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EXCLUSIVE Interview with
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Director **RICHARD DONNER**

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IRWIN ALLEN

VOYAGE
TO THE BOTTOM OF...
THE BARREL??



Aquaman in
Animation



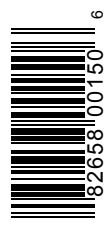
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THE CRAZY COOL CULTURE WE GREW UP WITH

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RetroFan fantasy cover by Scott Saavedra



Richard Donner

The Man Who Made Superman Fly



Richard Donner (center) and crew members in 1977 on location in Manhattan, doubling as Metropolis, during the filming of *Superman*. This photo appeared in DC Comics' *All-New Collectors' Edition #C-62 (Superman: The Movie)*. © Warner Bros. Superman TM & © DC Comics.

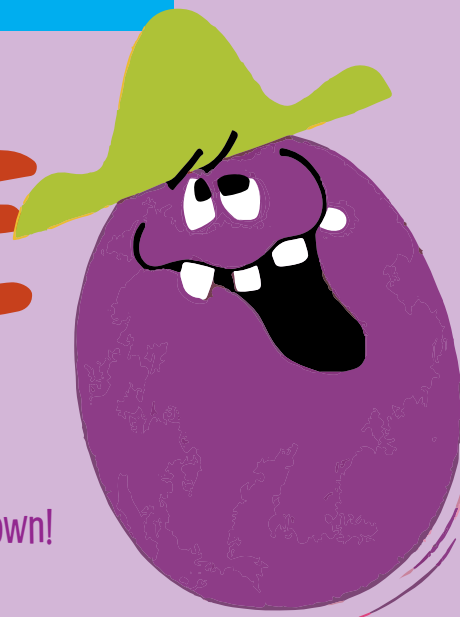
Conducted by Glenn Greenberg

Remove *Superman: The Movie* (1978) from Richard Donner's filmography and he would still be the man who directed *The Omen* (1976), *The Goonies* (1985), and all four *Lethal Weapon* films (1987–1998). An impressive list, to be sure.

But with *Superman*, Donner became the father of the modern comic-book superhero movie, through his vision of taking the subject matter seriously—though not without a healthy dose of fun and humor—and giving it a real-world aesthetic, a grandeur, and a respect that the genre never really had before.

On a film where so many things could have gone wrong, Donner got so much right, from bringing in his friend, screenwriter Tom Mankiewicz, to rework the screenplay (which had gone through drafts by Mario Puzo, David and Leslie Newman, and Robert Benton), to hiring composer John Williams to create what just may be his greatest movie score ever, to casting Christopher Reeve in the title role—and, just as importantly, Margot Kidder as Lois Lane. Any one of those elements could have made *Superman* a decent film. All of them combined made it a bona fide classic, the

The FUNNY FACE Saga



OR Move Over, Kool-Aid Man, There's Some New Fruit in Town!

by John Schwirian



*Funny Face is fun to drink,
The one to drink when you're having fun!
Funny Face is fun to drink,
Fun to drink for everyone!*

That's how the jingle went in the early television commercials—and it was true. Kids really found Funny Face fun to drink! Of course, zany characters and great mail-away premiums didn't hurt any, either.

In the early Sixties, Kool-Aid was the undisputed powdered-drink-mix king. However, consumers were unhappy over the amount of sugar used in the preparation of a pitcher of Kool-Aid. In an effort to combat this dissatisfaction, companies were searching for a substitute for sugar, an alternate that arrived in the form of an artificial sweetener named sodium cyclamate. Pillsbury processed sodium cyclamate into the product Sweet*10 in 1962, which allowed them to create foods that could be advertised as “sugar free” and “artificially sweetened.” With sugar eliminated, moms approved and sales rose on these products.

A Funny Face for Every Taste

Encouraged by the promise of Sweet*10, Pillsbury decided to challenge Kool-Aid with its own powdered drink mix. In 1963, Pillsbury hired Campbell Mithun Advertising to design a face for its product. Inspired by his daughter, Creative Director Hal Silverman dreamed up the Funny Face characters. “I

actually created them for my daughter, Jill, who was about four years old at the time,” Silverman wrote in a post on the *Retroland* website in 2013. “My nickname for her was Freckle Face—and from that beginning, all the characters just fell into place. Needless to say, my daughter—and all her friends—had a wonderful time playing with the names, and pretending to be the characters.” While Silverman sketched out the initial designs for the characters, the final art used on the packages was drawn by Lowell Herrera (1921–2015).

