated several anecdotes related in the first, though with additional information, including the use of Julie Schwartz's name this time—I had never gotten around to publishing the later submission. Yet I always intended to do so one day, perhaps after I'd talked to Larry about revising it slightly. But it recently occurred to me that it might be a good idea to commit it to print even before the publication of Larry's "JSA"-related story pages coming in #156... and so, with the permission of Sandy Plunkett, executor of Larry Ivie's estate, it follows. I do feel a need to state up front that some of Larry's opinions (as opposed to verifiable facts) may be controversial, the more so since Julie became a figure so beloved by much of comics fandom, including most definitely Yours Truly; still, Larry's article is a combination of opinion and fact—and facts, in particular, are what history, comicbook or otherwise, is made of...

The first step toward the end of the Golden Age of superheroes was made in 1944 by what *should* have been one of its most wondrous highlights—a super-thick issue titled *The Big All-American Comic Book*, featuring popular heroes from a variety of DC titles—Hawkman, The Flash, Green Lantern, The Atom, Wildcat, Wonder Woman....

But, the inside "art" was surprisingly poor—one of the



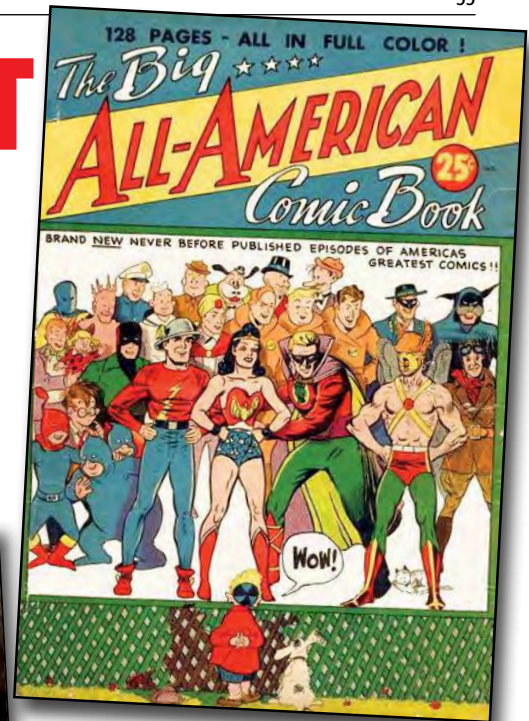
Larry Ivie
Photo courtesy of Sandy Plunkett.

worst-edited issues ever (although the all-time poorest—the appallingly inept *Batman* #500—would not appear until 1993).

A search through the finished art of *The Big All-American Comic Book* finds no lead

page visually worthy of the issue's first inside page. The closest was that for "Wonder Woman"! What should have begun the issue was the traditionally beautiful "Hawkman" feature. But *this* issue's "Hawkman" had to be buried near the end, because instead of the familiar signature "Shelly" on it, it had been done by someone *new*, someone seemingly incapable of drawing adequate faces, or legs of realistic thickness. Fortunately, the near-future issues of *Flash Comics* saw a much-welcomed return of art by "Shelly" [Sheldon Moldoff].

Long after, when I asked 1944 editor Shelly Mayer if he knew what had gone wrong with the *Big All-American*, he said that, although it seemed a good idea when initiated by publisher Max Gaines, the major editors of the time had been so busy on their regular titles that the decision-making on the special was scattered among *many* at the company, including, under a different name on the company records, Julius Schwartz.



The All-American Way

The 1944, *Big All-American Comic Book*, which Ivie makes the starting point of his essay, was 128 pages long (132, counting cardboard-stock covers) and contained stories of all the All-American company's heroes depicted here. Since its debut in 1939, All-American Comics, Inc., had been affiliated with National/DC and been distributed by its Independent News organization; but, despite the "DC" symbol that graced its comics' covers, it was basically a separate company, headed by Max C. Gaines in partnership with Jack Liebowitz and, probably, Harry Donenfeld. Note that the "DC" symbol does *not* appear on the *Big All-American* cover. Beginning with spring 1945 issues, All-American's comics would sport an "AA" symbol similar to the DC one for more than half a year. Cover art is a compendium of the work of numerous artists, including (at the very least) E.E. Hibbard, H.G. Peter, Howard Purcell, Joe Kubert, and Sheldon Mayer. Thanks to the Grand Comics Database.

