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**NOSTALGIC
NOTE:
KA-ZAP'S
PROBABLY
IN THIS
ISSUE,
TOO—BUT
DON'T
BLINK,
OR YOU'LL
MISS HIM!**



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ED
SILVERMAN!**

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On Our Cover: What better way to celebrate a half-century of the X-Men, and particularly their first decade, than to lead off with a "rejected" cover by none other than Jack "King" Kirby himself, as inked by Chic Stone? Of course, back in 1965, "rejected" was a relative term. There's a good chance that editor Stan Lee approved Jack's sketch for this take on *The X-Men vs. Ka-Zar*... an even better chance that, at the very least, the two men talked over the idea before Kirby penciled it... but either Stan later had second thoughts, or else publisher Martin Goodman nixed the finished product very late in the game, as he was occasionally wont to do. So we get two X-Men #10 covers instead of one! [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Above: Recognize this circa-1970 X-Men cover? Us, neither! But it's the "X-Men" cover drawn by an unidentified artist for the Brazilian comics title *Edições GEP* #14. See still more art and story from this rapturous Rio rarity—on p. 31! Thanks to Roberto Guedes. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
**Roy Ald, John Severin,
Norman Fruman, & Sid Couchey**



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FIRST PRINTING.

The Extraordinary But Star-Crossed Origins Of THE X-MEN

The First Decade Of "The Strangest Super-Heroes Of All!"

by Will Murray



Continuing our policy of making this the MARVEL AGE OF COMICS, we present two new super-hero mags which we feel are destined to become fantasy classics! THE AVENGERS, on sale in July, stars THOR, ANT-MAN, the HULK, and IRON MAN, all together in one book-length spectacular! And, on sale at the same time, is America's newest, most different group of super-heroes — the X-MEN! Who are they? What are they? Here's a hint — they're merely the GREATEST! Both mags by Stan and Jack, natch!

(Above:) *X-Men* #1 writer/editor Stan Lee—and penciler/co-plotter Jack Kirby, both from the 1964 *Marvel Tales Annual* #1. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

"X" The Unknown—At Least Till Next Month!

(Above left:) Curiously, although we now know that *The X-Men* #1 was planned to debut at roughly the same time as *Daredevil* #1, and that *The Avengers* #1 became a last-minute replacement for the latter (as detailed in *A/E* #118)—and though both Sept.-1963-dated team comics went on sale on the very same day in July of '63—*Fantastic Four* #18 (Sept. 1963) featured a full-page house ad for *Avengers* #1, while the *X-Men* logo was merely squeezed onto the bottom of a page advertising two Annuals.

(Center:) Even in the "Special Announcements Section" on *FF* #18's letters section, mention of *X-Men* played second fiddle to *Avengers*. (Well, okay, so Stan Lee wrote that the *X-Men* were "merely the GREATEST!"—but what did you think he was gonna say?)

(Right:) It wasn't until *FF* #19 (Oct. '63) that *X-Men* #1 got the full-page-ad treatment, by which time it had been on sale for a while. On the actual printed cover of #1, the levitational energy lines emanating from Marvel Girl's head were deleted. Art by Kirby and (probably) Reinman. Thanks to Barry Pearl for all three scans.

[© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

P.S.: Because the entire 1963-70 *X-Men* series is in print in various *Marvel Masterworks* and *Essentials* editions, we'll be reprinting few pages or panels from those comics in this issue. We prefer to concentrate instead on rare art materials.



"Something X-tra"

On July 2, 1963, Marvel Comics simultaneously released *The Avengers* and *The X-Men*, the former being their (latest) answer to DC's *Justice League of America*, while the latter was an attempt to duplicate the success of Marvel's own *Fantastic Four*—with maybe a touch of *Spider-Man* teenage angst thrown in.

Tagged "The Strangest Super-Heroes of All Time!" *The X-Men* was more subdued than the FF and darker than *The Avengers*. Up to this point, most of the heroes of the Marvel Universe had been radiation-created mutations, whether born of cosmic rays, gamma radiation explosions, or, in the case of Spider-Man, radioactive accidents. *Daredevil*, in the works at the same time as *The X-Men* (see A/E #118), would share the latter theme with the wall-crawler.

This time, however, writer-editor Lee modified the successful formula by offering up a team of super-heroes who were *born* with their special powers, thanks to the radiation effects of atomic experimentation.

"What if I just made them mutants?" Lee was quoted in Douglas Martin's essay "The X-Men Vanquish America" (*The New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1994). "There are mutants in nature, and with all the atomic explosions they're more likely than ever before."

Lee wanted to title the book *The Mutants*, but publisher Martin Goodman objected on the grounds that young readers would not understand the term.

As Stan related in the 1975 Simon & Schuster collection *Sons of Origins of Marvel Comics*, "Mutants have an extra power, extra ability, some extra facet or quality denied a normal man. The word 'extra' was the key. Mutants are, in a sense, people with something extra. And, if we think of the word 'extra' in phonetic terms, we might think of that phrase as 'people with something x-tra.' And a man with something x-tra could conceivably be called an x-man! Therefore, since we were discussing a whole group of mutants, why not call the book *The X-Men*?"

Goodman accepted the new title. Perhaps he half-recalled the cover story to a 1937 issue of his old pulp magazine *Star Detective*, N.V. Romero's "The X-Man." (Although that particular title character had been an undercover G-Man, not a super-hero.)

Both Lee and artist Jack Kirby, predictably enough, claimed credit for originating the concept in later years.

"As with all superhero teams, I had to have an excuse for putting them together," revealed Lee to Tom DeFalco in *Comics Creators on X-Men* (Titan Books, 2006). "The Fantastic Four were essentially a family, the Avengers were a club. What could the X-Men be that would be different? I figured if they're teenagers, what's more natural than a school?"

"I created X-Men because of the radiation scare at the time," asserted Kirby in *Comics Feature* in 1986. "What I did was give the beneficial side. I always feel there's hope for the human condition. Sure, I could have made it real scary. We don't know the connotations of genetics and radiation. We can create radiation but we



Martin Goodman.



Putting All Your "X" In One Basket

The cover and opening pages of the March 1937 issue of Red Circle's *Star Detective* pulp magazine, published by Martin Goodman (seen in photo). The cover is by J.W. Scott, the interior "double-truck" illo by Earl Mayan. Nothing is known about bylined author N.V. Romero. It seems unlikely that Stan Lee, who's always said he came up with the *X-Men* name after Goodman nixed *The Mutants* as the title of the comic, ever saw the pulp story. After all, he didn't go to work for Timely until nearly four years later—though he could have bought the mag off the newsstand, of course. Thanks to Will Murray for the interior scans and artist ID. The photo of Goodman is a blow-up from the famous 1942 photo taken at the so-called "Bambi" dinner. [Art © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Mutants were rare in comic books prior to *The X-Men*. Over at DC Comics, the futuristic Captain Comet, who had first appeared in DC's *Strange Adventures* #9 (June 1951), was a mutant, but he had been phased out of that science-fiction comic in 1954. His inborn powers were largely mental, although he was very capable physically, as well.

A few stray mutants had popped up in Timely/Marvel pre-hero fantasy mags such as *Journey into Mystery* and *Amazing Adult Fantasy*—e.g., the stories “The Mutants and Me,” “The Man with the Atomic Brain,” and “The Man in the Sky,” the latter two virtually identical stories about lone mutants who discover others like themselves secretly living like ordinary people, exactly like *Children of the Atom*.

The earliest significant Timely example dates from 1953, in a story in *Man Comics* about a renegade young mutant named Roger Carstairs, whose powers include the ability to project illusions into the minds of others. Carstairs uses these abilities for evil purposes, and perishes as a result in a tale belonging to the “Bob Brant and his Trouble-Shooters” series, “The Crawling Things!”

So mutants were not new. But they were about to be reinvented as Marvel super-heroes.

X-Tales Out Of School

The core concept of a school for young mutants, led by a wheelchair-bound telepath named Professor Xavier, allowed Lee and Kirby to skip a formal origin story. (The fact that DC had just rolled out a Marvel-like group of misfit super-heroes called The Doom Patrol, also led by a father figure in a wheelchair, is another matter entirely.)

“I thought of Professor X as Yul Brynner,” Lee told Patrick Daniel O’Neil for *Wizard: X-Men Turn Thirty*. “I thought it would be good if he was physically limited, since his mind was so powerful.”

By day, these teenagers were outwardly-ordinary students. But when danger called, they donned simple cowled costumes and became The X-Men.

Jack Kirby saw this as an evolution of the type of kid-gang features he’d been developing since his early days at Timely.

“Yes, I created The Young Allies,” he told interviewer Leonard Pitts, Jr., in 1986. “All of them. All of them came from my basement. The Avengers, Daredevil, The X-Men, all of them. The X-Men, I did the natural thing there. What would you do with mutants who were just plain boys and girls and certainly not dangerous? You school them. You develop their skills. So I gave them a teacher, Professor X. Of course it was the natural thing to do. Instead of disorienting or alienating people who were different from us, I made The X-Men part of the human race, which they were. Possibly, radiation, if it is beneficial, may create mutants that’ll save us instead of doing us harm. I felt that if we train the mutants our way, they’ll help us—and not only help us, but achieve a measure of growth in their own sense. And so, we could all live together.”

Beyond that initial impulse, the challenge was, as Lee once expressed it, “What powers can I give them that are not in use at the moment?”

As an attempt to innovate along *Fantastic Four* lines, *The X-Men* strove to be as different as it was parallel. Iceman

might be called an inverse Human Torch, while the gorilla-like Beast evoked the flavor of Ben Grimm, alias the Thing, as did his and Iceman’s antagonistic interplay. Beyond that, the parallels vanished. Cyclops with his power beams evoked Jack Cole’s similarly-powered Comet of Golden Age days. The Angel might have been a re-thinking of the old Timely non-powered Angel, with a touch of the Red Raven—although one would doubt anyone remembered that 1940 loser. Marvel Girl was a typical ‘60s Marvel super-heroine, attractive and armed with powers considered feminine—in this case telekinesis. (For the first-issue cover, however, her telekinetic energy emanations were whited out at the last minute, reducing her to hapless observer status.)

The premise was as strong as it was simple. Professor X secretly educated young mutants in the seclusion of his private school in Westchester County, New York, while seeking others to bring into the fold. Opposing him was the enigmatic Magneto, hunting for malleable mutants to join him in the subjugation of the human race. The backstory of their opposition was developed over the first year.

[Continued on p. 11]



SOLDIERS FIND STRANGE WEAPONS WHICH HAVE BEEN RENDERED USELESS BY THE GREAT EXPLOSIONS

STUDYING RUINS, GENERAL SAYS—BOY THOSE X-MEN SURE SAVED THE WORLD FROM ONE HELL OF A MESS—

The Cleanup Crew

According to *Jack Kirby Collector* editor/publisher John Morrow, the above two-thirds of a page of Jack Kirby pencil layouts are on the back of what was printed as page 6 of *The X-Men* #17 (Feb. 1966). Originally, these panels were to form most of page 3, until—as then-editorial-assistant Roy Thomas recalls it—editor Stan Lee decided Jack had devoted too much space (three pages’ worth, if these panels had been kept) to the clean-up after the defeat of The Sentinels, before getting around to showing several of the teenage mutants recuperating in a hospital. The full-page shot of The Angel flying on the published p. 6 was added to take up the space that Kirby had spent on soldiers standing around and Sentinels lying around... while not letting a (sliced) piece of art paper go to waste. These panels were first printed in *The Jack Kirby Collector* #7. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

THE X-MEN

NAME: Professor Charles Xavier (Professor X)
AGE: Thirty-ish
VOICE: Leslie Howard-- without English accent.
CHARACTERISTICS: ~~He~~ Possesses most brilliant mutant brain in the world. ~~Has~~ Confined to wheelchair due to ~~an~~ accident in his youth. Completely bald-headed a la Yul Brynner. Deeply serious, brooding, thoughtful, intense. The worry-wart type.
POWERS: Leader of the X-Men. He takes his job very seriously. Can read thoughts. Can project his own thoughts. And hoo-boy, such an I.Q.!