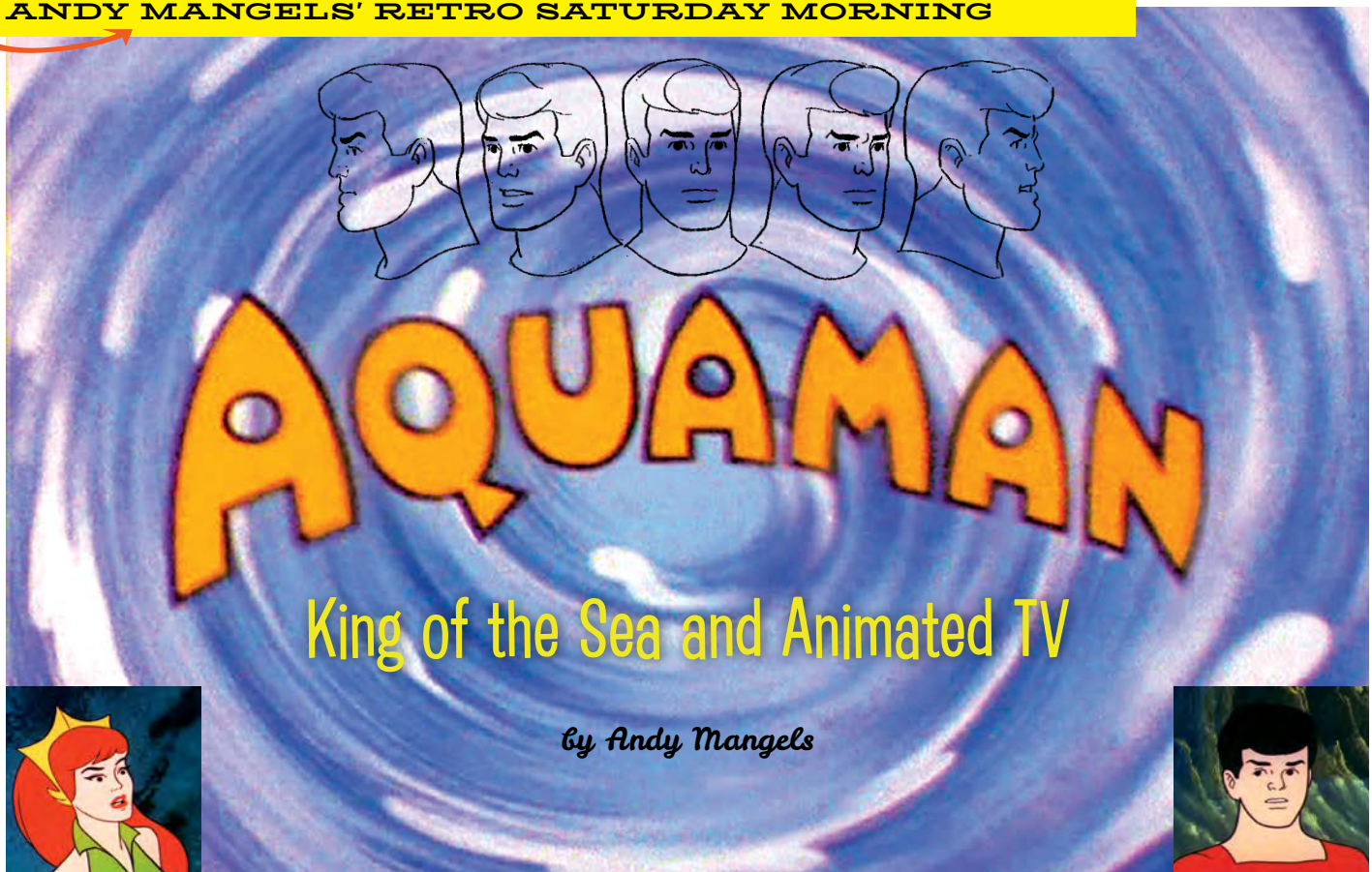
The original six characters (and flavors) hit the stores in 1964, consisting of Freckle Face Strawberry, Goofy Grape, Loud-Mouth Lime, Rootin' Tootin' Raspberry, Chinese Cherry, and Injun Orange. Don't remember the last two? That's because they were replaced the next year by Choo Choo Cherry and Jolly Olly Orange. Reports are mixed as to whether there were complaints from the public or if it was strictly an internal decision, but Chinese Cherry and

Injun Orange were deemed inappropriate and offensive. “At the time,” Silverman explained, “I was naive enough not to realize that the names Chinese Cherry and Injun Orange could be hurtful to Chinese and Native Americans. My sincere apologies, at this late date, to anyone I offended.”

