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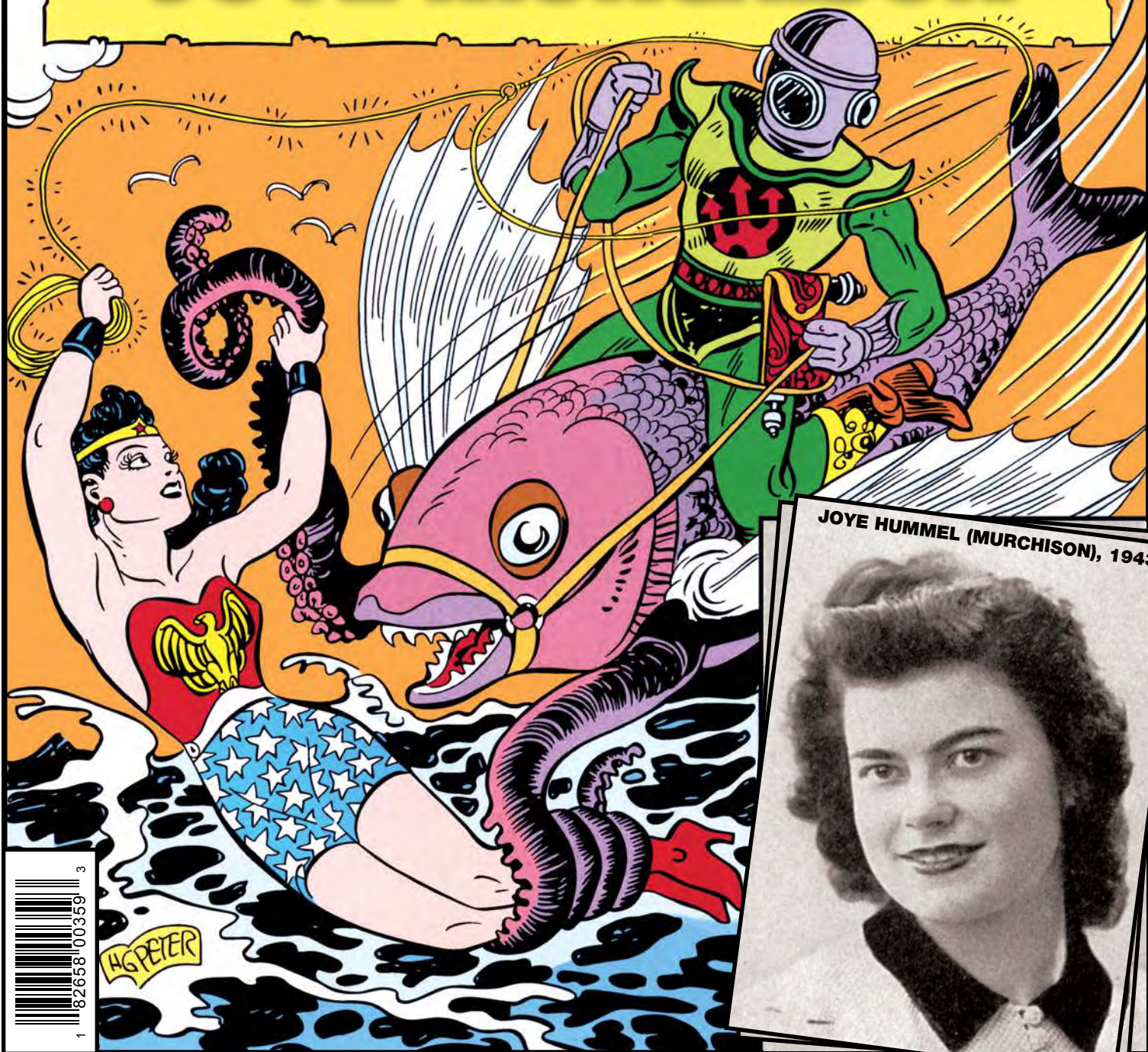


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SPOTLIGHT ON
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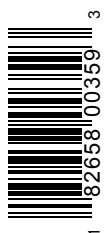
JOYE MURCHISON



JOYE HUMMEL (MURCHISON), 1943



BONUS! BARBARA FRIEDLANDER'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH DC COMICS!



Vol. 3, No. 157 / March 2019

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P.C. Hamerlinck hosts Will Murray on Henry "Lynn" Perkins—"The Stan Lee of '43!"

On Our Cover: What artist's work could we possibly have chosen to grace this issue's cover but that of the legendary H.G. Peter, who drew (or at least penciled, with inking help from quasi-anonymous assistants) virtually every "Wonder Woman" story from 1941 through 1958, and every WW and Sensation Comics cover through the latter 1940s? For one of the reasons Ye Editor selected the first splash page from Wonder Woman #15 (Winter 1945), see p. 18. Thanks to Jim Ludwig. And thanks to Joye Murchison Kelly for the photo of her 1943 Joye Hummel self that appears up front. [Artwork TM & © DC Comics.]

Above: Okay, so call it Personal Preference Month here at Alter Ego! Roy T. has always had a weakness for the cover of Wonder Woman #18 (July-Aug. 1946), which showed the Amazon lassoing a medieval knight in full armor. But the Joye Hummel-scripted, H.G. Peter-drawn lead-off splash page from that issue works even better here, since it depicts Diana battling menaces from various ages—as of course she did in her classic comicbook stories. Thanks to Jim Ludwig. [TM & © DC Comics.]



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FIRST PRINTING.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
James Galton, Herb Rogoff,
Harlan Ellison, & Tom Wolfe



The First Amazon

JOYE HUMMEL MURCHISON KELLY— Wonder Woman's Mid-1940s Ghost Writer

Interview Conducted & Transcribed
by Richard J. Arndt



Joye Hummel
in the early 1940s. Photo courtesy of Joye Murchison Kelly.

INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: Joye Hummel was born April 4, 1924. She started working with Dr. William Moulton Marston in 1944, after she graduated from the Katharine Gibbs School in New York City, where she had taken a psychology class from him. "Wonder Woman" was appearing in four comics at that time, in three of which Marston wrote nearly all the stories (Gardner Fox wrote Wonder Woman's first appearance in a "Justice Society" tale in All-Star Comics, and the dialogue she exchanged with her fellow JSAers in various group chapters). Being also in the early stages of launching the Wonder Woman comic strip, Marston needed a second writer who was not only talented and reliable but could follow and believe in the underlying philosophy that formed the foundation for the heroine's character and mythos.

Joye Hummel was the answer to his prayers, and she was soon working at what was essentially Marston's self-contained studio offices in New York City, where he and artist Harry G. Peter took the Wonder Woman comic, as well as the Amazon's stories that appeared in Sensation Comics and Comic Cavalcade, from script to ready-for-coloring art pages, overseen by All-American Comics' lead editor, Sheldon Mayer. Between 1944 and 1947, Hummel wrote at least 74 "Wonder Woman" stories, split between the three comics, none of which appeared with her name on them. Most of those stories were solo efforts, though some may have been co-written with Marston.



Joye Murchison
Kelly

with a Wonder
Woman cosplayer at
the 2018 San Diego
Comic-Con. Joye
was thrilled to be
reminded of the
impact the Amazon
has had on readers
down the decades.
Photo courtesy of
Bruce Guthrie.



Wonder Woman #12 (Spring 1945)

contains one of the earliest published comics stories written by young Joye Hummel, under the direction of Dr. William Moulton Marston. Read more about its Venusian subject matter on pp. 21-22. This book-lengthier, scripted in 1944, went on sale at the turn of '45, before her first "Wonder Woman" entries in Sensation Comics (#41, May 1945) and Comic Cavalcade #11 (Summer '45). Art by H.G. Peter. Thanks to Jim Ludwig. [TM & © DC Comics.]

When Marston fell ill only a few months after her hiring, she found herself responsible for writing her own scripts, typing up both Marston's and hers, as well as conducting the lengthy travels from her home on Long Island to New York City and the offices there, and then on to Rye, New York, where Marston was confined to his home. When Marston died in 1947, she became the lead writer of "Wonder Woman" and was expected to continue on the book, but very soon decided for reasons of her own (which are described in the interview) to leave the book following her marriage to David Murchison. Robert Kanigher took over the editing and writing of the "Wonder Woman" stories, greatly changing the way the character was perceived and behaved.

