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Alter Ego™

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
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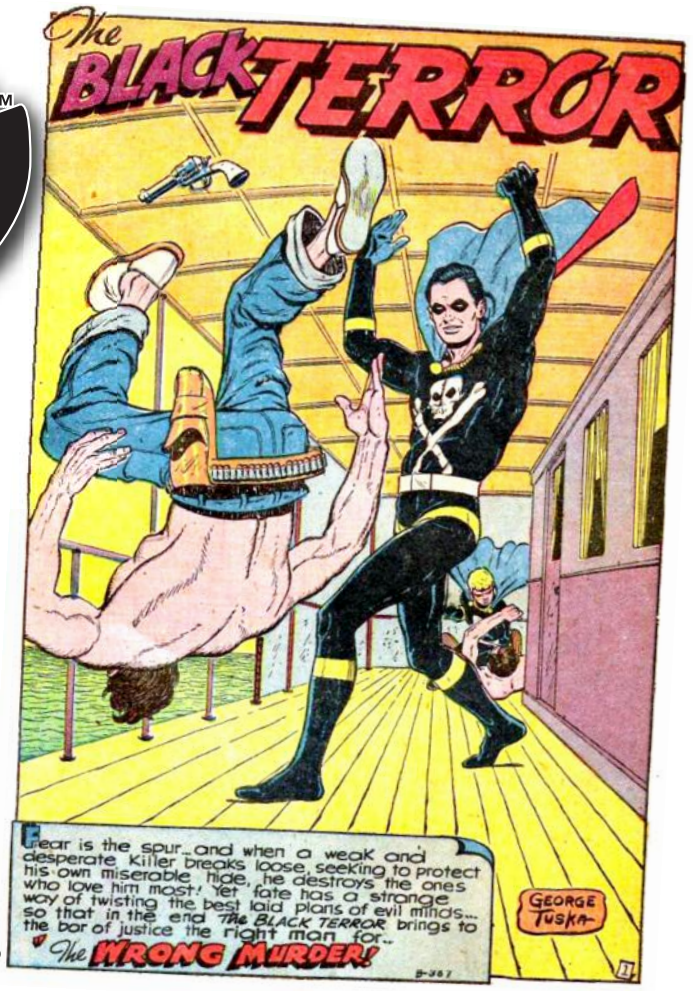

Contents

On Our Cover: *Since we can't mix and match Marvel and DC heroes on our covers, who were we gonna show with smiling* **George Tuska** *up front? Iron Man? Luke Cage? Certainly. Sub-Mariner? Iceman? Daredevil? Ghost Rider? Even Spider-Man? George drew 'em all, at one time or another. But we couldn't neglect Mr. Crime (and a generic hoodlum) from the* Crime Does Not Pay *days… or Buck Rogers and his ladyfriend from the comic strip George drew for years… so we came up with a pulsatin' potpourri on the career of this most modest yet talented of artists—lovingly assembled by our layout guru Chris Day!* [Marvel art ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.; Buck Rogers & Wilma Deering TM & ©2011 The Dille Family Trust; other art TM & ©2011 estate of George Tuska.]

Above: *Contrary to what you might think, though, genial* **George** *did draw a few super-heroes back in the Golden Age, long before he wandered into Marvel in the mid-1960s… as witness this sizzling splash panel from Standard's* Black Terror *#26 (April 1949). The scripter may be unknown—but we're well aware that Jim Ludwig sent us the scan!* [Art ©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

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FIRST PRINTING.

Sometimes Nice Guys Finish *First!*

George Tuska was one of the nicest guys I ever met.

At least, he was… to the extent I can judge from my own contacts with him over the years, first at Marvel in the 1960s and early '70s, later over the phone during the '80s, and during the past couple of decades at comic conventions, particularly the Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC, where he and I often ran into each other after I moved to South Carolina.

Of course, it can be claimed that no one ever really "knows" anyone fully, especially one who is only encountered in workplace situations, or in fairly casual social contacts. And with George, there was that extra barrier to deal with: his deafness. Virtually all those phone calls I alluded to above were actually made by or to his charming wife Dorothy, who learned over the years precisely what needed to be asked or said over Alexander Graham Bell's little invention. I know that, for my part, I almost felt that I was talking with George.

Okay, so I guess George could've deluded me… and Stan Lee… and Johnny Romita… and Marie Severin… and just about everybody else he ever met... into thinking he was a nice guy. After all, there *is* that oft-told tale about George slugging a fellow artist, basically without warning (so what if the guy *had* been picking on a buddy of his?). Maybe George was really a terrible person, a monster with a friendly pasted-on face, like Vincent Price in the 1950s movie *House of Wax*.

But somehow, I don't think so.

No, I think with George what you saw was, by and large, what you got. In his low-key, unspectacular way, he was a very talented artist with a good sense of story and an admirable work ethic and an ultra-professional attitude. He must have realized that he was one of the most valued artists featured in Charlie Biro's *Crime Does Not Pay* in the late 1940s/early '50s… and maybe he even sensed Stan Lee's glee on the day George informed him that the *Buck Rogers* newspaper strip had come to an end and he was finally available to draw full-time for Marvel Comics. When he (or rather, Dorothy) phoned me in the 1980s to tell me that he could use an assignment, I hope he knew that I was ready, willing, and eager to have him draw that Golden Age "Flash" story for the *Secret Origins* title I co-edited for DC.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: there was a time in the early 1970s, in particular, when George and John Romita were the two most commercial artists working for Marvel. Everything they did sold. In George's case, that included a two-issue stint on *Sub-Mariner*, a lengthy run on *Iron Man,* the early issues of *Hero for Hire* (which, sad to say, was a harder sell than it should have been).

Good… and likable… and bankable, to boot.

Any questions as to why I titled Dewey Cassell's fine study of George Tuska's career as I did?

