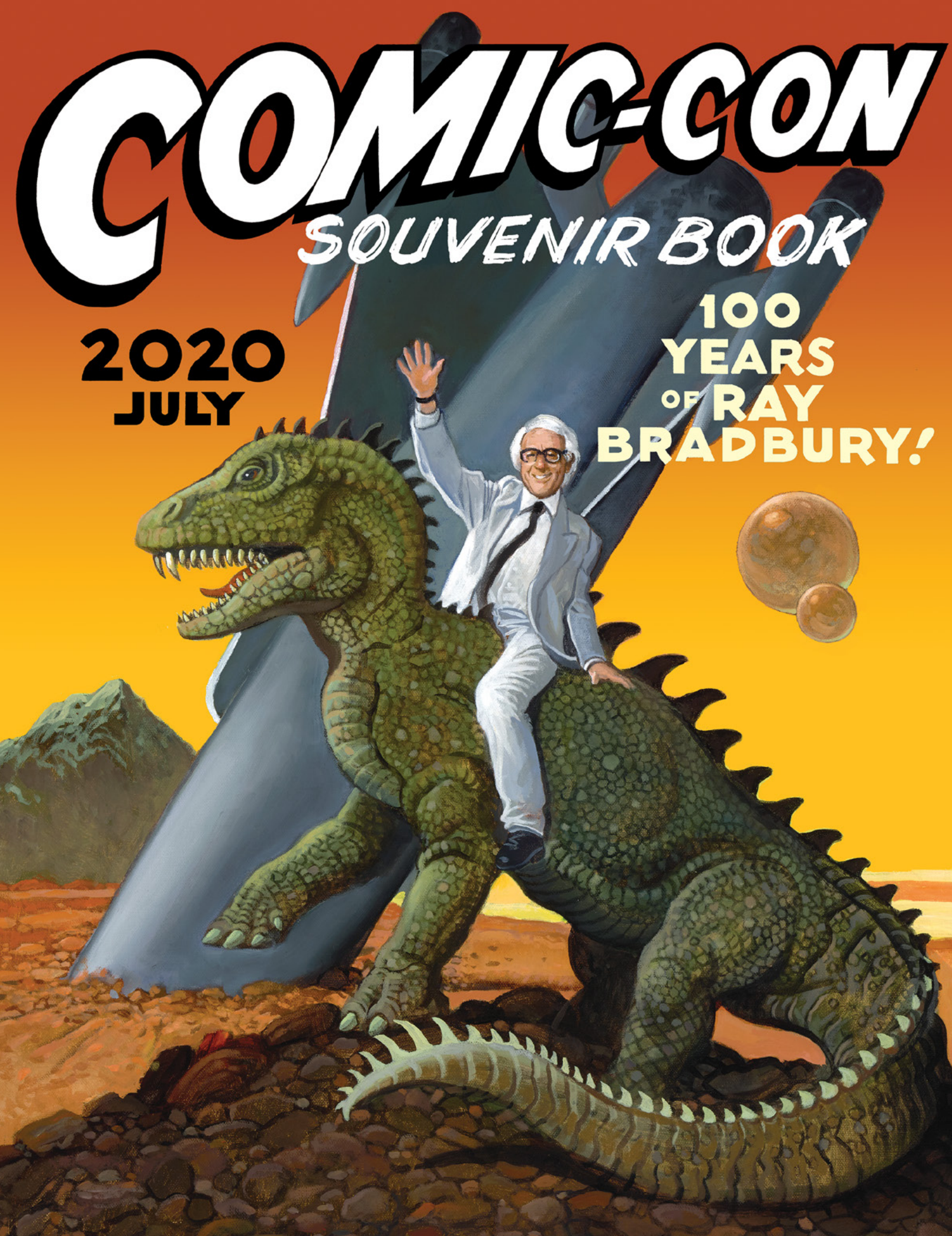


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President's Message

What a difference a year makes.

Just twelve short months ago we at Comic-Con were deep in the celebration of our 50th convention. I had big plans to oversee, big decisions to make, and even bigger shoes to fill. But through teamwork, the support of fans and attendees, and the can-do attitude from staff, volunteers, the Board, and all involved, the show was a tremendous success. We celebrated not only our mission, but our history as well, giving many a glimpse into the journey that shaped our small gathering of fans into a world-class event.

Flash forward to 2020, and I write this from my home rather than our offices. No doubt you are reading this from a similar location. Our realities have changed dramatically. The safety of our attendees has always come first, and while the decision to cancel the show was truly the only choice we could make considering the impact of this global pandemic, it was nevertheless heartbreaking for us. For the first time in our 50-year history we will not gather together in San Diego to celebrate. We will not share stories and anecdotes in person while we wait in line for our favorite program, visit with old friends and meet new ones at the Masquerade party, nor be able to wander around the massive Exhibit Hall or browse the Art Show. But with every cloud there is a silver lining . . . Comic-Con will continue as a virtual experience! Comic-Con@Home is different than what we are used to, perhaps, but through this platform we will be able to share much of the fun and community that makes our event the best convention of its kind in the world.

At Comic-Con@Home, trying to decide between events that all happen at the same time is not a problem . . . the tough decision will be which one to see first. Want to browse the Exhibit Hall? You can do that from the comfort of your favorite chair with a click of your mouse. Fan of costumes? You can catch the very best of costuming by watching

the Masquerade on Friday or checking out the many fans who have taken our Cosplay Challenge on social media. Volunteers may not be onsite to guide and help, but that doesn't mean they aren't volunteering; check out our SuperVolunteer section on the Toucan Blog and see how they are making an impact in their communities. Excited to see who will be awarded an Eisner this year? You're in luck, as the Eisner Awards will be available to view on Friday. In addition, there are many other activities you can take part in that we hope will keep some of the fun of Comic-Con flourishing. We honestly hope this online endeavor will be a small way to keep us all connected, to assure us all that our community is unbreakable as ever, that we endure beyond challenges.

As I mentioned earlier, teamwork is among the many secrets to our success, and as you navigate the Comic-Con@Home pages we are grateful to the many people and companies who have helped us bring the magic of Comic-Con to your home. From comics and book publishers, writers, artists and creators, television networks and movie studios, everyone has embraced this new endeavor with optimism, resilience, and good humor. But it is you—our community, our friends, and our associates—who are invaluable to our success.

We hope you will have fun with this new version of Comic-Con, and while we will miss seeing you in person, it just increases our anticipation of seeing you next year.

Robin Donlan

President, Board of Directors

Comic-Con International: San Diego



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Ray Bradbury, Riding a Dinosaur, on Mars

The original idea for this year's *Souvenir Book* cover was a pulp magazine-style painting of a spaceman in a retro spacesuit on Mars, with a dinosaur in the background. And if you looked really closely, you'd see that the man in the bulky spacesuit was Ray Bradbury, with his trademark white hair and horn-rimmed glasses.

But when artist William Stout submitted his first cover sketches, there was Ray on Mars all right, now wearing his trademark ice cream suit, riding a dinosaur with a crashed spaceship in the background. Stout had upended the original idea and instead created a whimsical, charming cover of the beloved author living his best life on Mars. And it was exactly what we needed at this point in 2020.

Bradbury was a long time guest at Comic-Con, starting with the very first one in 1970. He loved dinosaurs, comics, movies, riding his bike around Los Angeles, and so much more that makes him sound like the typical fan you'd find at our event. You can learn all about him (or have your memory of him jolted back to life) in our special section celebrating his centennial, which begins on page 16. But first, stop by our "Cover Story" feature on page 12 with artist Bill Stout, and learn the significance of the exact make and model of both that spaceship and the dinosaur, and Bill's personal connection with Bradbury.

It's also the centennial of the birth of stop-motion animation legend Ray Harryhausen. The two Rays were lifelong friends and having tributes to them back-to-back in this year's book is a special treat. Along the way we also celebrate the 75th anniversaries of EC Comics (look for a special treat combining Bradbury and EC beginning on page 42) and Moomin (proving once again the incredible diversity of the comic art form), plus 50th anniversary celebrations for Conan in Comics, Jack Kirby's Fourth World, and Last Gasp, the pioneer underground comix publisher and distributor.

Sorry, folks ... no "real" book.

We're sad that this year's *Souvenir Book* isn't a big, thick, printed, take-me-home-and-read-me epic like it normally is. But somehow the idea of a downloadable PDF for our 2020 edition is the right thing for right now. It's a different world. So, to answer your question, no, there will not eventually be a printed version of this book (but thanks for asking).

Last year's *Souvenir Book* was also a different kind of animal, focusing on Comic-Con's own 50th anniversary. One of the things that pretty much fell by the wayside was the yearly addition of art submitted by you, dear reader. We call it "fan art" in the Comic-Con office, but really a lot of it is of such a professional quality and created so lovingly that calling it that sells it way short. This year it's back, and as always, it's wonderful to see your stunning creativity and imaginations at work (just check out the Moomin 75th anniversary section as an example). You'll also notice an incredible amount of art this year from Chihuahua, Mexico. That's because

once again the students at Colegio de Estudios Superiores Palmore took our *Souvenir Book* call for submissions as a class assignment and sent in an amazing array of art. We hope you enjoy seeing it as much as we did.

An abundance of safety ...

We know you're probably sitting on your couch reading this, and we're sorry about that. In an effort to be as safe as possible, Comic-Con 2020 is now Comic-Con@Home 2020. We're trying our best to bring you all the things you love most about being in San Diego with us at this time of year. We hope you enjoy everything we have to offer online, and don't forget ... most everything we're doing from July 22-26 will stay available for the foreseeable future. Visit www.comic-con.org (if you haven't already) to jump into the online experience we're calling Comic-Con@Home, along with WonderCon@Home and the Comic-Con Museum@Home. And remember, all of this is totally free for the entire world!

A word about this PDF ...

We're presenting this publication in 2-page spreads, to better mimic the experience of a real book. While looking at it at first may seem daunting ("The type is SO SMALL!"), remember you can ZOOM in. Also, most ads contain direct links to the advertisers' websites, which may feature special exclusive items for sale or content exclusively created for Comic-Con@Home, so be sure to click on the full-page ads! (We suggest you use your keyboard's arrow keys to go forward and back in this PDF.)

And finally ...

It was the great Western philosopher Sean Connery who once said, "Never Say Never Again," but at this point in time I feel I should mention that this will be my last *Souvenir Book*. It has been my honor and privilege over the past 14 (!) years to edit and design these books, starting with the 2007 edition (the one with the Star Wars cover by Adam Hughes). It's been an amazing decade-and-a-half, working with some of the best artists in the comics world for our covers and seeing your creativity and passion just about every time I open an email during "Souvenir Book Season." I'm very proud of the comics and pop culture history we've presented in these books over the years and they will always be something I look back on as a high point of my time at Comic-Con. Thanks for reading along! All of us here at San Diego Comic Convention look forward to Comic-Con and WonderCon Anaheim 2021.

Gary Sassaman

Director of Print and Digital Media
Comic-Con International: San Diego



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Art © William Stout

COVER STORY: William Stout



Cover artist William Stout's long career includes assisting Russ Manning on *Tarzan* and Harvey Kurtzman and Bill Elder on "Little Annie Fanny." His acclaimed *Legends of the Blues* is the first of three volumes. Stout created the famous *Wizards* poster and his 50+ film career includes both Conan movies, *Predator*, *Masters of the Universe*, *Return of the Living Dead* and *Pan's Labyrinth*.

His book, *THE DINOSAURS—A Fantastic New View of a Lost Era* (1981) inspired Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park*. *Ray Bradbury's Dinosaur Tales* preceded *The Little Blue Brontosaurus* (1984 Children's Choice Award and the basis for *The Land Before Time*). The Houston Museum of Natural Science, Walt Disney's Animal Kingdom, San Diego Natural History Museum, and the San Diego Zoo all boast Stout murals.

Bill co-founded the Comic Art Professional Society and was its tenth president. His latest book, *Fantastic Worlds—The Art of William Stout*, covers his 50-year career. He's also one of two artists (Jim Lee is the other) who has created three separate Souvenir Book covers (1991, 2000, and now 2020).

SDCC: You're a dinosaur guy, just like Ray Bradbury. What draws you to these amazing beasts from a bygone era and how have you become so associated with them?

BILL: It all started when I was three years old. My parents took me to see my very first movie (this was before we or anyone in our neighborhood had a television set). It was the 1952 re-release of the original 1933 *King Kong*. I saw it at the Reseda Drive-In. I think it did damage at a genetic level.

Eventually we got a TV. Years later there was a TV phenomenon know as *The Million Dollar Movie*. A film would be selected and it would run twice every day and three times each on Saturday and Sunday. The first film they showed was *King Kong*. I watched every screening. *Kong* was so popular on TV that it also became the *second* Million Dollar Movie! I caught all of those screenings, too. So, in just two weeks I had watched *King Kong* 32 times! Not long after that I saw the "Rite of Spring" sequence from Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. It's been dinosaurs, dinosaurs, dinosaurs ever since.

My friend Don Glut had written a book titled *The Dinosaur Dictionary*. In the late 1970s, because dozens and dozens of new dinosaur discoveries had been

made since the publication of Don's book, he felt it was time for a new edition. One of his goals was to have an illustration for each entry. He asked me if I would draw four dinosaurs for his new edition. That eventually turned into about forty-four. As I was drawing them, a thought came to me: This may be the only image of this dinosaur that the public ever sees, so it had better be accurate. I joined the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology and began to attend their annual meetings, held in a different city each year. I made friends with a lot of the paleontologists. When I would find one who had discovered one of the dinosaurs I was drawing for Don's book, I'd ask him or her to check my reconstruction. This was before the Internet, so I would snail-mail xerox copies of my sketches and send them to the paleontologist for guidance and input. This would create a series of back-and-forth mailings until we were both happy with the drawings' accuracy.

I also felt the settings and plants should be as accurate, so I began studying paleobotany.

After finishing my *Dinosaur Dictionary* drawings, my regular publisher back then, Byron Preiss (also a Comic-Con regular), came visiting from New York. At my studio, he asked me, "If you could do your own book on anything, what would you do?" I thought Byron was just being conversational. I didn't really have an answer, as I had never given that subject much thought. Byron noticed the *Dinosaur Dictionary* drawings lying around my studio. "Would you like to do a book on dinosaurs?"

"Sure . . ." was my reply. I forgot all about it until a couple of months later when I received a phone call from Byron.

"Bill, I've got great news—Bantam wants to do your dinosaur book!"

Suddenly, I had a gigantic book project unexpectedly dropped into my lap. It became *THE DINOSAURS—A Fantastic New View of a Lost Era*. As soon as that book was published, I became "The Dinosaur Guy." I've subsequently worked on all kinds of dinosaur projects, including children's books, coloring books, comics, films, documentaries, theme park attractions, and my very favorite thing of everything that I do, murals.

SDCC: You illustrated the cover and a story for Ray Bradbury's Dinosaur Tales. Did you work closely with Ray on that book? What are your memories of Ray?

BILL: I met Ray while I was working on *THE DINOSAURS—A Fantastic New View of a Lost Era*. We became friends and he wrote the introduction to that book.

Now, let me just say that I was astounded that we became friends. I grew up reading his short stories. The observations he made in his stories felt so incredibly personal to me. When I would read his stories about kids my age, I'd ask myself, how did he know I felt that way as a kid?

His classic dinosaur time travel tale, "A Sound of Thunder" was in my high school American Literature textbook. During that time I read his novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (still my favorite book of Ray's). It felt like he had written that novel especially for someone my age. I re-read it years later and perceived I had been mistaken. He had written that book, I now thought, for young men in their late twenties. How foolish of me to think he had written it for kids! After I became a dad, I read *Something Wicked* again. Oh, how wrong I had been! There has never been a book more clearly meant for fathers!

That's the thing about Ray's work. It is so layered and so full of metaphors that it deeply reaches everyone, no matter what age they are.

Ray Bradbury's *Dinosaur Tales* followed my own dinosaur book. I was selected by Ray to do the cover (that image later became recreated in a scene in one of Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* movies). Ray also asked me to illustrate "A Sound of Thunder" for *Dinosaur Tales*. I poured my heart into those pen and ink illustrations. I didn't want to disappoint Ray . . . or myself. Ray gave me complete freedom in my approach to illustrating *Dinosaur Tales*. I was with some heavy hitters in that book, including Jim Steranko, horror cartoonist Gahan Wilson, my brother-from-another-mother Overton Loyd, and my dearest of friends, Jean "Moebius" Giraud.

I loved visiting Ray's Beverly Hills office. It was crammed with cool stuff. We both seemed to love all of the same things.

Ray purchased an original from me, one of several purchases he made from me over the years. I mailed it to him and decorated the wrapping with drawings of dinosaurs. The next time I visited Ray, I was shocked. There on the wall of his office was my illustrated packaging to him—framed!

Later I drew another "A Sound of Thunder" illustration: the cover for the first issue of *Ray Bradbury Comics* (1993). I insisted that Byron get Richard Corben to illustrate "A Sound of Thunder" inside the book, which he did.

Ray was a huge comics fan. We honored him at a CAPS banquet. I gave the keynote speech that night, talking about Ray's devotion to comics and his history with the medium.

Another great gift Ray gave me was opening night tickets to an entire season of Ray Bradbury plays at the Fremont Centre Theatre in South Pasadena. Ray would always be there on each opening night, enthusiastically giving support for and brief introductions to his incredible plays.

Near the end of Ray's life, I was contacted by his daughter on Ray's behalf. He wanted to spend a couple of hours with me at his home, him and me, one on one. It was one of the greatest gifts I have ever received. We spent the two hours telling stories, sharing passions, reminiscing and laughing. I'll never forget it. That was the last time I saw Ray.

SDCC: Let's talk about your cover for this year's *Souvenir Book*. You submitted two different sketches (seen on the previous page), one of them with a more EC-themed motif, since it's also the 75th anniversary of EC Comics. The sketch we chose for the cover has some fun "Easter Eggs" in it . . . can you explain them?

BILL: Well, I love Ray Harryhausen as much as I love Ray Bradbury. As it so happened, they were LA friends who were born in the same year.

Although the intent and focus of the Comic-Con *Souvenir Book* cover was to honor Ray Bradbury, I saw this commission as a way to honor both gentlemen. One of Ray Harryhausen's early films was an adaptation of Ray's short story "The Lighthouse." It became the basis for *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. That's Ray Bradbury riding the Rhedosaurus from that film. In the background is the spaceship from Harryhausen's *20 Million Miles to Earth*. The two moons in the sky represent the two moons of Mars. Both Ray and I are big fans of the writings of Edgar Rice Burroughs. One of our favorite series of ERB books is his John Carter of Mars novels. So, the two moons are a nod to Ray's passion for ERB as well as a tip of the hat to Ray's classic *The Martian Chronicles*. The white suit Ray is wearing acknowledges the Bradbury story, "The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit," which became a 1998 film directed by my friend Stuart Gordon.

SDCC: This is a fully-painted cover, in the tradition of the pulp magazines where Bradbury got his start. Can you talk a bit about your process in creating this cover and the way you painted it? Is part of it digital?

Bill: I always let each problem dictate its own solution. Because I can easily work in almost any art style, I don't try to force one particular style on everything. I begin by brainstorming and drawing thumbnail sketches. I often refer to my sketch process as "thinking with my pen." I often don't know what's going to pop out of my pen. In the case of the *Souvenir Book* cover I came up with several ideas, then chose a couple of the most promising ones. I drew those up at about half the size that they were going to be finally printed. I sent snapshots of these to the Comic-Con folks for their input and to see if I was on the right track with them. After getting their feedback, I drew a more refined version of one of my sketches. It changed Ray's posture to make him more dynamic. Then I colored it. That passed muster with Comic-Con, so I proceeded to the final painting.

I love traditional methods of creating art. Oil on canvas is my favorite medium. This cover is oil on canvas; the style harkens back to the old pulp magazine covers. Ray started his writing career in the pulps and was the first science fiction writer to graduate to what were called "the slicks." The "slicks" were considered a higher class of magazine than the pulps (*Saturday Evening Post* and *Playboy* were "slick" magazines; "slick" because the paper they were printed was of a higher quality and had a glossy coating).

My deadline was rapidly approaching. The painting was near completion—everything was finished except for the graduated background of the sky. Unless one is using an airbrush, it takes some time to do a large, perfectly graduated background. It often requires several coats of paint (repainting the background several times) before the underpainting has finally disappeared. I calculated that it was possible that the painting of this sky over and over might make me miss my deadline. So, I had the near-finished painting professionally photographed. After I got my digital file of the image, I put it into Photoshop where I easily added a perfectly graduated sky background. I then sent this combination traditional/digital image to Comic-Con. This freed me to paint the final graduated oil background at my leisure.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic that shortly arrived after I had sent Comic-Con my cover image changed all of those 2020 deadline concerns.

SDCC: You're one of the few people to attend every Comic-Con—all 50 of them. What are some of your fondest Comic-Con memories?

BILL: One of the best actually involves Ray Bradbury. I heard this second hand. Ray was wrapping up his Comic-Con panel. It was announced



Left, Bill's 1991 and 2000 *Souvenir Book* covers; above, Bill (far right) with Ray Bradbury and publisher Byron Preiss in 1981. Photo courtesy Bill Stout.

that Ray had time for one more question. A kid raised his hand and was called upon.

"Mr. Bradbury, what is it that you would like to do more than anything else in the world?"

Ray replied: "More than anything else I would like to visit William Stout's booth and look at his new paintings."

Another fond memory was meeting Alison Buckles. She was a beautiful San Diego local. We fell in love and began a relationship that lasted for four intense years.

I have also met many other folks at Comic-Con who would later become some of my closest friends. Because the attendees are from all over the world, if I hadn't met them at Comic-Con, I might never have met them at all.

Shawshank Redemption director, friend and art collector Frank Darabont used to host a Thursday night dinner at one of San Diego's finest restaurants for his favorite artists and, occasionally, some of his fellow director friends. I was always invited. One year he sat me opposite Guillermo Del Toro. I had been wanting to meet Guillermo for years but we kept missing each other. We have many mutual friends who all felt that we would hit it off. At that fateful dinner, we did indeed hit it off. The next day he purchased two pieces from me at my Comic-Con booth. He asked if I would be so kind as to deliver them to his home. I happily agreed. It was at his home, surrounded by his vast collection, that he asked me to work on *Pan's Labyrinth*. In the middle of his pitch, the phone rang. I heard his end of the conversation.

"Yes . . . oh, thank you! I'm so very honored . . . but I'm afraid I will have to pass. I need to make my little Spanish film right now."

After the call ended, I asked Guillermo, "What was all that about?"

"Oh, it was Warner Brothers. They just offered me Harry Potter!"

My esteem for Guillermo and his integrity (which was already high) shot sky-high. He had just blown off the Harry Potter franchise to make his "little Spanish film!"

One year the centerpiece of my booth was the poster I had designed for Mondo of *Nosferatu*. I think it's one of the best pieces of art I have ever created. I had it displayed in a \$2,000 frame. The price tag on the piece was the highest I had ever asked for an ink-and-watercolor original. Dealers' room gossip found me being accused of stepping over the line. The word on the floor was that I had gotten too big for my britches with that price.

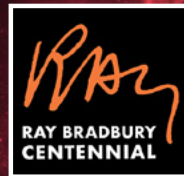
I explained what I had heard to Profiles in History auction/art dealer Joe Maddalena and asked his opinion. Was I asking for too much?

"I think your *Nosferatu* piece is the best bargain in the room," Joe replied.

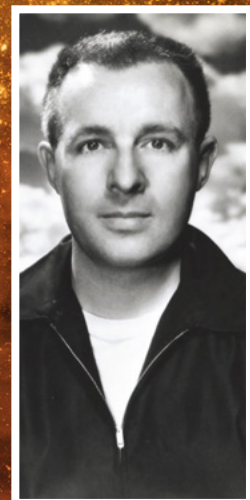
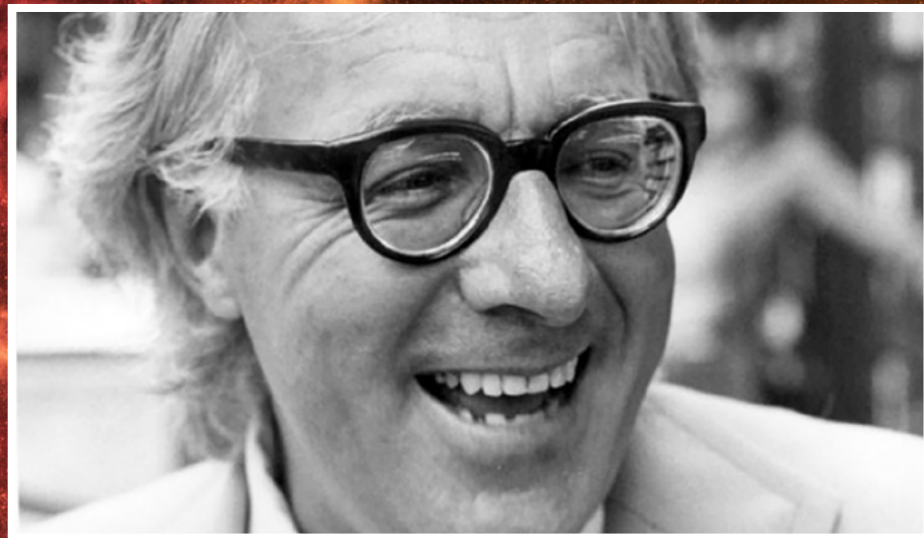
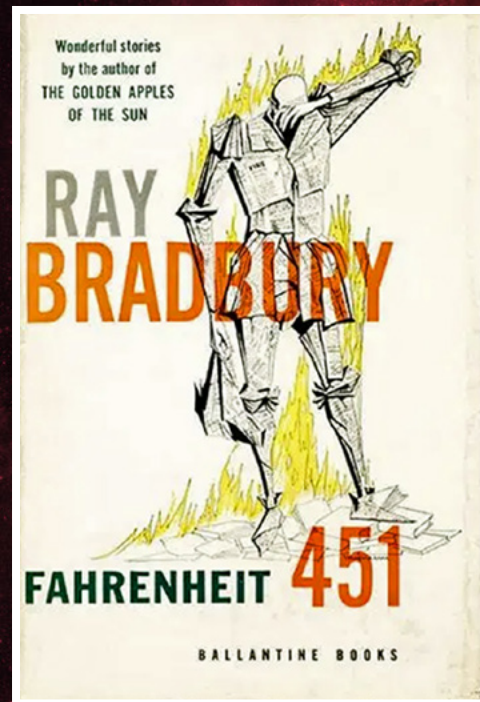
It sold in the last fifteen minutes of the convention.

Last year at Comic-Con (2019), I gave an Artist Spotlight presentation. When it was over, I received my first standing ovation.

Events and experiences like these are what draws me back to Comic-Con every year.



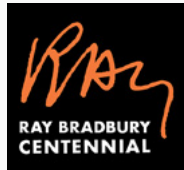
100 YEARS of



Ray Bradbury

A TELLER OF TALES

“ The thing that makes me happy is that I know that on Mars, two hundred years from now, my books are going to be read. They’ll be up on dead Mars with no atmosphere. And late at night, with a flashlight, some little boy is going to peek under the covers and read **The Martian Chronicles** on Mars. ”



RAY BRADBURY: One Story at a Time

by Jonathan Eller



(Above) "Three of a kind" (l to r): Ray Bradbury, his older brother Skip, and their father while living briefly in Roswell and Tucson, 1926. (Right): After returning to Waukegan, Ray began to clip and hand-color *Buck Rogers* newspaper strips and paste them into large scrapbooks.



Bradbury's love of movies came from his boyhood, when he saw films such as *London After Midnight*, starring Lon Chaney.

In the mid-1950s, Ray Bradbury pasted a series of very personal writing notes on the back of an old clipboard, spaced out beneath an overarching imperative inked by hand in large black letters: "ONE STORY AT A TIME." The first of these secret admonitions reads, "Learn to distinguish what you experience in books from that which you experience and take from life. Only what you learn from life makes you—original."

That remarkable life began in Waukegan, Illinois on August 22, 1920, when a third son was born into the working-class world of Leo and Esther Bradbury. Ray Douglas Bradbury carried the mark of the visual arts from birth; his mother, an avid cinema devotee, selected "Douglas" as his middle name to honor one of her silent screen heroes, Douglas Fairbanks Sr. From the age of three, Bradbury was hauled to the movie theaters by his mother and, later, by his older brother Skip, already a robust and athletic child in the image of their father Leo, who was a telephone lineman for the Waukegan power company.

Only two of the four Bradbury children survived infancy. Skip's twin Sam had died in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, and Esther was nearly carried off as well (a decade later, the dreaded influenza also claimed baby sister Betty Jane). In time Ray sensed that, on some level within the family dynamic, he had become daredevil Skip's replacement twin, but he was not a natural fit for that role. Visual art, in the form of comics and fairy tales, stole his heart before he could even read, as did the remarkable color photographs of King Tutankhamen's golden death mask and burial treasures. He was a bookish child, and he wore thick glasses from the age of eleven. Although he would grow to a respectable five-foot-ten inches in high school, his slow growth earned him the family nickname "Shorty."

The two boys and their parents lived next door to Leo's parents, who owned both homes. A few blocks to the east, the boys could explore the Lake Michigan shore and the rail lines that brought the seasonal circuses to town. To the west were the Illinois forests and rivers of Lake County, stretching on north to the nearby Wisconsin resorts. Dividing their neigh-

borhood from downtown and the lakeshore was a fascinating and much-studied ravine topography, a shadowy world that shaped many of his future tales about the uncertain boundaries between life and death.

Waukegan's two downtown movie houses, the Academy and the brand-new Genesee, were only a few blocks from Bradbury's home. The silent films he came to love during these years set the foundation for his lifetime love of motion pictures, including Lon Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Laugh Clown Laugh*, *He Who Gets Slapped*, and the long-lost vampire thriller *London After Midnight* (Bradbury would be one of the last living witnesses to that film's life on screen). His other early cinema loves ranged from Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s *The Thief of Baghdad* and *The Gaucho* to the comedies of Harold Lloyd and early Disney cartoons such as *Skeleton Dance* and *Steamboat Willie*.

If films anchored his love of visual storytelling, the world of comic strips taught him how such stories were constructed

and sequenced. In fact, his initial attempts at reading came at the breakfast table through the newspaper comics. In years to come he would accumulate, in strip or book form, collections of Popeye, Mickey Mouse, Mutt and Jeff, Alley Oop, Little Orphan Annie, and other favorites. But these various accumulations were overshadowed by his comprehensive collections of Dick Calkins's *Buck Rogers*, the Tarzan strips carried beyond the original Burroughs novels by Hal Foster, and eventually Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon*. He would use schoolroom paste to build more than twenty comic strip scrapbooks of these principal passions, often coloring in the characters' clothing to match the weekend color features. Most of these survive, with tantalizing evidence of hidden drawings by Bradbury beneath some of the pasted-down strips.

It was a short leap from the comics to the serialized genre fiction of the pulp magazines. The wonderment and eerie otherness of the science fiction pulps attracted him from the moment he found one of his grandmother's boards reading the fall 1928 issue of *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, with Frank R. Paul's cover illustration for A. Hyatt Verrill's "The World of the Giant Ants." His love soon spread to his father's story-filled copies of *Argosy* and the Edgar Rice Burroughs serializations of John Carter's Martian adventures in *Blue Book*. By his eleventh year, he was bringing home newspaper serials as well, venturing downtown on roller skates, pulled along by his dog.

The touch of Mr. Electrico's static-charged wand in a 1932 circus sideshow came with the admonition to "Live Forever," and suddenly the twelve-year-old Ray Bradbury realized, in a vague way, that he could live forever through his writing. Realization soon grew into conviction, but not in Waukegan; the third year of the Great Depression left Leo out of work, and unsettled years followed as the family moved to Tucson, back to Waukegan, and finally out to Los Angeles in the late spring of 1934. A toy dial-a-letter typewriter, a gift from his parents for Christmas 1932 in Tucson, provided a primitive way to transfer Buck Rogers dialog and perhaps a chapter for his own version of Burroughs's *Warlords of Mars* to small typewritten sheets of paper.

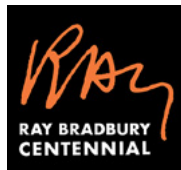
Ray Bradbury found ways to sustain his dreams all along the way, however, reading parts in various radio shows for KGAR in Tucson. Sound effects for Tailspin Tommy's airplane motor evolved into juvenile voice roles for that show, *The Katzenjammer Kids*, and *Bringing Up Father*. His favorite radio show, *Chandu the Magician*, was broadcast at KGAR from transcription disks that had to be destroyed after broadcast; Bradbury would collect the broken fragments and run his fingernail back and forth on each one, just to hear a few mystical words from Chandu or dark laughter from the villain Roxor.

His early loves of literature, radio, and film were heightened after his family moved to Los Angeles in 1934, and for a time nearby Hollywood reigned supreme in his imagination. Throughout high school he would seek Hollywood autographs outside of the Brown Derby and other restaurants and diners favored by the stars; he even climbed the wall between Hollywood Cemetery (now Hollywood Memorial Park) and Paramount for a chance to walk around in his dream world before his inevitable removal by the studio's security guards.

High school proved to be a more complicated proposition. Ray Bradbury had never done well in a lecture environment—he was a visual learner, a voracious reader in libraries wherever he found them, but not particularly fond of grammar rules that restricted his radio-style humor or his more refined experiments with metaphor and poetic prose. He had to remediate English grammar, but he excelled in the poetry and creative writing classes and clubs of Los Angeles High School. His class of 1938 yearbook epigraph included the comment "Headed for literary distinction," but in his heart



Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter novels, serialized in pulp magazines such as *Argosy*, were a huge influence on Bradbury's nascent writing career.



Ray Bradbury (back right) with his parents and his older brother Skip, circa 1936, in front of the house they shared with other renters on St. Andrews Place, a few blocks southwest of downtown Los Angeles.

he didn't think he was headed anywhere. After graduation he survived a single day on a lawn-cutting crew, a week or so as a delivery boy for the dressmakers in the Orpheum Building, and finally settled into nearly four years selling the afternoon edition of the Los Angeles *Herald and Express* on weekdays at the corner of Olympic and Norton, not far from St. Andrews Place, where he still lived with his parents and brother in a subdivided rental house.

But during his senior year at LA High, a notice posted in a small bookstore led him to the bi-weekly meetings of the Los Angeles chapter of the Science Fiction League, and his life as a writer, still raw and undisciplined, slowly began to gain focus. He would write humorous anecdotes and news highlights for the home-grown fanzines that served as a creative cross-country pen-pal network for fans and writers alike. Bradbury also wrote amateur tales for various fanzines, and during 1939 and 1940, he produced four issues of his own *Futura Fantasia*, notable for the illustrations and cover art of Hannes Bok.

Fans like Forry Ackerman and the aspiring stop-action animation talent Ray Harryhausen became fast friends. Ackerman's methodical approach to fandom and fanzine editing introduced Bradbury's prose, pun-laced humor, and cartoon-like art to the fanzine network of readers and editors. Their lifelong friendship spanned seventy years, but Ackerman's most important impact was arranging Ray Bradbury's first meeting with Ray Harryhausen in the late 1930s. The two Rays became friends for life, and Bradbury was soon helping out as Harryhausen experimented in his father's garage with primitive forms of stop-action animation.

Their rapidly rising careers took different paths, but Bradbury's and Harryhausen's achievements would intersect occasionally in the decades to come. A 1951 *Saturday Evening Post* story by Bradbury provided the title and a scene for one of Harryhausen's early successes as a Hollywood animator—the 1953 Warner Brothers film, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*.

Harryhausen's distinguished film career eventually led him to live in England, but the distance did not diminish their friendship. Harryhausen wrote the foreword to Bradbury's 1983 *Dinosaur Tales* story collection, and in 1992 Bradbury would have the honor of presenting Ray Harryhausen with his Academy Award for lifetime achievement in technological contributions to film.

But these notable moments in Bradbury's life were still far off in an unknowable future during the years leading up to America's involvement in World War II. In addition to his new friendships with Forry Ackerman and Ray Harryhausen, Bradbury received encouragement (and, in some cases, valuable mentorship) from genre writers Henry Kuttner, Leigh Brackett, Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, Ross Rocklin, and, for a time, Robert Heinlein. His bus journey from Los Angeles to the summer 1939 Science Fiction World Con in New York, funded largely through Ackerman's financial support, allowed Bradbury to circulate Hannes Bok's art portfolio at *Weird Tales* and jump-start Bok's Hugo Award-winning career as a genre magazine illustrator. Julius Schwartz, founder of the first significant genre writers' agency in New York and later a major editorial force in the world of comics, met Bradbury at the Con. Once he saw evidence of the young writer's potential, Schwartz agreed to represent him, guiding his sales from 1941 through 1947 as Bradbury rose to prominence in *Weird Tales* and the fantasy, detective, and science fiction pulps.

The war-clouded summer of 1941 was a time when Ray Bradbury still depended on his street corner newsstand for a very meager living that made every borrowed, purchased or gifted book a precious treasure. Finally, just before his twenty-first birthday, the aspiring fan writer earned his first professional check when Julius Schwartz negotiated his first sale in the pulp market. This was "Pendulum," re-worked from its original fanzine origins with the help of co-author Henry Hasse for the November 1941 issue of *Super Science Stories*. The \$16.00 he earned for his half of the sale marked the beginning of Ray Bradbury's prolific 72-year professional writing career.

World War II service scattered some of the LASFL members. Bradbury was deferred for poor eyesight and wrote Red Cross blood drive radio announcements for his alternate service. Fortunately, Hank Kuttner (writing from his East Coast army posting) and Leigh Brackett continued to mentor Bradbury through the war years as he developed his own unique style of writing. That style involved writing with emotional conviction about the fundamental fears, hopes, and passions that make us human. His friend and fellow writer Damon Knight later described Bradbury's strength as the ability to write about "the fundamental pre-rational fears and longings and desires: the rage at being born; the will to be loved; the longing to communicate, the hatred of parents and siblings; the fear of things that are not oneself."

Successive generations of young readers would find him deeply embedded in the nation's genre and mainstream reading culture—even though he never followed genre rules at all. Throughout most of the 1940s, the Bradbury submissions that passed across the *Weird Tales* editorial desks were not conventional ghost or vampire tales. Even Julius Schwartz grew apprehensive: "Where's your next *Weird* yarn—and don't

forget *horror*, not arty or child stuff." Editors of the detective pulps were amazed at his stubborn determination to let his characters write the stories, with little if any logical plotting at all. Yet they admired the emotional power and vivid metaphors of his prose, and more often than not they accepted his work for a wide range of detective pulps.

The broadening range of Bradbury's fiction soon began to reach the major market magazines as well, earning two *O. Henry Awards* annual anthology appearances for "Homecoming" (1946) and "Powerhouse" (1948). "The Big Black and White Game" (1945), one of several Bradbury tales that spoke against racial injustice, became the first of four stories by Bradbury to appear in the pages of the *Best American Short Story* annual anthologies over the next dozen years.

In spite of his talkative nature and lifelong love of acting, Bradbury had always been a loner at heart. In earlier times this tendency—along with a young writer's vow of poverty—had periodically affected his confidence, but in September 1947 he took on other vows when he married Marguerite McClure. She shared his love of reading, and her proficiency in European languages extended her reading passions into world literature, history and culture. The light she brought into his life was amplified that same month in 1947 when Don Congdon became his New York literary agent; as it turned out, Congdon and his son Michael would represent him throughout the rest of his long career. Bradbury would always consider his wife and agent to be his closest counselors in his public role as a teller of tales. In time he and Maggie would raise four daughters, outgrowing their house on Clarkson Road and moving in 1958 to a larger home in the Cheviot Hills section of West Los Angeles, where he would live for the rest of his life.

Readers of later times find it hard to believe that Bradbury's real success as a science fiction writer came more slowly than in horror and detective fiction, but by the late 1940s he hit his stride with masterful stories of the people who would explore other worlds. Yet science fiction would always remain more of an open-ended storytelling armature for Ray Bradbury; he didn't understand rocket ballistics or orbital mechanics, but he could use science-fictional settings to envision the alienation, loneliness, and fear of Otherness that his explorers and settlers might encounter as they strove to realize their otherworldly dreams. It took him many years to write sustained book-length fiction, but his mastery of the short story form resulted in the novelized story-cycle of *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) and a second volume of science fiction tales woven around the moving tattoos of *The Illustrated Man* (1951).

Over the next decade, the other enduring books of his career rapidly reached print: The wide-ranging realism, fantasies, and science fiction of *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (1953) and *A Medicine for Melancholy* (1959); *Fahrenheit 451's* inverted world of firemen who start fires, instead of extinguishing them (1953); the gathering of his first successes in weird fiction, revised with a few newer stories, in *The October Country* (1955); and the easy memories and vivid nightmares of small-town life from his Midwestern youth, collected and novelized as *Dandelion Wine* (1957) and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962), his fullest and most extended exploration of the nature of good and evil.



A family portrait of Ray and Maggie Bradbury with their daughters, circa 1963–64 (clockwise, from top left) Susan, Ramona, Alexandra, and Bettina.

Bradbury was becoming a major force in the much-debated process of fantasy and science fiction becoming part of the literary mainstream—all the more remarkable given the occasional critical observation that Ray Bradbury never really wrote within these genre traditions at all. Yet even as *The Martian Chronicles* and the subsequent Bradbury titles of the early 1950s were beginning to secure his lasting reputation, his ability to write vividly visual stories was leading him down a very different creative path—for the rest of his long life, he would spend a great deal of time adapting his work for feature films, television, and stage, sometimes overseeing others as they adapted his work, and sometimes fighting intensely to keep a Hollywood production from descending into chaos.

With memories of his teenage years climbing the back wall of Paramount still alive in his mind, Bradbury was finally able to enter a studio through the front gate as he wrote and sold his first screen story to Universal in 1952. What he had unconsciously learned from the comics proved key in his earliest screen successes: "Reading the comics and collecting them gave me the shorthand that screenwriters need to make points, prove metaphors, and do it with swift economy. The lessons I learned from *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon*—setting scenes, cutting dialog to the bone—were put to use when I worked on *It Came From Outer Space* (as author of the 99-page treatment) and my first screenplay, *Moby Dick*, for John Huston."

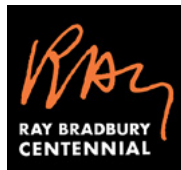
Universal's well-received *It Came from Outer Space* (1953), shot in both 2D and 3D from Bradbury's original screen story, was one of the first science fiction films to portray a serious scientific encounter with profoundly different forms of alien life. Early that fall, it was playing overseas in London theaters



Bradbury's first paid short story, "Pendulum," co-written with Henry Hasse, was published in the Nov. 1941 issue of *Super Science Stories*. He was paid \$15. From *ebay*



Bradbury's first short story collection, *Dark Carnival*, was published by Arkham House in 1947. From RayBradbury.com



Ray Bradbury (l) and Alfred Hitchcock on the set of Hitchcock's film *Torn Curtain* in the mid-1960s. Bradbury story adaptations were televised on *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* from 1956 through 1964.

as Bradbury met there with John Huston to share initial ideas on the formidable challenge of adapting *Moby Dick* for a Warner Brothers feature film. Bradbury's script, largely written in Ireland under the brilliant but demanding John Huston, proved to be one of the most exhausting challenges of his career, but the success of this film opened many doors to Bradbury in Hollywood, including television. Beginning in 1955, eight Bradbury stories were adapted for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. In all more than twenty Bradbury stories were adapted to television between 1951 and 1964, including Rod Serling's 1962 *Twilight Zone* production of "I Sing the Body Electric!"

If the 1950s marked Ray Bradbury's breakout in major market magazines, book publishing, and Hollywood, that decade also witnessed the full flowering of his fiction in the form of comic book adaptations. He had a gift for writing very visual prose, and Julius Schwartz had tried to recruit him for the comics as early as 1944: "Your dialogue and sense of humor has always been good; ditto for your plots. And I'm certain you can think in *pictures* which is so vital for the scripts we use." But unlike his mentors Ed Hamilton and Henry Kuttner, Bradbury never tried his hand at writing original stories for the various comic hero franchises; instead, comic book publishers of the early 1950s were attracted to the science fiction and fantasy stories that had already made him famous. By 1952, William M. Gaines and his talented stable of artists began a long series of Bradbury adaptations for the various EC comic book runs, and Bradbury was soon convinced that EC's adaptations could form the basis for a long-term working relationship.

Thanks to the rising controversy fueled by Dr. Fredric Wertham's indictment of comics in *Seduction of the Innocent*, Bradbury's first sustained journey through the world of comics would play out as a regrettably short twenty-four-month adventure. Yet even as Wertham's interpretation of the role of comics in juvenile delinquency gained traction in America, Bradbury stayed the course with EC, bowing to pressure from West Coast Hollywood friends and East Coast editors only to the point of asking that the Bradbury cover teasers be removed from future issues. He wanted his stories to continue in the EC books, and even expressed the wish that someday Gaines could feature a graphic adaptation of *The Martian Chronicles*. But as momentum moved toward a Judicial subcommittee hearing in the United States Senate over regulation of the comics industry, Bradbury's association with EC Comics left him just a graphic pen stroke away from involvement in the process. He never wavered in his support of the EC adaptations, however; with Bradbury's blessing, Ballantine Books would reprint black-and-white reductions of some of the original EC color adaptations in widely sold mass-market paperbacks titled *The Autumn People* (1965) and *Tomorrow Midnight* (1966). [For more on Bradbury and EC, see page 42.]

By the 1960s, Bradbury had become one of America's best-known Space Age visionaries, with copies of his books in the Kennedy White House and an Academy Award-nominated short-feature animated film of "Icarus Montgolfier Wright," his story of an astronaut's restless dreams the night before a fictional first mission to the moon. Ray Bradbury would be in NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory mission control center for Mariner 9's successful orbital Mars mission in 1971, and again for Viking 1's 1976 landing on the planet that he had already populated with his imaginary Martian settlers.

Three *Life* magazine features in the 1960s, including "Cry the Cosmos" (1962) and the award-winning "An Impatient Gulliver Above Our Roofs" (1967), helped sustain the goals of the Apollo lunar missions in the public imagination. Over the next decade, Bradbury would continue to refine our need to explore the Cosmos through influential articles with such thought-provoking Bradbury titles as "Apollo Murdered: The Sun Goes Out" (1972), "From Stonehenge to Tranquility Base" (1972), "The God in Science Fiction" (1977), and "Beyond Eden" (1980). In 1985 he was asked to testify on our Space-Age future for the National Commission on Space created by the United States Congress and President Ronald Reagan.

During these years Bradbury also remained a constant presence in Hollywood. François Truffaut's internationally-produced feature film adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* was released by Universal Studios in 1966, starring Julie Christie and Oskar Werner. Warner Brothers' 1969 release of *The Illustrated Man* featured Bradbury's longtime friend Rod Steiger and Claire Bloom in a film built on three of the volume's stories and set within a framework back-history of the illustrated man and the enchantress who creates his living tattoos. After years of frustration as major film studios failed to come on board to produce Bradbury's three successive scripts for *The Martian Chronicles*, NBC broadcast a January 1980 three-night miniseries of the *Chronicles* with a good script by Richard Matheson and a formidable cast of stars that included Rock Hudson,



"Out of the mist, one hundred yards away, came Tyrannosaurus rex." Ray Bradbury with a saurian friend in the early 1980s, a time when he and Byron Preiss gathered all of his stories about his favorite lost world creatures into the 1983 illustrated collection, *Dinosaur Tales*.

Darren McGavin, Maria Schell, Bernadette Peters, Roddy McDowall, and Bernie Casey.

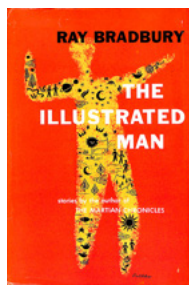
Excellent acting in all three of these film projects overcame some of the challenges of bringing Bradbury's fiction to life on screen, but problems with pacing and limited special effects budgets made it difficult to realize the full magnitude of imagination in these classic works. The same challenges faced the 1983 Disney release of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, which required extensive re-shooting, re-editing, and a new score at the studio during the fall and winter of 1982-83. Some of the special effects introduced late in the process by Lee Dyer improved a number of scenes, including the library confrontation between the town's Charles Halloway (Jason Robards) and the predatory carnival's Mr. Dark (Jonathan Pryce), one of the more memorable scenes of pure terror brought to film from Bradbury's supernatural fiction. In the end, *Something Wicked* received Hollywood's Saturn Award for Best Fantasy Film and four nominations in other categories, including the memorable music of James Horner.

There would be other less satisfying feature-length Bradbury films, including *Picasso Summer* (Warner Brothers/Seven Arts, 1972), the very loosely-adapted *The Screaming Woman* (Universal/ABC Movie of the Week, 1972), and *A Sound of Thunder* (Warner Brothers, 2005), but one of the most satisfying ventures of his entire career was *The Ray Bradbury Theater*. Here he could combine his fundamental lifelong loves of storytelling and acting with the chance to write, produce, and largely control a sustained five-season series of his own stories. In 1985 co-producer Larry Wilcox brought together the Canadian-based international production company Atlantis Films with HBO for an initial two-stage season of six episodes. Significant cable TV award nominations would lead to five

more extended seasons on the USA Network. Between 1985 and 1992, these sixty-five episodes would involve many of Hollywood's most famous stars and a number of international producers and directors.

Bradbury had grown from an amateur writer to a professional one while he was immersed in the 1930s and early 1940s world of science fiction and fantasy fandom, and he would periodically return to an even broader fan base throughout his life. In 1970 Shel Dorf persuaded Bradbury to attend the first full-fledged version of Comic-Con (then billed as the Golden State Comic-Con) as a special guest. Comics confront reality, he said to the Con attendees: "They are a direct confrontation with reality, not an escape." That first year he bought a few copies of *MAD* magazine in Comic Con's dealer rooms. This was the only surviving magazine from the old EC world of his friend Bill Gaines, and he would always consider it one of the best political and social commentaries in the land. Bradbury continued to renew himself and entertain fans at Comic-Con for another thirty-five years.

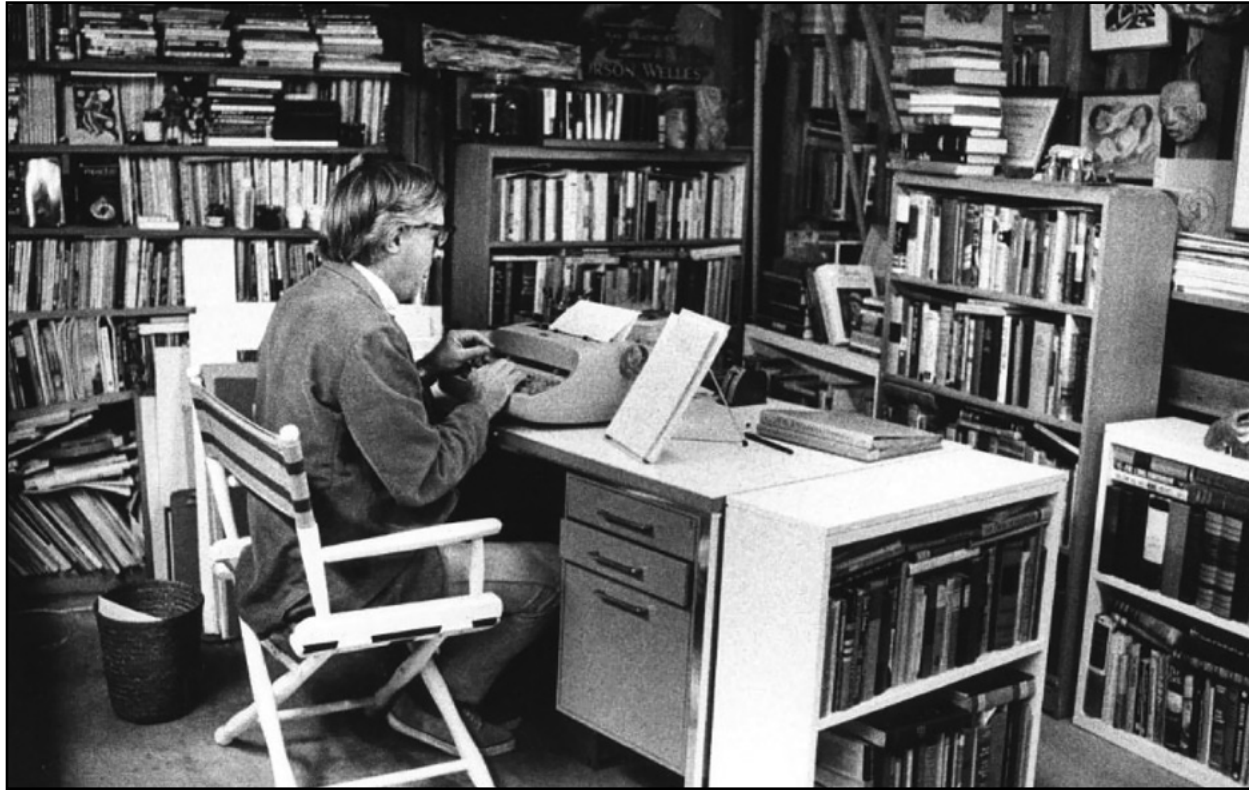
Many of these fans had read Bradbury's newer titles as well as his classic books. Collections like *The Machineries of Joy* (1964) and *I Sing the Body Electric!* (1969) included some of Bradbury's uncollected older stories, and this tendency to look back for overlooked early stories to mix in with newer ones would continue with the collections he published for the rest of his life, most notably *Long After Midnight* (1976), *The Toynee Convector* (1988), *One More for the Road* (2002), and *The Cat's Pajamas* (2004). After a serious stroke in late 1999, Bradbury recovered and was able to bring closure to book-length works that he had deferred for fifty years and more. These included *From the Dust Returned* (2001), the various adventures of the supernatural Elliot family made famous



Bradbury's third book, *The Illustrated Man*, another short story collection, was published in 1951. A movie version starring Rod Steiger premiered in 1969. From RayBradbury.com



Bradbury's first true novel, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, was published in 1962 and adapted into a movie in 1983. From RayBradbury.com



Bradbury working in his home basement in the mid-1960s. He maintained an office away from home for years, but he always kept an active writing routine in this enchanted space. Photo by Ray Hamilton

in early stories such as "Homecoming," and *Farewell Summer* (2006), the original novel of his Illinois youth from which *Dandelion Wine* had been carved so many years earlier.

Newer graphic adaptations of Bradbury's stories and books also appeared in the 1980s and 1990s; these projects were, for the most part, conceived and generated through the talent and vision of Byron Preiss. The later-life Bradbury treasures that Preiss created began with the illustrated Bradbury collection *Dinosaur Tales* (1983), early video games based on *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451*, and later broadened into a series of Bradbury Comics, reprinting some EC classics but primarily creating fresh ones illustrated by a new generation of Bradbury-inspired artists.

Given this long and creative career, it's not surprising that great honors came to Ray Bradbury before his passing on June 5, 2012. A National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters in 2000 was followed by the 2004 award of the National Medal of Arts, presented at the White House by President George W. Bush. In 2007 Bradbury received a Special Lifetime Pulitzer Citation for "his distinguished, prolific, and deeply influential career as an unmatched author of science fiction and fantasy." That same year, Bradbury was made a Commandeur of the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ambassador to the United States.

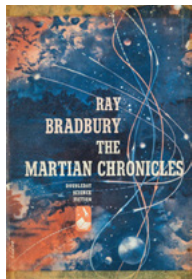
Many awards and special events were hosted by Cal Tech, the Planetary Society, and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, including the 2008 arrival of the Phoenix lander in the high latitudes of Mars carrying, among other literary works, a digital copy of *The Martian Chronicles*. These honors culminated in the weeks after Bradbury's death with the landing

of the Martian rover Curiosity, a large and atomic-powered traveler representing the first of a new generation of planetary explorers. After its successful Martian planetfall in August 2012, Curiosity's scientific team named the touchdown point "Bradbury Landing."

Michael Chabon, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Adventures of Cavalier and Clay*, led readers on a fantastic journey through a wartime mid-century world of comics that Ray Bradbury knew well. In 2002, Chabon revealed that the most influential story he ever read was Ray Bradbury's "The Rocket Man," a story he encountered at the age of ten. "All at once, the pleasure I took in reading was altered irrevocably. Before that, I had never noticed, somehow, that stories were not made of ideas or exciting twists of plot but of language. And not merely of pretty words and neat turns of phrase, but of systems of imagery, strategies of metaphor."

This very visual style of writing spoke truth to generations of illustrators who interpreted Bradbury's work in magazines, story collections, and comic books, here and around the world. Almost every year for more than three decades, Ray Bradbury would step out of time for a day and journey to Comic-Con, meeting the people who loved what he loved and appreciated what he privately called, on his "ONE STORY AT A TIME" clipboard, the "great vigor and blind vitality" through which he generated more than seventy years of timeless tales.

Jonathan R. Eller is a Chancellor's Professor of English and director of the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies at Indiana University's School of Liberal Arts. His books on Bradbury's life and career include the trilogy *Becoming Ray Bradbury*, *Ray Bradbury Unbound*, and *Bradbury Beyond Apollo*.



Bradbury's prediction of someone one day reading *The Martian Chronicles* on Mars is closer to reality: A digital copy of the book is already on the Red Planet. From RayBradbury.com

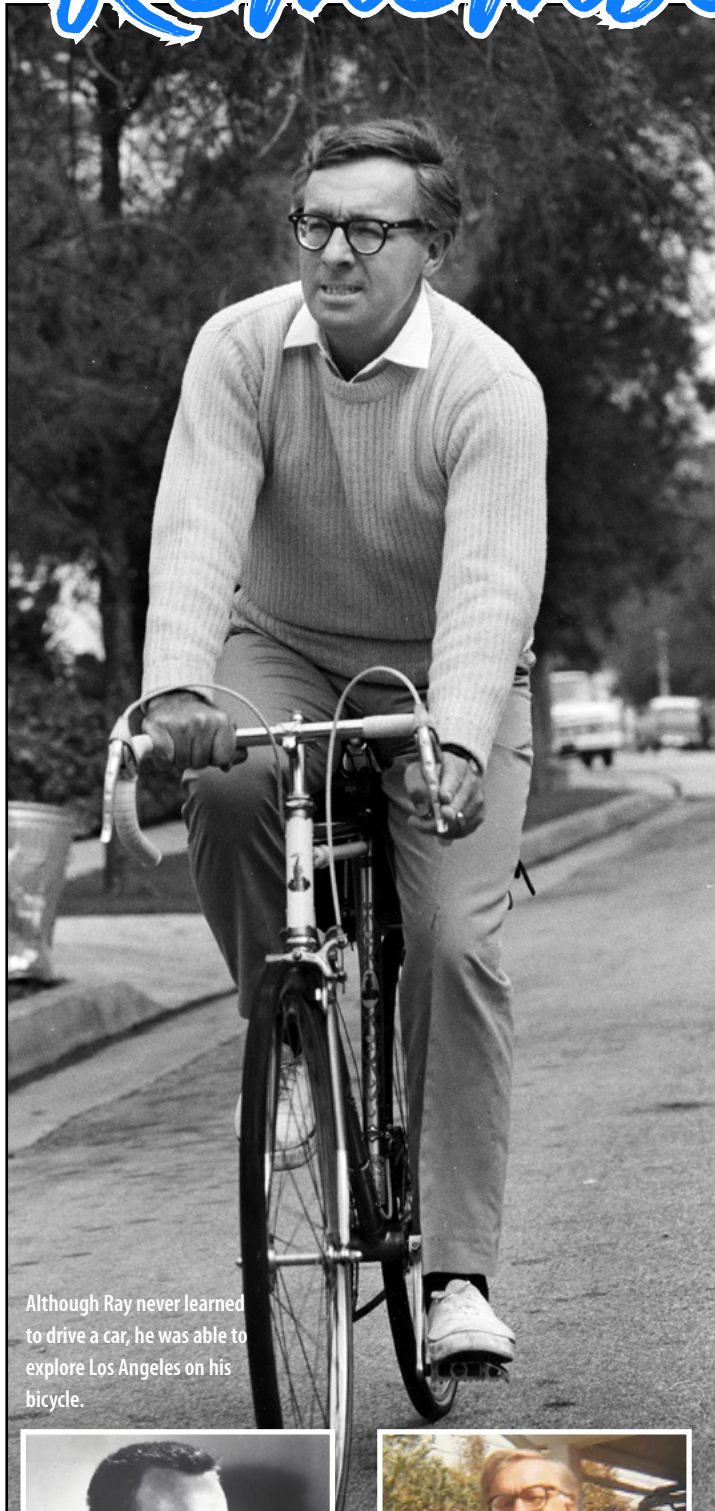
“The world outside our borderlands is there, it is a fact, it cannot be turned from, it cannot be hidden away, it cannot be covered up, it refuses to be ignored.

I wrote *Fahrenheit 451* to remind us that we must be careful how we funnel that world into our minds.”



Discover more at RayBradbury.com

Remembering Ray



Although Ray never learned to drive a car, he was able to explore Los Angeles on his bicycle.



Ray and Maggie Bradbury, 1980



Ray Bradbury: A Remembrance

by Susan Bradbury Nixon

Hundreds of people have written about the author Ray Bradbury over the years, but always Bradbury the writer. As one of his four daughters, I want to present a different slant.

Daddy, as a writer, was in a class of his own. As a father, he was even more unique. In an age when fathers left the parenting to the mothers, Daddy was a hands-on dad. Most weekends he piled us girls onto a bus, or into a taxi—since he didn't drive—and the adventures began!

Most times it was to a favorite bookstore or stationery store. Or we wandered the streets of Westwood Village or Hollywood, stopping for an Orange Julius or pizza, or, better yet, an ice cream cone or malt!

The holidays were Dad's favorite, especially Halloween and Christmas. Every October the pumpkins, witches, and skeletons would come out of storage to decorate as many rooms of the house as possible. Even the basement had its share! Daddy was always the one to go trick-or-treating with us. And even after we were all grown up, he would still go out on his own to neighbors' and friends' homes to collect stashes of candy.

Christmastime with him, however, is what I remember most: Going in a taxi to the local Christmas tree lot and selecting the biggest tree we could find, one that could barely fit through the front door. Daddy would put a "clump-o-lights" on the tree and throw tinsel with abandon, not quite caring what they looked like. He would hide the Christmas presents and then not remember where he had



placed them. Days or weeks later, he would appear with yet another gift that had been forgotten then found! The best, though, was after Christmas, some time in mid-January, when we'd take the tree down. Daddy would put the tree in the fireplace, set it on fire with a match, not realizing how tinder-dry the tree was, and WHOOSH ... a conflagration! Several times the mantel caught fire too. Never a dull moment when Daddy was involved!

Daddy was one of a kind. His childlike enthusiasm and sense of excitement were infectious. It was like having another sibling. We all got caught up in this wonderful world of his making and traveling with him on miraculous journeys.

This, then, was the Ray Bradbury I knew, loved, and miss every day.

Memories of Ray Bradbury

by Vanessa Harryhausen

Trustee for the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation
(Charity No. SC001419)

I have such fond memories of my Uncle Ray and his wife Maggie. My Dad, Ray Harryhausen and Uncle Ray had been best friends since they were in their teens, so it was literally a lifelong friendship that they shared. Uncle Ray passed away a year before my Dad—the two had stayed in touch from their teenage years until their 90s.

Even at an early age I was aware of the close and deep friendship both Rays had with each other. Whenever we were in LA we would get together, either visiting each other's homes or going out for meals. Both Rays were very fond of hamburgers and liked to visit the Spaghetti House restaurant. Much laughter and remembering the good old days were had by Uncle Ray and my Dad, and of course various films were discussed.

I remember going to see an adaption of one of Uncle Ray's plays, *The Martian Chronicles*, with him in LA—we were all excited to see it. We were also invited to visit the set of *Something Wicked this Way Comes*. Dad was always so thrilled and proud for Uncle Ray's achievements, as we all were.

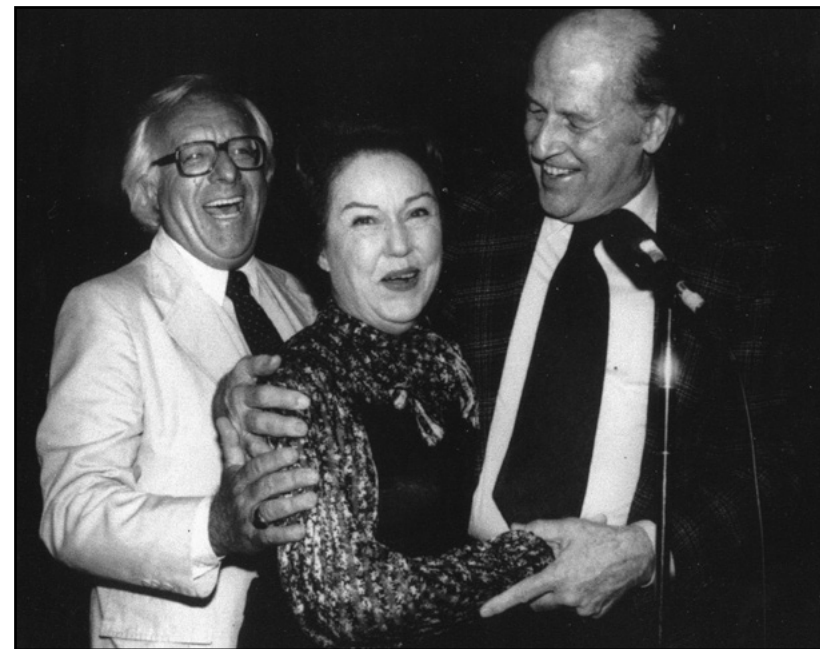
In 1992, my Dad was honored with an Oscar for his achievements, and this award was of course presented to him by his best friend. Uncle Ray made a lovely speech about my dad and their friendship, alongside their shared love of dinosaurs. He mentioned that in 1938 the two friends made a pact to grow old, but never to grow up. There was nobody better suited to speak about my dad's life on this proud evening.

To me Uncle Ray had a magnetic presence about him—he had a big heart and always had time for hugs and chats with me. We loved and treasured our times when both our families could get together.

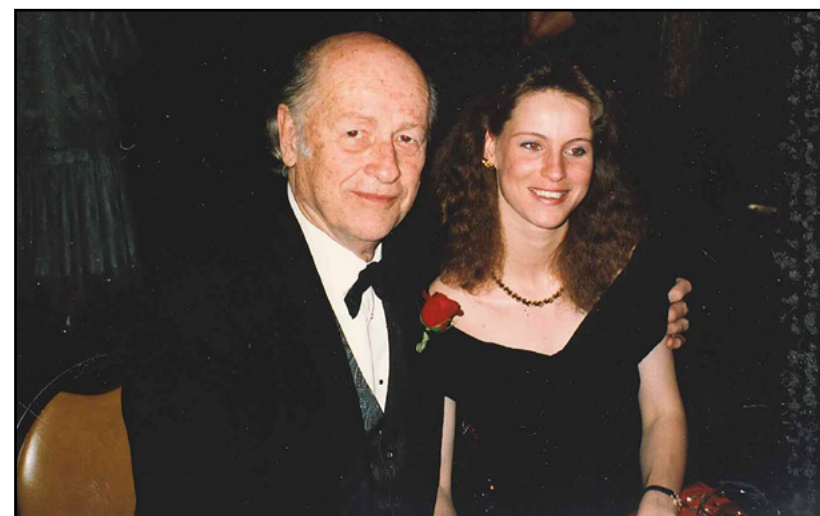
Thank you, Uncle Ray, for bringing to our lives laughter wisdom and love. You will be in my heart forever.



Ray Harryhausen (l) and Ray Bradbury at Dragon Con, Atlanta, Labor Day weekend, 1998.



King Kong star Fay Wray in the 1970s, flanked by friends Ray Bradbury (l) and Ray Harryhausen.



Ray Harryhausen and daughter Vanessa at the Hollywood ceremony where he received the 1992 Gordon E. Sawyer special Oscar for Technical Achievement in Film

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Ray Bradbury at Comic-Con

by Jackie Estrada

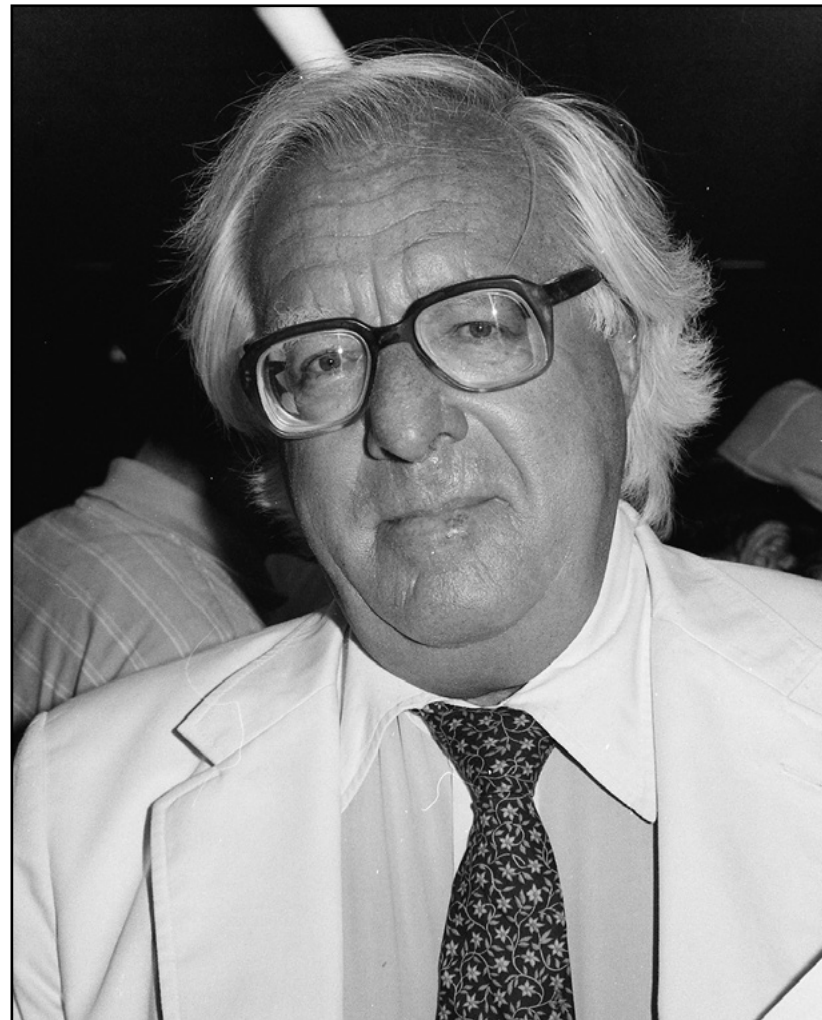
In 1939, the first World Science Fiction Convention was held in New York City. Among the 200 attendees were two young fans, Forrest J Ackerman (age 23) and Ray Bradbury (age 19), who had traveled from Los Angeles. At this point they were members of an LA fan group (the Science Fiction League, later changed to the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, still in existence today). As editor of the club's zine *Imagination*, Forry ran stories by Ray and underwrote Bradbury's fanzine *Futura Fantasia*. It would be a couple more years before they were working professionally in the field.

Jump to 30 years later: Both Forry and Ray are invited to be special guests at the very first San Diego Comic-Con (then called the Golden State Comic-Con). As fans who had turned "big-name pros," they were ideal guests to be that first show. So how did it come about that San Diego was able to get world-famous author Ray Bradbury to come? Here's how one of the Con's founding committee members, Mike Towry, tells the story.

Landing Bradbury as a Comic-Con Guest

"Before moving to San Diego in 1969, Shel Dorf had run The Detroit Triple Fan Fair along with Jerry Bails (who is sometimes called the "father of comics fandom"). The "Triple" in the name referred to science fiction and fantasy literature, films, and comics. It was a multi-genre con, the first regularly held event of a type that should be familiar to fans of Comic-Con.

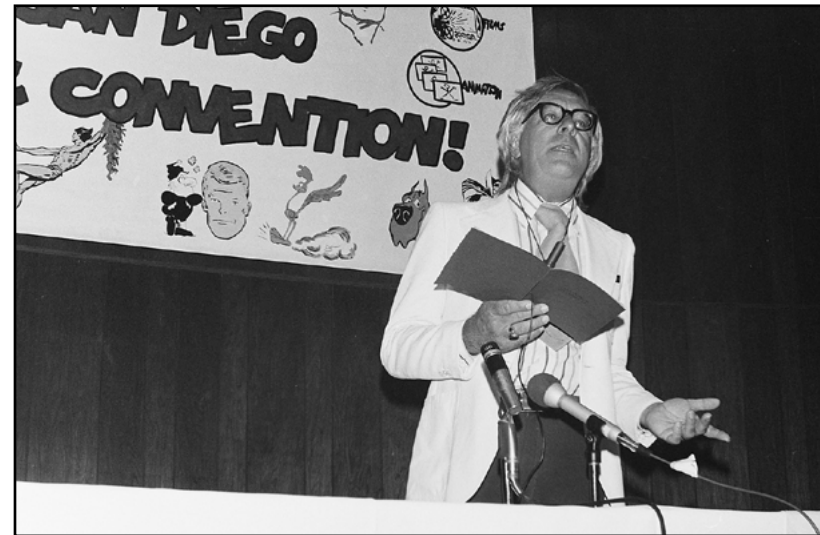
"When Shel moved to San Diego and contacted local fans about producing a con, he suggested a similar multi-



Ray always dressed smartly at Comic-Con (seen here in 1983).
All photos by Jackie Estrada unless otherwise noted.



Ray signing for fans at Comic-Con in the early 1970s.



Ray at the 1974 Comic-Con at the El Cortez Hotel.



Ray was one of the first recipients of Comic-Con's Inkpot Awards, shown here with event founder Shel Dorf in 1974 with the award. *Photographer unknown*



Bradbury presented Julius Schwartz with his Inkpot at the 1980 awards banquet. Sergio Aragonés was on hand to sketch Julie, and Harlan Ellison showed up to say a few words.

genre template. There subsequently was some discussion among the group of whether to follow that format or stick to just comics.

"When on Sunday, November 9, 1969, Shel led this group of San Diego comic fans and founding Comic-Con committee members on their first pilgrimage to the home of Jack Kirby, who had recently moved from New York to Irvine in Orange County, California, Shel asked, 'Jack, we're at the point now where we're trying to decide whether this should be just strictly a comic convention, or if we should include the fans of science fiction, the fans of films, and so on. What would your idea about this be?' Jack replied, 'I'd say do it all! Do comics and do anything that's been relevant to it. I know that comic fans have also been interested in the movie media, they've been interested in the pulp media, and all that has some value to them. I think they want to see it. I don't think they want to concentrate on comics alone. If you can widen the scope of the convention to include all these, I think you'll have a larger crowd and a more interesting crowd. And I think you'll have a great time.'

"So, a multi-genre convention it was to be, but that left the question of who to invite as science fiction guests. At the time, although some of the San Diego fans working with Shel to get Comic-Con going did read *F&SF*, none were really science fiction fans or had personal contact with science fiction fandom or authors.

"Fortunately, one of those fans, Richard Alf, who was planning to start as a student at UCSD, and Shel became aware of a talk to be given by Ray Bradbury at Revelle College, the science college at UCSD, on December 3, 1969.

"Shel had heard that Bradbury was a longtime fan of comic strips, so when he and Richard attended the talk, Shel brought along one of his comic strip scrapbooks to show Ray. During the discussion period after the talk, Shel handed the scrapbook to Ray who asked, 'Is this for me to keep?' Shel said no, but that he thought Ray would enjoy seeing it. As Ray looked at the comic strips and they talked, Shel invited him to be a guest at the Golden State Comic-Con. Ray was agreeable provided that the Con pay for his train ticket from Los Angeles, as he didn't drive, put him up in a hotel room, and pay his customary speaking fee, which was either \$3,000 (as Shel later remembered it) or \$5,000 (per Richard's subsequent memory of the event). Accounting for inflation at the official CPI rate, that would be anywhere from \$20,000 to \$35,000 in today's dollars.

"Shel was crestfallen, as there was no way the Con could afford that much (particularly since Shel was unemployed at the time and the other fans were all junior high or high school kids). Then it occurred to Shel to say to Ray that they were a just a group of fans trying to put on a non-profit educational event for the public benefit and didn't have that kind of money. To Shel and Richard's delight, Ray replied that if that was the case, he'd be happy to attend for free.

"Of course, Ray really didn't know if Shel and Richard were who they said they were and if the event was to be

as they represented it. No doubt he would have taken a chance and been a guest anyway, but it didn't hurt that he later received reassuring confirmation. In March of 1970, at a one-day mini-con held to raise funds for Comic-Con, Forry Ackerman was a special guest. Forry could vouch for Comic-Con as being legit. Further reassurance would be supplied by another longtime F&SF fan who had moved to San Diego in 1969, Ken Krueger. Ken had been a fanzine publisher, con organizer, small publisher, and dealer for decades. As a teenager he had even attended the first Worldcon in New York City and had met Ackerman and Bradbury there. Ken, who had a bookstore selling comics and F&SF books in Ocean Beach, had become chairman of the 1970 Comic-Con after its first chair, Bob Sourk, resigned the position after the mini-con. Ken and Bob both attended the long-running Westercon, which was held in Santa Barbara in July 1970. Ray Bradbury was also in attendance at that Westercon and Ken and Bob were able to follow up with him there to talk about Comic-Con and confirm that he was indeed going to be a guest at the San Diego con in August.