[TM & © DC Comics.]

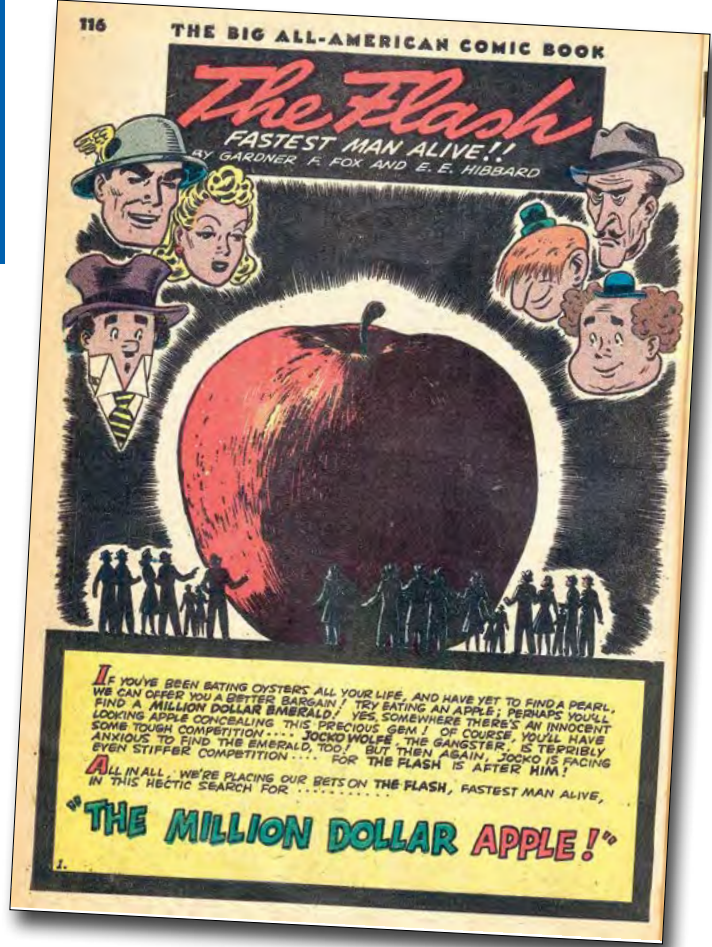


Making A Big Splash

Larry Ivie felt that none of the splash pages in the giant *BAACB*, with the possible exception of that of the "Wonder Woman" exploit that led off the issue, was "visually worthy of the issue's first inside page." Still, it must be said that, with a single exception, the artist of every feature in that publication was one who was already identified with that character: e.g., H.G. Peter drew the William Marston-scribed "WW" tale... Paul Reinman drew the Alfred Bester-written "Green Lantern"... and E.E. Hibbard drew "The Flash," reportedly from a Gardner Fox script. Repro'd from Ye Editor's personal, banged-up copy of *The Big All-American Comic Book*. [TM & © DC Comics.]

A curious decision was made by [DC] managing editor Whitney Ellsworth to mis-assign control of Superman to an individual who not only disliked the comic book medium, but stated he thought Superman to be the all-time *worst* creation—Mort Weisinger. There's no doubt it was due to Weisinger that the issue which introduced Superboy (*More Fun Comics* #101) made no mention of that fact on its cover—in favor of Green Arrow, a character Weisinger had introduced following a movie serial titled *The Green Archer*. Following his statement that he felt comicbook readers were either very young or intellectually retarded, he placed a sign next to his desk for his writers, turned to the wall during fan visits, that read: "Remember, we are writing for 8-year-olds!" He had rejected a 1945 proposal by Siegel and Shuster to *increase* the educational elements within the "Superman" stories; not a single "Superman" tale appearing during the editorial control of Weisinger can be called "intelligent"!

It was then that Ellsworth mis-assigned editorship to a friend of Weisinger's from their pulp-fan days, Julius Schwartz. I was later told by Schwartz that the primary benefit of this was his ability to offer new work to *good* writers—those who had authored *pulp* stories! (I questioned a lot of these choices.)