Shortly after this interview took place, an effort was mounted to bring Joye (now Joye Kelly) as a Guest of Honor to the 2018 San Diego Comic-Con. She did attend and was awarded the Bill Finger Award for overlooked excellence in comicbook writing. Joye is the first woman writer to receive that honor. (The "posthumous" half of that award went to the late Dorothy Woolfolk—who was Mayer's assistant editor during part of the 1940s.) Long out of touch with the world of comics, this is Joye Hummel Murchison Kelly's first interview to appear in a comics-history magazine, and was conducted on April 2 & 9, 2018. Although our cover refers to her as "Joye Murchison" because that's how she's identified in the Grand Comics Database, et al., we've used her current last name "Kelly" in the headings for her comments below...

RICHARD ARNDT: Today we're welcoming Joye Hummel Murchison Kelly, the first female writer of "Wonder Woman." Thank you for agreeing to this interview!

JOYE HUMMEL MURCHISON KELLY: You're welcome!

RA: What can you tell us about your early life? Where you were born, where you got your education, anything about your family you'd care to share, that sort of thing.

KELLY: I don't like talking too much about personal matters. I believe a private life should be private. Professional things I have no trouble talking about, but I'd rather not discuss family matters. As I often say, "That's personal."

I was born on Long Island. The town there was a slow, little place. Everything was slow back then, as compared to now. [laughs] My parents were divorced. I don't really know the reason why, but I went to a number of different grade schools and high schools when I was a child and young teenager. I regarded that as somewhat of an opportunity.

RA: Were you, or rather your parents, moving around a lot, or was there some other reason for all the different schools?

KELLY: I wasn't really paying all that much attention, or perhaps I just don't remember. Part of that is that I just turned 94, and some of what you're asking me about occurred when I was a child. I guess I was kind of an adaptable person. Imagination was something that was always present for me. All that moving around may have helped me in cultivating that imagination. I was a good storyteller. I was also a very good student. Following my high school graduation from Freeport High, there was a year spent attending Middlebury College in Vermont. Then my parents divorced and I didn't want to leave my



Katharine Gibbs School
of
Secretarial & Executive
Training
for Educated Women

Now, Voyageur

(Left:) Joye in a photo from the *Voyageur*, the Freemont High School yearbook for 1941, the year she graduated. Thanks to the Tenth Letter of the Alphabet website, via Richard Arndt.

(Right:) Title page from the 1924 edition of the Katharine Gibbs School handbook.

mother alone. So I transferred to the Katharine Gibbs School in New York City.

RA: Was that a college, or a technical school, or an undergraduate school?

KELLY: It was a school that offered a two-year college education. A certification [diploma] from the Katharine Gibbs School would open almost any door in the business world for an interview. It had two other branches—one in Providence and one in Boston. I spent a year at Middlebury and two years at Katharine Gibbs. You had to have really good grades in high school to attend either one of those schools.

It was in my second year that I found myself taking a psychology class with Dr. [William Moulton] Marston. He was a brilliant teacher. I inhaled his class. Mind you, while taking the course I never had a personal conversation with him. Never even shook his hand or told him that I really liked his course. We didn't go in for



Dr. William Moulton Marston

(Left:) Probably around the time the "Wonder Woman" feature was first being developed, the well-known psychologist (seen wearing a light-colored suit jacket) administered what was billed for publicity purposes as a "Jekyll and Hyde lie detector test." He measured young women's blood pressure while they watched footage from the then-new film *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), starring Spencer Tracy. Posted by John McElvee; forwarded by Sean Dulaney.

(Above:) Dr. Marston in the mid-1940s.



SIDEBAR #1: THERE'S JOYE IN SAN DIEGO...!

A/E EDITOR'S INTRO: Not long after Richard Arndt conducted his telephone interview with Joye Murchison Kelly, we learned that the San Diego Comic-Con planned to invite her to be a special guest in mid-July 2018. Frequent panel-moderator (and TV and comics writer) Mark Evanier would handle her panel, in tandem with author and cartoonist Trina Robbins. Mark generously arranged for us to receive a recording of the panel so we could excerpt it in *Alter Ego*. It's a fine conversation, which would've made a great lead piece for this issue if we didn't already have one in hand. Over the course of Richard's interview, we'll be interspersing several sidebars such as this one to highlight exchanges on the panel. Mark (with Trina unavoidably delayed at another panel) opened the conversation before a packed room of several hundred people...

MARK EVANIER: I have been looking forward to this panel for months. Every Comic-Con, there seems to be one moment that I really, really take home with me and I love, and there's been a couple here, and they've all involved this person. Last night at the Eisner Awards, the professional community stood up and cheered for this lady when we presented her with the Bill Finger Award. [applause] Save it for one big burst, okay? And, this morning, we had her at the Quick Draw game and 2700 people leaped to their feet and cheered for her, and it took up about eight minutes of the game because they were just clapping all the time, and things like that, and we love that, too. One of the things that happens at this convention for years is that we honor people who never in the world, when they did their most famous work, thought it would endure, and thought they would—[to Joye Murchison Kelly] You never thought that you would be in front of a room of people clapping because of that work you did. You never dreamed of that.

JOYE MURCHISON KELLY: Absolutely not. I'm thrilled.

ME: So these people gave us wonderful work and characters we love, and characters that the industry was built upon, and that future stories were built upon. And this is one of the ways we pay people back.... We fly them out here and put them up in a good hotel, and show our appreciation for them. I thought we were done doing that, because we had run out of people who did comics in those eras. We just ran out. There was just nobody else we could do this to. And then we found this woman, and what a perfect

that sort of thing much in those days.

RA: Was it a large class?

KELLY: I'd say it was a fairly large class. Their goal at Katharine Gibbs was to make you as perfect as you could be in any course that they wanted to teach—whether it was a business course or academic or anything in between.

At that point in time, because of the conditions at home, I was aiming to obtain an education that would allow me to go out, get a job and make money. Very pragmatic. My mother was single at the time and I was very young. I did some research and discovered that the Katharine Gibbs School would, in two years, give me opportunities to do many different jobs in various fields. I looked at what other students had become after graduating and realized that there were a number of opportunities for women that weren't so available elsewhere. I didn't know it was going to lead me directly into comicbook writing, but the Gibbs school had a very good track record for women finding jobs after completing the year or two-year courses. That was what gave me the desire to go there.



A Panel About Panels

(Left to right:) Trina Robbins, Joye Murchison Kelly, Mark Evanier.
Thanks to Mark Evanier.

person to give the Bill Finger Award to. Ladies and gentleman, thank and welcome Miss Joye Murchison Kelly. [applause, cheers]

KELLY: Thank you. Thank you very much.

ME: Are you getting tired of people clapping for you here?

KELLY: Never. [laughter]

ME: [after a couple of introductory questions] What city did you grow up in?

KELLY: Freeport, Long Island.

ME: What did you want to do with your life? Did you have a career goal?

KELLY: Actually, I wanted to be an actress. **[A/E EDITOR'S NOTE:** At this point, Joye relates how she felt a need to get a job as soon as possible, which led her to the Katharine Gibbs School. One day while there, she was giving a report on a book she had read—dealing with the then-ongoing Japanese invasion of China, quite likely one by Pearl S. Buck—and when she saw how enrapt the other students were, she thought to herself, “Well, this is a form of acting.”]

[A/E EDITOR'S NOTE: Further sidebars featuring segments of the Joye Murchison Kelly panel at the July 2018 San Diego Comic-Con will appear at intervals throughout the A/E interview....]