Pillsbury employed an aggressive marketing strategy to launch the new drink mix. While the Kool-Aid Man had to represent every flavor of Kool-Aid, Pillsbury provided different cartoon characters for each flavor, making it easy for children to spot their



Look at the mugs on these mugs! From the collection of John Schwirian, Funny Face mugs. (FRONT ROW) Goofy Grape, Freckle Face Strawberry, Lefty Lemon. (CENTER ROW) Choo Choo Cherry, Jolly Olly Orange, Loud-Mouth Punch. (BACK ROW) Chug-a-Lug Chocolate, Rudy Tutti Frutti, With-It Watermelon. © Brady Enterprises.



Welcome back to *Andy Mangels' Retro Saturday Morning*. Since 1989, I have been writing columns for magazines in the U.S. and foreign countries, all examining the intersection of comic books and Hollywood, whether animation or live-action. *Andy Mangels Backstage*, *Andy Mangels' Reel Marvel*, *Andy Mangels' Hollywood Heroes*, *Andy Mangels Behind the Camera*... nearly three decades of reporting on animation and live-action—in addition to writing many books and producing around 40 DVD sets—and I'm still enthusiastic. In this new *RetroFan* column, I will examine shows that thrilled us from yesteryear, exciting our imaginations and capturing our memories. Grab some milk and cereal, sit cross-legged leaning against the couch, and dig in to *Retro Saturday Morning*!

"Aquaman, swift and powerful monarch of the ocean! With ability to summon and command all creatures of the deep! Aquaman, who with his teenage ally, Aqualad, guards and defends all that lives in the sea against the forces of evil! Aquaman, King of the Seven Seas!" So blared the announced on September 9, 1967 when Aquaman made his television debut. Readers had already been reading his adventures for 26 years,

and the underwater monarch has become an animation regular—and butt of a thousand repetitive punchlines in the 50-plus years since. But how did the King of Atlantis begin his reign on Saturday mornings and beyond? Let's dive in...

The First Splash

Only five DC Comics characters have been published non-stop since 1941: Superman, Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman, and Aquaman. Created by artist Paul Norris (with writer Mort Weisinger) for *More Fun Comics* #73 (Nov. 1941), the Golden Age Aquaman was originally just a water-breathing, fish-talking hero partial to an orange shirt and green pants, plus boots, trunks, and gloves, while under the sea's surface. In *Adventure Comics* #260 (May 1959), the Silver Age Aquaman's origin was told, recasting the hero as half-human and half-Atlantean whose human name was Arthur Curry. In *Adventure Comics* #269 (Feb. 1960), he acquired a sidekick youth named Aqualad, and in the following month, he became a founding member of the Justice League of America, from their first appearance in *The Brave and the Bold* #28 (Feb.–Mar. 1960). Aquaman became the king of Atlantis in *Aquaman*



(TOP) The water-logged Aquaman logo, model sheets, and screen captures of Mera and Aqualad. (BOTTOM) A licensed "promotional cel" sold by Filamation. Aquaman TM& © DC Comics.

Irwin Allen

VOYAGE

TO THE BOTTOM OF...

the Barrel??

by Michael Eury

Do you recycle? Irwin Allen sure did! Not empty mustard jars and dog-eared magazines, but film footage, props, costumes, sets, music, sound effects... and ideas.