"Dan Adkins And The Incredible Tracing Machine!" Revisited (Part 3)

by Michael T. Gilbert

Recapping from the previous two issues: The 1969 fanzine *MCR (Modern Collector's Review)* #3 featured an article by a budding art expert, Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., in which he called cartoonist Dan Adkins to task for his extensive use of swipes. Vadeboncoeur also included a detailed, cross-referenced list of the copies to back up his case (as seen on our splash page). The writer had been a huge fan of Adkins, and seemed crushed to discover his idol was only human. At the time, an *MCR* editorial stated, "Dan Adkins and the Incredible Tracing Machine" must be the most controversial article ever printed in fandom. The amount of response was phenomenal!"

Last issue we reprinted letters discussing the ethics of copying, by some of the industry's brightest lights—as well as comments on their comments by Jim Vadeboncoeur on the firestorm he inadvertently started. Now let's hear what *Dan Adkins* himself had to say on the subject, in a circa 1969-70 letter to *MCR*'s editor, John McLaughlin:

Dear John,

I finally got around to seeing a copy of *MCR* #3 with the article on my swiping art. I'd heard about it from Jim Steranko and a few other friends. I had also seen one along the same lines about two years ago, and heard of a few others.

My reaction upon first seeing all those swipes laid out was one of amusement. One of the rules to swiping is not to get caught. Early in the game, I sort of threw out that rule. I didn't care if I got caught. I still don't. But, I am getting tired of playing the game. It seems so silly.

I think it was silly of me to take all those Ditko swipes for Dr.

OH, MY ACHING BACK... OR HOW I SPENT 731 HOURS LOOKING THROUGH 3,652 OLD MAGAZINES, 23 FILE CABNETS, 174 NEWSPAPERS TO FIND AN INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE FOR A DR. STRANGE SPLASH PAGE AND SOME JERKY KID IN ILLINOIS LOOKS AT IT FOR 1/4 OF A SECOND AND SCREAMS, "ADKINS SWIPED THAT FROM PAGE 7 OF PURPLE MONSTERS, NO. 78, JULY 18TH, 1943 ISSUE!"

Notes To You, Buddy!

Dan Adkins wrote this amusing intro to his article. He was just kidding, folks! Er... wasn't he...?

Strange. Mainly because I think I could have drawn it better myself. Stan Lee was always saying, "Make it look like Ditko," and I sure did. Although, even after all that swiping, I got a little part of myself in there. Still, it was silly, wasn't it?

Jim Vadeboncoeur, you must have gone through a lot of trouble to make the checklist. I think that was also silly. At least, a waste of time. You could have figured out that I did a lot of swiping after finding a small portion of the art on that list. Or just asked me. I would have told you the facts.

If Jim was trying to find out if everything I drew was swiped, the answer is no. But about 70% has been.

The checklist is not accurate in total. I will give you an example. My painting for the cover of *Eerie* #12 was from a movie still supplied by [publisher] James Warren, not from the small drawing done by Joe Orlando in a story he had done. Joe took his drawing from the movie still. I could hardly paint a realistic cover from the small panel drawn by Joe.

Jim seems to be surprised to find that artists swipe. Anyway, that he found that I swiped. I can understand that. He hasn't been around much. Now I would be surprised to find an artist that didn't swipe. Not that I'm saying there aren't artists who draw most of their stuff. There are a few. But it is clear to me that Jim doesn't have the knowledge that I do or understand the game at all. As I have said, I didn't play the game very well. I thought it was stupid. It still seems that way to me, but I'm beginning to see that if you play the game, it's better to play by the rules.



J'accuse!

In his original article, Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., accused Dan of swiping his *Eerie* #12 (Nov. 1967) cover for Warren Publications from a Joe Orlando drawing from Warren's *Monster World* #2 (Jan. 1964). But both artists had actually swiped a movie still from the 1944 movie, *The Mummy Strikes*. © New Comic Company, LLC.]



A Fan & His Fawcetts

(Right:) Earl Shaw's photo of Raymond Miller in his home, taken less than a couple of years before his passing. (Above:) In his later years, Miller lavished a great deal of time and energy creating action figures of his favorite Golden Age heroes. Seen here is the Fawcett set.