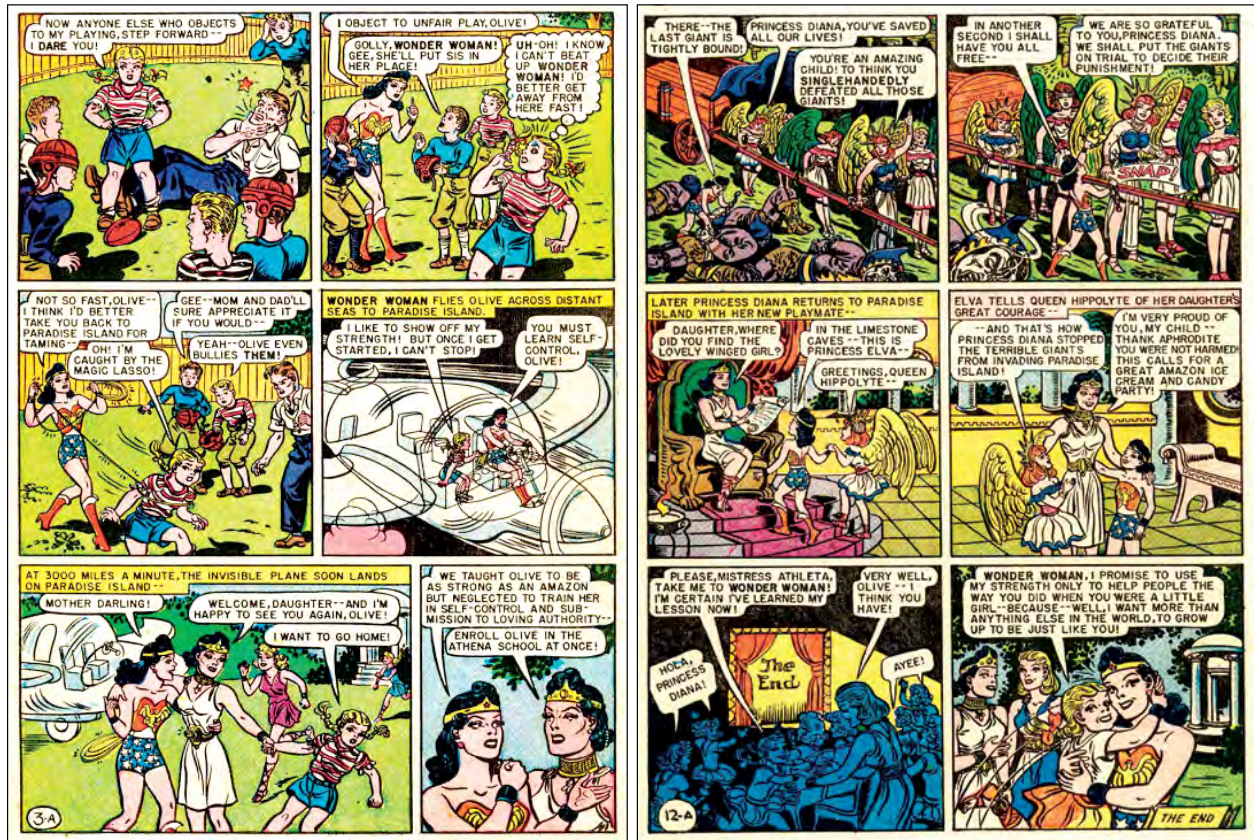
You couldn't be late for classes. It didn't matter if the Long Island Railroad broke down. You were not to be late for class. You had to dress to go to school, too. Hat, gloves, skirt. Not like today. You dressed up for work and you trained for that by dressing up for school. [laughs]

RA: Am I right in assuming that your maiden name was Hummel?

KELLY: Yes, that's correct. I was Joye Hummel when I wrote most of those “Wonder Woman” stories. I use Murchison Kelly because I was married to David Murchison for many years and am currently married to Jack Kelly. I've been very lucky. Two great men in one life.

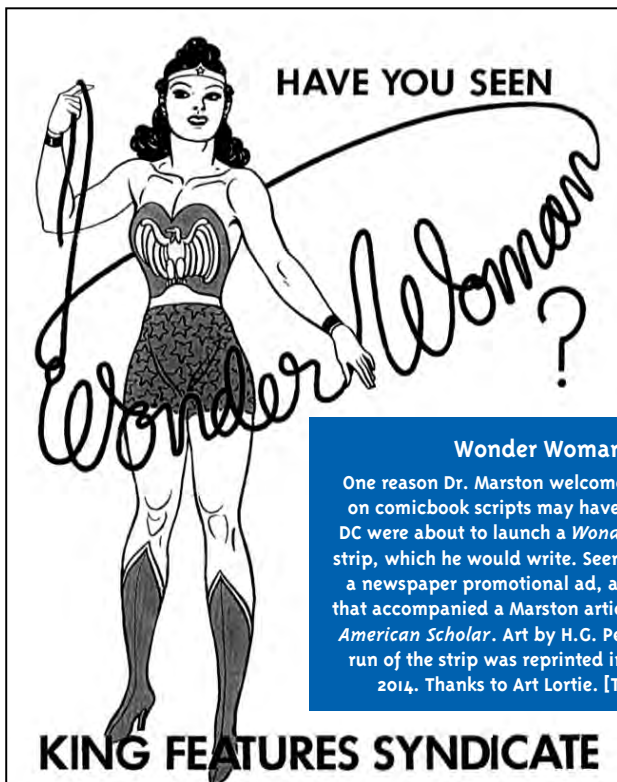
RA: How did Dr. Marston end up offering you a job?

KELLY: That was the surprise of my life. As I told you, I took the psychology class that Dr. Marston taught. It wasn't by choice. It was a required second-year course that you had to take. I thought he was a remarkable teacher. The way he explained his philosophy, how to get along with people, how to treat people on an everyday



You're A Wonder, Girl!

In "The Secret of the Limestone Caves" in *Wonder Woman* #30 (July-Aug. 1948), whose splash page can be viewed on p. 29, Joye utilized a young girl named Olive Norton (no doubt named after Olive Byrne, Dr. Marston's primary assistant and a member of the Marston household), who had first appeared in a Marston-scripted story in *Sensation Comics* #58 (Oct. 1946). In *WW* #30, Olive has become a bully because, Wonder Woman says, "We taught [her] to be as strong as an Amazon but neglected to train her in self-control and submission to loving authority"—so Olive is enrolled in "the Athena School" to correct that omission. This tale introduced the concept of a pre-adolescent Diana as the prototype for the later "Wonder Girl," seen in Queen Hippolyte's Magic Sphere—and her example inspires Olive to mend her ways. Art by H.G. Peter. Thanks to Joshua Hansen Clark, Jim Ludwig, and Chet Cox for the scans, and to the Great Comics Database for the cross-reference info. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Wonder Woman Strips!

One reason Dr. Marston welcomed Joye Hummel's help on comicbook scripts may have been because he and DC were about to launch a *Wonder Woman* daily comic strip, which he would write. Seen above and at right are a newspaper promotional ad, and an additional plug that accompanied a Marston article in a 1943 issue of *The American Scholar*. Art by H.G. Peter. The entire 1944-45 run of the strip was reprinted in hardcover by IDW in 2014. Thanks to Art Lortie. [TM & © DC Comics.]



BARBARA FRIEDLANDER'S Love Affair With DC Comics

On Being A Romance Writer & Editor— Just Down The Hall From The Silver Age

by Richard J. Arndt

INTERVIEWER'S

INTRODUCTION: Barbara

Friedlander Bloomfield was a freelance writer and associate editor for DC editor Jack Miller and served as a sometime de facto editor on at least six romance titles for DC Comics between 1964 and 1970. She was also the co-creator (with Joe Orlando) of the comicbook series *Swing with Scooter*. Following her comics career, she worked in the jewelry and antiques fields. In August 2018 she attended her first comics convention (TerriFiCon in Connecticut) and enjoyed talking to fans of *Swing with Scooter*, in particular. Because she used her maiden name "Friedlander" during her years in the comics field, we've employed that appellation in this interview, which was conducted between January 26 and February 1, 2018. Special thanks to Jacque Nodell, Jim Ludwig, and Bob Bailey for their help in supplying art and info to accompany this interview....



Barbara Friedlander Bloomfield

and her son, Cliff Bloomfield, a few years back—juxtaposed with:

(Below left:) The lead splash page from *Girls' Romances* #127 (Sept. 1967), one of the issues in whose indicia she's listed as full "editor"—though she suspects Jack Miller wrote this particular story. Artist unidentified. Thanks to BFB for this & the photo scan.

(Below right:) Barbara scripted this tale from *Girls' Love Stories* #152 (July 1970), with pencils by Werner Roth & inks by Jack Abel. Thanks to Jacque Nodell, and to Robin Snyder for the writer ID. [TM & © DC Comics.]



RICHARD ARNDT: *It's a pleasure to talk with you, Barbara. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?*

BARBARA FRIEDLANDER: I was a baby boomer, born on Sept. 27, 1945. I was born and raised in New York and I loved it there. It was very hard for me to leave it. My father had a hardware store on 6th Avenue and 52nd Street. That entire area is now built up. The building number was 1303, and that's now a huge building that houses the garment workers' union, I believe.

RA: *What kind of education do you have?*

FRIEDLANDER: I went to PS [Public School] 69 in the city. Its main claim to fame was that Bernard Baruch, the financier, also went to that school. I graduated from Julia Richman High School. Then I went to Hunter College for a while, finally switching to taking night classes there. This was just after my father passed away and it was hard for me to think straight. So I decided I would work and go to school at night. I went to an employment agency and they got me several jobs. I really didn't have any job skills at the time except that I could type and be a file clerk. The place that I eventually ended up was DC Comics.