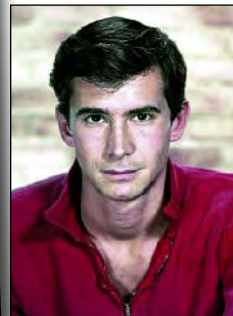
Leslie Howard
 (but how does one interpret "without English accent"?)

NAME: Scott Summers (Cyclops)
AGE: Nineteen.
VOICE: Anthony Perkins.
CHARACTERISTICS: Sort-of a present-day Spider-Manlet. He's Deputy Leader of X-Men. Gains- unsocial. Always worried about his own problems.
POWERS: If his eyes are ever unshielded, the power blastthey emit can cause untold damage.



Yul Brynner

NAME: Henry (Hank) McCoy (The Beast)
AGE: Eighteen
VOICE: Tony Randall
CHARACTERISTICS: Talkative as hell. Uses two-dollar words whenever possible. Is an erudite scholar and bookworm, which completely belies his somewhat ape-like posture. Has a sense of humor and is most likeable.
POWERS: Fantastically agile. Can climb a wall with his feet- can balance on one finger- can run, jump, leap like a monkey.



Anthony Perkins

NAME: Warren Worthington the Third (The Angel)
AGE: Eighteen
VOICE: A young Gene Barry.
CHARACTERISTICS: Healthy- from a very unhealthy blue-blooded family. Extremely handsome, and somewhat surprisingly endowed with a pair of large, dramatic-looking wings.
POWERS: Considering his wings, it will come as no surprise to learn that he flies like a bird.

NAME: Bobby Drake. (Iceman)
AGE: In thirties and a half- or seventeen.
VOICE: Typical teen-ager. But not too icky. He's a nice kid- not an itch.
CHARACTERISTICS: Is the youngest of the X-Men, but a regular guy.
POWERS: Can mentally will his body to turn icy! Can hurl ice at an enemy and can create ice-slides, ice-ralls, etc. when needed, out of composition of his own body.

X-MEN -2-

NAME: Jean Grey. (Marvel Girl)
AGE: 17 1/2.
VOICE: The voice of a pretty, seventeen-and-a-half-year-old gal.
CHARACTERISTICS: She falls madly in love at the drop of a hat. Presently has a crush on Professor X, Cyclops, Angel, and Lord knows who else!
POWERS: Can levitate herself or other objects by telekinetic power at which she possesses.

NOTE: ALL of the X-Men are mutants. They are banded together to protect mankind from the evil mutants which are also amongst us. They are quartered, secretly in Professor Xavier's School For Gifted Youngsters. No one knows on the outside suspects that the "gifted youngsters" whom the Professor solicits for his school are really mutants.



(Young) Tony Randall



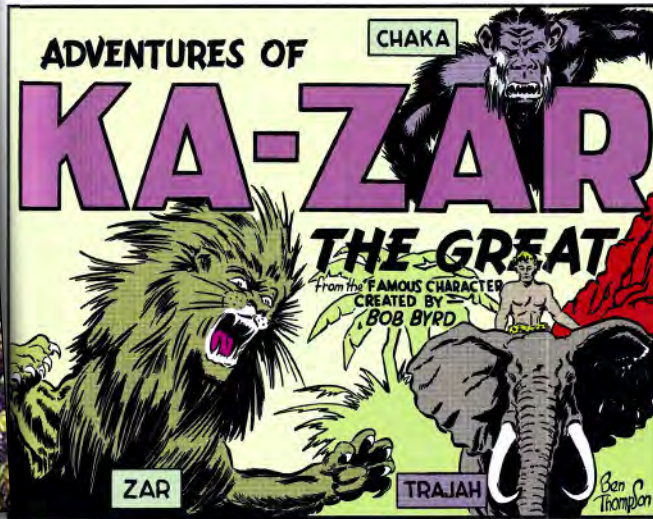
(Young) Gene Barry

"X-Men"-Rated Movies

Sometime in 1975, Marvel staffer and scripter Scott Edelman happened across what he describes on his blog as "a dozen or so carbon copies of descriptions of Marvel's central superheroes buried in the back of a file cabinet, barely visible because the sheets had slipped between the drawers.... Because the pages only referenced the earliest of Marvel's characters—the X-Men, the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, etc.—and because all of the references as to which famous actors' voices we should imagine coming out of their mouths were of a previous generation, I always assumed these were written by Stan Lee [and not written any later than 1965]." They also appeared, Scott felt, to have been composed on the same typewriter on which Stan composed his Soapboxes for the Bullpen Bulletins page, and were probably meant to be "a guide for the writers who'd follow him, perhaps so that the characters could be more effectively merchandised."

When Scott contacted Stan about them, The Man replied: "I think I wrote it. It looks like my typing. But I can't swear to it. Did you ask Roy Thomas? He's better at recognizing stuff than I am. I just wouldn't wanna testify to something that I'm not sure of. I'd say there's a 75% chance that I wrote it."

A couple of years back, Scott generously sent Roy scans of the photocopies he had kept of these sheets. Roy puts the odds of their being Stan's work at rather better than 75%; certainly they're in line with Stan's mention of Yul Brynner on p. 7, even if the writer managed to misspell Scott Summers' surname. RT suspects the notes may have been meant as a potential guide for animation studios, at a time when the Marvel characters were only beginning to make it to television in cartoon series like *Marvel Super-Heroes*, even though *The X-Men* didn't wind up being included in that omnibus 1966 series. For some reason, alas, the writer didn't suggest any voice models re Iceman or Marvel Girl. [© 2013 the respective copyright holders.]



Mariner... and a jungle pulp hero not seen since the Timely days, Ka-Zar. "The Incredible Hulk" feature was revived in *Tales to Astonish*. Lee decided to use *The X-Men* to reintroduce the jungle lord, which he did in issue #10, one of the great Lee and Kirby issues of that fabulous year. Despite the stellar start, Ka-Zar never truly caught on, but a year later, Sub-Mariner joined the Hulk in the reformulated *Tales to Astonish*. They would enjoy great success. Not so *The X-Men*.

Returning to the theme of the mutant-vs.-mutant tension, Lee and Kirby introduced The Stranger in issue #11. He was one of those cosmic characters like The Watcher who increasingly began populating the Marvel Universe. When Magneto attempted to recruit him, the resulting carnage scattered his Brotherhood forever. Magneto was taken off-planet, clearing the series for new directions.

The Three Faces Of Ka-Zar

The triple incarnation of a jungle king. (Clockwise from above left:) The cover of the 1936 pulp magazine *Ka-Zar*, Vol. 1, #1; artist unknown... the splash page of the "Ka-Zar the Great" story in *Marvel Comics* #1 (Oct. 1939), with art by Ben Thompson, scripter unknown... and the unused version of the Jack Kirby/Chic Stone cover done for *The X-Men* #10 (March 1965), repro'd from a photocopy of the original art. Except for the name, the Marvel version of Ka-Zar had no connection to the 1930s hero.
 [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

JOHAN RAND, YOUNG OWNER OF A RICH DIAMOND FIELD IN THE TRANSVAAL, IS FLYING FROM JOHANNESBURG TO CAIRO WITH HIS WIFE AND THEIR THREE-YEAR-OLD SON DAVID. OVER THE HEART OF THE BELGIAN CONGO THE PLANE DEVELOPS MOTOR TROUBLE AND RAND IS FORCED TO COME DOWN IN THE THICK, WILD TROPICAL FOREST!!



Duncan of Department of Special Affairs in Washington was summarily dropped, severing the team's single contact with outside authority. The X-Men worked best as outcasts, if not outlaws.

A rivalry between Scott Summers and Warren Worthington III over the affections of Jean Grey duplicated the early sexual tension between Reed Richards and the Sub-Mariner over Sue Storm of the *Fantastic Four*; but a fourth arm of that conflict—Professor X's unspoken crush on the redhead—was summarily dropped after one thought balloon!

In the middle of all this, Lee and Kirby decided to radically alter the premise of the series. The X-Men suddenly graduated from Xavier's School for Gifted Students, and their mentor took a leave of absence, installing Cyclops as his replacement. Yet they remained headquartered in his private facility. It was only issue #7.

Xavier returned a mere two issues later to lead the battle against Lucifer, the non-mutant villain who cost him his legs. This was the *Avengers* crossover issue. Kirby's art made the stories just as exciting as *Fantastic Four*, but readers still weren't buying it.

During this period, the Marvel Universe was fast expanding. According to an anonymous artist who says that at the time he was offered his choice of which of the three characters to draw, Martin Goodman handed Lee a list of three dormant characters he wanted to see revived: the Hulk, who had briefly been with *The Avengers*... The Sub-

Made In Brazil: The X-MEN!

The Secret History Of The Mutants South Of The Equator

by Roberto Guedes

A/E EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *The story of the first volume of Marvel Comics' The X-Men seems fairly concise and knowable: a mere 66 issues, published from mid-1963 through the turn of 1970, plus a few guest appearances in other heroes' mags... and, if one wants to count them, a handful of new covers done for reprinted 1960s issues beginning in late '70. But that's not quite the entire X-Men oeuvre from the '60s. To learn of nearly 100 additional pages of original "X-Men" yarns, produced primarily in an approximation of the artistic style of Jack Kirby, we must migrate momentarily to South America....*

In 1967, when the U.S. *Marvel Super-Heroes* animated cartoons series (from Grantray-Lawrence) began to appear on TV stations around Brazil, publisher Adolfo Aizen seized the opportunity to put out comic books starring *The Hulk*, *Thor*, *Iron Man*, *Sub-Mariner*, and *Captain America*—and, some time later, *Fantastic Four*, *Spider-Man*, and *Daredevil*, as well—through his EBAL imprint. Aizen was initially only interested in the characters



The Red Iceman Cometh!

(Above:) The Jack Kirby/Chic Stone cover for GEP's *X-Men* #1 (1968), which actually reprints stories from the U.S. *The X-Men* #7 (Sept. 1964). Although author Roberto Guedes reports that the official name of the comic, which alternated material from *The X-Men*, *The Silver Surfer*, and *Captain Marvel*, was *Edições GEP*, the cover logo here is clearly just *X-Men*—minus “The” or any Portuguese-language equivalent. © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Note the, shall we say, creative coloring. Apparently no one told the Brazilians (or else they didn't care) that the mutants were wearing uniforms, not costumes. But surely it can only be a failure to communicate that caused Iceman to wind up colored red! All art & photos accompanying this article were supplied by Roberto Guedes.

(Left:) The splash page from the back-up story in GEP's *X-Men* #1, featuring The Beast, was less Kirbysque than most.

who had appeared in TV cartoons (except, curiously, for *Daredevil*) and ignored the other Marvel heroes.

Thus, the original *X-Men* series by Stan Lee & Jack Kirby came to this tropical country in 1968, thanks not to Aizen but to the GEP Company (an acronym for “Gráfica Editora Penteadó”) operated



¡Ay Robot!

Issue #8 is the only one of the several Brazilian *X-Men* covers on which the phrase "Edições GEP" is clearly a title for the mag. The Kirby-penciled cover is reprinted from the U.S. *X-Men* #14 (Nov. 1965), the first of the Sentinels issues. Well, at least The Iceman's colored white on this one—and the folks at GEP deleted the backward number "1" that had been emblazoned on the robot's chest in the American edition, probably due to the cover art being "flopped," reversing right and left. There are a few minor artistic differences in the area beneath the Sentinel's right hand—but at least Marvel Girl is levitating, not swinging on a rope as in the U.S. comic! Let's give credit where credit is due! [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

by publisher Miguel Penteadó. Their stories were printed in a comic book called *Edições GEP* (*GEP Editions*) in a relay system, alternating with other Marvel characters such as The Silver Surfer (by Stan Lee & John Buscema) and Captain Marvel, the Kree warrior.