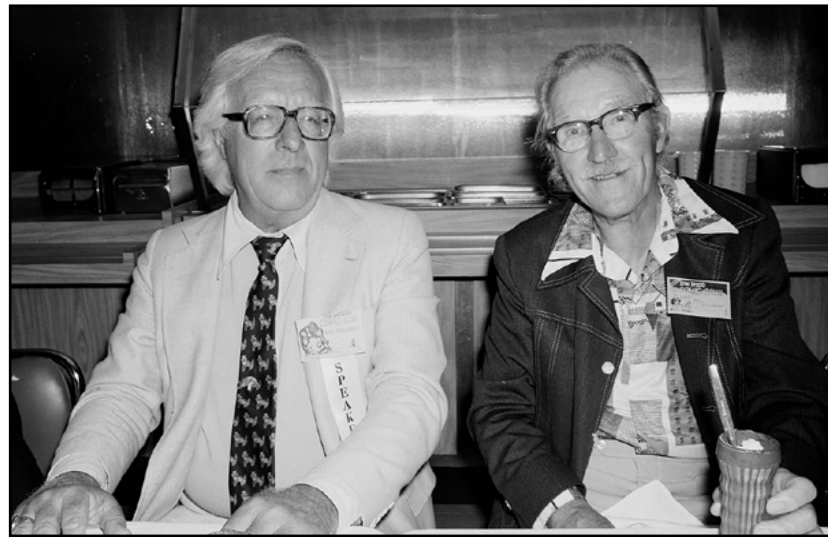
"When Ray spoke at that first Comic-Con, held at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego, it was Ken who introduced him, saying, 'I'm going to give you a very, very short opening remarks because the man I'm going to introduce, you all know him. What can we say about him? The field of science fiction fandom as a percentage has produced more professionals than any other group in the history of the world. We have produced many editors, many authors, many fine artists. We have also been very, very fortunate in producing one man whose work is literature. There is no other word for it, the word is literature. We have many authors, we have only one Ray Bradbury.'"

Bradbury at Comic-Con 1970

So that was Mike Towry's account of how Ray Bradbury happened to be one of the main guests at the first Con.

I was fortunate enough to have attended that show and to have been there for Bradbury's talk. There was no moderator—Ken Krueger introduced him, and Ray just started talking, with a few questions from the audience toward the end of the hour. We were all enthralled. Here are just a few things he touched upon as he spoke:

- He had scouted out the dealers' room and was tempted by many items, even though some of them had "outrageous prices."
- The direction of his life was inspired by reading the *Buck Rogers* newspaper strips starting when he was nine years old. Throughout his life he cut out and saved *Buck Rogers*, *Prince Valiant*, and other newspaper strips and still saved them. Other kids made fun of him, but he "refused to give up his loves."
- His first involvement with comic books came in 1952 when EC Comics adapted his story "Mars Is Heaven" for an issue of *Weird Science*—without Ray's knowledge. He



Comic-Con always brought together interesting combinations of people. Here's Ray with Katy Keene creator Bill Woggon at the 1981 awards banquet.

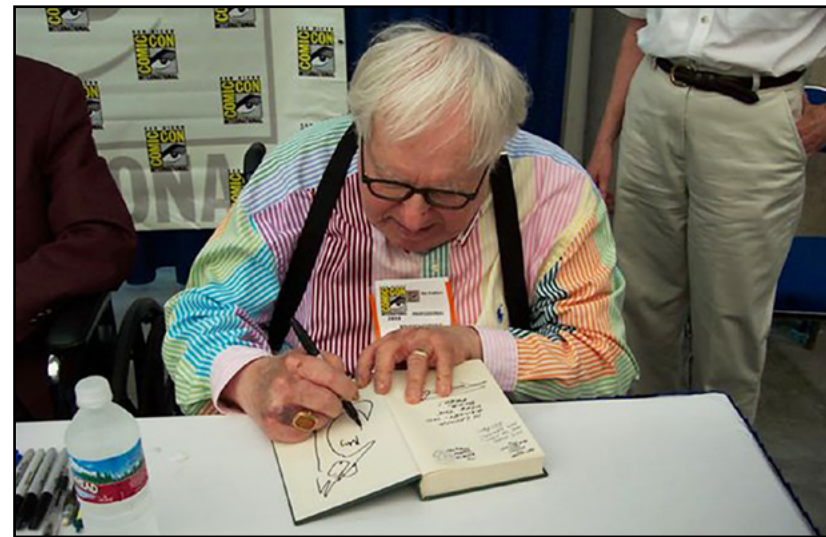


"I have never got over the initial impact of Buck Rogers on my life, and I am grateful for his explosion in my midst sometime in the year 1929 when the newspaper thudded against the screen door of my home in Waukegan, Illinois, and I walked out to pick up my destiny—the first Buck Rogers strip . . . From that day forward I did not walk to pick up the newspaper, I dashed, I ran, I streaked! I held my breath all day, waiting for the incredible moment when I opened the paper and was in love all over again."

1980 Comic-Con Souvenir Book • "What Comic Strips Mean to Me"



In 2003 Mark Evanier hosted a panel with lifelong friends Forry Ackerman, Julius Schwartz, and Ray Bradbury.



Ray was always happy to meet fans and sign autographs, including doing little sketches for people (at Comic-Con 2006).



Ray at Comic-Con in 2007. Photographer unknown



Ray (left) with his lifelong friend Ray Harryhausen (far right) and moderator Arnold Kunert, producer of numerous Harryhausen documentaries, at a Comic-Con panel in 2007. Photo by Bruce Guthrie

thought of suing, but instead he decided to "be nice" and write a letter to EC praising the adaptation and mentioning that they seem to have forgotten to send a check. The check came, and EC went on to adapt many more Bradbury stories. [For more on Bradbury and EC Comics, including a reprint of the comics adaptation of his short story "There Will Come Soft Rains," see page 42.]

- He became best friends with Ray Harryhausen when they were in high school. They would talk on the phone late at night about their mutual interests, and Harryhausen later served as Best Man at Bradbury's wedding.
- He talked about many of his Hollywood experiences, including working with Orson Welles, and told a hilarious anecdote about producer Hal Chester and the making of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*.
- He had worked on a few ideas for comic strips with artist Joe Mugnaini, but nothing became of them. However, he and Mugnaini collaborated on the animated film *Icarus Mongolfier Wright* (1962—nominated for an Oscar).
- He talked about the importance of comics in his life and in history, going back to the Egyptians.
- He worked on designing a ride for Disney World, in the course of which he got to work with Disney animators. He was a lifelong Disney enthusiast and was teased by his friends for having seen *Snow White* eight times; he and Walt became friends.
- Topics during the Q&A included a TV commercial he did with Stan Freberg, the *Illustrated Man* film (which he hated), Rod Serling's adaptation of "I Sing the Body Electric" (which he hated), how much he loved *MAD* magazine, and working on a Halloween project with Chuck Jones.

(A recording of Ray's entire talk can be listened to at www.comicconmemories.com/2010/01/08/recordings-of-the-1970-san-diego-comic-con-1-listen-to-them-here/)

Needless to say, I returned for every San Diego Comic-Con after that one, and Bradbury was a special guest for most of those shows. Each year I always made a point of dropping everything and going to see his talk, because he was the most inspirational speaker I've ever had the honor to hear.

Bradbury at the 1974 Comic-Con

By 1974 Comic-Con had found its "home" at the El Cortez Hotel. The guest list that year was stellar: Charles Schulz, Frank Capra, Milton Caniff, Chuck Jones, Jack Kirby, Russ Manning, Alex Toth, Bob Clampett, Walter Koenig, and Majel Barrett, just to name a few.

At that time I worked for a textbook publishing company, but I had a side career as a freelance article writer. I got a go-ahead from an editor at *Rolling Stone* to do a piece on Comic-Con, so that year I took lots of notes at every panel I attended, and the Bradbury talk was no exception (and this time I even took pictures). The article was never

written (*Rolling Stone* had a change in editors and was no longer interested), but I still have the notes. Here are some highlights:

- A main topic was working on a screenplay for *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Sam Peckinpah was originally supposed to direct, but he was replaced by Jack Clayton. [Note: This film did not get produced until 1982 and debuted in 1983.] Bradbury read the opening scene from the script, complete with voices.

- He talked about comics as an artform: "The last to realize it will be the intellectuals. It will creep up on them like the movies did. Europeans have already realized this."

- He was very proud of his screenplay for *Moby Dick* and said he loved Melville's "poetry." He even wrote a poem about the impact of Shakespeare on Melville, and shared part of it "because it is about creativity, something we are all interested in."

- Among projects he talked about were a play of *The Martian Chronicles* and a musical version of *Dandelion Wine* for which he wrote three songs.

In 1974 Comic-Con bestowed its first Inkpot Awards. Bradbury was among the first recipients of that award along with the other special guests, including Ackerman, June Foray, Stan Lee, Kirk Alyn, Russell Myers, and Roy Thomas.

Subsequent Decades

Bradbury was a perennial guest at Comic-Con for the next three decades. He participated in programs, occasionally sent in drawings for the program book, and delighted in wandering the Exhibit Hall. One highlight was the 1980 Inkpot Awards ceremony. Bradbury was asked to present the Inkpot to Julius Schwartz, another of his lifelong friends. They had met in 1939, and Julie was Ray's first literary agent. So it was a very special moment. In those years, it was a tradition for Sergio Aragonés to be near the stage with an easel where he could whip out quick drawings of the recipients, and he obliged with a caricature of Schwartz, who was by now an editor at DC, specializing in the Superman titles. Out of nowhere, Harlan Ellison bounded onto the stage with a folder in hand, saying he was there to honor Julie by finally presenting him with a comics script he'd been promising for years. (As I heard it, there was actually no script in the folder!)

In 1987 Ray received another award of his own from Comic-Con: The Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award. It was presented to him by Clampett's wife, Sody, during the Inkpot Awards banquet. And in 2011 Comic-Con presented him with the Icon Award, given to one individual each year who has been instrumental in bringing comics and/or the popular arts to a wider audience.

In 2003, Bradbury, Schwartz, and Forry Ackerman were brought together in a panel moderated by Mark Evanier, an event that brought many in the audience to tears, as

the men shared their memories. In 2007, Harryhausen and Bradbury were on the dais talking about such things as *King Kong* and celebrating nearly 70 years of friendship.

In these years, the Spotlight on Ray Bradbury panel usually occurred on Saturday of the Con, and it was always a must-see event with a packed house. By this time Bradbury was in a wheelchair. He could often be seen tooling around in the Exhibit Hall, still a fan at heart. He had multiple helpers with him, as he stopped for pictures and autographs, but he also shopped, looking for Golden Age comics, and made an effort to say hello to as many artists as possible, going back to Artists' Alley multiple times.

In 2009, Chronicle Books published *Comic-Con: 40 Years of Artists, Writers, Fans, & Friends*, for which Bradbury wrote the introduction. In it, he refers to having been a guest at the first show with just 300 people: "We were all very happy being there and enjoying one another's company." He goes on to say, "It's still a wonderful experience for me to attend Comic-Con, now with tens of thousands of people and to be able to look around at all these people who share my love for the history of illustration."

Ray's last appearance at Comic-Con was in 2010, when he was interviewed by his biographer, Sam Weller. When Sam asked, "If you could time travel to a moment in your life, what would it be?" Bradbury answered, "Every single moment. Every single moment has been incredible. I've savored it, enjoyed it, because I've remained a boy. This man you see here is not an old man, it's a twelve-year-old boy, and this boy is still having fun."

Bradbury left this planet for outer space on June 5, 2012, at the age of 91.

Jackie Estrada is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons. In addition to having edited a number of Comic-Con publications over the years, she's been the administrator of the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards since 1990.



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The Century-Old Magician Boy from Mars

by Lance Cervantes

Picture a skinny boy with glasses and straw-colored hair who found himself in the musty tent of the Dill Brothers Combined Shows eagerly awaiting whoever would take the stage that warm Labor Day in 1932. Enter the larger than life Mr. Electrico whose very presence demanded attention. Gauging the intimate crowd, Mr. Electrico took a seat in an electric chair. A switch is thrown just offstage; 50,000 volts of electricity shoot violently through his body. Summoning bolts of lightning, the man stood up and brandished a sword of flame. He waved it at the crowd like a conductor summoning gasps of horror and amusement. The sword homed in on the boy with glasses and straw-colored hair. Touching the sword to the boy's head, Mr. Electrico commanded, "Live forever!" and from then on, Ray Bradbury knew exactly what he wanted to be: a magician.

The following day, Ray attended the funeral of a favorite uncle. On the way home he spotted the muslin tent from the day prior. Despite knowing it would anger his father, the boy leapt out of the moving car and ran towards the sideshow. He ran "away from death, and towards life," Ray always recollected. Mr. Electrico towered over the boy. For the first time in his life, Ray was at a loss for words. The boy reached into his pocket and asked the tall man how to perform a magic trick he just bought. Mr. Electrico obliged before introducing the boy to the illustrated man. The sideshow performer then waxed poetic on a past life the two shared in Paris before the Great War. Ray would always tell that story, without a detail ever out of place, despite no evidence of the Dill Brothers Combined Shows ever having a Mr. Electrico. Days later, the young Ray began to write every day and never stopped.

I met Ray Bradbury for the first time at Comic-Con 2008. It was larger than it had ever been, but nowhere as large as it is today. It was the first time I made the trip to San Diego. I was intimidated by the lights and sounds and costumes and cheering. I found respite in Ballroom 6 where a scheduled panel piqued my interest when I read about it the day before: "A Conversation with Ray Bradbury." At 87 years old, his voice had more gravel, but he spoke with the fiery conviction of a young man who created a world of endless summers and magical Halloweens. The walls of the ballroom reverberated as he declared, "If you love what you do, then do it! And to hell with everything else!" After the panel, I approached the stage hoping to talk to THE Ray Bradbury. But reverse stage fright set in. He was just feet away, then inches, then fractions of an inch . . . then feet again until he was gone. His biographer, Sam Weller, sensed my disappointment in myself and extended an invitation to his birthday party the following month at one of his favorite bookstores in all of Los Angeles.

Waukegan would always be home to Ray Bradbury, but his family would move to Los Angeles by way of Arizona in 1934. He would frequent the streets of Hollywood on roller skates with his autograph book in the hopes of meeting Hollywood royalty like Mae West and Laurel and Hardy. By this point, the young author was already writing several pages every day, which proved to be a prudent move as he managed to score his first paid writing gig when George Burns bought one of his jokes to be used on the Burns and Allen radio show. When he graduated Los Angeles High School in 1938, poor eyesight prevented him from a military career and a lack of funds kept college out of reach. But Ray decided to educate himself by applying his voracious appetite for reading to his local library. Writing for a living seemed to be the most viable prospect.

I first read Ray Bradbury's "The Third Expedition" in the third grade, an

entry in the science fantasy opus, *The Martian Chronicles*. It told the story about a crew of explorers who arrive on Mars and find a Victorian town inhabited by their loved ones. The haunting twist left me wanting to read more. A mile from my school was the Glendale Central Library, which was a welcome refuge from summer-baked playgrounds. Between my school and that library were many locally owned bookshops. Little did I know that fate would bring me to one of those bookshops to celebrate the beloved writer's 88th birthday. That's when I fell in love with the Mystery and Imagination Bookshop where we sang and shared stories and ate a pumpkin-shaped cake. We spent the day praising Poe and Burroughs; Ray had a thing for Edgars. It was definitely a moment worth reliving.

Many, if not all, of Ray Bradbury's works can be traced to memories that had affected him in meaningful ways. "The Lake" was inspired by the real life drowning of a young girl; the first time he had been acquainted with death firsthand. *Something Wicked This Way Comes* brings Mr. Electrico to life as the villainous presence in Green Town. His early friendship with Hollywood legend Ray Harryhausen would inspire "A Graveyard for Lunatics." A drive with his wife along the shore would inspire "The Foghorn," the story of a heartbroken sea monster. And an innocuous walk on a warm Los Angeles night ending with a minor police confrontation with inspired "The Pedestrian," which would be expanded into what he considered his only work of science fiction, *Fahrenheit 451*.

Fahrenheit 451 would prove to be the novel that would define Bradbury's career to literary critics and bridge the gap between science fiction and what those same critics would refer to as "serious literature." Ray had little interest in such accolades; science fiction, pulp magazines, comics, and adventure stories had always been as serious to him as the works of Shakespeare or Austen. His passions always led him from one story to the next and his stories had afforded him a legendary position among the literary greats. His prolific career led to short stories, poems, plays, novels, writing the screenplay for *Moby Dick*, inspiring *The Twilight Zone*, his own television series, *The Ray Bradbury Theater*, film interpretations of many of his works, and so much more. Ray would also influence numerous creative people such as fellow Midwestern dreamer, Walt Disney, along with Stephen King, Steven Spielberg, Neil Gaiman, and David Bowie.

Imagination would transform Ray Bradbury's love of Lon Chaney movies and carnivals into countless stories that teach the world that the future is shaped by those who dare to dream bigger. And hopefully they also dream of a better world. He would continue to write well into his later years with *Farewell Summer*, his last novel to be published while he was still alive, a follow-up of *Dandelion Wine*. He loved to meet his adoring public, and we all loved to interact with him and pick his wildly imaginative brain. My third-grade self would have been in awe of just a single interaction with the author, but the universe saw fit to offer me the opportunity to meet him three times in one year.

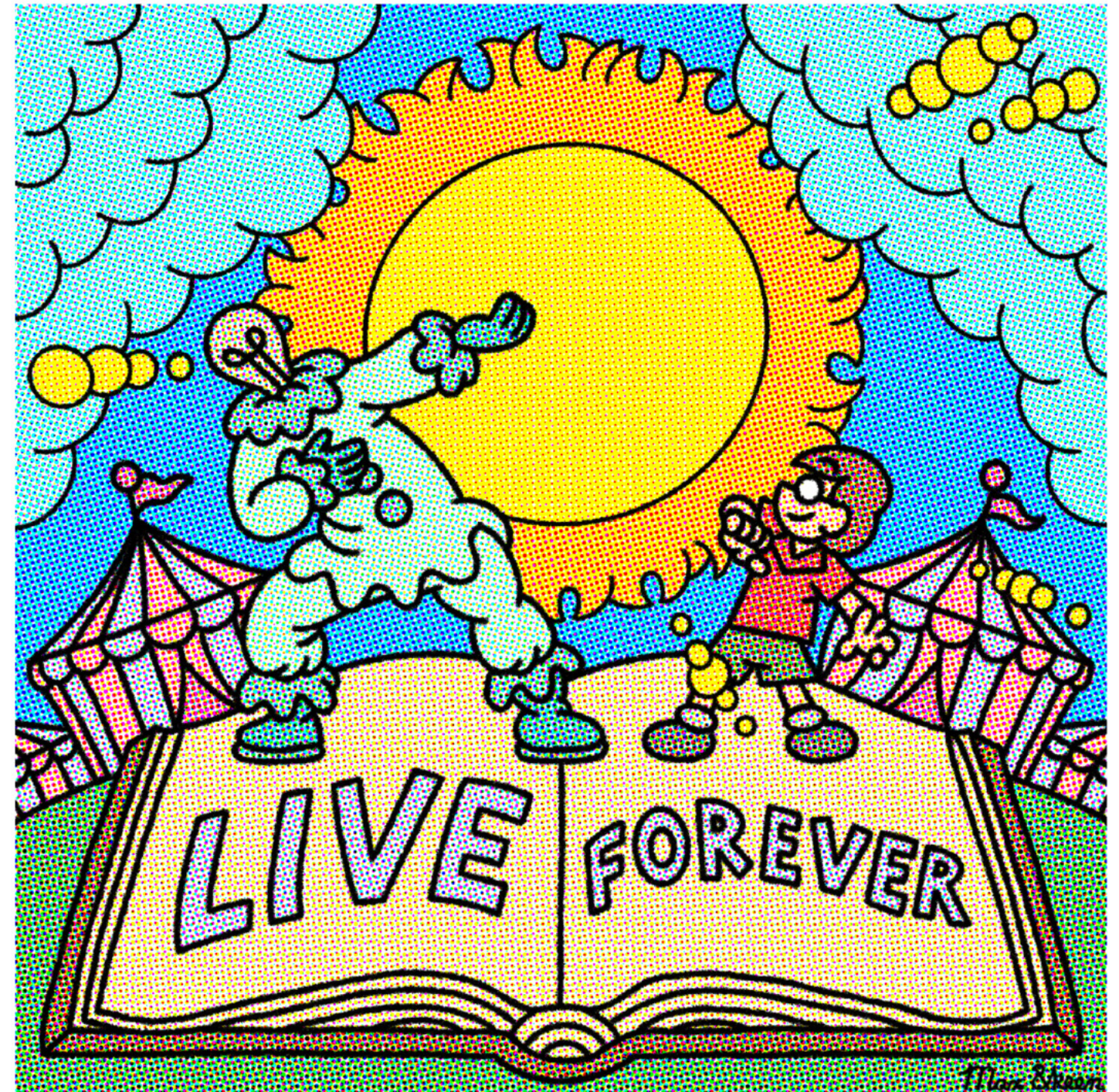
The third time I met him in 2008 was in November where he was giving an open lecture at a local school auditorium. While it was not the smallest crowd Ray had spoken to that year, it certainly felt like the most intimate. He answered questions from older fans and younger children. I even had the opportunity to finally have some facetime with the man at the end of the event. I had asked him for advice on how to pursue a career in writing. I have long wondered what it would have been like to be that 12-year-old boy with thick glasses and pale, straw-colored hair

told who was to live forever. While he had given the same advice before, it dawned on me that he genuinely believed that it was the only advice worth giving. "Just do what you love," he said before taking a deep breath, "AND TO HELL WITH EVERYTHING ELSE!"

To those who have read Ray Bradbury's work, there is a unique spell that is cast upon you as your eyes glide from word to word. Pictures form in your mind through a filter of nostalgia as if you were remembering a memory that never happened. Time dissolves in settings where dinosaurs seem futuristic and Martians make you long for loved ones long gone. This is Ray Bradbury's magic that will continue to bring him to life for

future generations when we have long colonized Mars and beyond. He took Mr. Electrico's advice to heart and will indeed live forever. In honor of Ray, let us continue to discover the things that we are passionate about, to jump off cliffs and learn to build our wings on the way down, to do what we love and to hell with everything else.

Lance Cervantes is a civil engineer who has read comic books since he was six years old and wrote fiction since he was eight. Among his other hobbies are drawing, and creating short films with friends. One day, he hopes to be a panelist at Comic Con International.



Max Skeen • San Juan, Puerto Rico

Ray Bradbury on Screen: Martians, Beasts and Burning Books

by Phil Nichols

Ray Bradbury was a child of the cinema, reportedly seeing *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) on first release at the age of three. His teenage years in Los Angeles gave him an intimate familiarity with Hollywood, as he roller-skated from studio to studio, collecting autographs of the stars. It should come as no surprise, therefore, to learn that he spent a significant part of his long career writing for the screen. Since his death in 2012, there has continued to be interest in adapting his works for the screen, but with mixed results.

A little-known fact is that Bradbury was an established scriptwriter—for radio—even before his first book was published. His 1947 radio play “The Meadow” (for *World Security Theater*) was aired four months before his debut book *Dark Carnival* appeared from Arkham House. Through the 1940s and 1950s, he submitted many stories to radio shows such as *Suspense*, and his stories have remained popular in this medium right through to the present.

The 1950s was the decade that brought Bradbury to the screen. In late 1952 he wrote a treatment titled *The Atomic Monster*, later retitled *It Came From Outer Space*—a story for films. Due to his relative inexperience, his “treatment” was more like a complete script, with dialogue and detailed camera directions. Longtime screenwriting pro Harry Essex, given the job of turning Bradbury’s “treatment” into a full screenplay, found the task very simple, as Bradbury had done nearly all the work. *It Came From Outer Space*, released in 2D and 3D in 1953, established Bradbury as a writer of intelligent screen science fiction.

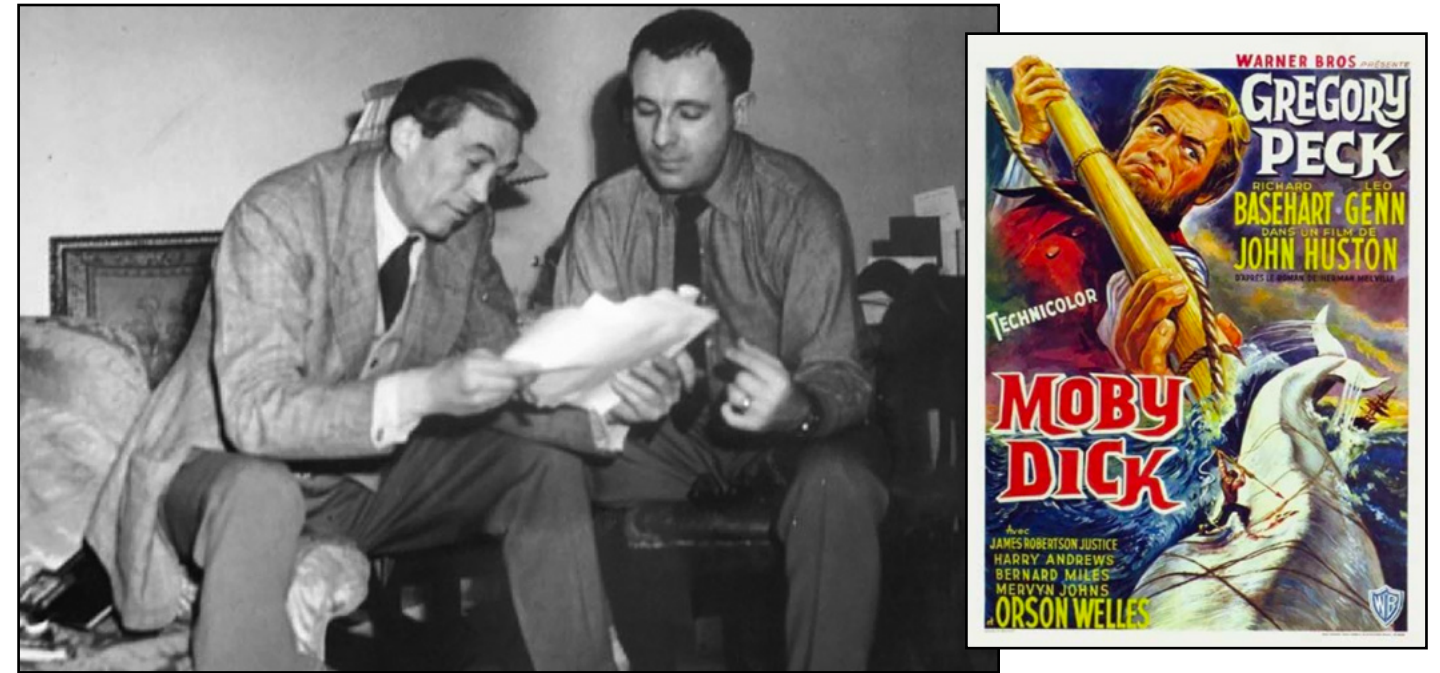
As if that weren’t enough, that same year saw Bradbury’s name attached to *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, one of the first “radiation monster” movies and a precursor to *Godzilla* (1954), known in America as *Godzilla*. It was based—loosely—on Bradbury’s 1951 *Saturday Evening Post* short story of the same name (later re-printed as “The Fog Horn” in his 1953 book *The Golden Apples of the Sun*). The short story centers on a lighthouse whose fog horn inadvertently awakens a creature from the depths of the ocean, a prehistoric beast who mistakes the horn’s bellow for another of its own species. Discovering the source of the sound, the beast destroys the lighthouse in a fit of rage and sadness.

On screen, the creature was brought to life by legendary animator Ray Harryhausen, coincidentally a close friend of Bradbury. But Bradbury didn’t write the script, and almost went uncredited. When Bradbury visited Harryhausen on set, producer Hal Chester invited him to look at the script (by future *Star Trek* producer Fred Freiberger and future *Outer Limits* producer Lou Morheim). Bradbury pointed out a similarity to his short story. Chester immediately offered to buy the rights, and made sure to capitalize on the source material by plastering “suggested by the *Saturday Evening Post* story by Ray Bradbury” all over the publicity material.

Meanwhile, Oscar-winning director John Huston had read “The Fog Horn,” and saw something in it that reminded him of Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851), the very property he was planning to film next. He invited Bradbury to write the screenplay for this prestigious



Two early Bradbury-inspired movies from 1953. (Above): The Bradbury-scripted *It Came from Outer Space*, and (below) *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, based on a short story by the author and featuring a dinosaur animated by lifelong friend, Ray Harryhausen.



Oscar-winning writer-director John Huston (left) hired Bradbury (right) for screenwriting duties on *Moby Dick* (1956). Bradbury later used the experience as the basis for his semi-autobiographical novel *Green Shadows, White Whale* (1992).

film, leading Bradbury to spend the best part of 1954 in Ireland with Huston, working on the script. This experience encouraged Bradbury to always think big: in the future, with his own screenplays, he would target big-name directors such as David Lean, Carol Reed, and Akira Kurosawa.

If the 1950s was the decade that established Ray Bradbury as a screenwriter, the 1960s was the beginning of his books providing source material for films. Starting around 1962, the leading French new wave writer-director François Truffaut sought to film Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Truffaut’s previous films, all of them hugely successful around the world, showed no evidence of any interest in science fiction: *The Four Hundred Blows* (1959) was a semi-autobiographical, largely realist portrayal of a troubled schoolboy; *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960) a noirish adaptation of an American thriller; and *Jules and Jim* (1962) an adaptation of a historical novel. What attracted Truffaut to *Fahrenheit* was not the science fiction, but the love of books: Truffaut was a bibliophile.

Being courted by Truffaut was a dream come true—for the first time since Huston, a major figure in contemporary cinema was noticing Bradbury’s works. Truffaut teamed with actor Jean-Louis Richard to write the script, writing in French, since it was always Truffaut’s expectation that the film would be made in his native language. Surprisingly, after many years in development, the project eventually attracted American and British investment, leading to Truffaut shooting the film in England and in English—despite his inability to speak the language himself.

As a film, *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) is brilliant and hokey in equal parts. It doesn’t help that leading man Oskar Werner speaks with an Austrian accent, while his wife and neighbour are both played by the same actress, Julie Christie. But magnificent cinematography by Nic Roeg and the superb staging of the book-burning scenes combine with Truffaut’s Hitchcockian style to produce a film which is, ultimately, a memorable and colorful experience. Bradbury loved it at the time, writing to Truffaut that “My novel looks at your picture and sees itself, your picture looks at my novel and sees itself!” Bradbury also wrote positively of the film in a *Los Angeles Times* review (November 20, 1966). Later, Bradbury was triggered to revisit *Fahrenheit 451* in his own stage adaptation (1986),

borrowing a number of innovations from Truffaut’s film.

Bradbury had a more mixed response to another of his best books adapted for screen in the 1960s. *The Illustrated Man* (1969) was written for the screen by a real estate agent—or at least, that was Bradbury’s claim. The film, directed by Jack Smight and starring Rod Steiger, made a bold attempt to bring Bradbury’s world to life with an energetic framing story taken from Bradbury’s 1951 book. But its adaptations of several of Bradbury’s short stories were incoherent, and the whole was wrecked by an ill-advised attempt to put Steiger at the center of every story. What could have been a *Dead of Night*-style anthology film, crystal clear in its portrayal of fantastical material, ended up as a surrealistic blurring of one story into another. Bradbury was initially positive about this film, but his positivity was short-lived as he soon gave it a thumbs down.

For much of the 1970s, Bradbury was hopeful of finally getting his novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes* on screen. What had started out as a 1955 screen treatment for Gene Kelly (*The Dark Carnival*) turned into the 1962 novel, and by 1973 was converted by Bradbury back into a film script for Kirk Douglas’s Bryna Productions. Sam Peckinpah was to direct, but eventually dropped out. Then Jack Clayton, famed British director of *The Innocents* (1961) was aboard, but also dropped out. By 1981, the film was back on again with Clayton returning. Press coverage at the time looked very promising. Bradbury and Clayton, the best of friends, were photographed on set at the meticulously-created “Green Town” set in the Disney studios.

Behind the scenes, alas, a small tragedy was playing out. Clayton had brought in a script doctor (John Mortimer) to improve Bradbury’s screenplay; Bradbury only found out when asked to give notes on Mortimer’s draft. Bradbury used a disastrous audience preview as an opportunity to lobby for reverting the film to something closer to the source material, and to an extent his suggestions were adopted. For the most part, however, the Disney “machine” took over, and a crack post-production team led by Lee Dyer effectively re-worked several major sequences of the film. The result, released in 1983, is a film that really does feel like Bradbury—it captures the small-town and the autumnal atmosphere—although the



A trio of Bradbury movie adaptations (l to r): *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), *The Illustrated Man* (1969), and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983).



Bradbury (left) acted as on-screen host of his own TV series *The Ray Bradbury Theater*, as well as scripting all of the show's sixty-five episodes.

final act is messy and rushed, with an ending which barely stands up to scrutiny. Bradbury declared this one to be “not a great film, but a nice one.” The tragedy is that the thirty-year journey from idea to finished film destroyed the close relationship between Bradbury and Clayton.

As well as providing material for the big screen, Bradbury was a fine source for TV. His work has been adapted countless times for television anthology shows such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Twilight Zone*, and for TV movies and specials. His short stories adapt well to the shorter form, and Bradbury himself adapted several for *Hitchcock*, the best being “Special Delivery” (1959; a boy sends away for giant mushrooms, which turn out to be part of an alien takeover) and “The Life Work of Juan Diaz” (1964; a Mexican from a poor family turns out to be worth more dead than alive, when his mummified body becomes a tourist attraction).

Bradbury also debuted his story “I Sing the Body Electric!” as an episode of *The Twilight Zone* in 1962—the more famous short-story version of this tale didn’t see print for another seven years. But Bradbury’s experience on this show was not good. While he was initially supportive of Rod Serling, introducing the creator/writer/host to writer friends Charles Beaumont, Richard Matheson, and George Clayton Johnson, the two ended up at loggerheads. What Serling intended as homage in his own episodes (such as “Where Is Everybody?” “Walking Distance,” and “The Lonely”), Bradbury took as plagiarism. The two fell out over an alleged broken promise on Serling’s part, and never spoke to each other again.

Matheson, always a close friend of Bradbury, was later significant in bringing Bradbury’s work back to the small screen, when he took on the gargantuan task of adapting Bradbury’s book *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) as a TV miniseries. Two things had changed since Bradbury’s own failed attempts to get his Martians on screen back in the 1950s. First, *Star Wars* (and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*) had burst onto screens in 1977, proving that there was money to be made from science fiction. And second, much more modestly but in that same year, Bradbury’s stage play adaptation of *The Martian Chronicles* had proven a surprise hit in a

Los Angeles theater. Science fiction and Bradbury were hot once again.

Matheson’s teleplay is actually a very smart adaptation of Bradbury’s book. It carefully selects which stories to tell, and wisely ties the narrative together more cohesively than the book, making it highly suitable for television: It combines both an overall arc with a distinctly episodic structure. Unfortunately, however, the miniseries as filmed for MGM and NBC (1980) is fairly dire. Despite one or two strong episodes, its first hour suffers from sluggish direction and a deadly pace of editing. Perhaps worst of all, the effects work throughout is unconvincing, and executed with a pre-*Star Wars* attention to detail. Director Michael Anderson—previously known for *The Dam Busters* (1955), *1984* (1956), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (also 1956), and *Logan’s Run* (1976)—was clearly past his peak. Bradbury very publicly distanced himself from the production, announcing to a press conference that the whole thing was “boring”—thus earning himself a reprimand from NBC’s lawyers.

But Bradbury was primarily a short story writer, and so for many years he toyed with ways of getting his short works on screen in a more substantial way, either in the form of anthology films or in his own anthology TV series. Examples include his 1960 screenplay based on *The Illustrated Man*, and his 1983 proposal for an anthology, *The Bradbury Chronicles*. None of these got off the ground, although the latter would form the basis of Bradbury’s most sustained period of work in media: *The Ray Bradbury Theater* (1985–92), his own personal *Twilight Zone*. Not only was he an executive producer, he was the sole screenwriter and—in the earliest batch of episodes—the on-screen host. While he didn’t have the sarcastic wit of Hitchcock or the intense magnetism of Serling, he brought a personal connection to each of his stories, introduced from his real-life toy-cluttered office. The production values of the series, however, were compromised. *The Ray Bradbury Theater* was a product of early cable TV, an HBO production that later shifted to more down-market networks. International co-production was the only way to sustain the series, with Canadian producers Atlantis teaming up with overseas partners and

filming in the UK, France, and New Zealand. Bradbury kept in touch with the remote productions by phone and fax.

The Ray Bradbury Theater looks cheap today (all the episodes are on DVD and YouTube, where they all look distinctly smeary, a victim of an era when shows were shot on film but transferred to NTSC video for editing), and some episodes are difficult to watch because of poor direction, photography, and performances. But as the production got into its stride, a number of gems emerged. Generally, these are episodes which steer clear of visual effects and deal just with characters and situations. Check out “To the Chicago Abyss,” and “The Great Wide World Over There”—and even “Mars Is Heaven” and “A Sound of Thunder” are quite absorbing, if you can forgive the low rent effects.

Finally, late in Bradbury’s career, two of his cherished projects made it to the screen from his own screenplays. *The Halloween Tree* (1993; based on his 1973 book) earned him an Emmy Award for this Hanna-Barbera-produced animated film—twenty years after he first adapted it for screen for Chuck Jones, a version which never got made. And Stuart Gordon, taking a break from Lovecraftian horrors, directed Bradbury’s screenplay for *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit* (1997)—decades after Bradbury had written the original, unfilmed version. Now in his seventies, Bradbury was with these two modest projects re-established as a successful screenwriter.

Following Ray Bradbury’s passing in 2012, there has been no let-up in interest in his work. Big names have been attached to proposed new adaptations of his books *The Illustrated Man*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, and *The Martian Chronicles*, although as is typical in Hollywood, most of these announcements have yet to yield any actual productions. So far, there have been just two, highly trumpeted but both failing to live up to their potential: ABC’s *The Whispers* (2015; executive producer Steven Spielberg; based on Bradbury’s “Zero Hour”) and HBO’s re-adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* (2018; directed and co-written by Ramin Bahrani).

For all its failings, the mere existence of the 2018 *Fahrenheit 451* reveals something curious about most of Bradbury’s works. They exist in

an always fantastical world, built on magical technologies such as totally immersive wall-screen TVs, so they never really date. They make acute social observations (see the bad parenting in stories such as “Zero Hour” and “The Veldt”), and their observations are timeless. Or they set out to terrify or unnerve (see early classics such as “The Crowd” or “Skeleton”), and do so with an insight which is universal. To an extent, then, any filmmaker or playwright in any age is going to find something in Bradbury which is for “now.” Bahrani achieved this in the 2018 *Fahrenheit*, managing to find a way in which paper books can still have relevance even in an age of e-books and emojis. Ray Bradbury’s legacy, it seems, is a body of visually creative, endlessly adaptable work which has already inspired generations of creative talent, and which will carry on doing so.

Phil Nichols did his PhD on Ray Bradbury’s screenwriting. By day, he teaches film-making at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. By night, he blogs on Bradbury at www.bradburymedia.co.uk



The Halloween Tree shows the two strands of Bradbury’s career: he published his novel (left) in 1973, and won an Emmy for his TV adaptation in 1994.

The Ray Bradbury/EC Comics Connection

by Grant Geissman



By 1952 EC was entering into what many aficionados feel is its prime period. To get story ideas, publisher Bill Gaines would stay up half the night reading pulp magazines and science fiction short story collections, trolling to find inspiration for their comic book stories. Gaines would jot down these ideas on little scraps of paper he called “springboards,” and he would bring these in to writer/artist/editor Al Feldstein as raw material for story ideas. One of the authors Gaines was reading was a young writer named Ray Bradbury. Among the springboards that inspired Gaines’s and Feldstein’s comic book yarns were two of Bradbury’s stories, which Bradbury knew nothing about. In a third instance they combined two of Bradbury’s plots (“Kaleidoscope” and “The Rocket Man”) into one story they called “Home to Stay!” (*Weird Fantasy* #13, May–June 1952). This third time, though, Bradbury found out about it. Rather than get into a big dust-up, Bradbury simply mailed a letter (dated April 19, 1952) asking for a \$25 payment for each story, and suggesting that many other of his stories might be adaptable into comics form. Gaines and Feldstein were ecstatic. Feldstein said, “This became the love of my life, adapting Ray Bradbury into comics. That was where I think my writing really started to improve, because I was immersed in his writing.” Gaines said in a 1973 interview with comics historian John Benson: “Feldstein developed a Ray Bradbury-ish style of using words. He got all carried away with the words, and so did I. I loved Al’s words.” (Gaines and Feldstein had their own system of punctuation. Feldstein would write the stories onto the art boards, and he would underline any

RAY BRADBURY

Ray Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Ill., on Aug. 22, 1920. His mother was of Swedish descent, and his father’s ancestors came to America in 1630. Ray spent much of his childhood in Arizona. At the age of 12, he received his first typewriter, a toy model, and started to write sequels to Edgar Rice Burroughs novels. As a boy, his greatest interests were magic, acting, and reading the Oz books, Tom Swift, Edgar Allan Poe, and Jules Verne. So it was quite natural, when he began writing, that his first stories were fantasies. He took a short-story course in Los Angeles High School in 1937, graduated in 1938, and had no further formal education. He started submitting stories to magazines at the age of 15, and sold his first story at the age of 21. His early acceptances appeared in the leading pulp magazines. Then in 1945, he sold his first “quality” story to the American Mercury, and followed this with sales to most of America’s best-known slick magazines. His stories have been reprinted in some 60 anthologies, including the 1946, 1948, and 1952 volumes of *The Best American Short Stories*. In 1948, Ray won third prize in the O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories Awards. The only other job Bradbury has ever held outside of writing was during the three years from 1939 to 1942, when he sold newspapers on a street corner at night, while writing during the day. He has had three books of stories published: *DARK CARNIVAL*, from Arkham House in 1947; *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*, from Doubleday in 1950; and *THE ILLUSTRATED MAN*, Doubleday, 1951. His new book of stories, *THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN*, is due, again from Doubleday, about the time this bio hits the stands. Ray has just finished writing a science-fiction movie script for a big Hollywood film studio, and has started another. He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife Marguerite, whom he married in 1947, and his two daughters . . . Susan, age three, and Ramona, eighteen months. Having been a fervent collector of comic strips and panels since the age of eight (owning a complete file of Buck Rogers strips from 1928 through 1937, Flash Gordon from 1934 through 1938, Prince Valiant from 1937 through the present, and Tarzan (drawn by Hal Foster) from 1932 through 1936, plus hundreds of old Popeyes, Out Our Ways, Alley Oops, etc.), Ray was most enthusiastic when we suggested adapting some of best stories into the comic format. His reaction to the job E.C. is doing can best be summed up in his own words: “. . . My thanks and gratitude for the really fine adaptations and beautiful art work you are doing on my stories. This is an entirely new experience to me, and I cannot tell you enough how much I appreciate the painstaking detail and thought you are putting into your efforts. It seems to me that again and again you achieve the exactly right atmosphere and angle in carrying out the story. . . . You people have a way of continually making me happy. I can’t thank you enough!”



Ray Bradbury’s EC Comics bio that originally appeared on the inside front covers of *The Haunt of Fear* #18, *Shock SuspenStories* #9, *The Vault of Horror* #31, and *Weird Science* #19.

words that were to be boldly italicized. To jack up the excitement, they put an exclamation point at the end of every sentence. Gaines recalled, “It got to the point where there was no such thing, literally, as a period in an EC comic. Periods were exclamation points.” Gaines and Feldstein called them “bangs!”

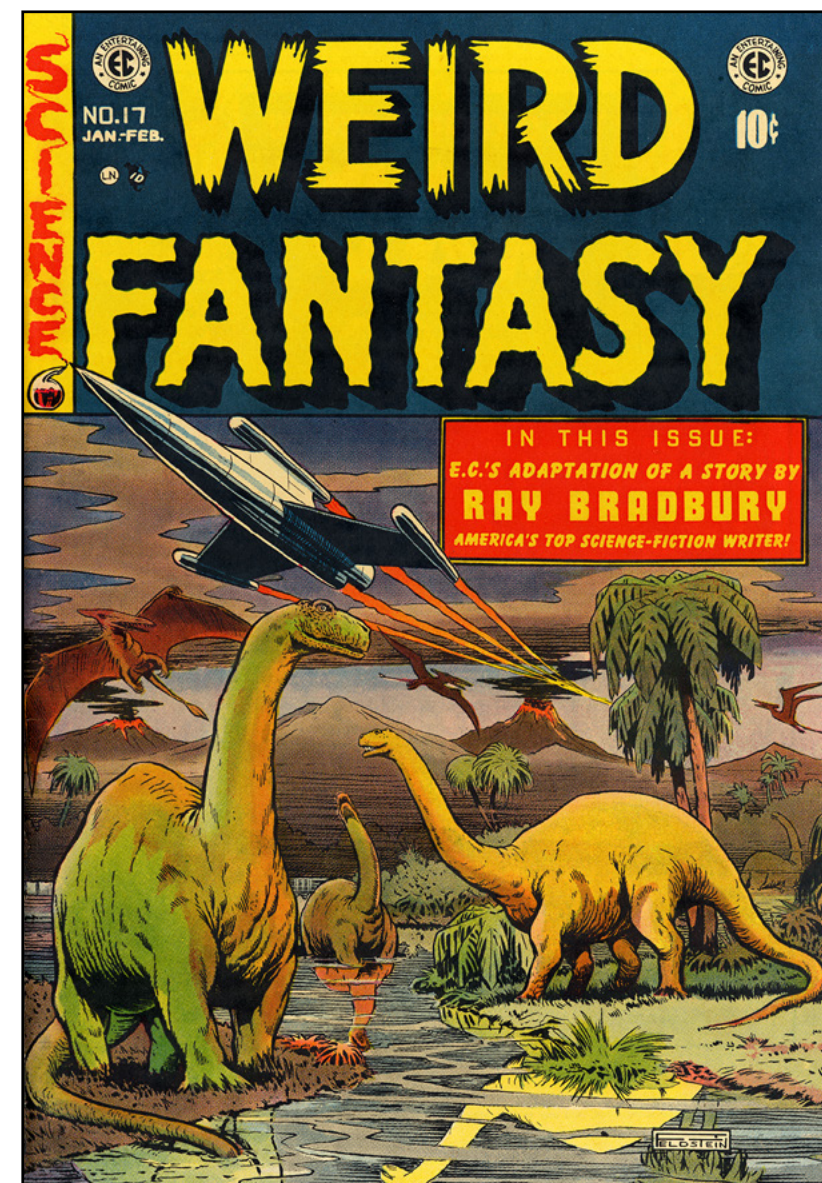
The first official EC Comics Bradbury adaptation was “The Coffin!,” illustrated by Jack Davis (*The Haunt of Fear* #16, cover-dated November–December 1952), and many more were to follow, including “The Long Years!” (illustrated by Joe Orlando), “Mars is Heaven!,” “There Will Come Soft Rains . . .” (both illustrated by Wallace Wood), “The Small

Assassin” (illustrated by George Evans), and “Touch and Go!” (illustrated by Johnny Craig). Feldstein did all the adaptations into comics form, working from Bradbury’s short stories. All of EC’s Bradbury adaptations are now generally considered to be classics, and EC’s adaptations of Ray Bradbury’s stories actually introduced his work to many readers who might otherwise have been unaware of it.

Bradbury and EC soon developed a mutual admiration society, and numerous letters were exchanged between Gaines and Bradbury about EC’s adaptations. Bradbury loved the EC adaptations of his work, and his letters to Gaines were mostly raves, except for one thing: He detested all those “bangs.” In a letter to Gaines dated August 18, 1952 Bradbury wrote, in part: “You ask for criticism, and I have only one major gripe. Would there be any chance, in the future, of cutting down on the exclamation points?!!!!!!” Bradbury understood that the exclamation points were intended to excite the reader, but said that he had “an opposite viewpoint,” saying that after “a hundred shots of adrenaline, the reader is numb! The exclamation points no longer mean anything, after constant repetition.” He asked that the use of exclamation points in his stories be cut down by “one-half.” Bradbury ends the letter on an up note: “Otherwise, I have nothing but the kindest regard and love for you, Al, Mr. Orlando, and Mr. Davis, for work beautifully and handsomely and cleverly thought out and completed! Long may we all work together! My blessings to you all!”

As time went on, Bradbury, who was becoming quite successful as a mainstream writer, began getting pressure not to have his name associated with comic books. Bradbury wrote a long, apologetic letter to Gaines (dated January 25, 1953) requesting that EC drop the cover blurbs hawking the adaptations of Bradbury’s stories. Bradbury loved EC’s adaptations of his work, and he made it clear that he would be happy to have them continue with his name in letters “six inches high,” as long as they did so inside the magazines, “behind the curtain.” Bradbury also wrote that he found the “whole business embarrassing and silly,” and that he hoped Gaines would understand that “the pressure of this business has forced my action at this time.” Gaines was fine with all of this. The reality was, there really wasn’t much of a bump in sales of the comics that had the Bradbury adaptations. Even so, Gaines loved having the Bradbury stories in his comics, and Feldstein loved doing them. The authorized Bradbury adaptations had appeared in EC’s comics for just about two years, and by that time, even if Bradbury hadn’t gotten squeamish about appearing in comic books, the truth was, as Feldstein said, “We had done pretty much everything that I thought could be adapted into comics form, and that we could also get the secondary rights to.” A total of 24 of Bradbury’s stories were “officially” adapted by Feldstein for EC. So the EC/Bradbury collaboration finally wound down, marking the end of a truly remarkable and creative chapter in comics.

Excerpted from *The History of EC Comics* by Grant Geissman, published by Taschen. Text Copyright © 2020 by Grant Geissman. For more on EC Comics, please see page 92.

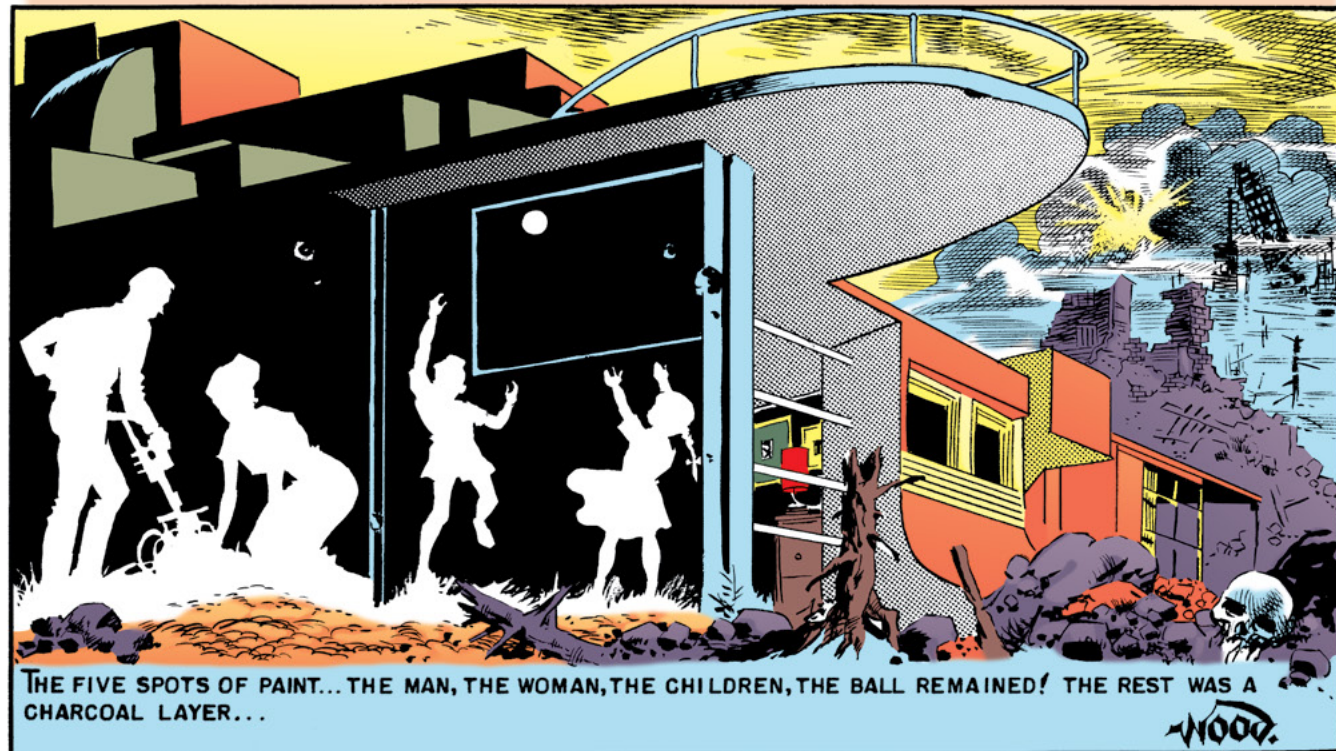


IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP SCIENCE-FICTION WRITER!

Turn the page for a classic Ray Bradbury story, “There Will Come Soft Rains,” published by EC Comics in *Weird Fantasy* #17, Jan.-Feb. 1953. Adaptation by Al Feldstein, art by Wallace Wood, and coloring by Marie Severin.

there will come soft rains...

THE SUN CAME OUT FROM BEHIND THE RAIN. THE HOUSE STOOD ALONE IN A CITY OF RUBBLE AND ASHES. THIS WAS THE ONE HOUSE LEFT STANDING! AT NIGHT, THE RUINED CITY GAVE OFF A RADIOACTIVE GLOW WHICH COULD BE SEEN FOR MILES. THE ENTIRE WEST FACE OF THE HOUSE WAS BLACK, SAVE FOR FIVE PLACES. HERE, THE WHITE SILHOUETTE OF A MAN MOWED A LAWN. THERE, AS IN A PHOTOGRAPH, A WOMAN BENT TO PICK FLOWERS. STILL FARTHER OVER, THEIR IMAGES OUTLINED IN ONE TITANIC INSTANT, A SMALL BOY, HANDS FLUNG INTO THE AIR... HIGHER UP, THE IMAGE OF A THROWN BALL... AND OPPOSITE HIM, A GIRL, HANDS RAISED TO CATCH THE BALL WHICH NEVER CAME DOWN...



THE FIVE SPOTS OF PAINT... THE MAN, THE WOMAN, THE CHILDREN, THE BALL REMAINED! THE REST WAS A CHARCOAL LAYER...

NOOD.

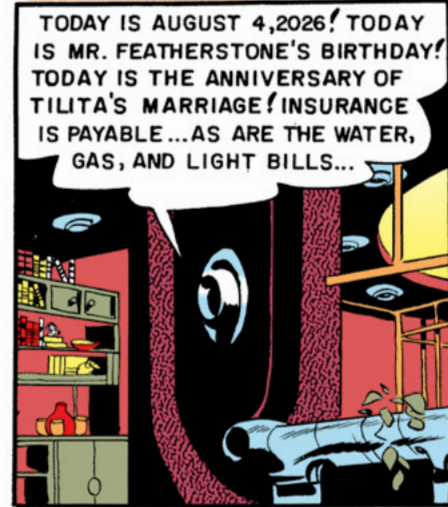
THE MORNING HOUSE LAY EMPTY. IN THE LIVING ROOM, THE VOICE-CLOCK SANG, REPEATING AND REPEATING ITS SOUNDS INTO THE EMPTINESS...



IN THE KITCHEN, THE BREAKFAST STOVE GAVE A HISSING SIGH AND EJECTED FROM ITS WARM INTERIOR EIGHT PIECES OF PERFECTLY BROWNED TOAST, EIGHT EGGS SUNNYSIDE UP, SIXTEEN SLICES OF BACON, TWO COFFEES, AND TWO COOL GLASSES OF MILK...



SOMEWHERE IN THE WALLS, RELAYS CLICKED... MEMORY TAPES GLIDED UNDER ELECTRIC EYES...



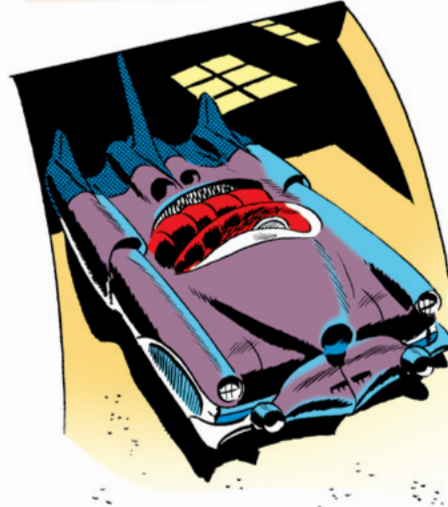
THE VOICE CLOCK SOUNDED AGAIN. EIGHT-ONE! TICK-TOCK! EIGHT-ONE O'CLOCK! OFF TO SCHOOL! OFF TO WORK! RUN! RUN! EIGHT-ONE...



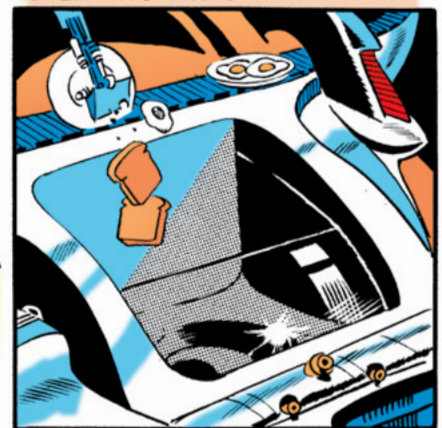
BUT NO DOORS SLAMMED. NO CARPETS TOOK THE SOFT TREAD OF RUBBER HEELS. IT WAS RAINING AGAIN OUTSIDE. THE WEATHER-BOX ON THE FRONT DOOR SANG QUIETLY...



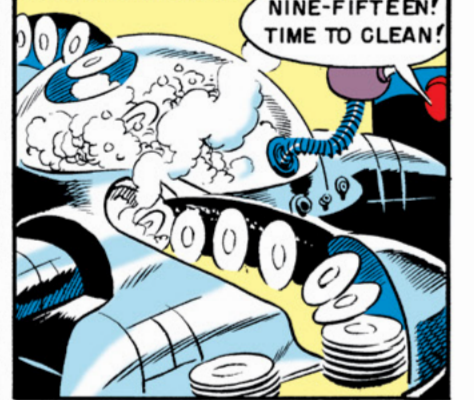
OUTSIDE, THE GARAGE CHIMED AND LIFTED ITS DOORS TO REVEAL THE WAITING CAR...



AFTER A LONG WAIT, THE DOOR SWUNG DOWN AGAIN. AT EIGHT-THIRTY, THE EGGS WERE SHRIVELED AND THE TOAST WAS LIKE STONE. AN ALUMINUM WEDGE SCRAPED THEM INTO THE SINK...



... WHERE HOT WATER WHIRLED THEM DOWN A METAL THROAT WHICH DIGESTED AND FLUSHED THEM AWAY TO THE DISTANT SEA. THE DIRTY DISHES WERE DROPPED INTO A HOT WASHER AND EMERGED TWINKLING DRY...



OUT OF WARRENS IN THE WALL, TINY ROBOT MICE-LIKE THINGS DARTED. THE ROOMS WERE ACRAWL WITH THE SMALL CLEANING ANIMALS, ALL RUBBER AND METAL...



THEY THUDDED AGAINST CHAIRS, WHIRLING THEIR MUSTACHED RUNNERS, KNEADING THE RUG NAP, SUCKING GENTLY AT HIDDEN DUST. THEN, LIKE MYSTERIOUS INVADERS, THEY POPPED BACK INTO THEIR NOOKS, THEIR PINK ELECTRIC-EYES FADED. THE HOUSE WAS CLEAN...



TEN-FIFTEEN. THE GARDEN SPRINKLERS CAME UP IN GOLDEN FOUNTS. THE WATER PELTED WINDOWPANES, RUNNING DOWN THE CHARRED WEST SIDE WHERE THE HOUSE HAD BEEN BURNED EVENLY FREE OF ITS WHITE PAINT...



TWELVE NOON. A DOG WHINED, SHIVERING, ON THE FRONT PORCH...



THE FRONT DOOR RECOGNIZED THE DOG'S VOICE AND OPENED. THE DOG, ONCE HUGE AND FLESHY, BUT NOW GONE TO BONE AND COVERED WITH SORES, MOVED INSIDE, TRACKING MUD...



BEHIND IT, ANGRY MICE WHIRRED... ANGRY AT HAVING TO PICK UP MUD... ANGRY AT INCONVENIENCE. FOR NOT A LEAF FRAGMENT BLEW UNDER THE DOOR BUT WHAT THE WALL PANELS FLIPPED OPEN AND THE SCRAP RATS FLASHED SWIFTLY OUT...



THE DOG RAN AROUND, HYSTERICALLY YELPING TO EACH DOOR, AT LAST REALIZING, AS THE HOUSE REALIZED, THAT ONLY SILENCE WAS HERE! IT SNIFFED THE AIR AND SCRATCHED AT THE KITCHEN DOOR...



BEHIND THE DOOR, THE STOVE WAS MAKING LUNCH... PANCAKES WHICH FILLED THE HOUSE WITH A RICH BAKING ODOR AND THE SCENT OF MAPLE SYRUP...



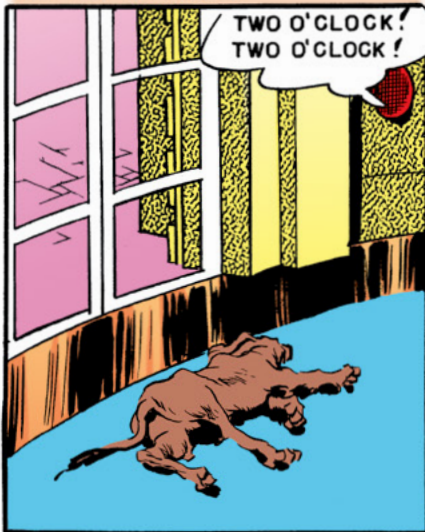
THE DOG FROTHED AT THE MOUTH, LYING AT THE DOOR, SNIFFING. ITS EYES TURNED TO FIRE...



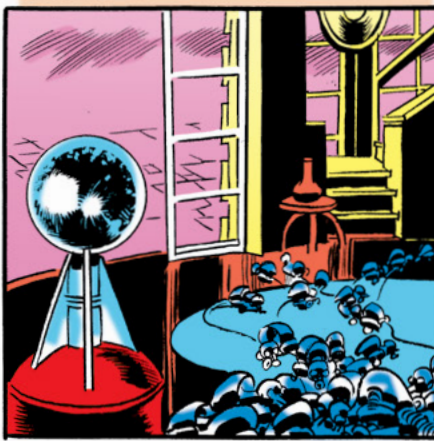
IT RAN WILDLY IN CIRCLES, BITING ITS TAIL, SPUN IN A FRENZY...



... AND DIED! IT LAY IN THE HALLWAY FOR AN HOUR...



DELICATELY SENSING DECAY AT LAST, THE REGIMENTS OF MICE HUMMED OUT AS SOFTLY AS BLOWN LEAVES IN AN ELECTRICAL WIND...

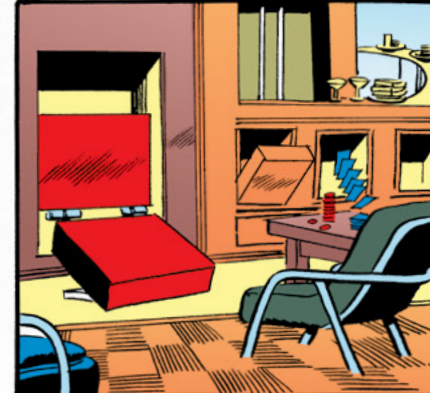


TWO-FIFTEEN. THE DOG WAS GONE! 3

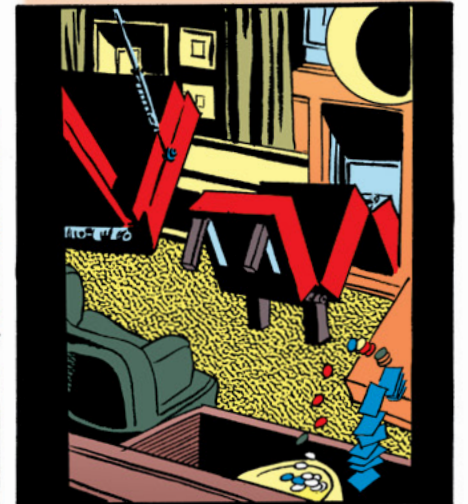
IN THE CELLAR, THE INCINERATOR GLOWED SUDDENLY AND A WHIRL OF SPARKS LEAPED UP THE CHIMNEY...



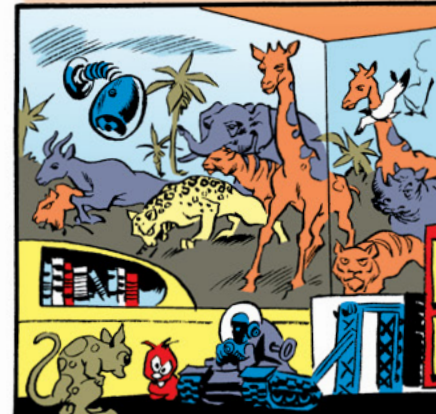
TWO THIRTY-FIVE. BRIDGE TABLES SPROUTED FROM PATIO WALLS. PLAYING CARDS FLUTTERED ONTO PADS IN A SHOWER OF PIPS. MARTINIS AND EGG SALAD SANDWICHES MANIFESTED ON AN OAKEN SERVER. MUSIC PLAYED...



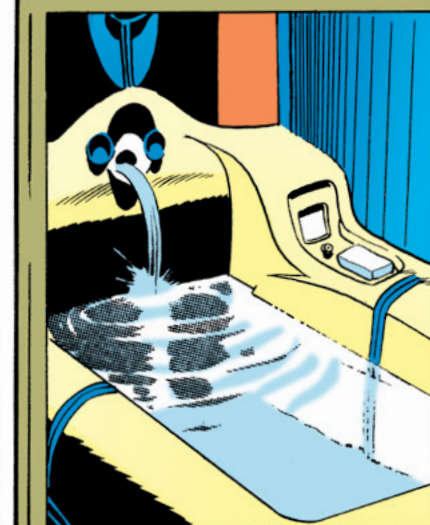
FOUR-O'CLOCK. THE TABLES FOLDED LIKE GREAT BUTTERFLIES BACK THROUGH PANEL WALLS...



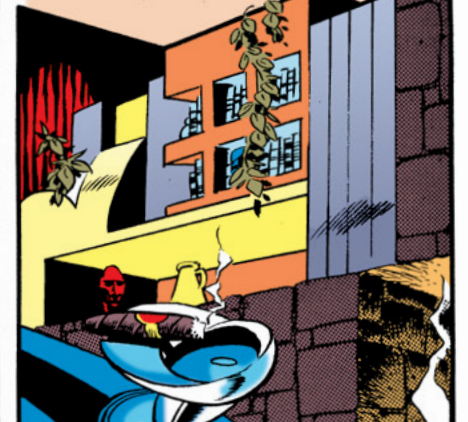
FOUR-THIRTY. THE NURSERY WALLS GLOWED! ANIMALS TOOK SHAPE... YELLOW GIRAFFES, BLUE LIONS, PINK ANTELOPES, LILAC PANTHERS... CAVORTING IN CRYSTAL SUBSTANCE! IT WAS THE CHILDREN'S HOUR...



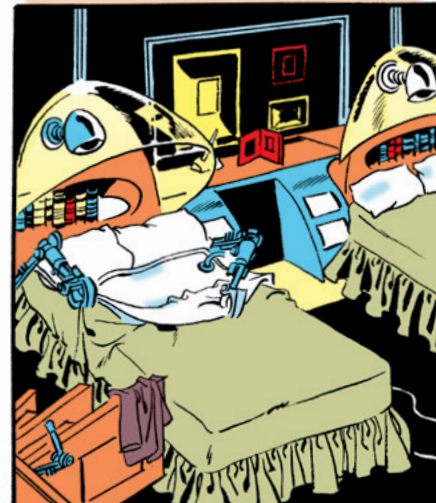
FIVE O'CLOCK. THE BATH FILLED WITH CLEAR HOT WATER...



SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT O'CLOCK. DINNER. IN THE STUDY... A GLICK. A CIGAR POPPED UP IN THE METAL STAND OPPOSITE THE HEARTH... HALF AN INCH OF GREY ASH ON IT, SMOKING, WAITING...



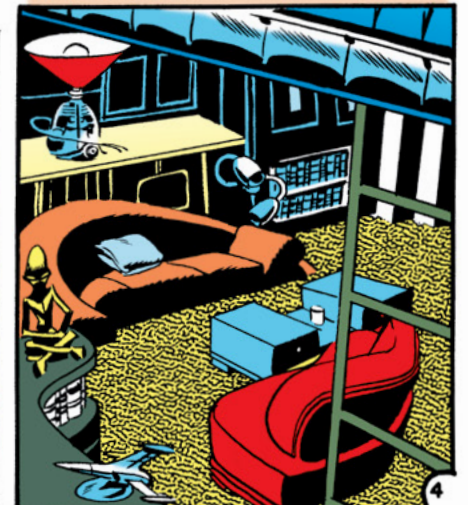
NINE O'CLOCK. HIDDEN CIRCUITS WARMED THE BEDS, FOR NIGHTS WERE COOL HERE...



THE FIRE BURNED ON THE STONE HEARTH AND THE CIGAR FELL AWAY INTO A MOUND OF QUIET ASH ON ITS TRAY...



THE EMPTY CHAIRS FACED EACH OTHER BETWEEN THE SILENT WALLS. AND THE MUSIC PLAYED...



AT TEN O'CLOCK THE HOUSE BEGAN TO DIE! THE WIND BLEW. A FALLING BOUGH CRASHED THROUGH THE KITCHEN WINDOW...



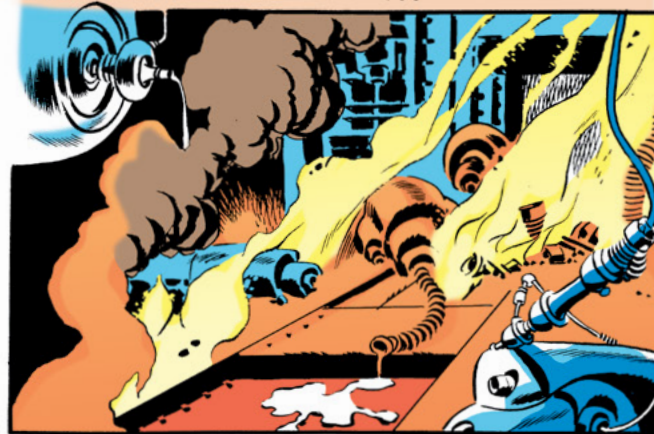
CLEANING SOLVENT, BOTTLED, SHATTERED OVER THE STOVE!



THE ROOM WAS ABLAZE IN AN INSTANT...



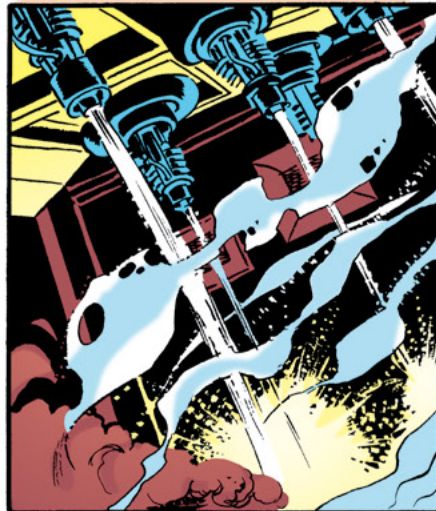
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE! SOMEWHERE, SIGHING, A PUMP SHRUGGED TO A STOP. THE QUENCHING RAINS CEASED. THE RESERVE WATER SUPPLY WHICH HAD FILLED BATHS AND WASHED DISHES FOR MANY QUIET DAYS, WAS GONE! THE FIRE CRACKLED ON...



IT FED UPON PICASSOS AND MATISSES IN THE HALLS, LIKE DELICACIES, BAKING OFF THE OILY FLESH, TENDERLY CRISPING THE CANVASES INTO BLACK SHAVINGS...



THE HOUSE LIGHTS FLASHED ON. WATER PUMPS SHOT FROM THE CEILINGS...



BUT THE SOLVENT SPREAD ON THE LINOLEUM, LICKING, EATING, UNDER THE KITCHEN DOOR, WHILE THE VOICES TOOK UP THE CHORUS...



THE HOUSE TRIED TO SAVE ITSELF. DOORS SPRANG TIGHTLY SHUT, BUT THE WINDOWS WERE BROKEN BY THE HEAT, AND THE WIND BLEW, SUCKING UPON THE FIRE...



NOW THE FIRE LAY IN BEDS, STOOD IN WINDOWS, CHANGING THE COLOR OF THE DRAPES...



AND THEN REINFORCEMENTS! FROM ATTIC TRAP-DOORS, BLIND ROBOT FACES PEERED DOWN WITH FAUCET-MOUTHS GUSHING GREEN CHEMICAL...



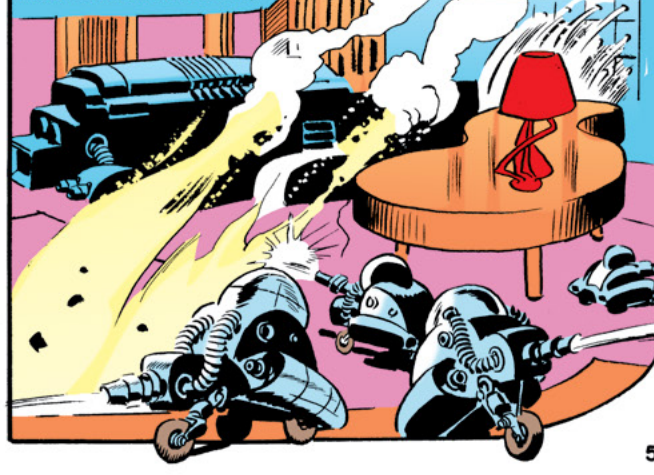
THE FIRE BACKED OFF, AS EVEN AN ELEPHANT MUST AT THE SIGHT OF A DEAD SNAKE. NOW THERE WERE TWENTY SNAKES WHIPPING OVER THE FLOOR, KILLING THE FIRE WITH A CLEAR COLD VENOM OF GREEN FROTH...



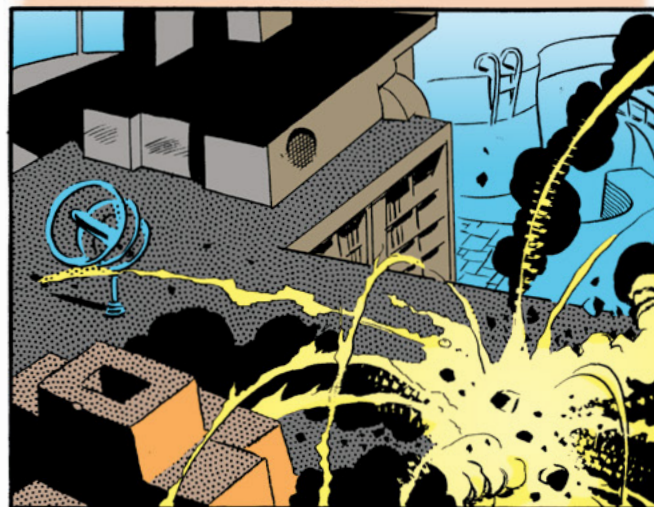
THE HOUSE GAVE GROUND AS THE FIRE IN TEN BILLION ANGRY SPARKS MOVED WITH FLAMING EASE FROM ROOM TO ROOM THROUGH THE HOUSE...



...WHILE SCURRYING WATER RATS SQUEAKED FROM THE WALLS, PISTOLED THEIR WATER, AND RAN FOR MORE. THE WALL SPRAYS LET DOWN SHOWERS OF MECHANICAL RAIN...



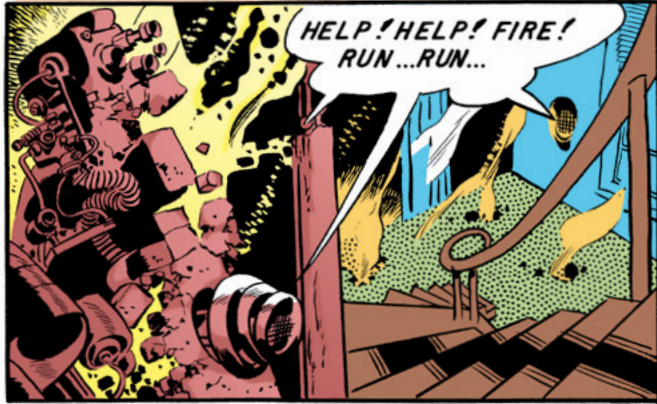
BUT THE FIRE WAS CLEVER! IT HAD SENT FLAMES OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, UP THROUGH THE ATTIC TO THE PUMPS THERE! AN EXPLOSION...