RA: *Outside of the fact that you needed a job, what attracted you to DC Comics? Were you a comics fan?*

FRIEDLANDER: My introduction to comics was Archie Comics, *Katy Keene*, and *Millie the Model*. I loved pretty things, and those books had lots of that sort of thing. I never read *Batman* or *Superman*. I was surprised that those two titles were still being published. But I loved the romance books. That's what got me interested.

I started out in the DC subscription department. That office included Mr. Liebowitz's secretary. I also knew Irwin Donenfeld's secretary.

I wrote a few stories as a freelancer and they liked them. It took a while, but after about a year of freelancing I was hired in editorial. I was working, freelancing, and going to school, and then I got the

job at DC. I enjoyed it because I got to meet some very interesting people. I also began to know the staff on the other side of the office. People like Jack Miller, who became my mentor. I learned a lot from Jack.

RA: *What sort of freelance work were you doing?*

FRIEDLANDER: I was writing love stories for Jack Miller. I wrote the advice columns—including "Advice to the Lovelorn," which featured advice to young girls on how to put on makeup, all kinds of things like that. It was what they called filler material, but a lot of that filler material that I was doing wasn't necessarily in those DC romance titles before I started doing it.

I started doing the freelance work in 1964, and then I became a fulltime worker in 1965, and in 1966 I became an associate editor, working for Jack Miller in the romance books. I still have a wonderful caricature of me, drawn by Joe Orlando, which also features caricatures of nearly everybody who worked in the DC bullpen at the time. It's just adorable and came as a complete surprise to me. He did it when I got the associate editor's position.

RA: *Do you remember the names of the other people in that caricature?*

FRIEDLANDER: Sol Harrison and Jack are in there for sure. I think the rather heavy-set man is Julie Schwartz. The young girl isn't anyone in particular. I think she represented the switchboard operators. There was also E. Nelson Bridwell, Bob Haney, Arnold Drake, and several other editors depicted there.

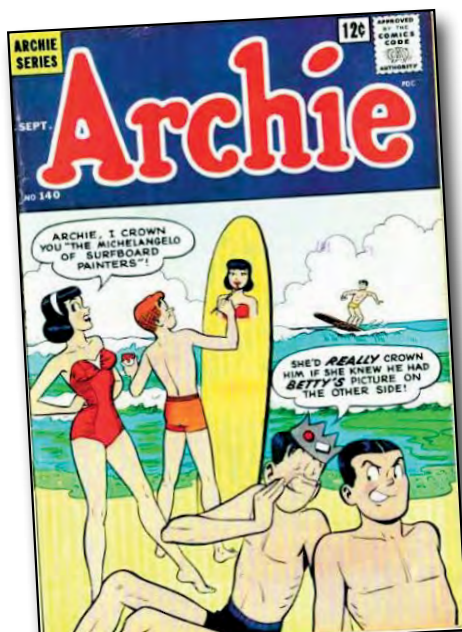
RA: *Did you ever become a full editor?*

FRIEDLANDER: No, my job title was always associate editor, but I did all the work of a regular editor. I wrote my books, did the art assignments and so on... that's what I did. I'm listed as the editor



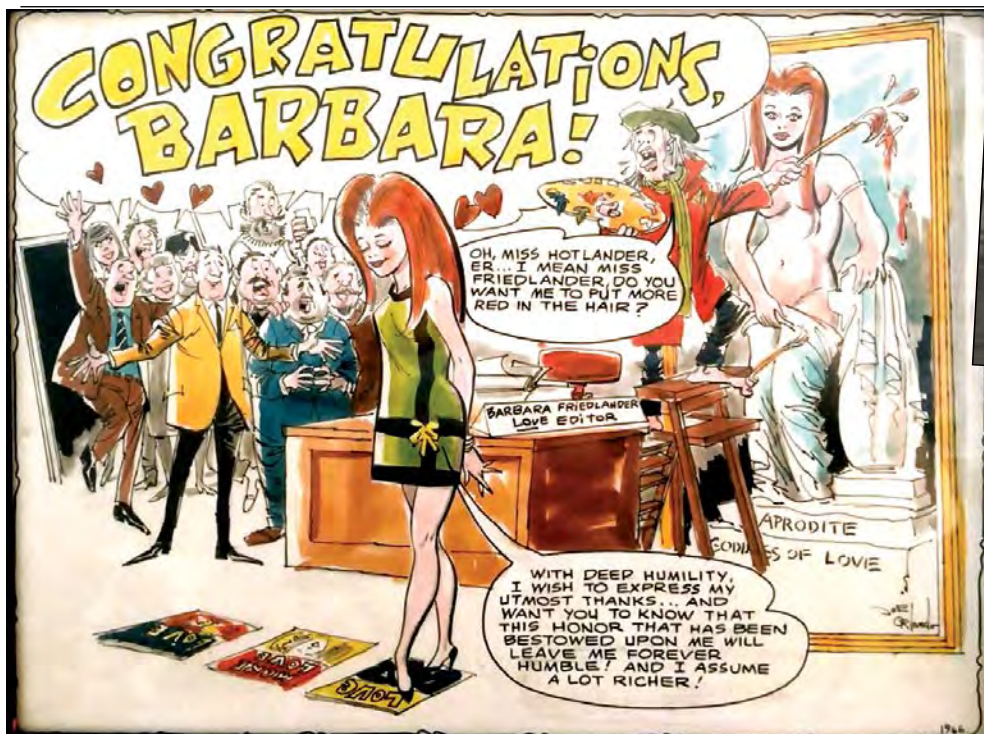
Jack Miller

The former DC editor and writer at Barbara's wedding in May 1969. Sadly, he died of cancer only a year later. Thanks to BFB & Linedia Benaca.



Archie, Katy, & Millie

Barbara's "introduction to comics" most likely came with earlier issues of these series than the ones depicted above; still, as a teenager years she still might've encountered the likes of *Archie* #140 (Sept. 1963), with cover pencils by Harry Lucy... *Katy Keene* #61 (Sept. '61), art by Bill Woggon... and *Millie the Model Comics* #106 (Jan. 1962), drawn by Stan Goldberg. [Archie & Katy Keene covers TM & © Archie Comic Publications, Inc.; Millie cover TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Venus Rising

Orlando drew this cartoon of and for Barbara in 1966, upon her official promotion to associate editor of the romance comics. Thanks to BF. [Art © Estate of Joe Orlando.]



Joe Orlando

was already a well-respected artist when he came to work for DC in the 1960s, but soon became the editor of DC's most successful suspense comics, beginning with *House of Mystery*. He's seen here penciling an issue of *Daredevil* for Marvel, circa 1964. Thanks to Shaun Clancy.

on a number of books. I don't think I was ever listed as an associate editor, but that was my actual title. I think at some point the higher-ups at DC assumed that I was an actual editor. I can't really explain that. That's just the way it was.

RA: What can you tell us about the DC bullpen of the 1960s? Sad to say, there are not many people left who have direct knowledge of that period.

FRIEDLANDER: I knew Sol Harrison, Jack Schiff, Ira Schnapp, and Walter Hurlicheck. Walter was a letterer. I think he was also the fellow who escorted the young people who came to tour the offices. Ira was a letterer as well. Ira was ancient, an elderly person when I knew him. He'd worked at DC for years but before that he'd worked in the movies doing the lettering on movie posters. He could tell you about all the movies that he made posters for.

He was a very interesting character. He was so ingrained there in the organization that he was just a permanent fixture. I don't know how long he worked after I left DC but he was still there when I did leave.

So many people—Irwin Hasen, Bob Haney, Arnold Drake, Carmine Infantino—so many, many people. The greatest authority on *Superman* there was a young man named E. Nelson Bridwell. He was the most complicated, quiet, nerdy person I ever met, but he was wonderful. He was just delightful. The office I ended up in I shared with Nelson and Jack Miller.

I think Nelson may have had a nervous disorder, because he would make sounds, interesting sounds while he worked. He was so dedicated to *Superman*! He would carry a razorblade to edit

Three Memorable DC People-Plus!



Sol Harrison

DC head of production, later vice president—and apparently the guy who came up with "go-go checks" circa 1966 (see pp. 39 & 48). Photo by Bob Rozakis.



Jack Schiff

Longtime DC editor. Photo by Jack Adler; courtesy of Todd Klein's blog.



Ira Schnapp

Major DC letterer, who designed some of its archetypal title logos. Photo courtesy of his son; forwarded by Michael T. Gilbert.



"Proofreading At Left, Lettering At Right"

That's how comics fan John Fahey labeled the above snapshot he took of part of DC's production area during an office visit on December 29, 1964. This is the first time this photo has been reprinted since it first appeared in *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1.] #9 in 1965; it is reproduced from that issue. Sorry it didn't repro better.