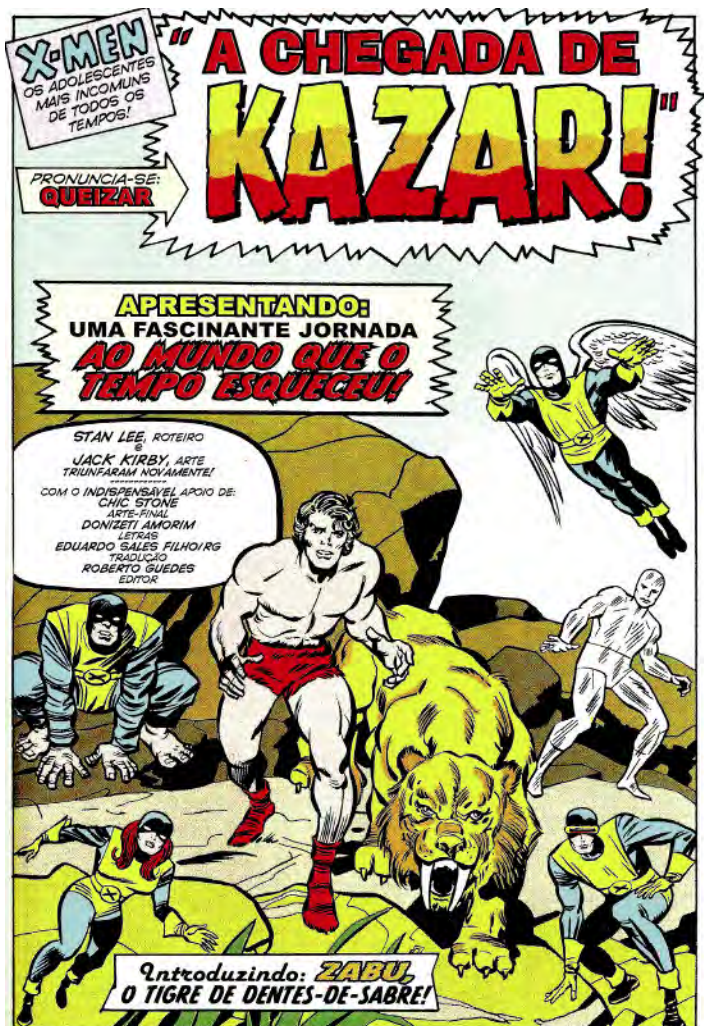
For economic reasons, as with other Brazilian publications in the 1960s, the *X-Men* comic book had a color cover and interior pages of black-&-white, although the size of the pages was slightly larger than that of American comic books. The title had a variable periodicity, and the final edition came out in late 1970; there were a total of 23 issues.

As the original U.S. stories contained about 20 pages, and GEP lacked paid advertising to fill the remaining pages of the comic book in the same manner that Marvel did, Penteadó opted to assign some Brazilian writers and artists to produce new stories of eight or nine pages.

The creators primarily responsible for this unusual task (after all, it is not documented with 100% certainty that Marvel even knew of these extra stories—or that they cared much one way or the other) were Gedeone Malagola and Walter Silva Gomes, along with others who were not credited. Together, the writers and artists produced a total of ten "X-Men" back-up stories. The tales were generally very creative; the characterization was at least reasonably true to the characters as they appeared in the American comics, and the drawings were at least a reasonable facsimile of Kirby art.

Malagola stated, years later, that Marvel had authorized the GEP to produce new "X-Men" stories. That assertion was never adequately explained, but it was commonplace for Brazilian publishers to produce extra adventures of foreign, licensed characters.

In 1967, for example, RGE Company (an acronym for Rio Gráfica e Editora) had already done something similar, when it had produced a totally unprecedented crossover between the original android Human Torch and the original (i.e., Fawcett Publications!) Captain Marvel, even though the first Torch had last had his own feature in 1954 and the Shazam hero had been cancelled in 1953! (This unique story was examined by John G. Pierce in *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #1, in 1999; later, the entire adventure was actually reprinted, a couple of pages at a time, over a series of *A/E* issues.)



The Savage Land Forever!

The splash page of *The X-Men* #10, as reprinted in Brazil by Panini in 1988—with a due credit added for editor Roberto Guedes. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

“The M.M.M.S. Wants You!”

The Glorious Rise And Fall Of Marvel’s Very First Fan Club

by Richard Kelsey

It started with four initials.

Those initials, “M.M.M.S.,” suddenly appeared in ads, in bulletins, and on the letters pages in Marvel comic books in issues published in 1964, along with a challenge for readers to guess what the initials meant.

What they meant, it would turn out, was the beginning of Marvel Comics’ multiple attempts to start a club for fans. In all, four different clubs spanning almost three decades and generating different membership kits, magazines, and all sorts of merchandise including buttons, figurines, posters, T-shirts, decals, stationery kits, and portfolios came and went.

Today, only the memories and merchandise, now prized collectibles, remain of the clubs. Not one of those four attempts lasted, in spite of a large and enthusiastic response for each club.

And it all started with four initials.

The answer to the tease concerning what “M.M.M.S.” might stand for was given in the letters pages of Marvel’s December 1965 issues, as seen in the first art spot on the very next page:

The MERRY MARVEL MARCHING SOCIETY

As Stan Lee wrote in his 2002 autobiography *Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*: “Naturally, I wanted to make it unusual, as different from other fan clubs as possible. As with everything

Marvel, I felt it should have a lighthearted, tongue-in-cheek feeling to it. Even the name should be slightly outrageous.”

Lighthearted? The detailed description of the membership kit in a full page ad in the February 1965 issues certainly was that, as it proclaimed that, for \$1, you could get:

- (1) A membership button measuring three inches in diameter which showed the Thing carrying a flag with the words “The Merry Marvel Marching Society” emblazoned on it and depicting Spider-Man and The Human Torch alongside. Above the M.M.M.S. flag were the words, in all caps, “I BELONG.”
- (2) “A whole mess of absolutely useless M.M.M.S. stickers which you can paste onto your bookcovers, attaché case, or the hubcaps of your Sting-Ray!” The ad didn’t show all of the stickers nor specify the exact quantity that “a whole mess” meant.

with ‘em, and we’re proud of the results! —Next ish, we’ll try to bring you a DIFFERENT type of F.F. epic, with a different angle and a few king-sized surprises! So, while you’re counting the minutes till F.F. #33, see if you can guess what M.M.M.S. stands for? We’ll tell you more about it next ish, and it’s going to be one of the big news items of comicdom this year! Till we meet again, then, let’s be thankful to Irving Forbush for expressing those tender sentiments which are so dear to us all—Make Mine Marvell



Hey, gang, how about THIS? It seems that **FANTASTIC FOUR FAN CLUBS** have been springing up all over the country! Many readers have written to us, asking where the nearest one is located which they can join. For the benefit of those interested, here is a partial list of some of the first FF FAN CLUBS... why not contact the one nearest you?

George Kopp 10 Pillot Place West Orange, N. J.	Bobby Marshall 20 Dover St. Tom’s River, N. J.	Donald Schank, Pres. 7 Glendale Dr. Freehold, New Jersey
Lesley Reed 519 South Meadow St. Ithaca, New York	Bill Mitchell Grant Blackman 1647 Boyce Drive Norfolk, Virginia	Stuart Kaufman 6127 N. Claremont Chicago 45, Illinois
Steve Clark Rt. 2 Alvord, Texas	Fantastic Four Fan Club 5650 Camillia Ave. Sacramento, California	Billy Wampler 3100 Liverpool Rd. East Gary, Indiana
Steve Goddard 183 S. W. 4th Newport, Oregon	Mark Carey 734 North 8th Ave. Upland, California	Tim Evans 744 Valley View Road Pittsburgh (16) Penn.
Herbert Silver, President 330 E. 173 St. New York 57, N. Y.		Robert Unger 19 Cumming St. New York 34, New York

More about our fan clubs in issues to come. But, until further notice, send us news of YOUR FF FAN CLUB activities to keep us posted.

Fan-tastic Notions

(Left:) Stan Lee devoted a half page in *Fantastic Four* #15 (June 1963) to acknowledging various Fantastic Four fan clubs that had spontaneously sprung up around the country. At this time, the cover box referring to the company as the “Marvel Comics Group” was only two months old. Art either by Jack Kirby—or by Sol Brodsky or someone imitating Jack.

(Above:) Over the course of the next year, though, Stan got an idea he liked better than merely plugging fans’ groups. The last paragraph in the “Special Announcements Section” of the letters pages in *FF* #32 (Nov. 1964) teased readers with the letters “M.M.M.S.” Clearly, publisher Martin Goodman had a hand in the new club, as well... but Stan maintains the club was his idea. Seems to Roy T. like Stan told him once that Merry Marty wasn’t really that sold on the idea—but maybe he changed his mind when all those dollar bills came floating in! Thanks to Barry Pearl for the scans.

© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

—First of all, here's what the letters M.M.M.S. (which we mentioned last ish) really stand for: The MERRY MARVEL MARCHING SOCIETY! It's a new club we're forming in answer to all of you congenial clubjoiners who've been asking for it! We're busily working out the details now, and hope you'll send us any suggestions which you may have in order to make the ol' M.M.M.S. the most offbeat, original, far-out fun-type club ever formed! So, let's hear from you, and be sure to watch this section in our future issues for more continuing progress reports!

Crazy Club Clues (Clockwise From Above:)

Stan began the "Special Announcements Section" of *Fantastic Four* #33 (Dec. 1964) by telling readers what "M.M.M.S." stood for (the usual guess probably contained the already-familiar phrase "Make Mine Marvel").

A special letters-section box in *FF* #34 (Jan. 1965) dropped a few more tidbits of information (like, the tariff was gonna be a whole buck!) and probably stalled for time.

Then, in #35 (Feb. 1965), an entire page was devoted to the official debut of the Merry Marvel Marching Society—a page that probably contained even more hand-lettered words than even a regular "Fantastic Four" story page did! The house ad was repeated the next month in #36. Thanks to Barry Pearl for these scans. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

MEMO FROM THE M.M.M.S.
 ("Merry Marvel Marching Society" to you!)
 Things are going great guns with our new Marvel Club! We have all sorts of special surprises and off-beat treats planned! But we want to wait till next ish before our official membership application coupon appears. (This will give us time to make sure that all the comments and ideas we asked you for have been received and read.) But, we can tell you this much: membership will be one dollar! (Making it possibly the most expensive club of its type!) So start saving your loose change now! But, for gosh sakes, we don't want your buck unless you can easily afford it. If you're strapped for cash, forget it! You can join a month later, or a year later! You won't miss anything important! There'll be no secret code messages which only Marvel Marchers can understand, or any other juvenile jazz like that! But for those of you who do join we guarantee a million laughs and a barrel of fun! So, watch for our big full-page official announcement next month, describing the club in detail and containing our first publicly-offered membership coupon! We have a hunch that the ol' M.M.M.S. will be the biggest thing since squirrel tails! But, as always, it's up to you! 'Nuff said!

- (3) A membership card displaying on the front the Marvel seal and the words "The Marvel Age of Comics - 'Nuff Said" and "E. Pluribus Marvel" and "Be it known [with space for the member's signature] is a charter member in good standing of The Merry Marvel Marching Society and is thereby entitled to the adulation and admiration of all lesser mortals! These privileges are non-transferable." Alongside that was space for the signature of the "Grand Marshal, (pro tem)"—"Benj. J. Grimm" (the Thing).