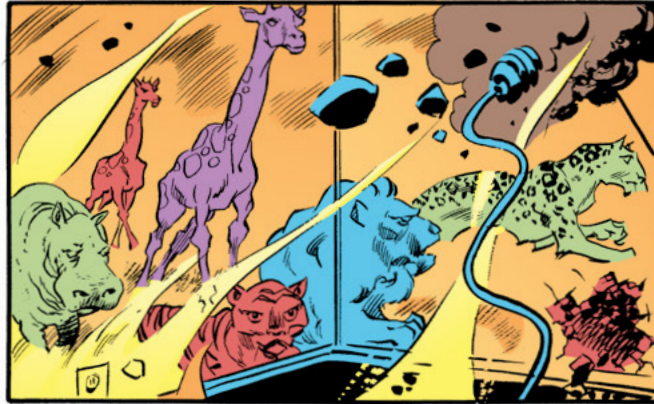
THE ATTIC BRAIN WHICH DIRECTED THE PUMPS WAS SHATTERED INTO BRONZE SHRAPNEL ON THE BEAMS. THE FIRE RUSHED BACK INTO EVERY CLOSET AND FELT OF THE CLOTHES HUNG THERE...



THE HOUSE SHUDDERED, OAK BONE ON BONE, ITS BARED SKELETON CRINGING FROM THE HEAT, ITS WIRES, ITS NERVES REVEALED AS IF A SURGEON HAD TORN THE SKIN OFF TO LET RED VEINS AND CAPILLARIES QUIVER IN THE SCALDING AIR. HEAT SNAPPED MIRRORS. THE VOICES WAILED...



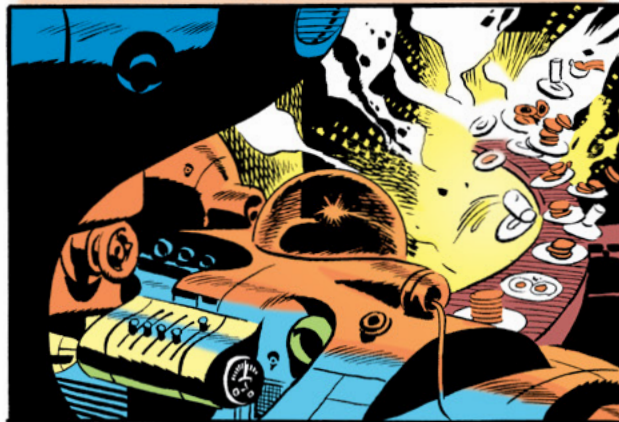
...LIKE A TRAGIC NURSERY RHYME. A DOZEN VOICES, HIGH, LOW, LIKE CHILDREN DYING IN A FOREST, ALONE, ALONE. AND THE VOICES FADED AS THE WIRES POPPED THEIR SHEATHINGS. IN THE NURSERY, THE BLUE LIONS ROARED, PURPLE GIRAFFES BOUNDED OFF, PANTHERS RAN IN CIRCLES, CHANGING COLOR...



VOICES DIED. IN THE LAST INSTANT UNDER THE FIRE AVALANCHE, OTHER CHORUSES, OBLIVIOUS, COULD BE HEARD ANNOUNCING THE TIME, PLAYING MUSIC, REMINDING THE HOT FLAMES OF DUE BILLS. DOORS OPENED AND SLAMMED. A FEW LAST CLEANING MICE DARTED BRAVELY OUT TO CARRY AWAY THE HORRID ASHES...



AND IN THE KITCHEN, AN INSTANT BEFORE THE RAIN OF FIRE AND TIMBER, THE STOVE COULD BE SEEN MAKING BREAKFAST AT A PSYCHOPATHIC RATE... TEN DOZEN EGGS, SIX LOAVES OF TOAST, TWENTY DOZEN BACON STRIPS, WHICH, EATEN BY FIRE STARTED THE STOVE WORKING AGAIN, HYSTERICALLY HISSING...



THE CRASH! THE ATTIC SMASHED INTO THE KITCHEN... THE KITCHEN INTO THE GELLAR... GELLAR INTO SUB-GELLAR. DEEP-FREEZE, ARMCHAIR, FILM TAPES, CIRCUITS, BEDS, ALL LIKE SKELETONS THROWN IN A CLUTTERED MOUND DEEP UNDER...



THEN, SMOKE... AND SILENCE!



DAWN SHOWED FAINTLY IN THE EAST. AMONG THE RUINS, ONE WALL STOOD ALONE. WITHIN THE WALL, A LAST VOICE SAID, OVER AND OVER, AGAIN AND AGAIN...



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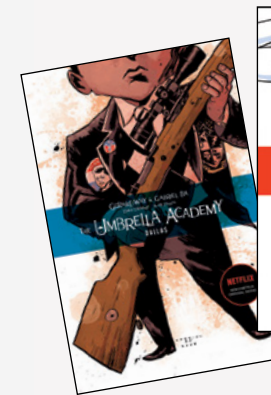
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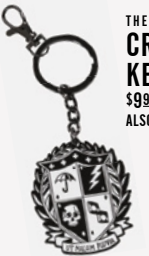
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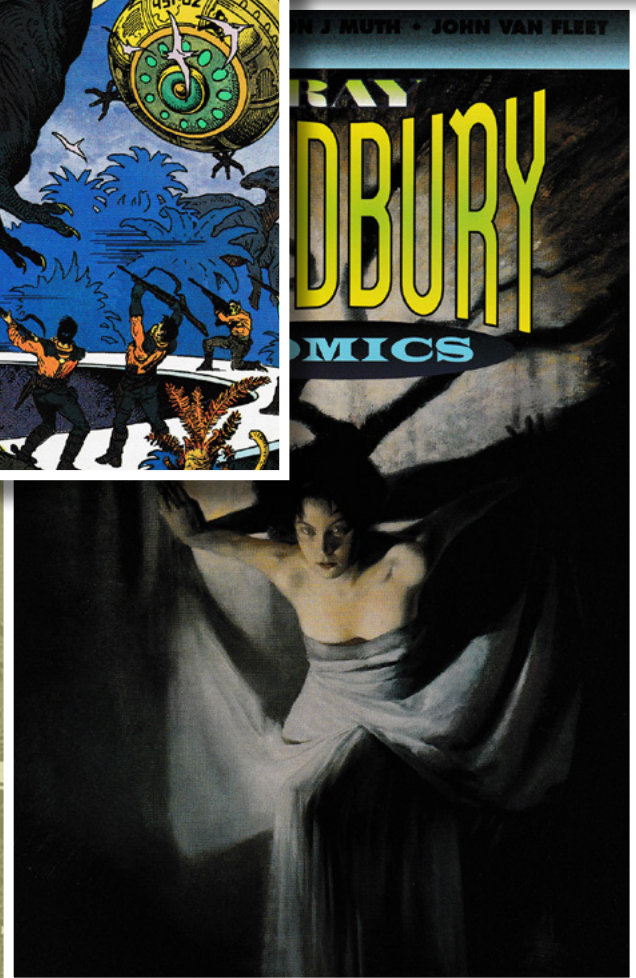
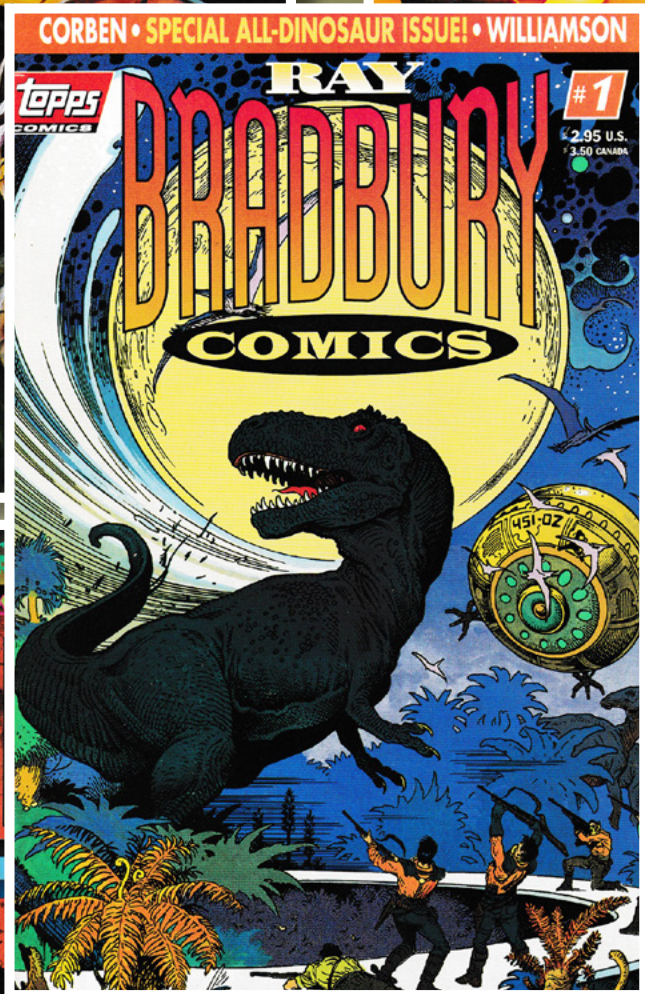
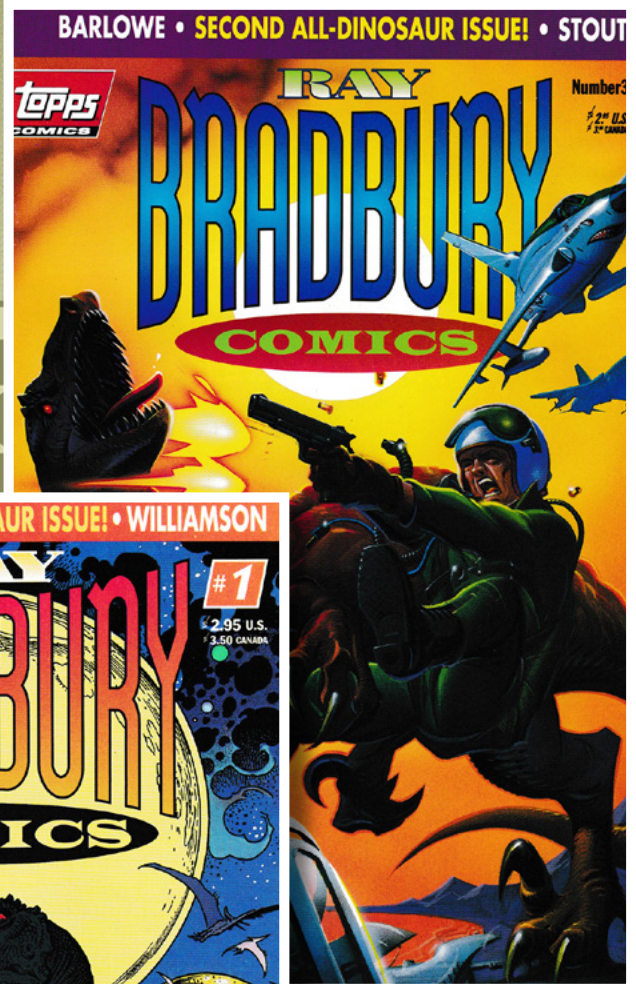
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Ray Bradbury's Chronicles

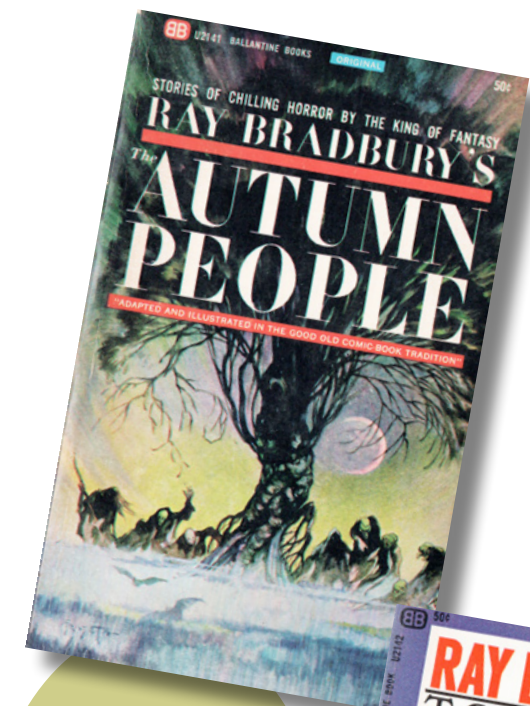
by Charlie Novinskie

Much has been written about Ray Bradbury as a person, writer, and influencer over a wide spectrum of entertainment from the written word, comics, movies, and literature in general. Most will remember the adaptations of his work in EC Comics, illustrated by some of the most talented creators in the business. These stories were reprinted in paperback form by Ballantine Books in the mid-1960s. There were also several projects that may not receive the attention of those more well-known comics, but still deserve discussing as part of Bradbury's legacy.

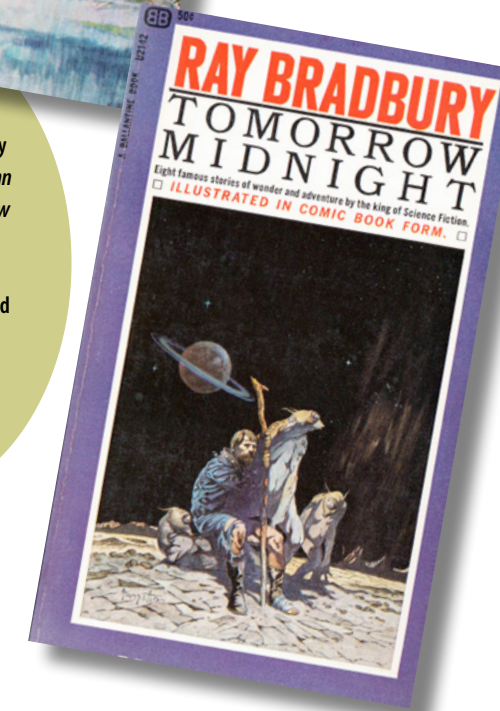
During the 1990s several publishers produced a series of graphic novels based on Ray Bradbury's work. One series of graphic novels were printed as limited editions in hardcover form by Nantier Beall Minoustchine (NBM) titled *The Ray Bradbury Chronicles*. There was a total of seven full-color books with dust jackets. Each book was numbered and signed by Bradbury and the artists who contributed to these classic illustrated Bradbury tales. Volumes 1 and 2 were limited to 1,200 copies; Volume 3-7 limited to 1,000 copies. In all, there were 43 signatures and 39 stories as well as introductions by Bradbury. Artists included Timothy Truman, Al Williamson, Richard Corbin, Wally Wood, and Ray Zone. In 2009, Hill & Wang published *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Martian Chronicles*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* as graphic novels.

Two of Bradbury's best-known works were developed as video games in the early 1990s: *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles*. Working hand in hand with Byron Preiss, the founder of Byron Preiss Visual Publications, a series of limited-edition graphic novels were developed. Preiss also worked as a book packager, developing titles for publication by such notables as HarperCollins and Random House, and he helped develop and package a series of Bradbury comics, published by Topps Comics, a start-up comic company back in the 1990s. Topps Comics was a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Topps Company, a worldwide producer of trading cards and confectionaries such as Bazooka Gum. The trading cards would play an important role in the Bradbury comics published by Topps.

In 1993, Preiss packaged a series of Ray Bradbury Comics for Topps, working with Topps' publisher Ira Friedman. "Byron pitched Jim (Salicrup) and me the idea for a Bradbury comic," notes Friedman. "He brought his relationship with Ray Bradbury to the table, along with a plethora of extraordinary writers and artists—Bill Stout, Richard Corbin, Al Williamson, Harvey Kurtzman, Matt Wagner, Dan Brereton, among others. These guys were all good pals of Byron's. Only he could have curated such an amazing roster of talent. His publishing house, Byron Preiss Visual Publications, packaged the entire body of work, so how could we resist such an opportunity?" Friedman noted that the deal was just what the new comic company needed. "Byron provided Topps Comics with a shot in the arm



Arguably the first Bradbury "graphic novels," *The Autumn People* (1965) and *Tomorrow Midnight* (1966) collected some of the author's EC Comics stories in a black and white "sideways" format with original covers by Frank Frazetta.



of credibility that was enormously helpful to us at a time when we were just getting going." Each issue of *Ray Bradbury Comics* contained an introduction from Bradbury, and included reprints from the EC years, plus new adaptations. One of the more interesting aspects of this short-lived series was the packaging of three trading cards with each polybagged comic. All three cards depicted a scene from the stories in the comic from some of the industry's top artists. For Topps, it was the perfect blend of comics and trading cards. I suppose the only thing missing was a stick of gum!

The first issue of *Ray Bradbury Comics*, published in February of 1993, was dubbed the All-Dinosaur Issue, and featured the stories: "A Sound of Thunder," and "Tyrannosaurus Rex," and a seven page reprint of "A Sound of Thunder" from *Weird Science-Fantasy* #25. Writers included Richard Corbin, Toni Garcés, and Al Feldstein with the artistic talents of Richard Corbin, Toni Garcés, Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, and Roy G. Krenkel. Inserted trading cards featured art by William Stout, Al Williamson, and others. At this point it was established that the comic series was the perfect blend of new material and reprints from previously published works of Ray Bradbury.

Ray Bradbury Comics #2 was the All Horror Issue featuring: "It Burns Me Up," "Touched by Fire," and "The Black Ferris," a reprint from *Haunt of Fear* #18. As in the previous issue, a stellar line-up of talent was included in the book with the works of Harvey Kurtzman, Matt Wagner, Sean Phillips, Al Feldstein, and Jack Davis. As with the first issue, inserted trading cards included cover art from the current issue. All card backs added additional information about the material presented in the comic as well as biographical information on the card's artist.

Taking advantage of the success of the first issue, the Topps/Byron Preiss collaboration used issue #3 to present the Second All-Dinosaur Issue featuring a brilliant William Stout, dinosaur-inspired cover. Interior writing/artist chores fell to Wayne Barlowe and Mike Kucharski and featured the following stories: "The Foghorn," "Besides a Dinosaur," and "Whatta Ya Wanna Be When You Grow Up?"

A Dave McKean cover was featured on the Alien Terror themed *Ray Bradbury Comics* issue #4 featuring the work of James Van Hise, Ron Wilber, and Mike Mignola. Stories included "The City" and "The Usher II."

Issue #5 became the last continuous issue of *Ray Bradbury Comics* even though a sixth issue was scheduled and solicited. Instead, the Bradbury's stories became a series of Special Editions published by Topps. The original cover artwork for issue #6 was produced by Kelley Jones. Issue #5 featured: "The April Witch," "Trapdoor," and "Picasso Summer," with the works of Jon J. Muth, Ross MacDonald, John Ney Rieber, Moebius, and John Van Fleet.

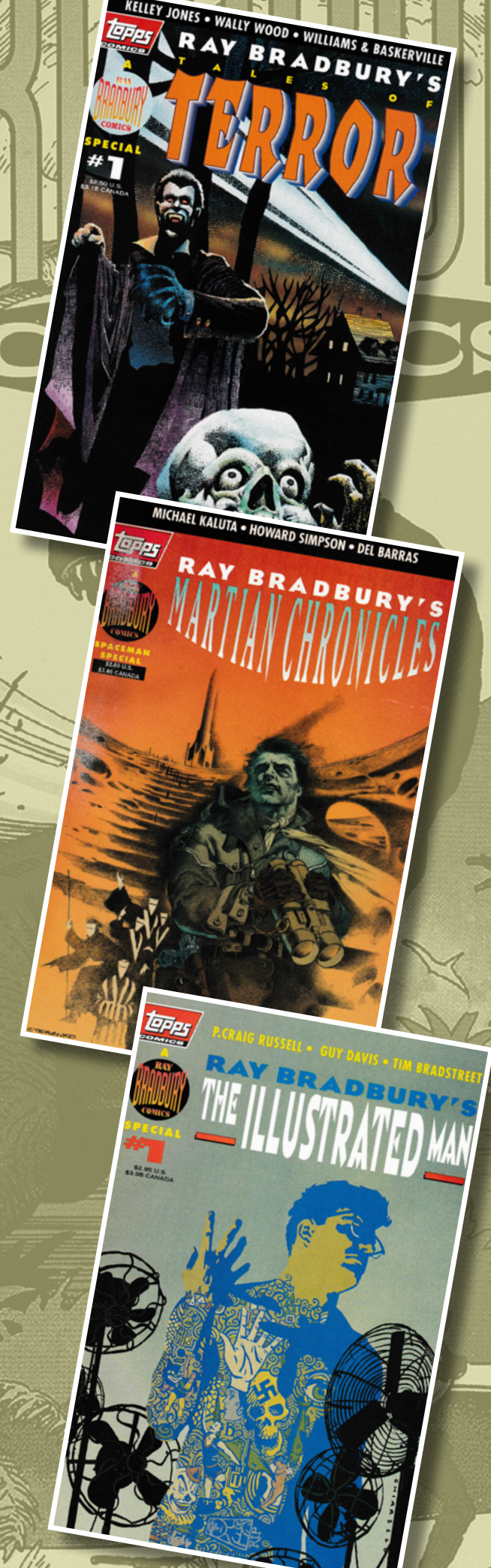
The first of four special editions published by Topps included Ray Bradbury's *The Illustrated Man*. The ten-page main story featured the work of Guy Davis and was followed up by "The Visitor" by P. Craig Russell and "Zero Hour" by Al Feldstein and Jack Kamen, reprinted from *Weird Fantasy* #18.

Originally scheduled as *Ray Bradbury Comics* #6, the material was the focus of *Ray Bradbury's Tales of Terror Special* #1. The aforementioned Kelley Jones cover led up to stories by Jones and Wally Wood. The theme was carried over into another one-shot by Topps, *Ray Bradbury's Trilogy of Terror*. The final in the series was published in June 1994—*Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles: Spaceman Special* featuring two tales: "The Off Season," and "Kaleidoscope," with the work of James Van Hise, Del Barras and Howard Simpson. The cover was provided by Jim Steranko with a frontispiece by Michael Kaluta.

In late 1995, Topps produced three digest sized issues of their most popular selling comic, *The X-Files* (think Archie digest-sized editions). *The X-Files Comics Digest* also featured a series of reprints of classic Ray Bradbury stories. The first issue ran "Trapdoor" from *Ray Bradbury Comics* #5, "The Foghorn" from issue #3 of the same comic series, and "The Visitor" from the *Illustrated Man Special Edition*. The second issue of the digest had three Bradbury tales that included "Kaleidoscope," "The Black Ferris," and "A Sound of Thunder," an EC classic. The final digest sized edition featured a 67-page X-Files story, "Scape Goats" by John Rozum and Charles Adlard, and followed up with "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury and Richard Corben and "Skeleton" by John Carnell, Anthony Williams, and Stephen Baskerville.

Most of the titles published by Topps are readily available and at reasonable prices for anyone wanting to pick up reading copies. The hardcover, limited editions, in some cases signed by Bradbury are out there as well, so that no matter how you want to enjoy these classic Ray Bradbury stories illustrated by some amazing talent, all are readily available for your reading pleasure. The legacy of Ray Bradbury lives on in these and other classics that will remain ageless for generations to come!

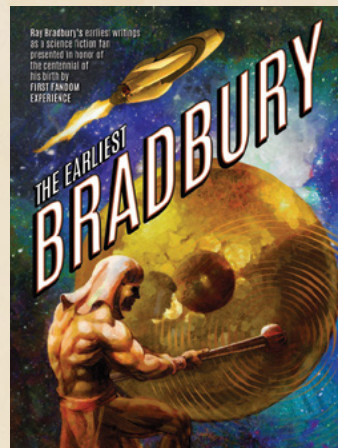
Charlie Novinskie fondly remembers the friends made and time spent at Topps in the 1990s as sales and promotions manager. He describes the experience as "The best job I've ever had—comic books, trading cards, and Bazooka gum—who could ask for more?"



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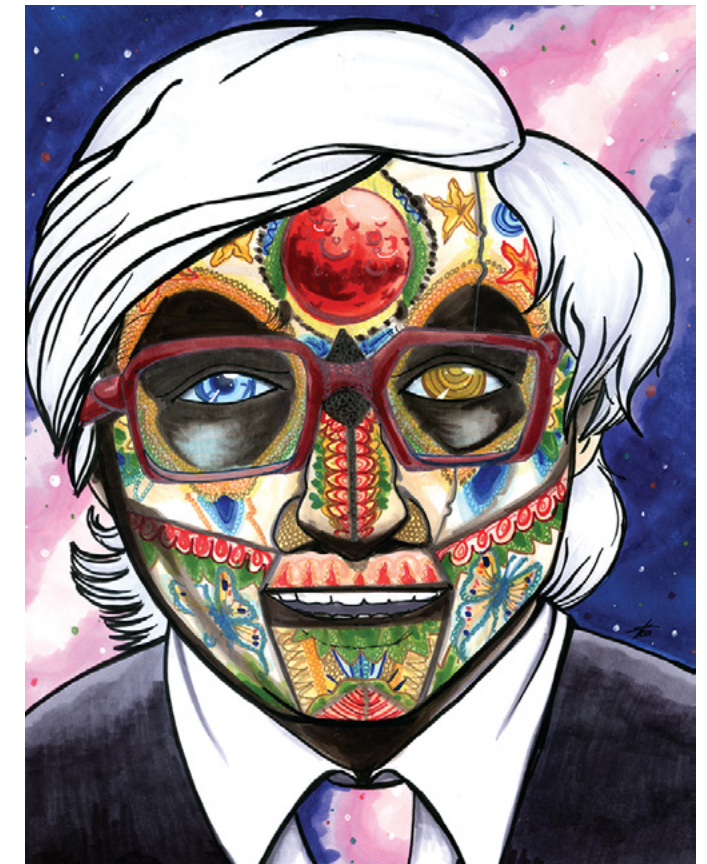
Deborah Abbott • Austin, TX • (Something Wicked This Way Comes)



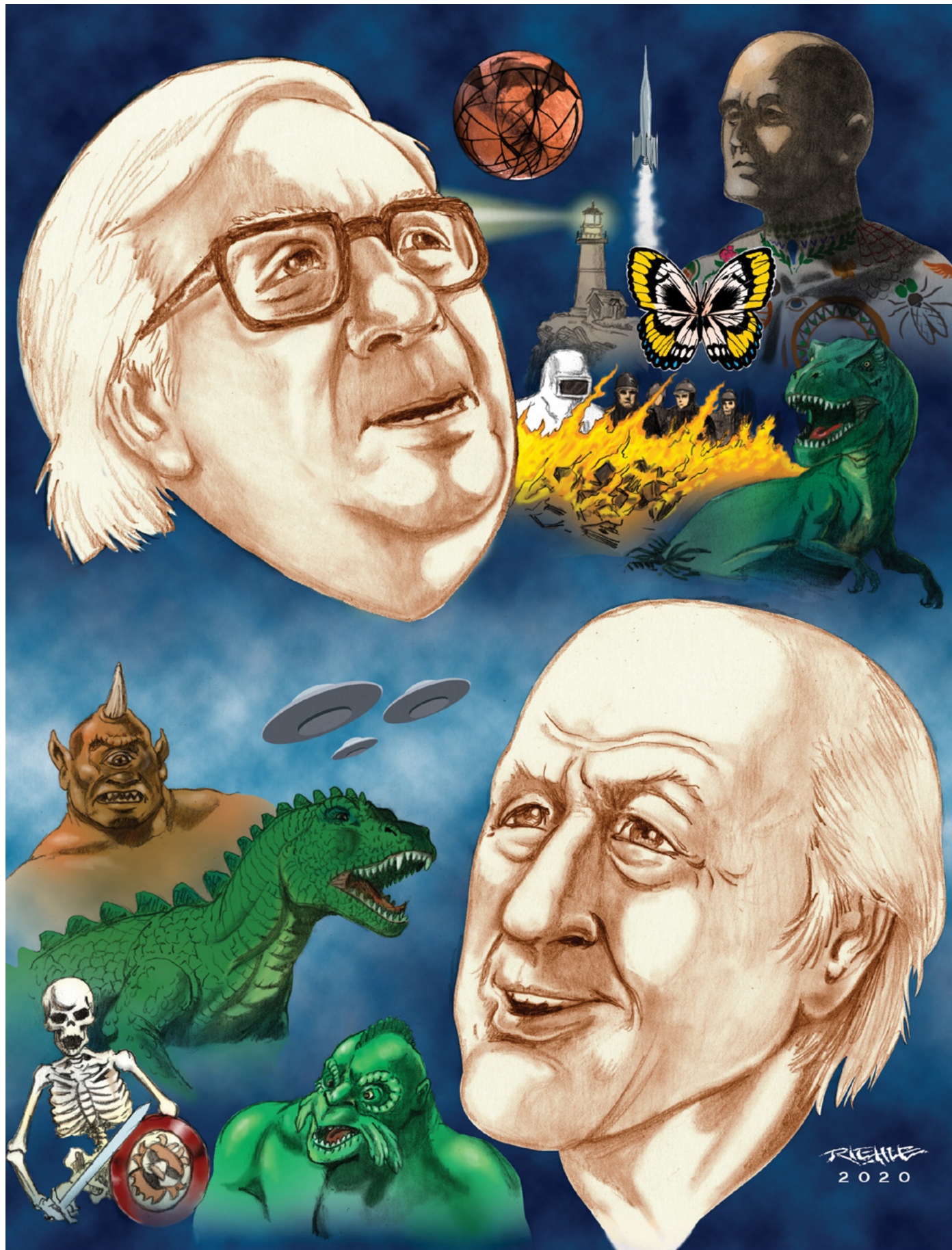
Alexandra Velazquez • Chihuahua, Mexico • (Pillar of Fire)



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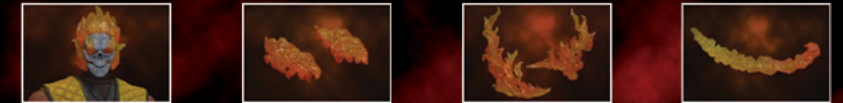


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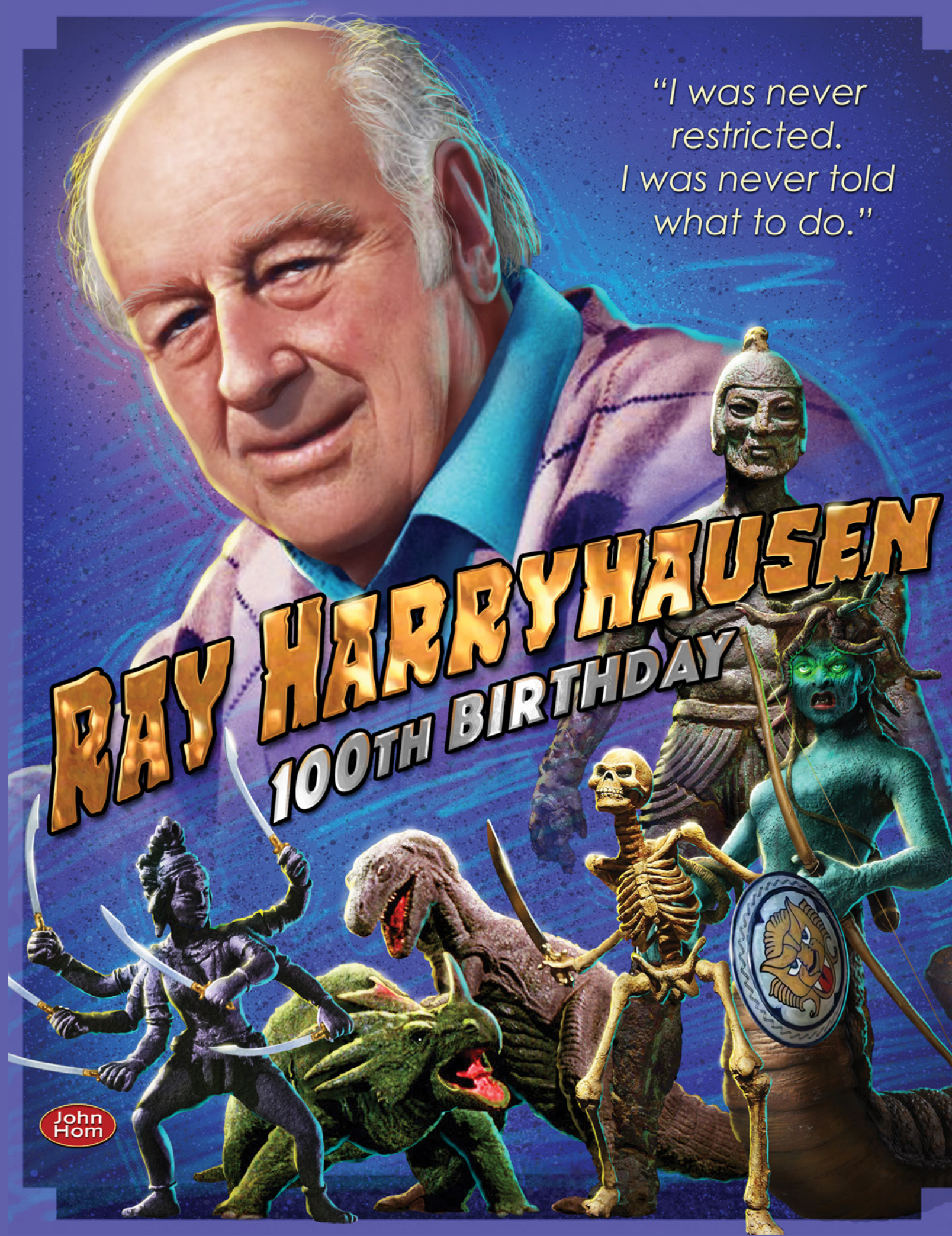
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Ray Harryhausen: Titan of Cinema

by Connor Heaney

Collections Manager, The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation (SC001419)

2020 marks what would have been Ray Harryhausen's 100th birthday—the centenary of a titan of cinema, whose imagination and creativity changed the face of blockbuster filmmaking in the 20th century. Despite his unparalleled influence, Ray was a generous and humble man, who was often flattered by the praise heaped upon him by the legions of filmmakers that had taken such inspiration from his creations.

To mark this milestone year, Ray's daughter Vanessa embarked upon a book which celebrates her father's life and career. Entitled *Titan of Cinema*, her memoir tells the story of her father's life through 100 of her favourite objects selected from the vast archive that Ray left behind. Cared for by the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation, this 50,000-item strong collection holds material from Ray's earliest experiments in the 1930s, through to projects he was working upon less than a decade ago.

Having been present during filming for all of Ray's films from *One Million Years BC* through to his final film *Clash of the Titans* in 1981, Vanessa holds a unique perspective on her father's creativity, motivation and working practices. What's more, she sheds light upon the man behind the magic—sharing anecdotes that celebrate his sense of humor, his occasional "moody moments," and the people closest to him that helped him to build such an incredible legacy.

Her memories build the striking picture of a man with unique talent and imagination, tempered with a practical and tenacious approach to life. From an early age, it was clear that his incredible focus would see him succeed in whatever field he set his mind to; his combination of persistence and patience provide a valuable example to animators and creators the world over.



Ray Harryhausen in the 1930s.

Raymond Frederick Harryhausen was born in Los Angeles, CA on June 29, 1920, to Frederick and Martha Harryhausen. His father, an accomplished machinist, had created props for two Laurel and Hardy shorts, manufacturing the remains of motor vehicles that had been destroyed during the comic duo's misadventures.

From an early age, Ray was captivated by cinema, enjoying such silent classics as *Metropolis* and *The Lost World*. As with most youngsters, he was fascinated by dinosaurs, and enjoyed family visits to La Brea Tar Pits. However, it was shortly before his 13th birthday that a trip to Grauman's Chinese Theatre would change his life. Ray was taken to see Merian C. Cooper's ground-breaking classic *King Kong*, and was astounded at the spectacle that unfolded before his eyes.

Immediately inspired, the rest of the 1930s saw Ray experiment with his own animations, whilst simultaneously stretching the scope of his imagination and learning the fun-

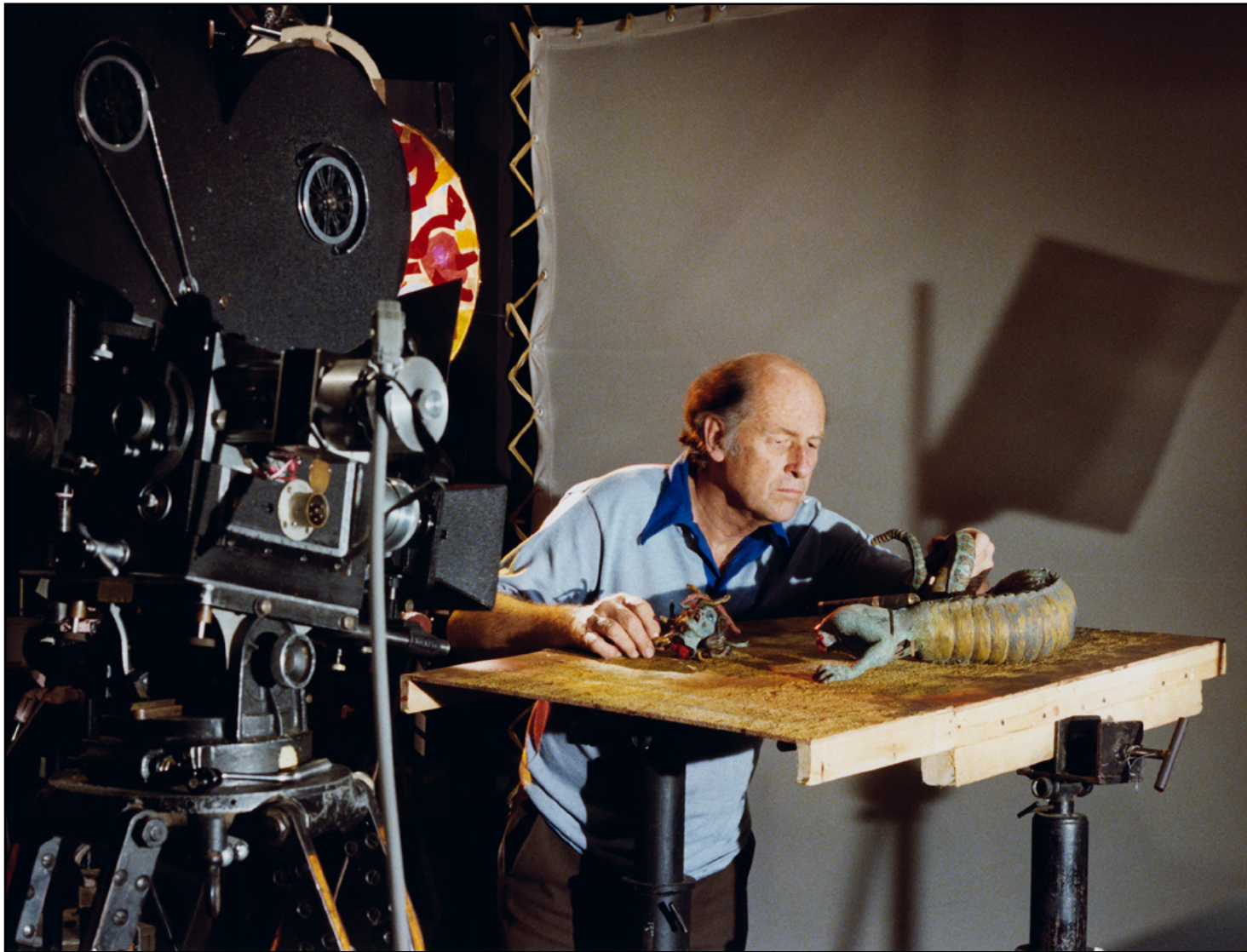
damentals of filmmaking. His first films were shot in his parents' backyard; when it became clear that the movement of the sun and clouds affected the lighting of his films, his parents generously transformed their garage into a studio for the budding animator. It is hard to overstate how important the encouragement of his parents would be—as well as providing this space, his father would assist with these early experiments, while Martha prepared costumes and props for early stop-motion models. A repeated piece of advice from his mother seems to have had a lasting impact: "Life is short—don't waste time!"

In 2008, Vanessa was asked by her father to sort through the garage of his property in Los Angeles, packed with material from his early career. Among the many long-lost treasures discovered within this trove, she uncovered a 1939 diary which details a few months in the life of her father aged 19. Showing his dedication and determination from the outset, each day chronicles his efforts to improve his craft or make his breakthrough into the filmmaking industry. Every setback or piece of progress is recorded as a learning experience towards his eventual goal. One particular piece of persistence was to have lifelong repercussions: The pursuit of feedback from his hero, *King Kong* animator Willis O'Brien.

O'Brien (or "Obie," as he was nicknamed) told the young animator that his early stop-motion models needed more work—that his Stegosaurus's legs looked like sausages, and that he needed to study anatomy before building any further models. Rather than being disappointed or offended by these comments, Ray notes in his diary that Obie had offered him useful constructive criticism, and signed up for night classes immediately. The fruits of this

Ray poses with the original armatured latex model for Medusa from *Clash of the Titans* (1981).
Photo by Andy Johnson





Ray animates the beheaded Medusa for *Clash of the Titans* (1981).

determination can be traced throughout Vanessa's explorations of her father's early years—his very first marionettes can be compared to the accomplished detail of the dinosaur models seen in the 1940 project *The Evolution of the World*.

The following decades saw Ray's filmmaking career flourish, and his work set new standards for special effects and fantasy cinema. By the 1960s, Ray and business partner Charles Schnee decided that London would be the perfect base for their ongoing film productions. As well as offering access to European locations which perfectly set the tone for mythological or fantastical stories, a UK base allowed for access to Rank Laboratories' yellow sodium matte backing process—one of only two in the world.

By this point, Ray had another reason to stay within London: his new bride, Diana Livingstone Bruce. Diana was a direct descendent of explorer David Livingstone, and had previously trained a Grand National-winning horse. They were married in 1962, with Ray taking a break from animation for the Hydra in *Jason and the Argonauts* to enjoy the ceremony in London. Vanessa, was born soon after, and from that point Ray would be joined by his little family on each of his film productions. As with his parents beforehand, Ray realized just how important a supportive family could be when undertaking such an unusual and creative

career. Ray's collection of models from previous films was beginning to grow, and Vanessa recalls the wonderful experience of growing up in a home full of dinosaurs and mythological creatures. She has shared behind-the-scenes family photography from this period, revealing such wonderful memories as peering through the camera on the set of *The Valley of Gwangi*, or visiting Disneyland with her two "Uncles"—Ray's best friends Ray Bradbury and Forrest J Ackerman.

Of course, while Ray ceased making films in 1981, his personality would not allow him to "retire" in the traditional sense, and he stayed active through the worldwide convention circuit. He also kept a keen eye on technological advances, and oversaw the rerelease of his classic films through new formats, even supervising the colorization of three of his 1950s black and white classics. As recently as 2013, Ray was engaged in the recording of a series of film commentaries with Foundation trustee John Walsh, revealing behind the scenes secrets and anecdotes for films that had been held within his memories for decades.

Ray's archive also contains a treasure trove of concept art for unmade films and unrealised concepts. He had learned early on how important it was to have a number of backup plans or ideas to draw upon, and so for every movie that Ray produced, there were three or four that did not make it to the big screen. John Walsh uncovered some 60 unmade proj-



Publicity shot for Ray's "Mother Goose" short films circa 1946.



Ray animating the battle between Trog and the Sabretooth Tiger from *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977).



Ray with director John Landis (far right) and Foundation trustee John Walsh, during a commentary recording for *Mighty Joe Young* in 2012. Photo by Simon Harvey

ects or alternative scenes during research for his 2019 book *Harryhausen: The Lost Movies*, each of which provide a thrilling insight into the extent of Ray's imagination.

Due to his unique level of involvement within each of his films, Ray was able to hold on to the many stop-motion creatures which populated these most iconic sequences. Primarily constructed from latex rubber over a metal armature, these creations inevitably deteriorate over time, due to the organic nature of their components. Ray realized that his unique collection could be used to entertain and educate for decades to come, and so in 1986 established the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation. Showing a great deal of foresight, this ensured that his collection of models, molds, artwork, tools, production material, photographs, and much more would be kept together as a cohesive whole—preventing any part of the archive being dispersed or sold at auction. The collection contains thousands of items, and continues to reveal lost secrets and new insights into Ray's incredible working life to this day. As a trustee of the Foundation, Vanessa has been closely involved in overseeing the ongoing protection of her father's collection.

In later years, Ray realized that it would be necessary to hire a restorer to ensure that these invaluable pieces were kept intact. Special effects artist Alan Friswell was hired to repair Ray's original models—importantly, Alan was able to spend innumerable hours in conversation with the creator. Ray offered very specific instructions on how he would like his models to be restored, with his wish being that they should resemble their original on-screen incarnations as far as possible. Alan now provides a unique link to Ray's original wishes, and has assessed, conserved or repaired over 70 models from the collection. This allows the Foundation to display Ray's work in exhibitions worldwide—without this repair work, iconic models such as Talos from *Jason and the Argonauts* or Kali from *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* would simply not be stable enough for display.

These restored models are proudly displayed within Vanessa's memoir, photographed for the first time since their repair. Alongside her own memories, Vanessa has called upon those closest to her father to share their own recollections of his life. Experts such as John Landis, Randy Cook, Rick Baker, and Phil Tippet explain the phenomenal influence of Ray's techniques, as well as the incredible experience of becoming friends with the man who had created the films they had grown up upon. Perhaps most touchingly, Ray Bradbury's daughter Susan shares her memories of "the two Rays"—best friends who had stayed in constant touch from their teenage years through to their 90s.

Ray Harryhausen sadly passed away in 2013, but his legacy lives on through his incredible collection and filmography. In his centenary year, the Foundation continues to discover new material or insights into his incredible life. Vanessa's memoir of her father's life acts as a fitting tribute to his ongoing influence, and she expresses the hope that Ray's torch of creativity can be passed down to yet another generation of filmmakers.

The Ray & Diana Harryhausen Foundation is a charitable Trust set up by Ray on April 10, 1986. It is the primary aim of the Foundation to protect Ray's name and body of work as



well as archiving, preserving and restoring Ray's extensive collection.

In addition, the Foundation is firmly committed to show and exhibit, for educational and entertainment purposes, material from Ray's unique collection. This includes models and artwork from each of his feature presentations and short films, as well as film equipment, tools, awards and more.

Since Ray's death on May 7, 2013, and the acquisition of all of Ray's entire collection by the Foundation, the Trustees are committed to continuing Ray's hopes for the future and protecting and conserving Ray's name and his unique reputation and contribution to world film history.

Connor Heaney is Collections Manager for the Foundation, and deals with the day-to-day care of Ray's archive. His responsibilities include the cataloguing and conservation of the collection, as well as promoting the awareness of Ray's work and legacy. He also is responsible for promoting the Foundation's objectives through social media, podcasts and other media.

For more information, visit www.rayharryhausen.com



(Top) Foundation conservator Alan Friswell, with a selection of the original models that he has restored.

(Above) Vanessa with her parents, during her father's 90th birthday celebrations in 2010.

Photo by Mark Mawston

(Above right) Vanessa by her father's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, opposite Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

(Left) Vanessa Harryhausen and collections manager Connor Heaney researching Ray's vast archive. Photo by Andy Johnson



RAY HARRYHAUSEN: Titan of Cinema

By Vanessa Harryhausen


A landmark book celebrating the centenary of the special effects master, told through 100 objects selected from his incredible collection by daughter Vanessa.


Packed with previously unheard stories and images from a life watching her father make world-famous films that changed the course of cinema. Published soon.



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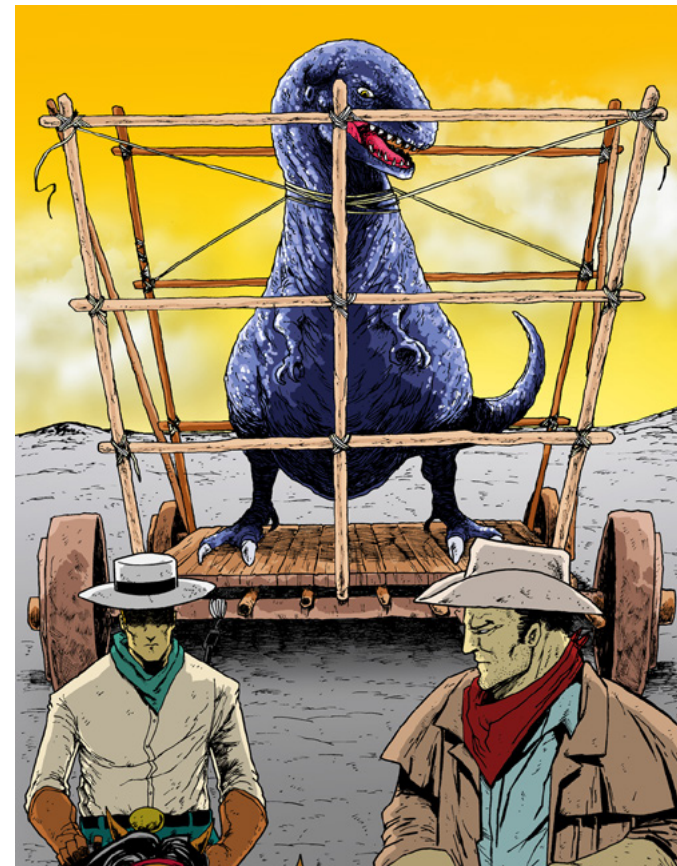
Roberto F. Franco • Merida, Yucatan, Mexico



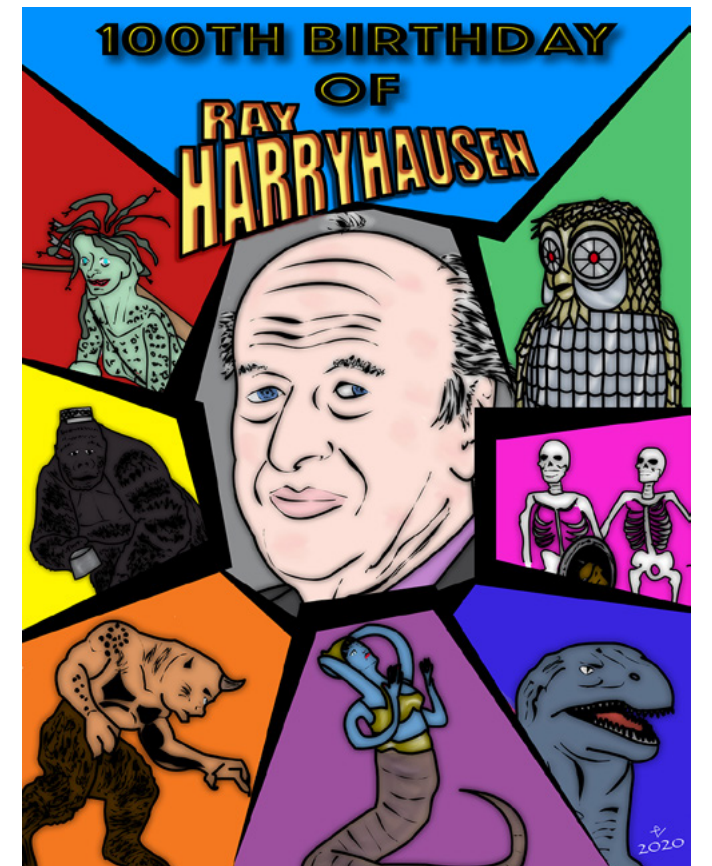
Barry Barnes • Emmett, ID



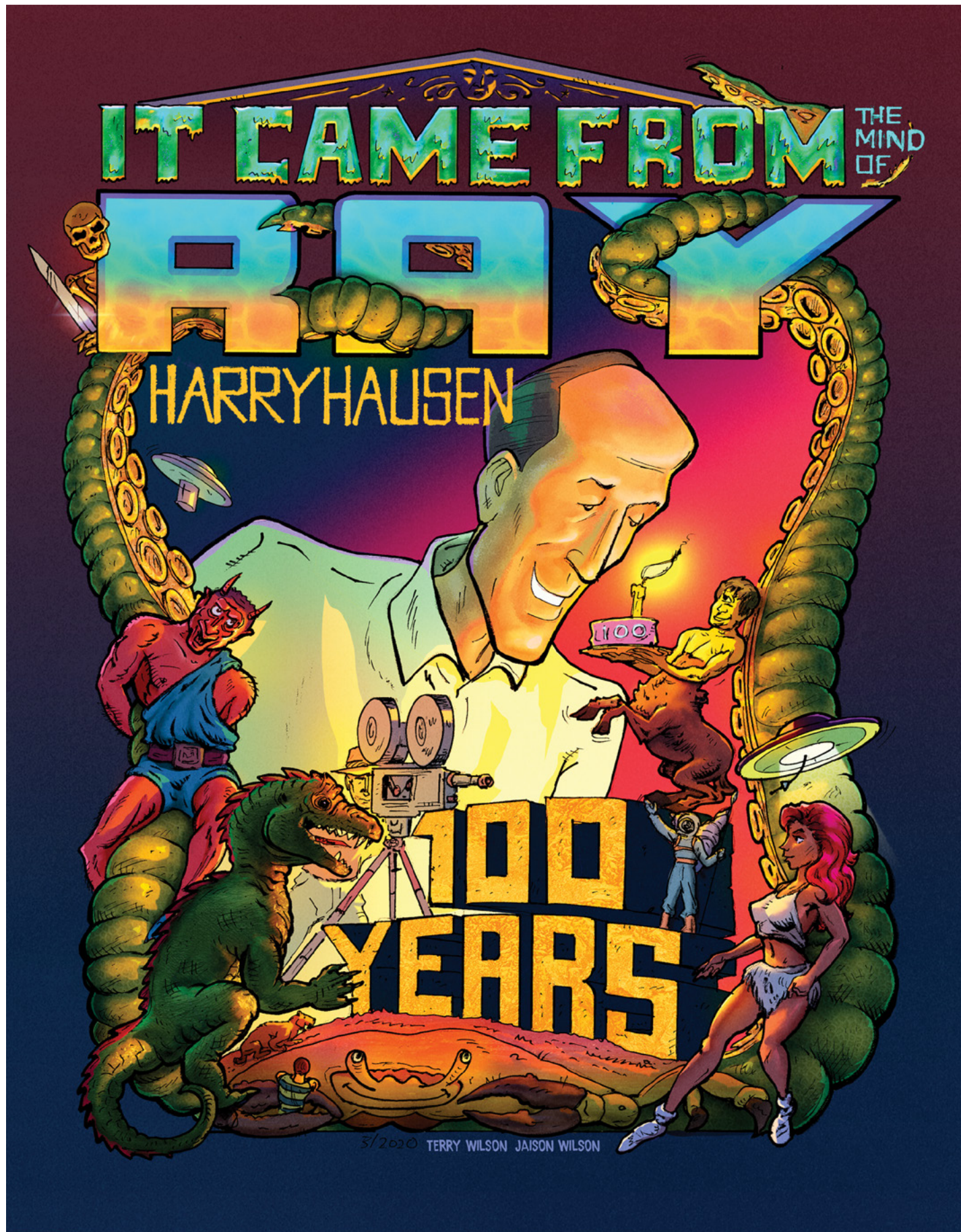
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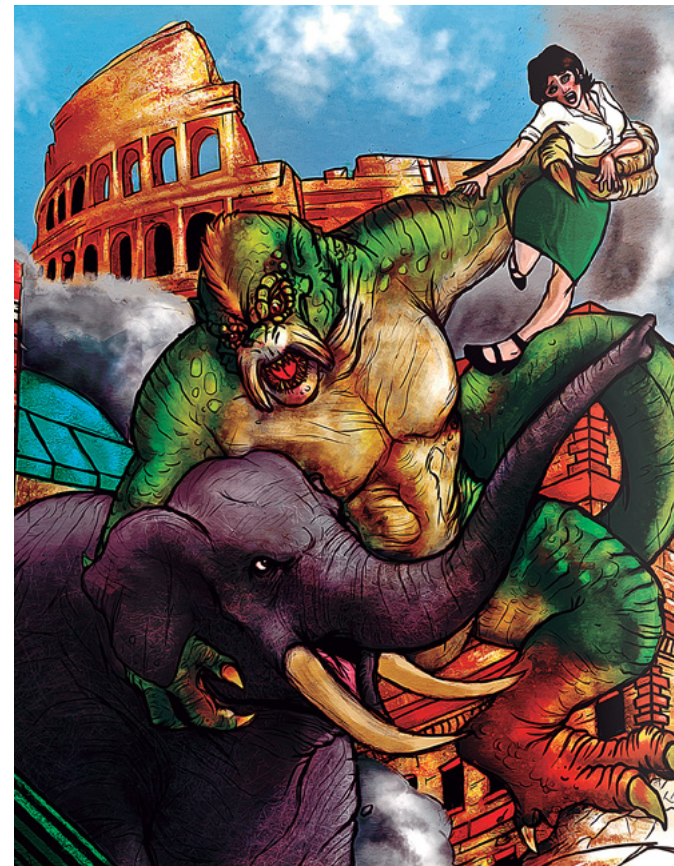
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Stan Tanaka & Wesley Wong • Chicago, IL

3,457 Miles and 14 Years Ago

by Glen Cadigan



As a child of the '80s, I grew up on movies made by directors that grew up on movies with special effects provided by Ray Harryhausen. Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and James Cameron are all acolytes of a sort, and you can add Tim Burton and Peter Jackson (among others) to that list. They carried on the tradition spiritually, if not literally, of merging live action with stop-motion, even if the effects weren't stop-motion themselves (or, in the case of *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas*, even if they were).

I didn't see Ray Harryhausen's work myself until I was an adult, which says something about how things have changed. Today, the push of a button will allow you to watch *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* or *Jason and the Argonauts* either online or via some streaming service. In my day, you had to catch movies like that on TV or hope there was a copy to rent at a locally owned video store. Since video stores themselves were still somewhat of a novelty back then, there was fat chance of that.

And if I didn't expect to see a Ray Harryhausen movie at that age, I certainly didn't expect to ever meet the man himself. But I did, and while it wasn't a landmark moment in his life, it was certainly a highlight of mine. Growing up in Newfoundland, I did not expect to meet anyone that worked in show business, then or ever. So I could not imagine the summer of 2006 when I would attend my first Comic-Con International and witness the people that were responsible for the culture of my youth, Ray Harryhausen included.

It's a long trip from Newfoundland to San Diego, with stopovers on the way. It takes three planes and over twelve hours to get there, plus the waiting time in between. But you pick up time as

you cross six time zones, so this story involves two different kinds of time travel: memory lane and jet lag.

Ray Harryhausen was there in an unofficial capacity and he sat on a panel with his good buddies, Ray Bradbury and Forrest Ackerman. He signed autographs at a booth afterwards where he met his adoring fans, but that wasn't how I met Ray Harryhausen.

It was actually the day after the last day of the Con that I saw him, and it wasn't even at the convention center itself. It happened at an off-site event, located at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Since he was in town for the Con anyway, the Museum had him give a presentation in their theatre that was part career retrospective, part Q&A. Stories were told, techniques were discussed, and clips from his movies were shown. The audience got to ask him questions afterwards, then he went out into the lobby to sign autographs.

This was an unexpected part of the evening—for me, anyway—since I had brought nothing for him to sign. But I stood in line despite my lack of preparedness, and while my friend and I waited, I wondered what I might do when I eventually reached the front. As we inched closer, there was a pleasant distraction: a skeleton model from *Jason and the Argonauts* made its way from person to person (accompanied by a responsible party) and I got to see, up close, the hand-sized figurine in a box which reminded me of a coffin, complete with sword and shield. Not a replica, but the *real* thing. Outside of people that work behind the scenes in Hollywood, how many could say that?

Fortunately, since the line was long I had time to think about my situation. When I reached the table where Ray Harryhausen sat, I decided to have him sign a unique item from the evening itself, namely my ticket. It caught him a little off guard (I don't



SebasTam • Chihuahua, Mexico

think he'd ever signed a ticket before), so he confirmed that was what I wanted. I said yes, and he took out his Sharpie and signed it. Then I had my picture taken with him, which was a two person job back in the days before smart phones.

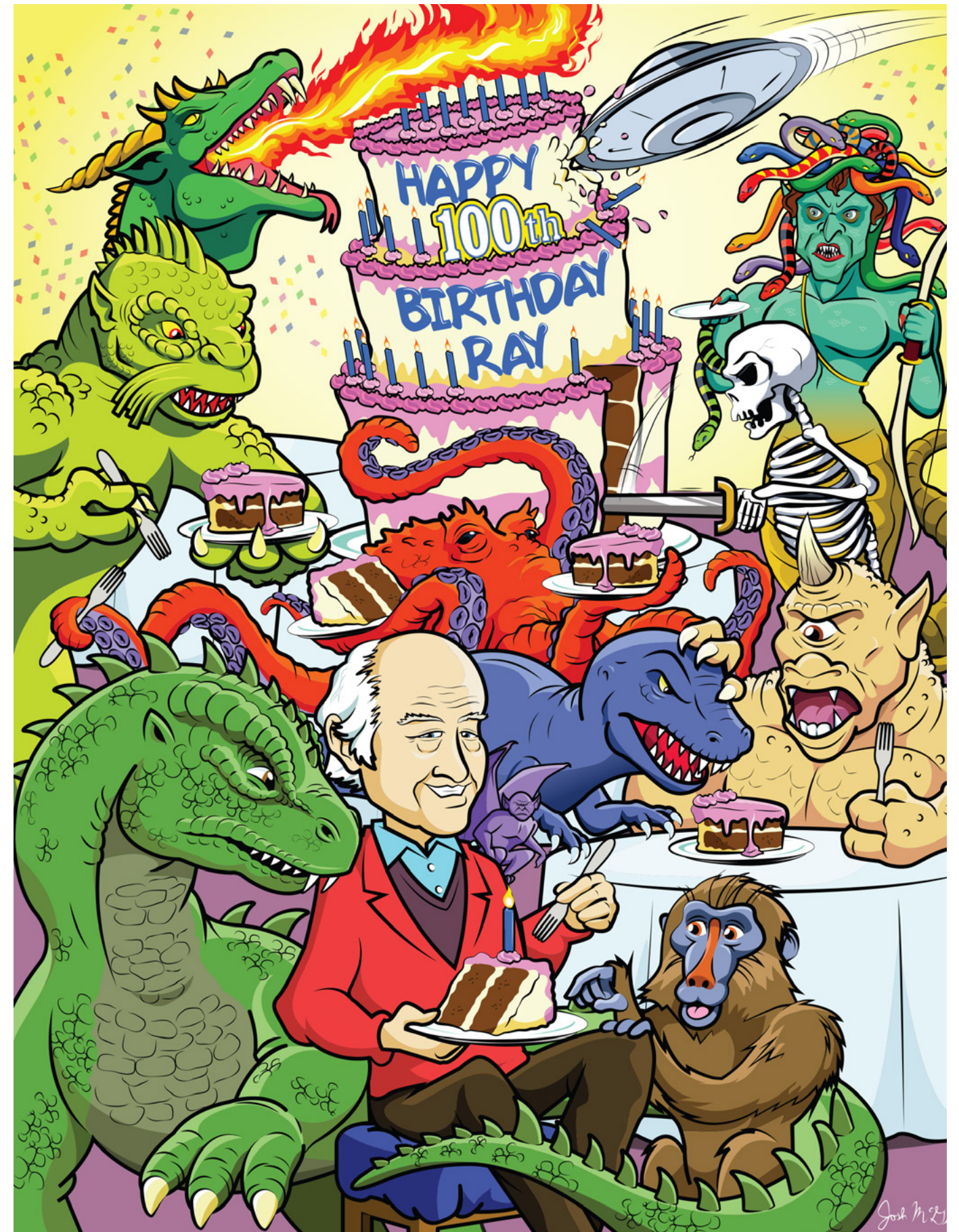
Unlike this article, I didn't make the moment all about me. I didn't ask him a million questions or tell him how much his work meant to me. It was a long line, he was eighty-six years old, and it had been a long day. I just got in and got out, happy to have met him. This was the man responsible for all those cool special effects back during the days when having *any* effects in a movie was special.

But that isn't even what I remember most about the evening. After the whole thing was over and I was waiting outside, Ray Harryhausen emerged with his hosts and bid them goodnight. He had a small suitcase with him (I assume the skeleton was within), and he walked, unescorted, down the concrete path towards the curb. He just stood there, on a perfect summer night, alone in the distance, waiting for his ride. No security, no escorts, nothing. Just him, back on from my perspective.

It was one of those summer nights that felt like it would last forever. It was such a magical night that I could've imagined a spaceship coming down and taking him away. The whole time my brain was telling me, "That's Ray Harryhausen, and he's *right over there!*" Appearances aside, it reminded me of Gandalf leaving the Shire for adventures somewhere else.

Ray Harryhausen didn't invent stop-motion, but he certainly mastered it. Today, it takes hundreds of people sitting in front of computers to do what he did by hand, and the main thing they have in common is that both endeavors take a long, long time. Aardman Animations aside, stop-motion has really become a lost art, and that's too bad. But Ray Harryhausen's legacy is in the people he inspired, and the people they inspired, and the movies that are made that feature fantastic creatures alongside actors that act against opponents that aren't really there. The tools may have changed, but the intent is still the same: to entertain and surprise and wonder, and to make the audience forget about the real world for a little while.

Glen Cadigan is an author whose work has appeared in various *TwoMorrows* publications, including *Alter Ego*, *Back Issue!*, and multiple *Companion* books, three of which he edited. He currently writes the adventures of *Bedlam & Belfry*, *Intergalactic Attorneys at Law*.



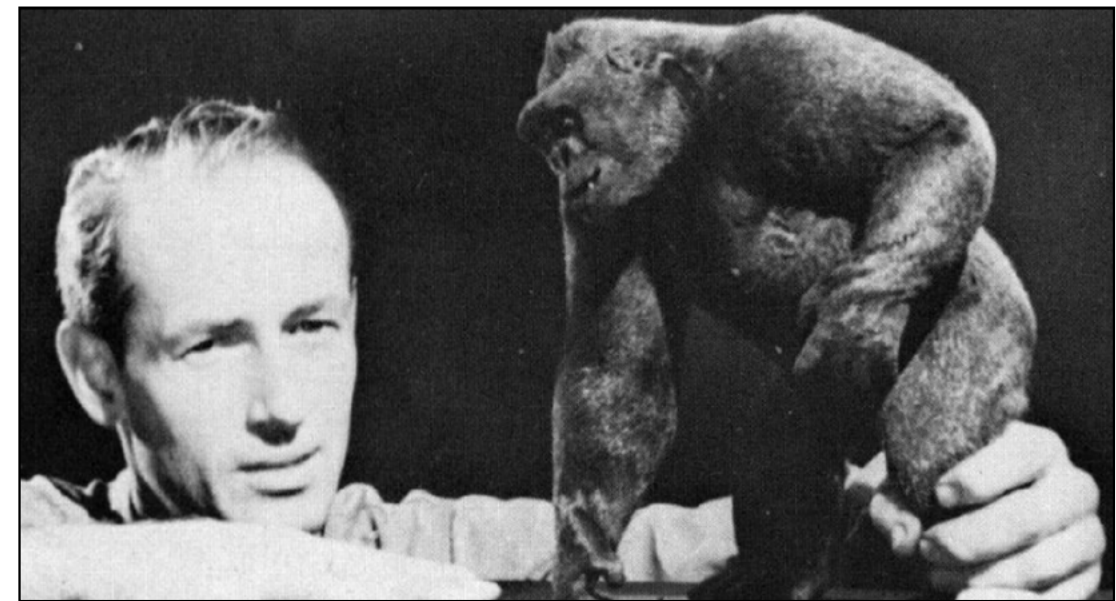
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Ray Harryhausen: He Brought Good Things to Life

by Jeff Bond



Ray Harryhausen and *Mighty Joe Young* (1949), a film he worked on with his mentor, stop-motion animation legend Willis O'Brien.

Long before dragons, dinosaurs, and otherworldly creatures could be built and animated inside computers, artists took a literally “hands-on” approach to conjuring up these fanciful beasts through a process called stop-motion animation. Originally experimenting with clay or rubber sculptures with metal wires running through them, animators would position a miniature creature on a table top, shoot a frame of film with a motion picture camera, and then adjust the model again, shoot another frame, and after a full day of effort, film run at 24 frames per second would create the illusion that the miniature creature was moving of its own volition.

Both traditional “cartoon” animators and stop-motion animators like Willis O'Brien quickly realized that animation could bring to life creatures that human eyes had never beheld, and cartoons like *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) and stop-motion shorts like *The Dinosaur and the Missing Link* (1915) gave moviegoers their first look at prehistoric animals in motion. O'Brien quickly established himself as a master of stop-motion animation, bringing an entire horde of dinosaurs to life in the 1925 adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* before providing animation for producer Merian C. Cooper's *King Kong* in 1933.

In *Kong*, a gigantic gorilla who rules a prehistoric enclave called Skull Island with a giant, hairy fist, O'Brien brought to life one of the most iconic characters in movie history. Kong terrorized the island's native population, kidnapped female lead Fay Wray, engaged in a skull-crushing, jaw-ripping brawl with a giant T-Rex, and finally faced his own mortality atop the Empire State Building in New York City, where his

confused death throes generated so much pathos that audiences wept for him—and still do. O'Brien brought sophisticated filming techniques to the movie, creating layered environments with glass paintings, miniature props and backdrops, and building machined metal armatures—like robotic skeletons—inside the ape and dinosaur models to keep them locked in position from frame to frame.

By the time he went to work on a second giant ape adventure, *Mighty Joe Young*, in 1949, O'Brien had a protégé. Young animator Ray Harryhausen had long been an admirer of O'Brien, and had fashioned his own prehistoric animal models for animation as a young man. Harryhausen found work with producer George Pal, who was making a series of fanciful animated shorts for Paramount called “Puppetoons,” which used replacement animation—creating individual figures in different positions, or heads with different expressions for closeups, and simply switching out the figures for each frame of movement. Harryhausen later joined the army and created training films using stop-motion animation, then embarked on his own series of animated “Mother Goose” fairy tale shorts including *The Storybook Review* (1946) and *The Story of Little Red Riding Hood* (1949).

Harryhausen had kept in contact with Willis O'Brien during all these efforts, showing the veteran animator his attempts at creating convincing stop-motion animation of dinosaurs and woolly mammoths, and in 1949 O'Brien finally hired Harryhausen for *Mighty Joe Young*, which featured a 12-foot-high gorilla roped and captured by men on horseback in Africa and brought back to civilization. Put on display in an elaborate



Harryhausen's "Ymir" is one of his most popular creations with fans. The space-travelling creature was featured in *20 Million Miles to Earth* (1957).



A poster for a Harryhausen double-feature, touting Ray's Dynarama process, also known as Dynamation. *Jason and the Argonauts* was originally released in 1963, *Mysterious Island* in 1961.

floor show, Mr. Joseph Young, much like King Kong, eventually goes berserk. O'Brien finally won an Oscar for his work on *Mighty Joe Young*, but the bulk of the expressive, dynamic animation of the giant ape had been done by Harryhausen, and the young animator was soon offered work on a 1953 science fiction movie called *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. Loosely based on Ray Bradbury's story "The Foghorn," the movie featured a rampaging, lizard-like dinosaur thawed out from arctic ice by nuclear testing. Harryhausen designed and built the "Rhedosaurus," which boasted a T-Rex-like head atop an iguana-like body—the first of many distinctive creature designs the animator would bring to motion pictures. He combined practical miniatures (particularly of a rollercoaster featured in the film's climax) with rear projection to place the animated creature into real New York City locations, and created an iconic monster movie moment when the dinosaur gulped down a Manhattan cop.

Producer Charles H. Schneer, working on low budget films at Columbia Pictures, had been nursing a concept for a movie about a giant octopus that manages to bring down the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, and in Harryhausen he saw just the man to bring this ambitious vision to movie screens. Harryhausen only gave Schneer five of the eight tentacles he wanted, but his "pentapus" starred in *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (1955) and Schneer and director Robert Gordon—without filming permits—stole background shots of San Francisco and the famous bridge so that Harryhausen's creature could be composited into shots of the city. Harryhausen and Schneer pulled off an even bigger trick by using stop-motion animation to put UFOs into the skies over Washington D.C. and destroy several national landmarks in the process in *Earth vs. the*

Flying Saucers (1956). The same year Harryhausen reteamed with Willis O'Brien to execute the stop-motion effects for Irwin Allen's documentary feature *The Animal World*, which boasted a lengthy sequence showcasing the Mesozoic Era and various dinosaurs, all animated by Harryhausen under O'Brien's supervision. The movie became obscure after its initial release, but Harryhausen's and O'Brien's dinosaurs became famous to a generation of kids when they were photographed for a 3-D Viewmaster reel that was sold in stores for years after the movie's release.

In 1957 Harryhausen and Schneer made yet another sci-fi monster movie, *20 Million Miles to Earth*, this time stretching the concept by having a tiny creature called an Ymir transported via rocketship inside a slimy, cantaloupe-sized egg to Earth, where it hatches in front of a dumbfounded Italian scientist and immediately begins to grow upon exposure to Earth's atmosphere.

With the Ymir, Harryhausen began to create the kind of iconic, expressive characters that Willis O'Brien had achieved with King Kong. From its first screen entrance as a doll-sized creature that somehow combined human and saurian characteristics, the Ymir, blinking and yowling in the unaccustomed light of a new world, generated fascination and sympathy. Growing to the size of a man and escaping into the Italian countryside, the creature mauls a farmer in a barn and when confronted by authorities led by an American military officer, the monster stalks directly toward the camera—and the audience—underlit in classic horror movie style, in a sequence that created nightmares for a generation of young kids. Finally reaching dinosaur-size, the Ymir attacks a zoo elephant in the first of Harryhausen's many creature-vs.-creature movie battles, and then

hides in the catacombs of the Colosseum in Rome where, Kong-like, it's blasted by bazooka fire to fall to its death.

The Ymir had derived its name from mythology, one of Harryhausen's fascinations. Schneer's and Harryhausen's low budget, black-and-white sci-fi thrillers had been profitable for Columbia, and both men's ambitions were growing. By the late 1950s color, widescreen spectacles were drawing big audiences away from their brand-new television screens, and Harryhausen and Schneer saw an opportunity to use the stop-motion animation techniques Harryhausen had been developing to bring not just creatures, but whole new worlds to movie screens. Inspired by an illustration by Gustav Dore (whose shadowy work had influenced the misty, backlit jungle backgrounds of Skull Island in *King Kong*), Harryhausen became excited by the idea of filming a fight between a human hero and a skeleton that would climax atop a spiral staircase. This was not the stuff of science fiction but of fantasy, and Harryhausen dug into the tales of the Arabian Nights, and in particular the adventures of Sinbad the Sailor, for what would become his and Schneer's first color movie, 1958's *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*.

Ray Harryhausen was the star of *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*. Acting as an uncredited producer, Harryhausen took a bigger creative role in the movie, co-writing its storyline and supervising the live action sequences that would involve his animation effects. Instead of just one animated monster, *The 7th Voyage* featured a menagerie of bizarre creatures to menace Captain Sinbad (Kerwin Matthews): not one but two horned, man-eating cyclopes; a mammoth, two-headed flying Roc and its young; a monstrous, fire-breathing dragon, and of course a murderous skeleton

brought to life by an evil magician named Sokurah (Torin Thatcher). *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* was shot in color on the exotic island of Malta, and to brand his technique of animating miniature creatures frame by frame against rear-projected, live action footage of actors and locations, Harryhausen coined the name Dynamation.

Like the Ymir, the creatures in *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* were fully developed, expressive characters. The two cyclopes lick their lips hungrily as they roast screaming humans over a fire and walk with a distinctive gait, elbows thrust backward, that Harryhausen had adapted from the Ymir's walk and which the animator would evolve through several later, bipedal characters; his dragon lurked in the shadows of a cave, bathed in brilliant red and green lighting, and engaged the surviving cyclops in a battle to the death before being dispatched itself by a giant crossbow. And Harryhausen created a nightmarish skeleton apparition, crouching as it stalks Sinbad and seeming to grin in fiendish glee as it engages the hero in swordplay.

With *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, Harryhausen and Schneer embarked on a new series of lavish Dynamation fantasies, often tackling famous tales of literature as in his 1960 adaptation of Jonathan Swift's *The 3 Worlds of Gulliver* (which featured only an animated crocodile, with Harryhausen's Dynamation techniques used to composite normal-sized actors playing either tiny Lilliputians or gigantic Brobdingnagians into shots with Kerwin Matthews' Gulliver), or Jules Verne's sequel to *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Mysterious Island* (1961), with a hermit-like Nemo (Herbert Lom) experimenting with growth processes to create a gigantic crab, gargantuan honey bees, a prehistoric, predatory bird, and a kraken-like nautilus.

For 1963's *Jason and the Argonauts*, Harryhausen tackled Greek mythology, adapting the tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece, for what would become one of the animator's great achievements and most critically praised films. *Jason and the Argonauts* starred the Gods Themselves—Zeus (Niall MacGinnis), Hera (Honor Blackman, who would appear a year later as Pussy Galore in the James Bond hit *Goldfinger*), and Hermes (Michael Gwynne), who both walk among men and manipulate their fates from Mount Olympus, where Jason and his men appear as mere pawns on Zeus' chessboard. Scored, like *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, by legendary film composer Bernard Herrmann, *Jason and the Argonauts* featured not only some of the most iconic animation sequences in Harryhausen's career, but some of the most memorable fantasy sequences in film history, rivaling the impact of *King Kong*. Winged harpies peck and shriek at the scraps of food hoarded by the hapless Pelias (Douglas Wilmer); Talos, a gargantuan bronze statue, creaks to life to pursue Hercules (Nigel Green) when the famous strongman steals treasure from its base; the god of the sea, Triton, personally holds the Clashing Rocks aside to prevent them from crushing Jason's ship, the Argo, while it negotiates a treacherous passage between seas, and after infiltrating the kingdom of Colchis, Jason faces the guardian of the Golden Fleece: a seven-headed serpent, the Hydra.