Carmine Infantino

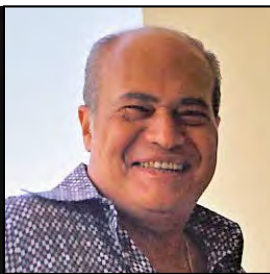
By the end of the 1960s, he had become DC's editorial director, on his way to a stint as publisher. Also seen is a scan of the original Infantino art for a DC love-comics cover—though whether or not it was ever used is not known. Thanks to Mark Evanier's blog www.newsfromme.com for the photo, and to dealer Mike Burkey (visit his www.romitaman.com site) for the art scan. [Art TM & © DC Comics.]

RA: Both John and Gene quit DC and went over to Marvel in 1965. Gene used the pseudonym of "Adam Austin" for a while, to hide the fact that he was working for both companies for a period of time.

FRIEDLANDER: When Jack took over the romance books, he was originally working with more artists than later on. Certainly more than I was. He used John Romita a lot. I think they [Romita and Colan] went over to Marvel because they could be more creative there. The romance department at DC was a small department compared to the other genres, and neither John nor Gene was getting a lot of work outside the romance books at DC. Certainly no super-hero work that I'm aware of. Of course, they were both gone when I got the associate editor job.

RA: John Romita was doing a nice series about a young nurse for Young Love. It was reprinted a few years back in a Showcase Presents volume. I think Robert Kanigher wrote the series.

FRIEDLANDER: Oh, but that would have



Carmine Infantino

been Jack's idea. He liked nurse stories and stewardess stories. I stayed away from those kind of stories. They weren't in my wheelhouse at the time.

RA: Do you remember Arthur Peddy or Bernard Sachs? Both of them ended their comic book careers around that time. They were doing quite a lot of romance work up through 1965-1966, then left for advertising work and never looked back.

FRIEDLANDER: Good for them. I honestly can't remember them, though I do remember Bernie Sachs' name. If I saw a picture of either of them, it might jog a memory, but it wouldn't be more than "Yes, I saw him." I don't remember working with either of them. Even if they were still working at DC when I was freelancing, if I wasn't in editorial yet there'd have been no reason or maybe even opportunity to meet them.

RA: Bernie Sachs was also inking the Justice League of America at the time. Am I correct in remembering that you wrote the "20 Miles to Heartbreak" serial that Alex Toth illustrated in late 1969-early 1970? You're credited as the writer when the serial was reprinted in 1977. I didn't read a lot of romance comics back in the day because I was only 12 or 13 and nobody I knew brought them, but recently I've been reading



Tony Abruzzo

was, perhaps second only to Jay Scott Pike, Barbara Friedlander's go-to artist for romance work. Seen here is his splash for a story in *Young Love* #56 (Aug. 1966). Thanks to Jacque Nodell. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Of Crows And The Cosmos

Part VIII Of *My Life In Little Pieces* By JOHN BROOME

AIE

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *In most issues since #149, we've been serializing, with the blessing of his daughter Ricky Terry Brisacque, the above-named "Off-beat Autbio" of Irving Bernard ("John") Broome, the much-respected Golden and Silver Age comics writer, who tarried upon this Earth from 1913 to 1999. Beginning in 1956, he was for years the primary writer of tales of the revamped "Flash" and "Green Lantern" for DC Comics—two titles which sparked the rejuvenation of the comics field and helped point the way to the modern era. John's memoir is not strictly-speaking an "autobiography" at all, but rather a collection of anecdotes, observations, and musings, many of which provide insight into this important comics scripter... even if comicbooks are never directly referred to in his short 1998 book, and only rarely do any of his four-color colleagues of the 1940s through the 1960s put in an appearance.*

This time around, crows and trees and the universe are the subjects... or at least the pretexts. Thanks to Brian K. Morris for retyping the work into a Word document for Ye Editor....

Putting In A Good Word For Crows

Chickens you can have, brother, and pigeons, too, but crows are different. Mister All-Black is a bird with pride, that's what he is; and you won't catch him snibbling around looking for a handout. Nossir! Or running around a barnyard, either, *after* his head has been cut off! Why, even the measliest, scroungiest crow would think far too much of himself ever to do something as undignified as that.

Of course you won't see a crow work. You can't train him like a falcon or get him to go fishing for you like a cormorant. And you're not likely to be watching Timothy T. (for Tecumseh) Crow in a circus or on TV. Truth is, your Mr. A-B is your iron-bound, oak-lined, moss-covered individualist if there ever was one. This funereal-feathered vagabond is a bit of a thief, species of gypsy, strictly no account by the world's standards, and with a bank balance perpetually scraping zero, but come what may he's his own bird and no one tells a crow what to do. Nossir!

Once I had a half-wild crow for a pet. Although you can't really tame a crow, he'll come and live with you for a spell if the spirit moves him, and that's what Gregor did with us. We called him Gregor on onomatopoeic grounds after listening to his attempts at conversation, all of it in a critical vein, by the way, as far as we could tell. He came sailing out of the blue on those big black wings of his and, if memory serves, landed on our clothesline.

My wife had gone out to hang clothes and she came back a moment after with eyes wide. "There's something on the line," she said. I went out and met Gregor. As I approached, he sidled away

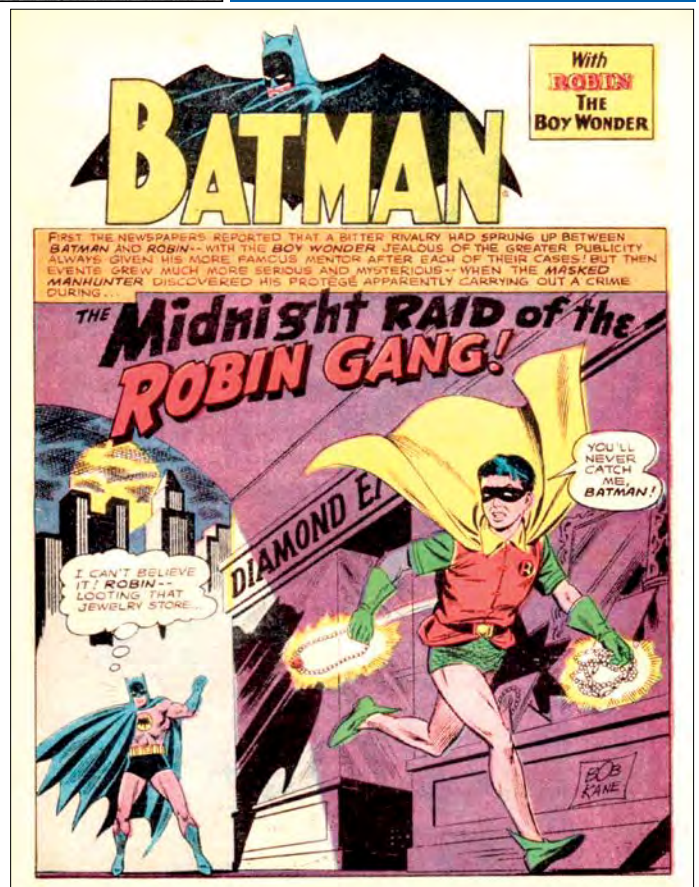
muttering. Critically. But he didn't take off. Somewhere, he'd lost his fear of humans. Later, I got the impression that his visit with us was based mainly on curiosity. In his own community, maybe Gregor was something of a sociologist: who knows about crows anyway?



Something To Crow About

(Left:) John Broome with Gregor the crow, circa 1956; photo courtesy of Ricky Terry Brisacque.

(Below:) While Broome occasionally wrote stories that dealt with birds, the avian with which he's most closely associated in the minds of comics readers is the robin—or rather, Robin the Boy Wonder. John was one of the primary writers of Julius Schwartz's "New Look Batman" in the mid-1960s, a reasonably successful attempt to update the Caped Crusader not long before the 1966 TV series would make him an overnight sensation by camping him up! Art by Shelly Moldoff, doing his own interpretation of Carmine Infantino's rendition of Batman, for *Detective Comics* #342 (Aug. 1965). Art scan courtesy of Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]





HEY, MARVEL FANS! HAVE WE GOT A TREAT FOR YOU! MEET **BRUCE MCCORKINDALE**, A CARTOONIST WITH THE UNCANNY ABILITY TO RE-CREATE CLASSIC COMICBOOK COVERS. THESE ARE PRIVATE COMMISSIONS DRAWN FOR COMIC CONNOISSEURS WHO CAN'T AFFORD TO DROP \$50,000 OR SO FOR THE ORIGINALS! BUT RATHER THAN MERELY COPYING A FAMOUS COVER, BRUCE SOMETIMES SHAKES THINGS UP BY INCORPORATING SPLASH PAGES AND SUCH FROM THE SAME ISSUE TO MAKE STRIKING NEW "IMAGINARY" COVERS – SOME EVEN *BETTER* THAN THE ORIGINALS!