(On the back of the membership card appeared "The Merry Marvel Pledge," which read: "I pledge allegiance to the mags of the Marvel Group, and to the madmen who put them on the stands. One bullpen, understaffed, indistinguishable, with liberty and boo-boos for all." To the right of the pledge was a membership number stamped on the card.)

- (4) A soft vinyl 33 1/3 r.p.m. record which according to the ad featured "the actual voices of the bullpen gang clowning around and welcoming you to the good ol' M.M.M.S.!"

Later, the membership kit would change and include new items. For example, a different record featuring two songs replaced the first record with its voices of the Marvel bullpen. "The Merry Marvel Marching Society Official Scribble Pad," a "Make Mine Marvel" pencil, and thumbnail-size comic books become part of the official kit. A different button replaced the first one, and the membership card was printed on different-colored paper. This new edition cost 69¢, and current members could purchase it for 50¢. That price would later go back up to \$1 for new applicants and 75¢ for current members. Sounds cheap? Remember that regular-sized comic books cost 12¢ in the middle 1960s. So \$1 would have bought you eight comic books. Comparing that to what current regular comics cost would give you an idea of an equivalent cost for today.

Marvel heavily promoted the club. Ads for the Merry Marvel Marching Society appeared inside the comics and even on the covers each month. A frequently used advertisement copied the style of the old Uncle Sam military enlistment recruitment posters, with the Thing looking and pointing directly at the reader above the words "The M.M.M.S. Wants You!"

The Merry Marvel Marching Society

I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER DO IT, EH? WELL, HERE IT IS! AN HONEST-TO-GOSH FAR-OUT FAN CLUB IN THE MIXED-UP MARVEL MANNER! WE TRIED TO MAKE IT EXCITING ENOUGH TO PLEASE A YANCY STREETER, MERRY ENOUGH TO FORCE JONAH JAMESON TO CRACK A SMILE, AND DIFFERENT ENOUGH TO MAKE SUB-MARINER SEND US A DRIPPING-WET DOLLAR. SO IF YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO TELL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN THAT YOU WERE ONE OF THE FIRST TO JOIN, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU MAY NEVER GET A CHANCE LIKE THIS AGAIN! (UNTIL NEXT ISH!) AND, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T TRUST ANYBODY, LOOK! HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL GET...

I BELONG
 THE MERRY MARVEL MARCHING SOCIETY

A WHOLE MESS OF ABSOLUTELY USE-LESS M.M.M.S. STAPLES YOU CAN PASTE ONTO YOUR BOOKCOVERS, ATTACHE CASE OR YOUR STING-RAY! (AND, FOR THE NGITS WHO DON'T APPRECIATE THAT, WE HARECITE THAT READ "HELLO STAMP OUT THE M.M.M.S.")

be it known
 I, a charter member in good standing of
 The Merry Marvel Marching Society
 and in thereby entitled to the adulation
 and admiration of all lesser mortals

WHEN OUR BULLPEN GANG DESIGNS A MEMBERSHIP CARD, WE DON'T KID AROUND! OUR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO MARVEL, WHICH YOU'LL FIND ON THE BACK, IS PROBABLY THE FUNNIEST THING SINCE THOR'S LAST CREW-CUT! NATURALLY, IT'S A GREAT STYLISH SYMBOL, TOO! JUST WAIT A MINUTE NEXT TIME YOU'RE INVITED TO THE PENTAGON, AND WATCH THE TOP BRASS FLIP! (YOU MAY DISCOVER THAT THEY'RE MERRY MARCHERS, TOO!)

FOR THOSE OF YOU LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE FIVE FRANTIC FRIENDS, WE'RE GONNA BREAK OUR HEARTS AND OFFER A REAL BARGAIN! ALL SIX OF YOU CAN JOIN FOR ONLY FIVE DOLLARS! AND BESIDES ALL THE JAZZ MENTIONED ABOVE, WE'LL DESIGNATE THE SIX OF YOU AS AN OFFICIAL M.M.M.S. LOCAL CHAPTER, AND SEND YOU THIS PRACTICALLY PRICELESS MARVEL CERTIFICATE! (IT'S FIVE TIMES THE SIZE YOU SEE HERE!) YOU CAN HANG IT ON YOUR CLUBHOUSE WALL, OR PUT IT SOMEWHERE TOO HIGH TO READ AND TELL EVERYBODY IT'S YOUR DIPLOMA FROM OXFORD! AND, OL' SMILING STAN LEE WILL PERSONALLY AUTOGRAPH EACH AND EVERY CERTIFICATE... JUST TO PROVE HE CAN WRITE!

HERE'S THE GREATEST SURPRISE OF ALL!
 YOU'RE GONNA RECEIVE A FRANKLY FABULOUS 33 1/3 R.P.M. RECORD WITH THE ACTUAL VOICES OF THE BULLPEN GANG CLOWNING AROUND AND WELCOMING YOU TO THE GOOD OL' M.M.M.S.! TALK ABOUT COLLECTOR'S ITEMS... YOU'LL NEVER WANT TO PART WITH IT!

MAKE OUT CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO: MARVEL COMICS GROUP!
 M.M.M.S.
 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
 625 MADISON AVE.
 NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10022

WRITE NICE AND NEAT! WE'LL AWARD A SPECIAL DE LUXE NO-PRIZE FOR THE BEST COUPON WE GET!

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ AGE _____
 SCHOOL, COLLEGE or OCCUPATION _____

'NUFF SAID! F.F.-35

AND WE WON'T FORGET YOU MERRY MARCHERS! IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW THERE'LL BE MORE SURPRISES TO COME!

Count former Marvel staffers amongst the many enthusiastic fans back in the day.

Tony Isabella, a comic book writer and editor who began his career at Marvel in 1972, reports: "Of course, I was a proud member of the Merry Marching Marvel Society. What self-respecting Marvel fan of the 1960s wasn't? Joining the M.M.M.S. and receiving the membership kit was a huge deal for me. Locally, I only had two friends who read comics and that was it. This was even before I had started contributing to comics fanzines. So, all of a sudden, artificial as it might have been, I was part of a community."

Scott Edelman, who worked at Marvel as an editor and writer in the middle 1970s, recalls saving enough dimes, nickels, and pennies to cover the membership kit cost, putting the coins in a Junior Mints box, taping it shut, and mailing that to Marvel to get his M.M.M.S. club kit: "I was nuts for the company. Those orange M.M.M.S. stickers—I put them all over the place. And, early on with the Merry Marvel Marching Society, they used to list members' names in the comics. My name is somewhere in an issue of *Tales of Suspense* with the Titanium Man. I'm in there as 'Scott Edelman from Brooklyn, New York.' It was just the perfect time and I was the perfect age to be in love with the whole Stan Lee image and the Bullpen Bulletins."



Kit And Kaboodle

The M.M.M.M. membership kit, from an Internet photo—complete with the envelope it came in! Popular as the button and stickers were, though, the true hit of the package was the 33 1/3 r.p.m. record that featured the voices of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Flo Steinberg, Sol Brodsky, Artie Simek, Sam Rosen, Wally Wood, et al. *Amazing Spider-Man* artist Steve Ditko declined to participate, so he's treated on the recording as if he's climbed out a window to escape the proceedings—something Mr. D. might well have done, if forced to it! Artie Simek didn't really play his harmonica on the record as Stan recalls later in this article, however. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

And fans responded. In the July 1966 issues, a Marvel Bullpen Bulletin reported that "We haven't had much time to mention it lately, but the ol' MERRY MARVEL MARCHING SOCIETY has so many thousands of members now that we're almost running out of numbers for the flood of new applications that keep pouring in!"

Les Daniels' 1991 coffee-table volume *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics* confirmed the tremendous response, saying that fans joined "in enthusiastic droves when membership application forms were finally published." Stan's "Gal Friday," corresponding secretary Flo Steinberg, was quoted in that book: "Nobody ever expected it to be so big. There were thousands of letters and dollar bills flying all over the place. We were throwing them at each other."

"For this, people paid money," Daniel reported. "In fact, branches of the M.M.M.S. sprang up at hundreds of colleges and universities, including such august institutions as Oxford and Cambridge. Lee never presented the M.M.M.S. as anything more than a lot of foolishness, but apparently this very quality made it a big success. And significantly, this fan club was not for just one character, but for an entire line of comics."

"You have to remember," says Mark Evanier, who has written for both comics and TV and has authored several books, "at that time, especially when the Merry Marvel Marching Society started, we didn't really have comic conventions. We didn't really have much access to Stan, Jack, Johnny Romita, and people like that. So any little thing that brought you a notch closer to the people who did the comics was kind of a thrilling thing. I think it was definitely a neat thing to have around."



The Second Time Around

The cover of the second M.M.M.S. record (which featured recorded songs, including the "I Belong" anthem, instead of the Bullpen) overlays a hero-laden "scribble pad." The art on the record was probably the work of then production staffer Marie Severin. [© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

“I Kept All The Comic Book Stuff In A Separate File”

An Interview With The Very Versatile ED SILVERMAN

Conducted 3-29-10 & Transcribed by Shaun Clancy

A/E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *Ed Silverman is, as per the bio contained in his memoir Brief Encounters with the Famous, the Near*

Famous and the Not So Famous, “a distinguished broadcast journalist and documentarian.” That is actually a bit of an understatement when applied to a man who has won 11 Emmy Awards, the Freedom Foundation Award, the Albert Lasker Foundation Award for Medical Journalism, and various other accolades over the years. Among his most notable broadcasts for ABC radio (and later television), he was the first on the air for that network about the November 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, served as network pool correspondent at Guantanamo during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, anchored the Man in Space broadcasts, covered the March on Washington and the admission of African-American James Meredith to the University of Mississippi, was beaten and tear-gassed during the ensuing riots, covered the trial of Lee Harvey Oswald murderer Jack Ruby, and participated in many other major journalistic moments. He has won numerous industry awards, and in the 1970s he served in the administrations of New York City mayors John V. Lindsay, Abe Beam, and Ed Koch.

His career at ABC radio began with his becoming writer, producer, and on-air reporter-interviewer for Bill Stern's Sports Today nightly network program,

and they had a long (and, as you'll see, tumultuous) relationship. He was also teamed later with another sports-broadcasting legend, Howard Cosell. Hence the unusual amount of space devoted to the following interview to sports, not ordinarily a center of focus in this magazine.

In the early 1950s, Ed Silverman also wrote material for a number of comic books... and we are pleased to welcome him to the pages of Alter Ego....

“Ed Cronin Wrote Back A Note...”

SHAUN CLANCY: *The Who's Who in American Comic Books 1928-1999 website, which attempts to list all the people who ever worked in comics, does not list your name in it as a contributor. Did you use a different name when writing for comics?*

ED SILVERMAN: *No, no... I submitted my work under my own name. I did work for both Ziff-Davis and Hillman.*

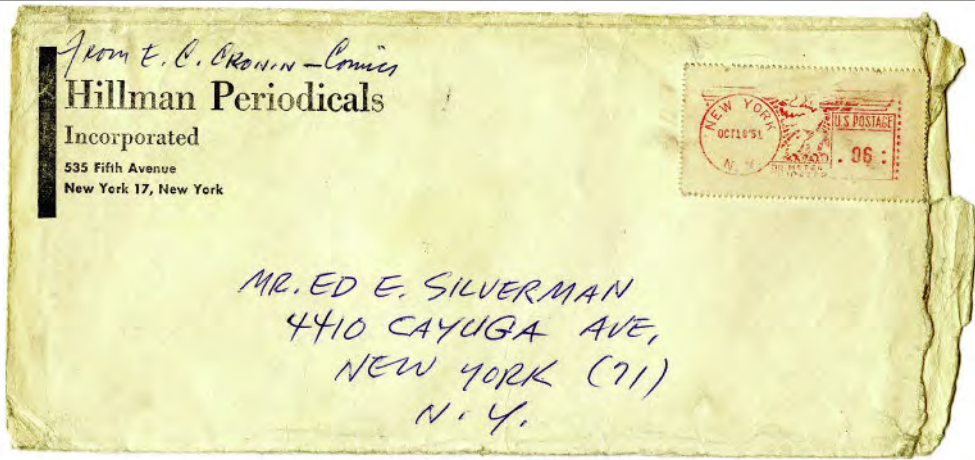


Silverman, Stern, & Sports Comics

Ed Silverman, seen a few years back amid his many honors and awards—flanked by two moments associated with mid-20th-century sports-broadcasting megastar Bill Stern, of whom more in the course of this interview: a photo of the two radio-men on the air (Ed's on our left) and the splash page of one of probably several stories he scripted for Ziff-Davis' comic *Bill Stern's Sports Book #2* (Summer 1952). Photos courtesy of Shaun Clancy & Ed Silverman.