George was one of the greats… and a man who gave the lie to that old Leo Durocher saw, "Nice guys finish last."

We'll always miss you, George.

Bestest,

Roy

An Artist For All Seasons

A Brief Look At The Life And Career of GEORGE TUSKA

by R. Dewey Cassell

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Although obviously covering some of the same ground as my (and my colleagues') out-of-print 2005 book* The Art of George Tuska, *this article was written largely from scratch with almost all new source material. The quotes by George are from an interview conducted at the 1997 San Diego Comic-Con, where he received the Inkpot Award. That interview is believed to be unpublished, and permission was granted by Comic-Con International to transcribe and include it here. This article also includes new interviews done with George's cousin Walter Tomashoff, as well as with Al Plastino, Mike Friedrich, Nick Cardy, Fern Peppe (widow of inker Mike Peppe), and Dorothy Tuska, George's better half of 61 years. Also included is the eulogy Stan Lee wrote about George that was read at his funeral. This article, then, is a new tribute to George, focusing primarily (but not entirely) on the first 35 of his nearly 50 years as a professional artist.*

I Led Three Lives—And Then Some!

In his long (but very active!) retirement, George Tuska could look back on having done acclaimed work for three of the world's most successful comics companies—Lev Gleason in the 1950s, and Marvel and DC during the Silver Age and beyond. And that doesn't count his work at *other* comics outfits—or on two major comic *strips!* The photo of a "retired" George in his studio floats above Tuska pages for *Crime Does Not Pay* #48 (Nov. 1946)... *Iron Man* #18 (Oct. 1969)... and *Teen Titans* #31 (Jan.-Feb. 1971). Photo courtesy of the Tuskas; *CDNP* art from Jim Amash; Marvel art from Barry Pearl; DC art from Dewey Cassell. [*Iron Man* page ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.; *Teen Titans* page ©2011 DC Comics; *CDNP* page ©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

NOTE: Because many *A/E* readers already own a copy of Dewey's 2005 TwoMorrows tome *The Art of George Tuska* (done with Aaron Sultan & Mike Gartland), we've reproduced very few of the photos and comics pages featured therein. The book's out of print, but copies can doubtless be located online.

Early Life

Starting at the beginning seems a little trite and more than a little redundant, but for those of you who did not buy the book *The Art of George Tuska* (and we know who you are), some background seems in order. George recalled his origins: "My mother was born in the Ukraine. She came to the United States in 1880. My brother and sister were born in New York. My mother [later] moved to Hartford, Connecticut. I was born in Hartford on April 26, 1916." George's father passed away when he was just fourteen, and his mother remarried.

Of his brother Peter, George's wife Dorothy recounts, "They were not close. Evidently, they had a run-in when they were very young…. When we were down in Florida, I think on our honeymoon, George looked up Peter. …[Peter] was not interested at all. When George's mother and stepfather had the farm up near Binghamton and their mother died, Peter took it over. We don't know what happened to Peter. Very strange situation. They *looked* so different, too. George was so blond and Peter was dark. But George was very close to his mother, and his sister [Mary], too."

George also had a cousin named Walter Tomashoff. Walter explains the connection: "According to Dorothy [Tuska], my mother was supposedly a cousin. My mother's name is the same as George's mother—Anna Oniska. I used to see George's mother a lot when I was small. I used to call her 'chu-cha,' which means 'aunt,' and that was typical of any older woman, even if they weren't related."

Walter remembers George's mother well: "A strong woman. She always called my mother 'dotchka,' daughter…. I know she lived down there on the Lower East Side where we once did. I remember going to her house. I didn't know that was not her original husband… George's step-dad. He was a very mild-mannered man. His mother was really assertive, but not in a way to overpower you…. I'm saying assertive from the standpoint that she is not going to take any guff from you. She was a strong woman. Liked to laugh a lot, I remember that. She was always very jovial."

George got along well with his mother and spent a lot of time with her, even later in life. Tomashoff recounts, "He had the old Pontiac, a pale blue Pontiac, paint faded on it. It was a funny thing, with that Pontiac. I remember [he took] my mother and his mother and step-dad [and me] for a ride up in the country… up into Connecticut. I remember it was a small country road. And 'Bam!'—a blowout. His mother used to refer to him as 'Sonny.' She said, 'Sonny, what's the matter with the tire?' I don't think he had a spare then, either. It was a hot day. He had to go somewhere to a small town to get another tire. And I remember driving again and 'Bam!'—another tire blew. [*laughter*] His mother said, 'Sonny, you should look at your tires before you take us on a trip like this.' He was mad. I remember that. I know he didn't kick the tire, but I know he must have wanted to kick the darn thing."