(Far Left & above:) Steve Ditko's *Strange Tales* #146 cover (July 1966). When Ditko unexpectedly quit the title, editor Stan Lee was forced to use some of Steve's interior art for the issue's cover. Above, Bruce McCorkindale turned interior art into a faux cover.
[© Marvel Characters, Inc.]

IN THIS CASE, BRUCE TOOK STEVE DITKO'S PUBLISHED COVER TO *STRANGE TALES* #146, AND REPLACED IT WITH ANOTHER DITKO IMAGE FROM THE SAME ISSUE! LOOK FOR MORE TWICE-TOLD COVERS IN **BRUCE MCCORKINDALE'S...**

MIGHTY MARVEL MASHUP!!

The Mighty Marvel Mashup!

by Michael T. Gilbert

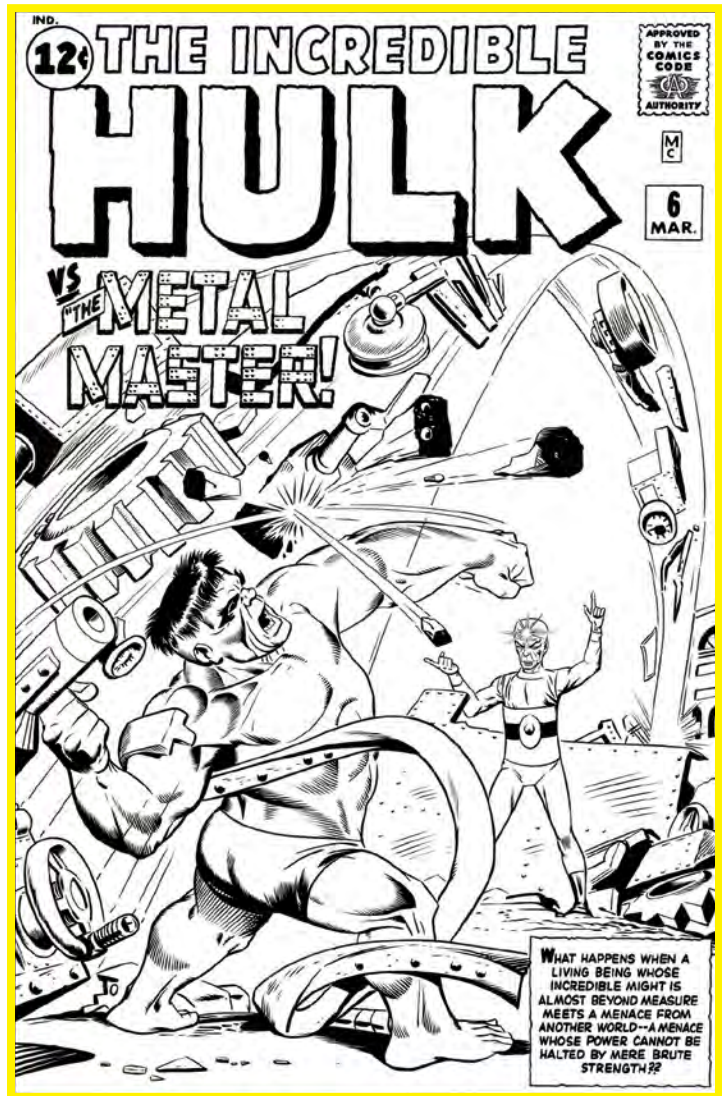
Recently the Crypt published a series of articles on the late, great cartoonist Dan Adkins. In it, a number of respected comic professionals debated the pros and cons of swiping art without attribution—something that got Dan in hot water in the late '60s.

This issue we're exploring a similar topic, but one less controversial: fully credited original art re-creations. Who among us hasn't dreamed of owning Kirby and Ditko's *Amazing Fantasy* #15 cover, or the one featuring Infantino's classic "Flash Of Two Worlds"? However, with rare comic art going for stratospheric prices nowadays, many cash-strapped fans find cover re-creations to be a fun, affordable alternative. Hey, it looks great hanging on a wall, and you won't need to get a second mortgage. Trust me—your "significant other" will thank you!

For the artist, cover re-creations can be a fun challenge, and a profitable hobby. I've done a few, and it's a kick to see how closely one can follow the original. One can also learn a surprising amount by imitating the masters.



(Above:) Steve Ditko's cover image for *The Incredible Hulk* #6 (March 1963). [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



Bigger Than Life?

(Above:) Bruce replaced the Ditko cover image with Ditko's splash page from the same ish (left). Bruce generally does his art in the classic large Golden Age size (13" x 20"). Say, is it just me, or does Steve's splash drawing make an even more dramatic cover than the real one? [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



The Fan P.O.V. Of The Marvel Super-Heroes—In 1963!

Bill Schelly here—presenting another trip in the Time Machine back to the early days of comic fandom—with a helping hand from Nick Caputo. Alter Ego is grateful to him for resurrecting the “Point of View” columns from Larry Herndon’s fanzine *Hero* in the early 1960s. Last issue, Nick introduced the round-robin discussion of the Justice League of America comicbook that had been printed in *Hero* #1. This time, he’s presenting the following discussion of the Marvel super-heroes as of early 1963. You have the floor, Nick!

Introduction by Nick Caputo

Looking through the eyes of a young, enthusiastic, and talented group of fans from the distance of 55 years is intriguing. One can’t help but be impressed by their efforts: unpolished, certainly, but bursting with fervor. It echoed a similar development with a different set of teens that formed bands and practiced in their basements (later dubbed *garage rock*). Both were deeply inspired by their passions and sought to create something they could call their own. As editor and publisher of *Hero*, Larry Herndon achieved those results.

Hero #2 continued the “Point of View” column, a round-table commentary, this time with a partly-new group of participating fans: Bob Butts, Buddy Saunders, and Al Kuhfeld. The first issue had spotlighted DC’s heroes, so it was only natural that issue #2 focused on the newly christened Marvel Comics Group and their super-hero features. Chairman Rick Weingroff supplied the questions to this trio, as he had in the previous issue.

A little background: publisher Martin Goodman’s super-hero revival was less than two years old when *Hero* #2 was mailed out to fans in May of 1963. Lee and Kirby’s *Fantastic Four* had started the ball rolling in mid-1961 and had become one of the best-sellers from what remained of the line once known as Timely Comics (or Atlas, or occasionally even as Marvel). The *FF* was soon followed by *The Incredible Hulk* (which failed to achieve adequate sales and only ran six issues), “The Mighty Thor” (in *Journey into Mystery*); “The Astonishing Ant-Man” (in *Tales to Astonish*); “The Human Torch” (in *Strange Tales*), “The Invincible Iron Man” (in *Tales of Suspense*), and *The Amazing Spider-Man*. With six super-heroes either starring in their own comicbook or as the lead feature in



Rick Weingroff
Chairman.



Buddy Saunders



Bob Butts



Al Kuhfeld

a fantasy title (*The Avengers*—mentioned in the article—and *The X-Men* would follow in three months), more than half of Goodman’s comicbook output now consisted of costumed heroes. These colorful characters were seized upon by young fans (and a selection of older ones) who not only read the stories but had strong opinions on their content, as will be evident in the discussion republished below.

And now, from the pages of *Hero* #2 (Spring 1963), the narration by Chairman Rick Weingroff:

A/E EDITOR’S NOTE: Last issue, we altered the identifying proper nouns of the “speakers” (e.g., Chairman:) to all-caps and bold (e.g., **CHAIRMAN:**). This time around, however, in the interests of authenticity, we’ve left them in non-bold upper-and-lower case, as they appeared in the original fanzine. Ditto with the phrase “comic book,” which A/E now customarily spells as one word. Oh, and the cover of *Hero* fanzine #2 (May 1963) was printed with last issue’s installment.

Once again, *Hero* throws open its pages to discussion on one of the favorite topics for fan consideration: The Marvel Comics Group. This issue the opinions were supplied by Bob Butts (editor of *Fan-to-Fan*), Buddy Saunders (artist and writer for many zines), and Al Kuhfeld (popular contributor). Before we start this discussion, for the benefit of any newcomers, I will briefly explain how “Point of View” is done. The article is made up of opinions sent to me by several fans, asking seven or eight questions which I sent to people who I feel will have a good, honest opinion on the topic. I reserve the full right to alter and edit these answers, in order to make a more smoothly moving article, although in no way do I change the opinions of the people queried. That out of the way, let’s get on with the discussion.