[Page © 1952 Approved Comics, Inc.]

The artist of “Man o' War – Saga of a Champion” in *BSSB #2* is uncertain (the Grand Comics Database has only skeletal info on the issue); but Silverman says he was the writer. The portrait of Stern, which appeared on every cover and splash panel of all three issues, was done by a different illustrator, perhaps Gerard McCann or Everett Raymond Kinstler, both of whom drew material for the interiors of Ziff-Davis comics. Splash page repro'd from a bound volume of Z-D issues on loan from one-time Z-D editor Herb Rogoff.



10-18-51

Dear Ed -

We can't use this story as it is - But IT'S A VERY GOOD YARN - And Here's what I'd like you to do with it: -

I'd like you to make a regular picture story of it - about 5 pages in length - I'll pay you \$8⁰⁰ per page. Three panels on page #1 (The Splash which starts the story, plus two following panels) - then 4 more pages of 6 or 7 panels per page, preferably 6 panels - This would make good 5 page picture story and I'd like to have it. Keep copy short - don't use any more captions than necessary. I like this yarn - so please let me know if you're willing to do this -

See you - Ed Cronin
Hillman

Cronin The Adventurer

It was Hillman Periodicals comics editor Ed Cronin who bought Ed Silverman's first actual comic book story. For Vol. 2 of the recent PS Artbooks hardcover collection *Roy Thomas Presents The Heap*, erstwhile cartoonist Herb Rogoff—who edited comics in the early 1950s for both Hillman and Ziff-Davis—drew this caricature of his Hillman boss. This "recollection," he says, will give modern readers some notion of what Cronin looked like: "I do know that his collar, tie, and the pin are all accurate. The rest of him is, after 60+ years, what I came up with." Since no photos of Cronin are known by us to exist, Herb, we're glad you did! [© 2013 Herb Rogoff.]

Also depicted are the Cronin letter that Ed quotes elsewhere on this page—and a Hillman envelope sent from Cronin to Silverman on Oct. 10, 1951. Thanks to Shaun Clancy & Ed.

He was always in the market for new writers or new ideas. I made a submission, and his boss Ed Cronin liked the stuff. The first thing I submitted to them was one of those one-page fillers, which was a narrative rather than a picture story.

SC: You mean those 1- or 2-page text stories you find in the middle of comics that get comic books classified as media postage?

SILVERMAN: Right, and they always had a need for those fillers. When I submitted the first one, Ed Cronin wrote back a note. I have it right here. It's dated "10-18-51" in green ink, and it reads: "Dear Ed, We can't use the story as it is. It's a very good yarn [which he underlined], and here's what I'd like you to do with it. I'd like you to make a regular picture story of it [he underlined the word "picture"] about 5 pages in length. I'll pay you \$8 per page, 3 panels on page 1. The splash, which starts the story, plus 2 panels then 4 more pages of 6 or 7 panels per page, preferably 6 panels [which he underlined]. This would make a good 5-page picture story and I'd like to have it. Keep copy short [underlined the word "short"]. Don't use any more captions than necessary. I like this yarn [all underlined], so please let me know if you are willing to do this. See you, Ed Cronin." As you can see, he was being instructive and not critical.

SC: Do you remember the yarn he speaks of? Was it sports-related?

SILVERMAN: No, it wasn't a sports story. I think it was a spy story.

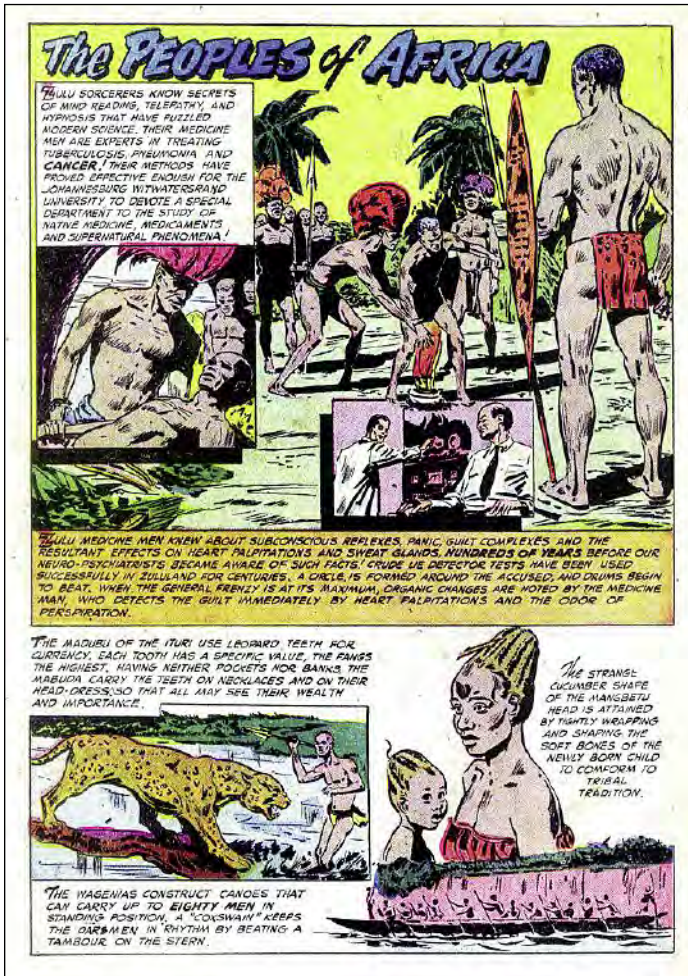
SC: You're probably the only person who still has anything written by Ed Cronin left, and you found it in less than five minutes in all your stuff, thinking today was going to be an interview on your radio career. Amazing.

SILVERMAN: I kept all the comic book stuff in a separate file, as I have closets full of stuff. I've been going through trying to clean it out. I'm not getting any younger, so I figured I might as well start now.

SC: Did you ever submit work to any other comic book publishers and maybe not have it published?

SILVERMAN: I did some early submissions to Will Lieberson over at Fawcett, but there was a little family conflict of interest, so I decided I didn't want to get involved with them. Will Lieberson was the husband of my first wife's cousin, and I didn't want to get into that favored-family position where I would owe him favors.

My relation with Herb Rogoff had been one of working together professionally at *Sports-Week*. Later, when Herb was editing for comic books, I would work mostly through him. We stayed in touch after *Sports-Week*, and he later suggested that I work for him.



Ed Silverman Goes Wild, Boy

(Top left:) Silverman wrote the one-page feature "The Peoples of Africa" for Ziff-Davis' *Wild Boy* #7 (Aug.-Sept. 1952). Artist unknown. Thanks to Rod Beck.

(Top right:) One of the scripts Ed has retained from his comics-writing days is that for "Joe Barton" story "The Big Hunt," intended for *Wild Boy* #4. The tale is one of a number of comics yarns over the years which were loosely based on Richard Connell's famous short story "The Most Dangerous Game." Thanks to Ed Silverman & Shaun Clancy.

(Right:) Publication of this story was delayed till #9 (Oct. 1953), which happened to be the first issue published after Z-D exited the comics biz and sold its inventory to St. John Publications, which added "of the Congo" to the title. The artist is none other than Carmine Infantino, who at the time seems to have been influenced to some degree by the work of Bernard Krigstein. Thanks to Jim Kealy for this page. [© 1953 the respective copyright holders.]

SILVERMAN: It was a combination of both. When Ed Cronin was running things [at Hillman], I knew he used to love things like spy stories and crime stories, stuff with unusual twists. The thing that still makes crime stories popular today is the twist endings.

SC: Ziff-Davis was very into publishing pulp magazines at that time, so did you also write for pulp magazines?

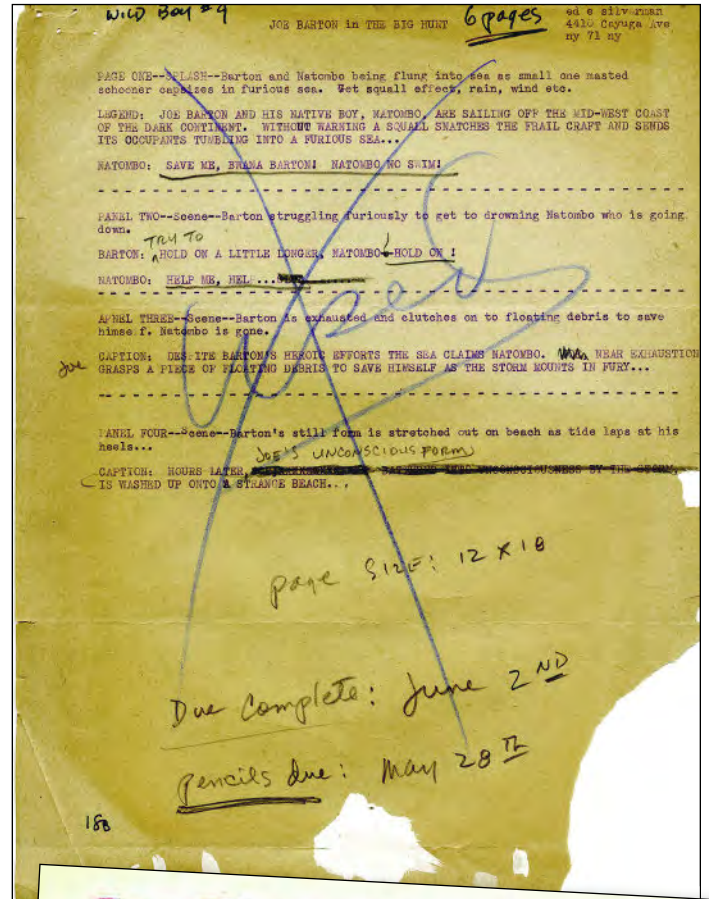
SILVERMAN: No.

SC: Did your family know you were writing for comics?

SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, sure, although I didn't advertise the fact too much.

SC: How did you meet your wife?

SILVERMAN: We were introduced by a cousin of mine who was in





HARVEY KURTZMAN, THE MASTERMIND BEHIND *MAD*, *FRONTLINE COMBAT*, *HELP!*, *TWO-FISTED TALES*, *TRUMP*, *HUMBUG*, AND *LITTLE ANNIE FANNY*, DIED ON FEBRUARY 21, 1993, AT AGE 68. HOWEVER, HIS CREATIVITY CONTINUED TO INFLUENCE GENERATIONS OF CARTOONISTS, AS WE'LL DISCOVER IN...

THE MEN WHO WOULD BE

KURTZMAN!

(PART 2)



Kurtzman Remembered

(Above:) Harvey Kurtzman, as seen in *Frontline Combat* #6 (May-June 1952). [©1952 William M. Gaines Agent, Inc.]

(Right:) Paul Guinan's Kurtzman tribute, from the 1993 San Diego Comic-Con program book. [©1993 Paul Guinan & Anna Bennett.]

1993, THE BATTLEFIELD. IT WAS A DARK DAY WHEN WORD WAS RECEIVED OF THE PASSING OF A HERO OF A SMALL PLATOON. BUT THEY KNEW THEY HAD TO CARRY ON, FOR THEY WEREN'T ANY ORDINARY FEMALE FIGHTING FORCE, THEY WERE THE...