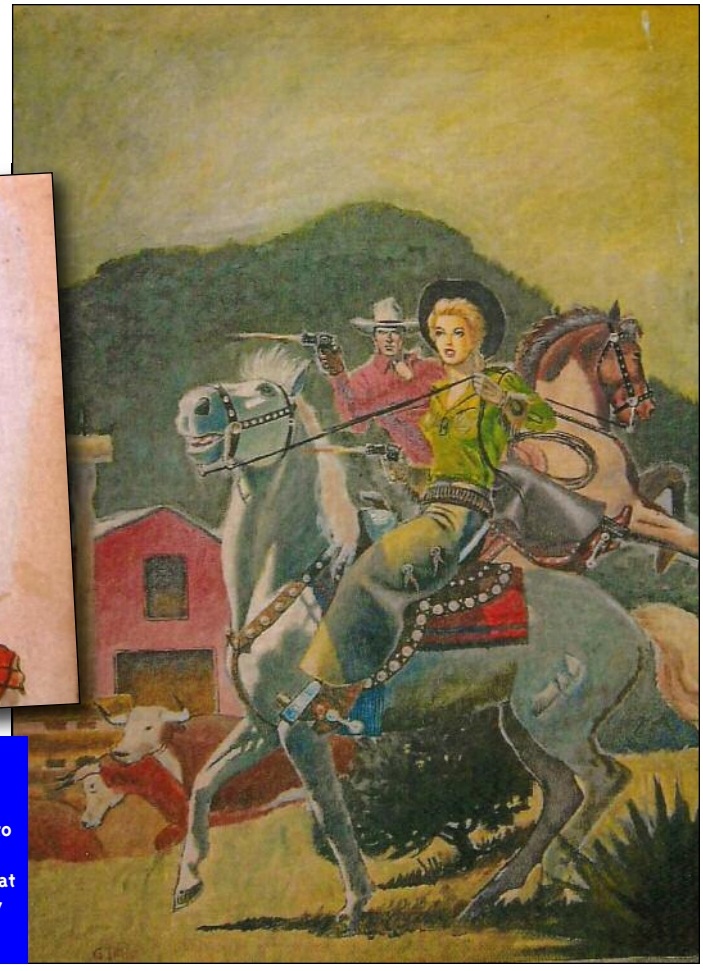
When he was eight or nine years old, George lost most of the hearing in one ear. Walter recalls: "I remember my mother, at the kitchen table there, questioning George about being deaf in the one ear. Or limited hearing. And this is a different story from what I read there in the book. I remember my mother saying, 'So, your sister pushed a match in your ear?' And he said, 'Yeah. It really hurt.' When he was quite young. That's how I heard he lost the hearing in that ear."

As for when he started drawing, George himself recollected, "At the age of eight, I was in the hospital for an appendix operation. After the operation, I was able to walk around the hospital, and an elderly person showed me how to draw Uncle Sam and cowboys and Indians. That was the start."

Art School, Eisner, & Iger

As he got older, George knew that he wanted to be a professional artist, but he hadn't planned on going into comics: "I went to school to learn to paint, oils and watercolors. My biggest desire was to become an illustrator. Back then, there were a lot of illustration artists and magazines, like *Argosy* and *Saturday Evening Post*, but I got into comics and it was just about the same thing. Later on, the illustrators disappeared, because the magazines went away."

Along the way, he met a few legends, among them Jack Kirby. "The first time I met Jack Kirby was at an art school downtown in Manhattan. He was from Brooklyn. He was doing comical pencils. He was very fast. I enjoyed watching him do it. A few years later, Jack worked for DC and I worked for Marvel. Later on, Jack came [back] to Marvel and I got to see him there. He was good to get along with. We had lunch together. We talked a lot about things. I watched how he penciled. He was so fast. Just put it down like snapshots."



Glamor Girls And Cowgirls

In his early days, George painted the standard "glamor girls" he hoped to sell to the slick magazines—but he already had one foot in the pulps, as per the painting at right. Thanks to the Tuskas and to Dewey Cassell. [©2011 Estate of George Tuska.]

Eisner & Iger—Together Again For The First Time!

Will Eisner in 1941 (left) and Jerry Iger in 1942 (right)—about as close as we're ever likely to come to seeing a photo of the two erstwhile comic shop partners together. The former pic appeared in the book *The Art of Will Eisner* (Kitchen Sink, 1982)—the latter in Golden Age artist Jay Disbrow's 1985 tome *The Iger Comic Kingdom*, which was reprinted in *A/E* #21. [©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

George did not start right out in comics, as he explained: "Before working for comics, I worked at the National Academy of Design art school. I did drawing for cosmetic bracelets, planning design. That was my first job. I don't know if you could call it art or what, but it was not my thing."

But then George got his first break, thanks to another legend, Will Eisner. In the 1930s, when comic books migrated from reprinted newspaper strips to all new material, pioneers like Will Eisner and Jerry Iger saw the potential advantages of a streamlined approach to comic book art production. They gathered together all of the people associated with producing a comic book and put them on staff. Writers, letterers, and especially artists were housed in one room, creating a sort of assembly line environment. Each of the artists sat at a drawing table, cranking out a certain number of stories each week for their salary. Some of these studios, which bore more than a passing resemblance to sweat shops, produced finished stories for various comic book publishers. An artist might be illustrating a story for Fiction House one day and Fawcett the next. Other studios, like the one run by Harry "A" Chesler, were operated by publishers who also produced material for their own titles.

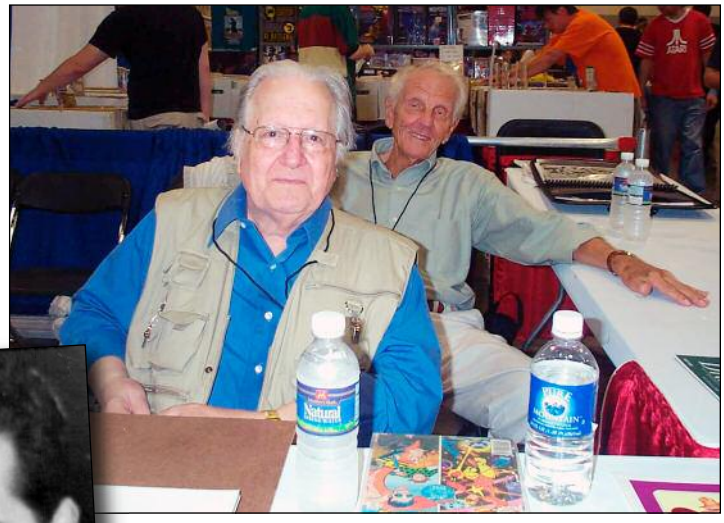
George recalled, "My first job in comics was with Eisner & Iger. I got it through a professional agency. Eisner called for me to bring some samples. I did individual cartoons, and I showed it to him and he said, 'That is not the thing we do.' And I asked him, 'What is it?' He showed me a comic book. 'This is what it is.' I said, 'Give me a chance.' He said, 'Sure.' So I went home and I came back the following day with a page: completed story, backgrounds, lettered and everything, borders. He liked it very much. It was a story about a Mountie capturing a criminal. He bought it for $5 and asked me if I wanted to work in the office. I said, 'That would be fine.' It was small. There were five fellas then—Bob Powell, Lou Fine, Will Eisner, and Will Eisner's brother Paul, and Jerry Iger. I was 22 or 23. Eisner was about my age. It was a nice bunch to start together with. I got along very well with Eisner.