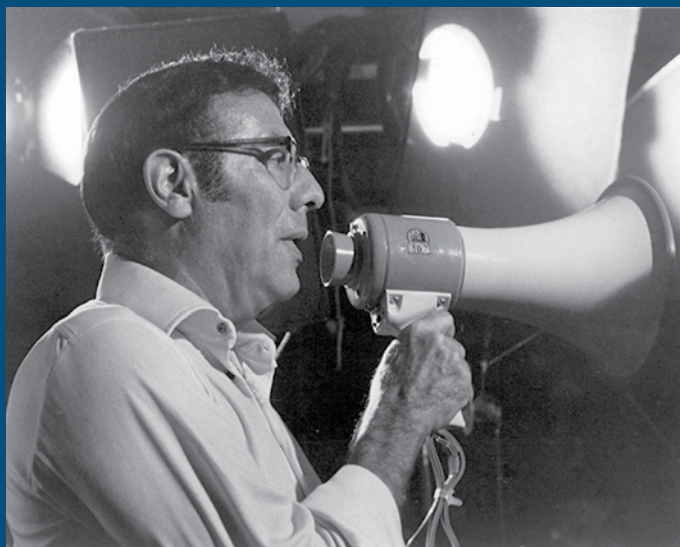
In Allen's world, cutaways of imperiled ships such as the *Seaview* nuclear sub or the *Jupiter 2* spacecraft might be seen again and again in later episodes. A furry creature that once elicited a "Danger!" warning from a vigilant Robot might later double as an abominable snowman terrorizing seamen. A viewer watching *Land of the Giants* might experience déjà vu once spying a *Lost in Space* set he remembered from a couple of seasons ago. A fuzzy headdress that looks like Fred Flintstone's Water Buffalo Lodge hat might be cannibalized to transform a chimpanzee into an alien pet. A classic children's novel—*Swiss Family Robinson*—might be reimagined as a futuristic clan cast adrift in the cosmos. Bill Mummy, the prolific child actor of the Sixties who became famous as *Lost in Space*'s boy genius Will Robinson, told me that Irwin Allen's mantra was "Time is money." According to Mummy, "Irwin was impressive. Part Barnum and Bailey, part Cecil B. DeMille. He came on the set everyday. Tapped his watch," policing his budgets by keeping the trains running on time... and by reusing resources.

Some might accuse Allen of voyaging not to the depths of the ocean, but to the bottom of the barrel with his chronic salvaging. But kids of the Sixties were utterly fascinated by the four

fantastic television programs he created and produced: *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Lost in Space*, *The Time Tunnel*, and *Land of the Giants*. We weren't very discerning back then, and most of us didn't notice that the gillman from *Voyage* later returned as an extraterrestrial in *LIS*. Those of who did notice didn't care. We were swept away by the razzle-dazzle of it all. And no one could razzle-dazzle quite like Irwin Allen.

Voyage from the Big Screen to the Boob Tube

Irwin Allen (1916–1991), a college dropout, built a career as a Hollywood magazine editor, radio producer, and gossip columnist before turning to film production. In 1953 he directed his first film, *The Sea Around Us*, which he also wrote and produced. This Technicolor documentary relied heavily upon stock footage (in this case, of maritime expeditions), a cost-cutting measure that would become an Allen hallmark. Allen adapted the idea from another source, an acclaimed novel by marine biologist Rachel Carson. As stated on Carson's website (rachelcarson.org), "*The Sea Around Us* became an overnight



Irwin Allen—the Sixties' TV sci-fi visionary—calling the shots on the set of the disaster flick *The Towering Inferno*. *Towering Inferno* © 1974 20th Century Fox Film Corporation. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions (www.ha.com).



The Amazing Sea- Monkeys®

Then & Now

By Scott Saavedra

Humbug is a funny little word. Perhaps most associate it with the character Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. To the British, it is also a hard candy. To knowledgeable comic-book fans, it is the name of the magazine Harvey Kurtzman founded after leaving his signature creation, *MAD*.

But for those of us who love the convergence of history and popular culture, humbug brings to mind P. T. Barnum, the great showman. Humbug is all about deception. In Barnum's mind, humbug in the service of entertainment was a virtue, not a vice. Now, if you're wondering what humbug has to do with Sea-Monkeys, the immensely popular, 60-year-old novelty originally sold through comic-book ads, then step right up, my friends... I have a story for you.

Phineas Taylor Barnum lived and breathed humbug, never meeting a fact he couldn't paper over with something more interesting and colorful so long as it brought in (paying) customers to his various museums and exhibitions. When Barnum

promoted his Fejee (Fiji) Mermaid, a sea-creature that wasn't actually a sea-creature, he used questionable advertisements to excite the public. The beautiful, half-naked mermaid illustrated in his advertisements showed something quite different from the hideous, dried-up, half-fish-tail, half-death-grimaced monkey actually on display. The exhibition was a huge success. It's not that Barnum absolutely had to employ humbug—the true story of how this creation of an anonymous Japanese fisherman made its way to Barnum wasn't boring, it just wasn't enough to bring in the crowds. It would be a lesson not lost on entrepreneurs in the decades that followed. Especially those, it seems, who created and sold novelties via comic-book ads.