Harryhausen found animating the hydra—and keeping track of the movements of all seven of its heads—one of the most arduous tasks of his career. But what followed was even more challenging. Slain by Jason and burned by one of Colchis' high priests, the Hydra is reduced to a skeleton, and its teeth are gathered to be sown onto the ground where Jason and his men have fled, where the teeth give rise to an army of skeletons armed with swords and shields. Harryhausen choreographed the resulting battle, pitting the swords of Jason and his men against those of the skeletons as they leap and thrust among seaside ruins, fought to the tune of a rambunctious music cue by Herrmann, and the result was one of the most eye-popping spectacles in cinema history.

After four lavish fantasies, Harryhausen and Schneer returned to science fiction, but with a classic twist. Adapting H.G. Wells' *First Men in the Moon* (1964), Nigel Kneale's screenplay flashed backward from astronauts discovering the remnants of a prior moon landing during a modern landing on Earth's satellite (which wouldn't happen in real life for five more years) to the Victorian Era, where Professor Joseph Cavor (Lionel Jeffries) invents an antigravity device that will carry himself and two passengers into space. There they discover the insect-like Selenites (and gargantuan, caterpillar-like "Mooncalfs") that Wells imagined in his novel. Literate and amusing, *First Men in the Moon* boasts arguably the finest script and performances in Harryhausen's output, with carefully spaced and calibrated animation effects. But cost considerations forced him to use children in rubber costumes for the denizens of the moon, leaving only the leader of the Selenites as a stop-motion animated creature.

Harryhausen returned to dinosaurs for Hammer's remake of *One Million Years B.C.* (1966), with a nubile Raquel Welch, on loan from 20th Century Fox, in a rabbit fur bikini that would launch one of the most beloved wall posters of the 1960s. While the film's first dinosaur was portrayed by an unconvincing iguana (the same approach taken by Irwin Allen in his remake of *The Lost World*, a project that squandered the efforts and hopes of Willis O'Brien and caused the legendary animator to retire from motion picture work for good), Harryhausen conjured up a host of vivid, stop-motion-animated saurians for the movie. A horned predator called a ceratosaurus engages a herbivorous triceratops in battle; a giant, lumbering sea turtle called an archelon terrorizes a group of "shell people" on a beach; a briefly-glimpsed brontosaurus (intended to be featured in a climax for the feature that went unfiled) lumbers through a desert and



Clash of the Titans (1981) was Harryhausen's final film.

a pair of squabbling pterodactyls fight over Welch near the end of the movie. The film's highlight was a confrontation between the shell people and a raptor-like, immature allosaurus, which terrorizes the primitive humans until the movie's cave man hero, Tumak (John Richardson), impales it with a pike.

One Million Years B.C. was a huge hit, but when Schneer and Harryhausen gambled on a second dinosaur feature, they ran up against changing tastes, with their dinosaur western, *The Valley of Gwangi*, losing out to the counterculture picture *Easy Rider* at the 1969 box office. Based on a concept by Willis O'Brien, *Gwangi* has since raised its reputation as one of Harryhausen's most exciting films, with a rousing score by Jerome Moross and some thrilling set pieces, including the lassoing of the allosaurus *Gwangi* by a group of cowboys (an idea originally planned for O'Brien's *Gwangi* project, then adapted for the 1949 *Mighty Joe Young*), and a hellish, harrowing finale set inside a Mexican cathedral.

When *Gwangi* failed to muster up box office profits, Harryhausen and Schneer returned to the reliable fantasy projects they had begun in the late 1950s, and created another hit in 1973 with *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*. John Philip Law played Sinbad, and British actress Caroline Munro competed with Harryhausen's work for the best visual effect in the movie. But Harryhausen brought his "A" game, providing a doll-sized, flying homunculus to serve as spy for the cunning sorcerer Koura (a wonderful



Ray with "Bubo" from *Clash of the Titans* (1981).

Photo by Andy Johnson, courtesy and © The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation

Tom Baker of *Doctor Who*), a wooden ship's figurehead that comes to life and steals a map from Sinbad's crew before sinking into the depths of the ocean, a one-eyed centaur, and a winged griffin. For Harryhausen, the film's *tour de force* was Sinbad's battle with a six-armed statue of the goddess Kali, also brought to life by Koura to match swords with Sinbad and his men in an ancient temple. The film also featured a cameo by Robert Shaw a few years before his famed role in *Jaws*, this time portraying a shimmering oracle appearing out of a cauldron of flames to provide Sinbad with clues to the location of a fountain of youth.

Harryhausen returned to Sinbad, this time played by John Wayne's son Patrick, in his final Sinbad adventure, *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* in 1977. With its realistic animation of a baboon possessed by a human spirit, a golden, robotic statue called a Minoton, three insect-like banshees, a gigantic walrus, a saber-toothed tiger, and a horned, hulking troglodyte, *Eye of the Tiger* boasted as much animation as any of Harryhausen's previous features and went toe to toe with the blockbuster debut of *Star Wars* in the summer of '77 (in fact in many shots the gold Minoton was portrayed by Peter Mayhew, the actor behind Han Solo's buddy Chewbacca). *Star Wars* itself featured an in-joke salute to Harryhausen in Phil Tippett's stop-motion animation of a chess game onboard the Millennium Falcon, and the movie's sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*, advanced the state of stop-motion with "go-motion," a method of adding motion

blur to the movie's snowbound Tauntaun creatures, while using straight stop-motion animation for *Empire's* lumbering, mechanical juggernauts, the AT-AT Imperial Walkers.

By this point Ray Harryhausen had endured as a role model and mentor for a generation of filmmakers and visual effects artists, from Tippett to George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, James Cameron and many others. For years, Harryhausen was the only visual effects artist whose name was known to the general public, and his effects were on the cutting edge of the possible for movies in the 20th century. But *Star Wars* created its own revolution in motion picture effects that quickly set a new standard that Harryhausen's work struggled to match. For his last film project, Harryhausen turned back to the mythology of *Jason and the Argonauts*, this time telling the tale of Perseus (Harry Hamlin) in 1981's *Clash of the Titans*.

With *The Empire Strikes Back* in the rear view mirror, Harryhausen and Schneer knew that *Clash of the Titans* would have to compete in a new world of lavish production values and sophisticated visual effects. Schneer attracted an all-star cast with Lawrence Olivier to play Zeus, Claire Bloom as Hera, Maggie Smith as Thetis, and Burgess Meredith as a blind philosopher. Just as Willis O'Brien had hired him to assist on *Mighty Joe Young* at the beginning of his career, Harryhausen hired animator Jim Danforth (whose *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* featured some of the finest animation this side of Harryhausen) to work on *Clash of the Titans*, particularly on the painstaking and beautiful animation of the winged horse Pegasus. Harryhausen animated giant scorpions, a brutish Calibos, and a mammoth, four-armed Kraken for the film's climax. An animated mechanical owl, Bubo, was Harryhausen's answer to R2-D2, but Harryhausen managed to top himself with his animation of the serpent-like Medusa, a snake-haired Gorgon who turns victims to stone in her dimly lit lair. With its expressive lighting and the demonic, frightening characterization of Medusa, Harryhausen proved he could still frighten little children to their bones and end his career on a note of triumph.

The death knell for stop-motion animation seemed to be sounded by Phil Tippett and Industrial Light and Magic's Dennis Muren in 1993 on Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*, which expanded on computer animation techniques developed for James Cameron's *Terminator 2* and finally brought wholly convincing, lifelike dinosaurs to movie screens. In the film a terrifying T-Rex snaps up a lawyer in its jaws in a shot right out of Harryhausen's *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. Harryhausen himself was impressed by the accomplishment, yet he lamented the loss of what he called the "dream-like quality" of stop-motion. In Harryhausen's work, the sheer, uncanny UN-reality became something solid and visceral, more real than real. Now, when any creature, landscape or apparition can be rendered onscreen by computer, a bit of Harryhausen's magic has been lost. Maybe that's why stop-motion still thrives in movies by Tim Burton (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Frankenweenie*), Nick Park (*Wallace & Gromit*, *Shaun the Sheep*), and Chris Butler (*Kobe and the Two Strings*, *Missing Link*). For years after his "retirement," Ray Harryhausen was a beloved guest of countless science fiction and pop culture conventions, fielding questions, signing artwork and figures, and learning firsthand the impact his work had on generations of fans, artists and filmmakers. And while the man himself is now gone, his name remains a touchstone of movie imagination.

Jeff Bond is editor-in-chief of *Geek* magazine and the author of books including *The Fantasy Worlds of Irwin Allen*, *The Art and Visual Effects of Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, and *The World of The Orville*. He lives in Los Angeles with a garage full of spaceship models and Ray Harryhausen creature figures.



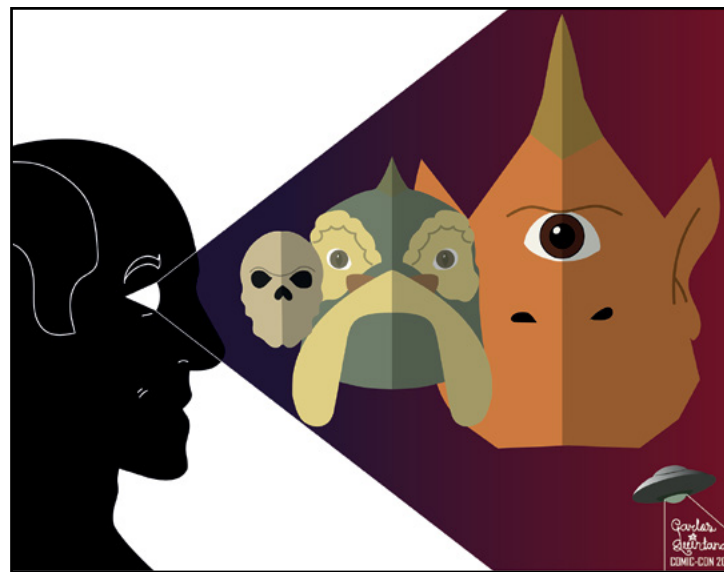
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THE History OF EC Comics



by Grant Geissman

If you're a pop culture aficionado, you may already be familiar with *Tales from the Crypt*, the American television series that aired on HBO from 1989 to 1996. You may also remember *Weird Science*, the 1985 John Hughes feature film starring Kelly LeBrock and Anthony Michael Hall. And you probably know *MAD*, the long-running humor magazine that became an American institution. But generally only true pop culture cognoscenti know that each of these properties started out in the early 1950s as full-color, 10-cent comic books, published by a small, scrappy company called EC Comics. So why should we care about these 1950s comics in 2020? Put simply, because this lesser-known company had an enormous impact on American pop culture, managing to be both commercially successful as well as boldly innovative.

At its creative peak in the 1950s, the EC line of comics included horror, crime, science fiction, war, and humor titles. To hard-core EC fans—known as “EC Fan-Addicts” (who are, indeed, fanatics!)—these were simply the best comic books ever published. Counted among EC’s fans are some disparate pop culture luminaries, including novelists Stephen King and R. L. Stine, filmmakers George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, and George Romero, Underground Comix cartoonist Robert Crumb, Monty Python member/visionary director Terry Gilliam, and musician Jerry Garcia, all of whom point to EC as an important inspiration.

For a company that has inspired so much adulation, EC had some rather modest beginnings. The company was begun in 1945 by comics pioneer M.C. “Max” Gaines. The letters “EC” originally stood not only for “Enter-

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M.C. "Max" Gaines in his office in 1946.

taining Comics" but also for "Educational Comics," reflecting Gaines's firm belief in the notion of comic books as an educational medium. Back in 1933, Gaines had been instrumental in the formation of the early comic book industry, successfully pitching Eastern Color Printing on releasing *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* as a promotional giveaway. Convinced that people would actually pay good money for a comic book, Gaines stuck some "10¢" stickers on a stack of copies of *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* and placed them on a New York newsstand. The stickered comics quickly sold out. He had proven his theory, and *Famous Funnies* Series 1 (the first 10-cent newsstand comic book, cover-dated July 1934) and *Famous Funnies* #1 (the first monthly newsstand comic book, cover-dated February 1934) followed. In 1938, he and his editor Sheldon Mayer had encouraged their business associates at DC/National to release a feature called "Superman." The Superman character was an instant hit, and so in 1939 Gaines and DC/National went in together and formed a sister company called All-American Publications, which introduced many familiar characters including Wonder Woman, the Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, and the Atom. In 1945 Max Gaines was bought out of his share of the All-American-DC/National partnership, and almost immediately he formed EC Comics, taking with him the rights to his *Picture Stories from the Bible* series. Gaines added other titles to the EC line, including a well-intentioned (but rather sleepy) line of titles for younger readers, with titles like *Tiny Tot Comics* and *Animal Fables*.

On August 20, 1947 Max Gaines was tragically killed in a motor boating accident on Lake Placid. Responsibility for the business fell to his son, William M. Gaines. Bill, who had actually been studying to be a chemistry teacher, had no interest in comic books and even less interest in being a publisher. And he had inherited a line of comic book titles that seemed as though they were in competition to see which one could lose the most money. At the time of his father's death, EC was running about \$100,000 in the red.

He was quite reluctant to step into his father's shoes, and he did so only at his mother's insistence. "In the beginning," Bill wrote, "I hated the business so much that I visited the office only once a week to sign the payroll checks." As he began feeling his way through the ins and outs of being a publisher, his attitude began to change. "First thing I knew, I had to read our comics. Next thing I knew, I was in love with them," Bill wrote.



As Bill began to assemble a new and younger staff (notably artist/writers Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman, along with a young artist/writer named Johnny Craig, who had worked for Max Gaines), he also began replacing his father's well-intentioned (but lackluster) titles with new (but highly derivative) ones. These comics were in the western, romance, and crime vein, and had titles like *Saddle Justice*, *Saddle Romances*, *Gunfighter*, *Modern Love*, *War Against Crime!*, and *Crime Patrol*. These books were a step in the right direction, but basically EC was just chasing whatever "trend" seemed to be successful for other publishers. After a year or two of playing "follow the leader" and trying to keep up with the ever-changing trends in the comic book industry, Gaines and Feldstein decided to go off in their own direction. The pair both loved scary stories like they used to hear on the old radio shows such as *Inner Sanctum*, *The Witches Tale*, and Arch Oboler's *Lights Out*, so they decided to insert some horror stories into their two crime comics (*Crime Patrol* and *War Against Crime!*) and test the waters. With the April-May 1950 issues they changed *Crime Patrol* into *The Crypt of Terror* (which was changed three issues later into *Tales from the Crypt*) and *War Against Crime!* into *The Vault of Horror*. A month later they changed *Gunfighter* into *The Haunt of Fear*. Soon EC's three horror comics had become the flagships of the line, and it was EC's turn to be imitated: Other companies began to flood the newsstands with competing horror titles.

EC's new line of comics (which Gaines and Feldstein christened the "New Trend") consisted not only of horror, but eventually grew to include science fiction, crime, shock, and—under Harvey Kurtzman's aegis—war and humor comics.

Unlike virtually any other comic book publisher of the time, Gaines and Feldstein strived to produce comics that were several cuts above the standard fare, both in the writing and in the artwork. While essentially writing to amuse themselves, they were also targeting an older age group than most other publishers; both men were in their mid-twenties at the time. They regularly included stories on bigotry, racism, drug abuse, police brutality, and an-



Bill Gaines (left) and Al Feldstein in the EC office in 1950.

ti-Semitism, subject matter that was virtually unheard of in comics at that time. (Gaines and Feldstein referred to these stories as "preachies.")

The two men soon developed a highly effective system, with Gaines generally providing the plot ideas (which he jotted down on little scraps of paper he called "springboards"), and Feldstein fleshing out and writing the stories directly onto the art boards that would be given to the artists to illustrate. Rounding out EC's creative team, artist/writer/editors Harvey Kurtzman wrote nearly everything he drew (and for the titles he edited), and Johnny Craig generally also wrote the stories he drew.

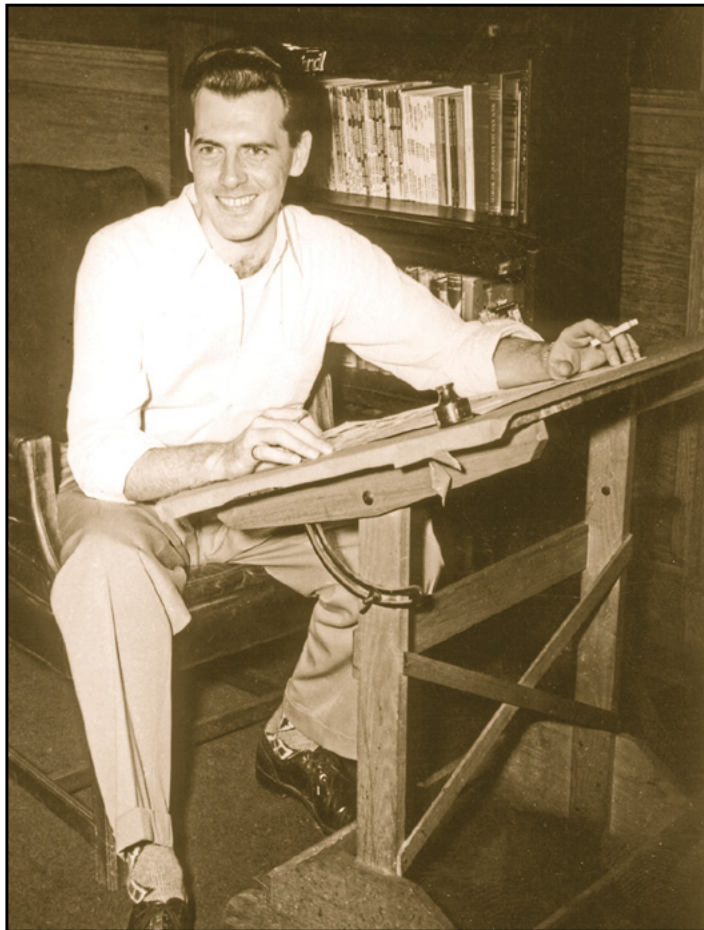


Along with the staff EC artists Al Feldstein, Johnny Craig, and Harvey Kurtzman, the list of freelance artists that regularly did work for EC reads like a "who's who" of comics in the mid-20th century, including Graham Ingels, Jack Davis, Wallace Wood, Bill Elder, John Severin, Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Frank Frazetta, Joe Orlando, Jack Kamen, George Evans, and Bernie Krigstein. The artwork that was done for the EC comics is generally considered to be among the best work ever to be done in comics. [See our "Gallery of EC Comics Artists" starting on page 104.]

Al Feldstein was a triple threat: an artist/writer/editor. Feldstein's artwork—which he would always dismiss as "stiff"—nonetheless had a visceral, bold style that contributed much to what is often referred to as "the EC mystique." *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*

entry on Feldstein states that "his depiction of 'static horror'—freezing a single action in time—has never been successfully duplicated in comics." Gaines always maintained that the EC comics with Feldstein covers always sold the best, probably because they stood out visually on the newsstands. An extremely energetic worker, it wasn't long before Feldstein was editing seven EC titles, adding *Weird Science*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Crime Suspense Stories*, and *Shock Suspense Stories* to the three horror comics. Writing, editing, and drawing covers and stories for all of these books eventually proved to be too much, and Feldstein dropped most of his drawing duties to concentrate on just writing the stories from Gaines's springboards. An incredibly proficient worker, Feldstein would write a story a day from Monday through Thursday, and use Friday to put together the letter pages and catch up on any other editing work that needed to be done. During this period he would also squeeze in occasional cover art to keep his hand in that part of the process. The following Monday he would turn his attention to another EC title, and the process would begin all over again.

Johnny Craig was another triple threat, an artist/writer, and later, an editor. Craig was a slow, meticulous craftsman whose art exhibited a very clean, film-noir kind of a look, often featuring moodily lit, atmospheric panels. Craig was in on the ground floor with Gaines and Feldstein in developing the EC horror titles *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Vault of Horror*, and *The Haunt of Fear*. Craig also created the archetypal image of The Vault Keeper, one of the three GhouLunatics, the horror hosts that bookended each story. Because Craig also wrote the stories he drew (with very few exceptions), Gaines, Feldstein, and Craig formed EC's horror tri-



Artist/writer Johnny Craig at his EC office drawing board in late 1951.

umvirate. Craig didn't enjoy horror stories with an overt amount of gore, and his stories tended to be peopled with vampires, zombies, and the walking dead. When *Crime Suspense Stories* was added to the EC line towards the end of 1950, Craig was able to fully indulge his film-noir tendencies. Many aficionados feel that much of Craig's finest work is to be found there, both in the interior stories and in the many covers he contributed for the title.

Artist/writer Harvey Kurtzman came to EC looking to do educational comics, but he soon was illustrating stories for EC's horror and science fiction titles. The very earliest ones were from scripts that EC provided, but it wasn't long before Kurtzman was writing and drawing his own stories. Very soon after, Gaines gave Kurtzman a shot at editing his own comic book. Always a fan of adventure and mystery stories, Kurtzman proposed a "he-man adventure" comic called *Two-Fisted Tales*; the first issue appeared in November–December 1950. But the Korean War had just broken out, and the book was changed into a war comic. Kurtzman wanted this war comic to be different. "I wanted my war stories to have some purpose," he said. "I wanted to do a war comic that told the truth. I wanted stories to show that all people are pretty much the same, and that all soldiers had the same problems, no matter who they were fighting for." A companion title, *Frontline Combat*, appeared in 1951. These highly regarded books were the very first true-to-life war comics. Kurtzman was an exacting, deliberate worker who not only wrote the stories, but also pro-

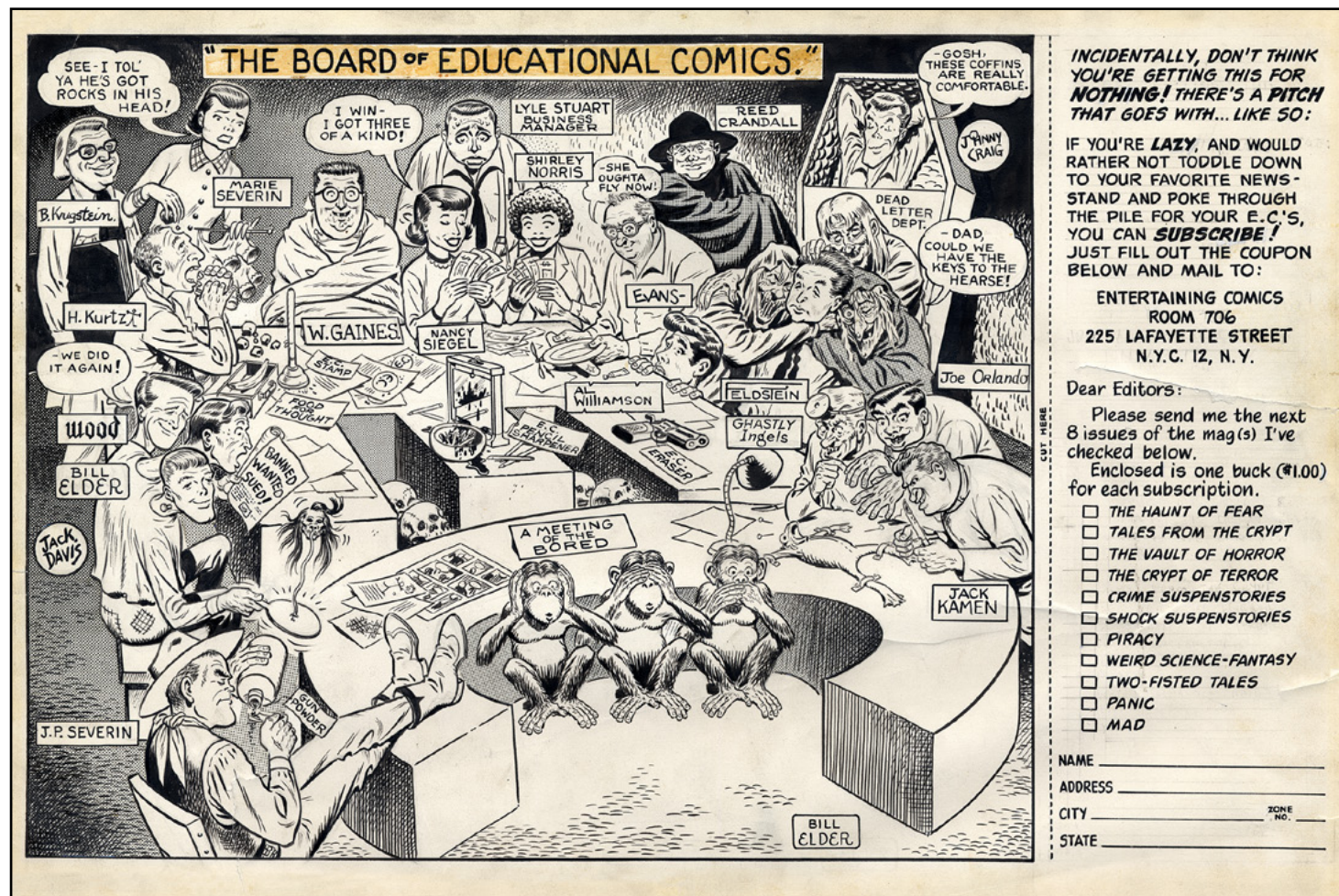


A charming Jack Davis caricature of Harvey Kurtzman, captioned "The MAD Man!," circa 1954.

vided detailed tissue-paper layouts of each panel for the artists to follow. To go off of Kurtzman's supplied vision was not encouraged. Kurtzman also felt that he couldn't write until he had all the background material together, a process that included talking to war veterans, reading historical accounts, going up on a test flight, and even sending his assistant Jerry DeFuccio down in a submarine for a first-hand account. Every detail had to be accurate, right down to the buttons on uniforms. Needless to say, this process took weeks. Kurtzman was producing work that was unsurpassed in the comic-book field, then or now, but the downside was that he was overworked and barely making enough money to support his family. By contrast, Feldstein could crank out a horror story in a day, but with Kurtzman's method there was no way he could up his output. He appealed to Gaines for a raise, but Gaines was caught in a conundrum. Feldstein was turning out seven books to Kurtzman's two, and payment was calculated by the number of books, not by the time it took to turn one out. And although *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat* were the best books of their kind, they were only moderately profitable compared with EC's flagship horror titles. Gaines suggested that if Harvey could sandwich in another book between the ones he was already doing, his income would go up by 50%. And so, out of a simple, pressing need for more income, in 1952 *MAD*—the first satire comic and a publication destined to become an American institution—was born.



Original cover art by Johnny Craig



Original Bill Elder art to an EC subscription flyer, 1954.

Gaines, who by all accounts was a very paternal figure, ran EC with a friendly, family-style atmosphere. Once an artist was in the fold, they would stay in the family as an EC regular. Artist Graham Ingels joined the company at the beginning of 1948 to work on the company's early western, romance, and crime comics. Once they launched the horror comics, however, it didn't take long to realize that Ingels was "Mr. Horror himself." He was soon signing his work with the pen name "Ghastly," and began specializing in what Bill Gaines biographer Frank Jacobs referred to as "cadaverous inkings." Ingels's horror tableaux were swampy, oozing, decaying, and fetid, and in the depiction of the rotting, shambling corpse he was second to none. He was also famous for his interpretation of the grinning visage of the Old Witch, one of EC's three GhouLunatics. Ingels also contributed the covers for the last 18 of the 28 issues of *The Haunt of Fear*, which gave that title a moody, atmospheric quality that was markedly different from EC's other two horror comics.

Jack Davis joined the EC family in 1951. Davis was an amazingly versatile artist, and he could also work unbelievably fast. His work appeared in the horror, crime, science fiction, war, and humor comics. Davis would create the archetypal visage of the Crypt-Keeper, another of the three GhouLunatics. Davis's first story for EC was "The Living Mummy" in the fourth issue of *The Haunt of Fear* (November–December 1950). His scratchy, car-

toony style proved to be a perfect foil to the often-gruesome EC horror stories, making them a little less horrific than they might otherwise have been. And with Kurtzman's *MAD*, Davis finally got a chance to fully indulge his humorous side, which was a welcome respite from all the horror and war stories.

Wallace Wood was another extremely versatile artist. Wood had art in all three of EC's horror comics, as well as the crime and shock comics. Wood also made beautiful contributions to Kurtzman's war comics *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*. But it is the quality of the work he would do in EC's science fiction comics, *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, which would earn him the title "the dean of science fiction artists." Wood essentially created a new visual vocabulary for science fiction art, with a propensity for depicting the ornate, complicated interiors of spaceships. Wood's figures often look as if they are defying gravity, carved out of plastic, and frozen in space. There is a three-dimensional quality to his work that few other artists have ever achieved. Wood was also one of the core artists to contribute to Kurtzman's *MAD* comics.

Joe Orlando was brought into the EC family on a recommendation from Wallace Wood. Orlando worked up a penciled sample page and went down to EC, and when Gaines and Feldstein saw it they said, "Terrific, we have another Wally Wood." Orlando's first story for EC was "A Mistake in Multiplication" in *Weird Fantasy*

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A Marie Severin illustration depicting the EC staff as Knights of the Round Table, 2000.

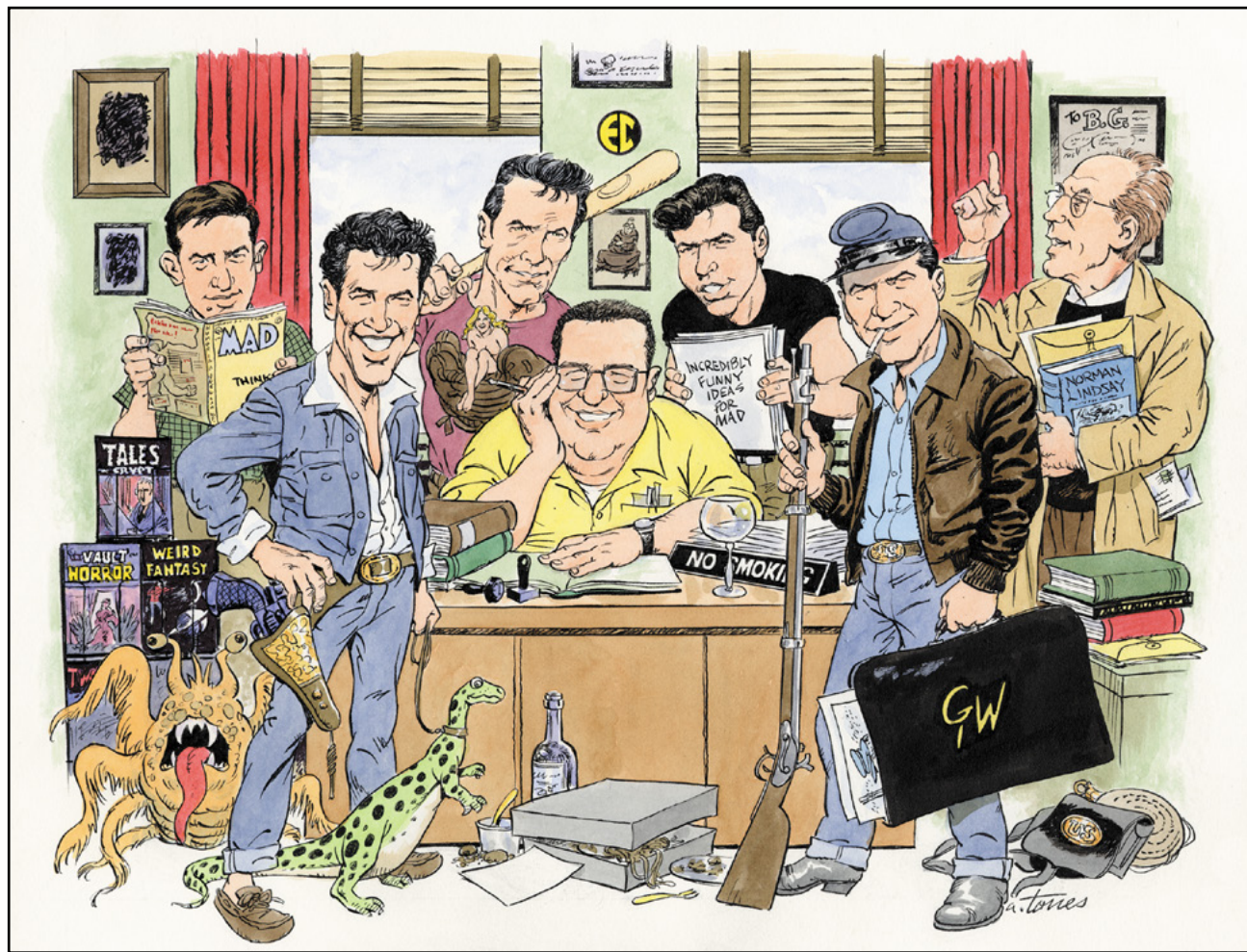
#9 (September–October 1951), and after that he missed appearing in only one issue of EC's science fiction comics. He also regularly contributed to the horror, crime and shock titles, and he also had a story in nearly every issue of *PANIC*, the sister publication to *MAD*. Although he did many stories for the company, Orlando contributed only four covers to EC. It has been said that at any other comic book company, Orlando would have been the shining star. Here, however, competition among the star artists was fierce.

The artistic team of John Severin and Bill Elder were brought to EC by Harvey Kurtzman at the end of 1950 to work on Kurtzman's war comics. Kurtzman said of the duo that "they complemented each other, and they did some of the finest stuff in that partnership that was ever done in the genre of war books." With Severin's knack for authenticity, he fit in very well with the detail-obsessed Kurtzman. The pair also had stories in EC's science fiction comics. When *MAD* came along in 1952, rather than keep the Severin/Elder duo together, Kurtzman decided to separate the two artists for their work in *MAD*. Elder had been a class clown, a natural comedian, and his work blossomed in *MAD*, where he could finally channel all his humor and manic energy into the art. With his *MAD* work, Elder became known for "chicken fat," crazy background gags and hilarious signs on the walls which he would sprinkle around the stories. As for Severin, he

was also a significant contributor to Kurtzman's *MAD* comics, appearing in nine of the first ten issues. By the end of 1953, the habitually overworked Kurtzman wanted to concentrate only on *MAD*, and he offered Severin the editorship of *Two-Fisted Tales*, which Severin readily accepted. (Consequently, Severin had to give up his slot in the *MAD* comic book.)

EC's staff colorist was Marie Severin, who was recommended for the position in 1951 by her brother John. One of the few women working in comics at the time, she was referred to as "the conscience of EC," because if she found a panel too gruesome to color in the "traditional" way, she would often opt to color the whole thing blue, yellow, or some other primary color as a way to tone down the gore. Apart from her spectacular coloring on the interior stories, Al Feldstein credits Severin's coloring on EC's covers with helping the comics sell. "You have to give Marie Severin credit for selling a lot of the covers that were done in black and white, but were really brought to life by her color," said Feldstein.

The youngest EC artist was Al Williamson, who came to the company in 1952 at the tender age of 21. The first job he did for EC was a Gaines/Feldstein horror story entitled "The Thing in the 'Glades'" (*Tales from the Crypt* #31, August–September 1952). "They had two scripts available, a science fiction story and a horror story that took place in the Everglades," Williamson said. He decided to take "The Thing in the 'Glades'" because it seemed like an easier



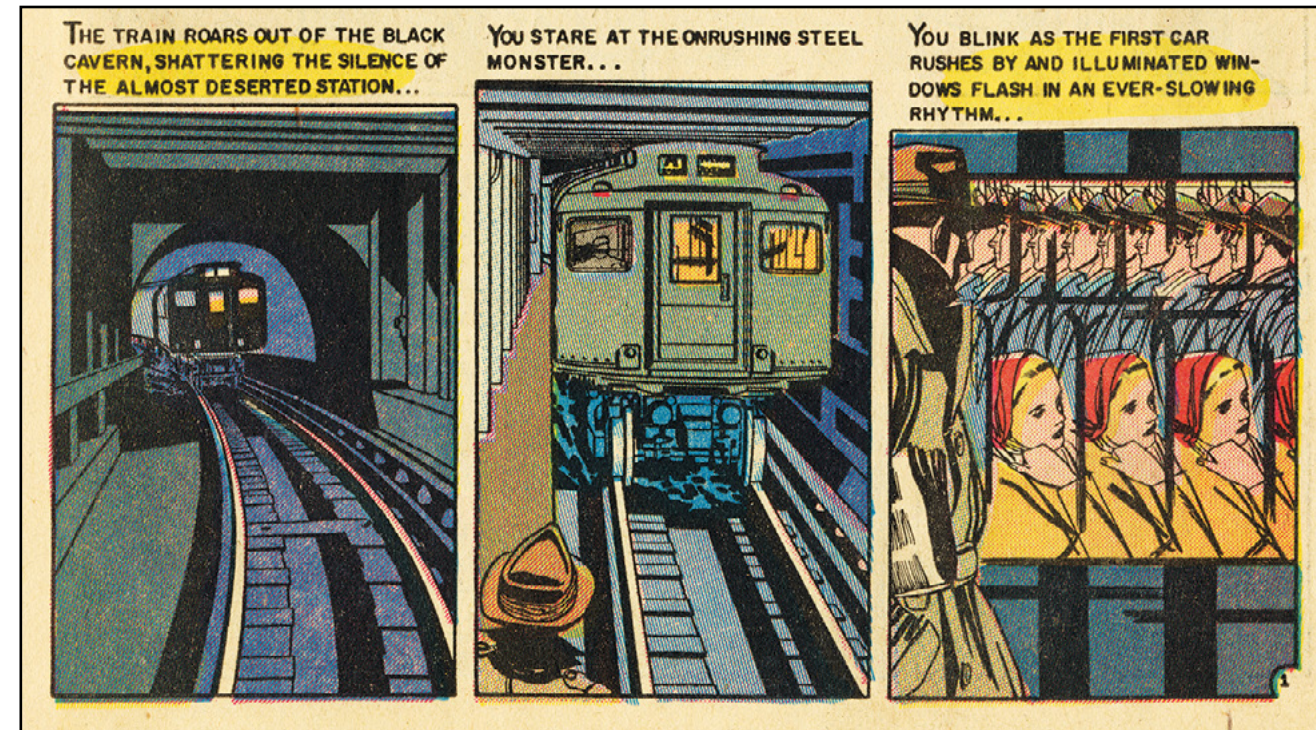
A 2004 Angelo Torres illustration depicting the 1950s Fleagle Gang in Bill Gaines's office. Left to right: Torres, Al Williamson, Frank Frazetta, Gaines, Nick Meglin, George Woodbridge, and Roy Krenkel.

task. He brought the job back, and his second assignment was "Mad Journey!" (*Weird Fantasy* #14, July–August 1952), the science fiction story they had showed him originally. Of that job, Williamson said that "I got chicken on some of the stuff, and I had Frank [Frazetta] ink some of it. I was always afraid that I would screw up my penciling with the inking." Apart from Frazetta, Williamson also regularly had help from Roy Krenkel—and later Angelo Torres—on the stories he did for EC. Williamson and the little group of artists that helped him complete his stories became known as The Fleagle Gang, a name bestowed upon them by Kurtzman. When Williamson would bring a completed job back, Feldstein said, "I would be wild about the artwork. What the heck did they call those guys? The Fleagle Gang. I was aware of all that, but they were turning out a nice product." Bill Gaines was aware of the outside help Williamson had as well, but he didn't care either, because the completed jobs were absolutely stunning.

In contrast to some of the other artists, Reed Crandall was a longtime comics industry veteran before he came to EC. Feldstein said that "When Reed Crandall walked into the office looking for work, I fell on my knees because I always worshiped his style!" Crandall's first work for the company appeared in 1953 ("Carion Death!," *Shock SuspenStories* #9, June–July 1953), and the fans immediately embraced his artwork. Crandall regularly

contributed to EC's horror, science fiction, crime, and shock titles. Bill Gaines said, "He was a fine, fine craftsman and did some of our very best stuff. I only regret that he came to us so late. We didn't have him for the first half, so we only got half as much out of him as we would have if he had started in 1950." What Crandall's output for EC might have lacked in quantity was more than made up in quality, and he did some of his best work for the company.

Another industry veteran was George Evans, who came to the company on recommendation from Al Williamson, suggesting that EC had the same "family" feel that Evans had been used to. Evans's first assignment was "All Washed Up!" (*The Haunt of Fear* #15, September–October 1952). Gaines and Feldstein loved what Evans came back with, and they kept him busy from then on. Evans did beautiful work in EC's horror, science fiction, crime, shock, and war titles. Bill Gaines said of Evans "This sweet little fella looked like an accountant, and you would never dream that this man was capable of such brilliant depictions of brutality." Evans usually played down the horrific aspects in his stories, saving the gruesome or shocking element for the final panels. Evans regularly worked on Harvey Kurtzman's war comics, but he hated working with Kurtzman's tissue-paper layouts, feeling that Kurtzman was stifling his creativity. If Evans varied from Kurtzman's



The bottom three panels from the first page of "Master Race," illustrated by Bernie Krigstein. This story is widely considered to be one of the most important comic book stories ever created.

layouts—which he would do not out of spite, but to make what he thought was a better illustration—Kurtzman would tell Evans that he had "desecrated his story." On the other hand, Evans loved working for Gaines and Feldstein. Evans said "When you brought in the finished art, Al would say, 'Oh geez, I never imagined a picture like that. Look at this, Bill.' And Bill would look and say, 'Holy cripes! Here's another one, Al!' This was a delight. You'd work for them for free."

Jack Kamen was brought into the EC fold by Al Feldstein, who had known him from their earliest days in comics. Kamen's initial EC work appeared in the first issues of the two science fiction magazines, *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, cover dated May–June 1950. (Knowing that Kamen's forte was drawing pretty girls, however, Gaines and Feldstein routinely shied away from giving him sci-fi stories that needed an abundance of machinery or technical equipment.) His work would also appear in *The Vault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Haunt of Fear*, *Crime SuspenStories*, and *Shock SuspenStories*. Almost instantly, Kamen became famous among EC fans for what came to be called "Kamen babes," women who were beautiful, voluptuous, and all too often cold and calculating. Kamen's art had a pristine, slick style, and his work was never all that horrific. Consequently, Gaines once asked him "How come all of your monsters look like a fish?" Of Kamen, Gaines said, "He was a real pro. Jack was almost as fast as Davis. He never missed a deadline and was there when we needed him. I always felt that Jack was a very important cog in the EC machinery, and I'm glad we had him."

Bernie Krigstein was one of the last artists to join the EC stable, and he was the most consciously "artistic" of the artists. He was also perhaps the only artist of the time to approach comic art as a serious art form. Krigstein would produce a total of 43

stories for the company, work that is now widely considered to be some of the best art ever done in comics. Some fans at the time, however, were unconvinced. Bhub Stewart, in the very first critical essay of Krigstein ever published, "B. Krigstein: an Evaluation and Defense" (*The E.C. Press* #4, a fanzine published in August 1954) wrote, "Krigstein is a great artist. But somehow the fans can't take him. Perhaps the style is a bit too radical, a bit too different." He ended his essay by appealing to Krigstein's detractors to give him a chance. Comics historian Michelle Nolan said of Krigstein that he was known for "the extremely innovative, often cinematic use of panels, and for stubbornly standing by his own code of artistic conduct." More than any other artist of the time, Krigstein was fascinated with the emotion, drama, and mood that could be conveyed by the arranging or rearranging of the panels. Krigstein's layouts and stop-motion panels have often been likened to the quick jump-cuts used in film. His most famous EC story was "Master Race," a story originally intended to appear in *Crime SuspenStories* #26 (December 1954–January 1955). Plotted by Gaines and Feldstein, and written and laid out by Feldstein as a six-page story, Krigstein envisioned something else entirely. "It was just the most explosive story that I had ever come across in the field," Krigstein said. He called Gaines and told him he wanted to expand it to a twelve-pager. Gaines replied, "Twelve pages? It's impossible," and went on to say that he couldn't do it because it would be an extra expense to have the story sent out and relettered. Krigstein volunteered to cut up the pages himself and paste the existing lettering down onto new pages. "This was such a ridiculous thing for any artist to do," Krigstein said, "but I felt the story was worth anything." They finally settled on eight pages, which meant the story had to be bumped out of its slot in *Crime SuspenStories* and held over for some later issue. Midway through the work, Gaines and Feldstein

called to say that they had made a mistake. Krigstein assured them that they hadn't. "When I brought the pencils in," Krigstein said, "Bill and Feldstein agreed that it was well worth the expansion." "Master Race" finally appeared in *Impact* #1, March–April 1955. Al Feldstein said of "Master Race" that "he really improved the story. The story was good, but he improved the art end of the story so much that I thought we were really breaking new ground. He was right in the end."



Bill Gaines's father had always told him that he would never amount to anything, but Bill was ultimately able to do what even his father could not do: make EC a success. However, times were changing. Attacks on comics by various guardians of morality had been happening virtually since the medium became popular. This all finally came to a head with a book called *Seduction of the Innocent*, written by Dr. Fredric Wertham. Wertham was an ambitious psychologist who had been waging a highly publicized campaign against horror and crime comics, which eventually led to a full Senate Subcommittee investigation of the supposed—but never proven and patently absurd—link between comic books and juvenile delinquency. The Subcommittee hearings took place in New York City on April 21 and 22, 1954. Egged on by business manager Lyle Stuart, Gaines volunteered to be a witness at these hearings. Hoping to defend his comics on First Amendment grounds, Gaines and Stuart had written a forceful statement, which Gaines read into the record. Unfortunately the senators had pulled a number of examples from EC's comics, largely taken out of context, which Gaines struggled to defend. Making matters worse, Gaines had been taking a prescription diet medication that contained a stimulant called Dexedrine, and the medication began to wear off during his testimony, leaving him sleepy and sluggish as the senators hammered away at him. In one particularly notorious exchange, Senator Estes Kefauver held up the cover of *Crime SuspenStories* #22 (April–May 1954), and asked, "Here is your May 22 issue. [Comics were cover-dated about two months later than the actual release dates, and Kefauver apparently conflated the cover date and the issue number.] This seems to be a man with a bloody ax holding a woman's head up which has been severed from her body. Do you think that is in good taste?" Gaines replied, "Yes, sir, I do, for the cover of a horror comic. A cover in bad taste, for example, might be defined as holding the head a little higher so that the neck could be seen dripping blood from it and moving the body over a little further so that the neck of the body could be seen to be bloody." Kefauver replied, "You have blood coming out of her mouth." Gaines said, "A little." To which Kefauver replied, "Here is blood on the ax. I think most adults are shocked by that."

Virtually every newspaper article about the hearings mentioned this "severed head" exchange, and so Gaines inadvertently became the personification of the irresponsible horror comic publisher in the minds of the public.

Forced under substantial pressure to "clean up" his comics or go out of business, Gaines dropped all of his horror and crime

titles, and in January 1955 EC began a "New Direction" in comics. Because of all the negative publicity that resulted from the Senate Subcommittee hearings, though, these New Direction titles ran into retailer and distributor resistance and were a money-losing proposition. A magazine-sized experiment called "Picto-Fiction" was also attempted, but although it was an interesting format this was also commercially unsuccessful.

Fortunately for Bill Gaines, he still had *MAD*, which he had recently turned into a magazine to keep creator/writer Harvey Kurtzman in the fold. With no other choice, Gaines put all his eggs in the *MAD* basket, and insanity (though some would say inanity!) prevailed. Kurtzman ultimately departed from *MAD* in 1956 for what turned out to be browner pastures, and Gaines enlisted Al Feldstein as the magazine's editor, a position he held until his retirement in 1985. *MAD* magazine eventually became, of course, an American icon. The EC comic books, however, were no more.

Happily, EC's flame has been kept burning brightly over the many years by its most ardent fans, who simply would not allow them to die. Like a shambling, reanimated corpse in one of their horror stories, EC comics have returned from the dead countless times in the form of high quality reprints. A trip to your local comic shop would likely yield new, contemporary reprints of EC comics in a number of different formats, including small black-and-white collections assembled by artist, full-color volumes reprinting six issues of each EC title in chronological order, and a series of oversized volumes presenting stories shot from the original art in color, with every nuance and blue-penciled correction visible. Some versions of these are available to download onto your tablet. It is natural to imagine that wherever the technology ends up going, EC comics will be available in some form or another for as long as there are people to read them. In spite of all the efforts of crusading psychologists, ambitious politicians, and do-gooding guardians of morality, the EC comics never stay dead for long.

And so we celebrate the 75-year history of the incredible, wonderful, horrible EC comics, and we also celebrate the legions of hard-core EC Fan-Addicts of every age who simply refused—and continue to refuse—to ever let the EC comics die.

EC comics *non morietur!*

Grant Geissman is the Eisner- and Harvey Award-nominated author/designer of several definitive books on the subject of EC Comics and *MAD* magazine, including *Collectibly MAD* (Kitchen Sink Press, 1995), *Tales of Terror! The EC Companion* (with Fred von Bernewitz, Gemstone/Fantagraphics, 2000), *Foul Play! The Art and Artists of the Notorious 1950s EC Comics!* (HarperDesign, 2005), *FELDSTEIN: The Mad Life and Fantastic Art of Al Feldstein!* (IDW, 2013), and *The History of EC Comics!* (Taschen, 2020).

He is also a guitarist and composer with 14 highly regarded albums released under his own name, the latest being the jazz trilogy of *Say That!*, *Cool Man Cool*, and *BOP! BANG! BOOM!* (Futurism Records). Geissman also co-wrote the music for the hit CBS-TV series *Mike and Molly* and *Two and a Half Men*, and he was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2004 for co-writing the *Two and a Half Men* theme ("Men, men, men, men, manly men").



THE HISTORY OF EC COMICS



CALLING ALL EC FAN-ADDICTS!

In 1947 Bill Gaines inherited a small, struggling comic-book company called EC Comics. Over the next eight years Gaines and EC reinvented what a comic book could be, launching "A New Trend in Comics," with titles like *Tales from the Crypt*, *Crime SuspenStories*, *Weird Science*, and even a humor comic called *MAD*. EC delighted in publishing gory, morbid horror and crime comics that had snap, ironic endings. But they also published the first true-to-life war comics, the first "real" science fiction comics, and morality tales about such then-taboo subjects as racism, bigotry, vigilantism, drug addiction, police corruption, and anti-Semitism.

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A
GALLERY
OF
AN ENTERTAINING
EC
COMIC
ARTISTS

"The artwork that was done for the EC comics is generally considered to be among the best work ever to be done in comics."

GRANT GEISSMAN



JOHNNY CRAIG



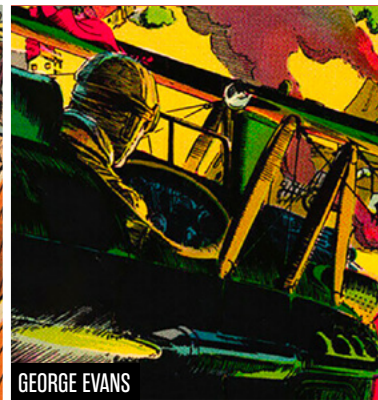
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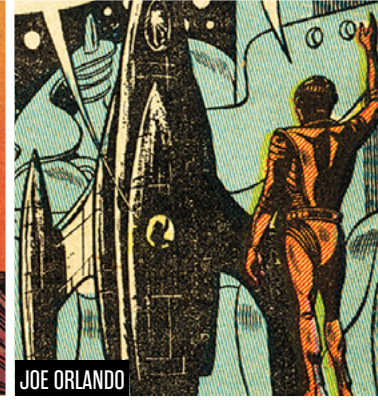
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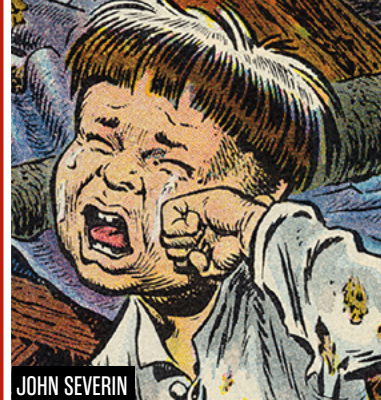
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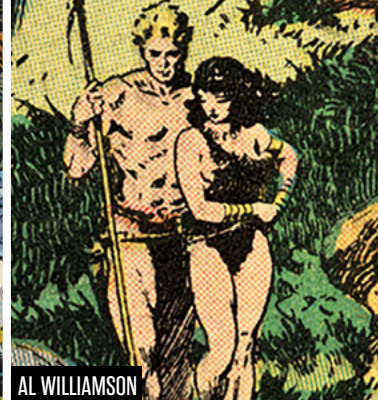
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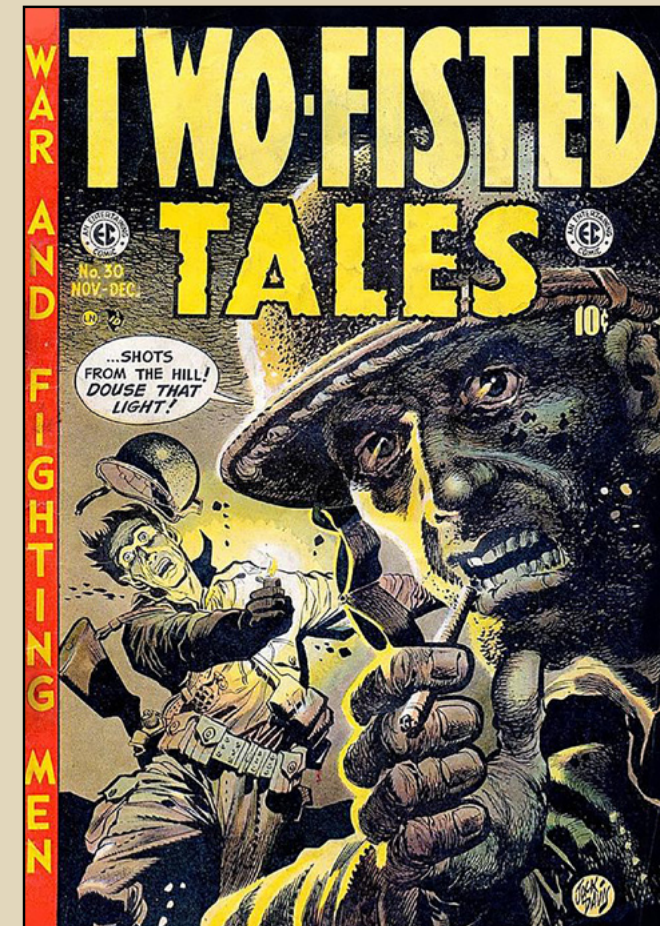
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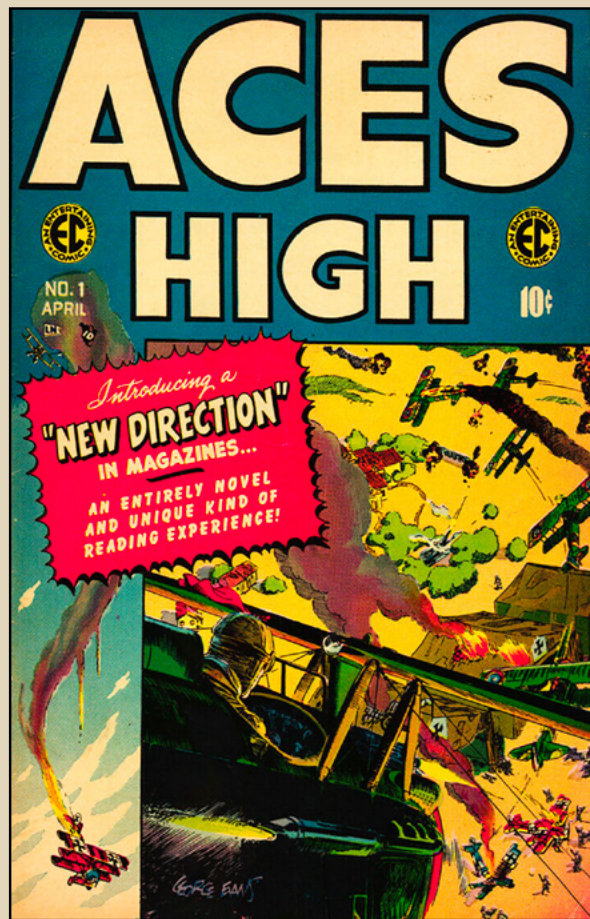
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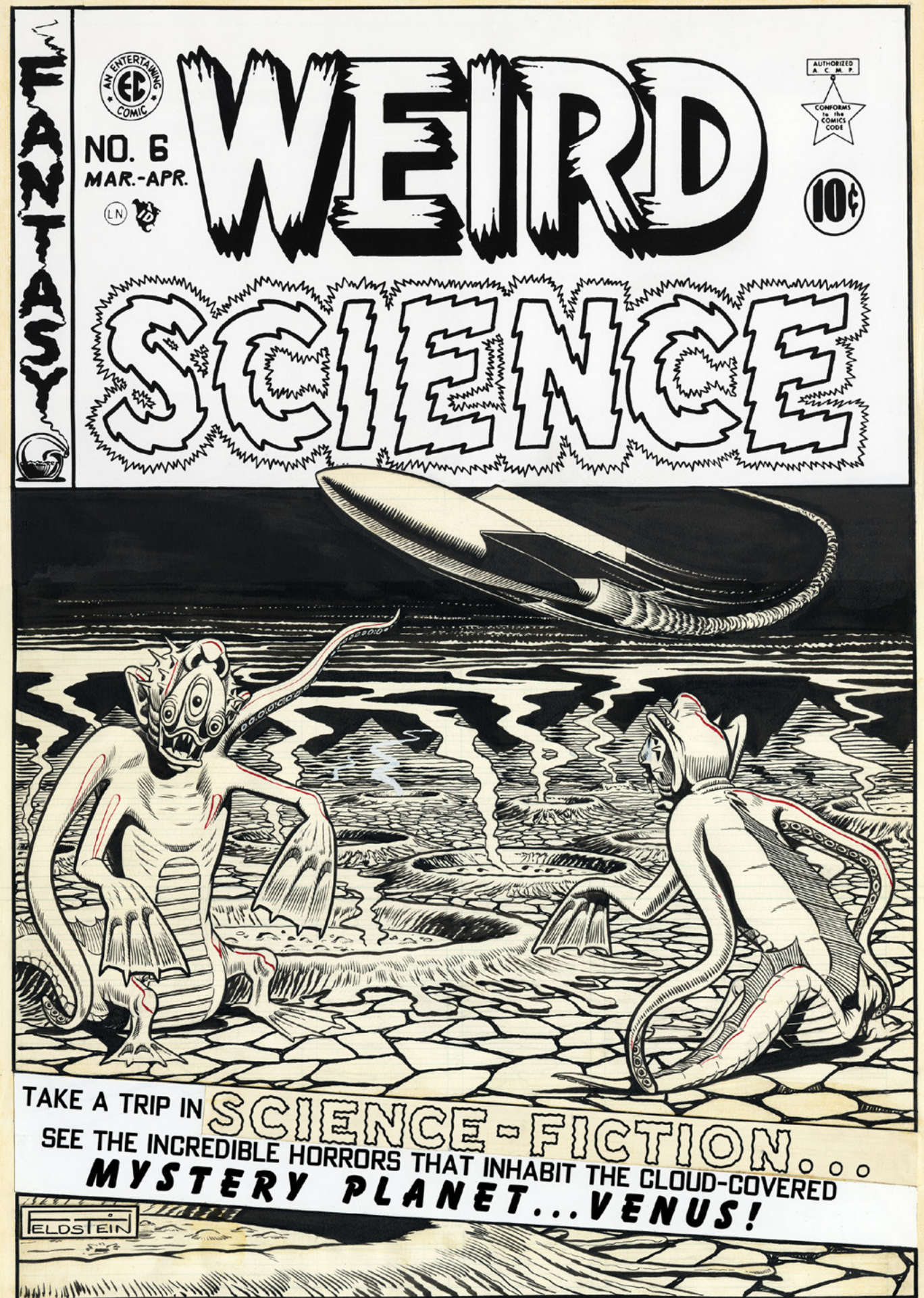
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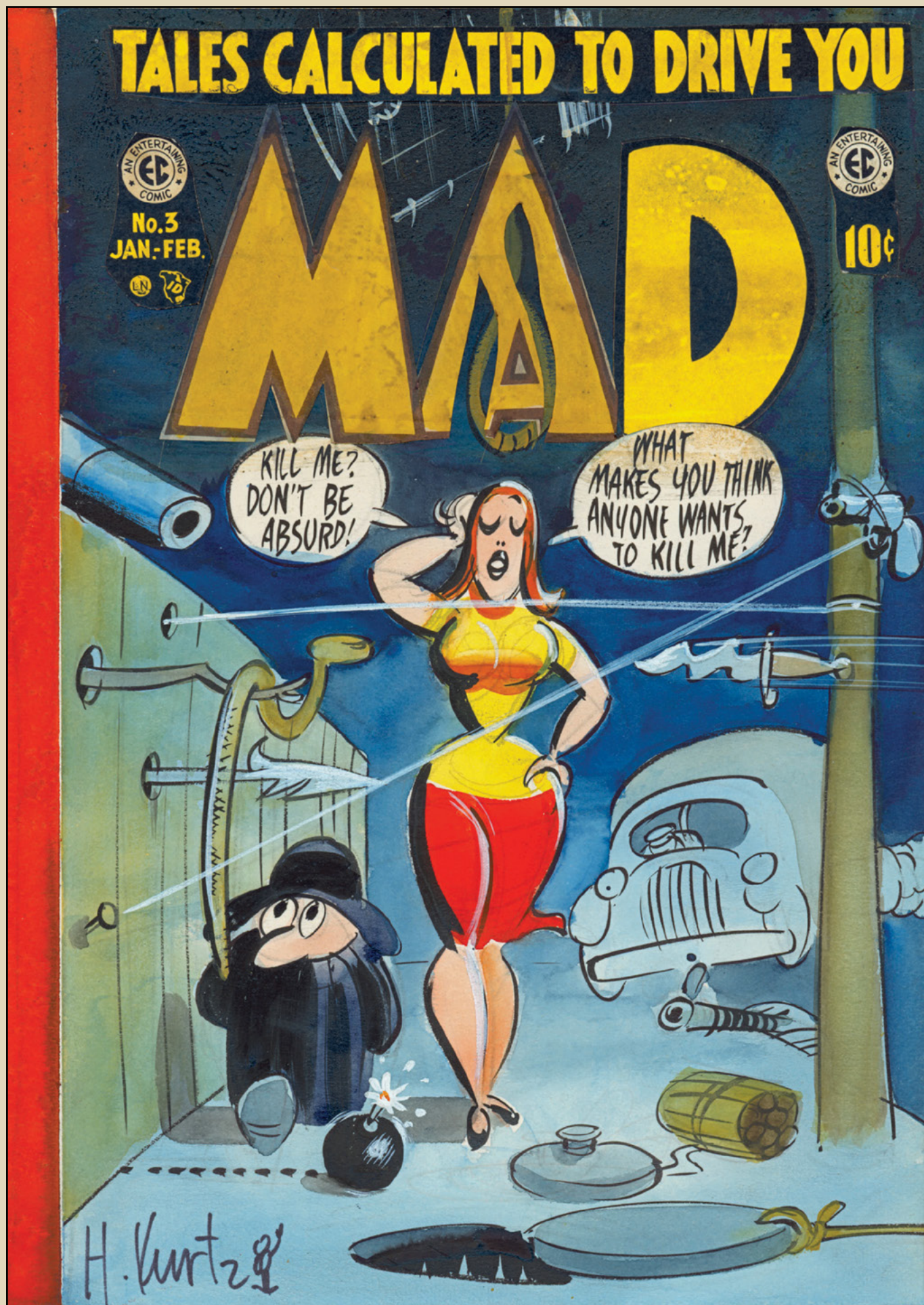
GRAHAM INGELS



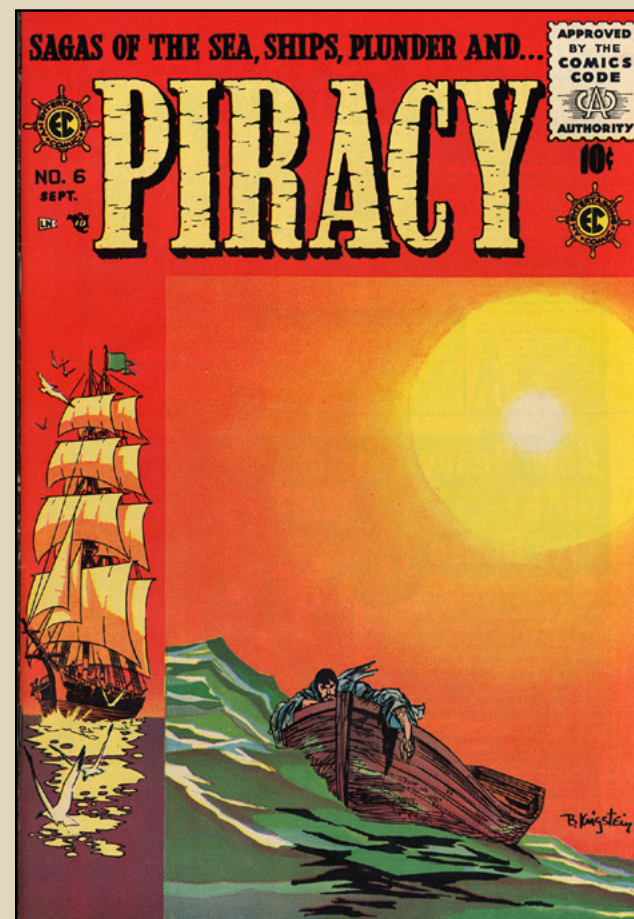
JACK KAMEN



AL FELDSTEIN (Weird Science #6 original art)



HARVEY KURTZMAN (MAD #3 cover rough)



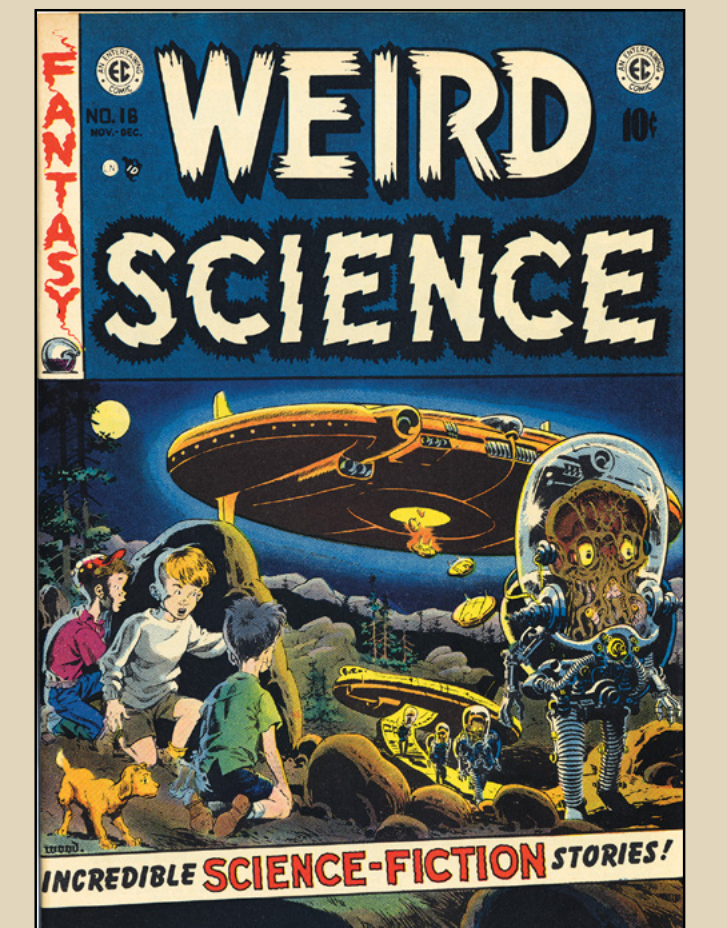
BERNIE KRIGSTEIN



JOE ORLANDO



JOHN SEVERIN (with Bill Elder)



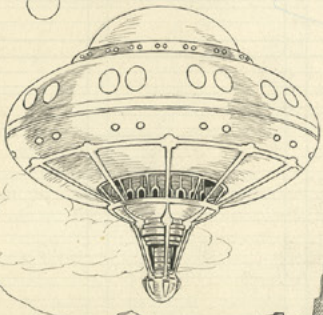
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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by WILLIAMSON & KRENKEL

THE SHIP CAME OUT OF THE BLACK NIGHT SPITTING FIRE... AND GROCK KNEW AN EAGERNESS ALMOST UNBEARABLE IN ITS INTENSITY. THE PLANET RUSTLED AND WAITED. IT HAD WAITED SO LONG. BUT NOW, THE WAITING WAS OVER. **THEY** WERE RETURNING! THEY RODE WITHIN THE ALLOY BOWELS OF THE ROCKET. THEY WERE COMING BACK, AT LAST! MEN!



THE ROCKET SPEWED FLAME, SETTLED. IN HIS EAGERNESS, GROCK SENT HIS MIND QUESTING THROUGH ITS METAL. YES! THE MEN WERE THERE...

WHEW! I'VE SEEN ALL KINDS, CAPTAIN, BUT OLD MOTHER NATURE REALLY OUTDID HERSELF HERE!

STRANGE PLANET, STRANGE LIFE FORMS. YOU'RE A **BIOLOGIST**, MASON! YOU KNOW THAT!



AL WILLIAMSON with Roy G. Krenkel (Incredible Science Fiction #32 original art)

DRAGON BALL SUPER

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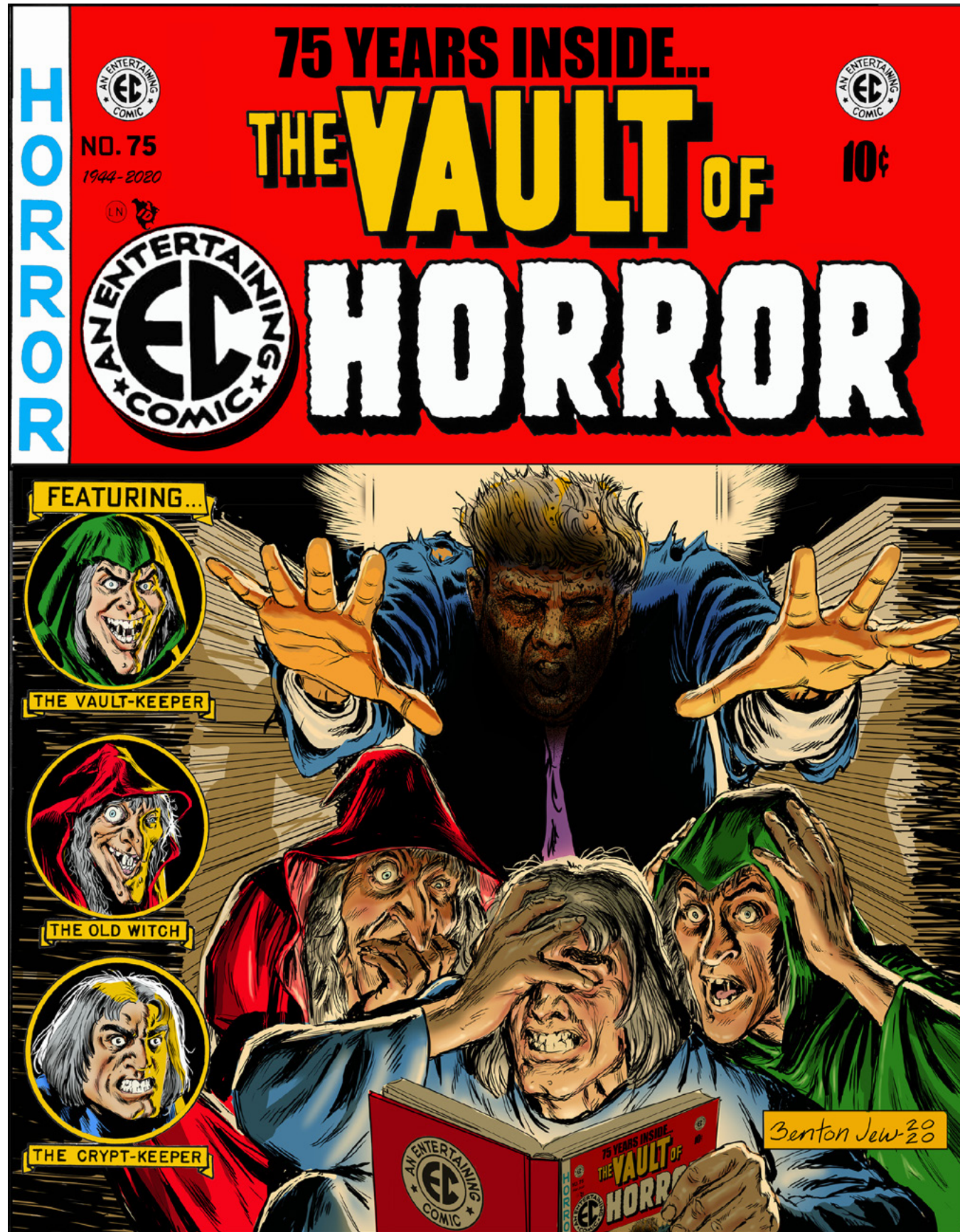


GODZILLA
 KING OF THE MONSTERS



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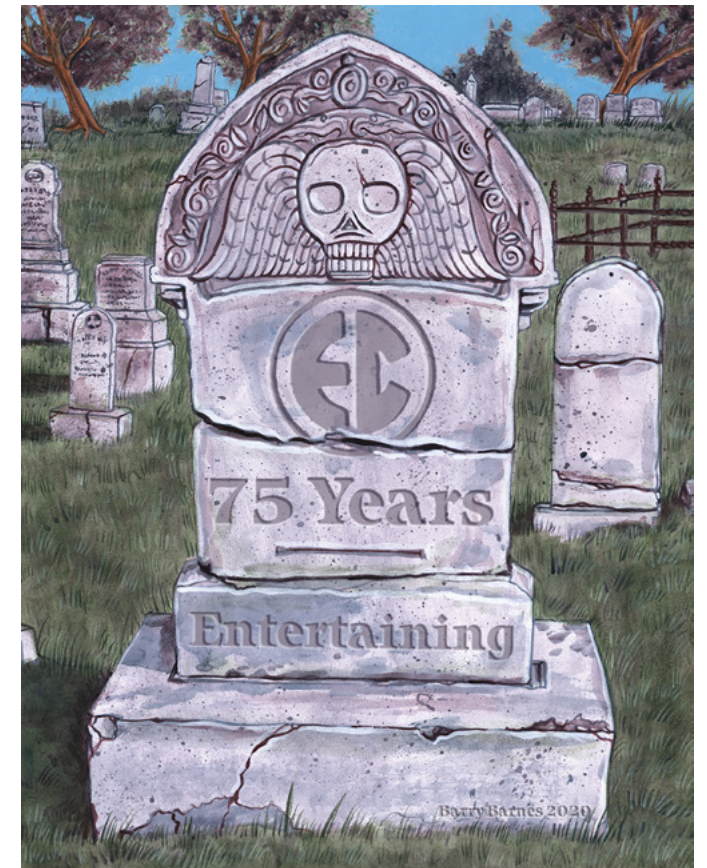
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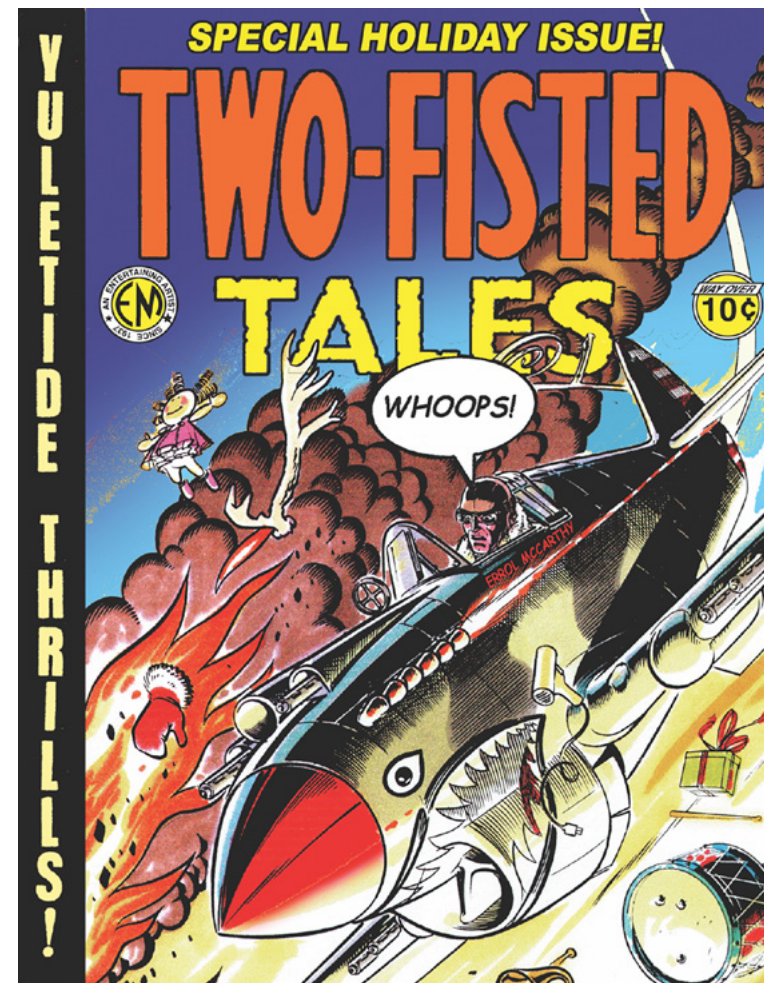
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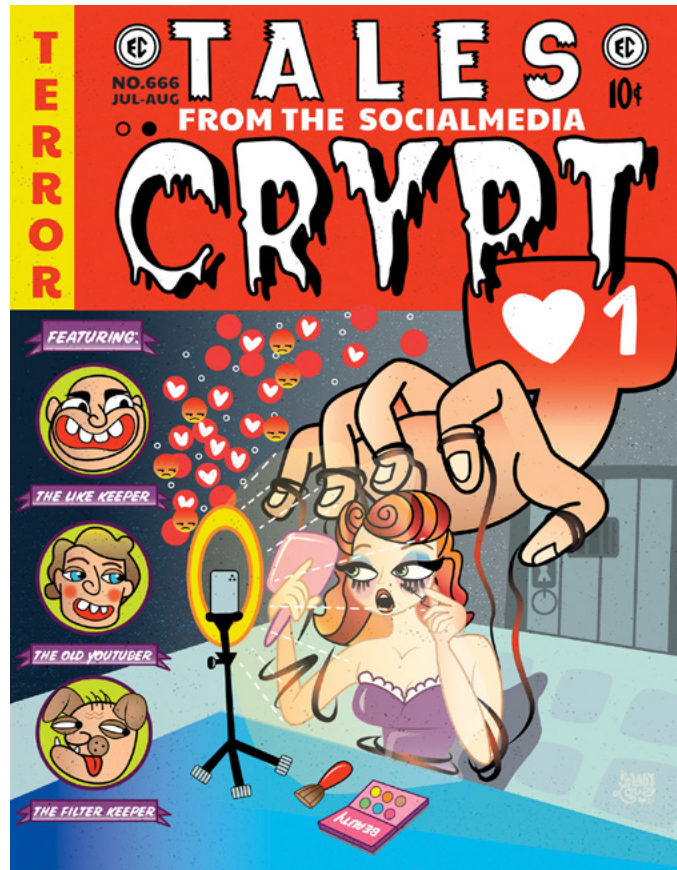
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YEARS
OF

MOOMIN

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Once Upon A MOOMIN

by Paul Gravett

For The Moomins, it's been a remarkable roller-coaster of three-quarters of a century so far, and with no signs of that changing. Today, these fantastical, homely creatures from Finland, a bit like small, white, furry hippos who stand on two legs, enjoy an international multi-media popularity that neither they nor their creator ever expected, or even dreamt of. The story of The Moomins is inextricably entwined with the story of their creator, an extraordinary Finnish woman, a spirited, spiritual force, named Tove Jansson. The one cannot be told without the other, because Jansson poured into her cast of characters so much of herself, her family, friends and lovers, her dreams and fears, her true and total spirit.