Chairman: Just to start this discussion off, I’ll ask one of the original questions and see if we can’t get a discussion going on the point: Who is your favorite hero at Marvel?

Buddy: My favorite hero is Spider-Man. He greatly outranks any of the other Marvel heroes, and Ditko draws the character in a manner that actually suggests the spider qualities.

Al: I agree that Spider-Man is the best Marvel has to offer, not only because of his great artwork, but also because of Spider-Man’s sense of humor. Though it

doesn't receive a full play in the stories, Spider-Man is the only Marvel hero with a fully-developed sense of humor. Only he would get a job with Jameson for the reason that he did.

Bob: Actually, although Spider-Man and the Ant-Man are my two favorite single heroes at Marvel, their adventures are, when probable, either too mundane or too outré. They can't seem to hit the balance between science fiction and plausibility.

Al: I can't agree with you there, Bob. "Spider-Man versus the Vulture" was, for example, very good, although how much of that was due to the "brick wall effect" (it feels so good when I stop) is uncertain.

Buddy: And the Vulture, and also Dr. Octopus from the third issue, brought out very well the many potential story lines for the Spider-Man.

Al: Right. Certainly the introduction of a villain like the Vulture—with every bit as much dash as Namor or Doctor Doom—is worthy of a good deal of credit.

Buddy: Of course the art does have a lot to do with Spider-Man's success. Ditko has a clear snap that I like.

Al: Strictly speaking, although he may not be one of the best draftsmen Marvel has, his work is stylistically attractive, being decorative rather than merely illustrative.

Bob: One thing about the art at Marvel in general is the new art concept. Basically, there seems to be a change in the coloring. Marvel is more somber than DC and the layout of colors is different.

Buddy: The coloring of the Spider-Man is actually one of the few points that I think this dark coloring has helped. The covers, for instance, are colored too darkly to be good.

Bob: Perhaps so, but the darker coloring and the more rigid panel-structure and grey-building-backgrounds are a relief from the monotony. Since Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko seem to have created this style, I would say they are my favorite artists at Marvel.

Buddy: I go along with your second choice, but couldn't agree with you less on Kirby. Some say Jack is overworked, but whatever the problem is, the fact remains that his work isn't as good as it should be.

Al: I don't even consider Kirby in a rating of Marvel artists. To me the order is: Ditko, followed at a great distance by Joe Sinnott and Don Heck. The latter two just plug along, doing nothing poorly enough to annoy and occasionally something quite good; Ditko's forte, on the other hand, is in his flashes of brilliance, which Heck and Sinnott can't even come near matching.

Buddy: Yes, other than Ditko, Heck, and possibly Sinnott, the Marvel group is producing very little good art. Actually, though, I



You Don't Know Jack!

One or two of the panelists seem dismissive of Jack Kirby's early Marvel work. What can we say? Best just to show the Kirby cover, inked by Ditko, of *Fantastic Four* #14 (May 1963), which went on sale a couple of months before *Hero* #2 went into the mails. Thanks to the Grand Comics Database. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

think the art teams are better than the artists themselves. For instance Kirby-Ditko is the best Marvel has, while Kirby-Heck is certainly good.

Bob: I personally think that Kirby's art is often too outré and bizarre, but then I'm not exactly an authority on the Marvel artists.

Al: Of course the art is important, but I think the best thing about the Marvel heroes is the general impression they give. Rather than appearing to have been stamped out by cookie-cutters as some heroes do, they have knocks and bumps all over their psyches.

Bob: There's no question but that Stan Lee is Marvel personified. If he fails, Marvel fails. If he succeeds, Marvel succeeds. He makes each hero act alive! They're heroic humans, not gods who never make mistakes or show emotion.

Buddy: One of Marvel's greatest accomplishments has been its characterization; no other group has done so well with this.

Al: Of course this characterization doesn't always work out right. The recent attempt to give Ant-Man emotions by introducing the Wasp and his late wife is still too uncertain to be evaluated, but right now he is the worst Marvel has to offer—thanks mainly to the loss of the Hulk from his own comic.

Buddy: I disagree with you on that point, Al. Ant-Man is my favorite hero (aside from Spider-Man), mainly because of the Heck art and the fact that, although his stories aren't as good as the DC type, they are much better than the trash forced upon Iron Man, Thor, and the Human Torch.

Al: I couldn't disagree with you less on that. Until the Wasp, Ant-Man could have been replaced by an exceptionally smart ant with little loss in interest except for those who prefer human heroes. As for the Torch, where most heroes would hesitate to give hot feet to their enemies, the Torch passes them out with abandon to his friends. This is the type of good story line in this series.

Buddy: I guess the main problem with the Torch, as far as I'm concerned, is that I expect the villains to be of the caliber of those in the Flash, and Marvel just doesn't make those kind. If the Torch has to be tied down with poor enemies like the Wizard and Paste-Pot Pete, it's no wonder he doesn't get his own mag!

Bob: In my opinion the Torch is one of the most un-fantastic Fantastic Four. He still looks like a "cheap cigar"! In fact, I hope that he is eventually removed from *Strange Tales* and replaced by another hero.

Buddy: Actually, the Torch's art doesn't fit him. Those thick ink lines give him a heavy appearance—unlike the old Timely Torch.

Bob: But the Thing falls into an entirely different category. He is the

Tom Wolfe & The Marvel Age Of Comics

A Neo-Journalist & Future Novelist's Four-Color Detours

A Personal Remembrance by Roy Thomas

Bestselling fiction writer and “New Journalist” Tom Wolfe (born 1930) died at age 88 on May 14, 2018. He was the author of such acclaimed books as *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968), *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers* (1970), *The Right Stuff* (1979), *Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), *A Man in Full* (1998), and other popular and influential works both long and short.

Now, ordinarily, since Thomas Kennedy Wolfe, Jr., never wrote, drew, or edited a comicbook—and, so far as I know, only rarely *read* one as an adult—his passing would not be noted in *Alter Ego*, even though he has been a literary and cultural icon of mine since the mid-1960s. Newspapers, TV, and print journals have paid just tribute to his life and work.

However, Wolfe did have a “comicbook connection,” even if he never sought one. In *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, he detailed the antics of *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* author Ken Kesey and his acolytes, the self-styled “Merry Pranksters,” on a 1964 cross-country journey in a psychedelically painted school bus (and with plenty of LSD on board to justify those hues; non-druggie Wolfe had been tolerated “on the bus” as an observer). Early on in the reportorial work, Wolfe refers to the modern “myths” that had truly touched people a couple of decades earlier: “not Hercules, Orpheus, Ulysses, and Aeneas—but Superman, Captain Marvel, Batman, The Human Torch, The Sub-Mariner, Captain America, Plastic Man, The Flash....”

Later in the book, Wolfe discovers there are a number of recent Marvel comics aboard the bus—especially issues of *Strange Tales* featuring “Doctor Strange, Master of the Mystic Arts”—which seem in some oddball way to be fueling some of the Merry Pranksters’ fantasies. At one point he describes Kesey as “[sitting] for hours on end, reading comic books, absorbed in the plunging purple Steve Ditko shadows of Dr. Strange attired in capes and chiaroscuro, saying: ‘How could they have known that the gem was merely a device to bridge DIMENSIONS! It was a means to enter the dread PURPLE DIMENSION—from our own world!’” There’s a later reference to Doc battling Aggamon (in that selfsame issue), in the chapter Wolfe titled “Dream Wars.”