"Later on, as time went by, we moved from 42nd Street to 44th Street. They expanded and there were more artists and cartoonists. I was together mostly with Eisner. We would talk about stories. There wasn't much writing for artists then. He told me, 'Hit this guy and throw a bomb at this guy.' And I said, 'Fine, I can do that.' I wrote all the story down. And I drew everything, backgrounds, the layouts, drawing, complete. But I didn't do the lettering and inking. I made my own borders and how many panels per page. I would write the story first and from there drew one panel, two panels, three panels. I would follow all that up and then I would show it to Eisner, and he would say, 'Well, this could be changed a little or that could be changed, but this is good.' It helped a lot. It built up my interest more. I would go back and do it over. I felt good about that. The pay wasn't tremendous, but I didn't mind anything. I was looking forward to it, a lot. Most of all, Eisner was the one who really helped my work." During this time period, George occasionally used a pseudonym that was his last name spelled backwards: "Aksut."

Another Golden Age artist who got his start in a bullpen was Nicholas Viscardi, better known as Nick Cardy. Nick remembers what it was like at that studio in the early '40s: "When I went to Eisner & Iger's, what they had was a large room. Incidentally, that was the place that I showed him my samples the first time. I went in and on the right side of the room was Lou Fine, then George Tuska, maybe Bob Powell or a few of the other guys. I think they [comics shops] were all that way. It was the beginning of the comic thing when they started competing. From what I remember, they were doing comics for people that wanted to publish. Like, Busy Arnold wanted a super-hero, so they would create a super-hero, and Fiction House or somebody else wanted a super-hero or something else and they would do these strips for other people that wanted to buy them. In other words, they were the creative part. A publisher would want something and they would go to them. We just did the artwork and he sent it out. They had one desk in front of the other and a taboret. And Eisner was in his office. Iger was in a different building." Tuska and Cardy became friends.

While with Eisner & Iger, Tuska illustrated stories for Fiction House about characters like "Shark Brodie," "Planet Payson," and "Kaänga." For Victor Fox, he created the features "Cosmic Carson" and "Zanzibar the Magician," and illustrated at least one cover for *Mystery Men Comics* (issue #6) that was once attributed to Lou Fine. He also illustrated "Spike Marlin" for Harvey Comics and "Uncle Sam" for Quality. Originality was not the order of the day: Spike Marlin looked a lot like Shark Brodie;

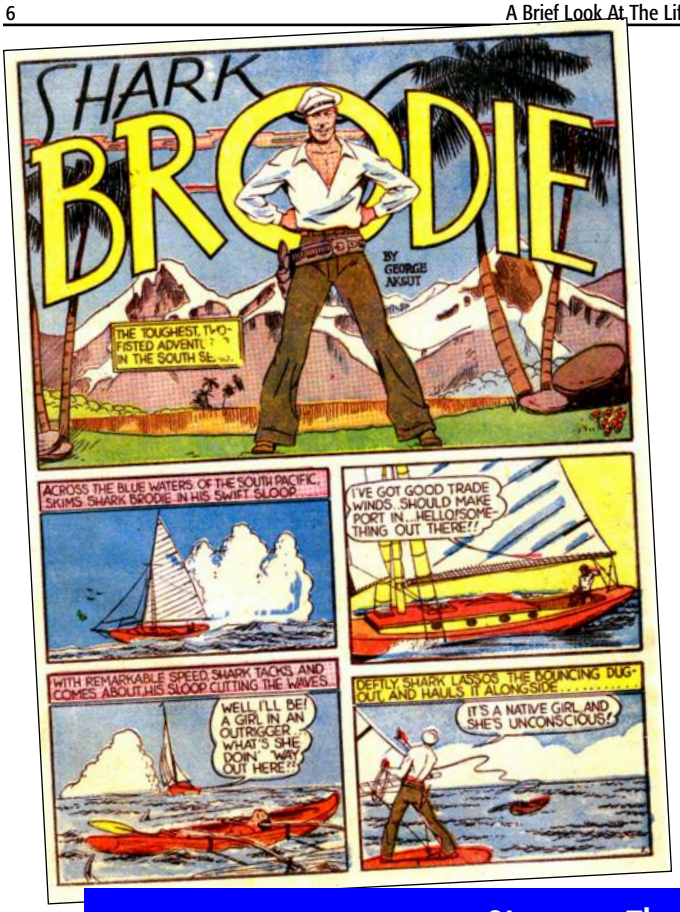
[*continued on p. 8*]



House Of Cardy

(Left:) Nick Cardy, later the noted artist at DC of *Aquaman* and of many great covers, was still Nicholas Viscardi when George Tuska met him in the Eisner & Iger bullpen. Thanks to Dewey Cassell.

(Right:) Nick and George at the 2003 Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC—displaying a friendship that had already lasted far more than half a century. Thanks to Bob Bailey.



Stranger Than Fiction House?