In all, she wrote and illustrated twelve Moomin books, the first a short novella in 1945, followed by eight novels, and three picture books for younger readers, available in more than fifty languages. But what first brought her the widest international fame was her original, English-language *Moomin* newspaper strip from 1954 to 1959, continued by her brother until 1974. At its peak, it was read by over 20 million people daily (excluding Sundays) in 120 newspapers across 40 countries. Astonishingly, despite their popularity, these sublime comics would almost disappear into newsprint limbo, largely unreprinted and underappreciated amongst her oeuvre. Their rediscovery and reappraisal began only in 2006, when Drawn & Quarterly launched a complete edition in English, including five volumes of the comics by Tove and five volumes of the comics created by her brother, Paul. This confirmed that Tove Jansson's *Moomin* strip stands up like George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, Hergé's *Tintin* or Charles Schulz's *Peanuts*, as a whole, distinct world born from one writer-artist's unique personality, experience and vision.

Tove Jansson (pronounced 'TOH-vuh YAN-sonn') was born a Leo on August 9, 1914, three months before the start of the First World War, and her Swedish first name simply means "beautiful." From the start, with both her parents full-time self-employed artists working at home, baby Jansson absorbed how art was everyday and everything, as natural as breathing. She grew up in Finland's capital Helsinki, as the first-born daughter of a Finnish-Swedish sculptor and his Swedish wife, a commercial illustrator. As father's sculpture didn't always pay regularly and times were often tough, it would fall to her mother to support the family more consistently from her assorted assignments, even designing Finnish postage stamps and banknotes.

The family story goes that, before baby Tove learned to walk, she learned to draw. She was photographed sitting at her mother's drawing table, snug in the comfort of her mother's lap, watching her work and making marks herself. Jansson also grew to love the escape and enchantment of stories, lapping up her mother's playful spoken yarns. She went on to read Jules Verne, Conan Doyle, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and other scribes of adventures and composed her own stories. In addition, Jansson would model from an early age for her father's sculptures, several of which still stand in Helsinki's public places. At school, however, she was a poor pupil, especially bad in math, from which her mother managed to get her excused. She grew up as a rebellious outlier but benefitted from the thorough encouragement of her parents to pursue her natural enthusiasm for both art and writing, taking homemade booklets of her fanciful stories to school to sell to her classmates.

Among the assorted strange beings which sprang from her young



imagination was the first recognizable Moomin. Jansson drew this while on an island holiday in the family's summer cottage in the Pellinki archipelago, after she got into an argument with her first brother Per Olov, six years her junior, about a philosopher she loved, Immanuel Kant. To get the last word, she drew a grotesque, long-nosed creature on the wall of the outhouse lavatory and added its name, "Snork," and the quote "Freedom is the best thing" beneath. Jansson explained later that she first got the idea for Moomin's appearance from spotting a tree stump "covered in snow which was hanging down like a big round white nose."

As for the name and concept, she traced those back to her childhood visits to her maternal uncle: "When I was very young and always hungry and stayed with him in Stockholm, I used to help myself to snacks from the larder at night. He did his best to convince me there were 'Moomintrolls' who would come out and blow down the back of my neck—they lived behind the stove in the kitchen." What began as a bogeyman in an uncle's scare story, Jansson would evolve into something far more benevolent and appealing.

The Jansson family expanded again in 1926 with the arrival of her second brother Lars, 12 years younger. With money tight at home, the teenage Jansson wrote in her diary two years later, "I look forward to the day when I can help mother drawing." Also in 1928, eager to be published and submitting her illustrated children's stories to publishers, she had one accepted. By the time it came out five years later, she chose to release it under a pseudonym, because by then her priority was to be recognized as a painter. Nevertheless, aside from infrequent commissions like murals, her personal paintings would pay only a few bills and, try as she might, writing words would prove equally essential to her as making images. In fact, Jansson contributed more to the family's finances by selling her comics and cartoons to the magazines which her mother already worked for and introduced her to. From the precocious age of 15, Jansson serialized the first of several fanciful single-page strips in kids' magazines and also began a 24-year association with *Garm*, cartooning for Finland's Swedish-language satirical magazine. In 1930, only sixteen, she was getting into print and was allowed by her mother to leave school early and stay with her uncle in Stockholm to study art. In her diary, she exclaimed: "And now I shall begin to live."

Her Moomintrolls began to live too, taking a variety of sizes and shapes in her studies and work through the Thirties. While she could tap into the traditions of trolls from Norse legend and Scandinavian folklore, she chose to develop her own as representations of her anxieties amid the darkening political climate and the unstoppable Second World War, which brother Per Olov would fight in. Some early examples of

trolls lurked as ghostly presences in diary sketches; others were black, long-snouted, pointy-eared and almost demonic, haunting a series of watercolor paintings. Her expanding work drawing for *Garm* required her to confront the darkening political climate and then express her opposition to both fascism and communism in a wartime Finland caught between Russia and Germany, through her clever cartoons and eye-catching front covers. Into several of these, Jansson began sneaking two little white trolls, one of whom she called 'Snork' (that nickname again), sometimes next to the magazine's logo or her signature, other times within the joke or commenting on it from the sidelines. Gradually, as she reshaped his body, this Snork morphed into a prototype for Moomintroll.

Simultaneously, the bigger vision of Moomintroll was taking shape from 1938 in the early drafts of what would become the first short novella, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*. She recalled starting it, "when I was feeling depressed and scared of the bombing and wanted to get away from my gloomy thoughts to something else entirely. . . . I crept into an unbelievable world where everything was natural and benign—and possible." Published in Helsinki and Stockholm in 1945, only a few months after the end of the War, this book presented the Moomins' "origin story," their habitats and customs, introducing Moomintroll and his parents, Moominpapa and Moominmama, clear echoes of Jansson's own. Like the real-life refugees whom Jansson saw displaced by the War, the Moomin family lose their home, hidden, naturally, behind an old-fashioned stove, which is being replaced by a more modern heating system. It becomes imperative that Moominmama and Moomintroll find somewhere safe to build a new home in which to hibernate from November to April. Their quest then extends to finding the restless, adventure-seeking Moominpappa, after he disappears with the deaf and mute Hattifatteners on their eternal wanderings. Mother and troll must endure monstrous perils and frightening climes, before they are reunited with father, surprisingly thanks to the huge, climactic flood, which by happy accident carries the new house he has built to the idyllic safety of Moominvalley.

The Moomins' debut did not sell well and received only one review, yet even before its publication, Jansson was unstoppable, charging ahead on its successor, *Comet in Moominland*. By the time this was published in 1946, her third, known in English as *Finn Family Robinson*, was well underway. Jansson felt driven to write and draw by the need to challenge the harshness of reality with her visions of "a happy society and a peaceful world." In her second Moomin book, the comet presents an even greater apocalyptic threat from the vast forces of nature, which finally can be overcome and result in a world reborn. Jansson also punctures the gender-coded clichés of masculine heroes like one of her favorites,

Burroughs' Tarzan, first by portraying Moomintroll saving his female playmate Snorkmaiden from a poisonous bush, only to have her cleverly rescue him from a giant squid. Snorkmaiden reflects Jansson's feminism and how practical and capable women can be. Another new character is Snufkin, the vagabond philosopher with his pipe and green hat, partly inspired by Jansson's close friend, the left-wing intellectual Atos Wirtanen.

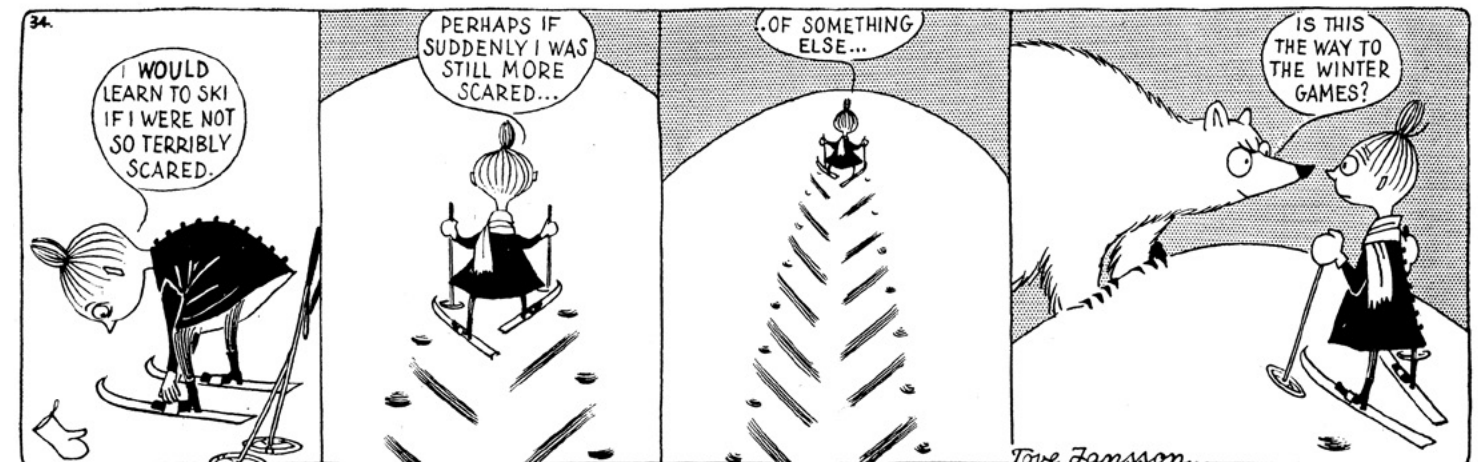
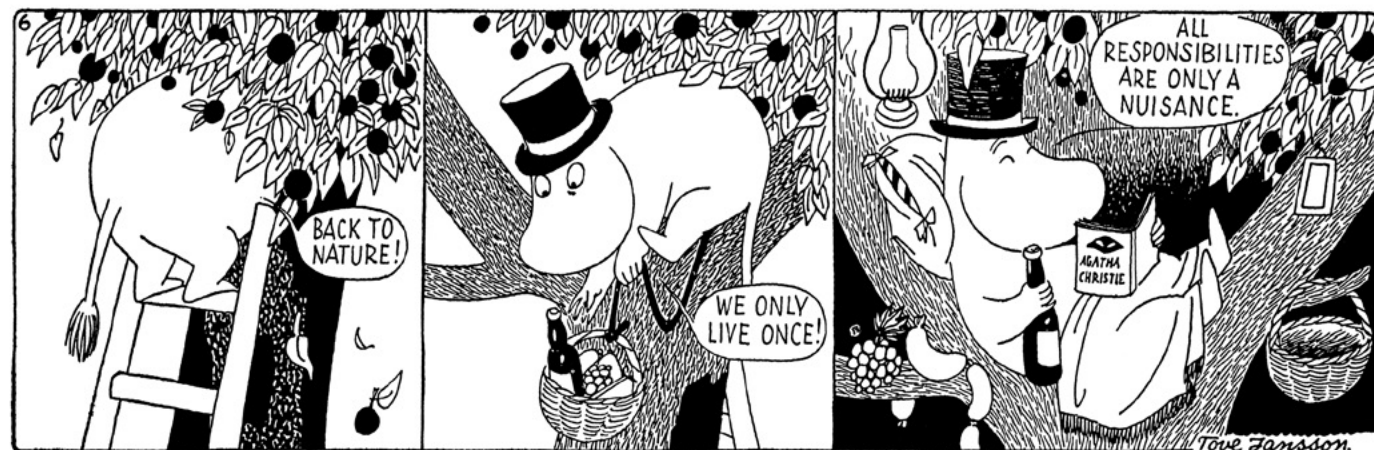
Comet proved hardly more successful than *The Great Flood*, but it led to Jansson being invited by Wirtanen to adapt it in 1947-8 into a weekly strip for his Swedish-language socialist newspaper *Ny Tid* ("New Time"). It is here she introduces Thingummy and Bob, an inseparable and barely intelligible pair with their peculiar language, whom she based on herself and her first female lover, theatrical director Vivica Bandler. Until homosexuality was legalized in Finland in 1971, Jansson maintained discretion about the women she loved. Later, she would affectionately cast her greatest love and lifetime companion, Tuulikki Pietilä, as the Moomin's wise and practical friend Too-Ticky, who helps Moomintroll understand the mysterious winter when he awakes too soon from hibernation. As for Jansson's first *Moomin* strip, complaints from certain *Ny Tid* readers, for example about Moominpappa reading a royalist newspaper, led to her being asked to wrap it up abruptly and differently from her original novel. Jansson reworked the *Comet* theme again in 1949 into a play directed by Bandler, which began their long-term theatrical collaboration and Jansson's eighteen works for the stage, several others Moomin-themed, including the libretto for a Moomin opera.

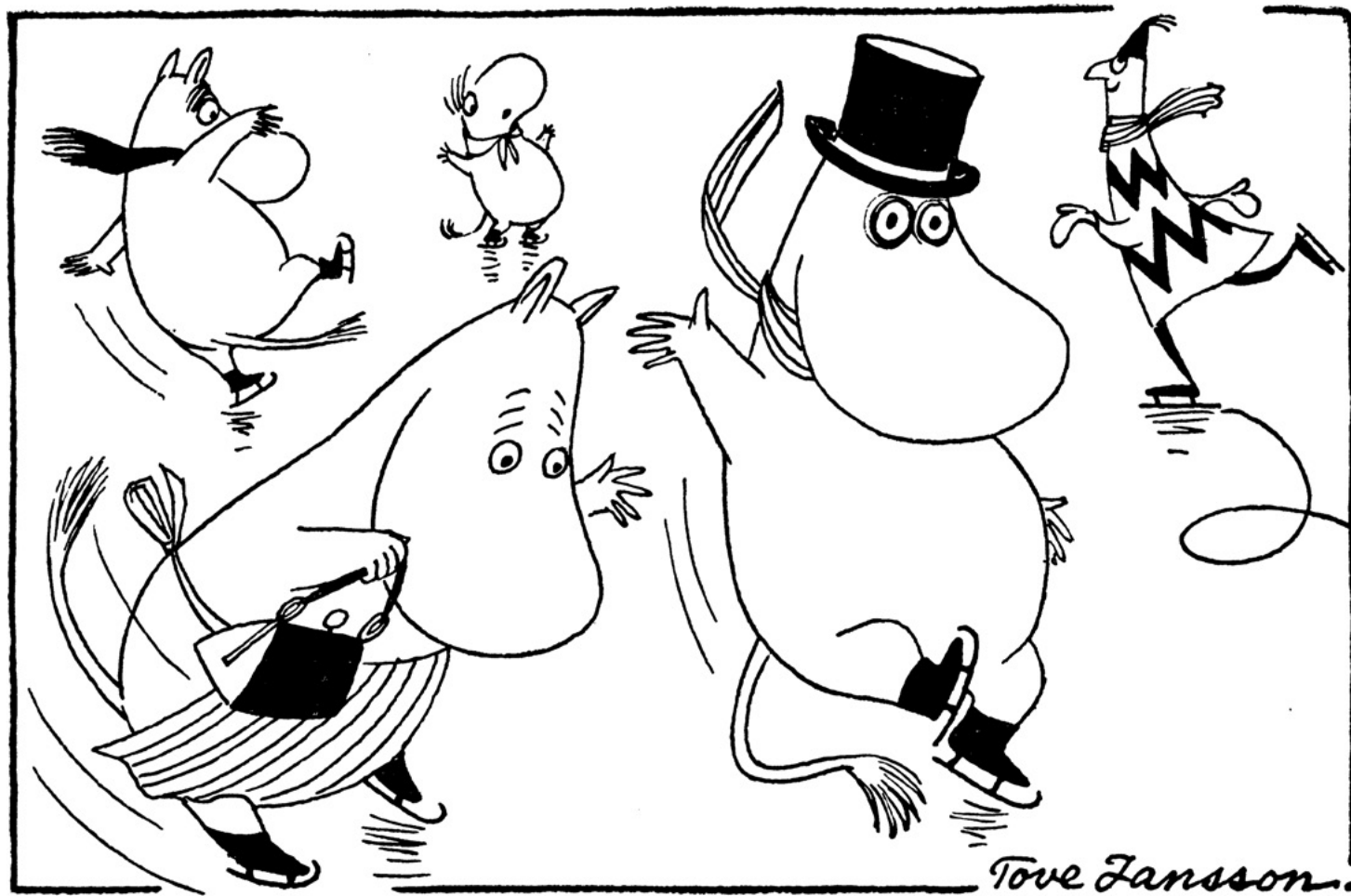
Thingummy and Bob also figure prominently in *Finn Family Moomintroll* in 1948, which offered the full emergence and blossoming of Jansson's richly imagined fantasy from the long shadows of war in her first two books. As an ideally accessible introduction, it became the first Moomin book to be translated into English, in Britain in 1950 and in the USA in 1952, where it was initially titled *The Happy Moomins*. Between 1950 and 1970, a further five illustrated novels would enhance her eccentric yet endearing Moominvalley ensemble. The British reception was immediately warm towards Jansson's books and this prompted Charles Sutton, syndication director of Associated Newspapers in London, to headhunt Jansson in 1952 to originate a *Moomin* strip for the *Evening News*, then the biggest-selling evening paper in the world, as a daily serial, unpolitical and family-friendly, but with a satirical streak aimed mainly at adult readers. Sutton's offer of a steady monthly salary, for the first time in her life of struggling self-employment, in exchange for "only six strips a week," as she put it, was too tempting. She convinced herself that this seemingly manageable workload would free enough time for her serious art, and she signed a seven-year contract. The first two years were taken up with intensive development and training, as she learned to work in



Tove Jansson and her brother Per Olov.

two new languages: in English with help from her brother Lars, and in the language of modern commercial comics. This required her to write concisely only in speech balloons and narrate sequentially, drawing moment-to-moment in usually three or four panels, ending on a hook to lure the reader back the next day. As a novice, she brought a sense of discovery to the medium, refining her line and composition for speed and clarity and playfully dividing panels with vertical elements like trees, a sword, skis or a bedpost, a technique rarely used before. Finally, after much pre-publicity, including customizing the paper's delivery vans, the *Moomin* strip premiered on Monday, September 20, 1954. It immediately won over its readership and was soon being syndicated abroad and spun off into merchandise, earning Jansson still more money. While she used none of the textual narration with its subtle tone from her illus-





The Moomins go ice-skating.

trated novels, in many ways the strips come across as more immediate, abundant with visual surprises, new characters, themes and settings, and equally lyrical and life-affirming.

A daily strip, however, is notoriously demanding and its success brought Jansson constant production pressures, which in time became all-consuming and dispiriting. She would often identify herself with Moomintroll, so it's no accident that in an early strip, she had him wistfully express, "I only want to live in peace, plant potatoes and dream!" In a revealing self-portrait, she drew herself at her drawing table, not working but looking wearily over at a teetering stack of her strip artwork, with a little Moomintroll seated on top, his eyes fixed on hers. As the newspaper's contract continued, Jansson grew more and more eager to quit. When she was officially freed in 1959, she found the perfect successor. Her brother Lars had already been her invaluable assistant on translation and later co-writing and swiftly mastered the drawing too, steering the series brilliantly for another fifteen years till 1974. The siblings would also found the company Moomin Characters, managing the family-owned, global property to this day.

Considering how popular the *Moomin* newspaper strips were, it is surprising that in their original English version they went largely forgotten for so long. Curiously, of the eight volumes compiling the strips into Swedish from 1957 to 1964, the first was issued in Britain in its original English in 1957 but then no more. Sidelined and all-but-forgotten, the strips enjoyed a belated renaissance after my rediscovery of that rare, single English book collection and made one set of photocopies of it, which I circulated by mail to a select global chain of Moomin fans, from Dylan Horrocks in New Zealand to Seth in Canada. Eventually, when

a photocopy of this reached the Canadian publisher Chris Oliveros of Drawn & Quarterly, he recognized their brilliance and made the deal to issue a series of deluxe complete reprints, which in turn led to numerous editions for the first time in other languages.

So belatedly these vibrant stories which Jansson crafted for her comic strips are being enjoyed and recognized worldwide as another acclaimed highpoint in her creative output. Her entire Moomin oeuvre continues to convey the deep importance of individuality, community and the natural world. As a woman, an artist, a writer, a lesbian, a feminist, a member of Finland's Swedish minority, an ever-questioning, self-realizing individual, Jansson shows us the wisdom of embracing, and celebrating, all of our wonderful difference and diversity.

For more information on Moomin creator Tove Jansson, please look for these books:

Tove Jansson: Life, Art, Words: The Authorised Biography by Boel Westin, Sort Of Books, 2014

Tove Jansson: Word and Love by Tuula Karjalainen, Particular Books, 2014
Tove Jansson: Letters from Tove edited by Boel Westin & Helen Svensson, Sort of Books, 2019

Paul Gravett is a London-based writer, curator and lecturer specializing in international comics art. In 2010 he curated a Tove Jansson exhibition for the Belgian Comics Art Museum in Brussels. His latest books are *Mangasia: The Definitive Guide to Asian Comics* and *The Illustrators: Posy Simmonds*, both from Thames & Hudson. www.paulgravett.com

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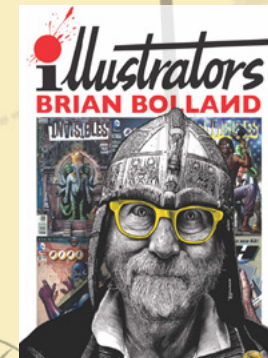
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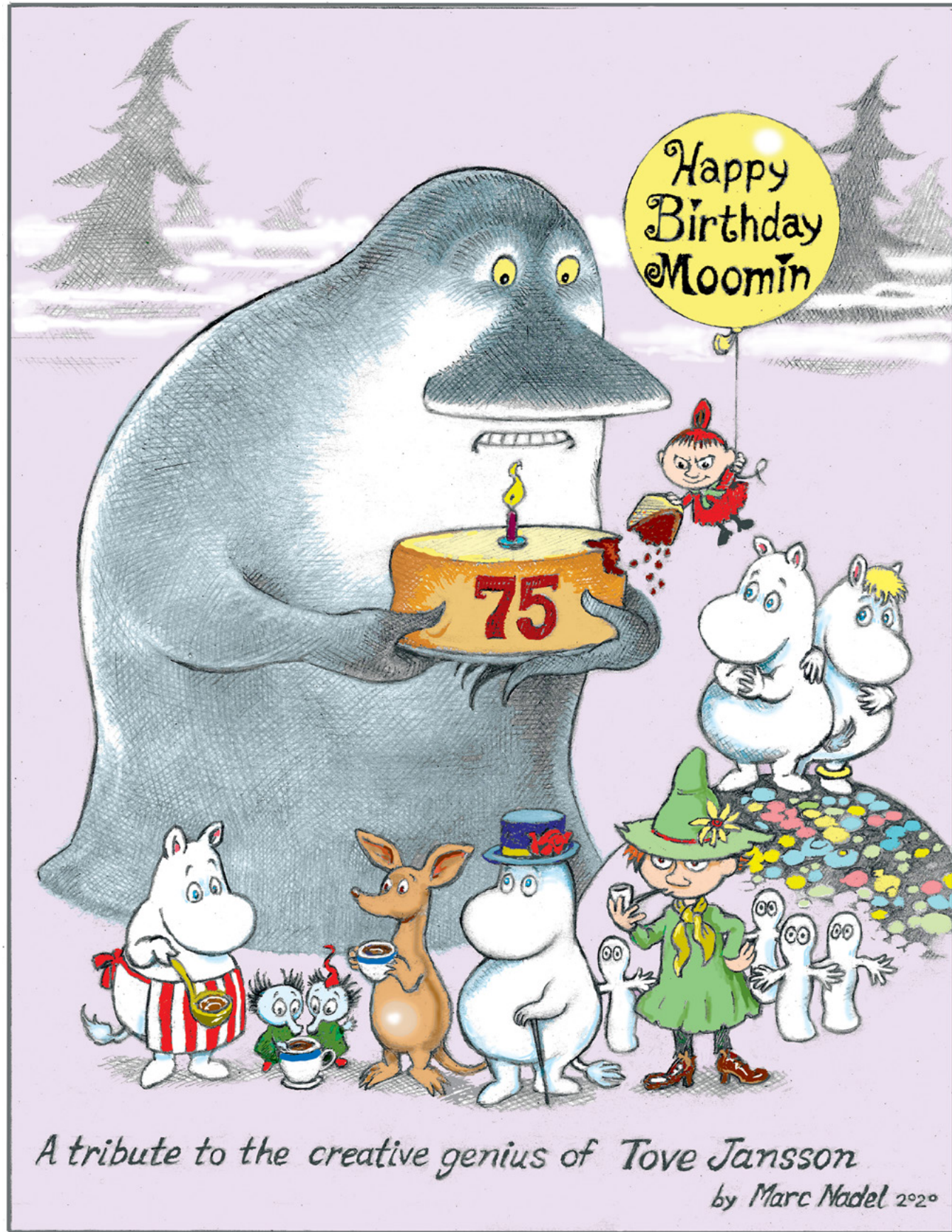
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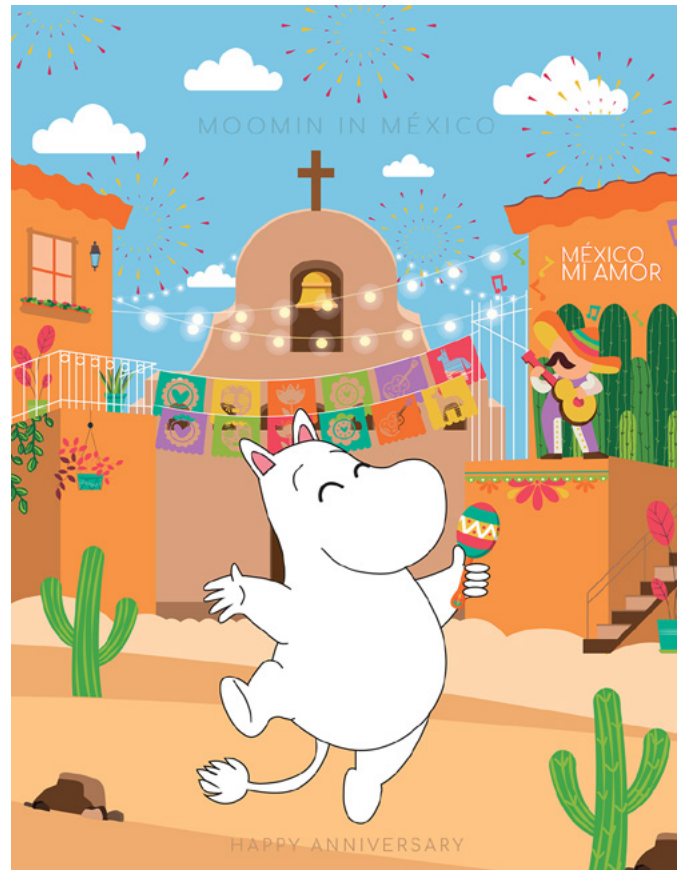
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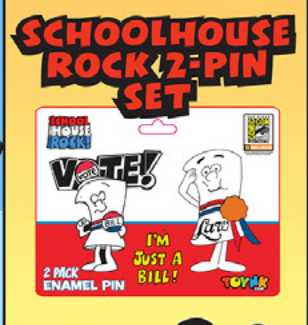
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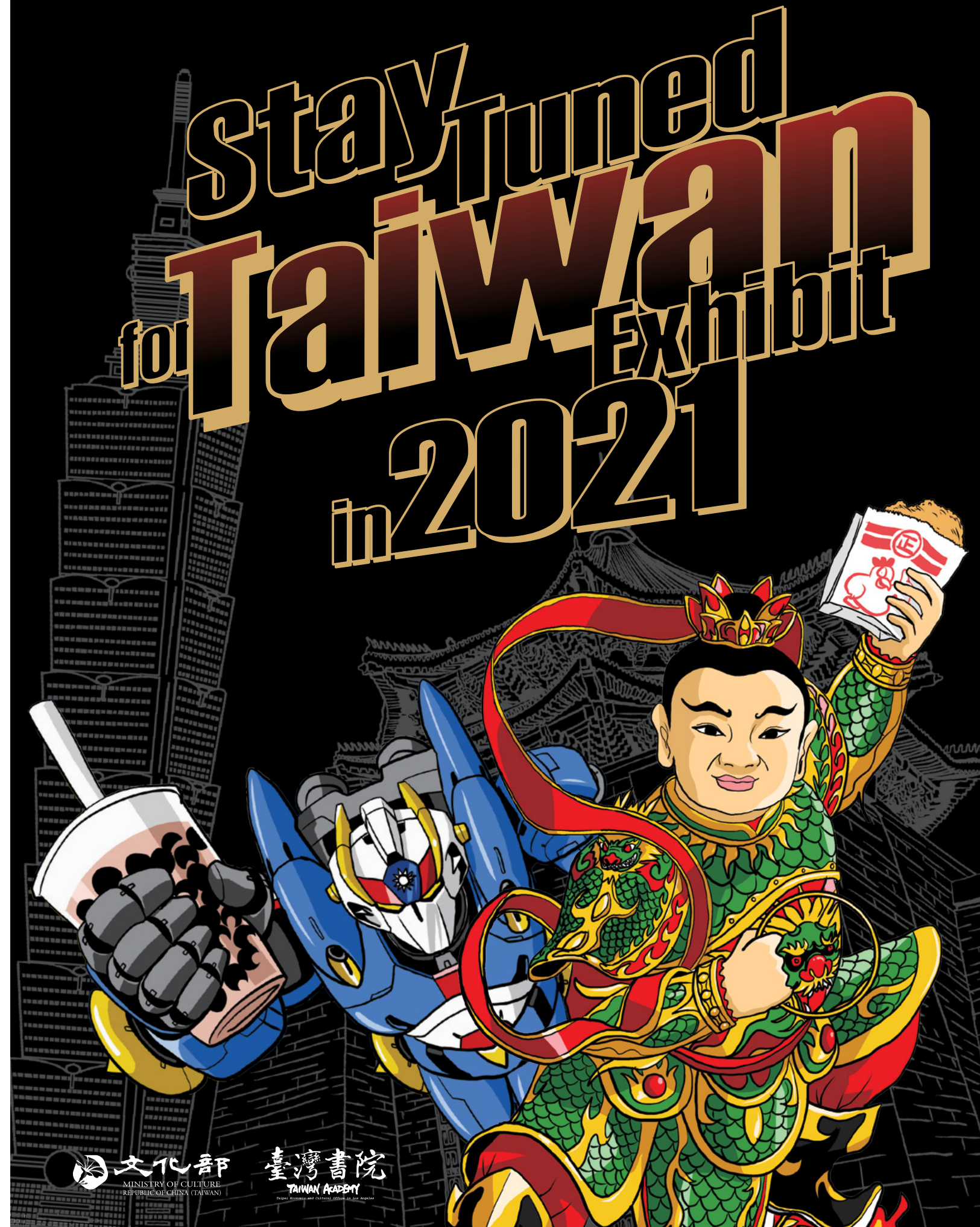
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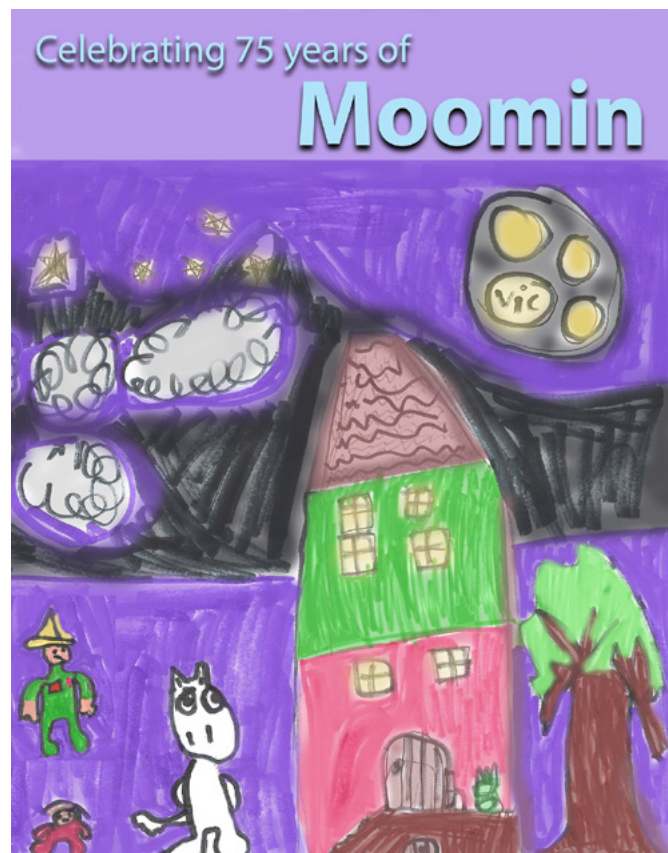
Mackenzie R. • (Age 14) Fontana, CA



Salvador Piz (Joan) • Chihuahua, Mexico



Fa Carre • Chihuahua, Mexico



Vic O. • (Age 8) Aliso Viejo, CA



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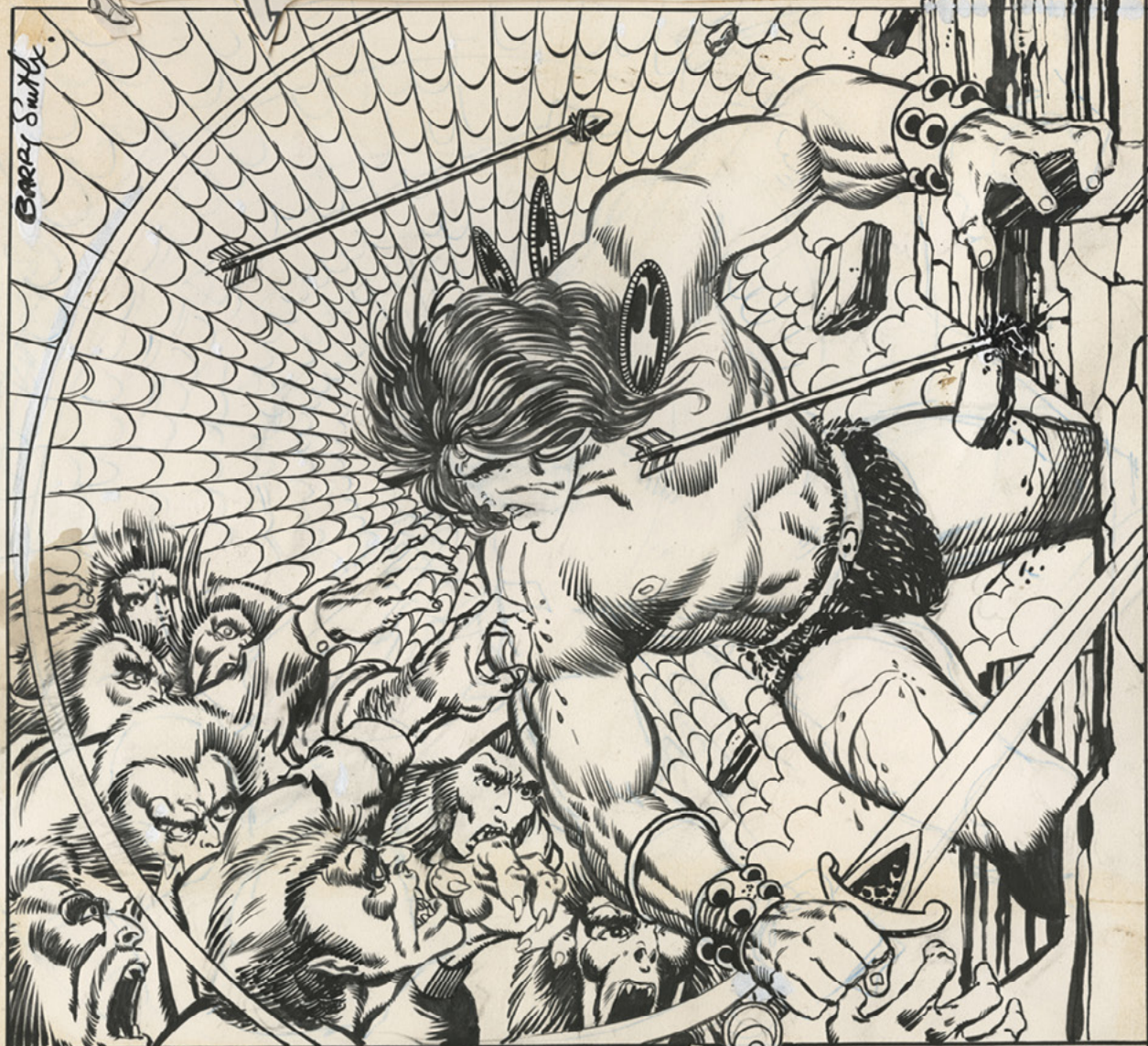
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HOW CONAN CAME TO COMICS



by Roy Thomas

The story of how Robert E. Howard's pulp-and-paperback hero Conan the Cimmerian wound up in Marvel Comics fifty years ago is a study in "what-ifs," five years before I got the notion to turn that expression into an ongoing title?

To wit:

What if Stan Lee and I decided that Marvel should license the rights to one of the sword-and-sorcery characters then headlining popular paperbacks?

What if Stan had decided, as was Marvel's usual wont, that we should simply create a new protagonist, rather than go after one that already existed outside comics?

What if we had gotten our first wishes, instead of our second choices, in several areas: Thongor of Lemuria as rent-a-hero . . . and John Buscema as artist?

By 1969, the first and second tsunamis of Marvel Comics were history: First, the creation of the major characters and concepts (completed either by Daredevil #1 in 1964, a year before I wandered in—or else by the arrival of the Inhumans, the Silver Surfer, and the Black Panther over the next year or so, to which I was merely an awestruck witness) . . . and second, the 1968 end of the split anthologies, as Captain America, Iron Man, et al., emerged overnight in their own solo-hero titles.

Alas, there'd been a bit of an industry slowdown in '68, with perhaps just a few too many costumed heroes vying for the spotlight at the same time. So Stan . . . and I as his associate editor and protégé . . . and surely Martin Goodman as publisher, even if he had recently sold the company he had founded in 1939 . . . knew that, if we were going to expand sales, it might be a good idea to seek out areas that might appeal not just to Marvel's faithful readers but also to new readers who had no trouble passing by a newsstand displaying innumerable guys and gals in colorful tights.

[Not] Brand Echh in 1967 had branched out in a humorous/parodical direction, but was still dependent on a customer's interest in superheroes. The Ghost Rider, our revival of a 1950s masked Western gunslinger, had gone nowhere. Captain Savage and His Leatherneck Raiders aped Sgt. Fury, but what was the latter but the application of the Lee-and-Kirby superhero genius to the war genre? None of those titles was the answer, or pointed to same.

So we looked to the newsstands to see what was selling thereon that might be adapted, in one way or another, to comicbooks that sold primarily to pre-teen and teenage readers, plus a scattering of wistfully nostalgic over-twenties.

And, at much the same time, if not even earlier, and certainly influencing our search to a considerable degree, were a steady stream of letters (remember them?) from Marvel's readers admonishing us to bring a few current prose sensations into the four-color forum.

The fans asked for *Doc Savage*, whose 1930s-40s pulp-magazine “novels” were being reprinted to considerable success . . . but Western/Gold Key had published one issue of a *Doc Savage* comic and it hadn’t set the world on fire; besides, they might still have the rights tied up. (A few fans probably suggested Doc’s Street & Smith buddy *The Shadow* as well, but Archie Comics had recently launched two series using that name, one reasonably authentic and the other keeping only the name, so that direction, too, was at least temporarily closed to us.)

Others suggested Marvel adapt the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and that would’ve been a welcome direction to both Stan and myself . . . but alas, Western/Gold Key had only recently lost the rights to Tarzan, and ERB Inc. had taken the ape-man and, for good measure, the master’s other-worldly and inner-worldly heroes to DC Comics, which clearly wasn’t going to relinquish them for a while.

A third and persistent suggest was to get the rights to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which—after a Burroughs boom of the early ‘60s had led to more and more adventure fantasy being picked up by hardcover and paperback publishers—had become the darling of teenagers and young adults. Stan was familiar with Tolkien mostly through questions asked by college students he spoke to, and although I had finished the third book in the wee small hours of January 1, 1968, after a particularly dull New Year’s Eve party at my Brooklyn apartment, I was only a lukewarm admirer. Still, Stan and I definitely put Tolkien on the list—why not? (But when we made an approach to his publisher a bit later, they were most definitely not interested in a comicbook edition of their cash cow.)

The fourth fantasy concept for which Marvel’s readers loudly clamored was—no, not Conan the Cimmerian (although certainly that name was mentioned more than any other individual hero of that type), but sword-and-sorcery in general. “Get the rights to one of the S&S heroes now cavorting in paperback form,” they demanded.

Stan thought it sounded like a good idea to him—except that, as he freely admitted before and after, he had virtually no idea of precisely what “sword-and-sorcery” was.

I knew what it was—but was no great admirer of the genre.

Now, I myself was a late and reluctant fan of Robert E. Howard. I was collecting the ERB books and their imitators, reveling particularly in the Ace covers by one-time comicbook artist Frank Frazetta. So when, in 1966, I beheld Frazetta’s iconic (not a stretch of that much-over-used word) cover for *Conan the Adventurer*, I scooped it up, especially after I read a reference to “Atlantis” on the back cover and figured this was probably something in the John Carter of Mars vein.

However, after reading the first few pages of the first story in the book, “The People of the Black Circle,” I was disappointed. The writing was solid, but to me at the time it seemed just a sort of ancient-world potboiler with a barbarian hero who didn’t do much more than throw a terrified Vendhyan (= India) princess over his shoulder and make off with her. Without reading further, I set the book on my shelf with the ERB and related titles . . . and while I continued to pick up subsequent Conan offerings for their splendid covers, I never really ventured inside for the next couple of years.

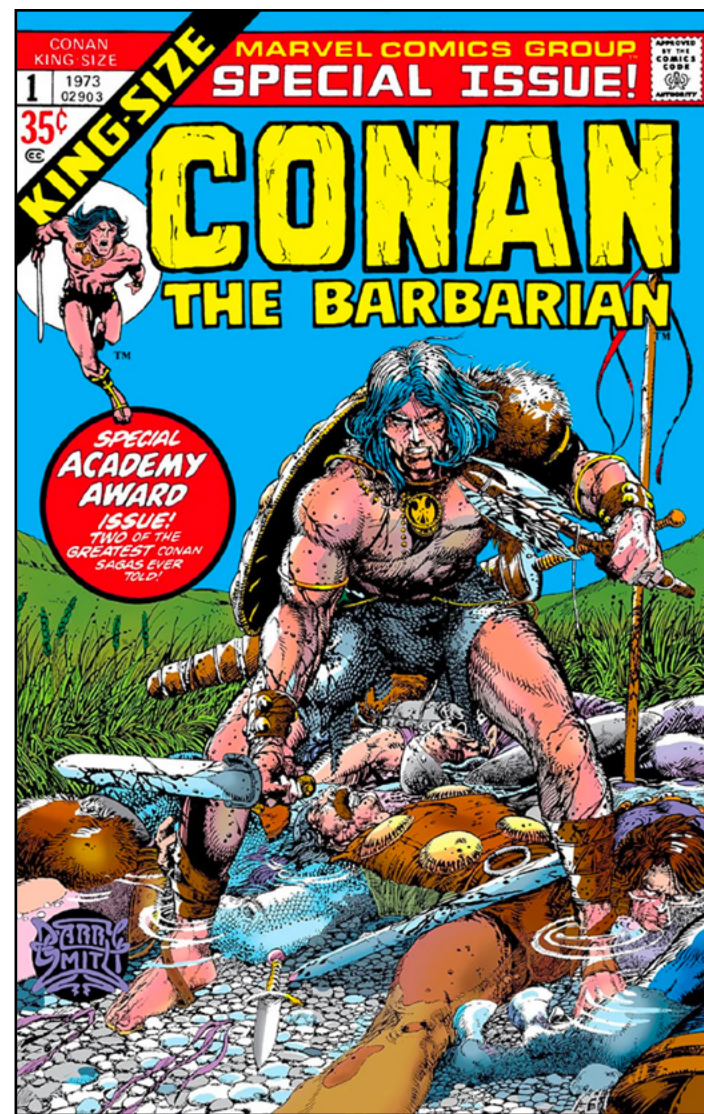
Meanwhile, other sword-and-sorcery heroes, as well as more John Carter-influenced ones, began to populate the newsstands. Howard’s own King Kull had a volume behind a lovely, illustrious cover by another familiar name, Roy Krenkel. Lin Carter, who was also co-writing some new Conan stories with the series’ packaging editor,



Conan the Barbarian #1, Oct. 1970 • Cover art by Barry Windsor-Smith

SF/fantasy writer L. Sprague de Camp, came out with his Thongor series—and one of the books, *Thongor in the City of Magicians*, sported my favorite “barbarian” cover of all time, the sinewy and muscular hero astride a huge pteranodon, flying above what seemed to be flowing lava against a black landscape. (Need I add that the painter was Frank Frazetta?) One of my favorite comics writers, Gardner Fox, created Kothar the Barbarian, apparently a straight copy of Conan. John Jakes, then still a few years away from becoming a best-selling author with his Bicentennial series, saw his Brak the Barbarian stories reissued in paperback—at first, behind another great Frazetta cover. There were others, as well . . . not exactly too numerous to mention, but why should I bother? (Only Michael Moorcock’s Elric of Melnibone stood out from the second-banana pack, since he was sort of an anti-Conan . . . a physically weak, albino-hued princeling who was almost totally dependent for his energy upon an enchanted (some would say cursed) sword.

For some reason, the first of the above of which I actually finished reading a whole book, probably inspired by the cover, was the above-named *Thongor* novel. It was apparently inspired by Howard’s tales of Conan as a king—such as I knew he was in time, from blurbs advertising the book *Conan the Conqueror*—but seemed somehow to have a



King-Size Conan the Barbarian #1, 1973 • Cover art by Barry Windsor-Smith

touch of John Carter, Warlord of Mars, about him as well . . . or perhaps I just imagined that part.

Before long, my Thongor experience had led me to give Howard a second read—and I quickly realized that I had overlooked the fact that here was the Real Thing, a masculine (even male-chauvinist, to use the then-current term) writer also possessed of the ability to make his words sing, as if they were a particularly violent kind of epic poetry. And hell, hadn’t *The Iliad* long been my favorite work of literature, with William Butler Yeats’ short play *On Baile’s Strand*, featuring the Irish legendary hero Cuchulain, hovering somewhere near second place alongside Joe Heller’s *Catch-22*?

So, with my having read a fair amount of Howard and Carter and Moorcock by that point, I seemed the likely person to do what Stan wanted done next (this being in mid-1969 or so):

He wanted me to write a longish memo to publisher Goodman, laying out the reasons why Marvel should license the rights to one of the sword-and-sorcery heroes then slashing their way through the paperback racks.

Why “license,” and not simply *make up* a new hero that Marvel would entirely own, as was usually done?

Beats the hell out of me—unless it’s because Stan probably

figured that, in order to do this “sword-and-sorcery” thing right, we’d need to be working with an already-established character, who happily might bring a bit of his prose readership along with him. But I’m just guessing. Stan and I never discussed the reason for the precise licensing idea.

So I wrote a two- or three-page memo to Goodman—my first one to him ever, and for all I know it might’ve been my last—stating that these S&S heroes were all the thing, and that if we licensed one of them, we might thereby appeal both to our regular readers and to a slightly wider readership outside comics. I stressed the things that S&S stories and comicbook superheroes had in common: a powerful, muscular hero . . . lots of great-looking women (many of whom, though I doubt I stressed this point, would be inadequately clad for cold climates) . . . colorfully evil villains (many of them magicians) . . . and monsters which, not being vampires or werewolves, we could safely use without upsetting the folks down at the Comics Code.

I must’ve outdone myself on that memo, because not only did Goodman approve our going after such a license (to the tune of \$150 an issue) but he mentioned that memo to me, in glowing terms, two other times I was speaking with him. (I always figured that was partly because he couldn’t think of anything else to say to, or about, me, since I was never that well known to him.)

So Stan and I talked it over and, partly at my suggestion, we went first after—Thongor of Lemuria. For one thing, we figured he’d be more likely to be available for comics adaptation than Conan, the one who was selling by far the best. Besides, of the three S&S hero names he knew at that time—Conan, Thongor, and Kull—he liked Thongor best, Kull second, Conan third (a “C” isn’t the strongest letter to begin a hero’s name with, Captain America to the contrary notwithstanding). So Thongor it was.

I had met Lin Carter once or twice, and knew (from his writings in Dick and Pat Lupoff’s early-’60s fanzine *Xero*) that he was a comics fan. He liked the idea of a Thongor comics, even though \$150 an issue wasn’t a princely sum even in 1969. His agent, however (Henry Morrison?), clearly didn’t care much for working out a contract that would bring him \$150 an issue, so he dragged his feet, hoping Marvel would up the ante. Lots of luck on that one! Neither Stan nor I was about to go back to Martin Goodman to try to pry more money from that tight, tight fist.

So I got frustrated, having to tell Stan every week or two that no progress was being made.

And then, around the end of the year, I picked up the latest Frazetta-fronted Howard reprinting—*Conan of Cimmeria*. And this time, perhaps because of my unhappiness over the way the Thongor thing was going, I read, more carefully than I ever had before, L. Sprague de Camp’s almost standard introduction. And I saw, nestled at the end, the name and even the *mailing address* of the literary agent for the Robert E. Howard estate: one Glenn Lord, in a place called Pasadena, Texas.

On a whim, I dropped Glenn a letter. Naturally, I stressed that being featured in a Marvel comic à la Spider-Man and the Hulk might bring even more readers to the Conan paperbacks, which was true enough (and actually did happen). Being ashamed of offering that paltry \$150, especially for the hero who had started the S&S boomlet, I unthinkingly upped the offer to \$200 per issue . . . a 33 1/3% jump. Within the week, the letter came back from Glenn: okay, write up a contract. We wouldn’t have the right to adapt any particular Conan

story, only to use the character . . . but that was fine by me at the time.

I don't recall the details of the contract, since Marvel's (Magazine Management's) lawyer drew it up, but that \$200 an issue went in there. No percentage royalties . . . just a flat sum. Pretty simple.

Meanwhile, who was gonna write the mag? Not Stan, who had no idea what S&S (let alone Conan) was all about. I was the logical choice of the two of us, but I was pretty busy with *The Avengers* and several other comics a month, even though *The X-Men* and *Doctor Strange* were both winding to a temporary close. More: I suddenly realized I would be up a creek with no visible means of paddling if Goodman decided he wanted to retrieve that extra \$50 I had offered Lord for Conan. (Truth to tell, I had half expected no contract to emerge because of that very fact, but somehow it had gotten finalized.)

So I figured, instead of having Gerry Conway write the comic (as I probably would've), I would script at least the first issue or two. That way, if Goodman wanted his \$50 back, I could simply not bill for two or three pages' worth of writing (I don't recall my rate at the time), and things would come out even. So that's how I more or less backed into writing all that Conan in comicbooks, comic strips, record albums, TV, and movies—everything except an actual Conan novel.

Stan and I had our artist chosen already, too. None other than John Buscema, with whom I'd been doing some fairly successful *Sub-Mariner* and *Avengers* material. As good a draftsman as had ever walked the halls of a comics company, and a good storyteller, to boot. What's more, when I sent John a copy of one of the Conan paperbacks and he read it—well, he had never before heard of Conan, but he immediately pronounced it as the kind of thing he'd always been wanting to do. Small wonder. We at Marvel had long been saying that, when Hal Foster retired from *Prince Valiant*, John should really be the guy to take it over; he'd keep the good drawing, and give the strip even more guts!

But, as I was writing out the original plot for the premier issue of the mag I suggested be titled *Conan the Barbarian* (because that had been the title of a 1950s hardcover reprint, but not of any of the 1960s paperbacks, so no potential confusion)—or maybe, for all I know, after I'd already sent it to John—the word abruptly came down from Martin Goodman that we couldn't use an artist with Buscema's rate (one of the highest at Marvel in those days)—because he wanted to hold down the costs, surely to recoup some of that \$200 an issue. (I should've known that grandiose sum didn't slip by him.) That left out longtime REH fan Gil Kane, too; Gil had been a booster and confidant during my quest to get the rights to Conan, and even had become convinced that he had given me the idea to pursue Conan . . . though he hadn't. And he was likewise too "expensive" to be considered as CTB's initial artist.

Stan suggested a couple of good artists who were in our price range—Don Heck and Dick Ayers—but I kind of dug in my heels. I had worked with and respected both guys, but I told him I didn't think either of them would bring the singular quality that I felt Conan needed to make it more than just another superhero book without a super-powered hero.

Okay, Stan said . . . so line up somebody.

The only person who sought me out at that time, hoping to get the assignment, was young Bernie Wrightson. But his issue of DC's earlier S&S "Nightmaster," while promising in a Frazetta-influenced way, was not, I knew, quite what Stan would want. But I made a note to try Bernie out on something of that sort ASAP . . . so that he soon became

the first person ever to draw King Kull in a comic book, and he did a wonderful job of it.

For Conan, though—I had a brainstorm.

A few months earlier, I had had young artist Barry Smith, who had been kicked out of the U.S. back to his native London for lack of a green card or some such detail that we at Marvel had never noticed when he was drawing *X-Men* and *Daredevil*, draw a story about a sword-and-sorcery hero I called Starr the Slayer . . . who killed his modern-day creator when the latter decided to off him in his next story. Barry had done a bang-up job on that tale in *Chamber of Darkness* #4, and besides, his rate was about as low as they went—probably \$20 a page for pencils, something like that.

So Barry got the assignment, and I mailed him the several-page plot for *Conan the Barbarian* #1—maybe after a fast (and expensive) transatlantic phone call to tell him it was coming.

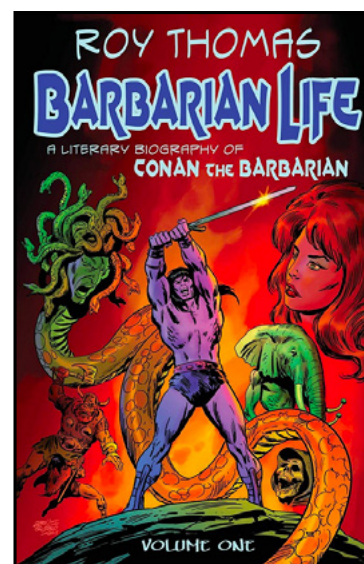
The rest, as they say, is history. Or, since we're talking about the Hyborian Age here, maybe I should say "pseudo-history."

Barry and I became celebrated as the harbingers of something relatively new in comicbooks, as I learned how to write the stuff (and soon got Goodman to pay an extra pittance so we could adapt actual REH Conan stories, beginning with "The Tower of the Elephant," my favorite) and Barry developed mightily as an artist, in ways neither Stan nor I (nor perhaps he himself) could have predicted.

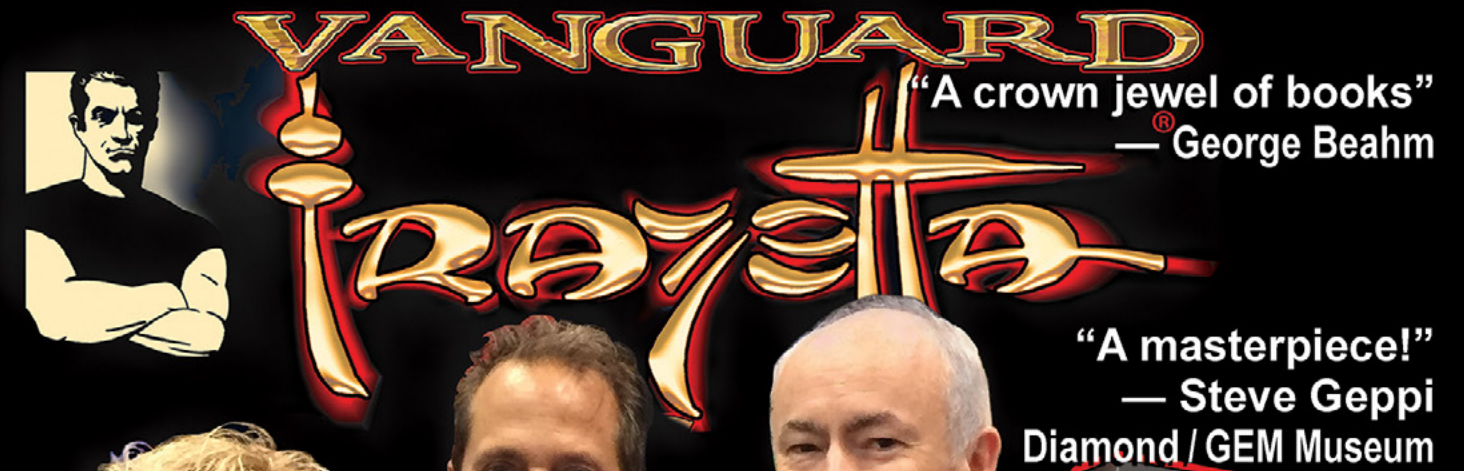
Conan the Barbarian, by the time Barry departed Marvel's color comic for the final time after issue #24, had become a solid Marvel seller—with pay raises for Barry, and, equally important when he quit, enough of a budget that first Gil Kane (for two issues) and then John Buscema were no longer out of our financial league.

Conan remains my favorite of all the "Marvel" characters I ever wrote—and I'm proud to have played my small part in first making *Conan the Barbarian* and *The Savage Sword of Conan* two of the company's most profitable magazines by the second half of the 1970s . . . and thereby making the early-1980s John Milius film *Conan the Barbarian* possible at a time when the Conan paperbacks were mostly out of print due to the publisher's bankruptcy . . . even if I never thought any Conan movie ever really caught the essence of what Conan was or should have been.

It's been a helluva ride, though . . . and it's not over yet.



Roy Thomas scripted and edited the first decade of Conan comics, from 1970 to 1980 . . . returned at the end of that decade to write most of Marvel's Conan titles till the company relinquished the license at the end of the '90s . . . and has written a handful of stories starring the Cimmerian now that he has made his triumphal return to the house that Stan Lee built. Roy hopes that somewhere, wherever they are, the ghosts of Robert E. Howard and Glenn Lord are smiling.



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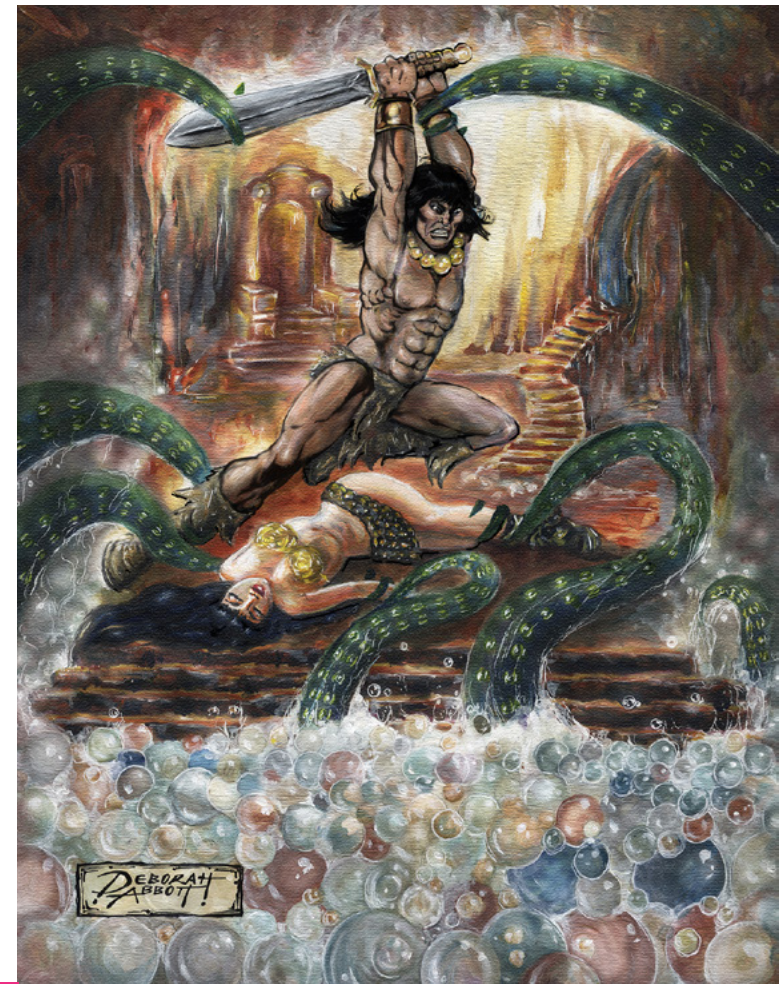


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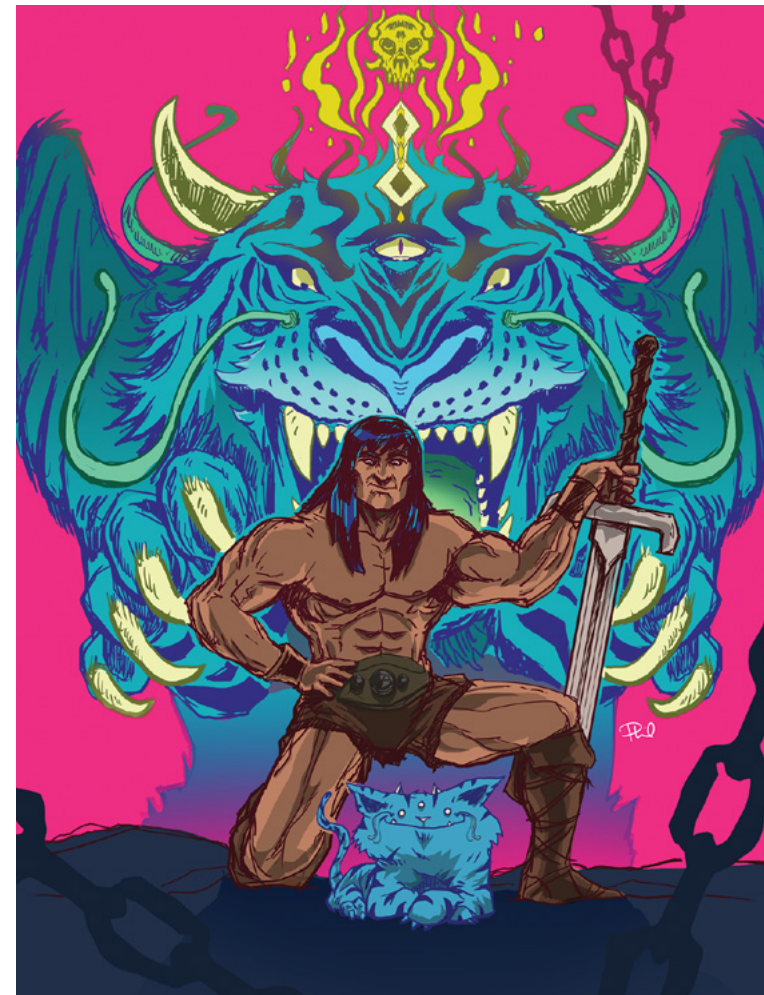
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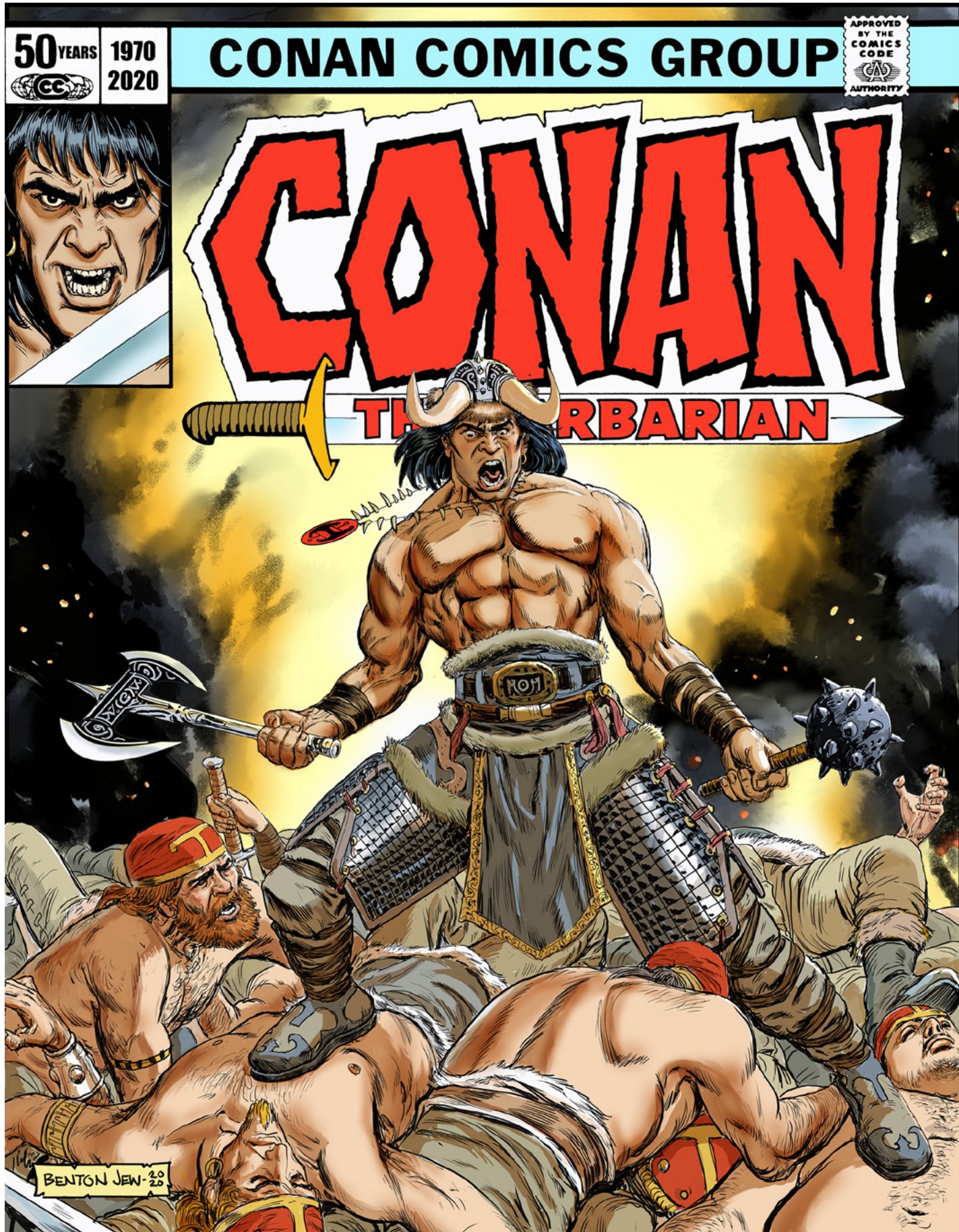
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BY CROM! CONAN CONQUERS COMICS!

by Charlie Novinskie

The year was 1970 and the Hyborean Age was about to meet the Marvel Age, changing the face of comics forever. Not that Robert E. Howard's definitive character, Conan the Barbarian, was an instant success. Trying to break the mold of superhero comics with a sword and sorcery character wasn't easy. The comic didn't instantly take off and was initially delegated to bimonthly status. But, thanks to master storyteller Roy Thomas and newcomer Barry Smith (better known as Barry Windsor-Smith) with his dynamic pencils, *Conan the Barbarian* became a mainstay of licensed comics, opening the way for a genre of comics that thrives to this day!

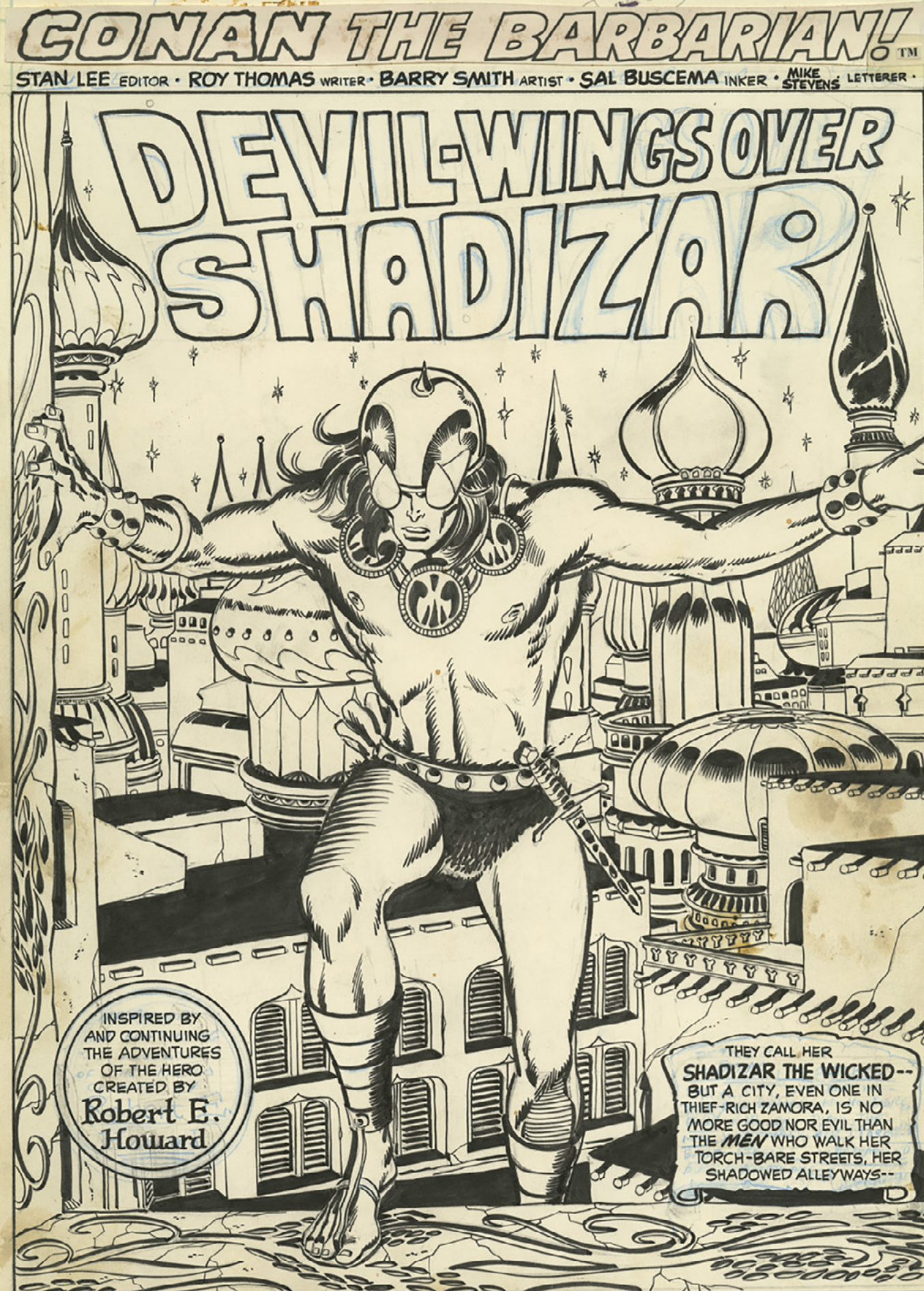
Conan led to a significant run of 275 issues running for an impressive 23 years before moving on to Dark Horse Comics. The series run featured 151 issues penned by Roy Thomas with pencils by John Buscema on most issues following Barry Smith's art on the first 24 issues. Other notable writers included J. M. DeMatteis, Chuck Dixon, Michael Fleisher, Bruce Jones, Don Kraar, Doug Moench, Jim Owsley, and Alan Zelenetz. Of note during the Smith run was a two-part story featuring Michael Moorcock's character Elric of Melniboné in issues #14-15, and the introduction of Red Sonja in issue #23. Twelve *Conan Annuals* were published from 1973 to 1987, along with five *Giant-Size Conan* issues, each consisting of 68 pages.

The success of *Conan the Barbarian* led to the 1974 publication of the black-and-white magazine series *Savage Sword of Conan*. Written by Thomas with art by John Buscema and Alfredo Alcala, *Savage Sword* became one of the most popular black and white comic series of the 1970s, running an amazing 235 issues, plus one annual. Reflecting back on the black and white explosion of the 1970s, Roy Thomas commented, "I don't think there was any great explosion of popularity of B&W comics at that time. Stan just felt it was a direction to reach out and perhaps expand the audience, making it more worthwhile for stores to sell 75-cent or \$1.00 comics instead of 15-centers. *Savage Sword of Conan* was started because the Conan issues of *Savage Tales* (#s 2-5) had done quite well." A variety of short-lived mini-series were also published, with the most interesting being 55 issues of *King Conan* (*Conan the King* after issue #19) running through the 1980s.

Conan's appearances in Marvel Comics weren't limited to the Hyborean Age, with the character also appearing in the modern age Marvel Universe. Many of these stories took place in *What If*. Issue #39 featured "What If Thor Battled Conan the Barbarian?" *What If* stories included Conan up against Wolverine, Captain America, and other modern-day Marvel characters. Other appearances occurred in *Avengers Forever* #12, *Fantastic Four* #405, and *Paradise X: Heralds* #1 with appearances by both Conan and Red Sonja. In 2019 Marvel launched the *Savage Avengers* as an ongoing Marvel Comics series with Conan the Barbarian teaming up with Wolverine, the Punisher, Venom, Elektra, and Doctor Voodoo.

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After the success of the Conan stories in *Savage Tales*, Marvel launched the *Savage Sword of Conan* black and white magazine in August 1974. It ran for 255 issues. • Cover art by Boris Vallejo.

Dark Horse Comics trip into Conan's world began in 2003 with the one-shot prologue, *Conan #0: Conan the Legend*. The first series was simply titled *Conan*, running for 50 issues through 2008. In all, Dark Horse published six major comic series' along with collections of the original Marvel Comics *Conan the Barbarian*, *The Savage Sword of Conan*, and the *King Conan* series in graphic novel format. The first series kicked off with Kurt Busiek as writer with a combination of new stories and adaptations including "The Frost Giant's Daughter," "The God in the Bowl," and "The Tower of the Elephant." Mike Mignola adapted "The Hall of the Dead" with Timothy Truman crafting tales from "Rogues in the House" and "The Hand of Nergal." Several notable artists turned in some of their finest work, including Cary Nord, Thomas Yates, John Severin, Tom Mandrake, Bruce Timm, Greg Ruth, Eric Powell, Paul Lee, and Tomas Giorello. Many of these artists contributed covers, along with Joseph Michael Linsner, J. Scott Campbell, Leinil Francis Yu, Tony Harris, Richard Isanove, and Ladronn.