Interview With Raymond Miller

by Jeff Gelb

[This piece originally appeared in Comics Buyer's Guide #1167, dated March 29, 1996.]

It's a Golden Age fan's dream come true, and Raymond Miller has lived it. He was born in 1931, which made him of prime comicbook-buying age during the 1940s, the legendary Golden Age of Comics. Twenty years later, as the first comicbook fanzines were appearing, Miller turned his boyhood love of comics into a seemingly endless series of hero, title, and company histories. For several years during the mid-1960s, it was hard to open a fanzine and not see Raymond's writing or traced artwork—full of enthusiasm for the medium he has enjoyed since he was just a boy.

JEFF GELB: What was it like to collect comics in the '40s?

RAYMOND MILLER: That's a long way back to remember! I do recall where I bought *Captain Marvel Adventures* from 1943 to 1946, in Vandergrift, Pennsylvania. It wasn't really what one would call a newsstand. Comicbooks were stacked on tables. I remember *Captain Marvel* made up quite a stack, and it was the only title I bought regularly up until 1946 (so I was in on the Mr. Mind serial from start

to finish). My earliest *Captain Marvel* purchase was #18, with the origin of Mary Marvel, and my buying didn't end until #110, eight years later.

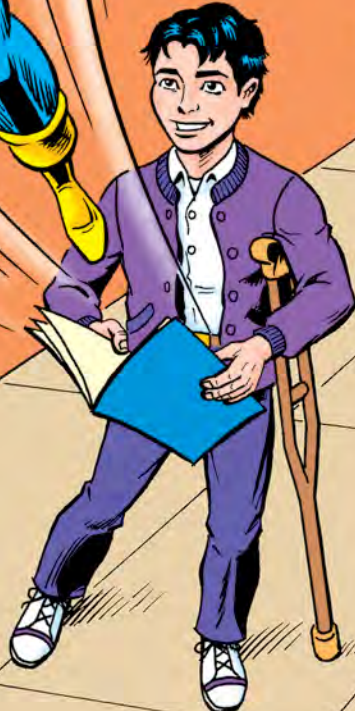
I do faintly remember buying some Fawcett bagged comics at the local 5&10¢ store sometime in 1943. If memory serves me right, there were five in a bag. But it was 1946 to 1950 when I really got into it. Now that I think back on it, I often wonder where I got the money to buy what I did. I bought every Fiction House title from 1946 to 1948, *Batman* and *Superman*, *Phantom Lady*, *Blue Beetle*, *All Top*, etc. Then I branched into all the Fawcett Westerns and, later, the ECs. In those days, you didn't need a comicbook store. You could buy comics at newsstands, drug stores, grocery stores, 5&10¢ stores. I must have had access to at last ten different places to buy comics in a town of nine thousand people.

I never stopped collecting, although I sold or traded just about every comicbook I bought from 1946 to 1955 during the 1960s, for



#214
Nov.
2018

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



ED HERRON
COMICS' MIGHTIEST
MYSTERY MAN!

Art by Vic Dal Chela (vicdalchela.com)
and Mark Lewis. Shazam characters™ & © DC Comics.

FRANCE "ED" HERRON

Comics' Mightiest Mystery Man

by Michael Browning

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

FCA EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:

A key player from the Golden Age of Comics, former Fawcett editor France Edward Herron passed away on Friday, September 2, 1966, at Manhattan Veterans Hospital with little fanfare. He only reached 48 years of age, and had been living at the Chalfonte Hotel in Manhattan. Regrettably, in later years, very few Fawcett alumni ever had much to say about him, forever leaving an aura of mystery attached to him.

Herron was freelance-writing for various publishers, including Fawcett, before that company offered him an editorial position based on the high-caliber "Captain Marvel" scripts he had previously sold them. In the same month that Bill Parker departed to serve in the National Guard, Herron took his place as Fawcett's comics editor on October 10, 1940.