For Fiction House, George drew, among other things, the hot-tempered seaman Shark Brodie for *Fight Comics* (starting with #1, Jan. 1940)—*probably* two-fisted "Inspector Dayton" in *Jumbo Comics* #16 (June '40)—and early exploits of the Tarzanic jungle lord Kaänga, as per his page for *Jungle Comics* #5 (May 1940) and his cover for *Jungle* #13 (Jan. 1941). Writers unknown. Note Tuska's use of his pseudonym "George Aksut" on the "Shark Brodie" splash. The "Brodie" page was sent by David Armstrong, *Jungle* #5 by Henry Andrews, *Jungle* #13 by Dewey Cassell, and "Inspector Dayton" by Henry Andrews. [©2011 the respective copyright holders.]

just children. You also received credit for your work on a comic strip, and it frequently paid better than comic book work and provided a steady source of income. But some comic strips were more prestigious than others—like *Buck Rogers*.

Buck Rogers, originally named Anthony Rogers, got his start in the story "Armageddon 2419 A.D.," which was written by Philip Francis Nowlan and published in the science-fiction magazine *Amazing Stories* in 1928. John F. Dille, president of what became the National Newspaper Service syndicate, hired Nowlan and artist Richard Calkins to bring *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* to life in a comic strip. The daily strip began in 1929 and a Sunday version followed a year later. The premise of the strip was that Rogers was a former US Air Service pilot who was mustered out after serving in France during World War I. He became a surveyor in Pennsylvania, where he was trapped in a mine cave-in and succumbed to strange fumes that placed him in a comatose state for 500 years. Upon awakening, he is discovered by Wilma Deering, who initially thinks he may be an enemy. He rescues her and wins her confidence, becoming a captain in Earth's military forces. Together with Wilma and scientist Dr. Huer, he battles the great "Mongol" threat, as well as villains like Killer Kane and the beautiful but deadly Ardala. At its peak, the *Buck Rogers* strip ran in over 400 newspapers and was translated into 18 languages, spawning a radio serial, movies, and television shows, as well as various merchandise. By 1947, both Nowlan and Calkins had left the strip. Successive artists included Rick Yager, Leo Dworkins, and Murphy Anderson.

So, when the syndicate telephoned in 1959, while George was still doing *Scorchy Smith*, he faced a tough decision, as he recalled: "Somebody called up from Chicago and said, 'I'm from the National Newspaper Syndicate.' I didn't know what it was [about]. They said, 'We have here *Buck Rogers*.' *Buck Rogers* was more popular than *Scorchy Smith*. I said, 'I don't know. I know the fella who is doing it. I wouldn't like to take it out of his hands.' He said, 'I tell you what. I'll call you a week later and you let me know. Otherwise, I might give it to somebody else.' I was in between. So, I accepted it."

Accepting the job was not an easy decision, as Dorothy Tuska recounts, "George felt very bad that he took it over. George apologized to Murphy [Anderson]. He felt that maybe if he hadn't said yes, he would do it, Murphy would still be doing it, even though he was slow. It was a very trying time for George. He was so used to writing *Scorchy Smith*, and he was sorry he left that to do *Buck Rogers*. He was not happy doing it. And then we had to get a letterer to do it. First an inker and then a letterer. The letterer was Martin Epp, I think."

Writers during Tuska's tenure on *Buck Rogers* included Jack Lehti, Howard Liss, and Ray Russell, as well as noted science-fiction author Fritz Leiber. The stories Tuska illustrated ranged from exciting space-borne adventures to somewhat silly beauty contests. But, there were some benefits to doing *Buck Rogers*. As a member of the National Cartoonists Society, George was invited to play in the annual celebrity golf tournament held at Shawnee on the Delaware, a resort owned by renowned band leader Fred Waring. Tuska, Mike Peppe, Al Plastino, and their wives enjoyed a weekend in the Poconos and George took home a second place trophy one year, presented to him by entertainer Jackie Gleason. Al Plastino recalls the golf outings with fondness: "June the 8th was Fred Waring's birthday. And we'd go every June the 8th, the cartoonists, and we'd have a two- or three-day outing there. It was on him. That's where I met Jackie Gleason. He played with us. There was a picture of Jackie Gleason and Waring and George and myself. George was a good golfer. He could hit the ball, boy. "

In addition, Tuska received a telegram in May 1962 from the Vice President of ABC News, James Hagerty, inviting him to appear on television to witness the historic orbital flight of astronaut Scott Carpenter. Hagerty sought out Tuska "as the artist of the *Buck Rogers* strip, the storylines of which are now becoming realities." Because of his hearing difficulties, George declined to participate.

Plastino was an admirer of George's work, noting, "I remember when he was doing *Buck Rogers*…. Beautiful work. Clean. His work was so neat. He was not a sketchy type of guy."

George sometimes found *Buck Rogers* frustrating, though, as he noted: "I worked at home quite a while for them. I was doing other small things for them also, like golf instructions. The big missing thing on *Buck Rogers* when I was doing it was Wilma. She wasn't there. Wilma has

The Rocket's Red Glare

Since so much of George's work for Marvel during the 1960s and '70s has been reprinted, we'll concentrate on less accessible art featuring that company's stalwarts—like this (color) commission drawing done for Belgian collector Dominique Léonard of the first super-hero drew when he returned to Marvel circa 1966. [Captain America TM & ©2011 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

always been with Buck. I think a hero has to have a girl. Otherwise, I plugged away."

There were other difficulties, as Dorothy recalls, "The fellow that was in Chicago, he called. He was with the newspaper syndicate. He called to speak to George and I answered. And I said George couldn't come to the phone, because he couldn't hear. Well, he got so nasty. I think that kind of blew it for George. He was not very nice. He couldn't understand why George couldn't get to the phone and I had to answer." George worked on *Buck Rogers* until the strip ended in 1967, cranking out six dailies and a Sunday each week. The end was something of a relief, as George noted: "Sometime later, I was called and told they were discontinuing *Buck*, for some reason. I didn't mind. It was pretty rough, the schedule."