HEARTBREAKERS!



IN MEMORY OF HARVEY Kurtzman '13 HEARTBREAKERS ©1989, 1993 PAUL GUINAN & ANNA BENNETT - AS SEEN IN D.H.P.

The Men Who Would Be Kurtzman (Part 2)!

by Michael T. Gilbert

Last issue we discussed Harvey Kurtzman's enormous influence on his peers—specifically Russ Heath, who drew for Kurtzman's *Mad* and *Two-Fisted Tales*. When asked if he liked working from Kurtzman's layouts, Heath replied: "Oh, I loved them. In fact, I'm sure some of his style even came out in my drawings." Kurtzman definitely inspired dozens of '50s-'60s-era writers and artists, including his two former *Help!* assistants, filmmaker Terry Gilliam and feminist icon Gloria Steinem.

But Kurtzman's pop-culture legacy continued far beyond the *Mad Men* era. Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Art Spiegelman, and Greg Irons were part of a whole generation of kids who grooved on his *Mad*, *Humbug*, *Trump*, and *Help!*, along with his gritty war stories in EC's *Frontline Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales*.

Using humor, Harvey taught those kids to distrust what the doctors, politicians, or Madison Avenue shills were selling. In the '60s, underground cartoonists took Kurtzman's lessons to heart and comically excoriated mainstream American culture. Chief among them was Robert Crumb, possibly Kurtzman's number one fan.



(Above:) R. Crumb's Kurtzman tribute from *Harvey Kurtzman's Strange Adventures* (Byron Preiss Visual Publications, 1990). [Art ©1990 R. Crumb.]

The Crumb Connection!

As a kid growing up in the '50s, creative Crumb was drowning in a sea of conformity, until Kurtzman threw him a lifeline—*Mad* comics.

"The covers of *Mad* no. 11 and *Humbug* no. 2 changed way I saw the world forever!" said Crumb. "Even though I've made a name in my own right, I still feel like a worshipful fanboy."

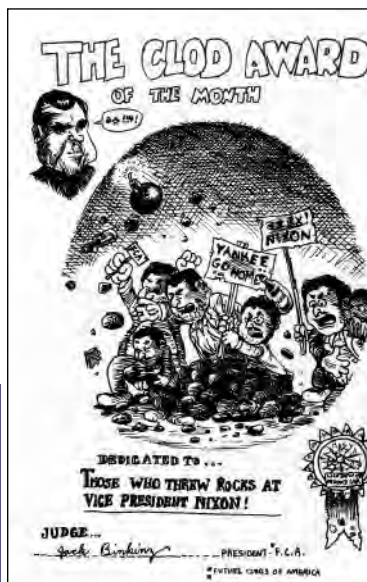
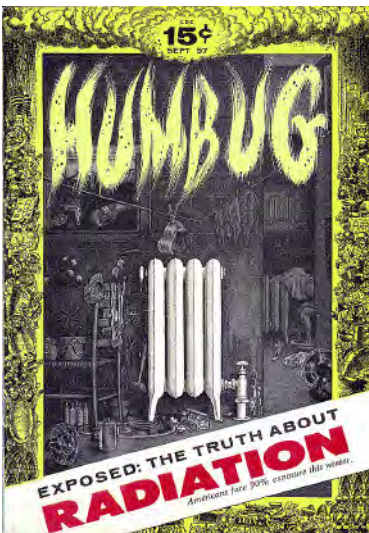
Kurtzman's hilariously cynical

Bah, Humbug!

(Left:) Crumb found Basil Wolverton's *Mad* #11 cover (May 1954) and Bill Elder & Jack Davis' *Humbug* #2 (Sept. 1957) a pair of real eye-openers! [*Mad* cover art ©1954 E.C. Publications; *Humbug* cover ©1957 the respective copyright holders.]

Love Note!

world view reaffirmed Crumb's own dark suspicions about how the world really worked. His influence on Crumb is plain, particularly on *Foo*, a fanzine Crumb published as a kid with his older brother Charles. Many of its stories were thinly-disguised swipes of Kurtzman features, such as their "Clod Award"—a variation of



The Sincerest Form of Flattery!

(Above left:) Brothers Charles and Robert Crumb published this "Clod Award" page in *Foo* #2 (Oct. 1958), imitating Kurtzman's "Humbug Award." (Above right:) This Arnold Roth drawing appeared in *Humbug* #2 (Sept. 1957). [*Foo* art ©1958 R. Crumb & Estate of Charles Crumb; *Humbug* art ©1957 the respective copyright holders.]

Spotlight On BILL SCHELLY – Part II

Alter Ego's Associate Editor's Own Panel At San Diego Comic-Con 2011

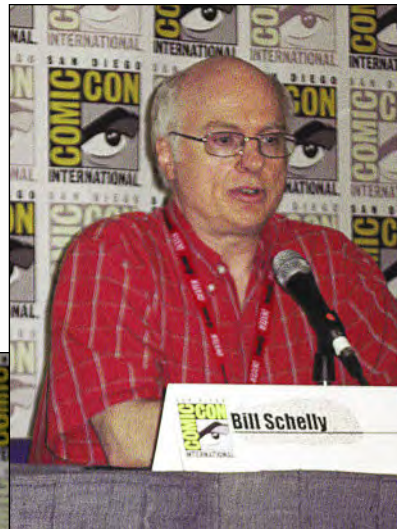
Panel/Interview Conducted by Gary Brown

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

INTERVIEWEE'S NOTE: *This piece, the second half of the "Bill Schelly Panel" held at the San Diego Comic-Con in July 2011, represents the conclusion of our year-long coverage of the major events related to that Con's "50th Anniversary of Comic Fandom" celebration. Last issue's installment dealt with my early comic book reading experience, my discovery of comic fandom, my time away from the hobby and return in 1990. I also recounted the publication of my first book, a biography of silent film comedian Harry Langdon, and the "origin story" of my book The Golden Age of Comic Fandom, from its humble beginnings as contributions to the comics amateur press alliance (apa-zine) CAPA-Alpha to its being self-published under my Hamster Press banner. —Bill.*

GARY BROWN: *Was the Hamster Press experience a good one for you? Would you recommend somebody going into self-publishing if they had no other alternative?*

BILL SCHELLY: It was most definitely a good experience for me. It allowed me to get *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom* and other fandom history books in print when no established publishers were interested. Would I recommend it? [chuckles] These days, I'd tell people that self-publishing in the print arena, as I did, has gotten much more difficult. For one thing, the cost of paper has gone up. The second thing is, when I began 20 years ago, I got a special, very low discount from Diamond Distributing. Then, too, people tell me it's more difficult to get your product into the Diamond catalog if you are a new, small publisher. For me, the 1990s was a unique moment in time when I could do it, and only because I was fine with just breaking even. If you have an idea, go for it, but these days I would suggest either "print on demand"—where books are only printed when an order comes in—or digital publishing. Also, it's much easier to get published digitally than in a hardcopy book. You can start at square one with something online, and if you generate enough interest, then consider a print edition if you feel that's important. A lot of young people, and not-so-young people, are perfectly happy with digital-only publishing. That avenue wasn't available to me when I started. If you want to write, or draw, or whatever, I encourage you to pursue it and consider all avenues. Like I said before, "make



A Splash Panel

Photos of Gary Brown (left) and Bill Schelly at the Bill Schelly panel at the San Diego Comic-Con, July 2011. Thanks to Aaron Caplan.

something happen," because no one will do it for you.

GB: *If I'm not mistaken, the next two projects were The Best of Alter Ego and The Best of Star-Studded.*

SCHELLY: Well, no, they came in this order: First was *Fandom's Finest Comics*, which reprinted a lot of the best amateur strips from the professionally printed fanzines like *Star-Studded Comics* and *Fantasy Illustrated*. Then came *Alter Ego: The Best of the Legendary Comics Fanzine*, co-edited with Roy. We are working on a sequel to that one right now. There was a second volume of *Fandom's Finest Comics*, and later the *Comic Fandom Reader* and the *Best of Star-Studded Comics*. Um.... I might be forgetting something.

GB: *You also published some comic books, didn't you?*

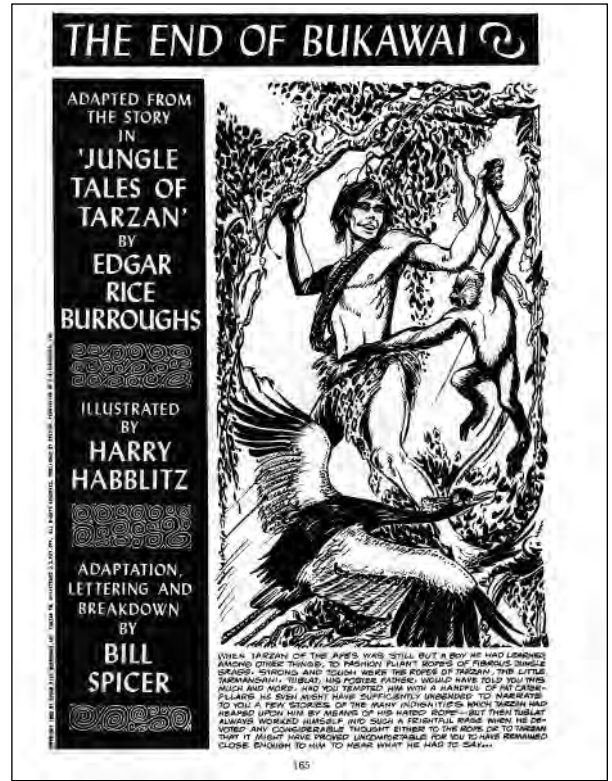
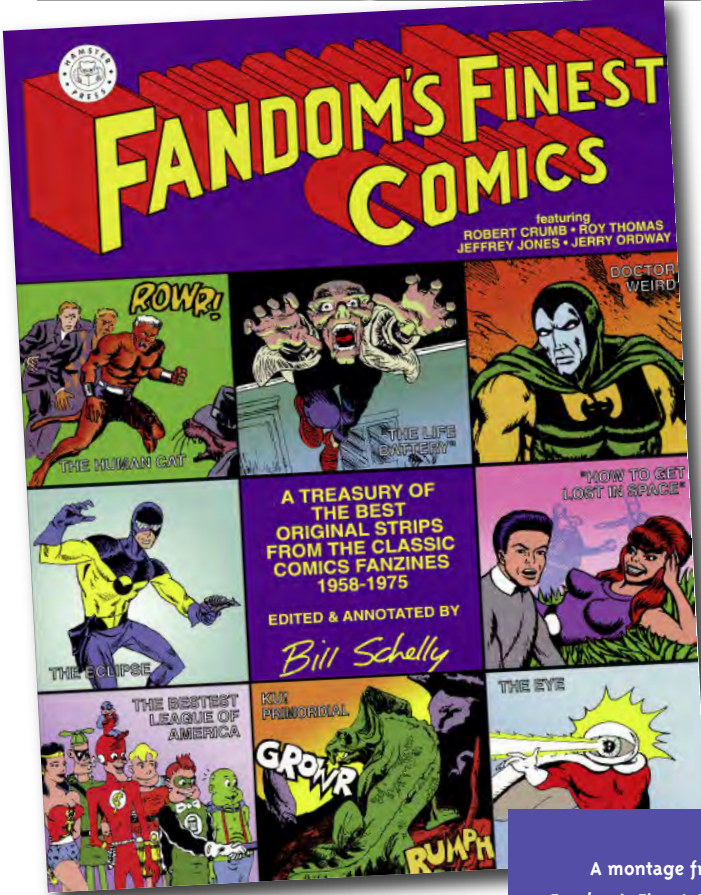
SCHELLY: Yes! I did publish two black-&-white comic books. One was *The Eye #1* with my own take on Biljo White's fandom character, and *Heroes Vs. Hitler*, which brought a whole bunch of those heroes together. Roy had a hand in that one, as he did in several of my books. I got to have my pencils inked by Dick Giordano on *Heroes Vs. Hitler*, which was a real thrill. He sure made me look good! (I also wrote an homage to the Finger-Moldoff "Robin Dies at Dawn" for Image around the same time, and that was the extent of my "pro" comics work.) Let's see... I wrote a fannish memoir called *Sense of Wonder: A Life in Comic Fandom*, which was published

by TwoMorrows. I think there are about 10 books in all about fandom. And, um.... where were we? [chuckles]

GB: *Well, then came the biography of Otto Binder, certainly one of the legendary writers.*

SCHELLY: Oh, yeah. I started working on the Binder biography around the time we hit year 2000. It was, like the fandom books, a real labor of love.