Harold von Braunhut, a former Merchant Marine, possessed an entrepreneurial spirit and a flair for humbug. And while his name may not be on the tip of everyone's tongue in the manner of P. T. Barnum's, they likely know his most enduring creation... wait for it...

Oddball Comics

The Amazing Spider-Man & the Incredible Hulk Toilet Paper



By Scott Shaw!

Okay, it's time for full disclosure. When I was a kid, I did much of my funnybook reading while perched on a toilet seat.

Too much information? Very possibly. In the comic-book industry, there's a rumor that the noted science-fiction agent and comic-book editor Julius Schwartz once said, "Reading a comic book should take about the same amount of time as taking a good dump." If I get the point of that proclamation, I seriously doubt that I was the only kid around who used the family bathroom as

a library. I even knew lunatics who read comic books *while taking a bath*—but to an obsessive kid like me, that sort of behavior seemed vastly more taboo than reading *Uncle Scrooge* while pooping. *What if you dropped your funnybook in the tub?* Disaster was waaay too possible there. But reading funnybooks on a porcelain throne with no one there to interrupt you? Pure nirvana... until Mom or Dad threatened to pry off the locked bathroom door's hinges to gain access.

Box front for *The Amazing Spider-Man & The Incredible Hulk Toilet Paper*. All product photos and toilet paper scans accompanying this article courtesy of Scott Shaw! Spider-Man and the Hulk TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.



Welcome to Metropolis



The Home of Superman

by Michael Eury

The Metropolis of Superman lore is a bustling environment with glistening skyscrapers that pierce the clouds—just like its high-soaring protector from Krypton—and whose streets attract a never-ending barrage of attacks from mad scientists, alien invaders, and vengeful supervillains.

The Metropolis of the real world—nestled at the southeastern corner of Illinois, U.S.A., the last stop in the American South before it gives way to the Heartland—has no skyscrapers. It's a rustic postcard of small shops and modest homes that haven't changed much over the years, populated by the kind of good-natured folks you'd find in a John Cougar Mellencamp song.

But this Metropolis has its own Superman—two, if you count the giant Superman statue in the center of town—and once a year, its streets are overrun with... well, mad scientists, alien invaders, and vengeful supervillains—plus more Supermen than you can shake a red cape at.

Metropolis, Illinois, is a city of 6,500 residents, but during the second weekend of each June it is flooded by a torrent of visitors (and event staffers) in electric blue Superman T-shirts, in town for

the annual Superman Celebration, a unique, extraordinarily fun hybrid of a community festival and a comic-con.

There's a lot to see in town during the Superman Celebration, from the Super Museum, statues of Superman and Lois Lane, and a procession of food and street vendors vying for your attention... but it's the legion of Superman masqueraders that catch your eye, as countless fun-seekers rush to the annual event dressed as the Man of Steel (pick your favorite version—from 1938's *Action Comics* #1, to the Henry Cavill movie Superman, to every incarnation in between, they're here). You'll find Supermen in every size, gender, and ethnicity imaginable, from uber-fit fashion models to muffin-topped grandpas to special-needs youth to chain-smoking stringbeans. And joining the many Supermen are cosplayers garbed as Supergirl (in several variations, including the Seventies' hotpants version!), Superboy, Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, Lex Luthor... plus characters outside of the Superman Family, virtually everyone from Ant-Man to Zatanna.

The Origin of Metropolis

The Metropolis, Illinois, of yesteryear looked not up in the sky for a bird, a plane, or a Superman, but to the riverbanks. Its advantageous position on the majestic Ohio River, just across from Kentucky, attracted French settlers during the mid-1700s, who displaced the region's Native-American population and erected Fort De L'Ascension during the French and Indian War. That fort was destroyed and rebuilt on several occasions, eventually bearing the name Fort Massac in honor of the Marquis de Massac, France's Minister of the Marine. The fort was immortalized in

(TOP LEFT) This colorful sign, repurposing Neal Adams art from the cover of *Superman* #252, greets visitors as they enter Metropolis. (TOP RIGHT) One of the Super Museum's many exhibits spotlights a collection of Superman original and specialty artwork. (BOTTOM) A *Daily Planet* vintage car, parked in front of the museum. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this article are by Michael Eury. Superman TM & © DC Comics.