Marvel Redux

While drawing the newspaper strips *Scorchy Smith* and *Buck Rogers*, George continued to do some comic book work, including covers and interior artwork for Harvey Comics' *Spyman* and *Alarming Adventures*, as well as humorous pieces for the *Mad* rival, *Sick* magazine, edited by Joe Simon. He also illustrated *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* for Tower Comics and several stories for Archie, Dell, and Gold Key, the latter of which were often inked by Mike Peppe. Then, in the waning years of *Buck Rogers*, Tuska turned to an old friend, Stan Lee, at what was now called Marvel Comics.

But thirteen years of drawing newspaper comic strips had taken their toll, as George explained: "I called Stan Lee at Marvel and he said, 'Come on over.' At first, it was 'Captain America.' There is a difference working in comic books and newspapers. The newspaper is not very flashy stuff, but the comics, there is more action, more fighting, panel after panel. After so long away from comic books, I was stale. Stan called me into his office. He said, 'You see this figure you drew? That's not right.' And showed me [with his fist through the air] 'Pow!'. He did bring up a lot and it was very interesting. I enjoyed it very much. Then I got into the swing of things."

Actually, Tuska's first work for Marvel Comics was a "Tales of the Watcher" story that he penciled and inked in issue #58 of *Tales of Suspense*. On the splash page of the 1964 story, Stan Lee welcomed back Tuska, saying, "We've managed to re-hire an artist who was one of our top stars many years ago," (although it would be three more years before George would rejoin the bullpen on a full-time basis). Because of his 6' 2" height with blond hair and an athletic build, Stan nicknamed him "Gorgeous" George Tuska. His next assignment was a daunting one—penciling and inking over Jack Kirby's layouts on "Captain America" in *Tales of Suspense*, starting with issue #70. In this five-issue run, Cap encounters Nazis, The Red Skull, and The Sleepers, as well as a guest appearance by The Avengers.

With practice handling Cap and the Assemblers under his belt, George's next big assignment was *The Avengers*. Most noteworthy among his contributions to "Earth's Mightiest Heroes" was issue #48, featuring the return of The Black Knight, for which Tuska did the interior pencils, inks, and cover. He also inked a number of *Avengers* stories and covers penciled by John Buscema, including issue #53, which features a face-off with The X-Men, foreshadowing his first significant solo opportunity. While he was still embellishing *The Avengers*, Tuska also tackled *The X-Men*. He penciled and inked the classic cover to issue #39, which also served as the basis for the "Marvel Value Stamps" of Cyclops and Marvel Girl that later appeared in various Marvel comics. Following that were a couple of issues in which he inked Don Heck's pencils. Then Tuska penciled his own issue of the merry mutants, followed by a three-part origin of Iceman that appeared as a backup story in *X-Men*. He illustrated several other *X-Men* covers as well. By this time, *Buck Rogers* was but a memory, and George had hit his stride once again in comics.

But that was not the end of Tuska's involvement with The X-Men. Issue

Value Added?

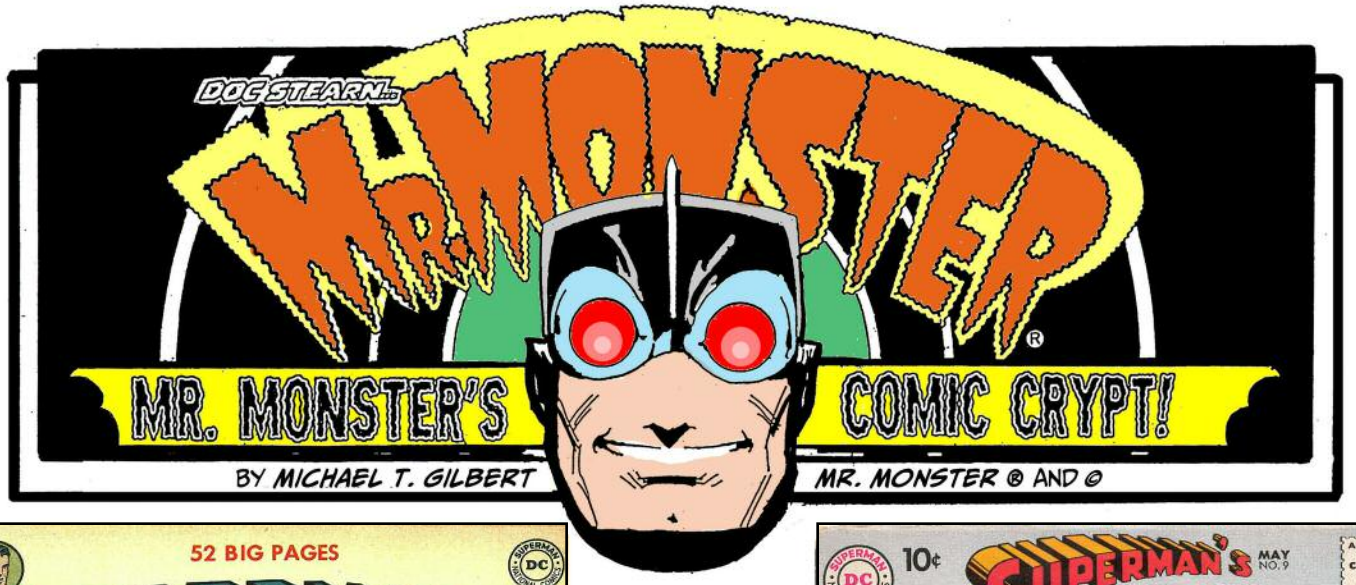
Here's something that may not have been reprinted: In the early '70s George Tuska drew this "Marvel Value Stamp" of Marvel Girl which appeared in a mag or two. Hey, when's Marvel gonna give those their own *Essentials* volume?