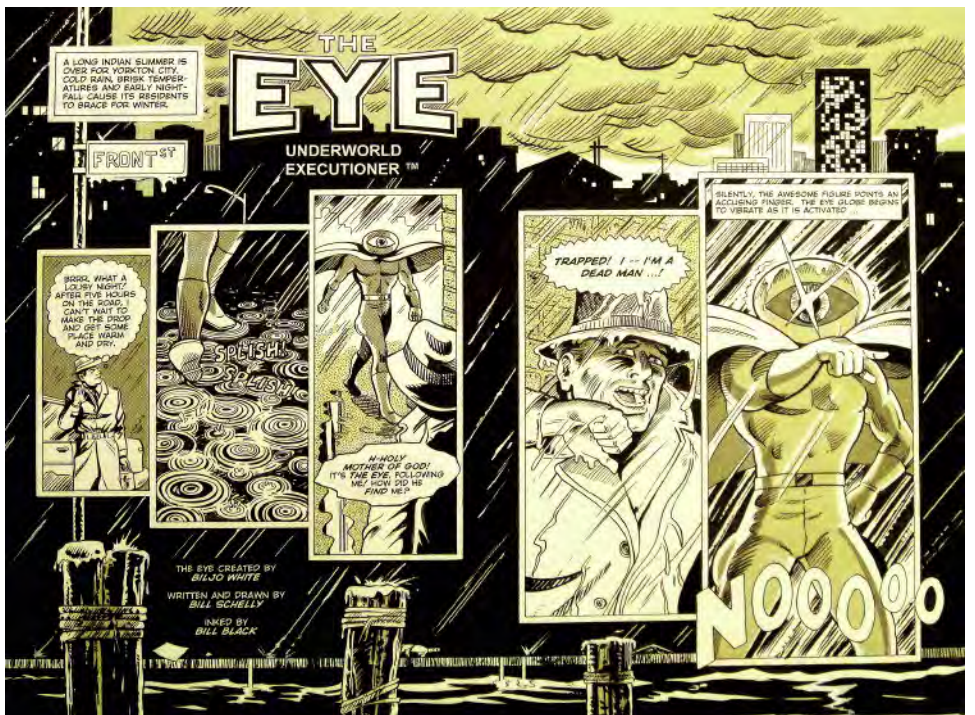
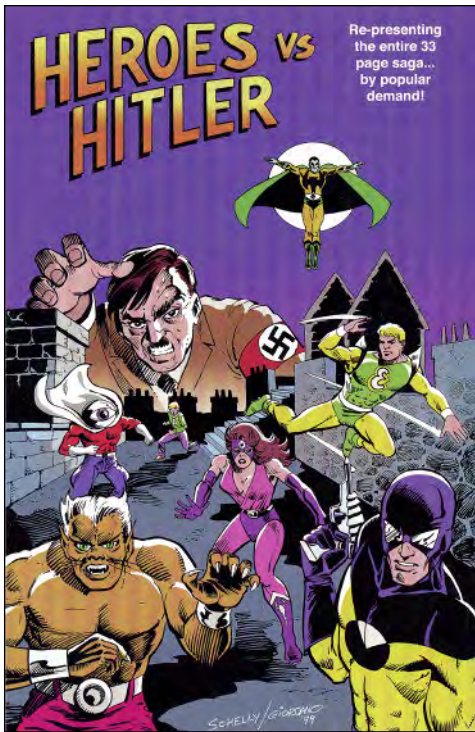
The Fandom Menace

A montage from a few of Bill Schelly's Hamster Press publications. (Clockwise from top left:) *Fandom's Finest Comics* [Vol. 1], which reprinted amateur strips from several fanzines, including *Star-Studded Comics* and *Alter Ego*. [Art ©1997 the respective copyright holders.]

One of "fandom's finest" amateur comics is an adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "The End of Bukawai" in the book *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*. It was reprinted in *FFC VI* from *Fantasy Illustrated* #3 (1965) with the permission of Danton Burroughs. The story was adapted by editor/publisher Bill Spicer and illustrated by Harry Habblitz. [©1965 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.]

The opening sequence of *The Eye* #1 (Summer 1999), penciled by Bill Schelly and inked by Bill Black, featuring the hero created by Biljo White. [©1999 Bill Schelly.]

Art penciled by Bill and inked by Dick Giordano, from the centerfold of *Heroes vs. Hitler* (2000). It starred some of the best of fandom-created heroes. [Character art ©2000 the respective copyright holders; other art ©2000 Bill Schelly & Estate of Dick Giordano.]



P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA 

Fawcett Collectors of America

#179

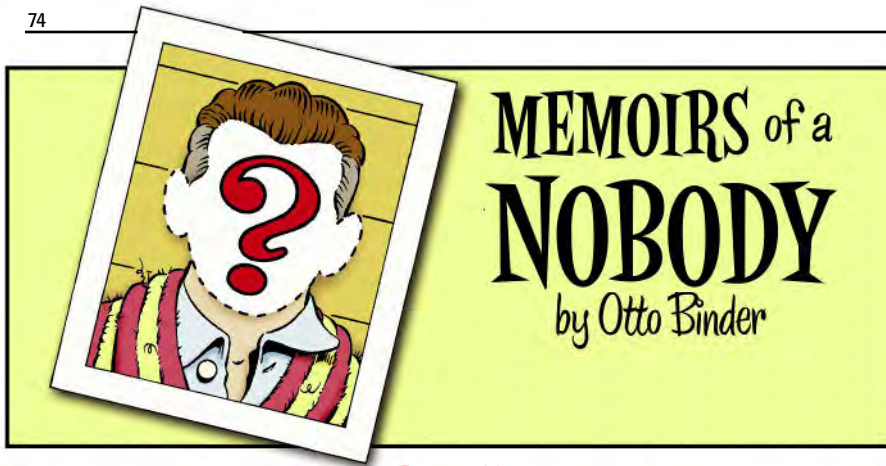
September 2013

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



SHAZAM

Artwork by Jesse Rubinfeld [jesserubinfeld.net]; Shazam hero! TM & © DC Comics; other art © 2013 Jesse Rubinfeld.



Part II

Abridged & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

Otto Oscar Binder (1911-1974), the prolific science-fiction and comic book writer renowned for authoring over half of the Marvel Family saga for Fawcett Publications between the early 1940s and 1953, wrote *Memoirs of a Nobody* in 1948 at the age of 37, during what was arguably the most imaginative period of his repertoire of “Captain Marvel” stories.

Aside from intermittent details about himself, Binder’s capricious chronicle resembles very little in the way of anything that is indeed autobiographical. Unearthed several years ago from Binder’s file materials at Texas A&M University, *Memoirs* is self-described by its author as “ramblings through the untracked wilderness of my mind.” Binder’s potpourri of stray philosophical beliefs, pet peeves, theories, and anecdotes were written in freewheeling fashion and manifestly devoid of any charted course—other than allowing his mind to flow with no restricting parameters. The abridged manuscript—serialized here in the pages of FCA—will nonetheless provide glimpses into the idiosyncratic and fanciful mind of Otto O. Binder.

In our first excerpt, presented last issue, Otto offered up a prologue to his memoir before going into how he felt about his own name. (He hated it.) In this second installment, he begins to delve into the pages of comic books. —P.C. Hamerlinck.

The Modern Pied Piper

My writing, as I mentioned before, has been the so-called pulps and comics. The mood is upon me to tell you something about the comics. Some behind-the-scenes facts.

By comics I refer specifically to all those dime magazines so dear to the hearts of the young. Of course, they are only for the young. Hardly anybody over 93 reads them.

The comics are a strange phenomenon that has suddenly sprung upon the American scene, no longer than ten years ago or so. The colorful, invincible heroes were an overnight sensation, and like mushrooms, a host more of mighty adventurers arose, fighting crime and evil. Why their amazing popularity among the small fry? What magic in them has so bewitched the kids that some of the comics magazines sell up to a million copies each and every month of each and every year?

I’ve tried to analyze it myself. The comics, of course, are stories told in pictures, and that’s part of the secret. Stories told in attractive colors and active figures are much more alive and vital, in their impact on the mind, than plain unadorned words. Confucius say: one picture worth thousand words.

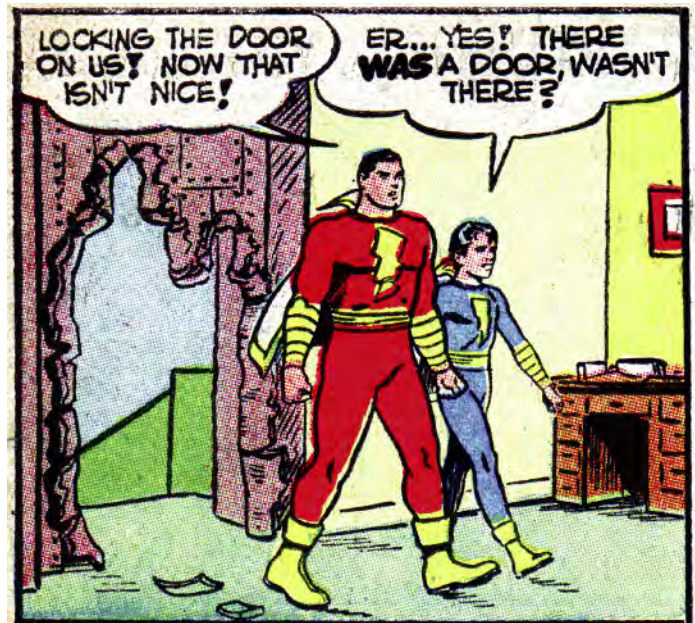
In a sense, the comics are movie stills, and so partake of the great popularity of the motion picture. Very often, the writer of the comics script says, in his instructions to the artist: “Shoot camera at an angle, looking down on hero from above as he battles the villain.” We are simply using a movie term to indicate to the artist how he should present the scene, as if he were behind a camera.

But this still doesn’t quite account for the tremendous appetite which children have for the comics, almost as if they had been starved of such fare, and could now eat their fill. So I make the point that the comics are *modern fairy tales*. Such old-time fairy tales as the Grimm and Anderson classics, the Mother Goose rhymes, and such, had really become a bit passé to modern kids. They dealt with medieval times, ogres and witches and what not, which to our kids today, in this scientific age, is pretty much old hat.

So when along came the modern “fairy tale,” whose hero was knight, sorcerer, giant, and genius all rolled into one quite human form, wearing a gaudy costume, the kids went for it hook-line-and-sinker. The comics hero is just as fantastic and unbelievable as any classic fairy tale character, but he has the one advantage of living in present times and dealing with on-the-spot crimes and evil. As such, the youngster can identify himself with the hero much more so than he could identify himself with Prince Charming riding a white horse through some dank forest of long ago.

So much for why they’re popular.