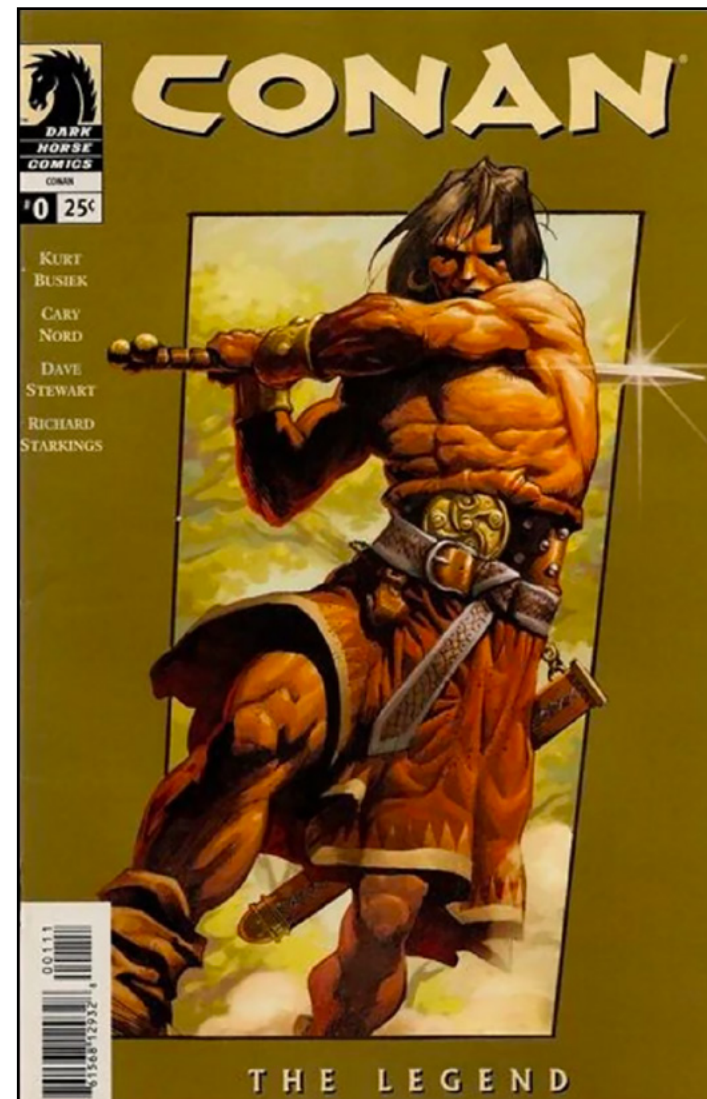
The second series, titled *Conan the Cimmerian*, began publication in 2008 and lasted 25 issues until November 2010.

A 99-cent issue #0 was published in June 2008, followed by the first issue of the series in July. Scripted by Timothy Truman, the artwork was by Tomas Giorello along with Joe Kubert, Paul Lee, Timothy Truman, and Richard Corben.

The third series premiered with Roy Thomas back as scripter, and Mike Hawthorne as the primary artist on the series. Doug Wheatley, Dale Keown, and Aleksis Briclot contributed covers. Titled *Conan: Road of Kings*, the first issue appeared in December 2010 and ended in January 2012 after 12 issues.

As a follow up to *Road of Kings*, the fourth series, titled *Conan the Barbarian*, ran 25 issues from February 2012 to March 2014 and featured Brian Wood's run with Robert E. Howard's original story "Queen of the Black Coast." A series of artists contributed to the series, including Becky Cloonan, Declan Shalvey, James Harren, and others. Original covers were handled by Massimo Carnevale with variants by Becky Cloonan, John Paul Leon, Dave Stewart, and Leonardo Fernandez.

Conan the Avenger was Dark Horse Comics' fifth series about Conan, with Fred Van Lente as the writer. The bulk of the tales were adaptations, including "The Snout in the Dark," "The Slither-



The Dark Horse era of Conan launched in 2003. • Cover art by Cary Nord and Dave Stewart

ing Shadow," and "A Witch Shall Be Born." Various artists contributed their talents with Brain Ching handling much of the art. *Conan the Avenger* ran for 25 issues from April 2014 through April 2016.

Dark Horse's final series, titled *Conan the Slayer*, lasted 12 issues from July 2016 to August 2017. Cullen Bunn handled the writing chores and Sergio Davila handled the artwork on all but the last issue.

Another series, *King Conan*, which takes place during Conan's time as king, launched in February 2011, concluding in 2016 with 24 issues. The series featured adaptations of Robert E. Howard's work, including "The Scarlet Citadel," "The Phoenix on the Sword," "Hour of the Dragon," "The Conqueror," and "Wolves Beyond the Border." The stories were adapted by Timothy Truman and featured the art of Tomas Giorello.

The *Conan*, *Conan the Cimmerian*, *Conan: Road of Kings*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *Conan the Avenger*, and *Conan the Slayer* series presented a fresh perspective for everyone's favorite barbarian, incorporating new material as well as adaptations of stories by Robert E. Howard material. The six main Dark Horse Conan series also make up a connected storyline. Numbering on

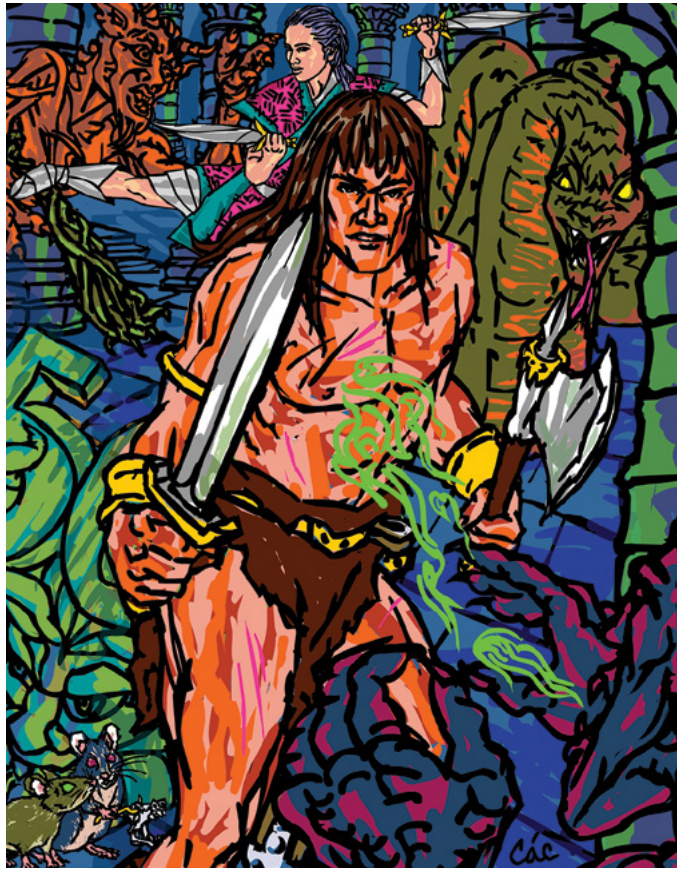


Dark Horse's *Conan* #1, 2004 • Cover art by Joseph Michael Linsner

the inner cover of these books listed the books in proper order. In addition to the larger series, there are also several miniseries and one-shots.

In 2019 the license was once again acquired by Marvel and the series was rebooted by Jason Aaron and Mahmud Asrar. Marvel Comics continues to write the next chapter in everyone's favorite sword-wielding barbarian, building on the 50-year tradition started by Roy Thomas and Barry Windsor-Smith that helped launch the sword and sorcery genre in comics!

Charlie Novinsk writes full time from his home in Grand Junction, Colorado where he lives with his wife, Kristine. Admitting to reading comics for over 50 years now, mostly Marvel, he also finds time to serve on the board of Hero Initiative helping creators in need, and is an Overstreet Advisor as well as managing editor for Lake Havasu LIVING Magazine. He was an editor and sales and promotions manager for Topps Comics during the 1990s.



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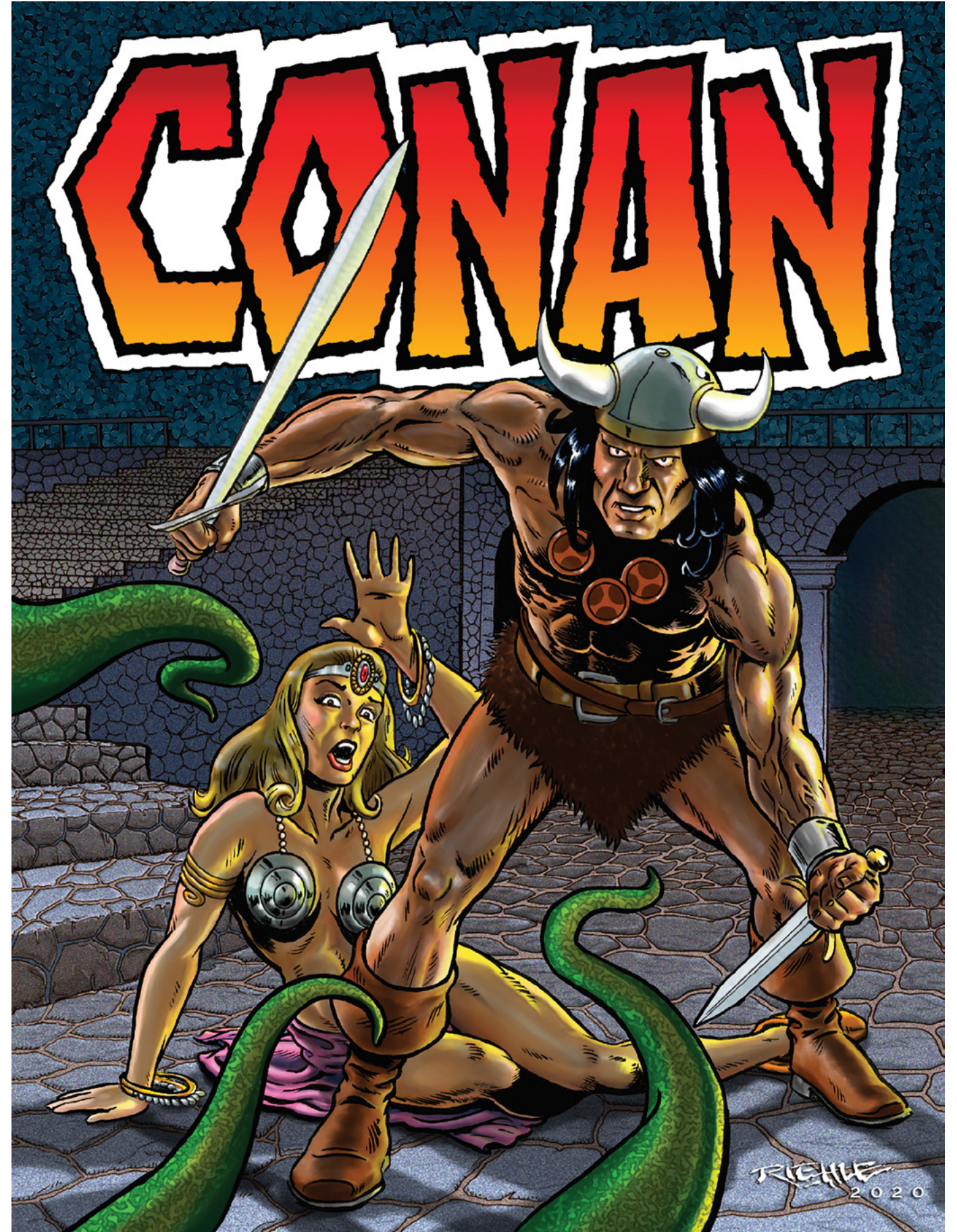
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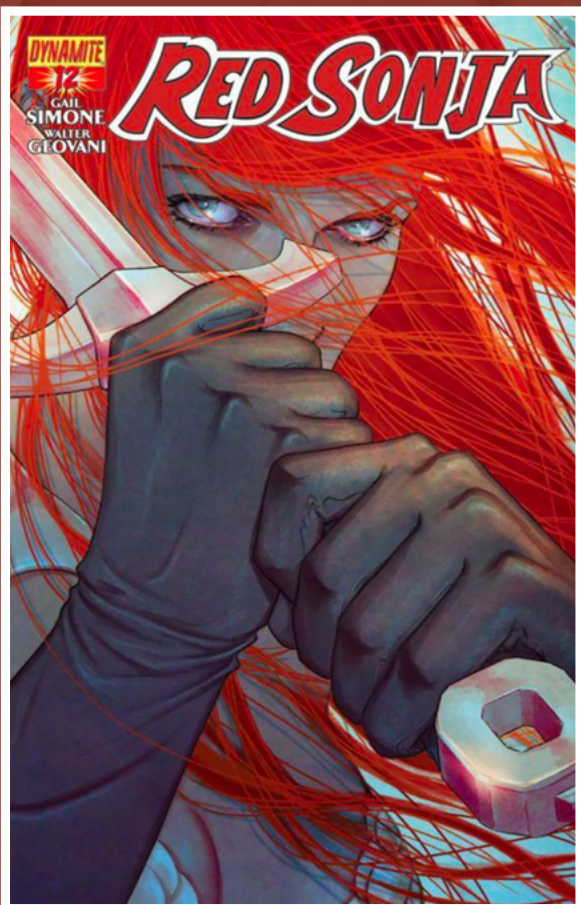
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LADIES WHO SLAY: 50 YEARS OF WOMEN & CONAN IN COMICS



ROBERT E. HOWARD

by Jennifer Susannah Devore

“Her hair was like elfin-gold ... Her full red lips smiled and from her slender feet to the blinding crown of her billowy hair, her ivory body was as perfect as the dream of a god. Conan’s pulse hammered in his temples.”
—“The Frost-Giant’s Daughter,” Robert E. Howard (*Weird Tales*, 1933)

Before artists Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo populated the Hyborian Age with bewitching, barbarian bodies, Conan creator Robert E. Howard penned tales vibrant enough to conceive unequalled worlds of sensual sword-and-sorcery. Decades after “The Phoenix on the Sword” publication (*Weird Tales*, December 1932), Howard’s barbarian still savages a path through pop culture, pulp fiction, and, since 1970, comics.

Like a sword thrust “through brass scales and bones and heart,” Howard’s wordsmithing leaves the reader breathless. Even sans the vivid Frazettas and Vallejos that would later, arguably, overshadow his work, Howard’s storytelling stuns on its own.

Robert Ervin Howard (REH) was born a Texan, and died a Texan. In between, he traveled not only the vast Lone Star landscape, but the American South and Southwest. Occasional trips took him across the Mexican border, visiting Boys Town and sending picturesque postcards from destinations like Piedras Negra. Born in 1906, Howard’s childhood was Western-nomadic, hauled from oil-boom towns to land-boom towns and back again by his manically-entrepreneurial father, Dr. Isaac Mordecai Howard, and Robert’s perpetually-ailing mother, Hester Jane.

“I’ll say one thing about an oil boom: It will teach a kid that life’s a pretty rotten thing ...”
—REH

Cross Plains, TX eventually became home and, there, in central Texas, the Howards stayed. The *tabula rasa* of 1920s Texas bred an unmatched imagination. The parameters of a country school, real and psychological, proved a slog.

“I hated school ... what I hated was the confinement, the clock-like regularity ... most of all the idea that someone considered himself or herself in authority over me ...”
- REH, letter to H.P. Lovecraft

Howard polished his art, devouring raconteurs like Twain, Poe and Lovecraft. A zeal for history, his grandmother’s tales and the family cook’s ghost stories, Howard developed early an appetite for sagas and the supernatural. Writing before the age of ten, Howard was first published at fifteen, via school newspapers and local rags. At eighteen, came his first professional sale: “Spear and Fang” (*Weird Tales*, July 1925).

Life's trudge and burdensome fears of old age pummeled Howard. June 11, 1936, day-three of his mother's coma, proved enough. That morning, Howard exited his mother's bedroom and went to his own. There, he typed a poem.

**"All fled, all done
So lift me on the pyre.
The feast is over
And the lamps expire."
—REH**

He then left the house, where his father kept vigil over Hester, walked a few short steps and climbed into his car, a 1935 Chevy he'd purchased for himself, with cash, from the rather good monies he'd earned writing. There, near the house, in the driver's seat, he shot himself in the head. He died eight hours later. Hester died the next day, having never regained consciousness. Mother and son were buried on June 14 at Greenleaf Cemetery in Brownwood, Texas, in a family plot Howard had recently purchased, "with perpetual care", on June 10. In a final frame of unimaginable pathos, Howard's father "paid someone to clean out the splattered brains" and drove his son's car, for years. Dr. Howard was reunited with his wife and only child on November 12, 1944.

**"Life is a hard thing for a woman. Your tall supple body will grow bent like mine, and broken with childbearing; your hands will become twisted, and your mind will grow strange and grey, with the toil and the weariness ... "
—"Sword Woman," REH**

What Howard left modern folklore was not only Conan the Cimmerian, but a world of ladies who slay, literally. Pirates, witches and queens, Hyborian-age women battle as fiercely as Conan, and seduce as easily as they slay.

Decades after Howard's first Conan tale, the first Conan comic would be published, in Mexico: *La Reina de la Costa Negra* (1952), published by Corporacion Editorial Mexicana (CEM). Adapted from Howard's "Queen of the Black Coast," the Hyborian pirate adventures ran in some fifty issues of CEM's *Cuentos de Abuelito*, yet presented Conan as a blond, rather than REH's raven-haired beast; an exotic switch for a Latin demo. From the late-1950s into the mid-1960s, *La Reina de la Costa Negra* was published again by *Ediciones Mexicanas Asocidas* and, later, by *Ediciones Joma* giving the Mexican demographic another fifty-plus issues of Conan and his luscious pirate queen, Bêlit.

If one was unaware of Hyborian citizenry, fantasy-artists Vallejo and Frazetta commanded awareness by the 1960s. Their savagely sexy visions unearthed scorching scenery. Before Conan comics, there were Conan book covers to whet an upcoming generation's appetite.

**"I had purchased all the published 1960s Lancer paperback books starring Conan—mainly for their Frazetta covers ..."
—Roy Thomas, *Barbarian Life: Volume 1***

Begat by writer/editor Roy Thomas and artist Barry Windsor-Smith, Red Sonja, likely the most recognizable scale-and-mail vixen, dauntlessly invaded Marvel in "Shadow of the Vulture" (*Conan the Barbarian* #23, Marvel, 1973).

Thomas' Red Sonja of Hyrkania was an eager adaptation of Howard's Red Sonya of Rogatine: heroine of his 1529 Viennese historical-yarn, "The Shadow of the Vulture" (*The Magic Carpet* magazine, January 1934).

If 1930s Sonya echoes a perkier, apple-cheeked Jean d'Arc, 1970s Sonja is a robust, yet suburbanesque warrior. Instead of a broadsword and katana, she could easily be clenching a tennis racket and workout towel: Farrah Fawcett in battle-whites. Feathered, strawberry-ginger waves tumble between her shoulders; she is, naturally, fair of face. Battle-ready, she sports bell-sleeve, chainmail crop-tops, bold jewelry and, oddly, red granny-panties, which complement her red knee-boots nicely.

Sonja's origin-story waxes classic: family slaughtered, personally violated, and home torched. Next, ancient magic unleashes to save her. Afterwards, there's copious soul-searching and perfection of mad MMA skillz, followed by a lifetime of revenge and palpable loneliness.

**"I will find you, nameless one, and I will repay you for what you have done to my family, and to me!"
—"The Day of the Sword", *Kull and the Barbarians* #3
(Marvel, September 1975)**

Through the 1980s, Sonja explores her feelings and sharpens her mad skillz, earning her place as warrior in a breadth of solo and crossover media. Yet, pop culture's most defining image must be Brigitte Nielsen. The statuesque Dane of Richard Fleischer's 1985 feature *Red Sonja* cements her as a Marvel icon, initiating decades of hot, ginger cosplay.

Mid-'90s, *Red Sonja: Scavenger Hunt* (Marvel, December 1995) sets Sonja on a soul-quest. As a girl does, she got extra fit for said-quest, physically and mentally. Fierce swordplay, her mind-game en pointe, Sonja even lost a little weight. Thanks to illustrator Alex Jubran, she looked quite Giselle Bündchen, like she did way more Pilates than Booty Camp.

Still, all that excellence couldn't save her: *Red Sonja* #34 (Dynamite Entertainment, 2005). Fortunately, comic characters never die, only move to a parallel universe. Sonja reincarnates as a version of her former self. New Sonja has elements of old, but her origin story changes: same family drama, but less magic and harder workouts.

Mid-2010s, writer Gail Simone's in charge; Sonja's origin-story is again tweaked. The fam is still slaughtered, but Sonja slays all offenders. She is *not* raped and there's no ancient magic. Walter Geovani's illustrations are sultry and chill, giving Sonja a casual tenor: Lindsay Lohan languid and lean. She can hurt you, clearly, but could totally go to Starbucks instead.

In 2020, writer/publisher Amy Chu dominates Sonja's narrative with new series *Red Sonja: Worlds Away* and, unexpectedly, *Betty & Veronica Meet Vampirella & Red Sonja*. Illustrators Carlos Gomez and Maria Sanapo present a fresh, youthful Sonja for a new



Ke Sneller • Oceanside, CA

decade: less Thundra, more Buffy.

Howard's first Conan-cohort, Bêlit the Pirate Queen, beguiles the reader as skillfully as she does Conan. At first blush, she seems to submit to the Norlander; but hers is a Beyoncé/Jay-Z vision. Together, they shall rule.

"Look at me, Conan! I am Bêlit, queen of the black coast. Oh, tiger of the north . . . Take me and crush me with your fierce love! . . . I am a queen by fire and steel and slaughter—be thou my king!"

—**"Queen of the Black Coast I," Robert E. Howard (Weird Tales, May 1934)**

Dude, it could *not* be easier.

Captaining the Tigress, Bêlit is a force of hurricane-strength, commanding a corsair crew wearing naught but a corset and sandals. As Howard penned one Bêlit exploit, it fell to Marvel to hoist again the Tigress' sails.

In 1975, Roy Thomas reacquaints Bêlit and Conan in "Queen of the Black Coast." Artist John Buscema revamps her from 1930s Mata Hari to 1970s hippie-chick: think Cher, *Half-Breed*. Earthy, with ultra-long, stick-straight, blue-black hair, Bêlit makes swimwear a clever career choice for pirate work: bikinis or plunging one-pieces, gold accessories and bucket-top boots. No cover-ups for this confident chick. Yet, even Cher-flair couldn't deflect Bêlit's demise. In 1979, Death comes a-knockin' for disco, the Seventies, and Bêlit in "Death on the Black Coast" in *Conan the Barbarian* #100 (Marvel, 1979).

Fortunately, death is theoretical in comics. In the '90s, Bêlit got a *Baywatch*-era Yasmine Bleeth makeover, and recouped the Black Coast. No matter her strut, in harem pants, bikinis and belly chains, or in fur-and-leather Faire-garb, Bêlit's mission was simple: dominate the Hyborian seas.

Millennial Bêlit sailed Dark Horse waters, fierce as ever. *Song of Bêlit* (Dark Horse Comics, 2014) sparks a moonlit, gothic trend. Illustrator Paul Azaceta produces an Addamsesque, ghostly beauty. By 2020, savvy Bêlit channels a Max Black/2 *Broke Girls* aura: sharp tongue, sharper cheekbones and a quick wit. Writer Tini Howard (no relation) molds Bêlit as a "cautionary tale," rather than a heroine. Tini's Bêlit possesses a shrewd, gaming mentality, choosing chess-like moves over brute force. Illustrators Afu Chan and Kate Niemczyk manifest an extant Bêlit in fun, anime form, as well as forms reminiscent of 1980s Nagel-art and *Riverdale*'s Veronica Lodge.

Holding the sad honor of Howard's final heroine, is Valeria of the Red Brotherhood. Finishing her tale weeks before his suicide, Howard described "Red Nails" as: "... the grimmest, bloodiest and most merciless story of the series so far. Too much raw meat ..."

"Once the sword was drawn there was no turning back; for blood called for blood, and vengeance followed swift on the heels of atrocity."

—**"Red Nails," Robert E. Howard (Weird Tales, 1936)**

The *Weird Tales* cover features a pale, willowy blonde, resembling silent-era film siren Edwina Booth. Illustrated by Margaret Brundage, Valeria looks ill-equipped to fend off a feisty Pomeranian, let alone the ungodly creatures of "Red Nails."

Valeria has introduced fleeing justice, having slain an ungentlemanly officer. As they say in Texas, *He needed killin'*. Conan's been tracking her for days, but, necessarily, they double-up to defeat dragons, witches and poison apples, even saving a village in the process. By story's end, like a beefier Scully and Mulder, they set off to right what's wrong in a very weird landscape.

In 1973, Roy Thomas revives Valeria; John Buscema and Barry Windsor-Smith design her sturdier than Brundage's elegant waif. In harem pants, metal halters and long blonde tresses, she maintains an *I Dream of Jeannie* flow; but it's a harder, tight-jawed Jeannie slaying Krakens and flying iguanas.

Film-buffs are forgiven, for mistaking John Milius' 1982 *Conan the Barbarian* poster for a *Buns of Steel* VHS-tape cover. Say what you like about the 80s, but, *ladies . . . be . . . fit*. If there's a lasting image of Valeria, it's Sandahl Bergman: IRL Vallejo girl. With the film's success, Marvel released a comic adaptation, written by Michael Fleisher with cover art by John Buscema: *Conan the Barbarian: Movie Special* (October 1982). Of course, because she's just a girl, she must die. Yet, after death, her spirit returns to save Conan's life. (Interestingly, in "Death on the Black Coast," *Conan the Barbarian* #100 (Marvel, 1979) Bêlit's spirit *also* returns après-death, to save Conan. Who's the fairer sex now, Conan?)

Dark Horse Comics *Valeria* (2003–2019) wears her independence comfortably. Conan's nice but not necessary. She can save herself and her horse is her bestie. Marvel's 2020 *Valeria* (*Age of Conan* series by Meredith Finch, illustrated by Aneke) recalls a yoga-strong Kaley Cuoco: sweet of face, kind of words, supakawaii in Faire garb and will run you through like old Camembert, then treat her horsie to some timothy hay, beside a tranquil, jungle pool.

Who runs the world? H-town girls. Their numbers are great: Zenobia, Queen Gedren, Queen Taramis, Princess Jhenna, Marique and countless others battling alongside, and against, Conan. Enter the Hyborian Age at your own risk.

From 1970-2003, Marvel licensed the beast that is Conan, as well as all movies, games, and fathomable kind of Conan product; from 2003-2018, Dark Horse held taut those licensing reins. Now, Conan's back home. In 2019, flush with Disney Dollars, Marvel reacquired the license for Conan Properties International (CPI). Back at Marvel, will devotees crave more Conan? Or will they fancy the worlds Stan Lee and Roy Thomas cultivated when they ushered Conan into comics, fifty years ago?

Jennifer Susannah Devore authors *Savannah of Williamsburg*, an 18th century historical-fiction series; she's currently penning *Book V* in the series. She also authored *The Darlings of Orange County*, *contempo-fiction mise-en-scène* in SoCal. Jennifer's obsessed with *British mysteries*, *Northern European paintings* and *Bob's Burgers*. She's intensified her yoga, in case she visits Hyboria.

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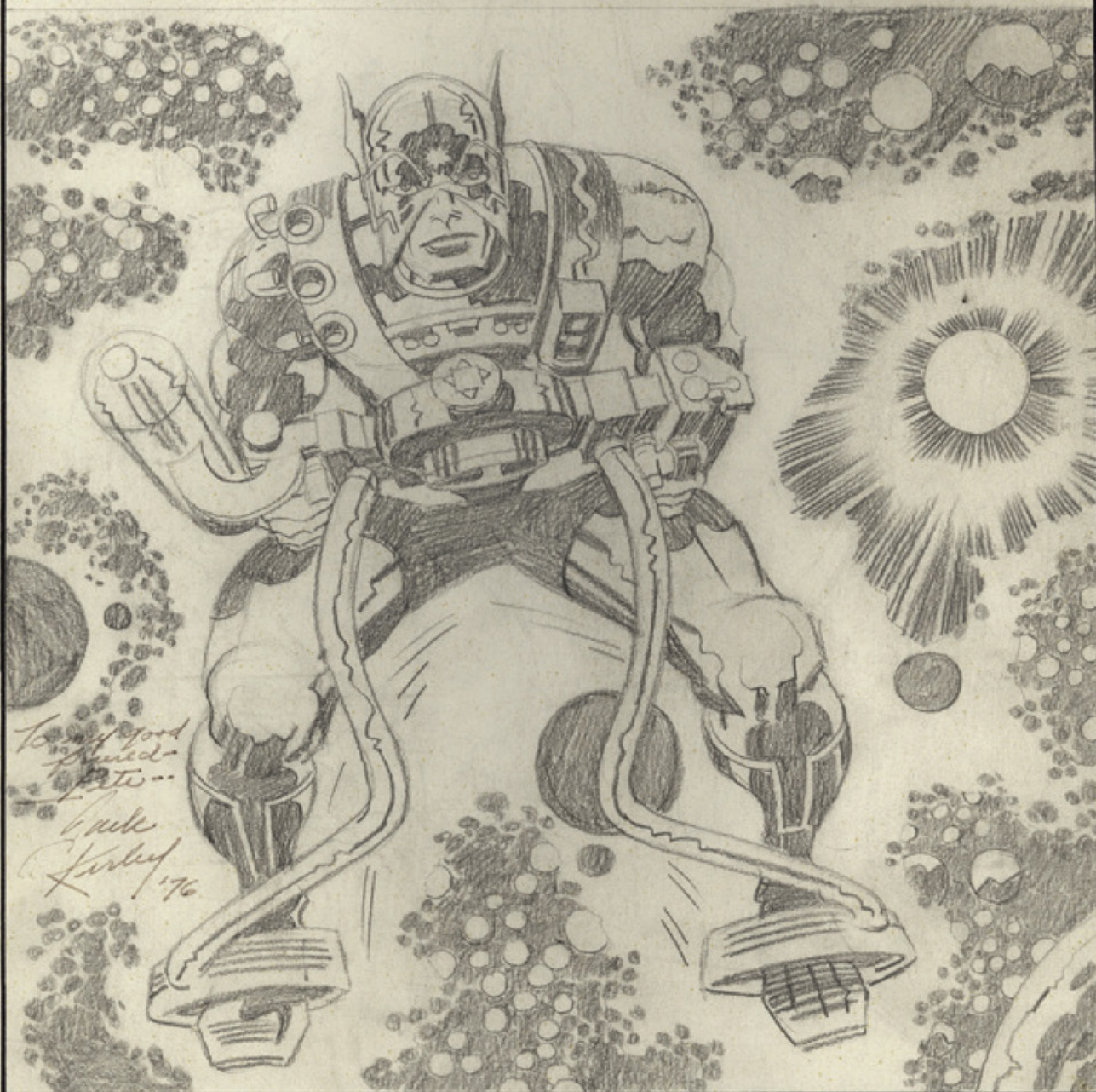
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ORION!! OF THE NEW GODS



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DON'T ASK, JUST KEEP BUYING IT:

50 YEARS OF KIRBY'S FOURTH WORLD

by John Morrow

"There came a time when the Marvel gods died..."

Okay, that's not exactly what the first page of Jack Kirby's *New Gods* #1 says, but that's precisely what it meant. Kirby, who'd spent the previous decade developing the Marvel Comics Universe, was ready to roll in 1970 on a new "Epic for Our Times" that he didn't feel he could produce at Marvel. His denouement that "An ancient era was passing in fiery holocaust!" meant more than he was leaving Thor and Odin (and Marvel Comics) behind. A seismic shift in his use of gods was taking place, and nearly everything about its backstory was seismic indeed.

The long, sordid tale of Kirby's discontent with Stan Lee and Marvel in the 1960s is the stuff of comic book legend (the last word on which may've come in my own book *Kirby & Lee: Stuf' Said*), but suffice it to say, Jack wasn't happy there by 1969. When DC Comics' publisher Carmine Infantino came a'knockin' to lure the top creator in the industry away, Kirby opened that door—and eventually made the move, taking two young guys named Mark Evanier and Steve Sherman away from the Marvelmania Fan Club to be his assistants. Jack was now working from the West Coast and mailing in his stories cross-country to his employers' New York offices—an exception that was only made for Kirby due to his high standing in the field. What he had planned at DC would require all the help he could find to pull it off with minimal East Coast interference.

At Marvel in the 1960s, Kirby was the architect of a shared universe of super-characters, who would routinely cross over into each others' comics for an issue or two, and occasionally cameo unexpectedly (and usually uneventfully). But despite even Jack's multi-issue continued story arcs like the *Fantastic Four's* Galactus Trilogy, or *Thor's* Ragnarok (which was threatened so often it became almost meaningless), you always knew those stories would end with a basic status quo of the lead heroes surviving to fight another day, and the villains being up to their old mischief again later.

As cryptic 1970 house ads in DC's comics heralded "The Great One Is Coming," Kirby jumped ship and launched his new "Fourth World" at DC, where mysteries galore slowly unfolded to create the next step in guest-starring and shared universes. This was a true epic, taking place not just across a trio of issues of one comic, but throughout every issue of four interwoven titles, all inextricably linked. If you missed one, you missed a lot. And the eventual climax was poised to end with the death of either the main hero (Orion) or the overarching villain (Darkseid). As each new issue hit the newsstands, the puzzle started to take shape, and an army of new characters was introduced.

The origins of the series' nickname "Fourth World" are lost to oblivion. Some think it came about because there were four interlocking books that made up the epic, each sort of in its own world. Others think it was Kirby's logical extension of the term "Third World" to describe this entity that was beyond anything we knew at the time. Whatever the case, the name stuck, to the point that the term was even used by Kirby on his pencil art for the later *Demon* series he created, although DC removed it before it was lettered. (There's no evidence that Jack intended the *Demon* to be linked to Orion, Darkseid, and the like, but it's a fascinating thing to ponder.)



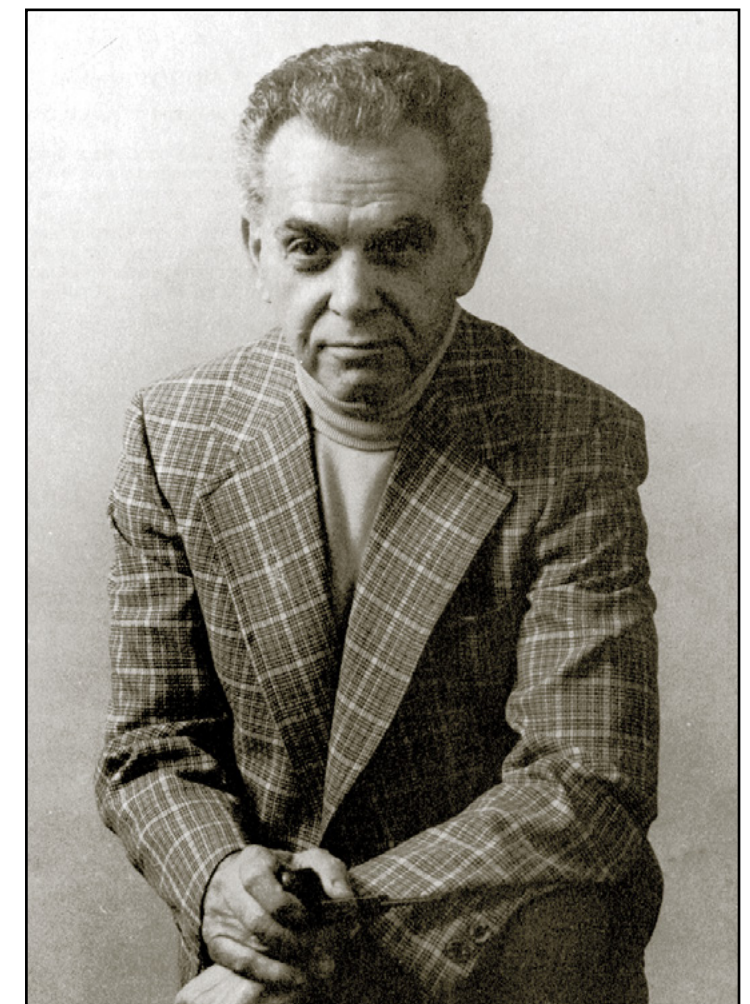
The enigmatic ad that announced Kirby's move to DC in 1970.



The first page of *New Gods* #1 sets the stage for Kirby's Fourth World.



Comic book Kirby...



and the King himself.

But it all began, chronologically at least, several months before *New Gods* #1 hit newsstands in 1971. Things kicked off with, of all things, three issues of *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*. Who but Kirby would've thought of that as a great place to begin such a groundbreaking experiment? To my knowledge, no one was waiting impatiently for a resurrection of his and Joe Simon's Newsboy Legion from the 1940s. It turns out we just didn't know we wanted it, until Jack revamped the boys as the offspring of the original kid gang. And what better strip to introduce newsboys, than one about a cub reporter for that great metropolitan newspaper, The Daily Planet? DC had wanted Jack to take over an existing strip as well as create his new ones, and Kirby chose *Jimmy Olsen*, since it was the only one available that didn't have a regular creative team which would be put out of work by him.

And what a wild ride Kirby took Jimmy (and us) on! The opening two-page spread introduced the new Newsboys and their "miracle car" the Whiz Wagon, which for fifteen glorious issues would transport them (with Superman in tow) through adventures unlike anything seen in Olsen's boring old mag—or anywhere else, for that matter. Readers were wowed by watching Superman's pal encounter a dropout society of bikers on super motorcycles who formed a commune called "Habitat," hippie scientists in a portable "Mountain of Judgment," a secret government DNA Project that introduced the concept of cloning humans (including a replicated version of the

1940s superhero the Guardian) to comics fans, and the initial hints of the antagonist of the series, Darkseid, and his Evil Factory.

And that was just in the first three issues. It was the greatest concentrated burst of creative energy ever seen in comics.

Then consider *Forever People* #1, which also appeared prior to the first issue of *New Gods*. They were a group of teenage pacifists, who together said the magic word "Shaz--," err, "Taaru!," and became the all-powerful Infinity Man, who had no compunctions about wiping out his adversaries. This transformation came about through use of the mysterious, sentient, seemingly electronic Mother Box, which served as the teens' protector and babysitter throughout the series. But with so much going on across four titles, Jack quickly forgot about Infinity Man, finally bringing him back for the team's final issue.

Forever People #1 also introduced the MacGuffin of the series, the Anti-Life Equation, which Darkseid constantly sought, but never really harnessed. With it, he could control the universe with a single word. It was up to the youngsters to stop him, without ever raising a hand in violence against him and his evil minions.

Such restraint wasn't shown back in *New Gods*, as Orion took on every opponent that Darkseid's evil planet Apokolips could throw at him. Death itself—on skis!—debuted in issue #3 as the Black Racer, a character that wasn't even supposed to be in that issue (Evanier and Sherman have both recounted how Kirby would spontaneously

toss new ideas and characters into a pre-planned issue, and it would evolve into an entirely different storyline than it set out to be). *New Gods* became the ultimate buddy comic, as dour Orion teamed with buoyant Lightray, and Kirby played their "good cop/bad cop" differences off one another with perfection.

(My own buddy Jon B. Cooke compiled a blog titled "365 Days of the Fourth World", which spotlighted a different Kirby character or concept each day for a year. Jon had no problem filling all the slots, with plenty left over. That list will be expanded and included in my upcoming double-size book *Old Gods & New: A Fourth World Companion*, out this Fall, and serving as the 80th issue of my magazine *The Jack Kirby Collector*.)

Finally, *Mister Miracle* #1 debuted, rounding out the four-title saga. We eventually come to learn that the main character, Scott Free, was an escapee from Darkseid's regime, having been raised by an S&M octogenarian named Granny Goodness in a mockery of even our world's worst orphanages. Soon, the breakout character Big Barda was introduced, openly championing the female empowerment of the Women's Lib era.

After DC imposed inker Vince Colletta onto Jack's pencils (a move no doubt to try to lure past *Thor* readers with its identical art team), Kirby finally managed to get Mike Royer assigned to the job a few issues in, and that's when the series hit its stride, both visually and creatively. There are several issues that, to me, stand out as the finest

in the Fourth World's run, and all were produced at roughly the same time:

"The Glory Boat" in *New Gods* #6, tackled the Generation Gap more provocatively than the *Forever People* ever did. The story's really about its supporting cast of one-off characters—a father from the WWII era, and his young son, steeped in the politics and pacifism of the time.

"The Pact" in *New Gods* #7 featured a major revelation about the main characters, and showed that, as much as Kirby created off-the-cuff, he had precisely planned out this twist well in advance to further the mythos.

"The Power" in *Forever People* #8 finally depicted just what the Anti-Life Equation could do, and who had been unknowingly wielding it.

Jimmy Olsen #147's "A Superman in Supertown" paid off on the promise of Superman's longing to be among his own kind, as Kirby first foreshadowed back in *Forever People* #1.

And picking up on the narrative in a series of short flashback sequences from previous issues, "Himor" in *Mister Miracle* #9 told the tale of Mister Miracle's mentor, and Scott Free's own escape from Apokolips.

And let's not forget Mister Miracle's most controversial character, Funky Flashman. This foil for the escape artist was actually a thinly disguised parody of Kirby's former Marvel editor Stan Lee. Even the



This two-page spread from *New Gods* #2 shows New Genesis as "a world caught up in the joyful strains of life!!" • Art by Jack Kirby and Vince Colletta

character's odd name has direct ties to Stan, as research in my own magazine recently uncovered. And *parody* might be the wrong word; Funky was a viciously biting *caricature* of Stan—done by Kirby after he felt he had proven who the main architect of the Marvel Universe really was, by branching out on his own at DC, with what was then being hailed as the most sweeping work ever done in comics. Jack hit Stan where it hurt, from capitalizing on his penchant of taking credit for others' creativity, to making fun of Lee's toupée—effectively burning bridges with Marvel and ensuring he was stuck at DC for the duration.

Still, with his Fourth World series firing on all cylinders, what could go wrong? As this dynamic tapestry was being unfolded, surely it was fully appreciated at the time, and that's why it's heralded for its grandeur today, right?

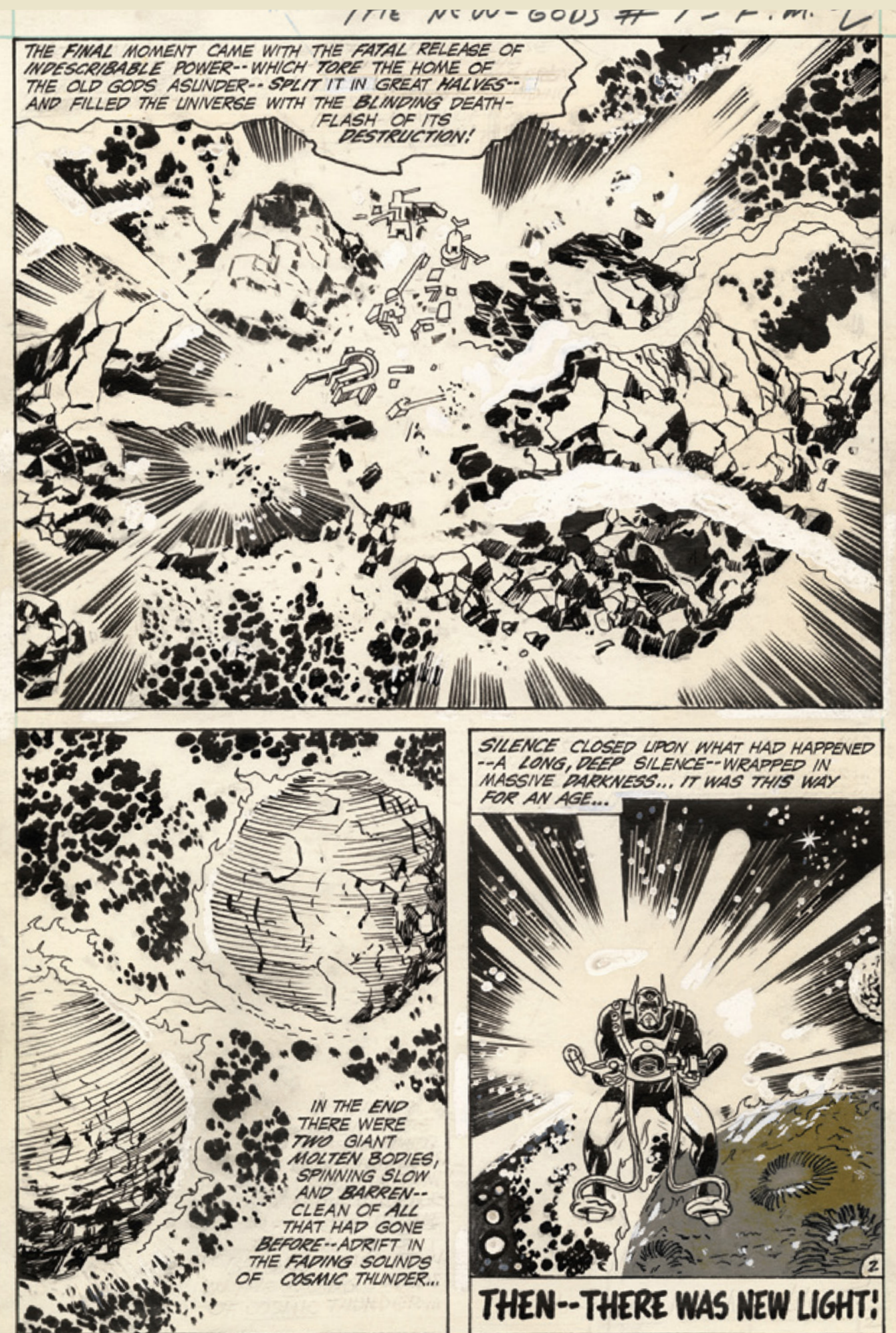
Wrong. Just as suddenly as it appeared on the scene, the bottom seemed to drop out of the Fourth World. DC forced Kirby to include Deadman as a guest-star in *Forever People* #9. *New Gods* #9 turned away from much of the Orion/Lightray dynamic, and introduced yet another new character, Forager, in what appears to be an attempt at a spin-off. Kirby's final *Jimmy Olsen* ended with the characters in the Whiz Wagon, literally driving off into the sunset, as that groundbreaking title reverted back to its pre-Kirby mundaneness.

DC had big expectations for Jack and his new series. When

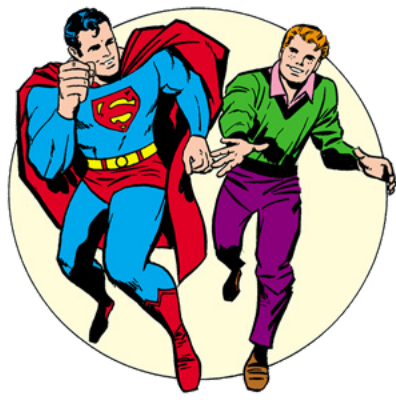
sales results came in as good but not spectacular, despite its acclaim throughout fandom, the series was forcibly course-corrected by management, then abruptly scuttled, leaving Kirby little time to retool his final issues to offer some sort of resolution, let alone a proper ending. *Forever People* ceased with the characters trapped in an idyllic limbo. *New Gods* signed off with Orion screaming that his final battle with Darkseid would end with one of them dying—and readers given no idea if or when that battle would ever take place.

This left only *Mister Miracle* to continue publication. "Himon," great as it was, was hurriedly cobbled together after Kirby got the news of the Fourth World's cancellation. Jack apparently felt it was too important of a story to never get told. So he juggled his plans and worked it in to the sequence, before the book devolved into a string of competent but uninspired non-Fourth World stories. The series petered out with a final issue, spotlighting the wedding of the main character to Big Barda (effectively reducing her from larger-than-life to being her new husband's "little woman"), and offering as much of an "ending" as Kirby could muster, as he moved on to other concepts that DC felt would be more commercial.

We know now that sales figures were skewed on fan-favorite series like the Fourth World in the early 1970s, as unreported back-door sales were being made to secondhand bookstores and dealers who were servicing the burgeoning back issue market of the day.



Original art for page 2 from *New Gods* #. • Art by Jack Kirby and Vince Colletta



Kirby's colorful "circle" art for the covers of his Fourth World titles, including (left to right) *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen*, *Forever People*, *New Gods*, and *Mister Miracle*. • Art by Jack Kirby and Vince Colletta

But all Kirby knew was his pride and joy, which he'd poured all his creative energy into, was being taken away. In many ways, he never recovered creatively from it, and never again put quite the effort into his work as he had from 1970-1972 at DC Comics.

As Kirby's DC contract came up for renewal in 1975, he chose to return to Marvel Comics—and DC chose to resurrect the New Gods on his way out the door. It was a short-lived revival, since it wasn't spearheaded by the creative genius who started it in the first place. Kirby himself remained discontented with comics, and mostly abandoned the field in 1978 for a more lucrative career in animation, where he and his remarkable concepts would be properly appreciated.

Since then, a lot of great creators, from John Byrne to Walter Simonson, have attempted to continue this unfinished *magnum opus*. Kirby himself got a shot at finally ending it when a more sympathetic DC Comics management team saw the value in bringing him back for the 1984 *Hunger Dogs* graphic novel and tie-in comics. But it was too little, too late. He still had dozens of stories he needed to tell in order to properly end things—much more than the pages of a single graphic novel could present. Kirby's own creative prowess and personal connection to the characters had diminished in the previous decade. And by 1984, Darkseid and company were so entrenched in DC's continuity and merchandising, that there was no way they would allow Jack to permanently end his epic with Darkseid's obliteration. A couple of toy tie-in *Super Powers* series would give Kirby some much-deserved retroactive compensation for creating a cornerstone of the DC Universe, and one last opportunity to draw characters he'd never worked on, like Dr. Fate, Martian Manhunter, and even Batman. It all nicely tied mainstream DC characters into the Fourth World storyline, without offering any kind of resolution to the story Kirby set out to tell in 1971.

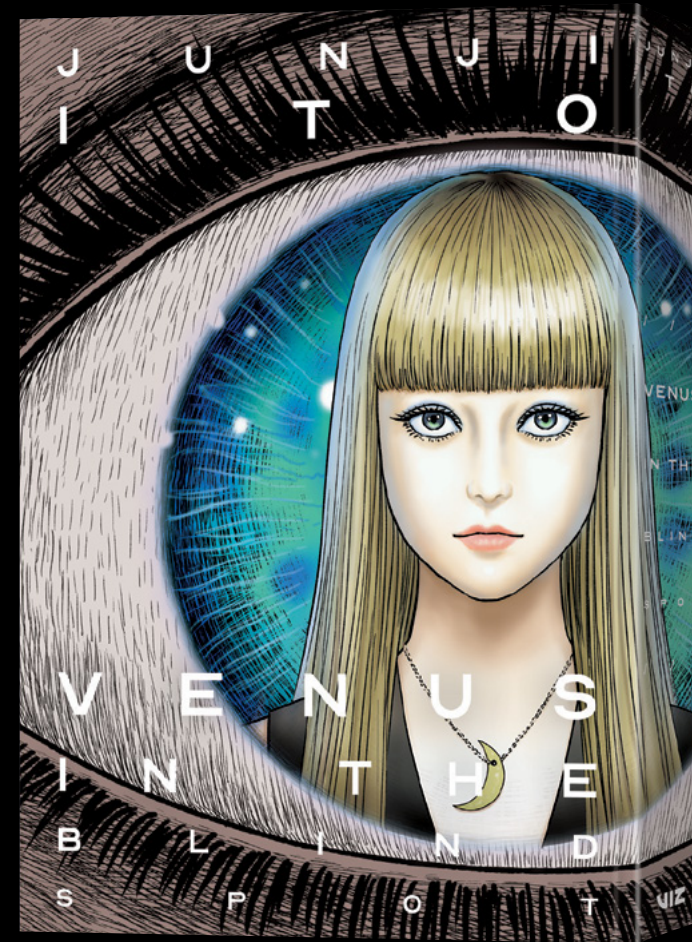
So after 50 years, the Fourth World's potential remains largely untapped. Maybe that's for the best, as the "Epic for Our Times" has proven to be timeless, fresh as the day it launched half a century ago. I'd argue that nothing DC or Marvel has published since then has been as original—even both companies' cinematic universes have echoes of, if not outright connections to, the Fourth World and its concepts. DC is even now poised to adapt the Fourth World

concepts directly in its upcoming films, with a purported New Gods movie directed by Ava DuVernay and co-written by comics scribe Tom King. And that, my friends, is perhaps the best testament to the amazing, prolific imagination of Jack Kirby, the one true King of Comics.

John Morrow is publisher at *TwoMorrows Publishing*, and editor of the *Jack Kirby Collector* magazine, which launched his company 25 years ago. *TwoMorrows* continues to be the premier purveyor of books and magazines about comics history, LEGO, and retro pop culture, but it all goes back to Jack Kirby. For more info, visit www.twomorrows.com



Page 23 from *New Gods* #1: "O' Deadly Darkseid!" • Art by Jack Kirby and Vince Colletta



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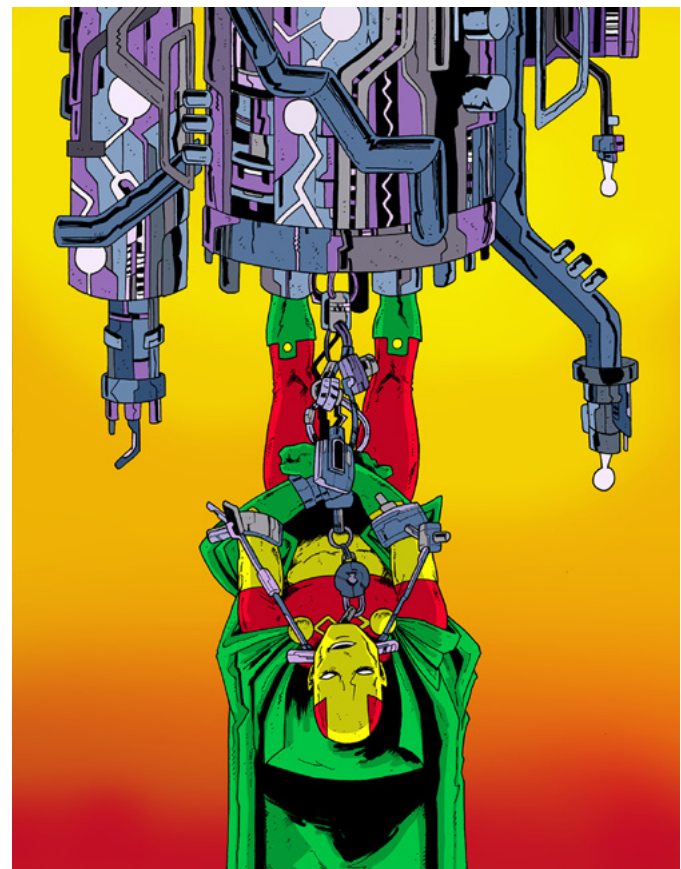
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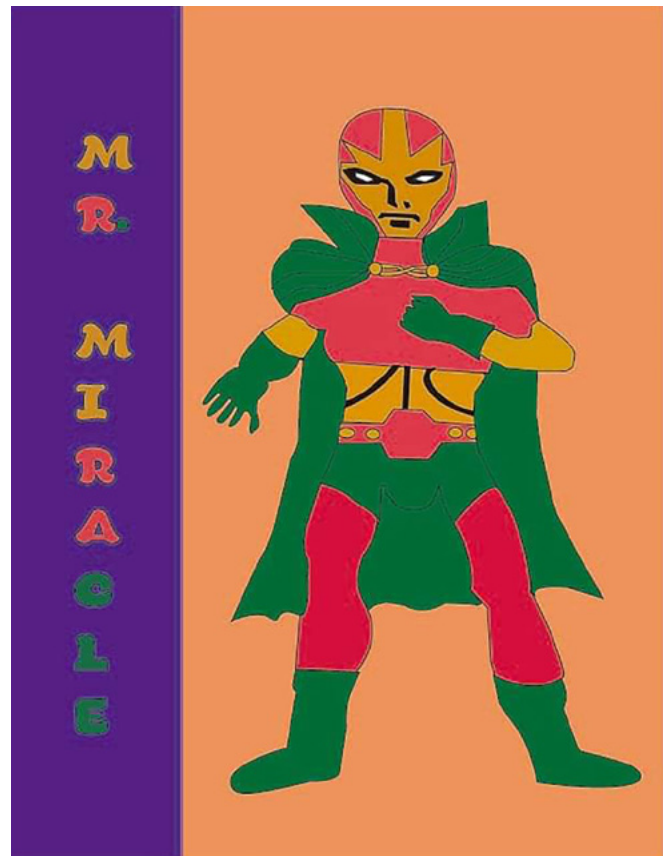
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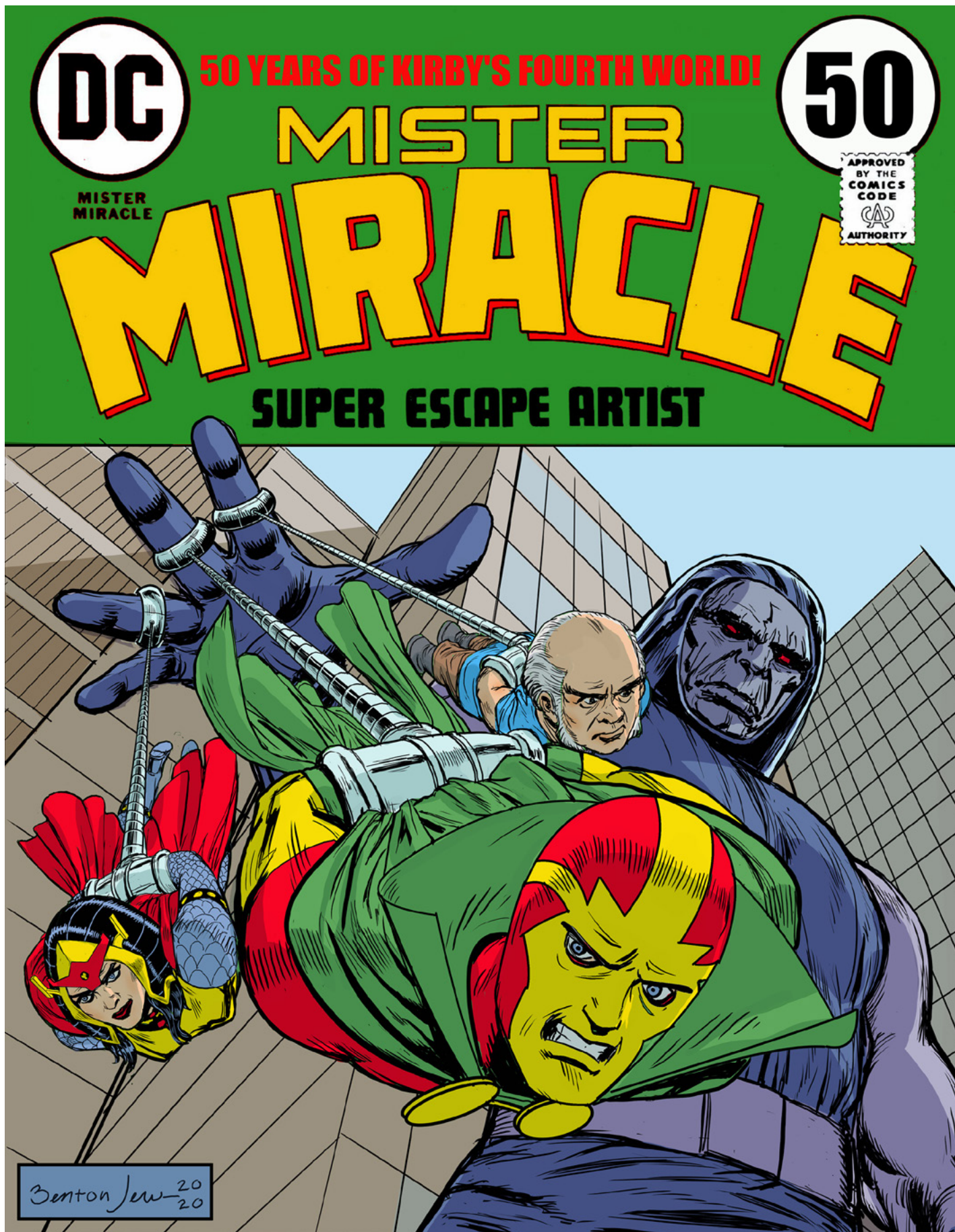
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PRESENT AT THE BIRTH: KIRBY'S FOURTH WORLD

by MARK EVANIER

Much has been written—a lot of it by me—about how unhappy Jack Kirby was working for Marvel Comics in the late sixties. The company was growing and thriving and its owner, Martin Goodman, had negotiated what seemed then like a huge sum to sell it to what then qualified as a kinda-massive conglomerate.

The main value of Marvel, Jack felt, flowed from the innovative and popular characters he had created or co-created and storylines he had conceived or co-conceived. Not that he'd done it all by himself but no one who knew the actual history would ever dispute the following: Not too long before, Marvel Comics was on the verge of closing down. Now, it was not only still in business but also worth a heckuva lot of dough. Both had a lot to do with the creative contributions of Mr. Jack Kirby.

Everyone agreed on that point. Everyone, that is, except the incoming owners of Marvel.

None seemed to be aware (or willing to admit) that Jack was not one of those interchangeable artists. You know: The kind you hand someone else's ideas and they draw them up as per orders. Quite the contrary, Kirby was still coming up with ideas and concepts and plots and making contributions that, had he been making them over at DC, would probably have brought him some sort of co-writing or plotting credit and pay for that work. And maybe, just maybe, a bit more financial security for himself and his family.

Jack began to feel like his stay in the world of Marvel might be coming to an end. In case it was, he decided to create a new world . . . one that came to be called The Fourth World.

Why "fourth?" No one knows. No one will probably ever know. Various folks have various theories but I was working for Jack at the time and I'm telling you: No one knows. Jack certainly didn't. He wasn't even sure if he'd come up with it or if someone else had. But he came up with everything else about it.

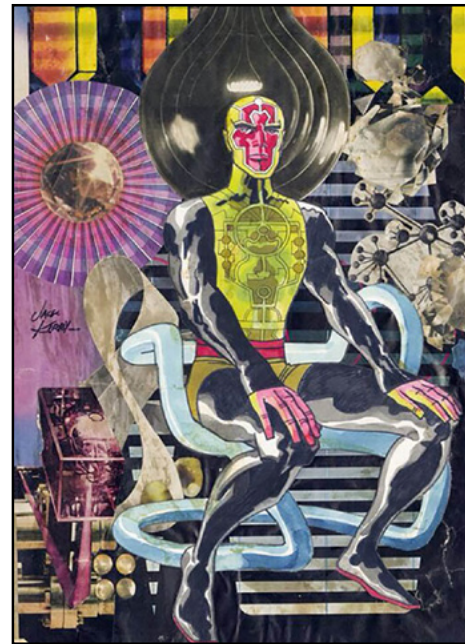
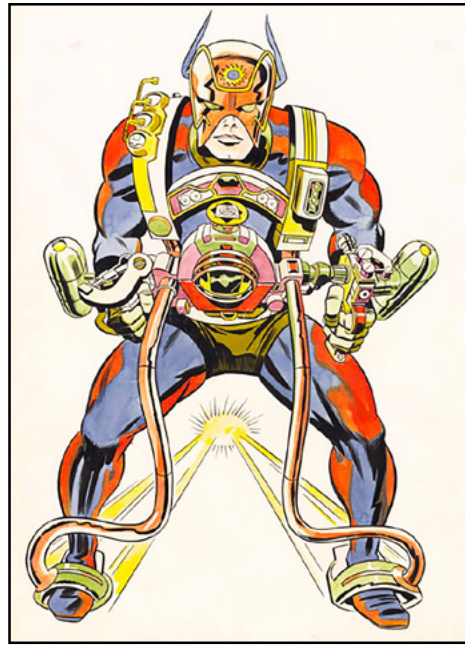
The three books that initially launched it all—*The Forever People*, *New Gods*, and *Mister Miracle*—began life some time in 1968 when Jack was feeling exceedingly trapped at a company that didn't seem to appreciate him or his contributions. He needed to find a possible escape route from Marvel—and don't think those feelings had nothing to do with the creation of Mister Miracle, the Super Escape Artist and a key player in the Fourth World yet to come.

He did up a batch of new character sketches so if he came upon someone else interested in getting into business with him, he'd have something to show them. Jack penciled the drawings, Don Heck inked most of them, and then Jack inked the rest and did the coloring on all.

The core of what would later be called the Fourth World series was a clash within a new generation of gods, the ones who would succeed Thor and his kind when there came the inevitable day of Ragnarok and the death of the old gods. Some sources have claimed that at this formative stage (1968) Jack wrote a detailed outline listing all the characters—who they were, what they would do and so forth.

This is not true. Whatever outline there was existed only in Jack's head where there was a constant swirl of new thoughts and directions. He was the kind of storyteller who might suddenly decide, between drawing Panel 4 and Panel 5 on a page, to tell a completely different story.





Six of Kirby's concept sketches for the Fourth World, including (clockwise from upper left) Darkseid, Orion, Lightray, Metreon, Mantis, and Mister Miracle.

Committing that story to paper was an act of constant improvisation. Even after he set it down on the final art boards, he often got what he thought was an even better idea. He was working in pencil, after all, and there are these things called erasers.

He might even finish four or five beautiful pages, decide they were the wrong four or five beautiful pages and lay those aside to be replaced by four or five other beautiful pages he would then create. Jack worked very hard on this series—on every comic book he did, in fact—and I think the effort shows.

Even the inked/colored presentation drawings had no finality. There's one of a guy in a yellow costume toting a gun and folks refer to it as an early design of Mister Miracle. It sort of was and sort of wasn't. When Jack did that drawing, it was of a character not named Mister Miracle who was not a Super Escape Artist, not a god and not part of any continuity involving gods. There were other characters in

the pile that Jack hadn't figured would intersect at all with his "new gods" idea though some of them, like the one called the Black Racer wound up being folded into the mix.

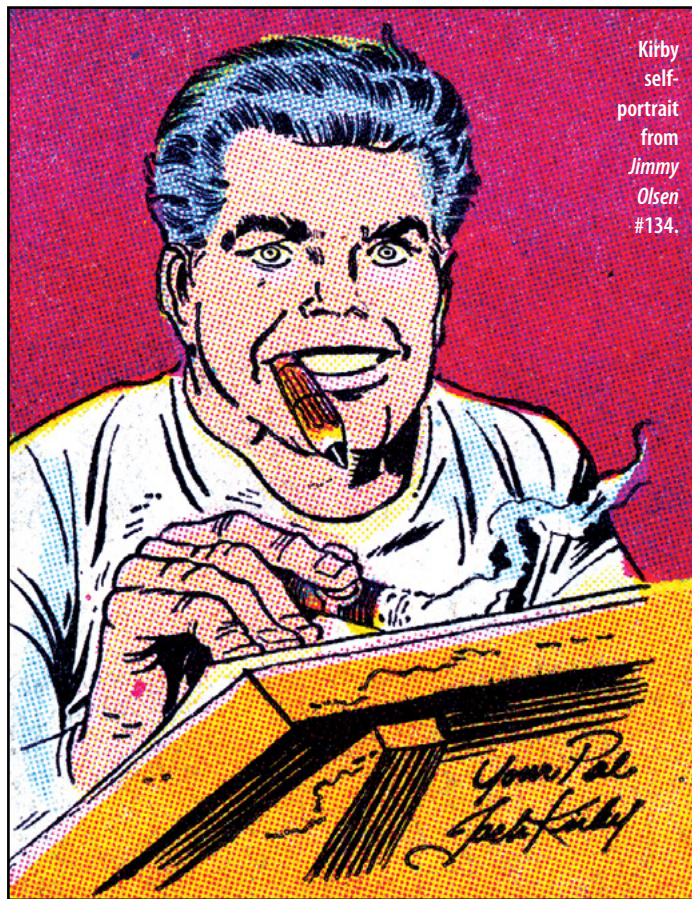
DC Comics, in the person of its newly-installed Editorial Director Carmine Infantino, wanted the new ideas and the guy who had them. When Jack finally gave up trying to get Marvel to appreciate him, he agreed to move to DC to do the new concepts and others to be named later.

He said yes the last week of January, 1970. A week or two later, he hired two kids—my friend Steve Sherman and his friend, me—to act as assistants and to keep for a time, the biggest secret ever in the comic book industry. In March, Stan Lee and the world found out... and Jack set to work on new books of new gods.

Steve and I watched, contributing next-to-nothing, as it took shape. Every weekend when we visited the home of Jack and his



Unpublished original cover art for *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #138. • Pencil art by Jack Kirby • Original art courtesy Scott Dunbier



wonderful wife Roz, another piece of the puzzle had been figured out. Or sometimes, last week's piece was in a new position with a new name and function.

The guy in the yellow suit with the gun was now the unarmed Super Escape Artist, Mister Miracle. The escape part was inspired by a previous career of writer-artist Jim Steranko, but the subtext was inspired by Jack's own feelings of imprisonment at Marvel and elsewhere. (A few issues later, the character of Scott "Mr. Miracle" Free was united with the burly/beautiful character, Big Barda. The inspiration for her look and build came from a *Playboy* layout of singer-actress Lainie Kazan. Everything she said or did was inspired by Roz.)

Autobiography and Jack's personal mores and beliefs underscored everything in the new books. The *Forever People* was all about a topic that mattered a lot to Jack in '70: The way young people were "on deck," showing themselves as qualified to take over from the older generation. Jack was by no means displeased or threatened by youth taking its rightful place . . . and not just in the country but the comic book field, as well.

Then there was Orion, who Jack thought might have been the first character drawn for "the pile" back in 1968. There was a lot of Jack in that character as well, his two faces representing the way he often felt he had to be. There was the human Orion, the handsome man who stood high on moral principles and decency. And then there was the inhuman one who sometimes did things to survive that horrified the Orion he preferred to be . . . things that supplied his connection to his highly-estranged father.

That father was Darkseid, also born in the stack of presentation drawings. Darkseid would become one of DC's key villains.

The three comics—*Forever People*, *New Gods* (which featured

Orion), and *Mister Miracle*— were ever-so-slightly unveiled at the first comic book convention in San Diego in August of 1970. The following December, they began coming out on a bi-monthly basis. Jack had fought for monthly (yes, he was fast enough to produce all three) but had lost that battle.

Early sales were good but they were not the Marvel-destroying smash hits which some there had expected. What Jack had been trying to do with it all was to invent the comic book mini-series and create something that could be kept in print forever.

DC said they liked that idea but they really didn't. Some there didn't like the Kirby style (or anything that looked like it was done by their competitor) at all. They thought conventionally at that company then and the folks in the licensing division had decreed—I heard one of them say this myself—that there was zero chance of any of Jack's new characters winding up as toys or games . . . and especially on TV or movies, which is where the money was then in comics.

Soon, Jack's books were selling no better than most of the failing DC line. Some would tell you that there was just no market for Kirby's new concepts or Kirby's way of writing dialogue. Others would say that DC was an unhealthy company that didn't know how to sell a new comic and gave up on most of them too quickly. Take your pick. You can guess where I stand on this one.

After two years, the comics were "suspended" which, then as now, meant "canceled." Jack did other things, frustrated that he was stopped when he was maybe ten chapters into a novel of perhaps two hundred. When he was angling to leave DC in 1975, he was offered a resumption of the Fourth World books if he'd stay. He passed, went back to Marvel and began working his way out of a comic book industry that really wasn't offering him a good place to be.

Later, newer DC management brought him back to resurrect the Fourth World in connection with some of the characters becoming toys and appearing on television . . . you know, that thing that previous folks in the licensing division had said would never in a million years happen. As I'm typing this, I'm being watched by a Darkseid action figure.

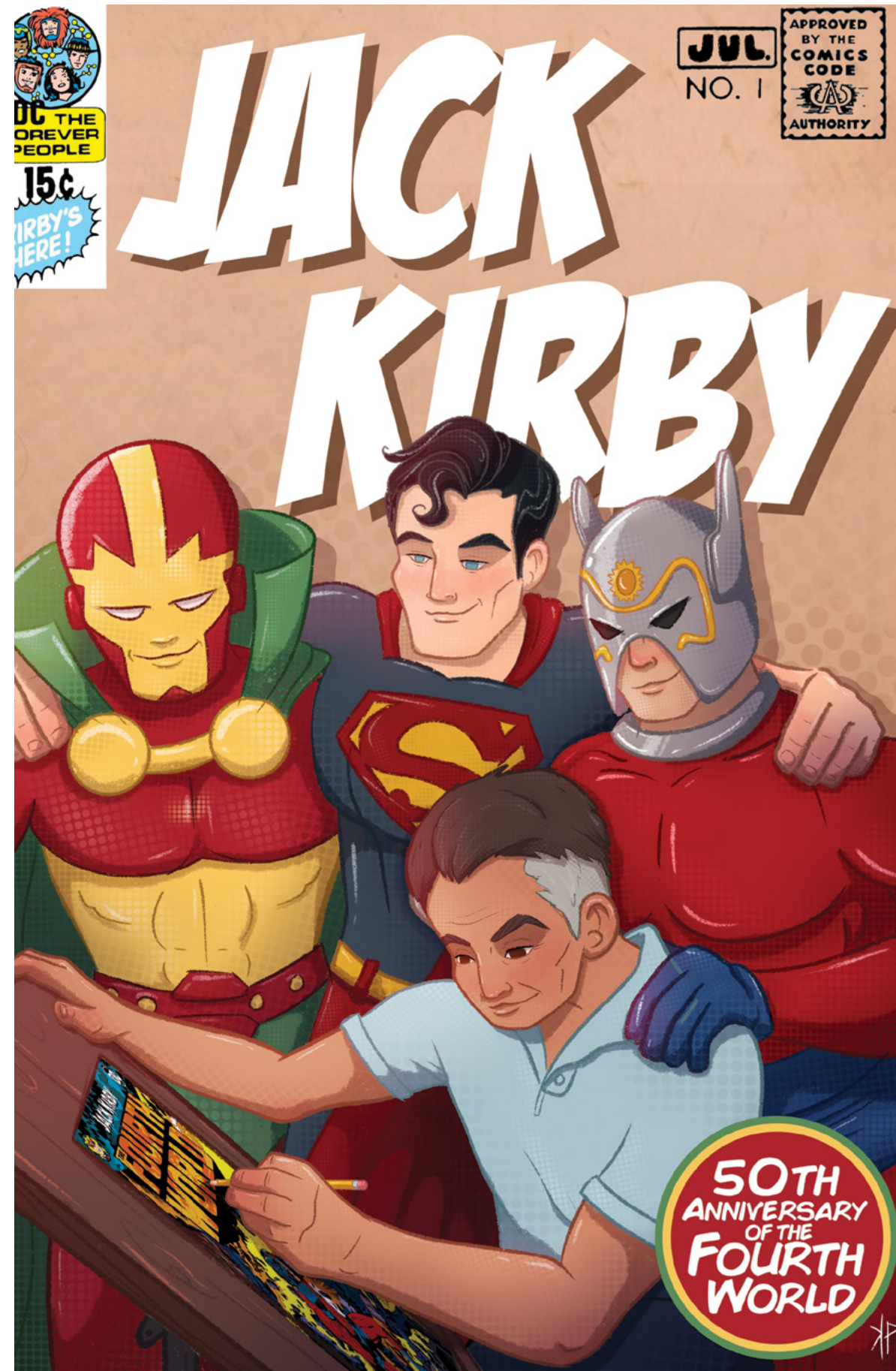
Jack did a new graphic novel, *The Hunger Dogs*, to bring a brief, not-entirely-satisfying closure to his interrupted epic. The Fourth World characters continue to appear in new stories by the top talent in the comic book field and the old stories, the ones Jack did that were called sales flops when he did them, are reprinted and reprinted and reprinted and reprinted. More TV and movie appearances loom ahead.

I loved Jack Kirby and I loved his work and I cannot even begin to separate the two loves. I reread the series, start to finish, every year or two and every single time, I see things that weren't there in previous readings. It's always some new spark of brilliance and it always reminds me of Jack.

Another thing is the shelf in my office of all those fancy, expensive, hardcover reprints of the Fourth World. When they yanked the rug out from under his feet and aborted the series, Jack said, "Those books will be a hit. It may just take time."

Right again, Kirby. Right again.

Mark Evanier went to work for Jack Kirby in 1970 and also attended the first-ever multi-day comic book convention in San Diego, the institution that is now known as Comic-Con International. He has never missed one of the conventions but he has missed Jack Kirby a lot since 1994 when we lost him.



Kaley Powers • San Diego, CA



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50 YEARS OF MIND CANDY FOR THE MASSES!

CELEBRATING A HALF-CENTURY OF RON TURNER'S LAST GASP PUBLISHING

by JON B. COOKE

Ronald Edward Turner was just trying to help out.