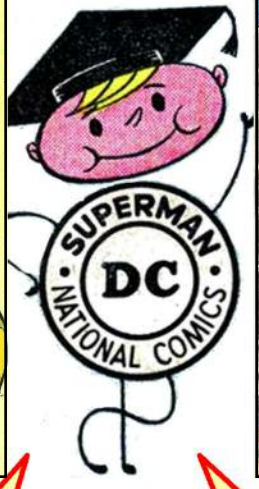
#66 of *X-Men* would be the last featuring new, original stories until the book was re-launched with a new team in issue #94 in 1975. In the interim, *X-Men* became a reprint book. However, there were numerous new stories that featured appearances by one or more of The X-Men during the intervening five years, including *Amazing Spider-Man* #92, *Avengers* #88, *Amazing Adventures* #11-17, *The Incredible Hulk* #150, and others. But the first new, original "X-Men" story to appear after *X-Men* #66 was a three-part solo story featuring the mutant Angel that appeared as a backup in *Ka-Zar* #2-3 and *Marvel Tales* #30. This "Angel" story is unusual in several respects. Not only was it relegated to the back of two reprint books, but it was penned by none other than Jerry Siegel, of "Superman" fame. Siegel wrote a three-chapter tale about The Angel that was penciled by Tuska and inked by Dick Ayers.

It is possible that this "Angel" story was done for inventory and then inserted into the reprint books because the opportunity presented itself, but it seems equally likely that it may have been intended as a backup feature in *X-Men*. Issues #38-57 of *X-Men* included multi-part backup stories that explained the origins and powers of The X-Men. The three parts of the "Angel" story were certainly meant to be presented in the same title, as evidenced by the fact that the closing caption of the second part was changed to redirect readers to *Marvel Tales* #30. (*Ka-Zar* was canceled after issue #3.)

While he was working his way back into the saddle at Marvel, Tuska contributed to several other titles, including inking Marie Severin's pencils in several early issues of the new solo book *The Incredible Hulk*, as well as penciling a couple of issues of *Daredevil*. Over the years, Tuska's style of drawing had evolved, from the "house" style he'd adopted in the early years at Eisner & Iger, to the realistic and dramatic style found in *Crime Does Not Pay* and his early Timely work, to the cartoonier style evident in the comic strips he did in the '50s and '60s, and finally to the action-oriented style he exhibited at Marvel.

A big part of George's success at the latter company, where the "Marvel method" required the artist to provide the flow of the story as well as the art, was his gift for storytelling. Walter Tomashoff elaborates, "The thing that I liked about George, he would be so descriptive when he talked about something. Like, this one time he was telling me about this guy who was fishing out on a sandbar, beyond the pier going out into the water. He was casting way out and didn't pay attention to the tide coming in. It was about waist high and there was this shark circling him. And George, he takes you through that story, and you just envision that shark coming





HI, KIDS! IT'S ME, COMIC BOOK MASCOT ***JOHNNY DC***, SUBBING FOR ***MR. MONSTER! WHY?*** 'CAUSE THIS ***KOOKY KROSSOVERS*** EPISODE IS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO MY ***FAVORITE*** PUBLISHER! AND WHO KNOWS MORE ABOUT ***DC*** THAN ***ME?*** CHECK OUT THESE COVERS WHERE LOIS LANE GOES ***GA-GA*** OVER HEPCATS ***PERRY COMO*** AND ***PAT BOONE!*** ***KOOKY, HUH?***

NOWADAYS SHE'S INTO ***OZZY OSBOURNE!*** ***SURPRISED?*** NOT AS SUPRISED AS YOU'LL BE WHEN YOU SEE THE REST OF MY...

KOOKY DC KROSSOVERS!

SUPERMAN #67, NOV. 1950. ART BY AL PLASTINO
SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND LOIS LANE #9, MAY 1959. ART BY CURT SWAN & STAN KAYE.

Kooky DC Krossovers—Part 2

by Michael T. Gilbert

Funny Business!

The line between reality and fiction was always a bit fuzzy at DC. One month Lois Lane might canoodle with singers Pat Boone or Perry Como, while Superman would sip champagne with Hollywood stars Ann Blyth and Orson Welles the next.

This media cross-pollination worked both ways. In real life, DC's Hollywood connections gave life to movie and TV versions of Superman, Batman, Congo Bill, and other DC properties.

National/DC got on the Hollywood bandwagon early. Their 1939 series, *Movie Comics*, featured a bizarre mix of traditional comics and photo-novellas of current movies. When that title failed to take off, they tried again in 1950 with *Feature Films*, a new title that featured graphic novellas of popular movies, including Bing Crosby's *Riding High*, and *Fancy Pants* with Bob Hope and Lucille Ball.

The series folded after four issues, but Bob Hope's comic book career flourished. DC launched his own title that same year, and *The Adventures of Bob Hope* proved to be a major success, lasting 109 issues from Feb. 1950 to Feb. 1968. DC followed with other comics devoted to famous stars. Television shows like *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Jackie Gleason*, *Dobie Gillis*, and Phil Silvers' *Sgt. Bilko* all had their own titles. Even

Calling All Costumes—And Diana Prince!

Clockwise on this page & opposite one: Jerry meets The Flash in *Adventures of Jerry Lewis* #112 (June 1969); Batman in *AOJL* #97 (Dec. 1966); Superman in *AOJL* #105 (April 1968); Wonder Woman in *AOJL* #117 (April 1970); Alfred E. Neuman and Bob Hope in *AOJL* #89 (Aug. 1965). [©2011 DC Comics.]