To take up another phase, some people and organized groups are against the comics as proper food for young and impressionable minds. They claim the child’s mind becomes so crammed



Open Door Policy

Our late longtime *Alter Ego* comrade, artist Marc Swayze, whose life and 100th birthday we celebrated last issue, drew Captain Marvel Jr. only twice during his comics career: once, in the background on the cover of *Wow Comics* #9 (Jan. 6, 1943)... and, as shown in the example above, within Mary Marvel’s origin story written by Otto O. Binder for *Captain Marvel Adventures* #18 (Dec. 1942). “The colorful, invincible heroes were an overnight sensation,” Binder affirms in this issue’s chapter of *Memoirs of a Nobody*. [Shazam characters TM & © DC Comics.]

Home Is Where The Thunder Is

The Roadway To Capt. Marvel Junior's Residence

by Don Ensign

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

Introduction

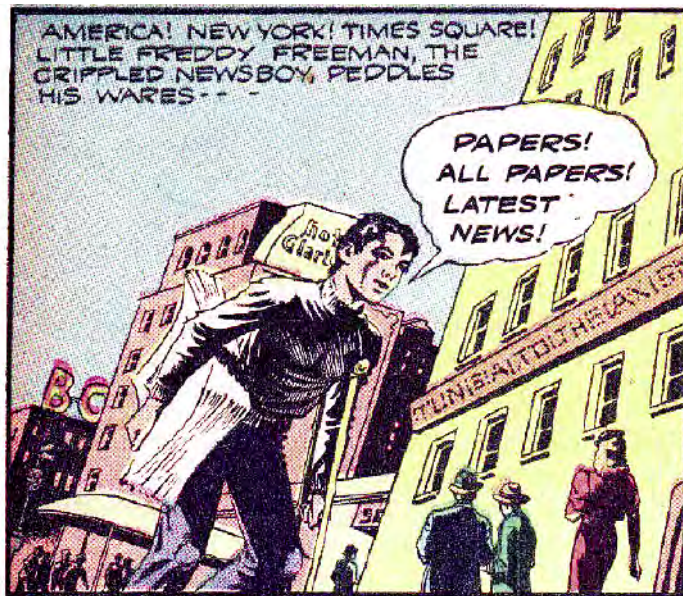
Freddy Freeman's home town was often constructed with many clues of its identity littered within his stories. But where exactly did Freddy and The World's Mightiest Boy call home?

The city where Freddy Freeman had his residence and newsstand business was not actually pinpointed in the vast majority of the "Captain Marvel Jr." stories. Perhaps the writers deliberately didn't want to call out a specific location that Freddy and Captain Marvel Jr. claimed as their home base... or Fawcett editors could have conceivably determined that their young readers may have wanted to claim Junior for their own home town. Therefore, while the creative team at Fawcett may not have had a specific city in mind, they did nevertheless leave some subtle (as well as overt) hints about the city that Marvel Jr. lived in and protected. Superman and Batman had their fictional Metropolis and Gotham City, both of which were based on New York City and other large American and even international cities. In the 1960s, Stan Lee based his Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Avengers, and other characters squarely in New York City.

The Big Apple

New York City was the specific site of a number of Captain Marvel Junior's early exploits. The World's Mightiest Boy was in NYC to battle Captain Nazi and twice repelled a German aerial bombing attack on the Big Apple (*Master Comics* #34; *All Hero Comics* #1). Junior confronted the "Marble Madness" that sent huge animated stone statues rampaging down Fifth Avenue, near the Natural History Museum and NYC's harbor (*Master* #41); Freddy Freeman was also seen in the tale hawking newspapers in the city. CM Jr. battled a giant Nazi super-soldier in the streets of NYC, where again Freddy "peddles his wares..." (*Master* #42). Captain Nazi abducted a patient from a NYC hospital and took him to Baffin Land (*Captain Marvel Jr.* #12), where Junior confronted the super-Aryan. Freddy met a telepathic penguin at the New York Aquarium in Battery Park before embarking to Antarctica (*Master* #44).

It is important to understand that Freddy Freeman and Captain Marvel Jr. were more mobile during the wartime, visiting many locations and cities both in the U.S. and overseas. The Standard Oil Refinery was one location for a story from 1944 (*CMJr* #17), most likely based on the current Bayway Refinery in Linden, New Jersey, near the New York City metro area. Again in '44, we found the crippled newsboy peddling papers in NYC in "The Indian Braves of Wall Street" (*CMJr* #20). Freddy and a friend became involved with a steamboat race up the Hudson River (*CMJr* #22). Freddy was in NYC in a mid-1946 story (*CMJr* #43) wherein his alter ego battled Dr. Encyclo and his beasts. Later, Freddy raised funds to build the "Metropolis Hospital" (*CMJr* #46). A ruthless Wall Street businessman used any means to wrestle control of land containing a valuable oil deposit from a company in which Freddy owned stock (*CMJr* #55). This story could've either taken place in New York or neighboring Pennsylvania.



I'll Take Manhattan

New York City was the unambiguous locale of numerous "Captain Marvel Jr." wartime-era escapades. Here, Freddy Freeman "peddles his wares" around Times Square in a tale from *Master Comics* #42 (Sept. 1943; art by Mac Raboy) in which CM Jr. clashed with a giant Nazi super-soldier named Woton in the streets of NYC. Art by Mac Raboy. Scripter unknown.

[Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

While New York City was the site of some of Junior's adventures during the war years, it wasn't necessarily his home base. In 1949, Freddy and his landlady, Mrs. Wagner, visited NYC (*Master* #107), where CMJr stopped Sivana Jr. from hijacking the Statue of Liberty. This story indicated that, from at least by the middle of 1947, Freddy was living and working outside of New York City. (Freddy officially moved into Mrs. Wagner's Boarding House in *CMJr* #52, Aug. 1947.)

The Philadelphia Stories

Over the course of the "Captain Marvel Jr." series, we are told a number of things about Freddy's metropolis. The city where he lived had a Chinatown (*Marvel Family* #24; *MF* #27), a science museum (*CMJr* #68), a casino (*CMJr* #68), a zoo (*CMJr* #35; *CMJr* #51; *MF* #53), and a Natural History Museum that the ancient villain Greybeard tried to rob (*CMJr* #37). Freddy sold newspapers at a train terminal (*Master* #68), at a trolley track, and on a college campus in the city (*Master* #85). The anonymous city also had an ice hockey team (*MF* #3), a major airport (*CMJr* #80), skyscrapers (*Master* #71; *CMJr* #46), a concert hall (*CMJr* #43), a "Whiffanys" jewelry store (*CMJr* #50), an observatory at the city college (*CMJr* #97), and a horse-racing track (*CMJr* #92); and there was an Avon Theater in Freddy's neighborhood (*CMJr* #44; #54; #64; #69). (An Avon Theater existed in Philadelphia from 1924-56.)

There are key items that point to one certain city as being Freddy Freeman's home. The city is an ocean port with a water-

A Beautiful Rut

An Interview With Mac Raboy Assistant WILLIAM "RED" MOHLER

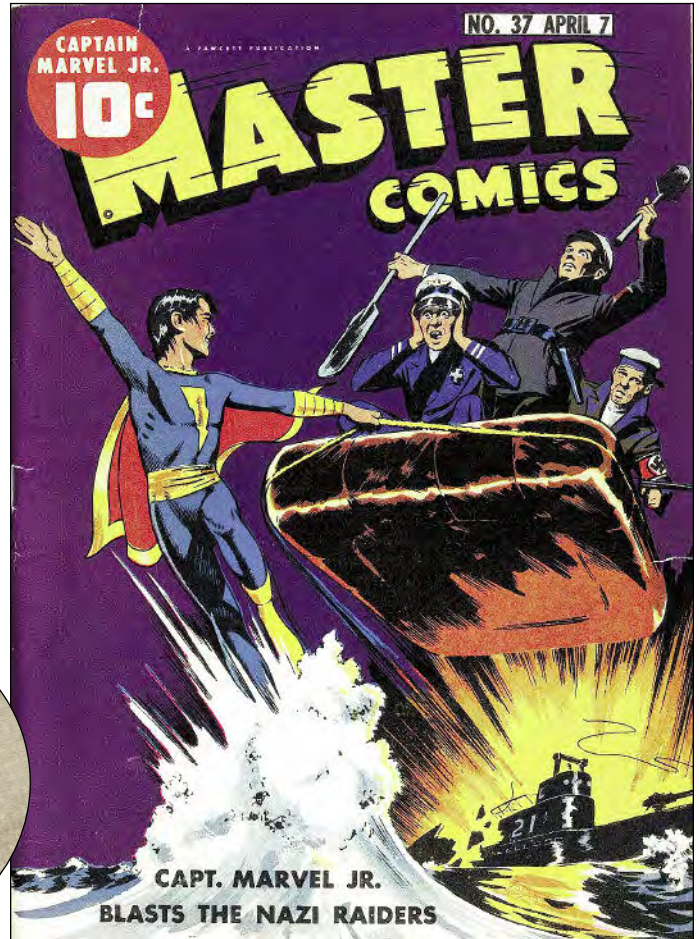
by John G. Pierce

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

The majestic and meticulous artwork of celebrated "Captain Marvel Junior" artist Emmanuel "Mac" Raboy frequently required assistants to smooth the progress towards completing comic book art pages starring the World's Mightiest Boy. The principal artists who lent their support to Raboy at Fawcett Publications during the 1940s included Bob Rogers (nee Rubin Zubofsky), Gene MacDonald, and William "Red" Mohler, whom FCA correspondent John Pierce interviewed back in the mid-1970s after discovering that he and the artist resided in the same county. The outcome of their conversation is published here for the first time. Unfortunately, we were unable to come up with a photo of "Red" Mohler. Mohler's birth and death dates are not known; the entry for him in the online Who's Who in American Comic Books 1928-1999 contains no information except that he is alleged to have worked for the B.W. Sangor comic art shop in 1946. —PCH.

JOHN PIERCE: Could you give us a brief rundown of your career in comics?

"RED" MOHLER: In December of 1942, I was hired on a six-month trial basis as an inker for Mac Raboy. I worked with Mac only on "Captain Marvel Junior." We worked in a main room. C.C. Beck, who had a large staff, was in the next room. The draft kept people coming and going. Gene MacDonald and I were hired on the same day. I was fired six months later. Raboy left and opened an office. Gene and I went with him. He started branching out. At Fawcett, there were 15-18 people in a room, doing paste-ups on *True* and other magazines. Mac, Gene, and I were in a corner. We did relatively few scripts, perhaps one per month.



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Up, Up, And Anchors Away!

The lifting cover to *Master Comics* #37 (April 1943), just one of the many masterworks artist Mac Raboy (seen in photo) created during wartime at Fawcett Publications while working on "Captain Marvel Junior." William "Red" Mohler, one of the two artists hired at the same time to assist Raboy, said that he and Gene MacDonald were asked to learn to draw like Mac "...but there was no way!" The photo of Raboy was seen in full in the *FCA* section of *A/E* V3#6 back in 2000, courtesy of Roger Hill. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

In an attempt to locate a photo of Mohler, Roy Thomas e-mailed Roger, who had written about Raboy and his assistants in the aforementioned issue of *A/E*, and informed him of this upcoming interview. His response: "Wow, I didn't know anyone had ever talked with 'Red' Mohler; in fact, I don't think I ever knew his first name was William. I wasn't aware of his contributions to Fawcett Comics until either Bob Rogers or Gene MacDonald mentioned his name to me. But neither of those guys had photos of 'Red.' I tried to track down 'Red' many years ago but never could find him (because I didn't have that first name)...."

"Oh, someone told me along the way that 'Red' was married to a woman named Helen, nicknamed 'Duffy,' Mohler. I got a listing on her over 15 years ago, living in New York City, and called her phone number countless times, only to get an answering machine. I left many messages on her machine, but she never called back. I eventually gave up, assuming she just didn't want to talk about those days. I tried the number again a few years ago and it was disconnected. I think she's probably gone now, like most of those folks. Too bad. Good luck on it, Roy."