It was New Year's Eve 1968, when the "very stoned on Panama Red" San Francisco State University grad student was, for the first time in his existence, handed an underground comic book—as he later described it, "a real 'head' comic"—and that absorbing read of *ZAP Comix* simply blew Ron Turner's mind. R. Crumb's funny-book work transported his consciousness into a state well beyond any effect from reefer, and it also changed his life, though that metamorphosis would begin some months later.

While finishing his experimental psychology master's degree, Turner joined campus protests against the Vietnam War and the self-described "radical, anti-war person" became immersed in campus politics. At the same time, he also rekindled an early love of EC Comics when he strolled into the San Francisco Comic Book Company, in the city's Mission District. Gary Arlington's pioneering establishment was epicenter of the burgeoning underground comix scene.

Soon enough, to raise funds for the Berkeley Ecology Center, 29-year-old Turner spearheaded a project to, in his words, "make a political propaganda book about ecology and sell it and let the money flow," and so the debut issue of *Slow Death* was produced. Financed by a loan from some friendly "nerd" drug dealers, *Slow Death Funnies* #1 included EC-inspired horror stories with ecological themes by comix stalwarts. Among those talents was Greg Irons, the title's quintessential artist, whose gloriously macabre work graced nine of the 11 published issues, the last in 1992, seven years after Irons' demise. Also in #1 were efforts by the two most successful of all underground cartoonists, Crumb and Gilbert Shelton. That first Last Gasp title was released on the inaugural Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

Ironically, though that event launched a venture that today celebrates five decades in business, Turner had little interest in creating anything permanent at that time. "The first *Slow Death* we did was going to be a one-shot," he confessed. "I had no intention of doing another one and I was going to turn it over to the Berkeley Ecology Center, walk away, and do something else." Though the environmental group green-lighted the project, the Center's leadership had changed in the intervening months and they ended up accepting only 10 copies of the 20,000-issue run. Still, while surviving on unemployment benefits, an undeterred Turner decided to give this new underground comix biz a go.

(Initially, Turner wasn't quite sure what to call the imprint or, for that matter, the comic book itself. But, with help from fellow EC "fan-addict" Arlington, the neophyte comix mogul determined it was a toss-up between "Slow Death" and "Last Gasp Eco-Funnies.")

Popular enough to get a second printing, *Slow Death* #1 was noticed by the underground community and soon Turner was approached to publish other titles, including the first all-woman comix anthology, Trina Robbins' *It Ain't Me, Babe*, as well as other horror genre efforts, including *Skull*, and so was initiated the Last Gasp Eco-Funnies Company as a continuing business. (Early on, the work of masterful horror artist Richard Corben was notably introduced to a wide audience in Last Gasp's *Slow Death*, *Skull*, and *Fantagor*.) But,



Ron Turner
by R. CRUMB '89

(Left) Ron Turner in the early 1970s. Photo © Clay Geerdes. • (Right) The comic that started it all: *Slow Death Funnies* #1 from 1970. • (Opposite) Ron by R. Crumb, 1989.

hardly a year after being formed, the nascent outfit narrowly escaped the wrath of a cultural behemoth as the Walt Disney Company set a swarm of lawyers upon a hapless band of cartoon-parodists over a Last Gasp-published title.

"At the time," Turner explained, "we had the success of *Slow Death*, *It Ain't Me, Babe*, and *Skull*, and I started expanding and business was increasing . . . At a certain point, [S.F. cartoonist] Dan O'Neill said, 'I have this idea about doing an anti-Disney comic book' . . . So this idea of going after Disney, I thought, was a pretty good idea, and I said, 'I'll publish this, but under one condition: you can't say who published it.'" The resulting two editions of *Air Pirates*, with covers sporting faux "Hell Comics" logos and insides filled with adult-themed stories starring undisguised versions of Mickey Mouse and crew (properties the contributing cartoonists determined were in the public domain and hence available to all), suffered the ire of the House of the Mouse as litigation stretched on for years. Eventually, Turner was ratted out as publisher and forced to settle, while the careers of some defendants were effectively quashed.

In 1972, Turner became patron to a brilliant cartoonist whose comics subsequently had a lasting impact on the art form. The newbie publisher was terrifically impressed with Justin Green's introspective work, and Turner said, "It really captured the depths of neurosis a human can overcome. Our agreement was that I

would buy him groceries and pay his rent if he would continue working on his story. If he finished it, great, if he didn't, fine. It was just a gamble, but it paid off!" That pay-off was Green's *Binky Brown Meets the Holy Virgin Mary*, hailed widely as the pioneering autobiographical comic book, one profoundly impacting his own and subsequent generations of comix storytellers, and no less than Art Spiegelman proclaimed its influence on his Pulitzer-winning graphic novel, *Maus*. Turner estimates that eventually 70,000 copies of Green's groundbreaking masterpiece came off the press.

At that same time, Turner said, "Feminism was very much in the air and it was needed," and he remains proud to have published another landmark title, *Wimmen's Comix*, an anthology featuring all-women stories. "Historically, limitations had been put on women and their drawing style wasn't always as technical as men, but the power, emotion, and passion of the women's stories were certainly there, and definitely the pains and hurts and loves they had were there, and that came through . . . Theirs had been an unscratched itch, as a lot of people didn't realize they could tell a story. Maybe they hadn't been allowed before, but they could now speak. So *Wimmen's Comix* became a place for that to happen." Last Gasp remained its publisher until 1985, after 10 issues.

Early success prompted fresh opportunities for Last Gasp

to expand into new realms. "My unemployed self," Turner explained, "was very busy putting comix into dress shops, boutiques, magazine stores—anywhere they could be sold." As he traded his inventory with other comix publishers for theirs, and thus was established the company's distributing arm. (At one point, Turner personally distributed to 200 Bay area stores.) The company also branched out to include in its catalog drug paraphernalia, buttons, posters, and T-shirts, plus the Dealer McDope Dealing board game, of which, he reports some 300,000 were sold over time.

Soon enough, Last Gasp also carried postcards, stationery, calendars, and even paraquat detection kits. In the year since borrowing the drug dealers' money, Turner made good with his nerdy pals and, though they would subsequently become business partners for a stint, the publisher eventually became the company's sole owner. (Over the decades, Last Gasp's distributing division employed hundreds and warehoused an inventory amounting to 20,000 separate items before it closed in Dec. 2016, though, Turner said, "We still ship to stores around the world and drop off orders to local shops.")

One title proven to be a profitable addition to the Last Gasp balance sheet was a long-running and oft-reprinted satirical romance series that transported the genre to scatological extremes. "One Saturday morning," Turner said, "I was in Gary's

store with Bill Griffith, who showed me his *Young Lust* comic, and Gilbert Shelton was in the store at the same time, and I looked at it and, for what I saw, I thought it wasn't enough of a parody to publish. So I passed on it and Gilbert passed on it, too. John Bagley's Company & Sons printed it, and it became a big hit, and was Company & Sons' bread and butter . . . Eventually Bill and Jay Kinney came to us and we published #3 [June 1972], which we printed in color, and we reprinted #1 many times." Last Gasp also published *Young Lust* #5 [Mar. 1977] through #8 [1993].

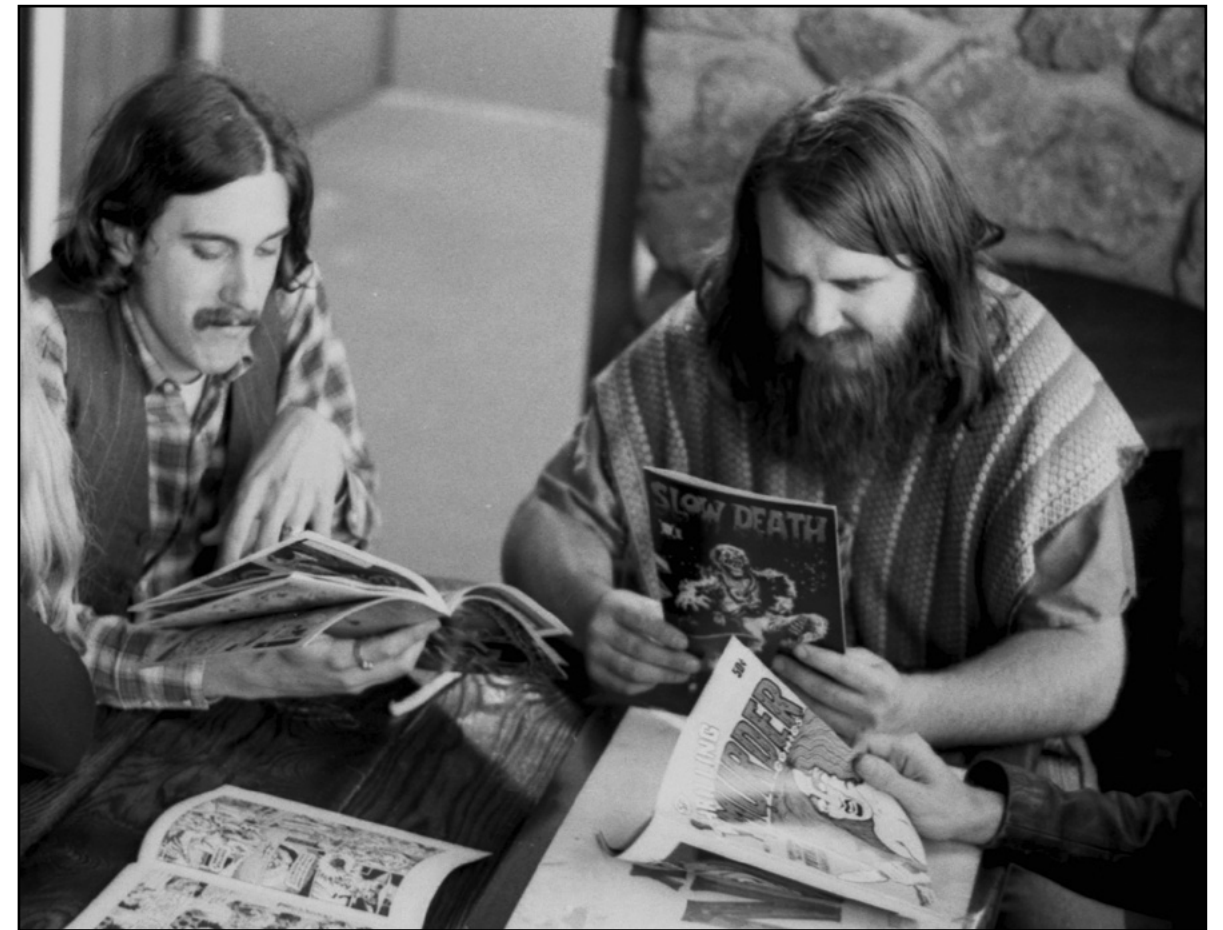
According to Turner, at a peak in the early '70s, there were some 30–40,000 head shops selling underground comic books in this country, an era when much of comix distribution was piggybacked upon sales of bongos, cigarette papers, and other drug-related items. When, by mid-decade, anti-paraphernalia laws proliferated throughout the nation, local crackdowns on head shops resulted in the near collapse of the trade. Then, Turner related, vinyl record stores became outlets to sell comix, yet soon enough, many were also routinely busted for selling items such as rolling papers and pipe screens, and, as wary storeowners stopped trading in drug accouterments, comix sales plummeted. The field was suddenly in crisis, as numerous underground publishers called it quits, leaving a mere handful of companies to carry on.

The national "stagflation" economic downturn of the mid-'70s also added to underground industry woes. Explained Turner, "All of



Ron Turner (right) with fellow comix publisher Gary Arlington (said to have opened the first store devoted singularly to comics, the San Francisco Comic Book Company).

Photo © Clay Geerdes



Ron Turner (right) reads some comics he published with cartoonist Larry Welz, whose *Cherry Poptart* comix was a successful Last Gasp title.

Photo © Clay Geerdes

a sudden, nobody had any deposable money. Thus our business dropped in 1974, by going down 80% in just a few months. It was amazing. Almost everything just about died then." Sometime around then, Last Gasp left Berkeley and moved operations to a San Francisco warehouse.

Turner also made a big change in his personal life by beginning a romance with Carol Stevenson and their relationship eventually led to the pair's greatest creations: children Colin (born Feb. 1978) and Claire (born Dec. 1988). The couple finally made it official, on Jan. 15, 2008, when they were joined in legal matrimony at a San Francisco City Hall ceremony, officiated by then-mayor Gavin Newsom. "I wanted to get married before my kids did," Turner quipped.

In 1975, Turner went into a partnership with George DiCaprio, comix writer-editor (and father of movie star Leonardo DiCaprio), to produce certain titles, and they dubbed their association Yentzer & Gonif (Yiddish for "scumbag and thief"). Together, they released *Cherry Poptart*, *Harold Hedd*, and *Bicentennial Gross-Outs*. "Our logo was drawn by Bill Stout," Turner recalled, "which was a weight scale that had a pound of flesh on one side balanced with a pile of money on the other." Emblazoned on it was a motto they first heard from a tailor: "Never fall in love with your stock." (Later, the two DiCaprios, along with über-comics fan Glenn Bray, teamed with Last Gasp to produce Stanislaw Szukalski art books.)

Exposure in the bookstore market was one way to keep Last Gasp afloat during lean years, and as popular alternative books *How to Keep Your Volkswagen Alive* and *The Whole Earth Catalog* racked up retail success, so did the fortunes of their distributor, Bookpeople. Early on, that Berkeley employee-owned group added Last Gasp's wares to its catalog, thus helping the publisher to find a wider audience. "They were the first to carry underground comix as a legitimate item to sell in bookstores," Turner said. "It was a breakthrough for us to be carried by them."

In the earliest years, Last Gasp did occasionally publish its own books (including, to name three, *The Breather's Guide to Invisible Air Pollution* [1970], *The Kids Liberation Coloring Book* [1971], and 1975's *Anthology of Slow Death*, the latter co-produced by Bookpeople's Wingbow Press). "We mostly were focusing on comics," Turner related, "but we were kept being asked by the odd places we sold to, like head shops, who wanted to know if we had any books on marijuana growing or drugs, and comic shops wanted to know if we had any comics trade paperback collections." Then, by the late '70s, the publisher gradually produced books on a regular basis, initially with respective efforts about punk music, pot horticulture, and pop stars. "But, not coming from the book business," he confessed with a laugh, "early on, I didn't know what I was supposed to do, so I was printing books in the same numbers I did the comics.

Which was a mistake, as that was a *lot* of books!"

Turner remained especially proud of publishing comix about the marginalized and oppressed: for instance, Carl Vaughn Frick's gay comics title, *Watch Out* [March 1986], the AIDS benefit anthology edited by Trina Robbins, *Strip AIDS U.S.A.* [1988], and Jaxon's painstakingly authentic histories of Native Americans, *White Comanche* and *Red Raider* [both 1977]. Of his efforts, the publisher said, "All these people from around the world got the sh-tty end of the stick and you gotta try and break that stick in two."

A huge perennial seller for any publisher holding the rights was the quintessential underground comic book, *ZAP*, and in 1980, Last Gasp—previously merely a distributor of the publication—signed an agreement with the *ZAP* collective to become the title's publisher, thereafter a significant money-maker for the company. "We went from working on distributor margins to publisher margins," Turner said, "so there was more money to be made, percentage-wise . . . and, for me personally, it was a big deal." Last Gasp was the legendary title's official publisher for the next 25 years. Turner would subsequently formulate individual book agreements with *ZAP* alumni R. Crumb and Robert Williams.

For a time, Bill Griffith's *Zippy the Pinhead* collections, calendars, and such were Last Gasp staples and, besides periodic

Zippy compilations, the company briefly slowed production of comix titles. But importantly, in 1981, Turner did handle Crumb's *Weirdo*, the irreverent humor comics anthology published through the '80s, and its pages were refuge for a new generation of "alternative" cartoonists during the otherwise moribund Reagan years. And by mid-decade, truth to tell, the company restarted its steady flow of comix publishing, significantly the brilliant autobiographical efforts by one-time Last Gasp accountant Dori Seda, whose young life was lost due to illness in 1988. (In the '90s, the outfit even boasted its own titular five-issue anthology, *Last Gasp Comix & Stories*.)

A permanent category in Last Gasp's catalog has long been explicit sex comics. "We were doing *Cherry Poptart* (though that went away to Kitchen Sink)," Turner said, "and, once the internet got going, we did *Horny Biker Sluts* and a series called *She-Male Trouble*, and these were pretty hardcore stuff. That was the intent." He then described company philosophy regarding explicit publications: "I always felt we should be very sincere about the material we offered. If you wanted hardcore sex, okay, here's some hardcore sex!" Between the '90s and '00s, Last Gasp translated full-color French sadomasochistic "albums," which became mainstay listings.

Starting in 1989, Last Gasp teamed with Knockabout



Ron Turner today, 50 years after starting Last Gasp. Photo by Nancy Tran

Press, the British underground comix publishing and distribution company run by Tony Bennett, a U.K. anti-censorship champion, as each handled the other's books on their respective sides of the Atlantic. One Last Gasp import, Crumb's *My Troubles with Women*, was held up by British customs when an inspector was offended by three panels—out of some 760, by one count—which depicted acts of oral sex. The resulting obscenity trial was ruled in favor of Knockabout.

For Last Gasp, the 1990s also brought a shift to publishing art books in the pop surrealist/lowbrow art category, exemplified by the work of Robert Williams, Todd Schorr, Mark Ryden, Ron English, and others. In part, this new focus resulted from an association with Los Angeles "culture purveyor" Billy Shire, an art gallery owner in need of book-length catalogs to be created for exhibitions and sold in his trendsetting La Luz de Jesus art showcase. Thereafter Turner expanded to like subjects, publishing books devoted to tattoo art, California pop culture, "kustom kulture," and similar topics, many of which the publisher still spotlights to this day.

(In 2004, Last Gasp published *Harold's End*, a novella purportedly based on the "real-life" experience of JT Leroy, a former San Francisco heroin-addicted street hustler who began his trade by being pimped out as a boy by his own mother. Notoriously, Leroy was thereafter revealed to be a fictitious construct of writer Laura Albert.)

Notably, since the '00s, Last Gasp was the American publisher of a newly translated *Barefoot Gen*, the multi-volume manga saga

of a Japanese boy and his family's ordeal through the Hiroshima atomic bombing and aftermath. Into its line-up, the publisher also offered *Tintin* albums and books devoted to cartoonist-author Hergé and his renowned Belgian adventure comics.

From the 1970s to mid-2010s—celebrating some 44 holiday seasons—Turner hosted a renowned San Francisco event held at their warehouse, Last Gasp's annual "Burritos, Beer & Cheer" soirée. "It was basically a Christmas party," he said, "when everybody came down, drank some beers, smoked some joints, and that got to become a big thing, and eventually we used it as a fund-raising event for the local soup kitchen," the St. Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, with beverages donated by area wineries and brewers.

Today, control of the company is in the hands of son Colin, who presides over a streamlined publishing schedule. Shed of its distributing arm, Last Gasp singularly focuses on its prescribed founding mission: to publish books (and today the occasional comic book) dedicated to honoring the business's registered trademark tagline as coined by "Ronzo": Mind Candy for the Masses®.

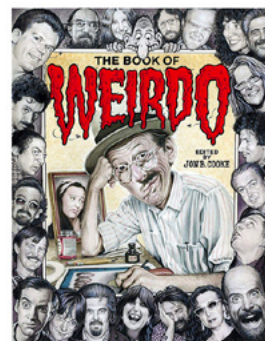
The father mused over how it felt to be the lone survivor, last of the original underground comix publishers still in business. "Back in my football days," Turner said, "I played both offense and defense, so I never got a rest, and I don't mind being the last one standing . . . but the reality is that my son, Colin, has taken the reins and he's the one standing."

Though today the man has slowed some and stands with the aid of a cane, "Baba Ron" Turner, the charming, unrepentant hippie and grandfather, remains as sharp and avuncular as ever while nearing his 80th birthday. Nowadays, he's happy to boast that, over the preceding five decades, Last Gasp published 770 books (plus hundreds of other items) and his company has yet to miss payroll for any pay period, has honored all royalty payments, and has never stiffed a printer.

Asked how he accounts for the endurance of Last Gasp in its first half-century, Turner chuckles and offers a mere two words:

"Dumb luck."

Jon B. Cooke is the five-time Eisner Award-winning editor of *Comic Book Artist* magazine [1998–2005]; writer and co-producer of the full-length feature film documentary, *Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist* [2007]; and currently is editor of *Comic Book Creator* magazine, published by *TwoMorrows*. In 2019, his comprehensive history of R. Crumb's humor comics anthology, *The Book of Weirdo*, was published by Last Gasp, and he recently compiled a trade paperback collection of cautionary environmental horror stories, *Slow Death Zero*, for the same publisher. Jon is now hard at work on *Mind Candy for the Masses: 50 Years of Last Gasp Publishing, a retrospective of Ron Turner's innovative company. He lives in southern Rhode Island with his wife, Beth; two dogs, Roxy and Dilly; and a cat named Noodle—and eldest son Benjamin for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.*



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The year-round **Comic-Con Museum** is coming to San Diego's Balboa Park in 2021! Upon opening, the Museum will feature round-the-clock programming, rotating immersive experiences, a theater, and an Education Center. To learn more about how you can be part of our origin story, visit us at Comic-Con.org/Museum and become a Charter Member today!.



COMIC-CON MUSEUM

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE MEMORIES FROM THE LAST YEAR

We will see you in-person next year for the Museum's Grand Opening!



THE TIME WE HAD NEARLY 10,000 VISITORS DURING DECEMBER NIGHTS

We had the privilege to work with a number of amazing groups for last year's December Nights. Their donation of time and resources allowed visitors to explore their own creativity at make and take stations like the one designed by Cardboard Superheroes, meet well-known artists like Shag or to sit back and relax while enjoying classic holiday films.

THE TIME WE MADE SOME NEW FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS

In collaboration with The Helen Woodward Animal Center, we co-hosted the 7th Annual PAWmicon and helped to raise \$43,000 in support of orphan animals. While being a great cause, it's also THE cutest event. Guests experienced pet cosplay contests, themed photo opportunities, music, games, food, and more.



THE TIME WE SHOWCASED OUR FIRST FEATURE ARTIST, SHAG

Last year, we had the opportunity to work with Josh Agle (aka Shag) to create an exhibit featuring a retrospective of his career. As if that weren't cool enough, Shag also produced a limited-edition print made exclusively for the Museum. Through sales of the print, we have raised over \$10,000 in support of the Museum. Thank you Shag and The Shag Store!

THE TIME WE INDUCTED BATMAN INTO THE COMIC-CON MUSEUM CHARACTER HALL OF FAME

2019 was a momentous year as we inducted Batman as the very first honoree into the Comic-Con Museum Character Hall of Fame. Celebrating the Dark Knight's impact on pop culture and fans over the last 80 years was really special. We are looking forward to seeing which characters are honored next!

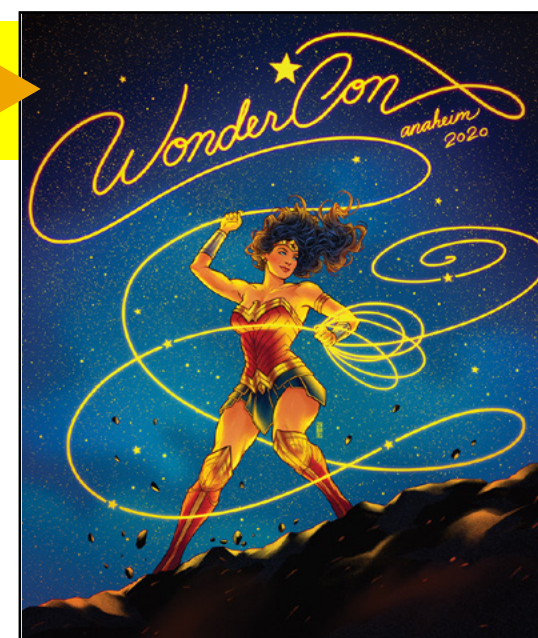


THE TIME WE ACTIVATED ALL 68,000 SQUARE FEET OF THE MUSEUM

We were completely overjoyed last year as we witnessed more than 20,000 visitors access the Comic-Con Museum for free. It gave us goosebumps to see firsthand what this place will be like when we officially open in 2021.

THE TIME JEN BARTEL VISITED OUR "SENSE OF WONDER" EXHIBIT

Before the pandemic hit, we were incredibly fortunate to have artist Jen Bartel join us for the exhibit opening of "Sense of Wonder: The Art of WonderCon Anaheim," curated by our own Gary Sassaman. That night, we also debuted the WonderCon Anaheim 2020 Program Book cover created by Jen and got to learn direct from her about the creation of this truly beautiful piece of art.



THE TIME WE SCREENED THE FIRST EPISODE OF PICARD

We were fortunate to work with CBS All Access to host an exclusive screening of *Picard* Episode One at the Comic-Con Museum. And as if that wasn't cool enough, CBS brought down original props and costumes from the show, which we displayed in a pop-up exhibit right outside the theater. The first of many premieres!



THE TIME WE CAME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Tough does not even begin to describe the reality we all face in 2020. But one thing these unprecedented times have made clear is the importance of connectedness. Whether that is to one another, to our values, to our communities, to learning, to growth, the power of connectivity is transformative. In this time, the Comic-Con Museum has been doing its best to connect with its community and provide resources that help us learn something new while infusing a little bit of joy. And we're just getting started.



ALL OF THE TIMES OUR SUPPORTERS WERE AMAZING!

The saying, "It takes a village" comes to mind when we think back on this last year and the incredible support our Charter Members, donors, and volunteers provided in helping make all of the events, programs and exhibits we planned a reality. We couldn't be more grateful!



BUILD THE 1967 MUSTANG

STARRING IN *GONE IN 60 SECONDS*

ELEANOR

60 SECONDS

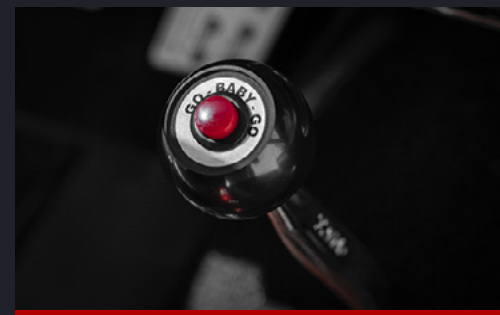
BUILD THIS UNIQUE 1:8 SCALE DIE-CAST MODEL OF THE MUSTANG ELEANOR, THE STAR CAR IN THE 2000 REMAKE OF *GONE IN 60 SECONDS*

COMING JANUARY 2021

LARGE SCALE 1:8



DC THE EAST CLUB HERO COLLECTOR
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"GO BABY GO" GEARSHIFT

Working replica of the Eleanor's signature gearshift as seen in the movie.



NITROUS TANK

Pop open the trunk and there's the nitrous oxide tank, just like in the movie. "We saved the best for last..."



AUTHENTIC DETAILS

From the pepper grey paint scheme to the design of the gauges, nothing has been overlooked.

**REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE:
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BATMAN BECOMES THE FIRST INDUCTEE INTO THE COMIC-CON MUSEUM CHARACTER HALL OF FAME

In 2019, Batman became the first inductee into the Comic-Con Museum's Character Hall of Fame. A gala ceremony was held on Wednesday, July 17, and the Museum was turned into a massive three-level salute to the Caped Crusader, featuring all things Batman from across all media, including comics, movies and TV (featuring actual Batmobiles!), video games, statues, displays, and much, much more. DC's publisher and chief creative officer, Jim Lee, helped induct Batman into the Character Hall of Fame ... here's an excerpt from his speech from that memorable (not-so-dark) night.

"Batman is very much real. The core of Batman, the qualities that made him endure from generation to generation is as true to life as it gets. Batman is an inspiration that makes us believe that it's possible to take any hardship and forge it into something good. Batman is real in every person who summons the strength and resilience to keep going, and that my friends is a superpower."



CHARACTER HALL OF FAME
2019 **BATMAN**



Batman TM & © DC • Art by Jim Lee and Alex Sinclair • From the 2014 Comic-Con Souvenir Book



THE BATMAN

My friend and mentor, Jerry Robinson, used to tell me the story of how he and Bill Finger had a bet going with Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster as to whose character would wind up lasting longer. Jerry doubled down on The Batman. He figured that Superman's powers were so fantastical, and that the boys couldn't keep coming up with threats that were large enough, and therefore Supes would be the first one to fade. It was a continuation of that thinking that led Jerry to come up with the idea of The Joker . . . giving The Batman a bigger, more colorful, larger-than-life threat. As Jerry and Bill began to talk about developing this new "super" villain, they were prepared to take the great comic strip villains of *Dick Tracy* and *Terry and the Pirates* to the next level. And The Batman would never be the same. Superheroes would never be the same. The world would never be the same. And eventually, Hollywood would never be the same.

As another of my great friends and mentors, Stan Lee, often said to me, "The longest lasting and most popular superheroes are the ones with the greatest supervillains because, ultimately, it is the supervillains who define the superhero." Simply stated, The Batman has had the greatest supervillains in the history of comicbookdom and, inarguably, the greatest comic book supervillain in history. In fact, I will go one step beyond that . . . he has had one of the three greatest villains in the history of CINEMA, among The Wicked Witch of the West, Darth Vader, and The Joker.

I will even go on the record to say that if someone decides to create a Mount Rushmore of The Joker, the four heads carved into it will be Jack Nicholson, Mark Hamill, Heath Ledger, and Joaquin Phoenix.

The 1989 *Batman* movie was revolutionary on many levels. It was the first true dark and serious comic book superhero movie. It changed the world's perception of superheroes, supervillains, and comic books themselves, as it was embraced worldwide across borders and cultures by adults who had never read a comic book in their lives. Comic books and superheroes were no longer considered kiddie fare. The credit for that must go to director, Tim Burton, who had what I call "The Big Idea." The Big Idea was that if we were to make the world's first ever dark and serious comic book superhero movie, this film could NOT be about Batman. It had to be about Bruce Wayne. And that has made all the difference! Think of it . . . shouldn't Marvel's movies titled *Iron Man* actually, truly be titled *Tony Stark* . . . ? And those Spider-Man movies should clearly be titled *Peter Parker*. The portals were opened by Tim's Big Idea which still impacts and influences genre movies to this very day.

I believe there have been six geniuses to have spearheaded Batman-related movie projects that changed what a comic book movie could be, how a comic book movie could be made, and the world's perception of superheroes and supervillains:

For the 1989 *Batman* movie, it was Tim Burton and our Oscar-winning production designer, my friend, Anton Furst, who designed Gotham City, the Batmobile, and the whole look of that ground-breaking picture.

Then it was the genius Christopher Nolan who not only restored the darkness and dignity to Batman, but elevated it as an artform. When you walked out of any one of his Dark Knight trilogy films, you no longer were limited to say, "That was a great comic book movie!" Now you could say legitimately, "That was a great film!"

"Genius" is also the best term I can use to describe Phil Lord and Chris Miller, the creators of *The Lego Movie* and one of the great interpretations of Batman in which audiences globally laughed WITH Batman not AT Batman. These, of course, are the same Phil Lord and Chris Miller who would go on to create the animated feature film *Into the Spider-Verse*, another work at genius level.

Finally, there is the genius of Todd Phillips, director and co-writer of *Joker*, a movie that once again redefined how a comic book movie can be made, and even redefined and defied the definition of "What is a comic book movie?"

Co-creator of The Batman and The Joker, Bill Finger, never lived long enough to see a media interpretation of his Joker past Cesar Romero. Jerry Robinson, the co-creator of The Joker, lived long enough to see the performance of a lifetime by Heath Ledger in *The Dark Knight*. Jerry fully embraced that interpretation and fully supported a filmmaker taking his character to bold and daring new and different levels. I can only imagine how Jerry and Bill would have embraced the performance of Joaquin Phoenix as *Joker* under the direction of Todd Phillips!

What has the extraordinary success of Batman on the big screen over the decades meant to pop culture and the world culture? What has been the grand impact of Batman-related movies, three times now re-inventing what a comic book movie could be and how superheroes and supervillains are perceived by the world? The answers came one year ago with the inauguration of The Character Hall of Fame on the site of the amazing, upcoming Comic Con Museum in San Diego. The first comic book character inducted into its new Hall of Fame was not Superman, but rather The Batman. When I was growing up, that would have been inconceivable! Impossible! Earth-shattering! But in its own unique way, at least to me, it has meant that Jerry and Bill won their bet with Jerry and Joe!

Michael Uslan

Originator and Executive Producer of the Batman movie franchise • 2020

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Panel - How to Create Your Own Novel: From First Idea to Publishing and What You Need to Sell Your Work Into TV and Film.
YouTube Sunday, 07/26/20, 3:00 PM - <https://linktr.ee/winnertwins>

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2020 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Nominations

BEST SHORT STORY

“Hot Comb,” by Ebony Flowers, in *Hot Comb* (Drawn & Quarterly)
 “How to Draw a Horse,” by Emma Hunsinger, *The New Yorker*
 “The Menopause,” by Mira Jacob, *The Believer*
 “Who Gets Called an ‘Unfit’ Mother?” by Miriam Libicki, *The Nib*
 “You’re Not Going to Believe What I’m About to Tell You,” by Matthew Inman, *The Oatmeal*

BEST SINGLE ISSUE/ONE-SHOT

Coin-Op No. 8: Infatuation, by Peter and Maria Hoey (Coin-Op Books)
The Freak, by Matt Lesniewski (AdHouse)
Minotaur, by Lissa Treiman (Shortbox)
Our Favorite Thing Is My Favorite Thing Is Monsters, by Emil Ferris (Fantagraphics)
Sobek, by James Stokoe (Shortbox)

BEST CONTINUING SERIES

Bitter Root, by David Walker, Chuck Brown, and Sanford Greene (Image)
Criminal, by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips (Image)
Crowded, by Christopher Sebela, Ro Stein, and Ted Brandt (Image)
Daredevil, by Chip Zdarsky and Marco Checchetto (Marvel)
The Dreaming, by Simon Spurrier, Bilquis Evelyn et al. (DC)
Immortal Hulk, by Al Ewing, Joe Bennett, and Ruy José et al. (Marvel)

BEST LIMITED SERIES

Ascender, by Jeff Lemire and Dustin Nguyen (Image)
Ghost Tree, by Bobby Curnow and Simon Gane (IDW)
Little Bird by Darcy Van Poelgeest and Ian Bertram (Image)
Naomi by Brian Michael Bendis, David Walker, and Jamal Campbell (DC)
Sentient, by Jeff Lemire and Gabriel Walta (TKO)

BEST NEW SERIES

Doctor Doom, by Christopher Cantwell and Salvador Larocca (Marvel)
Invisible Kingdom, by G. Willow Wilson and Christian Ward (Berger Books/Dark Horse)
Once & Future, by Kieron Gillen and Dan Mora (BOOM! Studios)
Something Is Killing the Children, by James Tynion IV and Werther Dell’Edera (BOOM! Studios)
Undiscovered Country, by Scott Snyder, Charles Soule, Giuseppe Camuncoli, and Daniele Orlandini (Image)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR EARLY READERS

Comics: Easy as ABC, by Ivan Brunetti (TOON)
Kitten Construction Company: A Bridge Too Fur, by John Patrick Green (First Second/Macmillan)
The Pigeon HAS to Go to School! by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books)
A Trip to the Top of the Volcano with Mouse, by Frank Viva (TOON)
¡Vamos! Let’s Go to the Market, by Raúl the Third (Versify/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
Who Wet My Pants? by Bob Shea and Zachariah Ohora (Little, Brown)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR KIDS

Akissi: More Tales of Mischief, by Marguerite Abouet and Mathieu Sapin (Flying Eye/Nobrow)
Dog Man: For Whom the Ball Rolls, by Dav Pilkey (Scholastic Graphix)
Guts, by Raina Telgemeier (Scholastic Graphix)
New Kid, by Jerry Craft (Quill Tree/HarperCollins)
This Was Our Pact, by Ryan Andrews (First Second/Macmillan)
The Wolf in Underpants, by Wilfrid Lupano, Mayana Itoiz, and Paul Cauuet (Graphic Universe/Lerner Publishing Group)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR TEENS

Harley Quinn: Breaking Glass, by Mariko Tamaki and Steve Pugh (DC)
Hot Comb, by Ebony Flowers (Drawn & Quarterly)

Kiss Number 8, by Colleen AF Venable and Ellen T. Crenshaw (First Second/Macmillan)
Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me, by Mariko Tamaki and Rosemary Valero-O’Connell (First Second/Macmillan)
Penny Nichols, by MK Reed, Greg Means, and Matt Wiegle (Top Shelf)

BEST HUMOR PUBLICATION

Anatomy of Authors, by Dave Kellelt (SheldonComics.com)
Death Wins a Goldfish, by Brian Rea (Chronicle Books)
Minotaur, by Lissa Treiman (Shortbox)
Sobek, by James Stokoe (Shortbox)
The Way of the Househusband, vol. 1, by Kousuke Oono, translation by Sheldon Drzka (VIZ Media)
Wondermark: Friends You Can Ride On, by David Malki (Wondermark)

BEST ANTHOLOGY

ABC of Typography, by David Rault, translation by Edward Gauvin (SelfMade Hero)
Baltic Comics Anthology #34-37, edited by David Schilter, Sanita Muižniece et al. (kušl)
Drawing Power: Women’s Stories of Sexual Violence, Harassment, and Survival, edited by Diane Nomin (Abrams)
Kramer’s Ergot #10, edited by Sammy Harkham (Fantagraphics)
The Nib #2-4, edited by Matt Bors (Nib)

BEST REALITY-BASED WORK

Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations, by Mira Jacob (One World/Random House)
Grass, by Keum Suk Gendry-Kim, translation by Janet Hong (Drawn & Quarterly)
Kid Gloves: Nine Months of Careful Chaos, by Lucy Knisley (First Second/Macmillan)
Moonbound: Apollo 11 and the Dream of Spaceflight, by Jonathan Fetter-Vorm (Hill & Wang)
My Solo Exchange Diary, vol. 2 (sequel to *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness*), by Nagata Kabi, translation by Jocelyne Allen (Seven Seas)

They Called Us Enemy, by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker (Top Shelf)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM—NEW

Are You Listening? by Tillie Walden (First Second/Macmillan)
Bezimena, by Nina Bunjevac (Fantagraphics)
BTM FDRS, by Ezra Clayton Daniels and Ben Passmore (Fantagraphics)
Life on the Moon, by Robert Grossman (Yoe Books/IDW)
New World, by David Jesus Vignolli (Archaia/BOOM!)
Reincarnation Stories, by Kim Deitch (Fantagraphics)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM—REPRINT

Bad Weekend by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips (Image)
Clyde Fans, by Seth (Drawn & Quarterly)
Cover, vol. 1, by Brian Michael Bendis and David Mack (DC/Jinxworld)
Glenn Ganges: The River at Night, by Kevin Huizenga (Drawn & Quarterly)
LaGuardia, by Nnedi Okorafor and Tana Ford (Berger Books/Dark Horse)
Rusty Brown, by Chris Ware (Pantheon)

BEST ADAPTATION FROM ANOTHER MEDIUM

Giraffes on Horseback Salad: Salvador Dali, the Marx Brothers, and the Strangest Movie Never Made, by Josh Frank, Tim Hedecker, and Manuela Pertega (Quirk Books)
The Giver, by Lois Lowry, adapted by P. Craig Russell (HMH Books for Young Readers)
The Handmaid’s Tale: The Graphic Novel, by Margaret Atwood, adapted by Renee Nault (Nan A. Talese)
HP Lovecraft’s At the Mountains of Madness, vols. 1–2, adapted by Gou Tanabe, translation by Zack Davison (Dark Horse Manga)
The Seventh Voyage, by Stanislaw Lem, adapted by Jon J Muth, translation by Michael Kandel (Scholastic Graphix)
Snow, Glass, Apples, by Neil Gaiman and Colleen Doran (Dark Horse Books)

BEST U.S. EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL MATERIAL

Diabolical Summer, by Thierry Smolderen and Alexandre Clerisse, translation by Edward Gauvin (IDW)
Gramercy Park, by Timothée de Fombelle and Christian Cailleaux, translation by Edward Gauvin (EuroComics/IDW)
The House, by Paco Roca, translation by Andrea Rosenberg (Fantagraphics)
Maggy Garrison, by Lewis Trondheim and Stéphane Oiry, translation by Emma Wilson (SelfMadeHero)
Stay, by Lewis Trondheim and Hubert Chevillard, translation by Mike Kennedy (Magnetic Press)
Wrath of Fantômas, by Olivier Bocquet and Julie Rocheleau, translation by Edward Gauvin (Titan)

BEST U.S. EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL MATERIAL—ASIA

BEASTARS, by Paru Itagaki, translation by Tomo Kimura (VIZ Media)
Cats of the Louvre, by Taiyo Matsumoto, translation by Michael Arias (VIZ Media)
Grass, by Keum Suk Gendry-Kim, translation by Janet Hong (Drawn & Quarterly)
Magic Knight Royearth 25th Anniversary Edition, by CLAMP, translation by Melissa Tanaka (Kodansha)
The Poe Clan, by Moto Hagio, translation by Rachel Thorn (Fantagraphics)
Witch Hat Atelier, by Kamome Shirahama, translation by Stephen Kohler (Kodansha)

BEST ARCHIVAL COLLECTION/PROJECT—STRIPS

Cham: The Best Comic Strips and Graphic Novelettes, 1839–1862, by David Kunzle (University Press of Mississippi)
Ed Leffingwell’s Little Joe, by Harold Gray, edited by Peter Maresca and Sammy Harkham (Sunday Press Books)
The George Herriman Library: Krazy & Ignatz 1916–1918, edited by R.J. Casey (Fantagraphics)
Krazy Kat: The Complete Color Sundays, by George Herriman, edited by Alexander Braun (TASCHEN)
Madness in Crowds: The Teeming Mind of Harrison Cady, by Violet and Denis Kitchen (Beehive Books)
Pogo, Vol. 6: *Clean as a Weasel*, by Walt Kelly, edited by Mark Evanier and Eric Reynolds (Fantagraphics)

BEST ARCHIVAL COLLECTION/PROJECT—COMIC BOOKS

Alay-Oop, by William Gropper (New York Review Comics)
The Complete Crepax, vol. 5: *American Stories*, edited by Kristy Valenti (Fantagraphics)
Jack Kirby’s Dingbat Love, edited by John Morrow (TwoMorrrows)
Moonshadow: The Definitive Edition, by J. M. DeMatteis, Jon J Muth, George Pratt, Kent Williams, and others (Dark Horse Books)
Stan Sakai’s Usagi Yojimbo: The Complete Grasscutter Artist Select, by Stan Sakai, edited by Scott Dunbier (IDW)
That Miyoko Asagaya Feeling, by Shinichi Abe, translation by Ryan Holmberg, edited by Mitsuhiro Asakawa (Black Hook Press)

BEST WRITER

Bobby Curnow, *Ghost Tree* (IDW)
 MK Reed and Greg Means, *Penny Nichols* (Top Shelf)
 Mariko Tamaki, *Harley Quinn: Breaking Glass* (DC); *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me* (First Second/Macmillan); *Archie* (Archie)
 Lewis Trondheim, *Stay* (Magnetic Press); *Maggy Garrison* (SelfMadeHero)
 G. Willow Wilson, *Invisible Kingdom* (Berger Books/Dark Horse); *Ms. Marvel* (Marvel)
 Chip Zdarsky, *White Trees* (Image); *Daredevil*, *Spider-Man: Life Story* (Marvel); *Afterlift* (comiXology Originals)

BEST WRITER/ARTIST

Nina Bunjevac, *Bezimena* (Fantagraphics)
 Mira Jacob, *Good Talk* (Random House); “The Menopause” in *The Believer*
 Keum Suk Gendry-Kim, *Grass* (Drawn & Quarterly)
 James Stokoe, *Sobek* (Shortbox)
 Raina Telgemeier, *Guts* (Scholastic Graphix)
 Tillie Walden, *Are You Listening?* (First Second/Macmillan)

BEST PENCILLER/INKER OR PENCILLER/INKER TEAM

Ian Bertram, *Little Bird* (Image)
 Colleen Doran, *Snow, Glass, Apples* (Dark Horse)
 Bilquis Evelyn, *The Dreaming* (DC)
 Simon Gane, *Ghost Tree* (IDW)
 Steve Pugh, *Harley Quinn: Breaking Glass* (DC)
 Rosemary Valero-O’Connell, *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me* (First Second/Macmillan)

BEST PAINTER/DIGITAL ARTIST

Didier Cassegrain, *Black Water Lilies* (Europe Comics)
 Alexandre Clarisse, *Diabolical Summer* (IDW)
 David Mack, *Cover* (DC)
 Léa Mazé, *Elma, A Bear’s Life, vol. 1: The Great Journey* (Europe Comics)
 Julie Rocheleau, *Wrath of Fantômas* (Titan)
 Christian Ward, *Invisible Kingdom* (Berger Books/Dark Horse)

BEST COVER ARTIST

Jen Bartel, *Blackbird* (Image Comics)
 Francesco Francavilla, *Archie, Archie 1955, Archie Vs. Predator II, Cosmo* (Archie)
 David Mack, *American Gods, Fight Club 3* (Dark Horse); *Cover* (DC)
 Emma Rios, *Pretty Deadly* (Image)
 Julian Totino Tedesco, *Daredevil* (Marvel)
 Christian Ward, *Machine Gun Wizards* (Dark Horse); *Invisible Kingdom* (Berger Books/Dark Horse)

BEST COLORING

Lorena Alvarez, *Hicotea* (Nobrow)
 Jean-Francois Beaulieu, *Middlewest, Outpost Zero* (Image)
 Matt Hollingsworth, *Batman: Curse of the White Knight, Batman White Knight Presents Von Freeze* (DC); *Little Bird, November* (Image)
 Molly Mendoza, *Skip* (Nobrow)
 Dave Stewart, *Black Hammer, B.P.R.D.: The Devil You Know, Hellboy and the BPRD* (Dark Horse); *Gideon Falls* (Image); *Silver Surfer Black, Spider-Man* (Marvel)

BEST LETTERING

Deron Bennett, *Batgirl, Green Arrow, Justice League, Martian Manhunter* (DC); *Canto* (IDW); *Assassin Nation, Excellence* (Skybound/Image); *To Drink and To Eat*, vol. 1 (Lion Forge); *Resonant* (Vault)
 Jim Campbell, *Black Badge, Coda* (BOOM Studios); *Giant Days, Lumberjanes: The Shape of Friendship* (BOOM Box!); *Rocko’s Modern Afterlife* (KaBOOM!); *At the End of Your Tether* (Lion Forge); *Blade Runner 2019* (Titan); *Mall, The Plot, Wasted Space* (Vault)

Clayton Cowles, *Aquaman, Batman, Batman and the Outsiders, Heroes in Crisis, Superman: Up in the Sky, Superman’s Pal Jimmy Olsen* (DC); *Bitter Root, Pretty Deadly, Moonstruck, Redlands, The Wicked + The Divine* (Image); *Reaver* (Skybound/Image); *Daredevil, Ghost-Spider, Silver Surfer Black, Superior Spider-Man, Venom* (Marvel)
 Emilie Plateau, *Colored: The Unsung Life of Claudette Colvin* (Europe Comics)
 Stan Sakai, *Usagi Yojimbo* (IDW)
 Tillie Walden, *Are You Listening?* (First Second/Macmillan)

BEST COMICS-RELATED PERIODICAL/JOURNALISM

Comic Riffs blog, by Michael Cavanaugh with David Betancourt, www.washingtonpost.com/comics
The Comics Journal, edited by Gary Groth, RJ Casey, and Kristy Valenti (Fantagraphics)
Hogan’s Alley, edited by Tom Heintjes (Hogan’s Alley)
Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society, edited by Qiana Whitted (Ohio State University Press)
LAAB Magazine, vol. 4: This Was Your Life, edited by Ronald Wimberly and Josh O’Neill (Beehive Books)

Women Write About Comics, edited by Nola Pfau and Wendy Browne, www.WomenWriteAboutComics.com

BEST COMICS-RELATED BOOK

The Art of Nothing: 25 Years of Mutts and the Art of Patrick McDonnell (Abrams)
The Book of Weirdo, by Jon B. Cooke (Last Gasp)
Grunt: The Art and Unpublished Comics of James Stokoe (Dark Horse)
Logo a Gogo: Branding Pop Culture, by Rian Hughes (Korero Press)
Making Comics, by Lynda Barry (Drawn & Quarterly)
Screwball! The Cartoonists Who Made the Funnies Funny, by Paul Tumej (Library of American Comics/IDW)

BEST ACADEMIC/SCHOLARLY WORK

The Art of Pere Joan: Space, Landscape, and Comics Form, by Benjamin Fraser (University of Texas Press)
The Comics of Rutu Modan: War, Love, and Secrets, by Kevin Haworth (University Press of Mississippi)
EC Comics: Race, Shock, and Social Protest, by Qiana Whitted (Rutgers University Press)
The Peanuts Papers: Writers and Cartoonists on Charlie Brown, Snoopy & the Gang, and the Meaning of Life, edited by Andrew Blauner (Library of America)
Producing Mass Entertainment: The Serial Life of the Yellow Kid, by Christina Meyer (Ohio State University Press)
Women’s Manga in Asia and Beyond: Uniting Different Cultures and Identities, edited by Fusami Ogi et al. (Palgrave Macmillan)

BEST PUBLICATION DESIGN

Grunt: The Art and Unpublished Comics of James Stokoe, designed by Ethan Kimberling (Dark Horse)
Krazy Kat: The Complete Color Sundays, by George Herriman, designed by Anna-Tina Kessler (TASCHEN)
Logo a Gogo, designed by Rian Hughes (Korero Press)
Madness in Crowds: The Teeming Mind of Harrison Cady, designed by Paul Kopple and Alex Bruce (Beehive Books)
Making Comics, designed by Lynda Barry (Drawn & Quarterly)
Rusty Brown, designed by Chris Ware (Pantheon)

BEST DIGITAL COMIC

Afterlift, by Chip Zdarsky and Jason Loo (comiXology Originals)
Black Water Lilies, by Michel Bussi, adapted by Frédéric Duval and Didier Cassegrain, translated by Edward Gauvin (Europe Comics)
Colored: The Unsung Life of Claudette Colvin, by Tania de Montaigne, adapted by Emilie Plateau, translated by Montana Kane (Europe Comics)
Elma, A Bear’s Life, vol. 1: The Great Journey, by Ingrid Chabbert and Léa Mazé, translated by Jenny Aufferly (Europe Comics)
Mare Internum, by Der-shing Helmer (comiXology; gumroad.com/l/MIPDF)
Tales from Behind the Window, by Edanur Kuntman, translated by Cem Ulgen (Europe Comics)

BEST WEBCOMIC

Cabramatta, by Matt Huynh, www.believermag.com/cabramatta
 Chuckwagon at the End of the World, by Erik Lundy, www.hollowlegcomics.tumblr.com/chuckwagon
 The Eyes, by Javi de Castro, www.javidecastro.com/theeyes
 Fried Rice Comic, by Erica Eng, www.friedricecomic.tumblr.com
 reMIND, by Jason Brubaker, www.is.gd/T7rafM
 Third Shift Society, by Meredith Moriarty, www.webtoons.com/en/supernatural/third-shift-society/list?title_no=1703

HALL OF FAME

Judges’ Choices:

Nell Brinkley
 E. Simms Campbell

Nominees:

Alison Bechdel
 Howard Cruse
 Moto Hagio
 Don Heck
 Jeffrey Catherine Jones
 Francoise Mouly
 Keiji Nakazawa
 Thomas Nast
 Lily Renée Wilhelm Peters Phillips
 Stan Sakai
 Louise Simonson
 Don and Maggie Thompson
 James Warren
 Bill Watterson



2019 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Recipients

BEST SHORT STORY

"The Talk of the Saints," by Tom King and Jason Fabok, in *Swamp Thing Winter Special* (DC)

BEST SINGLE ISSUE/ONE-SHOT

Peter Parker: The Spectacular Spider-Man #310, by Chip Zdarsky (Marvel)

BEST CONTINUING SERIES

Giant Days, by John Allison, Max Sarin, and Julia Madrigal (BOOM! Box)

BEST LIMITED SERIES

Mister Miracle, by Tom King and Mitch Gerads (DC)

BEST NEW SERIES

Gideon Falls, by Jeff Lemire and Andrea Sorrentino (Image)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR EARLY READERS (UP TO AGE 8)

Johnny Boo and the Ice Cream Computer, by James Kochalka (Top Shelf/IDW)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR KIDS (AGES 9–12)

The Divided Earth, by Faith Erin Hicks (First Second)

BEST PUBLICATION FOR TEENS (AGES 13–17)

The Prince and the Dressmaker, by Jen Wang (First Second)

BEST HUMOR PUBLICATION

Giant Days, by John Allison, Max Sarin, and Julia Madrigal (BOOM! Box)

BEST ANTHOLOGY

Puerto Rico Strong, edited by Marco Lopez, Desiree Rodriguez, Hazel Newlevant, Derek Ruiz, and Neil Schwartz (Lion Forge)

BEST REALITY-BASED WORK

Is This Guy For Real? The Unbelievable Andy Kaufman, by Box Brown (First Second)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM—NEW

My Heroes Have Always Been Junkies, by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips (Image)

BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM—REPRINT

The Vision hardcover, by Tom King, Gabriel Hernandez Walta, and Michael Walsh (Marvel)

BEST ADAPTATION FROM ANOTHER MEDIUM

"Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein: Junji Ito Story Collection*, adapted by Junji Ito, translated by Jocelyne Allen (VIZ Media)

BEST U.S. EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL MATERIAL

Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World, by Pénelope Bagieu, translated by Montana Kane (First Second)

BEST U.S. EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL MATERIAL—ASIA

Tokyo Tarareba Girls, by Akiko Higashimura (Kodansha)

BEST ARCHIVAL COLLECTION/PROJECT—STRIPS

Star Wars: Classic Newspaper Strips, vol. 3, by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson, edited by Dean Mullaney (Library of American Comics/IDW)

BEST ARCHIVAL COLLECTION/PROJECT—COMIC BOOKS

Bill Sienkiewicz's Mutants and Moon Knights... And Assassins... Artifact Edition, edited by Scott Dunbier (IDW)

BEST WRITER

Tom King, *Batman*, *Mister Miracle*, *Heroes in Crisis*, *Swamp Thing Winter Special* (DC)

BEST WRITER/ARTIST

Jen Wang, *The Prince and the Dressmaker* (First Second)

BEST PENCILLER/INKER OR PENCILLER/INKER TEAM

Mitch Gerads, *Mister Miracle* (DC)

BEST PAINTER/MULTIMEDIA ARTIST (INTERIOR ART)

Dustin Nguyen, *Descender* (Image)

BEST COVER ARTIST (FOR MULTIPLE COVERS)

Jen Bartel, *Blackbird* (Image); *Submerged* (Vault)

BEST COLORING

Matt Wilson, *Black Cloud*, *Paper Girls*, *The Wicked + The Divine* (Image); *The Mighty Thor*, *Runaways* (Marvel)

BEST LETTERING

Todd Klein, *Black Hammer: Age of Doom*, *Neil Gaiman's A Study in Emerald* (Dark Horse); *Batman: White Night* (DC); *Books of Magic*, *Eternity Girl* (Vertigo/DC); *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Tempest* (Top Shelf/IDW)

BEST COMICS-RELATED PERIODICAL/JOURNALISM (TIE)

Back Issue, edited by Michael Eury (TwoMorrows)
PanelxPanel magazine, edited by Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou, panelxpanel.com

BEST COMICS-RELATED BOOK

Drawn to Purpose: American Women Illustrators and Cartoonists, by Martha H. Kennedy (University Press of Mississippi)

BEST ACADEMIC/SCHOLARLY WORK

*Sweet Little C*nt: The Graphic Work of Julie Doucet*, by Anne Elizabeth Moore (Uncivilized Books)

BEST PUBLICATION DESIGN

Will Eisner's A Contract with God: Curator's Collection, designed by John Lind (Kitchen Sink/Dark Horse)

BEST DIGITAL COMIC

Umami, by Ken Niimura (Panel Syndicate)

BEST WEBCOMIC

The Contradictions, by Sophie Yanow, www.thecontradictions.com

HALL OF FAME

Judges' Choices: Jim Aparo, June Tarpé Mills, Dave Stevens, Morrie Turner
Voters' Choices: Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez, Jenette Kahn, Paul Levitz, Wendy & Richard Pini, Bill Sienkiewicz

COMING SOON FROM MAD CAVE



COMICS WITH A MAD TWIST.



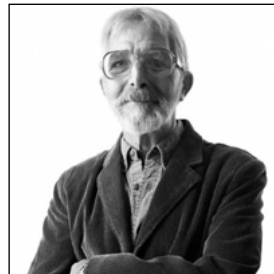


2019 Will Eisner Hall of Fame Inductees



JIM APARO (1932–2005)

Jim Aparo's first comics work was at Charlton Comics in the late 1960s. He worked on several genres there and was eventually recruited by editor Dick Giordano for a move to DC Comics in the late 1960s, where he handled such features as *Aquaman* and *Phantom Stranger* before landing the art chores on DC's premiere team-up book *The Brave and the Bold* (starring Batman). He then co-created (with Mike W. Barr) *Batman and the Outsiders*, which he drew from 1983 to 1985. Aparo went on to draw stories for *Batman* (most notably "A Death in the Family" storyline), *Detective*, and other DC titles into the late 1990s. For most of his career, Aparo not only pencilled his work but inked and lettered it as well.



JOSE LUIS GARCIA-LOPEZ (1948–)

Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez was born in Spain and began drawing comics professionally in Argentina at age 13. In the 1960s he drew romance titles for Charlton Comics. In 1974 he came to the U.S. and started working for DC, drawing such series as *Superman*, *Batman*, *Hawkman*, *Tarzan*, and *Jonah Hex*. His other notable work includes *Atari Force*, *Deadman*, *New Teen Titans*, and *On the Road to Perdition*. Since 1982, Garcia-Lopez has designed and pencilled the definitive versions of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and many other characters for various DC Comics style guides, which are created for licensees only. His style guide art has been seen on countless DC Comics licensed products and is still being used today.



JENETTE KAHN (1947–)

Jenette Kahn rebranded National Periodical Publications as DC Comics, reviving the floundering company as a proving ground for both experimental titles and reboots of iconic characters. She started as publisher at DC in 1976, at only 28 years old, after having founded the kids' magazine *Dynamite* for Scholastic. She became president of DC in 1981 and editor-in-chief in 1989. Kahn pushed the boundaries of mainstream comics, publishing work such as *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns*, and launched the edgier Vertigo line in 1993. She grew the company from 35 employees to 200 and instituted more creator-friendly policies. In 2000 the Library of Congress honored Kahn as a Living Legend for her contributions to America's cultural heritage. In 2002 she left DC to create her own film production company, Double Nickel, which produced Clint Eastwood's *Gran Torino* in 2008.



PAUL LEVITZ (1956–)

Paul Levitz began his career as a comics fan, publishing *The Comic Reader*. He started at DC in 1976 as an assistant editor (to Joe Orlando) and in 1978 became editor of the Batman titles. He was an executive at DC for 30 years, ending as president and publisher. As a comics writer, he is best known for *Legion of Super-Heroes*. Most recently, Levitz has worked as a historian (*75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Myth-Making*; *Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel*) and teacher (including the American Graphic Novel at Columbia).



JUNE TARPÉ MILLS (1918–1988)

One of the few female artists working during the Golden Age of comics, June Tarpé Mills was the creator of *Miss Fury*, an action comic strip and comic book that first appeared in 1941. *Miss Fury* is credited as being the first female action hero created by a woman. The *Miss Fury* comic strip ran until 1951. Mills returned to comics briefly in 1971 with *Our Love Story* at Marvel Comics.



2019 Will Eisner Hall of Fame Inductees



WENDY PINI (1951–) AND RICHARD PINI (1950–)

Wendy and Richard Pini created the much-loved fantasy series *Elfquest*, widely regarded as the first manga-influenced graphic novel series with a high fantasy theme published in the U.S. The Pinis were among the first independent publishers of their own comics, founding Warp Graphics in 1978. In 2018, *Elfquest* concluded its 40-year run with Dark Horse Comics. The series has millions of readers around the world and continues to gain new fans. Wendy has also drawn and written comics for Marvel, DC, First Comics, and other publishers. The Pinis received an Inkpot Award in 1980, and *Elfquest* has won numerous awards since 1979.



BILL SIENKIEWICZ (1958–)

Bill Sienkiewicz started drawing comics professionally at age 19, fresh out of art school. His early style on Marvel titles such as *Moon Knight* was heavily influenced by Neal Adams. In the 1980s Sienkiewicz broke out with a multimedia style that was revolutionary for comics, combining painting, line art, collage, mimeographs, and other elements. His highly stylized art on Marvel's *Elektra: Assassin* and *The New Mutants* and his own graphic novel *Stray Toasters* earned international acclaim. His work has appeared in Brazil's National Museum of Fine Arts; galleries in Paris, Barcelona, and Tuscany; and advertising campaigns for Nike, MTV, and Nissan.



DAVE STEVENS (1955–2008)

Dave Stevens created the Rocketeer, the retro adventure hero of 1980s indie comics and 1991 movie fame. *The Rocketeer* combined Stevens' love of 1930s movies, the golden age of aviation, and 1950s pin-up girl Bettie Page. Before becoming a professional artist, Stevens contributed amateur illustrations to Comic-Con program books in the 1970s. His first professional gig was as Russ Manning's assistant on the *Tarzan* comic strip in 1975. Stevens later worked as an animator at Hanna-Barbera and as a storyboard artist on projects including *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and Michael Jackson's "Thriller" music video. Stevens was the first recipient of the Russ Manning Promising Newcomer Award in 1982, and he won an Inkpot Award and the Kirby Award for Best Graphic Album in 1986.



MORRIE TURNER (1923–2014)

Morrie Turner introduced the *Wee Pals* comic strip in 1965. When *Wee Pals* was first created, bringing black characters to the comics pages was by no means an easy task. At first, only five major newspapers published the strip. It was not until 1968 and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. that *Wee Pals* achieved nationwide acceptance. Within three months of Dr. King's death, *Wee Pals* was appearing in more than 100 newspapers nationwide. In 2012 Turner was the recipient of Comic-Con's Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award. He also had the distinction of having been one of the handful of pros at the very first Comic-Con in 1970.



2019 Inkpot Awards



WENDY ALL • Artist
Comic-Con volunteer in the 1970s

CHARLES BROWNSTEIN • Nonprofit Organizer
Executive Director, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

LEIGH BARDUGO • Fantasy Author
Shadow and Bone trilogy, *The Language of Thorns*

DAVID CLARK • SF Aficionado
Comic-Con founding committee member

JON B. COOKE • Editor/Author
Comic Book Creator, *The Book of Weirdo*

WILLIAM CURTIS • Volunteer
Comic-Con Deaf and Disabled Services

CRAIG FELLOWS • Volunteer
Comic-Con VP and Division Administrator, Operations

MARY FLEENER • Cartoonist
Billie the Bee, Life of the Party

ROGER FREEDMAN • Physics Professor
Comic-Con founding committee member

GENE HA • Comics Writer, Artist
Mae, Top Ten

JONATHAN HICKMAN • Comics Writer
East of West, House of X/Powers of X

ARVELL JONES • Comics Artist
Deathlok, All-Star Squadron

CHARLES KOCHMAN • Book Publisher
Editorial Director, Abrams ComicArts

ULLI LUST • Graphic Novelist
Today Is the Last Day of the Rest of Your Life, How I Tried to Be a Good Person

CRAIG MILLER • Publicist/Producer/Author
Star Wars Memories

CLAYTON MOORE • Teacher
Comic-Con volunteer in the 1970s–1980s

JOHN NEE • Publisher
Marvel Entertainment

AUDREY NIFFENEGGER • Author
The Time Traveler's Wife, Her Fearful Symmetry

PACO ROCA • Comics Writer/Artist
Wrinkles, Twist of Fate, The House

SCOTT SNYDER • Comics Writer
Batman, American Vampire, Wytches

BRINKE STEVENS • Actress/Author/Director
Early Comic-Con volunteer; *Brinke of Destruction*

BILLY TUCCI • Comics Writer/Artist
Shi

CHRIS WARE • Cartoonist
Jimmy Corrigan, Building Stories, Rusty Brown

BILL WILSON • Anime Aficionado
Comic-Con volunteer in the 1970s–1980s

MARYELIZABETH YTURREALDE • Bookseller
Co-founder of Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore



BOB CLAMPETT
HUMANITARIAN
AWARD

Edgardo Miranda-
Rodriguez
Lisa Wood



BILL FINGER
EXCELLENCE IN COMIC
BOOK WRITING AWARD

Mike Friedrich
E. Nelson Bridwell



RUSS MANNING
PROMISING NEWCOMER
AWARD

Lorena Alvarez



WILL EISNER SPIRIT
OF COMICS RETAILER
AWARD

La Revisteria Comics
Buenos Aires,
Argentina



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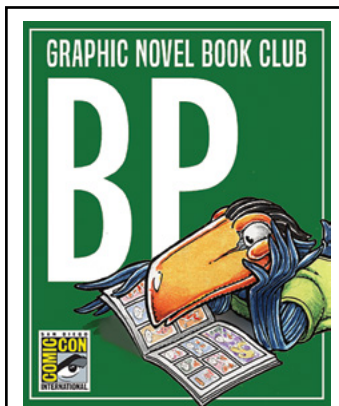
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COMIC-CON GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUBS

The Comic-Con Graphic Novel Book Clubs continued their discussions through 2019 and into 2020. And then the world changed, but the groups soldiered on and shifted to monthly meetings via Zoom, thus creating ZookClub!

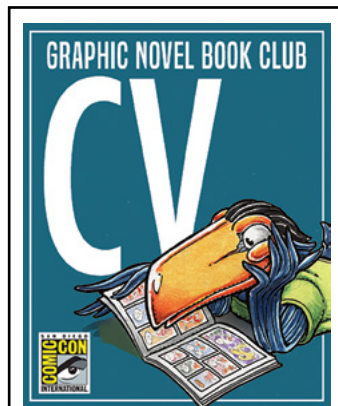
The Book Clubs have been a part of Comic-Con since 2014. We've asked each club for their favorite book of 2020 (so far). You can follow along with our monthly meetings by visiting <https://www.comic-con.org/toucan/categories/book-club>



BALBOA PARK

EST. 2018

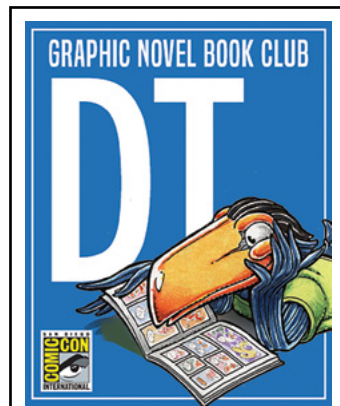
Favorite Book of 2020
Spider-Man: Life Story
Chip Zdarsky & Mark Bagley



CHULA VISTA

EST. 2019

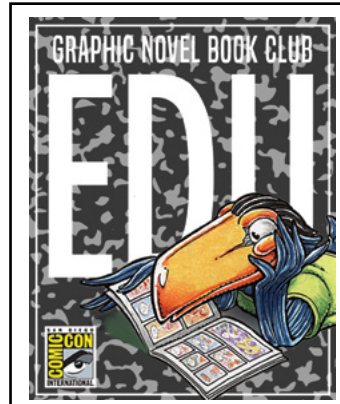
Favorite Book of 2020
Farmhand vol. 2
Rob Guillory & Taylor Wells



DOWNTOWN

EST. 2014

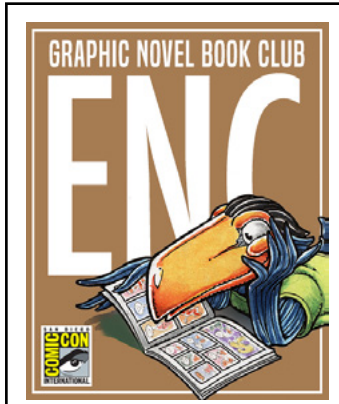
Favorite Book of 2020
Murder Falcon
Daniel Warren Johnson



EDUCATORS GROUP

EST. 2019

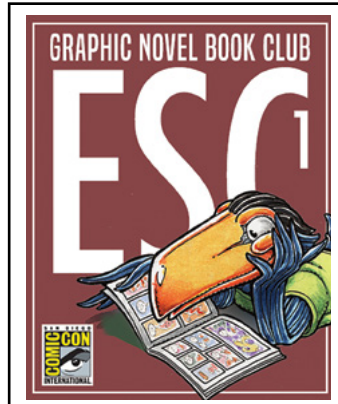
Favorite Book of 2020
Hey Kiddo
Jarrett Krosoczka



ENCINITAS

EST. 2017

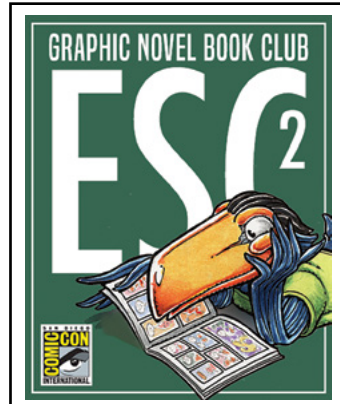
Favorite Book of 2020
Death: The Deluxe Edition
Neil Gaiman, et al



ESCONDIDO 1

EST. 2017

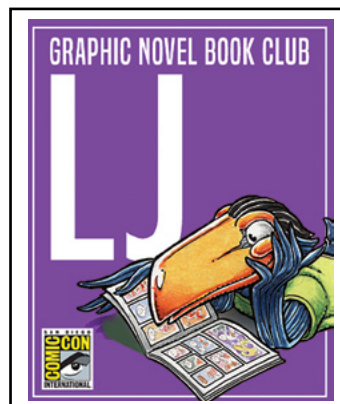
Favorite Book of 2020
The Way of the Househusband
Kousuke Oono



ESCONDIDO 2

EST. 2019

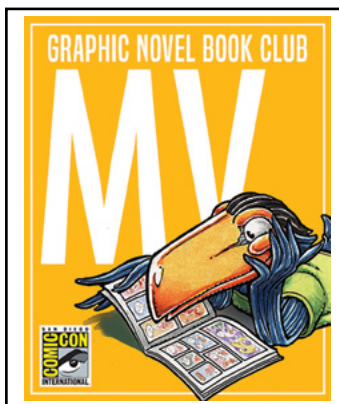
Favorite Book of 2020
Lady Killer vols. 1 & 2
Jamie Rich & Joëlle Jones



LA JOLLA

EST. 2015

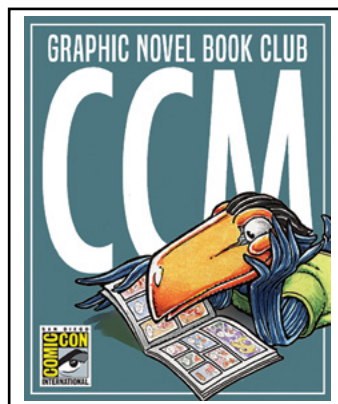
Favorite Book of 2020
Watchmen
Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons



MISSION VALLEY

EST. 2014

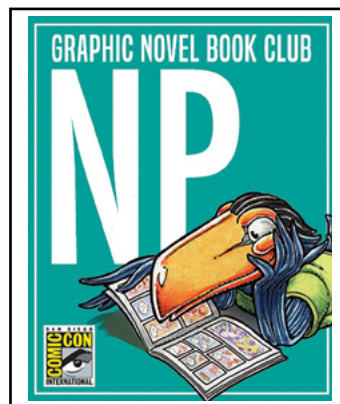
Favorite Book of 2020
In Waves
AJ Dungo



COMIC-CON MUSEUM

EST. 2019

Favorite Book of 2020
Die, Vol. 1: Fantasy Heartbreaker
Kieron Gillen & Stephanie Hans



NORTH PARK

EST. 2015

Favorite Book of 2020
Paper Girls (Complete Series)
Brian K. Vaughan & Cliff Chiang

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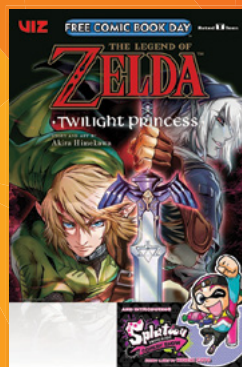
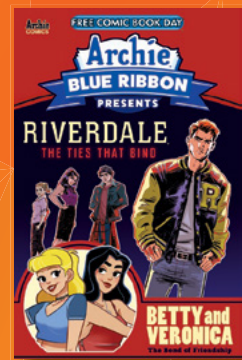


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IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING THOSE WE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR



GERRY ALANGUILAN WAS A LICENSED ARCHITECT BUT HE CHOSE TO FOLLOW A CAREER CREATING COMIC BOOKS.

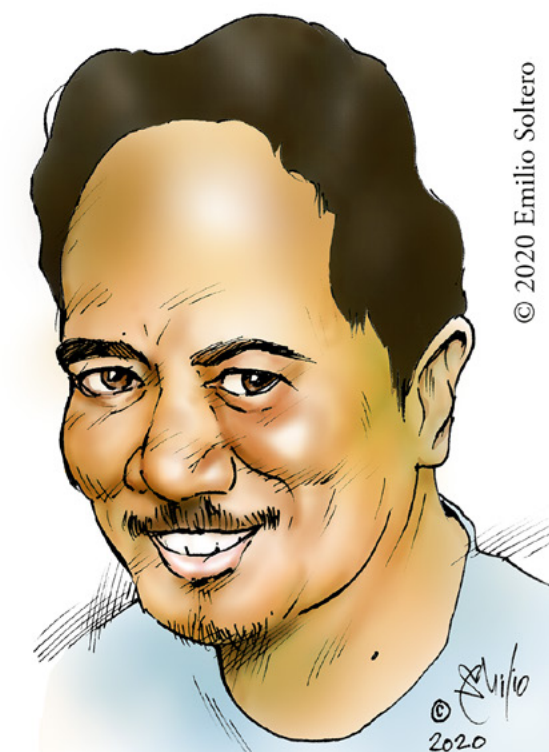
HE WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE KOMIKS MUSEUM IN SAN PABLO, LAGUNA, PHILIPPINES, AND HE IS CREDITED WITH ORIGINATING THE TERM "KOMIKERO."

HIS FIRST PUBLISHED WORK WAS A PIN-UP IN ASTER #1.

ALANGUILAN MADE AN IMPACT INKING, IN COLLABORATION WITH LEINIL FRANCIS YU, ON THE X-MEN, THE AVENGERS, AND OTHER TITLES FOR MARVEL COMICS.

HE CREATED THE ELMER COMIC BOOK, AS WRITER AND ARTIST.

AN ASIDE: GERRY ALANGUILAN BECAME AN INTERNET SENSATION WITH HIS "HEY BABY" VIDEO, AS VIEWED BY MILLIONS.



© 2020 Emilio Soltero

GERRY
ALANGUILAN
1968-2019

BOB ANDELMAN (1960–2019) by Jon B. Cooke

Best known for his *Will Eisner: A Spirited Life*, an authorized biography of the legendary graphic novelist, Bob Andelman was, starting in the 1980s, a constant presence in Florida's Tampa Bay area media scene, making his living as a writer for local newspapers and national news magazines. But, as freelance life is often financially precarious, Bob expanded his repertoire to become a book author.

Supplementing income for a growing household by producing roughly one book per year, Bob largely co-authored businessmen's autobiographies (most successfully, *Built From Scratch*, a 1999 best-seller about the founders of Home Depot). "My stock and trade is that I do a lot of books with heads of companies and help them tell their story," he explained. "But what I have always wanted to do is to write a straight out-and-out biography."

A fortunate change in book agents brought about that coveted opportunity, as Bob was selected to be Will Eisner's official biographer. "It has been a fabulous experience from top to bottom," he said of writing the 2005 book. "There were some bumps along the way, but I got to meet a great man, I got to spend a tremendous amount of time with him at the end of his life and his career, and I wouldn't trade any of that for anything. I got to meet people who knew him and worked with him and made some wonderful contacts."

Bob made superb use of those contacts, particularly for his *Mr. Media Interviews* podcast, of which he produced 1,141 episodes, about 10 percent featuring interviews with comic book professionals, cartoonists, and related folks. Originating in 1994 as a newspaper column, *Mr. Media* was the perfect showcase for Bob's exceptional abilities as an interviewer. Over the years, he spoke with innumerable celebrities, from Kirk Douglas to Gene Simmons, Frank Zappa to Captain Kangaroo, and many others. His favorite guest? Hollywood sex goddess Raquel Welch. "What a beautiful



Bob Andelman with Will Eisner.

actress," Bob gushed. "When I got to interview her, I really enjoyed it. At the same time, I realized that this woman I had always adored was the same age as my mother." With a chuckle, he added, "That was a little weird to get used to."

About his skill in eliciting revealing answers to his probing questions, Bob confessed, "What my wife will say is that there are two reasons that people talk to me: One is that I am a pretty good listener, and people want to talk when someone is going to listen; and the other thing is, she thinks I am in the wrong business. She thinks I should be a therapist because, for some reason, people like to open up and tell me things that they would never reveal to anyone else. I don't know what it is. I have heard the wildest, craziest things, both working on stories and not working on stories. Maybe I just have a friendly face or I just look perfectly harmless. I don't know what it is, but people tell me stuff that even my eyes just go wide, I can't believe the things that people say."