The Rudi Franke Interview

A Talk With One Of Fandom's Finest Early Fan-Artists

Conducted by Bill Schelly, CFA Editor Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

Introduction

*The Comic Fandom Archive has devoted several columns to the fandom activities of Marty Arbunich (*Yancy Street Journal*) and Bill DuBay (*Voice of Comicdom*), two fans from San Francisco—but they were only two of the four members of their grandly named publishing enterprise, Golden Gate Features. The others were Barry Bauman and Rudi Franke. Now it's Rudi's term in the CFA spotlight.*

Rudi Franke's first fanzine effort was Heroes' Hangout, *a popular zine of the mid-1960s. Later in the decade, he succeeded Bill DuBay as editor and publisher of* Voice of Comicdom. *More than a fanzine publisher, Rudi was one of early fandom's most talented artists, whose contributions appeared in many fanzines besides those of GGF, such as* Star-Studded Comics *and* The Buyer' Guide for Comic Fandom.

Somehow, Rudi and I never got together for an interview until January of 2009, in conjunction with my research for my latest book, Founders of Comic Fandom. *I've wanted to chat with him for a long time, so it a great pleasure to be able to talk to him at some length about his participation in those halcyon days of fandom.* **—Bill.**

BILL SCHELLY: *Let's start with your date of birth.*

RUDI FRANKE: November 17th, 1939.

BS: *The first thing I want to ask you is, where did you grow up and what did your dad do for a living?*

FRANKE: I was born November 17, 1939. I grew up in the Oakland area—that's the Bay Area here—and my dad was a baker. He had a bakery for himself in around 1956, '57, '58, and I helped out there a little bit.

A Host of Hosts

Rudi Franke during his high school days (a photo later printed in several Golden Gate Features publications) and as a teacher in the late '60s or early '70s—flanking his "creepy" cover for the comics apa-zine *Capa-alpha* #61 (1969). This artwork bears evidence of the considerable craft and artistry that he brought to fandom in the 1960s. Photos courtesy of Rudi. [Comics characters TM & ©2011 respectively by Marvel Charcters, Inc.; Gold Key and Charlton or their successors in interest; DC Comics; Warren Publishing or its successors in interest; other art ©2011 Rudi Franke; .]

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

#158
January 2011

Art by Marc Swayze

[Shazam hero TM & ©2011 DC Comics]

***FCA* EDITORS NOTE:** *From 1941-53, Marcus D. Swayze was a top artist for Fawcett Publications. The very first Mary Marvel character sketches came from Marc's drawing table, and he illustrated her earliest adventures, including the classic origin story, "Captain Marvel Introduces Mary Marvel (*Captain Marvel Adventures *#18, Dec. '42); but he was primarily hired by Fawcett Publications to illustrate Captain Marvel stories and covers for* Whiz Comics *and* Captain Marvel Adventures*. He also wrote many Captain Marvel scripts, and continued to do so while in the military. After leaving the service in 1944, he made an arrangement with Fawcett to produce art and stories for them on a freelance basis out of his Louisiana home. There he created both art and stories for The Phantom Eagle in* Wow Comics*, in addition to drawing the* Flyin' Jenny *newspaper strip for Bell Syndicate (created by his friend and mentor Russell Keaton). After the cancellation of* Wow*, Swayze produced artwork for Fawcett's top-selling line of romance comics, including* Sweethearts *and* Life Story*. After the company ceased publishing comics, Marc moved over to Charlton Publications, where he ended his comics career in the mid-'50s. Marc's ongoing professional memoirs have been a vital part of* FCA *since his first column appeared in* FCA *#54 (1996). Last time we re-presented Marc's 5th column—from* FCA *#58 (1997)—in which the artist wrote about Pete Costanza, turning out Captain Marvel artwork, and playing in a music combo formed with other Fawcett artists. In this issue we re-present the last pre-*Alter Ego *Swayze column—from* FCA *#59 (1998)—wherein the artist reminisces about editors Ed Herron and Rod Reed, the creation of Mary Marvel, the ball games and get-togethers with members of the Jack Binder shop, and his newspaper comic strip aspirations.*

—P.C. Hamerlinck.

We were surprised upon arriving at work one morning to find that a wall had been constructed separating the area occupied by the non-comics group and a section intended for the comic book artists. It was a bit of a mystery in that it included a wide, arched opening through which we passed freely and frequently.

There were conjectures as to the purpose of the wall, but most logical was that the need for privacy may have been recognized. An occasion where a Fawcett comic book featured Captain Marvel lifting a corner of the cover was followed shortly after it hit the newsstands by a competitor magazine with *their* hero peeling back the cover. Pure coincidence, possibly, but food for thought. For our part, I am absolutely positive the idea originated in our camp because it was my own… as was the art (*Whiz Comics* #38, Dec. 1942).

Almost as sudden as the appearance of the wall was the disappearance of Eddie Herron. Little was said around the office except that he had been called into the military. Later accounts of the period were that Otto Binder and John Beardsley took over as co-editors for about a month. I was not aware of it. It was thirteen years before I saw Eddie Herron again… at Charlton Publications in Derby, Connecticut… briefly, under somewhat different circumstances.

I liked Eddie Herron. His contribution toward the success of Captain Marvel cannot be overstated. He had come at the right moment, shortly before Bill Parker left and at a time when the very character of Captain Marvel was being formulated. I've read where he was a talented writer. He certainly knew good writing when he saw it. He was a serious student of the comic book business and he was extremely market-minded. Rarely did he pass a newsstand that he didn't step in and re-arrange the comics section so the Fawcett books got at least their fair share—maybe more—of the display area. It was Herron who suggested that whenever possible in planning cover art we position Captain Marvel toward the left edge. He had observed a growing tendency among dealers to display the comic books in a lapped-over arrangement where only that section of the cover was visible. Physically, Herron was a giant of a man… energetic, dynamic… he fairly radiated enthusiasm. I'm convinced that if it's possible for a human being, a grown man, to love a comic book hero, Eddie Herron loved Captain Marvel as much as did our young readers.

Earlier in the year Herron had approached my desk and without a word pulled up a chair. Then, leaning forward, he began in hushed tones to describe "a new feature character—a little girl about Billy Batson's age."