Captains Clockwise

France "Ed" Herron mapped out a spine-tingling trilogy to introduce his new creation to comics readers: Captain Marvel Jr.! The editor placed scripting in the capable hands of freelance writer Bill Woolfolk (who'll be featured in the FCA-centered *A/E* #157, as well as in #159). Next, desiring to contrast the new young hero with Cap Sr., he brought in artist Mac Raboy to render the Blue Boy with fine-line realism. Herron's magnum opus commenced in *Master Comics* #21 (Dec. '41) with the introduction of Woolfolk's wicked Captain Nazi, and an early comicbook crossover starring Bulletman and Captain Marvel.

That tale was continued that same month over in *Whiz Comics* #25 — where Captain Nazi inadvertently sets in motion the debut of Captain Marvel Jr., featuring a rare, one-time collaborative artist mash-up between C.C. Beck and Raboy.

The trilogy was wrapped up in *Master Comics* #22 (Jan. '42), wherein Junior joined forces with previous cover star Bulletman. The two *Master* covers are drawn by Raboy; the *Whiz* cover was illustrated by Beck; and the *Whiz* #25 interior page at left, with Junior's first appearance, is a collaborative effort by both artists. [Shazam heroes, Captain Nazi, & Bulletman TM & © DC Comics.]



Bone-fied Debut

One of the most famous Golden Age stories was "The Riddle of the Red Skull" from the first issue of *Captain America Comics* (March '41), written by Ed Herron with art by Cap co-creators Simon & Kirby, which introduced Timely's most notorious villain. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Woolfolk, who also contributed the creation of Captain Nazi to the tales, shared memories of Herron with me in 2000:

"Ed Herron was the next editor-in-chief [after Parker] and, by all accounts, was a good one. He was also a good writer who sold stories to other media. He was fired when the maharajas at Fawcett discovered he was writing stories under different names and paying himself. He was undone by a typewriter tic that identified the stories as having been written on his typewriter. Personally, I think if the stories were good, the maharajas should have had nothing to complain about. I didn't meet Ed until years afterward when I had left comics and became chief writer for *The Defenders* television drama series. By that time, Ed was down at his heels and he was hanging around the fringes of comics. He died not long afterward."

After Herron's termination, Fawcett replaced him with new editor Rod Reed in September 1942.

While Herron had hit a home run with Marvel Jr., let's not forget an even greater achievement: Herron was instrumental in bringing over Otto Binder to Fawcett, and altered Otto's life forever when he gave him "Captain Marvel" to script!

On top of his having not abided by Fawcett's rule regarding editors writing their own stories, there was another elephant in the room concerning Herron's tenure at Fawcett.

Undoubtedly, the most damaging thing to Fawcett in the 1953



Joe Simon & Jack Kirby

One of the greatest teams in the history of comics. Joe's standing, Kirby's seated at the drawing board.

court proceedings with DC (National) during the prolonged copyright infringement case viz. Superman and Captain Marvel was the testimony of two former Fawcett comics creators who claimed they had been ordered by the publisher to straightforwardly copy material from "Superman" stories. Otto Binder had later reported to fandom that those two individuals were writer Manly Wade Wellman and ex-editor

Ed Herron. Binder stated that Herron, "apparently embittered" by his firing from Fawcett, had "turned state's evidence over to DC that Captain Marvel was a direct copy of Superman..."

Our late colleague, Fawcett artist Marc Swayze, in his long-running memoirs published in *FCA*, recalled happier times, beginning on his first day at the Fawcett offices... which was also the first day he met Ed Herron:

"It was 1941. I rose from my seat in the reception room of Fawcett Publications and a big fellow approached with outstretched hand.

"I suppose you were e

"Well, not right at first guy.

"Your wire addressed

"We laughed. To this d mine or the telegraph opera

Herron, with art direct Beardsley, told the artist that had submitted to them. Sw know the name of the chara

"Yeah," Herron chimed from Beck's."

In addition to Junior a the ball rolling with Mary N consummate creators Otto column, Swayze took us ba

"Earlier in the year, He without a word, pulled up in hushed tones to describe about Billy Batson's age." H

"To start off," he continued, "we'll call her Mary Bromfield. Then, when she speaks her magic word she'll become..." Eddie finished with, "From that description, can you whip up a character sketch?" He knew I could—he was already replacing his chair against the wall."

Marc Swayze always had nothing but good things to say about

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