Intrigued by this, and greatly admiring the entirety of *Kool-Aid* for reasons totally unrelated to comics, I wrote its Manhattan-dwelling author a fan-letter of sorts (sent in care of his publisher, I’m sure), which ended by asking him if he would mind if I wrote him into a scene in the *Doctor Strange* title I was then

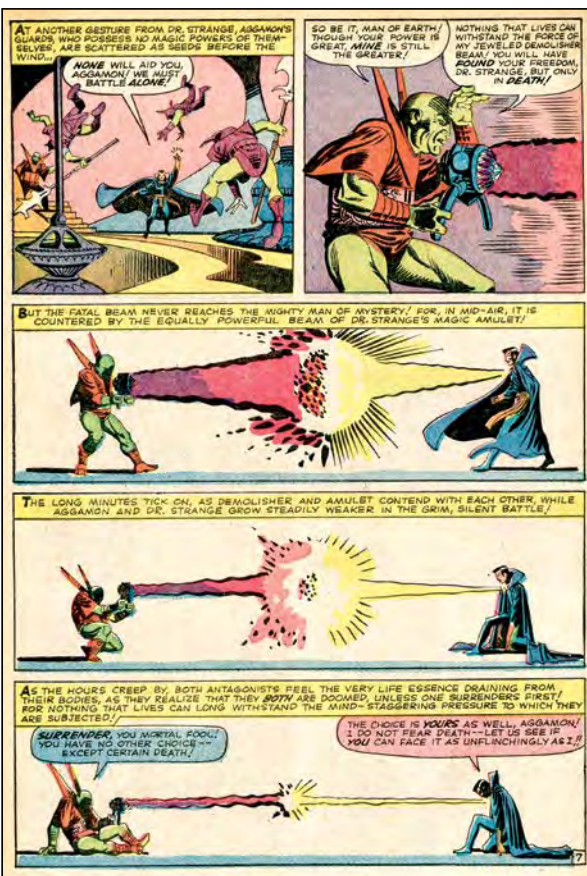
scripting with artist Gene Colan (Ditko having moved on by early 1966). I was delighted to receive a quick response, a handwritten letter that made abundant use of dazzling calligraphic flourishes, including cartouches—boxes around certain important words or phrases, just as the names of Pharaohs had once been enclosed amid Egyptian hieroglyphics written on monuments of stone. That particular missive, alas, has gone lost over the years amid my moves from Coast to Coast to Coast; but, to my overjoyed surprise, he granted me the blessing I sought with no request for prior (or later) approval. So I had Gene pencil him into a sequence in *Doctor Strange* #180 (May 1969), in which Stephen and his extra-dimensional ladyfriend Clea run into journalist Tom Wolfe amid the multitude of revelers on Broadway in Times Square on New Year’s Eve. (This story had been intended for #179, which came out at the turn of 1969-70; but unremembered circumstances intervened and #179 had wound up sporting a Ditko reprint instead.) I’m not entirely happy with the dialogue I put in the two men’s mouths during their brief exchange, but I’m happier with the sequence in general—a brief interim, just moments/panels before a huge pterodactyl flies into the electric news-ticker that dances around the Allied Chemical Tower. As I recall, Marvel received a number of letters expressing shock and awe at the unexpected meeting of Doc and Tom Wolfe.

Soon afterward, Wolfe told a fellow journalist—or at least he was indirectly quoted as doing so—that some time later he had been “killing time” in some waiting room by paging through a *Doctor Strange* comic lying there (what kind of waiting room was he in, anyway?) when he’d been surprised to spot his likeness therein. Well, maybe he just forgot he’d okayed our depicting him. For, surely I’d sent him a copy of the comic. (Or did I somehow *forget* to do so? Not likely—but it *was* a long time ago.) In any case, if I received any sort of early reaction to the story from Wolfe, I don’t recall it now.

Some time later, I read his newest bestseller, *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*—or, since that 1970 work was



Tom Wolfe
Back in the day.



"Purple" Rain

(Left:) From *Strange Tales* #119 (April 1964), the splash page of the "Dr. Strange" yarn set in the Purple Dimension—and p. 9 of the story, in which the Mystic Master fights a supernatural battle with that realm's evil ruler, Aggamon. Script by Stan Lee; art (and quite possibly plot) by Steve Ditko. Thanks to Barry Pearl for the scans. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

actually a compilation of two of his fairly recent articles gathered in book form, perhaps I was reacting to the original publication in *New York* magazine of "Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny's," its original title. In that piece, which introduced into the language a new term that is still with us, he reported on a cocktail party he had attended at the 13-room Park Avenue penthouse of composer Leonard Bernstein and his wife Felicia Montealegre on January 14, 1970. The event was intended as a fundraiser for the Black Panther Party—yes, the same controversial African-American organization founded in late 1966, no doubt coincidentally, half a year after the first appearance of Marvel's super-hero Black Panther in *Fantastic Four* #52-53 (July & Aug. '66).

Wolfe took no stance for or against the real-life Panthers, who were seen



Strange Bedfellows

Panels from the two pages in *Doctor Strange* #180 (May 1969) in which Stephen and Clea encounter Tom Wolfe in Times Square on New Year's Eve, 1968. Roy Thomas, writer; Gene Colan, penciler; Tom Palmer, inker. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



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Reinterpretation by Will Meugniot (maskedmayhem.blogspot.com)
After Gene Colan and Frank Giacoia. Shazam heroes and related characters™ & © DC Comics, Marvel heroes™ & © Marvel Characters, Inc.

"The Stan Lee Of 1943!"

Fawcett Associate Editor
Henry "Lynn" Perkins

by Will Murray

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

[The following piece originally saw print in Comic Book Marketplace #120 (March 2005). It is re-presented here with its text revised/updated, and accompanied with new illustrations. —PCH.]

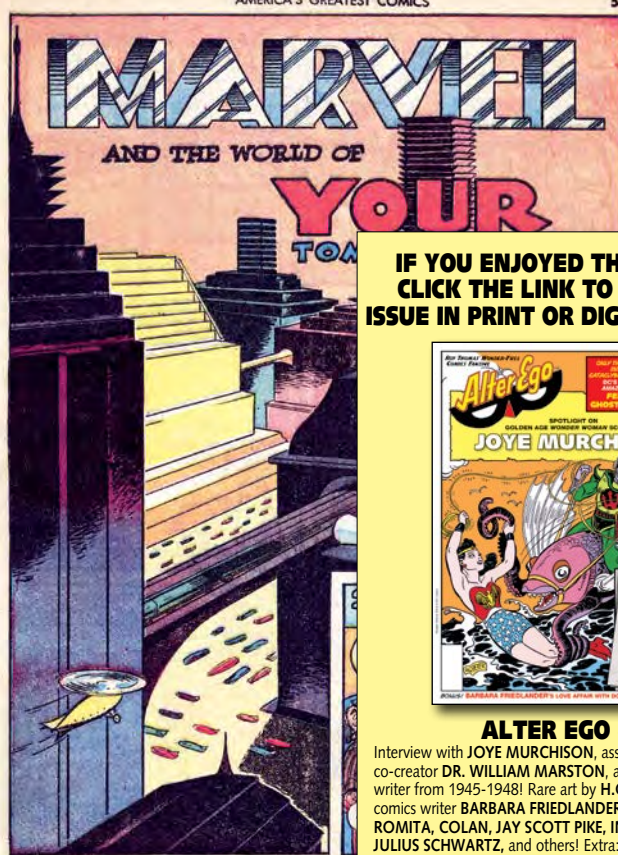
Few remember Henry "Lynn" Perkins. Yet, back in the Golden Age of Comics, he was a significant writer and editor. How significant? In addition to being a pivotal presence at Fawcett, where he inaugurated intriguing changes that smack of the kind of super-hero revolution Stan Lee kicked off in 1961, Perkins constituted a one-man British Invasion as well.

I had never heard of Henry Perkins until the day I was going through bound library volumes of a forgotten 1940s writers' periodical called the *Writer's Journal*. The April 1943 issue carried a cover story titled "Comic Magazines Turning Comic, And Hungry For New Writers."

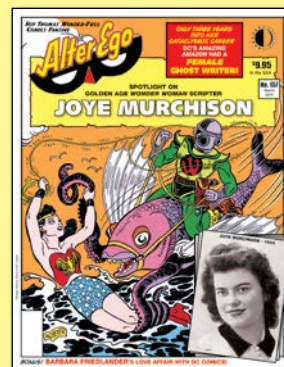


Henry Aveline ("Lynn") Perkins

Born in Petropolis, Brazil, on April 22, 1919, he was the second son of British parents, F.W. and Winifred Perkins. His brother, Frederick F. Perkins, was five years older. After the family moved back to England, Henry attended the Charterhouse School near Godalming before beginning his writing career, which encompassed newspapers, pulps, comics, and movie serials. Officially becoming a U.S. citizen in 1951, Perkins and his wife left Hollywood and returned to New York; the couple had a least one child. By the 1970s, he was working at public relations firms. Henry Perkins passed away in New York City on July 20, 1999.



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ALTER EGO #157

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Perkins plotted the "Captain Marvel" story "The World of Your Tomorrow," which appeared in *America's Greatest Comics* art by C.C. Beck & staff. Read this FCA article to learn the thing that occurred in that story that became the last thing that happened in a Fawcett comic! [Shazam, Billy Batson, & Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics]