

ROY THOMAS'
YULE-BE-SURPRISED
COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™

\$8.95
In the USA

No.130
January
2015



A SPECIAL
HOLIDAY
EDITION OF

FCA ⚡
Fawcett Collectors of America



80 PAGES

STARRING CAPTAIN MARVEL
with Spy Smasher, Golden Arrow, Bullet-
man, Mr. Scarlet, Commando Yank, Ibis
the Invincible, Lance O'Casey, Phantom
Eagle, and many others.

plus—DAN BARRY!



Heroes TM & © DC Comics or the respective copyright holders.

Editor
Roy Thomas
Associate Editors
Bill Schelly
Jim Amash
Design & Layout
Christopher Day
Consulting Editor
John Morrow
FCA Editor
Paul C. Hamerlinck
J.T. Go (Assoc. Editor)

Comic Crypt Editor
Michael T. Gilbert
Editorial Honor Roll
Jerry G. Bails (founder)
Ronn Foss, Biljo White
Mike Friedrich
Proofreaders
Rob Smentek
William J. Dowlding

Cover Artist
C.C. Beck
(colorist unknown)

With Special Thanks to:

Heidi Amash	Sharon Karibian
Ger Apeldoorn	David Anthony
Terrance Armstead	Kraft
Lois Barry	André LeBlanc
Steven Barry	Paul Leiffer
Sy Barry	Dominique Leonard
Alberto Becattini	Mark Lewis
Gail Beckett	Arthur Lortie
William Biggins	Jim Ludwig
Bill Black	Michel Maillot
Gary F. Brown	George Mandel
Chris Boyko	Jim McCaffrey
Frank Brunner	Robert Menzies
Rich Buckler	Brian K. Morris
Aaron Caplan	Will Murray
Nick Caputo	Marc Tyler
Shaun Clancy	Nobleman
Ed Cox	Rick Norwood
Brian Cremins	Amy Kiste Nyberg
Rich Donnelly	Barry Pearl
Ramona Felmang	John G. Pierce
Shane Foley	Gene Reed
Clay Fourrier	Ed Rhoades
Rod Fradkin	Steve Ringgenberg
Mike Friedrich	Trina Robbins
Bob Fujitani	Jan Sand
Janet Gilbert	Randy Sargent
Don Glut	Dave Schreiner
Chris Green	Vijah Shah
Walt Grogan	Leonard Starr
George Hagenauer	Brian D. Stoud
Jostein Hansen	Dann Thomas
Barbara Harmon	Gerry Turnbull
Carolyn Hayes	Juan Urgano
Tom Hegeman	Hames Ware
Bob Hyde	Len Wein
M. Thomas Inge	Lindsey S.
Sid Jacobson	Wilkerson
Doug (Gaff) Jones	



If you're viewing a Digital Edition of this publication, PLEASE READ THIS: This is copyrighted material, NOT intended for downloading anywhere except our website or Apps. If you downloaded it from another website or torrent, go ahead and read it, and if you decide to keep it, DO THE RIGHT THING and buy a legal download, or a printed copy. Otherwise, DELETE IT FROM YOUR DEVICE and DO NOT SHARE IT WITH FRIENDS OR POST IT ANYWHERE. If you enjoy our publications enough to download them, please pay for them so we can keep producing ones like this. Our digital editions should ONLY be downloaded within our Apps and at www.twomorrow.com



FRANK ANDERSON IS AN EASTERNER WHO KNOWS THE NIGHTCLUB STREETS BETTER THAN THE SAGEBRUSH TRAILS, WHOSE ONLY KNOWLEDGE OF CACTUS IS WHAT HIS FLORIST HAS TOLD HIM. HIS FATHER, SCORNING AND DESPAIRING OF HIS SON, SEEKING AID, CALLS TO THE VIGILANTE AND WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN EXCITING AND COLORFUL TALE OF... "THE MAKING OF A MAN!"

Contents

Writer/Editorial: Keeping The "Christmas" In Christmas 2

The Many Facets Of Dan Barry. 3
Alberto Becattini begins an in-depth study of a controversial comic book/comic strip artist.

Seal Of Approval: History Of The Comics Code—Chapter 6 . . 29
Amy Kiste Nyberg relates how the Code evolved, beginning in 1955!

"I Want Kids To Grow Up Knowing Who Really Created Batman" 37
Marc Tyler Nobleman discusses his "children's book" about writer Bill Finger.

Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt! Twice-Told Covers. 41
Michael T. Gilbert demonstrates that, if a cover's worth using once, it's worth using *again!*

Comic Fandom Archive: "Was I First In Remembering Comic Books?" 47
Bill Schelly showcases the late Jim Harmon's reminiscences of his 1957 *Peon* column.

A Tribute To Morris Weiss. 51

re: [comments & corrections]. 52

FCA [Fawcett Collectors Of America] #190 61

Paul C. Hamerlinck presents a super-length Yuletide "Yule-ogy" for some Fawcett greats—Beck, Binder, and Swayze—plus a colorful cache of vintage Fawcett Christmas art!

On Our Cover: *Fawcett Publications' various giant-sized Christmas comics were an institution for a number of years, as detailed in this issue's likewise giant-sized FCA section—and one of the best covers in the lot was Charles Clarence Beck's for Xmas Comics #2 (1942). We kinda wonder if C.C. told his Fawcett bosses how much he detested showing Captain Marvel and Santa Claus together—or at least he did in 1973, as you'll also read this issue! And here you thought it was just a simple, harmless comic book cover!* [Shazam hero, Bulletman, Spy Smasher, Mr. Scarlet, Ibis the Invincible TM & © DC Comics; other art © the respective copyright holders.]

Above: *During his several years working for National/DC, the multi-talented Dan Barry drew a number of outstanding "Vigilante" stories, featuring that modern-day masked cowboy hero. One of his finest splash pages is this one from Action Comics #142 (March 1950), from a script attributed to Gardner F. Fox. Thanks to Alberto Becattini. [© DC Comics.]*



Alter Ego™ is published 8 times a year by TwoMorrow, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. Alter Ego Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@ntinet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrow, NOT to the editorial offices. Eight-issue subscriptions: \$67 US, \$85 Canada, \$104 elsewhere. All characters are © their respective companies. All material © their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. Alter Ego is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. ISSN: 1932-6890

FIRST PRINTING.



This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Morris Weiss & Dan Barry

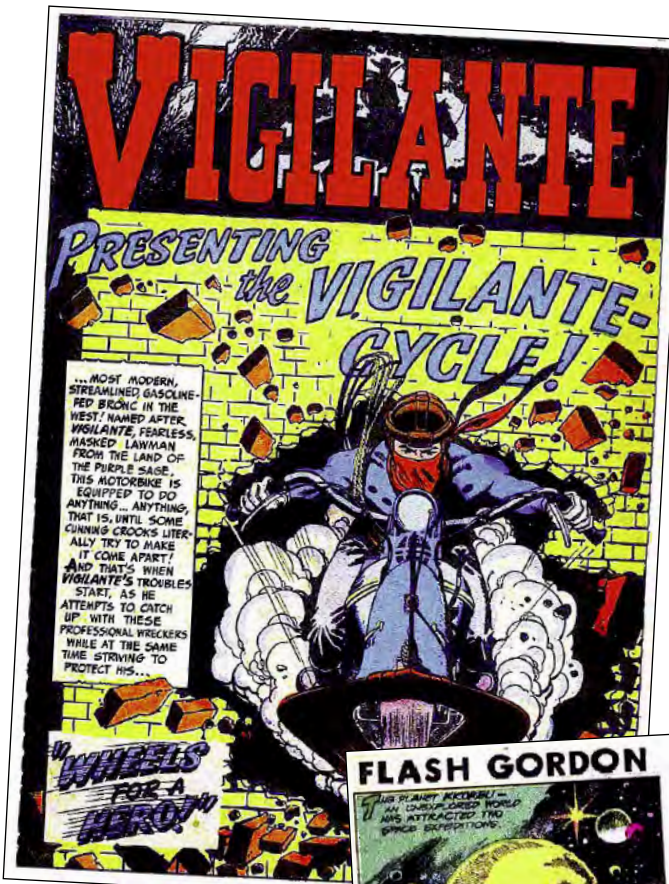
The Many Facets Of DAN BARRY

Comic Books, Comic Strips—& A Controversial Genius

by Alberto Becattini

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION: Dan Barry has always been one of my favorite comic artists. As a young boy I was fascinated by his Flash Gordon, and only later on would I discover his beautiful comic book stories. This essay is the result of a 20-year-long extensive researching of the man and the artist, and it would not exist were it not for the many wonderful people who have aided me along the way. These include Barry's children Steven and Lois, who helped a lot with family history and pictures; comics historians Bill Black, Shaun Clancy, Ed Cox, Ramona

Felmann, Jostein Hansen, Bob Hyde, David Anthony Kraft, Paul Leiffer, Arthur Lortie, Rick Norwood, Ed Rhoades, Steve Ringgenberg, Dave Schreiner, Brian D. Stroud, and Juan Urgano, who have contributed interviews and insights; and interviewees Sy Barry, Gail Beckett, Rich Buckler, Bob Fujitani, Carolyn Hayes, Sid Jacobson, André LeBlanc, George Mandel, Jan Sand, Larry T. Shaw, and Leonard Starr. And thanks to Roy Thomas, who made it happen....



Dan Barry—A Flashy Artist!

A 1952 photo of Dan Barry in his studio at the Hotel des Artistes, illustrating Flash Gordon—flanked by some of his primo comic book and comic strip work: The "Vigilante" splash from *Action Comics* #149 (Oct. 1950). [© DC Comics.] The Dec. 18, 1983, *Flash Gordon* Sunday page. [© King Features Syndicate, Inc.] Except where otherwise noted, all art & photos accompanying this article were provided by Alberto Becattini.



PART I: The Great Little Artist From New Jersey

Beginnings

Daniel Louis Barry was born in Long Branch, New Jersey, on July 11, 1923, to Samuel (1892-1976) and Sarah Barry (1894-1978). His father was a painting contractor, bringing home about \$40 a week, and supporting a big family. Dan was the fourth-born, his elder siblings being Tillie (b. 1918), Phillip (b. 1919), and Beatrice (b. 1920). The family grew even bigger during the following years with the births of Herman (b. 1926), Seymour (b. 1928), Raymond (b. 1929), and Enid (b. 1935). Dan's son Steven has shed more light on the family background:

My grandfather Samuel was a painter. Sarah raised eight children and liked to cook. I remember Sarah used a lot of garlic when she cooked. I remember meeting Sarah's mother at age 95 when I was young. She was of Hungarian ancestry—I believe the last name was Menschik. My aunt Tillie was known as Chickie. Two of Raymond's boys—Harvey and Ricky, both around my age (I believe Ricky is a little older and Harvey a little younger)—had artistic talents. I believe Ricky taught art and Harvey had a graphics company.¹

The Great Depression struck, and there were times when Samuel's business was really bad. Dan and elder brother Phillip had to be temporarily sent to an orphanage because Samuel could not support all the kids. In 1931 the Barrys moved to 2930 West 24th Street, at the tip end of Brooklyn, in Coney Island, and that is where Dan grew up.

Art School

Barry studied at Straubenmuller Textile High School at 343 West 18th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City, where he became the editor of the school paper and drew his first cartoons. He left there while in the twelfth grade to pursue his dream: drawing comics. On account of his early talent, he had just won his first scholarship to attend an art school on Saturdays, the American Artists School in Greenwich Village. Founded in April 1936 and originally located at 131 West



Early Days

(Above:) Dan Barry's parents, Samuel and Sarah, in a 1949 photo. [Courtesy of Steven Barry.]

(Left:) A view of Straubenmuller Textile High School, which Dan Barry attended from 1936-39.

14th Street, the American Artists School was a progressive independent art school among whose founders was William Gropper, the political cartoonist for the left-wing paper *The Daily Worker*. Barry's instructors were Ralph Soyer and Osato Kuniyushi. They taught him the basics of drawing and painting. To pay for art school he would do odd jobs like shining shoes.

A Key Meeting

In his teens, Barry would spend most of his free time in Coney Island, playing roller hockey in the street. There he met, among others, Joseph Heller and Cy Coleman (who would later become famous, respectively as a writer and a songwriter/jazz pianist). It was through Heller's mentor, Daniel Rosoff, that Barry got into comics when he was eighteen. Rosoff recommended him to George Mandel, who had lived in the same neighborhood before becoming a successful comic book artist and moving nearby. As Mandel recalled:

Dan was as fine a draftsman as Jack Kirby, which is to say the most, as Kirby was matchless but for Danny. Also note that, as a person, he was among the fairest, thoughtfully sensitive and agreeable. It was Daniel Rosoff, one of my closest friends, who recommended Dan to me. A very colorful guy (we were just 21, in time for war), he enjoyed upwardly influencing younger boys culturally and health-wise, himself a dedicated athlete and reader—of two books at a time, no joke.²

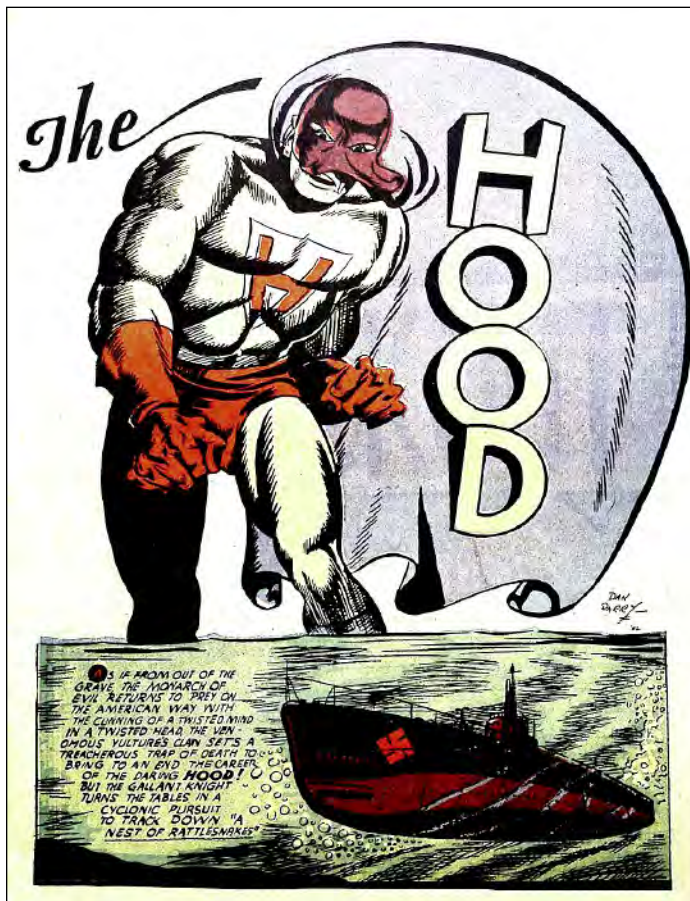
At the time, Barry was a stagehand at the People's Theatre Group, drama being one of his early interests. One day Mandel came over in his Cadillac and drove Barry to his studio. Barry took to going there regularly, observing Mandel at work. He would bring in his samples for Mandel to comment on and make suggestions. George's elder brother, Alan, was



Our Crowd

(Left:) Comic book artist (and later highly regarded novelist) George Mandel in a 1952 photo. Mandel was three years Barry's senior when he took him on as his assistant in 1941. Mandel was interviewed by Jim Amash in *A/E* #103.

(Center:) Joseph Heller (1923-1999), author of *Catch-22*, and (at right) Cy Coleman (1929-2004), lyricist for such Broadway hits as *Sweet Charity*, hung around Coney Island with Dan Barry as kids. These photos show them some years later.



Dan Alone

(Above:) "The Hood" story from *Cat-Man Comics*, Vol. 3, #7 [real #17] (Jan. 1943) might be the first one penciled and inked—and signed—by Dan Barry.

(Top right:) "Boy King" art by Barry from *Clue Comics*, Vol. 1, #4 [real #4] (June 1943).

(Right:) Signed splash page for *Heroic Comics* #19 (July 1943).
[© the respective copyright holders.]



EUGENE MOORE

LIVING PROOF OF THE "KIND O' STUFF" MARINES ARE MADE OF . . .



Newburgh, 60 miles north of New York. Spillane had just sold his first Mike Hammer novel, *I, the Jury* [1947], and wanted to publish his own comic books. He asked different artists to join him, saying he would build a house for each of them if they did. Dan Barry declined, whereas others like Mike Roy and Harry Sahle accepted.)

Most of the stories Barry penciled at Funnies, Inc., were inked by John Giunta, who was to become his lifelong friend. When they first met, both were living in Brooklyn—Barry in Flatbush and Giunta around Bay Ridge. Besides doing Barry's finishes on "Blue Bolt," Giunta also inked such strips as "Sky Wolf" for Hillman. It was Giunta who introduced Barry to a young talent by the name of Frank Frazetta.

Marriage, Hillman, And Timely

When Barry got married to Helene Marks, he left art school and went to live on Long Island. Barry wanted to go back to New York City, but his wife said it was impossible to raise kids there. As Steven Barry recalled:

[M]y mother, who never remarried, raised two children on her own. (My father, on the other hand, did not want to get involved, claiming my mother would undo everything he could teach me.) I was very close to my mother, who had a significantly smaller family than my father—one older sister,



To Sketch A Thief

(Above left:) Barry's drawing of *Crime Does Not Pay* narrator Mr. Crime and his victim, done especially for fellow artist George Roussos' sketchbook, circa 1948. [© Estate of Dan Barry.]

(Above right:) Dan Barry's and George Roussos' self-portraits drawn for the latter's sketchbook, also circa '48. [© Estates of Dan Barry and George Roussos, respectively.]



fighter only made cameo appearances, often to go to court and pin down the real culprit of a crime in front of the judge.

Fawcett And Croydon

Fawcett Publications was another publisher that benefited from Barry's contributions during 1946-47. There, Barry took his revenge on Jack Binder by virtually stealing two characters away from him—or rather, from his shop artists. Created in 1940 by writer Bill Parker and artist Jon Small, "Bulletman" was police lab technician Jim Barr, who had developed a bullet-shaped device called the Gravity Helmet that allowed him to fly. Among the titles where "Bulletman" appeared was *Master Comics*, and Dan Barry drew him in issues #81 & 82, probably from scripts by Otto Binder.

Usually drawn by former Binder Shop artist Leonard Frank, "Captain Midnight" was another aviation stalwart whose stories ran in his own title from 1942-48. Born as a radio hero, Captain "Red" Albright was given a secret identity and a red and purple costume at Fawcett, as well as aides Chuck and Joyce Ramsay and a comical mechanic called

Crime Marches On!

(Right:) Barry's cover for the mystery paperback *Dogwatch*, published by Croydon in 1946. The author had a great name for a crime writer: Carlyn Coffin. Think it was a realie? [© the respective copyright holders.]





Dr. Amy Kiste
Nyberg

Seal Of Approval: The History Of The Comics Code

Beginning Chapter 6 Of Our
Serialization Of The 1998 Study
By AMY KISTE NYBERG



This sticker heralding the sale on Comics Code-approved magazines was sent out to retailers—complete with instructions on how to apply it.

A/E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *This time around, we only have room for part of one of the concluding chapters of Dr. Nyberg's book on the history of comic book censorship. This segment*

*covers the early days of the Comics Code Authority, illustrated by numerous examples of the Code's revisions of comic art and writing that was submitted to them in the days soon after it went into effect at the end of 1954—on the heels of that year's hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, the publication of Dr. Fredric Wertham's anti-comics book *Seduction of the Innocent*, and the formation by most of the surviving publishers of the Comic Magazine Association of America.*

Once more: Seal of Approval is heavily "footnoted," albeit in the MLA style which lists book, article, or author name, plus page numbers, between parentheses in the main text: e.g., "(Hart 154-156)" refers to pp. 154-156 of whichever work by an author or editor named Hart appears in the bibliography... which will be printed at the conclusion of our serialization, a few issues from now. When the parentheses contain only page numbers, it is because the other pertinent information is printed in the text preceding the note.

In the main text, we've again retained usages from Nyberg's book such as "superhero," an uncapitalized "comics code," "E.C." and "DC," etc. In the captions Ye Editor has added, however, we've reverted to A/E house preference. These captions, of course, do not necessarily



I Wanna Hold Your Hand Grenade

(Above:) Another photo (which, alas, we cannot reproduce any larger from our source) of Judge Charles F. Murphy, first Comics Code administrator, at the early press conference in the Joe, among other things, he showed alterations he had ordered made in the Jim Sinnott-drawn story "Sarah" for *Timely/Atlas' Uncanny Tales* #29 (March 1955). See *A/E* #128 for another such pic.

(Right:) The Comics Code Authority's proscribed changes were, from first to last, something of a hit-and-miss affair. E.g., The grenade explosion in the final panel of this sequence from Charlton's *Soldier and Marine Comics* #13 (April 1955) was approved by the Code during the first months of its existence, while other similar violence was often censored out of existence. Maybe this panel slipped through because the enemy combatant was killed only in silhouette?

Artist and writer unidentified. Thanks to Jim Ludwig. [© the respective copyright holders.]

*reflect the opinion of Dr. Nyberg or of the University Press of Mississippi, the original publisher of the book—whose original edition can still be obtained from UPM at www.upress.sate.ms.us. Our thanks to Dr. M. Thomas Inge, under whose general editorship the volume was originally published in 1998 as part of its *Studies in Popular Culture* series, and who was instrumental in helping to arrange for its reprinting here. Thanks also to William Biggins and Vijah Shah, acquisitions editors past and present at the U. Press of Mississippi... and to Brian K. Morris for retyping the text on a Word document for Ye Editor to, well, edit.*

Chapter 5, in A/E #128, dealt with the adoption and earliest implementation of the 1954 Comics Code, under its so-called "comics czar," Judge Charles F. Murphy....



“I Want Kids To Grow Up Knowing Who Really Created Batman”

MARC TYLER NOBLEMAN Talks About His Mission To Win Posthumous Fame For BILL FINGER

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by John G. Pierce

INTERVIEWER'S INTRO: Marc Tyler Nobleman is a man on a mission. He wants people, especially younger people, to know who really created Batman. He wants to bring to light the contributions of one Milton Finger, better known as Bill Finger, to those who might otherwise conclude that Batman was solely (or even principally) created by Bob Kane. Marc agreed to talk to me about his motivations and research (voluminous research, as it turned out) in writing his 2012 tribute to Finger, *Bill the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-Creator of Batman* (Charlesbridge, 2012), which was illustrated by Ty Templeton.



JOHN G. PIERCE: First of all, what does this book add to our knowledge?

MARC TYLER NOBLEMAN:

We've all heard the saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover." You also can't judge it by its thickness! This is a picture book packed with a lot of previously unpublished information. Most of it is about Bill Finger as a man, not as a comics writer. It fleshes him out as a person.

There were key details which needed to be uncovered. Who was his family? How had he died? What happened after his passing? The book doesn't end with Bill's death; the last six pages of the story proper take place *after* his death. I knew that he was poor, but I didn't know that he had died without an obituary, a funeral, or a gravestone. It was a heartbreaking end for the man who almost single-handedly created one of the top three or perhaps five fictional characters of all time. It was as if he just drifted off the face of the earth without a trace.

JGP: So why did you write in this format? Why not a longer biography?

NOBLEMAN: We've gone decades without a Bill Finger book. My feelings were 1) this is the area (i.e., children's books) in which I'm most experienced; and 2) I wanted to work from the ground up. I want kids to grow up knowing who really created Batman. Too late to do [Bill Finger] any good, but I believe that justice has no expiration date. The truth shall set Bill free!

[As a result of the book,] I'm regularly asked to speak at schools, conferences, etc. A highlight was the chance to present at San



A Finger In Every Plot

While researching his book about Bill Finger, Marc Tyler Nobleman uncovered a number of previously unknown photos of Batman's co-creator. This one shows Bill and his wife Portia at the beach, probably sometime in the 1940s.

By then, "Batman" had already long since been developed by Finger and artist Bob Kane. Seen above are the first two panels Finger would have written featuring the new hero—the splash page (in which the "Bat-Man" is seen only in silhouette) and the first story panel in which he appears, both from *Detective Comics #27* (May 1939). These panels are repro'd from the 1990 DC hardcover *Batman Archives, Vol. 1*. The past quarter-century has seen an explosion in the preservation of vintage comic book material in book form—and the end is nowhere in sight! [© DC Comics.]

Diego Comic-Con. I had two sessions; the first was very well attended, and the second (a panel with author Larry Tye) was standing-room only. Some of the people at the first appearance came back for the second.

JGP: Can you give us any clues as to your research methods?

NOBLEMAN: The book relays some of the methods used, some quite outlandish. I started with his first wife, Portia. She had died in 1990, but I located her last known address, in New York City. So



WELCOME, READERS!
I'M THE *GHOST* INSIDE THE
PAINTING, AS DEPICTED ON THE COVER OF
ISSUE ONE OF HARVEY'S *MAN IN BLACK*! BUT CHECK
OUT THE *AD* FOR THAT COMIC. AS YOU CAN
SEE, I JUST WASN'T *MYSELF* THAT DAY!
GIGGLE!

THAT'S 'CAUSE WHEN IT CAME TIME TO *PRINT* THE *AD*,
I WAS *MISSING* IN ACTION! OR AT LEAST *MISSING* FROM
THE *BLACK* PLATE! HEY, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? *HE'S*
THE *MAN IN BLACK*. I'M THE *WOMAN IN RED*!

ACTUALLY, *BOB POWELL* DREW ME AS A
COLOR HOLD ON A SEPARATE RED PLATE. AND
WHEN EDITOR *JOE SIMON* NEEDED A QUICKIE COVER
FOR THE *AD*, HE ADDED A *TEMPORARY* LOGO AND
DRAWING OF ME! AT HARVEY, THEY WERE ALWAYS
TINKERING. BUT THE *RESULTS*
WERE *WORTH* IT!



note - This art prints
entirely in red and yellow
only!

Man in Black #1

AND IT WASN'T JUST *HARVEY*! OTHER
PUBLISHERS HAD THEIR OWN. . .

**TWICE-TOLD
COVERS!**

(Left:) Ad from *Black Cat Mystic* #59 (Sept 1957). (Right:) *Man in Black* #1 (Sept. 1957)
Art from the Joe Simon Collection. Joe may have drawn the ad art. [Art © Harvey Comics.]

Twice-Told Covers!

by Michael T. Gilbert

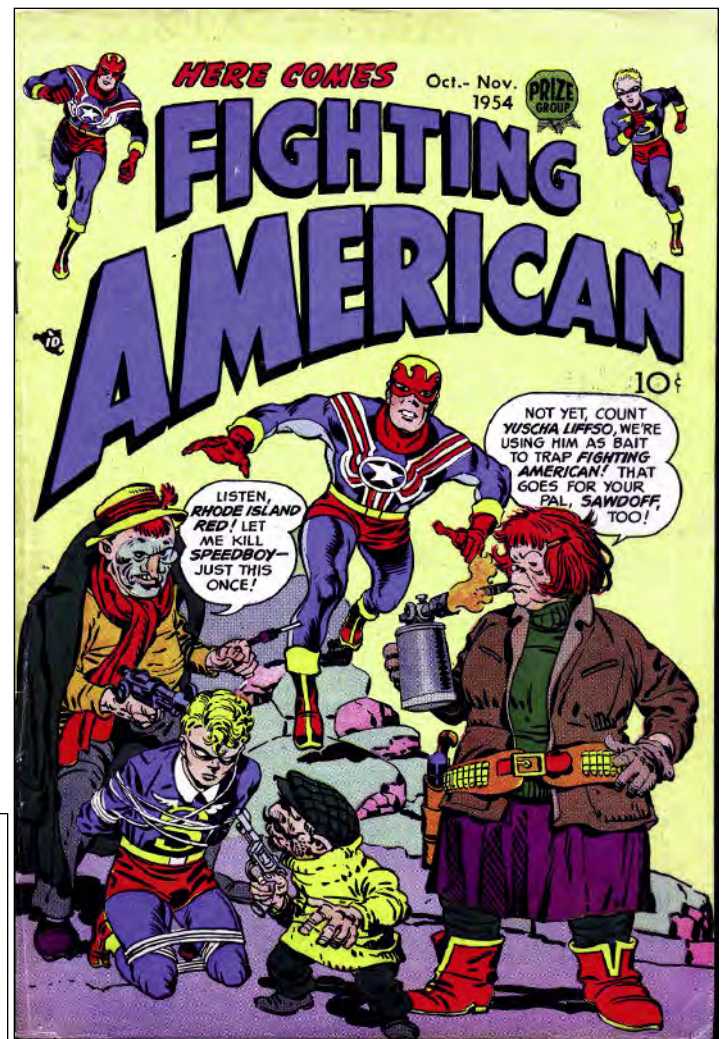
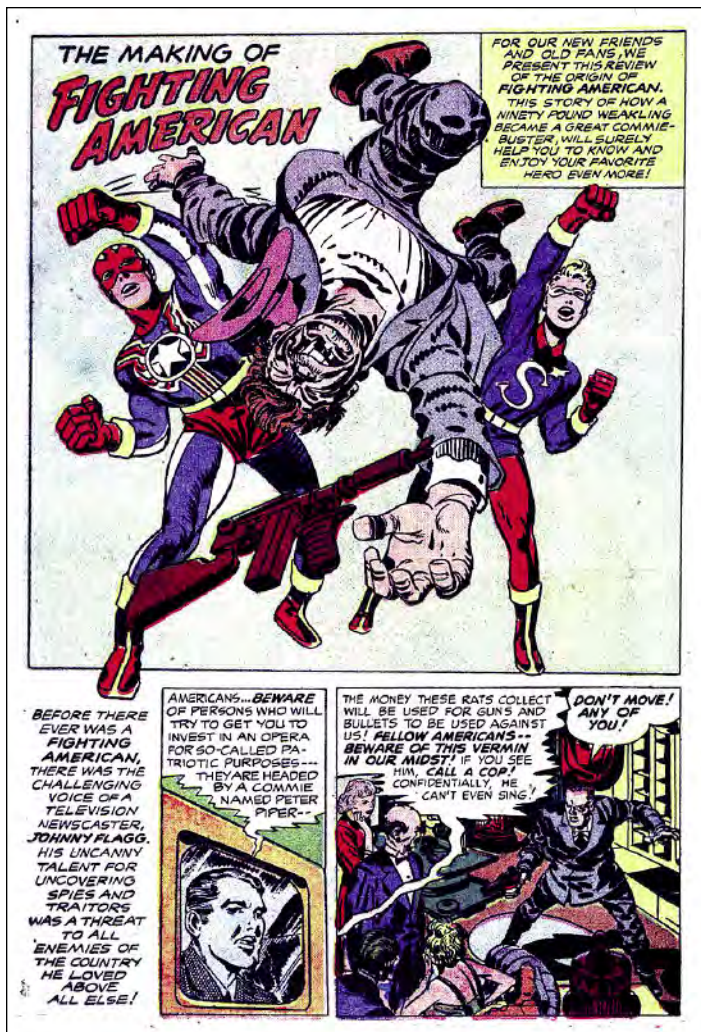
Schlock-meister publisher Victor Fox may not have cared about the quality of the art *inside* his comics, but he sure cared about his covers. That's why Fox hired Lou Fine and other top talents to draw spectacular cover art oozing sex and blood. He knew what sold comics!

Over at DC, the editors would brainstorm bizarre cover ideas, designed to titillate the kiddies' curiosity. Then, almost as an afterthought, they'd have their writers come up with improbable stories to match them. Who cared if the plots made sense? It was the covers that counted!

Covers were the best advertisements when publishers were trying to sell comics to kids. Gold and Silver Age comic book publishers spent a lot of time designing those mini-posters.

Twice-Told Prize!

Prize Publishing editor Joe Simon knew the value of a good cover, too. He once tossed away a perfectly wonderful one that he and Jack Kirby drew. Why? Because the team came up with an even *better* one!



Those Loveable Commies!

(Above:) Simon & Kirby's fabulous cover to Prize's *Fighting American* #4, cover-dated Oct. 1954.

(Left:) *Fighting American* #6 (Feb. 1955) featured a recap of the hero's origin, reprinted from issue #1. However, a new splash panel was added, recycled from a rejected *Fighting American* #4 cover. [© 2014 Estates of Joe Simon & Jack Kirby.]

The new cover featured a trio of cutthroat Commies—namely Rhode Island Red, Sawdoff, and Yusha Liffso (as in the Yiddish phrase “You should live so long!”). Those three no-goodniks were so evil that they talked Joe into replacing Kirby's original *Fighting American* #4 cover with one starring them!

But Simon had the last laugh. Rather than waste a good action scene, the team recycled their cover into a dramatic splash panel for a reprint of *Fighting American*'s origin story two issues later.

In that same spirit, I decided to re-recycle their original drawing, imagining the cover as it might have looked had Simon & Kirby gone with their first idea. (See facing page.)

Employing a little Photoshop magic, I added new text and word balloons in the silly spirit of the original stories. My verdict? Joe Simon & Jack Kirby's original cover would have been a knockout, too—literally! *Ouch!*

“Was I First In Remembering Comic Books?”

A Posthumous Guest Column About The “Harmony” Article In *Peon* #38 (Feb. 1957) That Anticipated “All In Color For A Dime”

by Jim Harmon

Introduction

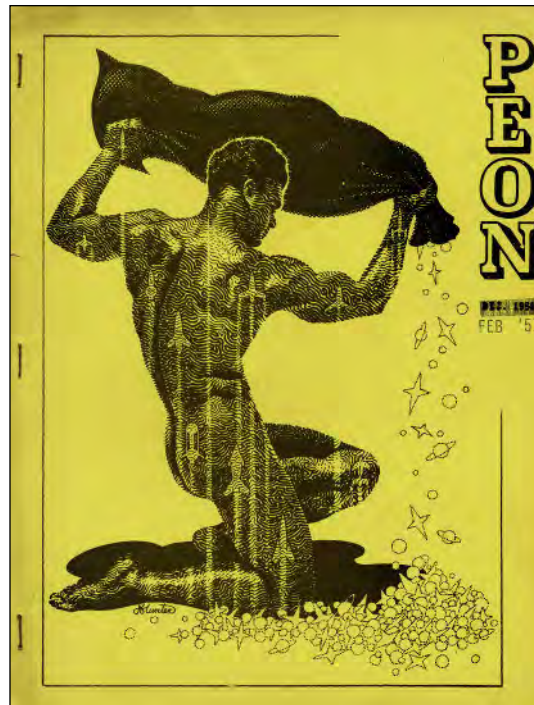
In A/E #127, we re-presented Jim Harmon’s 1957 “Harmony” column, probably the first nostalgic/historic article ever written about the Golden Age of Comic Books. But we felt we ought to allow him to append his comments to it, and to address some of the factual errors of the type that inevitably appear in pioneering articles. We thank Jim’s wife Barbara for her kind permission to posthumously publish Jim’s article, which is copyright by her. Jim passed away in 2010 and had written this article specifically for *Alter Ego* and the “Comic Fandom Archive” a bit earlier. —Bill Schelly.

In 1957, I was twenty-four years old and I had been a professional writer for five years, selling stories to *Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Galaxy* when I was nineteen. I had not given up writing for the amateur science fiction fanzines, and still haven’t after another fifty years. I did a regular column titled with a simple play on my own name, “Harmony,” for one called *Peon*, which was a play on the Navy rank of its editor, Charles Lee Riddle. (It was “PN” something. Can’t remember it all.) I didn’t spend much time waiting for divine inspiration, but I took a few minutes to look at the blank sheet of paper in my old, used Remington

typewriter. Recently I had read another fanzine, title unrecalled, with an article by fellow fan Rick Sneary on his memories of the *Flash Gordon* Sunday comic strip. (In a few years I would meet and become good friends with Rick, a brilliant young man with a hunchback, reminding me of my radio hero, Peter Quill.) Other fans had mentioned *Buck Rogers* and *Krazy Kat*, but I could remember no one ever making more than the briefest of mentions of comic book magazines.

I decided to write a whole article of maybe two thousand words on comic books. That should cover the subject once and for all.

It should not have been all that difficult for me to remember comic books, because I still had a lot of them, and still bought a few new ones. I did not admit I was still buying comic books. I thought the more intellectually inclined older SF fans would not be impressed. Of the older comics I still had, I had made a bad mistake as a child. I had traded my comics with other kids. That way, I got a lot of comics to read, but my older comics were always being replaced by newer ones. Some comics I loved so much I would never trade them off. I still had all my issues of *All-Star Comics*, and some other special issues. I had what I believed was the first Captain Marvel, called *Captain Marvel Thrill Book*, an oversize comic in



A Peon Of Praise

Fan Al Hunter’s cover for the science-fiction fanzine *Peon* #38 (Feb. 1957)—seen larger in A/E #127—in which Jim’s “Harmony” column was first published, flanked by:

(Left:) Jim Harmon, in center, with fellow SF/movie fans Bob Burns on his right and Ron Haydock on his left... a photo taken in 1962 after a screening of some of friend Don Glut’s films at the CBS facilities in Los Angeles.

(Right:) Jim on a convention panel, nearly half a century later.



PAUL C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

Captain Marvel #189
January 2015
ADVENTURES

LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY COMIC MAGAZINE

JAN.
Captain Marvel
ADVENTURES
10¢
NO. 42



Season's Greetings
Captain Marvel

CAPTAIN MARVEL
IN ST. PAUL, MINN.



HOLIDAY GREEN
APPROVED READING

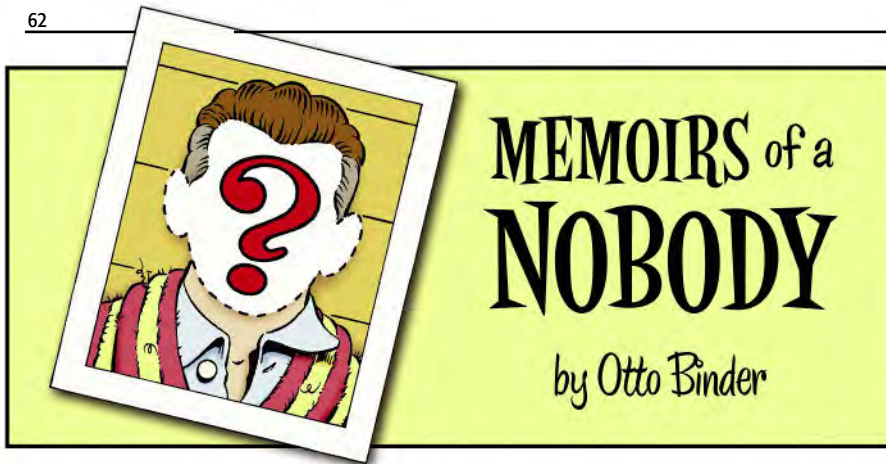
WENDELL CROWLEY
MERCY SHULL
ROY ALO

Merry Christmas!

Shazam heroes TM & © DC Comics

UNCLE DON

Speckled Holiday J...
World's Mightiest



Part XI

Abridged & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

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

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

In this 11th excerpt, Otto establishes his own proverb, reaches out to young readers, and vividly describes an extraordinary dream he once had.

—Paul C. Hamerlinck

CONFUCIUS SAY ...

Do you like proverbs? Neither do I.

Have you ever noticed how many of those wise old sayings, the pearls of wisdom from the ages, the gleanings from the tables of the sage—how they *contradict* each other?

“God helps those who help themselves” in this corner, versus “All things come to he who waits.” The first proverb forms the creed for the go-getter, one who waits for nobody to serve things up on a silver platter, and who goes out and grabs what he wants. The second proverb teaches the exact opposite. Be meek and reticent and you will be rewarded.

Now you can’t do both, can you? Not unless you’re a Jekyll-and-Hyde, good by day, and bad by night. And look what happened to him (them)?

Proverbs *make decisions* for vacil-

lating people. It’s so nice to face a crisis and then fall back on the wise words of some great seer, who must know what he’s talking about. The rub is that though a proverb may fit one situation and solve it perfectly, it may be exactly wrong in another situation and snafu things but good.

So I will make a proverb: “The wise person shuns wise sayings.” And instantly, of course, there comes to mind the antithesis: “Only the fool thinks he is wise!” So, you’re a fool if you go by proverbs, and you’re a fool if you don’t. You fool, you.

Let’s quit fooling around. There are some sayings that make sense. “The more you learn, the more you find there is *left* to learn.” That’s the gist, if not the exact wording. At first glance it seems silly. But on analysis, this type of saying reveals profound soundness.

But take all proverbs “with a grain of salt.” “Seeing is believing,” you know, but don’t forget also that there are “more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” In short, “don’t believe everything you read,” not even what you just read.

CALLING ALL READERS!

They say a book, to achieve popular appeal, must attract all types of people—men and women of all age groups. Let’s see, so far I’ve got the neurotics roped in, plus all morons, idiots, and the lunatic fringe. But who else?

You’re insulted? You resent any of the classifications above? But if you’ve read this far, what else are you? Secretly, though, I consider you faithfuls quite superior in intelligence, for seeing that behind my inanities and banalities is something solid... vital... uplifting... profound! You know what I mean! You do? Then tell me.

But not to lose sight of my purpose here, I must see to it that the kids are attracted to this book. I’ve neglected them. Excuse me for a moment while I devote myself to their needs.



“Go Out There And Win Just One For The Shazamer!”

In this issue’s chapter of *Memoirs of a Nobody*, Otto Binder enunciates a proverb of his very own—yet the ancient adage-author himself, Solomon, was at a loss for any words of wisdom during a dire moment in Binder’s “The Olympic Games of the Gods!” in *Whiz Comics* #125 (Sept. 1950); art by Kurt Schaffenberger. [Shazam hero & Shazam TM & © DC Comics.]

Louisiana Legend

The MARC SWAYZE LPB-TV Interview

Interview Transcribed & Edited by J.T. Go

FCA

EDITOR'S NOTE: From 1941-53, Marcus D. Swayze was a top artist for Fawcett Publications. While the very first "Mary

Marvel" character sketches and stories came from Marc's drawing table, he was originally hired by the publisher to produce "Captain Marvel" stories and covers featured in Captain Marvel Adventures and Whiz Comics. Marc also wrote several "Captain Marvel" stories while serving in the U.S. Army, where he also played guitar in jazz bands and performed twice with Bing Crosby while the popular singer was entertaining the troops. Upon his release from military duty in 1944, Marc made an arrangement with Fawcett to create art and stories for the company on a freelance basis from his home in Louisiana. It was there that he turned out both artwork and scripts for "The Phantom Eagle" in Wow Comics, in addition to drawing the Flyin' Jenny newspaper strip created by his friend and early mentor Russell Keaton. After the cancellation of Wow, Marc provided story art for various Fawcett romance comics titles. After the demise of Fawcett's comics department in 1953, Marc moved over to Charlton Publications where he finished a nearly 15-year career in comics. As many of our longtime readers are aware, beginning in 1996, Marc wrote a highly venerated, ongoing column of his professional memoirs in our pages entitled, "We Didn't Know... It Was the Golden Age!" until his death in 2012 at the age of 99. Marc was a big part of our family in the magazine and in our lives, and we will never forget him.

Back in 1997, I was contacted by Louisiana Public Broadcasting to supply them with background information on Marc Swayze, who was to be interviewed by Gus Weill for an upcoming episode of their television series Louisiana Legends, which aired the following year. LPB's Louisiana Legends program highlights outstanding Louisianians who have distinguished themselves in the world of art, writing, enter-



tainment, politics, public service, and athletics. The show brings intimate looks into the lives of the state's most influential, visionary, and successful citizens... and Marc Swayze is forever part of that respected group. I would like to extend a big thank-you to LPB Executive Producer Clay Fourrier for granting us permission to transcribe and publish Marc's TV interview. The text is courtesy of Louisiana Public Broadcasting (www.lpb.org).

—Paul C. Hamerlinck.

GUS WEILL: When I was a boy growing up in Lafayette, Louisiana, in the '40s, I wore a towel pinned around my neck... and I would stand on a fence, and before I would attempt to fly off of it I would shout "Shazam!" Of course, nothing ever happened, other than breaking my leg once. My guest today is Marc Swayze, one of the talented artists who drew the red-suited hero Captain Marvel and his alter ego, Billy Batson, who shouted "Shazam!" Marc, that Billy Batson sure had us captivated when we were kids, and we just loved it when he yelled "Shazam!"—a word that would become part of the American lexicon.

MARC SWAYZE: That word came from Bill Parker, the original writer of Captain Marvel, Billy, and the whole idea.

GW: Marc, you come from a very talented family—from your parents, to your wife, and down to your own children. How do you account for all that talent?

SWAYZE: Well, that's a difficult question. I had always thought that my parents could do anything in the world. My mother played some nice piano and organ, and my father taught himself the violin so that they could play together. My father was a steamboat captain and designer, builder, and pilot. It took talent for that, I'm sure. I'm proud of my folks. And my wife June and I have been blessed with talent in our own family along the way.

GW: Quite remarkable and true! Marc, when did you begin drawing?

SWAYZE: I think children must draw the things they

We Knew Marc Was A Legend Long Before 1997!

(Above:) A TV screen shot of Marc Swayze being interviewed in 1997 for an episode of the Louisiana Public Broadcasting program *Louisiana Legends*, which was aired the following year. Photo by J.T. Go. [Louisiana Legends film capture is courtesy of Louisiana Public Broadcasting (www.lpb.org).]

(Right:) Back in 1942, Marc drew the very first "Mary Marvel" sketches and the character's earliest stories, as we've documented in many previous editions of *FCA*. Seen here is one of a series of paintings which the heroine's co-creator made during the '90s devoted to the World's Mightiest Girl. [Shazam heroine TM & © DC Comics.]



“Fairy Tales And Impossible Stories”

C.C. Beck, Santa Claus, & “The Year Without A Christmas!”

by Brian Cremins

Edited by Paul C. Hamerlinck

Why was C.C. Beck so unhappy with “The Year without a Christmas!,” a story by Elliot S! Maggin with art by Kurt Schaffenberger, from DC’s *Shazam!* #11? What’s there not to like about a story wherein the Marvel Family meets Santa Claus and saves the holidays for kids all over the world? In his essay “How to Write (or Not Write) Comic Stories,” Beck explained:

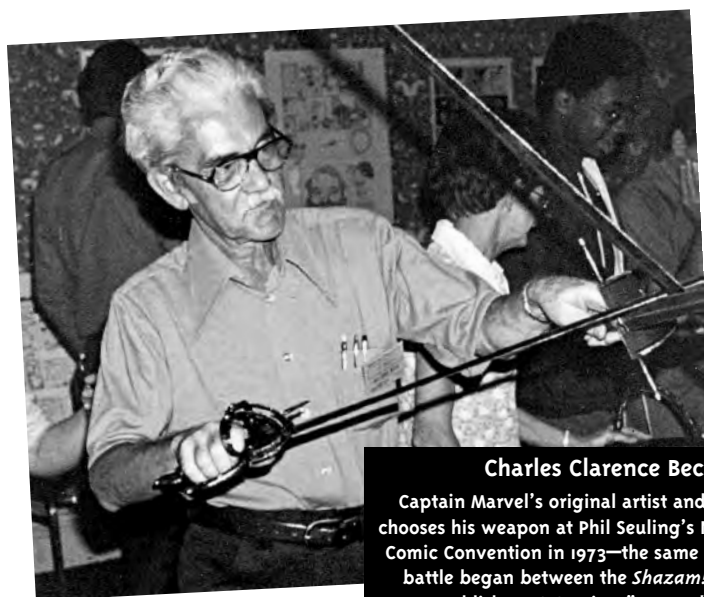
When I saw the Marvel Family talking to Santa Claus in *Shazam!* No. 11, I said to myself, “Why didn’t they bring in the tooth fairy and Cinderella’s godmother while they’re at it?” Perhaps they are saving them for future issues. I can hardly wait for the big Easter issue of *Shazam!* They’ll probably have Captain Marvel helping the Easter Bunny color eggs. Won’t that be thrilling? [FCA #73/Alter Ego #14, April 2002]

After recently reading the Christmas tale from *Shazam!* #11 (issue dated March 1974; released Dec. 20, ’73)—in which the Sivana Family tries to destroy the holiday by speeding up time so that Christmas morning never arrives—I still wondered why Beck responded to it with such sarcasm. I know his experience working for DC was a low point in his career, but Maggin’s story is harmless enough, and there’s no faulting Schaffenberger’s impeccable compositions and pacing. However, as I read through my copies of Beck’s correspondence with his late 1980s debate group “The Critical Circle,” I discovered a passage that might explain



What? You’ll Believe A Man Can Fly—But Not Reindeer!?

Author Brian Cremins is impressed with Kurt Schaffenberger’s well-designed and eye-pleasing rendering of the Christmas tale from *Shazam!* #11... but wonders if its writer Elliot Maggin might’ve been demanding too much from the readers. [© DC Comics.]



Charles Clarence Beck

Captain Marvel’s original artist and co-creator chooses his weapon at Phil Seuling’s New York City Comic Convention in 1973—the same year that the battle began between the *Shazam!* artist and publisher DC Comics. “En garde, DC!”



Kurt Schaffenberger.



Elliot S! Maggin.

The Fawcett Christmas Fantasmagoria

A Joyful Exhibit Of Fawcett Comic Yuletide Cheer

Assembled by Paul C. Hamerlinck

INTRODUCTION: *There has been one invariable theme expressed amongst most of the individuals connected with Fawcett's comics whom I've interviewed over the years: they all cherished their time with the publisher. Our friend and former Fawcett production artist, the late Emilio Squeglio, once described Fawcett Publications as "the epitome of what a business should be... honest to their employees, to the public, and to themselves"... and said that he "felt cared for" and even "loved by them." Emilio further elucidated that the Fawcetts were sincere "Midwestern people who had feeling and compassion for others, and appreciated everything you did," and that the Fawcett brothers*

hired individuals "very much like themselves... hard-working people... with happy-go-lucky-attitudes." Emilio also remembered the incomparable Fawcetts as being fun people who enjoyed having a good time, particularly at their "unbelievable" Christmas parties at the Greenwich Country Club.

We feel that some of that Fawcett warmth and genuine good-naturedness are thoughtfully replicated in this gallery of company Christmas cards and holiday-themed comic books. Merry Christmas from FCA! —PCH.

Turning On The Fawcetts

(Left:) Captain Billy Fawcett, founder of Fawcett Publications with his legendary post-World War I humor magazine *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang* (he's the one holding his hat) and the even more legendary silent-movie comedian Harold Lloyd—together on the Palm Springs golf links in 1935—as per the note from Wide World Photos printed on the back of the pic. [© Wide World Photos or successors in interest.]

(Below:) The Fawcett sons and one daughter, 1950. Clockwise from upper left: Gordon, Roger, Marion Claire, and Roscoe. Shaun Clancy, who provided both this photo and the previous one, figures the pic was probably taken at the Fawcett offices. One brother—Wilford H. ("Buzz") Fawcett—is not in the shot. Incidentally, PCH explains that the three black almost-"K"-shaped indications on the photo are crop marks that were added by someone at a newspaper, to cut down the area of the picture printed so as to include just the four heads. [© the respective copyright holders.]



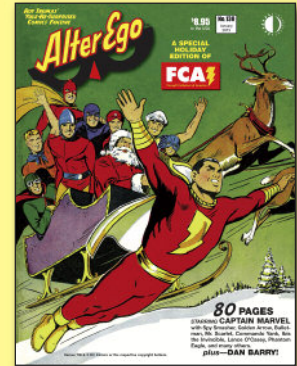
FROM: WIDE WORLD PHOTOS LOS ANGELES BUREAU
CAPTAIN BILLY FAWCETT AND HAROLD LLOYD

PAIM SPRINGS, CALIF.-- Here are (left to right) Captain Billy Fawcett, magazine publisher and Harold Lloyd, mp actor, about to start off for their daily golf match at Palm Springs, California where they are vacationing. The Lloyd family are residing at Palm Springs during the spring season. Captain Fawcett is the house guest of J. Darsie Lloyd, Harold Lloyd's father. Captain Fawcett is from Minnesota.
LOS # 49614 S PLEASE CREDIT 3/21-35





IF YOU ENJOYED THIS PREVIEW, CLICK THE LINK TO ORDER THIS ISSUE IN PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT!

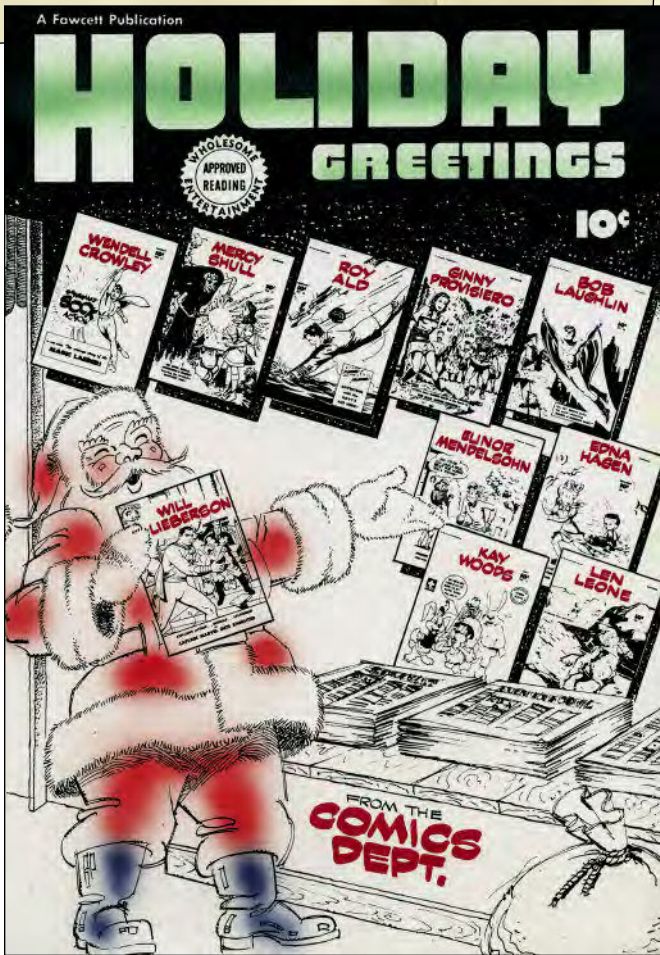


ALTER EGO #130

CAPTAIN MARVEL headlines a Christmas FCA (Fawcett Collectors of America) Fantasmagoria starring C.C. BECK, OTTO BINDER, MARC SWAYZE—and the FAWCETT FAMILY (presented by P.C. HAMERLINCK)! Plus: Comic book/strip star artist DAN BARRY profiled, MICHAEL T. GILBERT in Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt, BILL SCHELLY on comics fandom history, and more! Cover by C.C. BECK!

(84-page FULL-COLOR magazine) \$8.95
(Digital Edition) \$3.95

http://twomorrows.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=1165



With One Magic Ornament
(Right:) Mid-1940s Christmas tree ornaments featuring Captain Marvel, Hoppy the Marvel Bunny, and Sherlock Monk. Thanks to Walt Grogan. [Shazam heroes TM & © DC Comics; other art © the respective copyright holders.]