After a surprisingly prolific 2019, during which the 59-year-old battled a rare cancer, adenoid cystic carcinoma, Bob passed away, on February 24. By his side were his wife, Mimi, and their 23-year-old son, Charlie. Mimi described Bob as possessing an "epic kindness." She also said of her husband of 31 years, "He really listened to people. It mattered."

Jon B. Cooke was editor of the five-time Eisner Award-winning magazine *Comic Book Artist*; writer and co-producer of the feature-length film documentary *Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist*; editor of *Comic Book Creator* magazine; and author of *The Book of Weirdo*. He was featured on three episodes of *Bob Andelman's* podcast, *Mr. Media Interviews*.

ROMAN ARAMBULA (1935–2020) by Mark Evanier



Photo: Mark Evanier

A sweet, talented cartoonist named Roman Arambula died in March, the victim of a heart attack at the age of 83. Roman did many things in his life but he was proudest of being the artist who succeeded Floyd Gottfredson on the *Mickey Mouse* newspaper strip.

Roman was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and studied art at the University in Mexico City. He worked in fine art and advertising and even painted pottery, but his love of cartooning inevitably led him to that field. Specifically, it was to the Mexico-based Gamma Studios, which was doing most of the animation for *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, *King Leonardo*, *Tennessee Tuxedo*, and other American cartoon shows.

When Gamma closed down in the late 1960s, Roman and his family moved to Dallas and then to Los Angeles, where he worked for various animation studios. I met him at Hanna-Barbera when he was laboring there in layout on *Scooby Doo* and other shows and I was working on the Hanna-Barbera comic books. Roman drew for a number of them, both domestic and foreign, particularly on *Laff-a-Lympics*.

By then, he'd landed the *Mickey Mouse* job,

following Gottfredson on the daily strip. He didn't write it, but his art infused it with a happy, organic feel that, I thought, combined the Gottfredson Mickey with a little of the flair of Roman's favorite animator, the great Fred Moore. Apart from occasional fill-ins by other artists—which Roman would have told you was not because he ever missed a deadline—he drew and lettered the strip for around 15 years.

Roman was a delightful little man who was something of a cartoon character himself. It is not hard for those of us who knew him to imagine a world in which Mickey Mouse draws the adventures of Roman Arambula.

Mark Evanier is an award-winning writer/producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author. He is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons.

ALLEN BELLMAN (1924–2020) by Dr. Michael J. Vassallo

When Allen Bellman passed away on March 9, comics fandom lost two important things. The first was the fact that Allen likely was the very last connection to Timely's superhero golden age. The second was that Comic-Con International (and the entire nationwide convention circuit) lost its last Golden Age ambassador of goodwill. Ever since I discovered Allen happily enjoying his retirement down in Tamarac, Florida in 1998, interviewed him in 2001, and had his story published and known since 2003, he and his wife Roz had been on a non-stop rollercoaster ride of giving back to the industry, halted only two months before he died at age 95.

Allen's story is now fairly well known. Born in Manhattan on June 5, 1924 and Brooklyn-raised, he entered the comics industry at age 18 in the fall of 1942 after answering an ad in the *New York Times* for inkers wanted at Timely Comics. His first work was as background artist for Syd Shores on *Captain America Comics*. He then toiled on staff at Timely on several features, including *The Patriot*, *Human Torch*, *Captain America*, later issues of *All Winners Comics*, his own "who-done-it" crime feature "Let's Play Detective," and wherever he was needed for the next seven years, except for the time spent in the Navy during the war.

Following the dissolution of the Timely bullpen in late 1949, Allen joined the Lev Gleason staff and contributed to titles there, from crime to romance. By 1951 he was back freelancing for Stan Lee at what was now known as Atlas Comics, contributing to pre-Code horror, crime, western and war titles. This was the best work of his career, as it was all his own stylized pencils and inks, unlike the assembly-line Timely staff work done often piecemeal in the 1940s. For Atlas, my favorite work was a run of six stories in the "Jet Dixon of the Space Squadron" series.

Allen left the industry right as Dr. Fredric Wertham was ramping up his attacks on comic books, departing just as Dr. Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* was published in 1954. He went on to a long career in commercial art and photojournalism, where he was an award-winning photographer for the *Florida Sun Sentinel*. By the time I tracked him down in retirement in 1998, he had long put his earlier comics career behind him, but it was never really forgotten. There was much left unsaid. Allen even revealed to me that no one believed he had actually worked in the comic book industry, a frustration that gnawed at him over the decades. My initial interview started him on a 16-year run as the Golden Age's primary ambassador of goodwill. Allen and Roz were fixtures on the nation's convention circuit and he gave back doubly all the love he received from fans around the world. He cherished the Inkpot Award given to him at the 2007 San Diego show. In 2017, I was honored to edit his autobiography, *Timely Confidential*, an unfiltered look back at his life and colleagues during his Timely years. With his passing, our last tenuous connection to Timely's war-era superheroes has been irrevocably severed. His earlier work in our industry finally validated, no one, I repeat, no one, had a better last act than Allen Bellman.



Doc Vassallo with Allen Bellman at Comic-Con.

Dr. Michael J. Vassallo is a Manhattan dentist and noted comics historian and authority on the Timely/Atlas period of Marvel's history. He is the co-author of *The Secret History of Marvel Comics* and has written 20 introductions to Marvel's *Timely* and *Atlas Age Masterworks* volumes. Dr. Vassallo has also provided writing and editorial support to TASCHEN Publishing (*75 Years of Marvel*, *The Stan Lee Story*) and maintains his own *Timely-Atlas-Comics* blog.

MITCH BERGER (1955–2019) by Jackie Estrada

It is with heavy heart that I must say good-bye to my dear friend Mitch Berger, who finally lost his 20-year battle with NET (neuroendocrine tumor), a rare form of cancer.

I met Mitch in 1990 when he came to Comic-Con with Batton Lash, Russell Calabrese, and some other friends from New York. They arrived at the Con early, on the Sunday before the event, and were sharing a suite at the Hotel San Diego. I had met Bat and Russell a few weeks earlier at the Chicago Comicon, and in the intervening time I had found several excuses to call Bat about his upcoming trip. I arranged to meet his group at the Horton Plaza Panda Inn for dinner that Sunday night. Mitch already suspected I was interested in Bat, and he made a point of ensuring that Bat and I sit next to each other at dinner. Needless to say, by the end of the Con Bat and I were an "item," and Mitch had played a role in that. (Bat and I were married in 1994.)

Mitch attended the School of Visual Arts with Will Eisner and Harvey Kurtzman as his teachers (something he had in common with Bat), and he worked as an assistant to Harvey for a while. He also went to law school and obtained a degree from Antioch School of Law.

Combining his two interests of comics and law, Mitch was on the founding board of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, and he published a periodical called *Bullseye*, devoted to editorial cartoons. From 2010 to 2014 he also provided a feature to NPR called *Double Take*, which put two cartoons from opposing viewpoints next to each other, finding depth and interest in the juxtaposition. By then he had moved from New York to Washington, DC, where he worked in the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. During that time he also supported



Mitch Berger (right) with Batton Lash at Comic-Con.
Photo: Jackie Estrada

many well-known cartoonists with pro bono legal work.

Mitch served as a consultant for Batton's comic book series *Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre* a.k.a. *Supernatural Law*, advising on the proper legal terms to use and what procedures would actually happen in the various kinds of cases Wolff & Byrd took on. And of course, Mitch had lots of suggestions, including offering many puns, a hobby Bat and Mitch also shared. A Comic-Con regular, Mitch loved to attend the show and hang out at our Exhibit A Press booth.

For four decades, Mitch carried a sketchbook with him to Comic-Con and other events. In 2015 Bat and I saw him at the first Comics Crossroads Columbus (CXC) show at the Billy Ireland Library and Cartoon Museum at Ohio State University. He showed us the most recent sketches he had gotten, from Art Spiegelman and Bill Griffith. We marveled at the artwork in the book, going back to the 1970s, from such greats as Hal Foster, Jules Feiffer, R. Crumb, Vaughn Bode, Jerry Robinson, Joe Kubert, Roy Crane, Marie Severin, and of course Eisner and Kurtzman. Shortly thereafter, Mitch presented the sketchbook to the museum's founder, Lucy Caswell, for their collection. He later wrote, "You can never really own art; you are lucky if you have the privilege to be its custodian for a while."

In the course of battling his cancer, Mitch became active in support groups and education for NET patients and their families, and he continued that advocacy even while in hospice care. Mitch had other passions as well, including baseball (he traveled around the country to see games in as many stadiums as he could) and scuba diving.

When Mitch's wife of 20 years, NPR producer and journalist Peggy Girshman, died in March of 2016, he was devastated by her passing. But then he was blessed with Michiko, his wonderful second wife, who made his final years happy ones.

A year ago, Mitch's tribute to Batton appeared in the pages of the 2019 *Comic-Con Souvenir Book*. Bat had passed away from brain cancer in January of that year. I like to think that they are now together somewhere in the hereafter, talking comics, trading puns, and coming up with more supernatural legal cases for Wolff & Byrd.

Jackie Estrada is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons. In addition to having edited a number of *Comic-Con* publications over the years, she's been the administrator of the *Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards* since 1990.



CLAIRE BRÉTÉCHER WAS KNOWN FOR HER REALISTIC CHARACTERS AND STORIES OF GENDER ISSUES.

CLAIRE BRÉTÉCHER 1940 - 2020

HER FIRST PROFESSIONAL WORK WAS IN COLLABORATION WITH RENÉ GOSCINNY ON *LE FACTEUR RHÉSUS*.

SHE WON FOR BEST FRENCH AUTHOR AT THE ANGOULÊME INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL, IN 1975.

SHE CREATED *LES FRUSTRÉS*, AND *AGRIPPINE*.

BRÉTÉCHER WAS A CO-FOUNDER OF *L'ÉCHO DES SAVANNES*.



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NICOLA CUTI (1944–2020) by Joe Staton



Nick Cuti and Joe Staton

Nick Cuti had a great skill. You could take him anywhere he'd never been and put him out on the sidewalk, turn him around twice, and he would head straight for a really good restaurant.

Actually, Nick had lots of skills. He was an artist and illustrated his own SF stories. That includes being a master of scratchboard, a nearly lost, and very difficult, technique. He was a filmmaker, director, camera man—the whole thing, he could do it. He was a TV animator for years. He was an editor.

But what Nick was really the master of was telling stories. His head was always full of them. When he came to Charlton Comics in 1972, we hit it off and I drew a lot of his fantasy and SF stories, so that when he was creating a new character, E-Man, he called me up. It turned out to be best match

for each of us. We did other things together over the years, but E-Man was what we were here to do. I'm proud I knew him, I'm proud I worked with him, I'm proud to have been his friend, and I really miss him.

Joe Staton has been a comics creator for over 40 years. In addition to drawing E-Man, his credits include everything from Green Lantern to Scooby-Doo. He has been drawing the syndicated Dick Tracy comic strip since 2011.

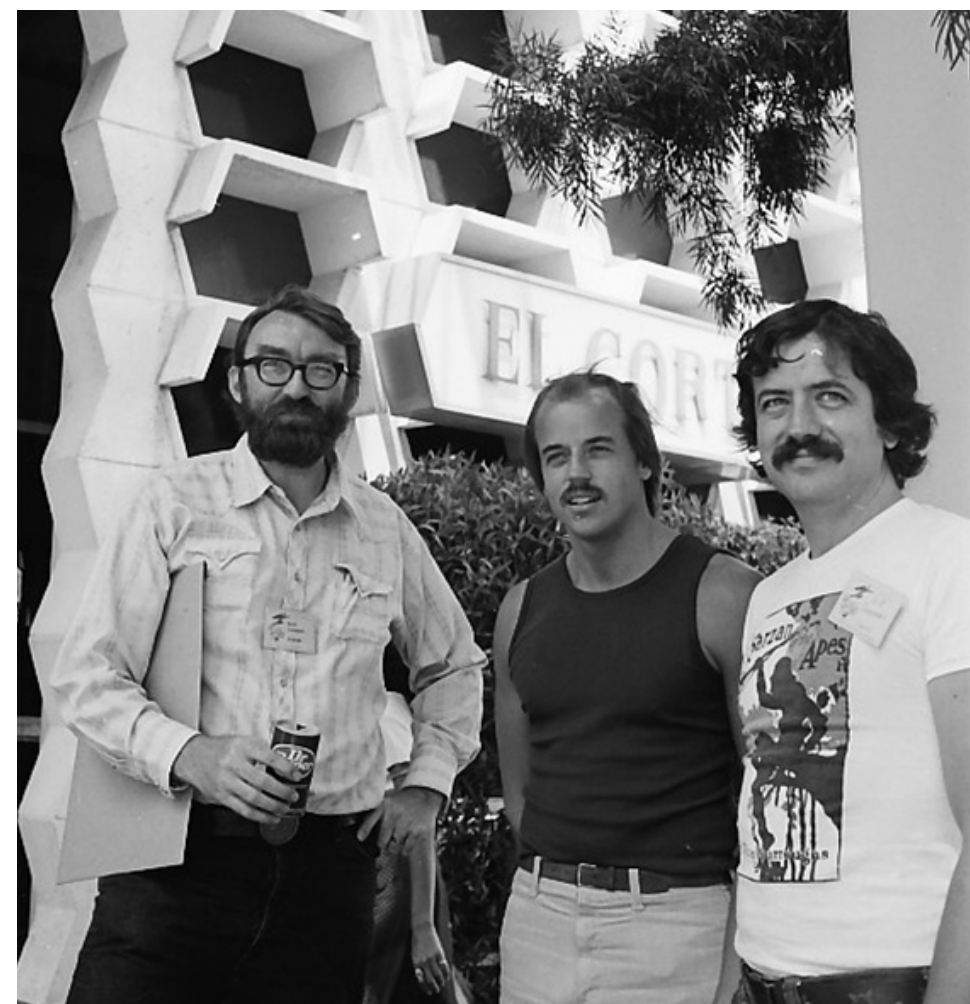
RUSS COCHRAN (1937–2020) by Steve Ringgenberg

Russ Cochran, Ph.D., was one of the true Renaissance men of comics fandom. Originally a professor of physics at Drake University in Iowa, he became the archivist of almost every EC comic. He was also an art dealer with an impeccable reputation, a music historian, a good friend of both EC publisher Bill Gaines and the Frazetta family, and the proud owner of a pair of chimps.

What motivated Russ Cochran to become a publisher was his love of EC Comics. In the early 1950s he had actually stopped reading comics until being inspired by a copy of *Haunt of Fear*: "I started trading comics again and converting my inventory of comics . . . into whatever ECs I could find . . . I and a couple of other guys around the neighborhood got our subscription copy of one of the ECs where they announced there was going to be a Fan-Addict Club, and we said, 'Oh yeah, that's for us!' And it said send in a quarter, and if several guys send in, in one group, then you'll be a Chapter. I remember my membership number was 181."

Cochran kept reading ECs until 1956. He pretty much forgot about his obsession with EC until one fateful day in 1964. "On sort of a whim I decided to write Bill Gaines. My letter said something to the effect that the members of our chapter, of EC Fan-Addict Club number three, one of us is a teacher, one is a minister, one is a doctor, one is a lawyer, and not an axe murderer in the bunch. I thought he would get a kick out of knowing that the influence of the ECs had not been detrimental to us. Anyway, he . . . wrote me back and said, 'Next time you're in New York give me a call and we'll go out to dinner.'" Fortunately for us, Cochran took up Gaines on his invitation and the two became friends. After seeing some of Gaines's EC original art, Cochran was struck by the large size and beautiful rendering on the pages and thought, "Boy, wouldn't other EC fans love to see it?" He began reprinting ECs in 1971; his first portfolio contained a cover and four stories all shot from original art. It quickly sold out and he followed it up with five more EC Portfolios.

Cochran left his tenured university position in 1974 to become a full-time publisher, in the process bringing to light not only almost every EC story and cover but also vintage newspaper strips. His most ambitious project was the *Edgar Rice Burroughs Library of Illustration*, a deluxe, slipcased three-volume set that featured paintings, illustrations, and comic strips by J. Allen St. John, Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel, Russ Manning, N. C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover, and Hal Foster. Another notable limited-edition Cochran published was a three-volume,



Russ Cochran at the 1974 San Diego Comic-Con at the El Cortez Hotel, with Danton Burroughs (grandson of Edgar Rice Burroughs) and Camille "Caz" Cazedessus (publisher of the fanzine *ERB-dom*). Photo: Shel Dorf

slip-cased set of books reprinting Al Williamson and Archie Goodwin's complete run of *Star Wars* strips.

Cochran realized there was a market for high-quality EC reprints, so he approached Bill Gaines with a bold proposal: reprinting EC's entire output in a uniform format with all stories shot from original art. As the artwork was scanned, Gaines sold it off through Cochran's art auctions.

In conjunction with publishing the Complete EC Library in hardback, Cochran also republished all the EC New Trend and New Direction comics in a variety of formats. Russ's friendship with Frazetta also produced some notable projects, including *Untamed Love*, reprinting romance stories from the mid-50s, and *Thun'da King of the Congo*, which reprinted the

only comic book drawn entirely by Frazetta.

Russ was always a commanding presence at the San Diego Comic-Con, from the very earliest ones. Gruff and authoritative (he was a professor, after all), he was known to all not just as a purveyor of EC items but as one of the most ethical art dealers on the convention circuit, a man who always treated his customers and fellow fans with fairness and courtesy. He exhibited at the Con for decades, selling his EC and Frazetta books and vending art by the cream of America's cartoonists and illustrators. EC Comics fans in particular owe him a great debt for helping to spread the gospel of EC far and wide.

Steven Ringgenberg attended his first San Diego Comic-Con in 1972, ultimately attending about half of them so far. His lifelong love of EC Comics, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Ray Bradbury spurred him on to a writing career that began in 1980 and encompassed writing eight novels, a book of short stories, and scripts and articles for DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Heavy Metal magazine, Dark Horse, Bongo, Warren Publishing, and many others, including writing notes for Russ Cochran's Complete EC Library and contributing to Cochran's Comic Book Marketplace.

ERNIE COLÓN (1931–2019) by Dan Mishkin



Any review of Ernie Colón's life in comics has to begin with his amazingly versatility. His extraordinary range, from *Richie Rich* through *The 9/11 Report*—with fantasy, science fiction, superheroes, comedy, and horror all in the mix—combined with his eternally inventive approach to the challenges of visual narrative.

Ernie's early career was spent at Harvey Comics—drawing, by his estimate, 15,000 pages of *Casper*, *Richie Rich*, *Wendy*, and *Hot Stuff*. But remember: He was versatile. Beginning in the late sixties, he worked on Warren books like *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella*, and unlike at Harvey, experimentation was not only allowed at Warren, but encouraged. And Ernie was a great experimenter, always finding new possibilities in comics storytelling and in the tools at his disposal. He started drawing on a computer almost as soon as that was possible.

In the mid-1970s, at the short-lived Atlas Comics, he went more superhero-y on titles like *The Grim Ghost* and *Tiger-Man*. This is where I first saw his name, unaware that I'd been a fan of his work since my earliest days reading comics, when Harvey's books were uncredited.

ERNIE COLÓN: A FORCE OF NATURE by Howard Zimmerman

Ernie Colón could draw anything. That is a fact. It was a gift. he was the Roy Hobbs of graphic illustration.

If you were a kid in the 1970s and '80s, you probably enjoyed Ernie Colón's work for Harvey Comics on such titles as *Casper the Friendly Ghost*. While at Harvey, Ernie met, collaborated with, and then became lifelong friends with Sid Jacobson, who was a writer, then an editor, and ultimately Harvey's editor-in-chief.

Later in his career, Ernie collaborated with Jacobson on a proposal to turn *The 9/11 Commission Report* on the attacks on America into a graphic continuity for students and adults. They dropped off their proposal at over a dozen publishing houses. They got a single positive response, from Hill & Wang, and cut a deal. The book was published in 2006.

The simply titled *The 911 Report: A Graphic*

Adaptation became a national bestseller and somewhat of a phenomenon; it garnered serious reviews and brought tons of adult and older readers to the forgotten format of their youth. It was mentioned in the same breath as Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus* as comics for grown-ups, and signaled a new chapter in Ernie and Sid's creative partnership.

Also for Hill & Wang's Novel Graphics imprint, Ernie and Sid collaborated on *Che: A Graphic Biography* and *Anne Frank, The Anne Frank House Authorized Graphic Biography*. Then, for the same imprint, Ernie created a two-volume graphic history of the United States, as narrated by Uncle Sam, and told through the lens of *The Great American Documents*. Collectively, the two all-color volumes took almost eight years to be created and see the light of publication.

Looking for new work, Ernie wrote a letter to Marvel's Jim Shooter that included a drawing of Casper on his knees—"begging to be rescued," Ernie later said. That got him a gig, and in the '80s and '90s he did a wide variety of work for Marvel and DC. Ernie's standout at Marvel was probably *Damage Control*, co-created with Dwayne McDuffie, about the company that cleans up after superhero battles. Ernie was the ideal artist to convey its blend of action-adventure and comedy.

Ernie's signature project at DC, I like to think, is *Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld*, which he created with Gary Cohn and me. He brought fantasy and fun, danger and real human emotion to the stories. And created a world that was vivid and unique and alive with creatures large and small, exotic plant life, and expressive faces on the trees—and even on the buildings. "Everything is alive on the Gemworld," he told us.

Ernie would sometimes pencil in dialogue on the boards, not all of it appropriate for tween girl readers—especially the lines he gave the villains. But that unprintable dialogue shaped Gary's and my concept of the characters, because Ernie was very good at finding the essence of a thing.

In his seventies, Ernie reinvented his career with the brilliant idea of adapting the 9/11 Report—I actually smacked my forehead when he told me about it—becoming a master of nonfiction comics that untangled the mess of real-world events. Equally brilliant was his response to an interviewer who asked if a comics version of the 9/11 Report didn't oversimplify a complex subject: "When we do comics," he replied, "we're not in the business of *simplifying*, we're in the business of *clarifying*."

Ernie never stopped coming up with ideas. And in the year before his death, he told me how he'd like to do kids' comics again. His final, never-completed project recast *Sleeping Beauty* as *Slipping Beauty*—so named because she was very clumsy.

When I met Ernie in 1982—me age 29, him an "old man" of 51—I could not imagine that we'd be friends and occasional collaborators for almost forty years. I can't begin to say how grateful I am for that time. And how I wish there was still more.

Dan Mishkin co-created *Amethyst* and *Blue Devil* for DC Comics and wrote many of DC's well-known characters at one time or another, including a memorable three-year run on *Wonder Woman*. He has written adaptations of popular properties from other media such as *Star Trek* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, as well as a comic book documentary on the Kennedy assassination and the Warren Report.

Ernie produced about 300 pages of brilliant graphic illustration for the *Documents* books, which were rigorously vetted because they would be, and still are, used in high school and mid-grade classrooms across the country, and indeed, around the world. Volume two was published just a couple of weeks after Ernie died.

My company had been commissioned by Hill & Wang to create and produce these two volumes. The first task was to hire a creative team—artist and writer. Ernie was my go-to illustrator because, you know, he could draw anything. Portraits of famous folks; action scenes; editorial cartoons; Conestoga wagons; civil rights protests; impassioned speeches; and bloody warfare. So, offering the art assignment to Ernie was a no-brainer. Finding the right person to *script* the graphic continuity of America's saga was more diffi-

cult. At that time, Sid was not available. After taking a couple of swings and misses, I finally saw the obvious answer as to who would write the books. It was, it had to be, Ernie's wife, Ruth Ashby.

Ruth is a much-lauded and accomplished author of many volumes on American history and women's fights for equal rights. She was my first book editor when I joined Byron Preiss Visual Publications in 1986. She became a friend and mentor. Not long after I arrived there, I began to see a handsome, debonair gentleman stopping by Ruth's desk a couple of times a week. I was told it was Ernie Colón. He was illustrating a series of mid-grade paperback fantasies that Ruth was editing. I knew Ernie's work, and was, in fact, a fan. I introduced myself. We became friends. He and Ruth were married in 1992.

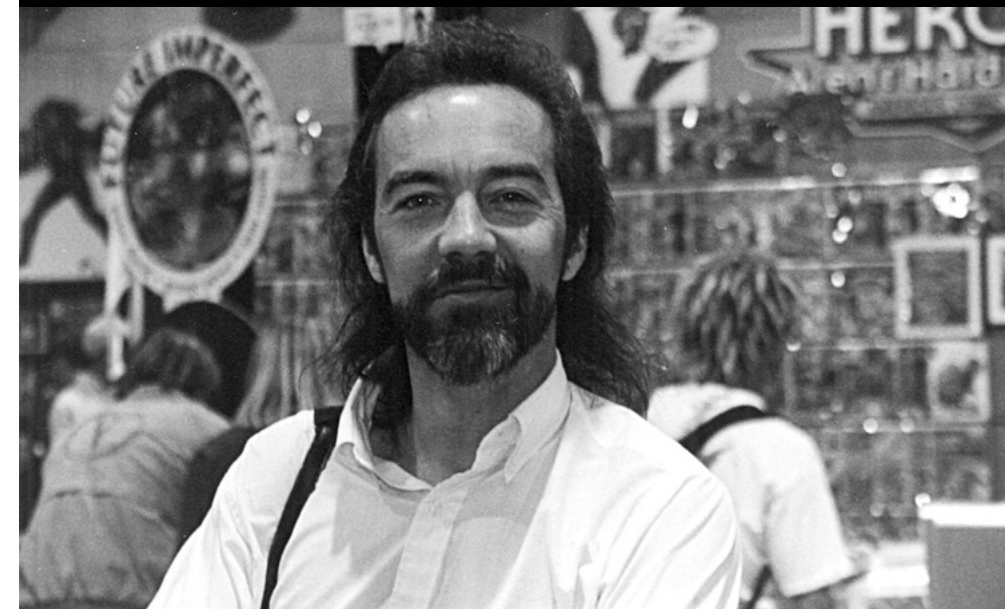
In July 2019, two weeks after he had delivered his final revisions for volume two, Ernie passed away after a long bout with cancer. A couple of weeks after the memorial service, I got an email from Ruth saying someone at the New York City Board of Education had contacted her to inquire about rights to a part of one of the *Documents* volumes. She explained that she did not hold the rights, and directed him to me.

Long story short: The Board has acquired the license to deliver, to tens of thousands of New York City high school students, copies of Ernie's and Ruth's chapter on The Constitution. In 20 crisp pages, Ernie and Ruth successfully told the story of the most important document in the history of America—graphically compelling, easily understandable, comprehensive, and gripping.

I never doubted they would because, you know... Ernie could draw anything. God bless him.

Howard Zimmerman is president and editor-in-chief of Z File Books.

DALE CRAIN (1954–2020) by Dean Mullaney



Anyone who's bought and enjoyed an archival comic book or newspaper strip collection in the past 30 years owes a debt of gratitude to Dale Crain. Known across the industry as an exceptional art director, book designer, editor, and comics historian, Dale was a three-time Harvey Award winner and recipient of two *PRINT* magazine awards for book design.

Going by his middle name, Roger Dale Crain was born on November 28, 1954 in Springfield, Missouri, and grew up in the nearby small town of Ozark, where he was on his high school's yearbook committee.

He began his comics career in the mid-1980s at Fantagraphics in Southern California. "Dale was the first honest-to-God real designer we employed," recalled Gary Groth. "He upped our game in a serious way. Good thing, too, because we were publishing more books at this time and dipping our toes in the bookstore market." In addition to designing various book projects (*The Collected Works of Jules Feiffer* was a favorite), he helped shape the look of the company and its flagship magazine, *The Comics Journal*. "Working with him was wonderful," added Groth, "because he brought an infectious enthusiasm to the job; he loved what he did and brought energy to the room."

Dale left Fantagraphics when they moved to Seattle in late 1989, and he relocated to New York, where he designed some issues of *RAW* magazine and started the long stint at DC Comics for which he is best known today. DC's archive program was then in its nascent stage. For the next 15 years Dale helped steer *The Spirit Archives* and definitive collections of *Plastic Man*, *Superman*, *Sgt. Rock*, *Black Canary*, *Doom Patrol*, *Wonder Woman*, *Kamandi*, and dozens more.

By 2002 he had developed "a keen understanding of the digital restoration process," recalled Bob Greenberger, who joined the Collected Editions department and had an office adjacent to Dale's. "It was an evolving aspect of the business and he was painstaking in making sure all the details were right."

Dale brought his design sense to DC's upscale book production with trade collections such as *V For Vendetta*. "Dale was proud of his work on that book," recalls Cory Sedlmeier, who worked with Dale on *Marvel Masterworks* a decade later, "the way he used the domino motif throughout the book, to tell a subtle story through the book design." He also found time to conceive, package, and co-edit (with Bill Blackbeard) the classic two-volume reference book *The Comic Strip Century* in 1995.

Dale switched teams in 2005, bringing his skills to Marvel's archival lines, beginning with *The Incredible Hulk*, vol. 3. He worked on many collections, including *Iron Man*, *Golden Age Captain America*, *Fantastic Four*, *Avengers*, and *Silver Surfer* until 2012, by which time he had relocated in Hong Kong, where he set up an art restoration studio.

Running a studio, it turns out, wasn't for him. Dale knew that if you wanted the best possible design or the most accurate archival restoration, you had to do it yourself. There were no shortcuts. Just hard work and a dedication to preservation.

He enjoyed being "semi-retired" but still keeping his hand in comics, working with me on restoring classic newspaper strips in two dozen Library of American Comics books. He moved from Hong Kong to Thailand, and eventually to Vietnam. Shortly after he arrived, he sent me a little video showing his neighborhood, right on the beach. He absolutely loved it in Da Nang and didn't see himself ever coming back to America.

He died from a heart attack in Vietnam, age 65.

Dean Mullaney is the creative director of the Library of American Comics and knew Dale Crain since the 1980s, when Dean ran *Eclipse* and Dale worked at Fantagraphics.

HOWARD CRUSE (1944–2019) by Andy Mangels

Upon their passings from this plane, many artistic geniuses are lauded for their body of work, and occasionally for their temperament. Howard Cruse, whose work spanned six decades of publication in and around the comic book industry, will be lauded—and rightfully so—for his genius work with the graphic semi-memoir *Stuck Rubber Baby* and for his collections of *Wendel* cartoons and other stories, but his temperament was as clear as his work was detailed. Despite the battles he faced as the first openly gay male in underground comix in the 1970s, Cruse never lost his temper without first resorting to wit, and his wisdom and cool demeanor led those who met him to see him as a wise mentor. Cruse charmed everyone; even on the internet, it would be hard to find anyone with a negative thing to say about him or his talent. The talent was prodigious, ranging from stories he wrote and drew with bold thick-lined cartoonish art to heavily cross-hatched, intensely-detailed realistic art.

Born in Springville, Alabama in 1944, Howard Russell Cruse began drawing comics early and had his first published cartoon strip in a weekly paper when he was 13. After drawing for theatrical programs, editorial cartoons, and other newspaper strips, by 1971, he had debuted a strip titled *Barefootz* for a college newspaper, and he began exploring the open-minded world of underground comics, leading to Kitchen Sink publishing his first *Barefootz* collection in 1975.

In 1976, Cruse devoted part of an issue of *Barefootz Funnies* to a story, “Gravy On Gay,” which was the cartoonist’s first venture into gay topics. Publisher Denis Kitchen asked Cruse if he would be willing to edit a new *Gay Comix* anthology for Kitchen Sink, and Cruse agreed. In September 1980, the first issue of *Gay Comix* appeared, featuring lesbian and gay cartoonists creating comics specifically for their community. Cruse edited the first four issues, then turned editorship over to Robert Triptow (from 1984 to 1991), and then me; I changed the name to *Gay Comics* and edited it until 1998.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Cruse’s work appeared not only in the undergrounds but in such publications as *Playboy*, *Heavy Metal*, *Bananas*, *ArtForum International*, and *The Village Voice*. He drew the regular *Wendel* strip for *The Advocate* newsmagazine from 1983 to 1989.

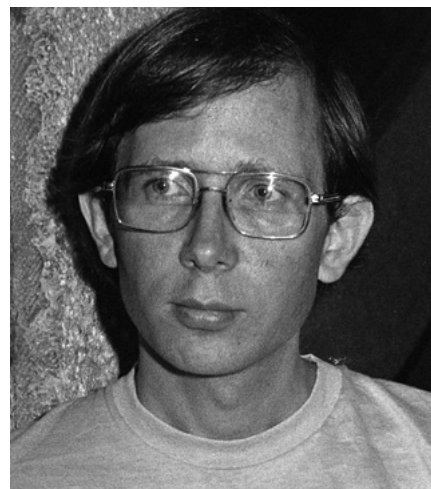


Photo: Jackie Estrada

For many years, Cruse worked on the semi-autobiographical graphic novel *Stuck Rubber Baby* for Paradox Press, an imprint of DC Comics. The book was finally published in 1995 to immense critical acclaim. Mainstream press, librarians, teachers, and comic readers alike all praised Cruse’s work for its raw emotional honesty and insanely detailed art even as he wove a story about racism and homophobia in the south, and the intersection of the Civil Rights movement with personal coming-of-age. The book received both the Harvey and Eisner Awards and the United Kingdom Comic Art Award for Best Graphic Album.

In between all of the creativity, Howard met Eddie Sedarbaum around 1979 in New York and the two became inseparable; they were finally legally wed in summer 2004.

In the time since *Stuck Rubber Baby*, Cruse continued to draw for comics, political and humor magazines, newspapers, CD covers, Broadway posters, erotic magazines, and more. Comic-Con International gave him their prestigious Inkpot Award in 1989, and he was again a special guest at CCI in 2010. Cruse curated art shows for LGBTQ cartoonists, and was the subject of art exhibits of his work worldwide. He is extensively profiled in the upcoming documentary feature film *No Straight Lines*, alongside other LGBTQ creators.

In one of his strips, “Death” (which appeared in *Dancin’ Nekkid with the Angels*), Howard presaged his own death:

“After I’m gone, I like to think somebody might pick up my comic books and have a chuckle! Fat chance, you say—but permit me my illusions!” He also promised that his soul would be up in heaven, “Rockin’-and-Rollin’ and Dancin’ Nekkid with the Angels!”

If there is any justice in this world for a talent as great as Howard Cruse’s, and a soul as forthright, readers will go pick up his books and have a chuckle, and his soul really *will* be dancin’ nekkid with the angels.

Andy Mangels is the bestselling author and co-author of 20 books, including the *TwoMorrrows* book Lou Scheimer: Creating the Filmmation Generation, as well as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* tomes, *Iron Man: Beneath The Armor*, and a lot of comic books.

GENE DEITCH (1924–2020) by Jerry Beck

Gene Deitch (father of underground cartoonist pioneer Kim Deitch) was one of animation’s unsung geniuses—an animation director, character creator, and author; a designer, a comic strip creator, and yes—a comic book artist. If I just list his career highlights, that alone would justify his place among the greats.

Top of the list would be his creation of Tom Terrific—a classic cartoon star practically forgotten today. Preceding Hanna-Barbera by a year, TT was the first original animated character created for television by a major cartoon studio. Tom was a shape-shifting little boy, wearing a funnel on his head, who would have wildly imaginative adventures with his lazy hound dog “Mighty Manfred” against an array of arch-enemies headed by Crabby Appleton. Deitch gave Jules Feiffer his first professional job writing for this series.

At the Terrytoons studio in the mid-1950s, where Tom Terrific emerged from, Gene became the Creative Director and upended the studio’s musty old character stable by injecting new blood—hiring not only Feiffer but the likes of pop artist James Flora, launching the animation careers of Ernest Pintoff and R. O. Blechman, and creating strange neurotic characters like Silly Sidney, Clint Clobber, and Flebus.



Gene Deitch as a special guest at the 2013 Comic-Con, with Jerry Beck and Leonard Maltin.

So let’s backtrack a moment. Deitch was born in Chicago and grew up in Los Angeles, and after a stint drawing aircraft parts for the military during World War II, he began drawing panel cartoons (“The Cat”) for a jazz collectors fanzine *The Record Changer* (all of which have been reprinted in a fine volume by Fantagraphics Books). Those print cartoons were read by the top animators at UPA (Mr. Magoo), and that led to his hiring by director John Hubley; it was at UPA that he received master class training in all things animation.

He became an actual film director at the Jam Handy industrial animation studio in Detroit, a position he took en route to New York, where he soon headed UPA’s Manhattan studio in 1952. It was here he made TV commercials that included the famous Bert and Harry Piels Beer spots featuring comedians Bob and Ray.

Deitch left Terrytoons to start his own studio in the late 1950s. When one of his clients paid Deitch to visit and size up a dilapidated animation studio in communist Czechoslovakia, he ended up falling in love with the country—and its pretty studio manager, Zedinka. He ended up spending the next 60 years there—making Academy Award-nominated shorts like *Nudnik*, and winning the coveted Oscar for his short *Munro* (based on a Feiffer story) in 1960.

He made shorts for both King Features (adapting Herriman’s *Krazy Kat* and Segar’s *Popeye* for television) and MGM (doing theatrical *Tom & Jerry* cartoons)—as well as numerous adaptations of children’s books (for producer Weston Woods), including the first cinematic treatments of *The Hobbit*, *Where The Wild Things Are*, and *Charlotte’s Web*.

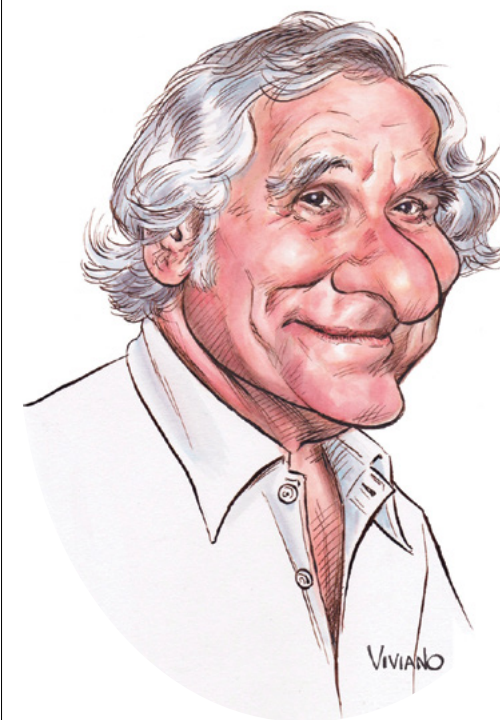
I got to know Gene and became a close friend in the last 30 years of his life. I co-hosted (with Leonard Maltin) a spotlight panel at Comic-Con in 2013 where Gene received his Inkpot Award. He was an amazing talent and a wonderful human being. It sounds like a cliché, but Gene was “full of life.”

Enthusiastic about life, art, and jazz music, he was an eager first adopter of the latest technology, from tape recording back in the early 1950s to the Internet in the 2000s. His love for wife Zdenka was total.

Speaking for everyone who ever loved one of his cartoons, his work will live forever. Speaking for everyone who ever met him: He will be missed.

Jerry Beck is a writer, animation producer, college professor, and author of more than 15 books on animation history.

MORT DRUCKER (1929–2020) by Sam Viviano



To call Mort Drucker a master caricaturist is to damn him with faint praise. In his 54 years with *MAD* magazine, Drucker created exquisite movie and TV parodies—a genre which, if he didn’t invent, he pretty much defined. Paired with such gifted writers as Arnie Kogen, Stan Hart, Larry Siegel, and Dick DeBartolo, Drucker managed to create, in five or six pages, a distillation of a film or show that was at once extremely accurate and totally whimsical.

Most caricaturists are happy to produce a single evocative image of a subject; not Mort. In his *MAD* parodies he would draw actors and actresses dozens of times, from different angles, in different settings, with different expressions and different poses, often with only one or two pieces of photo reference. In addition, he was at the same time telling the film’s story, designing the page, illustrating the writer’s gags, and adding gags of his own. He was a high-wire aerialist, juggling half a dozen bowling balls simultaneously and never losing his balance.

As a caricaturist, Drucker achieved the goal of every artist who has ever worked in that field: He made you see his subjects through his eyes. Once one experienced the bulging forehead of his Marlon Brando, the jutting chin of his Julie Andrews, or the

diffident stance of his John Wayne, it was impossible to see them ever again except as he saw them.

On meeting Mort for the first time, the biggest surprise was how quiet and humble he was. He would be much more interested in your goals and ambitions than he was in his own accomplishments. He was extremely generous with his time and advice, which was always inspirational. He deeply subscribed to the notion that, if you found something you loved to do, you’d never work a day in your life.

A devoted family man, Mort was strict about keeping “banker’s hours,” drawing all day in his Long Island studio but breaking early so he could spend the evening with wife Barbara, his high school sweetheart, and their two daughters, Laurie and Melanie, on whom he doted and who adored him in return.

That doesn’t mean Mort didn’t work hard at his craft. Famously self-taught, he spent countless hours studying how the folds in clothing hung from the human body. His daughter Laurie remembers him working late into the night when she was a child, doing sketch after sketch of his own hands. And yet he made it all look so easy.

When Mort’s “pencils” came into the *MAD* offices for review, the staff would stare in awe at their simplicity. These preliminary sketches, drawn twice up on the very boards on which he’d do his finished art, were rarely more than a few lines and squiggles. And yet the story, the action, and the characters were all there, clearly indicating the complex and detailed finished art to come. Mort did most of his work in the inking stage, although to call the finished art “inks” would be a misnomer. Each page was a multimedia extravaganza, completed in ink, yes, but also pencil, ballpoint pen, washes, markers, Rubylith, Zipatone, and whatever other tools would jump into Mort’s hand when he reached out to his taboret. He knew what he wanted the end result to look like, and he would use whatever it took to achieve that end.

After having drawn hundreds of stories filling thousands of pages—not to mention all his side work in advertising, movie posters, coloring books, and *Time* magazine covers—Mort eased into retirement a decade into the new millennium. He continued to see his fellow cartoonists on Long Island occasionally, and he continued to dote on his daughters and his beloved Barbara. On April 9 of this year he passed away, less than three weeks after his 91st birthday.

Mort Drucker inspired generations of cartoonists to follow his lead, yet no one came close to his mastery. We might copy his licks, sure, but we will never be able to see the world through his eyes, interpret it in his brain, or render it with his hand. There was only one Mort Drucker.

After a 22-year career as a humorous illustrator, **Sam Viviano** served as *MAD* magazine’s art director from 1999 through 2017. In 2012, he edited the book *Mort Drucker: Five Decades of His Finest Works*.

DOROTHY "D.C." FONTANA

(1939–2019)

by Jean Graham



From the 1960s through the 1990s, Dorothy Catherine Fontana wrote for dozens of television shows, including *The Wild Wild West*, *Star Trek: The Original Series*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Streets of San Francisco*, *Star Trek: The Animated Series*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Babylon 5*. While working with Gene Roddenberry on both *The Lieutenant* and *Star Trek*, she became one of the first women to break the Hollywood scriptwriting gender barriers, and though she sometimes wrote under male pseudonyms or the gender-neutral "D.C. Fontana," most of her screen credits from the 1970s on were as "Dorothy Fontana." She also wrote the tie-in novels *The Questor Tapes* and *Star Trek: Vulcan's Glory*. She turned later in life to teaching screenwriting throughout the early 2000s at the American Film Institute Conservatory.

Her *Star Trek* original series episodes were always fan favorites, particularly "Charlie X," "Tomorrow is Yesterday," "Journey to Babel," "Friday's Child," and "The Enterprise Incident." She was a guest at numerous 1970s fan conventions, and in August of 1973, via the local *Star Trek*/sf fan group S.T.A.R. San Diego, she appeared at Comic-Con to promote the upcoming premiere of *Star Trek: The Animated Series*. She gave us a preview of the first two episodes — "Beyond the Farthest Star" and "Yesteryear." The latter, her take on Spock's childhood, is often cited as the best episode of the series. Dorothy would return to San Diego as a guest for Equicon 75/Filmcon 3, and with "The Trouble With Tribbles" writer David Gerrold in 2016 for ConDor Con's celebration of *Star Trek's* 50th anniversary.

Dorothy left us on December 2, 2019, following a brief illness. She is survived by her husband, cinematographer Dennis Skotak, as well as by legions of fans who will continue to love and admire her work for years to come.

Jean Graham is the founder, S.T.A.R. San Diego and served as *Star Trek* liaison for the San Diego Comic-Con in 1973 and 1974.



ARGENTINIAN ARTIST JUAN GIMÉNEZ FIRST CAUGHT THE PUBLIC'S EYE WITH HIS WORK IN HEAVY METAL, STARTING IN 1981.

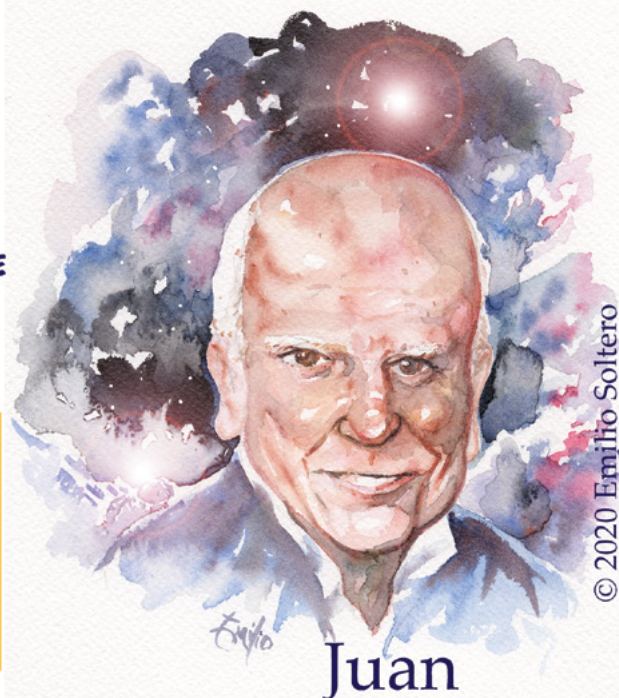
HE WROTE AND ILLUSTRATED LEO ROA, A STORY ABOUT A YOUNG JOURNALIST.

JUAN ALSO WROTE AND DREW THE FOURTH POWER.

HE DESIGNED THE HARRY CANYON SEGMENT FROM THE 1980 HEAVY METAL MOVIE.

GIMÉNEZ COLLABORATED WITH ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY ON THE METABARONS.

"...HE... EMBODIED THE IMMORTAL NO-NAME, THE LAST METABARON. IN MY UNCONSCIOUS, JUAN GIMÉNEZ CANNOT DIE. HE WILL CONTINUE ON, DRAWING LIKE THE MASTER WARRIOR THAT HE WAS." DIRECTOR & WRITER. ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY



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VICTOR GORELICK (1941–2020) by Mike Pellerito

So just about my favorite place in the world is San Diego, and while there are so many wonderful comic conventions, there is nothing quite like THE San Diego Comic-Con. There was also nothing quite like SDCC with the late, great Victor Gorelick . . . and for that matter, there was no one quite like the man himself.

Victor started at Archie as a teen himself in 1958, a long 12 years before the first-ever San Diego Comic-Con. He had a lot of great memories at the show over the years, and certainly some great highlights for Archie. One in particular was in 2005, when his good friends Bob Bolling and Dexter Taylor won Inkpot Awards for their long and legendary body of work on *Little Archie* (among much more at Archie). He was so proud to see they had recognition for their work. It was always nice to see Victor as such a fan of the people and the work he helped put together. I do vividly remember Victor winning his own Inkpot Award in 2008, celebrating his first 50 years at the company. He was so happy to be recognized by SDCC for all he had done over the years in comics. The award held a nice place of honor in his studio at home, which was also filled with all

sorts of comic collectibles from over the years, as well as his artist's desk, which he used to occasionally letter or color a job, even though he was an executive at the company and, most important to him, editor-in-chief.

However, I think what is most notable to comic book fans, among all those trips to San Diego, all those meetings, breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, is one of the most important bits of comic book history intertwined with San Diego: *Archie Meets The Punisher*. As the legend goes, in 1993 Victor had dinner in a dimly lit San Diego restaurant with his longtime friend, the late, great Batton Lash (creator of *Wolf & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre*). At the time, Vic brought up a crazy idea he had cooked up with then-EIC at Marvel Tom DeFalco, then known only as "Project A." But they really didn't know how to bring off such a weird crossover. If you ever had

the pleasure of meeting Batton, you know that he could make any idea, no matter how crazy, work. He wrote a script, and Archie artist Stan Goldberg and Marvel artist John Buscema pulled it off in 1994. If you think about all the wild crossovers Archie has had over the years since, and there are many, none would be possible without

Victor joking around with friends like Batton and Tom.

Dan Parent shared some SDCC memories with Victor: "I remember my first San Diego Comic-Con with Victor was back in 1992! A few other NY-based Archie creators were there, like Bill Gollhofer and Paul Castiglia. Victor always liked the opportunity to get freelancers together who were not East Coasters, including George Gladir, Batton Lash, Bill Galvan, and Rich Koslowski. I was impressed at how Victor knew everybody at Comic-Con and always going above and beyond for fans." When Archie was at a convention, Victor was always there. Actually, *wherever* Archie was, you could always find Victor.

For over 60 years, Victor was synonymous with Archie, and after so many years, so many convention appearances, and so many times

talking about it all, I never thought to ask him what his favorite part was. I did reach out to his wife Kathie (whom Victor always said meeting her was like hitting the jackpot), who herself also took many trips to SDCC over the years, and she told me: "Victor always enjoyed going to SDCC and meeting Archie fans. His greatest joy was when a fan would come over and thank him for Archie Comics and how they learned to read and learn English from them."

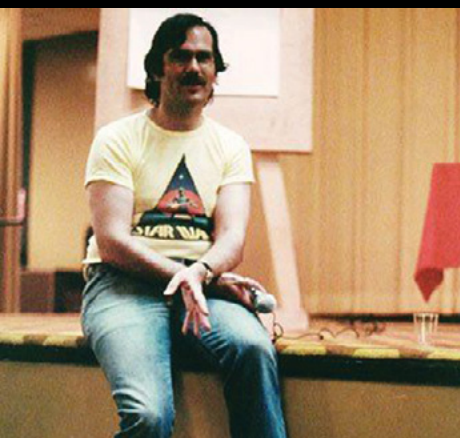
With all his history at Archie, over 60 years and all he'd seen and done, the simplest answer was the best answer; Victor was always, always all about the fans.

Mike Pellerito has been with Archie Comics since 2000, holding a number of roles and eventually working his way up to President.



Photo: Jackie Estrada

CHARLES M. LIPPINCOTT (1939–2020) by Craig Miller



Charley Lippincott has passed away. Charley changed my life 44 years ago when he asked me to help him market a new science fiction movie to science fiction and comic fans. In many ways, he changed your life, too.

I worked for Charley. We became friends and stayed friends. He left Lucasfilm in, I think, 1978, but our friendship continued. We'd go out to lunch. That sort of thing. We lost touch for a while when he and his wife moved to Vermont years ago, but we reconnected on Facebook.

Charley was smart. He was funny. And, admittedly, in recent years he could get a little cranky. But he was

a great guy. He hadn't been in the best of health these last few years, but I didn't think he'd be leaving us so soon. I'll miss him. A lot.

In my book *Star Wars Memories*, I wrote a long section about Charley and the early marketing of *Star Wars*. I won't quote the whole thing, but here are the opening paragraphs.

In The Beginning, There Was Charley

Charles M. Lippincott, usually known as Charley, went to USC Film School at the same time as George Lucas. Charley became a publicist, first at MGM, and worked on a lot of projects. He worked with Alfred Hitchcock

on *Family Plot*. 20th Century Fox hired him to work with George Lucas on *Star Wars*.

Charley's title was Senior Vice President, Advertising, Publicity, Promotion, and Merchandising of Star Wars Corporation. Quite a mouthful. He oversaw every aspect of *Star Wars* related to those areas. And more.

Not to take away anything from George, whose creative mind conceived, wrote, and directed *Star Wars*. Or from the film's producer, Gary Kurtz, whose knowledge of production got the film made. Or creative geniuses like John Dykstra, Richard Edlund, and countless others at Industrial Light & Magic who reinvented special effects to make miracles happen. They all made a great movie that wouldn't have happened without them.

But without Charley, I don't think *Star Wars* would have come close to the success it achieved.

Charley was responsible for a lot. He made sure every character, every name, every image was properly copyrighted and trademarked. He made the licensing deals (along with Marc Pevers, an attorney who was Vice President of Licensing at 20th Century Fox) for the merchandise that, despite the enormous box office gross, was the real profit center for Lucasfilm. He was even part of the pitches to the 20th Century Fox Board, to help convince them to make the movie.

And he masterminded the campaign that truly changed the way movies were marketed. His deal with Marvel for comics, Ballantine Books for a movie novelization, and other companies with posters and T-shirts and more, all to come out before the film was released in order to build up buzz about the film, has become the norm. He was the first person in Hollywood to decide to market a film directly to fans. To bring a film preview to Comic-Con or to the World Science Fiction Convention. And to make fans and conventions the important part of the equation they always should have been. That, too, has become the standard for the industry.

I'm really quite proud to have worked with him.

Craig Miller was the original Director of Fan Relations at Lucasfilm, working on *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. As part of that, he was a publicist, writer, editor, and producer. He also created and ran the *Official Star Wars Fan Club*. His book *Star Wars Memories* was published last fall.

TOM LYLE (1953–2019) by Beau Smith



Tom Lyle (left) and Chuck Dixon, autographed for Beau Smith.

I knew Tom Lyle for over half of my life, yet we never spent a moment of that time in each other's house. We didn't have to—we did better than that, all because of comic books.

Because of comic books, a multitude of cities and conventions across the United States like San Diego Comic-Con, became our personal front porch to enjoy a friendship and community that few can ever experience. I have long said that comic books are the common bond that unite uncommon people.

Tom Lyle was uncommon people.

Tom's formative years were deeply rooted in what I believe is pop culture's greatest decade: the 1960s. This was a decade of change in music, art, sports, technology, television, education, writing, thinking, and how we would look at the future—and we capped off that decade by going to the moon! If that doesn't make an impact on your life, then I don't know what does.

It all made an impact on Tom's life. He became an artist, a writer, a teacher, a musician, a sportsman, and always carried an open mind to any topic or situation brought before him. It all made him a truly good friend. It made him a great artist, and it made him an exceptional teacher.

Tom was always willing to share his knowledge with others, especially those who were seeking to be creators within the realm of comic books. From the 1980s on, I can remember time and time again, Tom taking time from convention signings to help an aspiring artist with questions they had or to look at their sketches. Always teaching; it came natural for Tom. He always made time.

Off the road, and through the years, Tom and I would spend hours on the phone talking comics, music, the business—and *sports*, the one place where we were always at odds. You see, Tom was a lifelong Minnesota Vikings fan, and I, a lifer for the Chicago Bears. It made for some great trash talking and gloating for both of us depending on how the season went. I miss those talks. (We made up for it as we were both really big fans of Michael Nesmith of The Monkees.)

Tom and I broke into the comic book business at the same time, along with a core group of other creator buddies: Tim Truman, Chuck Dixon, Flint Henry, Gary Kwapisz, Tim Harkins, John K. Snyder III, and Graham Nolan. The mid-1980s found us all working for Dean Mullaney and cat yronwode at Eclipse Comics. We shared hotel rooms at conventions together, created comics together, and spent a lotta hours talking comics.

From our days at Eclipse, our group all took various paths further into the world of creating comics. Tom and Chuck Dixon went to DC Comics and put their mark on the character of Robin, giving him a new ticket into a new century and the way he would be done. While at DC, Tom helped reinvent The Comet and Starman, and he was a major contributor to the Batman universe as well. One of Tom's childhood dreams came through as he alternated work between DC and Marvel Comics. At Marvel, Tom impressed everyone with his stylish art on *The Amazing Spider-Man*. His work on *Maximum Carnage* and *The Clone Saga* is still talked about today, especially his costume design on The Scarlet Spider. Tom, along with Dave Cockrum, were always go-to artists when it came time for costume designs and redesigns. Tom always had a flare for expanding the look and fashion of characters. His mesh of traditional art with groundbreaking style came in very handy, as he was able to pass his knowledge along to students as a professor at the Savannah College of Art and Design. His childhood dreams became the learning tools of a whole new generation in Georgia.

We were all children who grew up in pop culture's greatest decade, the sixties. I'd like to think that Tom took all the best things of that decade and shared it with us in his work. We were invincible then, young men from all walks of life with the same burning passion to tell stories and do them in the form of comic books. It's still so very hard and sad to think that a member of that once invincible young group of men is gone. He touched so many of us in this brief life, but the friendship he shared will always be eternal.

Beau Smith is the creator and writer of *Wynonna Earp*, the heroine of the cult favorite comic books, graphic novels, and Syfy Television series.

SYD MEAD (1933–2019) by Paul M. Sammon

Syd Mead, that staggeringly successful polymath of multitudinous interests and graphic gifts—industrial designer, visual futurist, automotive designer, science fiction fan, corporate concept artist, motion picture designer, internationally acclaimed illustrator, and longtime guest of Comic-Con International—passed away in Pasadena, CA, on December 30. He was 86.

Syd's formidable talents elicited awe from fellow professionals and adulation from rabid fans. He was also the quintessential nice guy, as well as my occasional collaborator and friend. More on those last three in a moment.

Sydney Jay Mead was born on July 18, 1933, in St. Paul Minnesota. Fascinated by art, transportation design, and Golden Age science fiction literature (especially the works of Robert Heinlein), Syd focused on his passions early on. He studied and later practiced classical art techniques the Old School Way.

He graduated from the prestigious Art Center School in Los Angeles (now the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena) in June 1959. He was almost immediately hired by the Ford Motor Company's Advanced Styling Studio, where his lifelong love of automobiles resulted in a number of quasi-futuristic, still-impressive concept car designs. He left Ford in the early 1960s to freelance for high-end corporate clients, doing illustrations for their in-house books and catalogs, and he spent most of the 1970s providing interior and exterior architectural designs for firms like Intercontinental Hotels, as well as product designs for Sony, US Steel, and Philips Electronics.

Throughout, he earned a reputation as one of the 20th century's most influential conceptual artists. His prodigious gifts caught the attention of Hollywood, and he worked as a production illustrator on some of SF cinema's best-known films. He helped design the massive V'ger spacecraft seen in 1979's *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, worked on concept designs for 1982's *Tron*, designed the Space Marine ship *Sulaco* for 1986's *Aliens*, and created the Leonov spacecraft seen in 2010, plus the friendly robot of *Short Circuit* and further designs for *Mission Impossible III*, *Elysium*, and *Tomorrowland*. Syd's final film contribution lay in creating the deserted, irradiated Las Vegas seen in *Blade Runner 2049*.

Yet for a certain clutch of film fanatics, Syd's crowning celluloid achievement will always be his hyperdetailed props, cityscapes, and vehicles populating the mean streets of an alternate 2019 Los Angeles seen in Ridley Scott's dystopic 1982 SF/film noir hybrid *Blade Runner*. From this classic emerged Mead's fabulous flying "Spinner" (an airborne police car), which stands as an enduring pop culture icon. *Blade Runner* also highlighted the ultimate expression of Syd's consistent "visual futurism" approach, in which he envisioned not just a design but a design's total context, including its environment, its use, and its plausible workings.

As for Comic-Con International, Syd maintained



major motion picture presentations—Syd did them all. And it was during these that the brightest colors of his personality shone through. Relaxed, open, friendly, and grounded, Syd greeted the most tongue-tied fan with the same easy smile and unpretentious Midwestern grace as he did the most celebrated director, actor, or publisher. Yes, Syd may have won an Inkpot Award in 1989 for his countless professional milestones, but at each and every Con he was always, at root, one of us.

And he was my friend. We initially met in 1980, when I was first embedded in and writing about the making of *Blade Runner* for a number of magazines during that film's tortured genesis. At the time I was delighted to discover that Syd and I felt equally thrilled to be working on a major representation of the type of previously low-budget science fiction cinema we'd grown up loving as kids.

I later interviewed Syd many times, enjoyed shared meals and drinks with him, showcased him as a major player for my book *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*, attended his various art exhibits and lectures, and was honored to discuss his career on-camera during 2006's feature-length documentary *Visual Futurist: The Art & Life of Syd Mead*. Oh, yes—Syd and I sat in together on a number of Comic-Con panels too.

I last saw Syd in June of 2019. He'd just spent months in hospital battling lymphoma but was back home by midyear. I'd then called his life-partner and

was doing, and whether he might be available for a quick best-wishes. Imagine my delight when I was instead invited to join them at their home for an intimate lunch, where the three of us spent a marvelous afternoon. Syd was a bit tired, but totally "there," his usual effortless self. Yet we both silently knew we were enjoying our last supper together.

Syd eventually excused himself from his tranquil outdoor dining table to go back inside—to work. Soon it was my turn to leave. I popped my head through the doorway of Syd's studio to say goodbye. He looked up from his drawing board, flashed me his trademark toothy grin, and told me how great it was to see me again.

A few months later he was gone. His final moments were detailed in this post on his website, SydMead.com: "(Syd) left us peacefully accompanied by his partner Roger Servick surrounded by a gentle fire, Christmas decorations, and a wonderful array of his artwork. His final words were, 'I am done here. They're coming to take me back.'"

Paul M. Sammon is an author, filmmaker, and photographer who has worked on such films as *RoboCop*, *Dune* (1984), and *Starship Troopers*. He is also the author of multiple books, including the bestselling *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*.

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LEE MENDELSON (1933–2019) by Mark Evanier

Lee Mendelson, the Emmy-winning writer/producer of hundreds of television programs and specials, died Christmas Day of 2019. The date had special significance because his body of work included what was arguably the most beloved Christmas special of all time and probably the most-seen animated film ever made: *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, which first aired for Christmas of 1965.

Upon delivery, CBS screened the show, disliked it, and discussed not airing it. But its sponsor insisted, and with little promotion, the show won great critical acclaim, monster ratings, as well as Lee's first Emmy Award (of 12) and his first Peabody Award (of 4). It also won Lee a contract to produce more *Charlie Brown* specials over the next half-century as well as dozens of other shows.

Many of these shows were documentaries, but Lee also continued producing animated programming, mostly in partnership with Bill Melendez, of popular features including *Garfield*, *Cathy*, *Babar the Elephant* and *Mother Goose & Grimm*. In live-action, he produced and often wrote shows featuring such stars as Paul Newman, Gene Kelly, Joanne Woodward, Lucille Ball, Bing Crosby, Flip Wilson, Whoopi Goldberg, Muhammad Ali, Carl Reiner, and *Frozen*'s Kristen Bell. Lee also co-created, with Frank Buxton, NBC's hit Saturday-morning series *Hot Dog*, featuring comedians Woody Allen and Jonathan Winters, and Lee worked with John Steinbeck and Henry Fonda on two specials based on Steinbeck's work: *Travels with Charley* and *America and Americans*.

I had the pleasure and honor (it was both) to work with Lee on most of his *Garfield* projects and a few others. He was very smart, very honest, and when he told you what was going to happen, or even what should happen, he was correct way more often than almost any other producer I ever encountered. This business could use a lot more Lee Mendelsons.



Photo: Jason Mendelson

Mark Evanier is an award-winning writer/producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author. He is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons.

DENNIS O'NEIL (1939–2020) by Paul Levitz

Denny O'Neil was a journalist, a writer, an editor, a teacher, a mentor, but most of all, an inspiration.

He entered comics early in the second wave, joining the Marvel staff in the mid-1960s after a piece of local reporting he did on the field attracted Roy Thomas's notice. He did the usual junior editorial tasks, took the Marvel "writing test," and started out on assignments like *Millie The Model*, working his way up to pinch-hitting dialoguing *Doctor Strange*. Mostly though, he observed and learned.

When the Marvel work faded, he shifted to Charlton, connecting with Dick Giordano who had assumed the editor's role there and was injecting life into a generic line. Denny created novel projects, a science fiction cowboy strip named *Wander with Jim Aparo*, and *Children of Doom* with Pat Boyette. But he became one of Giordano's young stars, and before long followed him to DC in 1968.

Denny arrived at DC at a propitious moment: A group of the older writers who had dominated the line for decades were being pushed out after requesting better deals. As he later put it, "If I realized I was being hired as a scab, I wouldn't have done it"; but mercifully for comics, he didn't know. Before long, he graduated to writing *Justice League of America*, and then got a shot at *Batman*. The series was in recovery: The burst



Photo: Jackie Estrada

of success that had accompanied the 1966 TV show had worn off, and editor Julie Schwartz was trying to find a new tone, leaning on detective mysteries. But Denny began writing darker tales, drawing on classic

horror themes or making the hero a true creature of the night. He coined the term "Dark Knight Detective" and joined with artist Neal Adams to set the mood for *Batman* that would dominate not just the next 50 years of comics but all the modern movies, television shows, video games, and cartoons that made the hero a cultural phenomenon.

Schwartz's *Green Lantern* title was in even worse shape, and he gave Denny and Neal a freer hand to try and fix it. The result was a groundbreaking run titled *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*. It didn't introduce social relevance to comics, but it amplified it and put it front and center. This was a comic that was saying things, about race, sexism, ecology, politics, and more. The issues weren't always sugar-coated with costumed supervillains or disguised by metaphor, either. They won every award their peers and fans had to offer.

It's hard to fast forward through Denny's career: He was the first writer to simultaneously be the lead writer on *Batman*, *Superman*, and *Wonder Woman*, making important changes in each (some would endure, others fondly remembered, and some—well, we all make mistakes, he'd sigh and say, looking back). He snuck in a prose novel, *Bite of Monsters*, and became the first young writer to be given a freelance editor's position at a major comic company. He shifted back to Marvel

in 1980, taking a staff editor's desk. He wrote incisive film reviews.

And then he began to inspire.

He connected with a younger generation of talent, and didn't just give them opportunities, he talked to them. Talked movies, comics, mystery novels . . . and technique—again and again, technique. And they listened. Especially a farm kid who shared his love of noir, Frank Miller. He gave Miller the chance not just to draw *Daredevil* but to write it (hell, it was Marvel's weakest seller, why not risk it?) and to write it as a superhero comic had never been written before.

He kept writing, too. Not as much, because of the desk job, but significantly. His *Iron Man* stories drew on his own private struggles for their power and redefined Tony Stark and the boundaries of the human dilemmas a hero could face in mainstream comics.

In 1986 Denny went back to DC and became the Batman editor for a generation, working with Miller and a battalion of leading writers and artists. He took on youngsters as assistant editors and drilled them in the skills he felt they needed to master the form, sending them off as true professionals and devoted stepchildren. During his tenure, Batman became the bestselling single superhero franchise, and it has stayed

that way. The books expanded the cast, extended the storylines, and expounded on serious subjects.

And again, the writing continued. He took an old Charlton character, *The Question*, and working with Denys Cowan made it a powerful political treatise, drawing on experiences he'd witnessed as a journalist back in his native St. Louis. This wasn't a token moment of a corrupt politician; it was an indictment of everything that could go wrong in the system. Because someone had to, he dove in and novelized the complex *Knightfall* storyline that he'd run across the ever-expanding line of Bat-books.

He wrote a short tale filling in a gap in Batman's origin, "The Man Who Fell," that attracted no notice at the time but would have a pivotal effect on the character's destiny, becoming the story that attracted Christopher Nolan to direct his monumentally successful cycle of Batman films that drew from it and other stories Denny had edited.

He taught. On the job, to his assistants and his contributors. After hours, at New York University and the School of Visual Arts. Over a vegetarian platter, to anyone who would listen. And the smart ones did.

Through it all, and in his years of semi-retirement, he searched for what he could do to make the world a

better place: one-on-one with those he worked with, teaching more, and involving himself with projects exploring ways to realign the world's thought patterns. But more than anything, he inspired those around him.

Denny demonstrated courage and the power of the creative person's podium: He told tales that spoke truth to power, enlightened readers about the challenges in the world, and used the traumas of his own life to offer revelation and hope. Mostly he was quiet and soft-spoken, unless he stood as a teacher and made his platform a pulpit, or he sat before a keyboard and let his stories shout to the world. He won all the comics awards and has long been in our Eisner Hall of Fame, but also received real-world recognition not simply as a writer but as a good man. Fittingly, one of his last honors was at the Carter Center, because his courage and commitment to use his powers for good made him even more of a hero than the costumed figures he wrote so well. If that's not inspiration, what is?

Paul Levitz is a writer/editor best known for his 38 years at DC Comics (ending as President & Publisher) and for authoring such works as *75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Myth-Making* and *Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel*.

MARTIN PASKO (1954–2020) by Paul Levitz

If you're a certain age, you probably first met him as "Pesky" Pasko, a constant presence in the letters columns that adorned comics in the 1960s and 1970s. He seemed to duel with the editors, particularly DC's Julie Schwartz, exercising a wit that was unusual among the so-called letterhacks.

If you're a bit younger but were part of the select group that connected as early comics fandom, you might have read *Fanzine*, the surprisingly literate zine he and Alan Brennert published, or met him at one of the legendary Seuling Cons (he was #54 in the published preregistration list for 1971).

Come into the story a few years later, and suddenly he's signing the letters columns of Schwartz's titles—an editorial staffer on the other side of the process, now getting to snark at his formerly fellow letter writers.

Maybe you were there when he began writing comics? A little bit of horror for Warren's black-and-white magazines, then suddenly scripting *Wonder Woman* and then . . . *Superman*? He was one of the first fanzine publishers to break through as the regular writer on one of comics' most legendary characters.

As a sharp-eyed student of media, you could have caught his name starting to appear on a parade of television episodes, everything from genres he loved like *Twilight Zone* and *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* to the unclassifiable and experimental *Max Headroom*, and even *Roseanne*.

But his most influential work might have been his time as a writer and story editor on *Batman: The Animated Series*, introducing the epic character to new generations of fans, and serving as a key voice of expertise on the deep history of the Dark Knight as they built his most faithful media adaptation. He picked up an Emmy there, and co-wrote the first (and many say, best) animated movie of the character, *Mask of the Phantasm*. A long list of other

animated shows came from his keyboard; comics-connected ones like *Plastic Man* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and originals like *Thundarr* or sweeter flavors like *My Little Pony*.

He returned to comics again and again, writing diverse genres, and even getting to have a hand in his beloved *Star Trek* (you should have heard his Shatner imitation). Lots of his work was behind the scenes or in ignored corners: The *Celebrate the Century* comics he put together for the Postal Service may have had the broadest distribution of any American comic of its time.

Through it all, and through so many other creative projects that were either uncredited or hidden behind a pseudonym or even sadly unpublished, he was an oft-maddening perfectionist, striving through draft after draft of his own work in search of the unattainable, or nudging his collaborators with the same pesky persistence that was his trademark. His wit was his greatest saving grace, for besides its presence in his stories, he was always ready to make people laugh, often at his own expense. Work was serious, politics was serious, the challenges his friends and family faced were serious; but as intense as he would be about it all, somehow he'd say something that just made you crack a smile, laugh, and everything would be a little bit better.

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Portrait: Bill Sienkiewicz

DAVID RECTOR (1950–2019) by Jackie Estrada

Born and raised in Northeast Washington, DC, David Rector graduated from McKinley Technical High School with a concentration in visual arts and attended the University of the District of Columbia, earning a Bachelors in Political Science. After cutting his teeth as a staff photographer and teacher of visual craft to community teens and adults with Topper Carew's The New Thing Art and Architecture Center, David enjoyed an exhibit of his photographic work at the renowned Corcoran Gallery.

In the 1970s David became the public affairs photographer for Pride, Inc., an inner-city self-help group, where he shot news, events, and personality journalistic pieces for the community organization. He took on freelance production work at NPR's DC headquarters in 1981. He made his mark during his ensuing 28-year career on NPR's staff as a producer of stories and segments for *All Things Considered*, *Weekend Edition Sunday*, *Performance Today*, and NPR's modular service for specialized audiences.

After his mother's passing, David began to look West for his next chapter. He asked Roz Alexander-Kasparik to marry him and arrived as San Diego's newest resident on opening day of Comic-Con 2008. (In addition to the camera he always carried, David grew up with a comic book in hand from which he learned to read.)

I met David through Roz, whose office on Fifth Avenue in downtown San Diego was next door to the studio of my husband, Batton Lash. David and Batton immediately hit it off, sharing their love of comics and spending many hours talking about their favorite writers, artists, and characters.



Roz Alexander-Kasparik and David Rector at the 2008 Comic-Con. Photo: Jackie Estrada

Less than a year later, David experienced an aortic dissection that left him a quadriplegic and non-verbal. He spent the next 10 years fighting to regain his ability to move purposefully and to speak. With Roz, he focused on co-creating *Recall and Given*, a memory-as-superpower comic, aided by Batton and many other comics pros. David painstakingly made his editorial preferences and decisions known to the illustrators and script writers intent on developing *Recall and Given* into the real-world, anti-ableist, superhero saga he envisioned.

David passed away on October, 15, 2019, in San Diego, survived by his loving companion Roz, who is continuing the work on making *Recall and Given* a reality.

Jackie Estrada is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons. In addition to having edited a number of Comic-Con publications over the years, she's been the administrator of the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards since 1990.

RICHARD SALA (1955–2020) by Dan Clowes



Sala self-portrait

Richard Sala was my closest friend for almost 30 years. We first came into contact when he wrote me a very kind and uplifting letter about my comics back in the dark days of 1987. I had been a huge fan of his work in *RAW* and elsewhere. I was blown away that such an accomplished artist would write to me, and we quickly became devoted pen-pals. He would send me packages with xeroxes of out-of-print Kenneth Fearing stories and blow-ups of Topps Civil War cards, all copied on the sly at his library job. I would usually respond by telling him about some writer or comic artist or movie he already knew all about. (Richard knew more about movies than anyone I've ever met. I know several film scholars who would regularly enlist his help in trying to figure out the name of an obscure film based on the scantest of information. It never took more than a few minutes to hear back from him.)

We finally met in person in 1992 (the same red-letter day I met my wife), at a signing at Comic Relief (RIP) in Berkeley. When I moved to the area later that year, he quickly became my best and, for a while, only friend. In those days, he was somewhat carefree and outgoing,

having quit his library job to work as a very successful magazine illustrator. We'd meet for a weekly lunch/trip to the comic store, and talked on the phone almost every day. He took me to all the great old Bay Area used bookstores, where we would try to outdo each other looking for the best finds. Later we met Adrian Tomine, who joined in as part of our Berkeley comics trio. He fit right in, though it must have been grueling for him to listen to Richard and I talk at length about Burt Mustin or Percy Helton during lunch. Those were some of the happiest times of my life.

Richard was a very complicated guy, totally unlike anyone I've ever met. He could be gregarious and charming, always energetic and animated in conversation, but also crippled by terrible anxiety and profoundly agoraphobic. Over the years, it got harder and harder to get him out of the house. I basically forced him to meet me for lunch every Friday, and we did that right up until the COVID quarantine; but toward the end, that was the extent of his social life (except for the vast hours he spent online—a true lifeline). He would always show up 5 minutes late, furious about traffic, wearing a thick

black work-shirt and his famous bucket hat which curiously covered a full head of thick hair. He would close his eyes tight while ordering, as though trying to solve a complicated math equation, and then chop his ham and eggs into weird goulash which he never finished.

He was utterly opposed to exercise—he would literally drive two blocks to the post office, circling patiently for a spot—but also vital and energetic, especially in his work. I’ve never been able to grasp how quickly he could crank out so many perfect, beautiful, hand-watercolored pages every week; it was like breathing to him.

He was reassuringly predictable in a way, but always surprising in his (often intensely withering) opinions, and occasionally he’d reveal a secret skill that would make you rethink everything you knew about him. I once saw him dazzle a crowd of jaded partygoers by nonchalantly shooting a fly out of mid-air with a rubber band. But he felt cursed by his anxiety. In all the years I knew him, he never once left the state of California. He spent his early childhood in Chicago before moving to Arizona, and briefly to Louisville, but that was the extent of his travels. He never visited New York, or left the country, though part of him wanted to very badly.

The more I learned about his struggles growing up, the more I was amazed by the extent of his accomplishments. I always had to remind him that no matter what, he had supported himself as a beloved artist for most of his adult life, and that would cheer him up for a few seconds. He was absolutely convinced that nobody really liked his work, that all the kind words were some massive conspiracy, but he also hoped that one day, some lone weird kid would find one of his books in a used bookstore and find the same kind of connection with his work that he’d had with his own bookstore heroes.

I always loved reading his new books and then talking about them with him. Every character and idea had an interesting origin (the name Peculia, for example, came from a childhood misreading of *pelicula* in a Spanish film magazine) or a connection to some tangible event in his life. It was all so much deeper and more loaded emotionally than the surface implied. I loved him so much, loved hearing his thoughts on every subject, and his utterly unique Richard Sala-ness (“Sala-esque” is an oft-use adjective in the Clowes house), and feel so deeply grateful that I got to know such a private man. I’ll be having conversations with him in my head for as long as I live.

Dan Clowes is the award-winning creator of such works as *Eightball*, *Ghostworld*, *Wilson*, *Ice Haven*, *The Death-Ray*, and *Patience*.

BILL SCHELLY (1951–2019) by Jeff Gelb



Jeff Gelb and Bill Schelly (right).

William (Bill) Schelly was a Seattle-based prolific writer of books and articles about comic book creators, companies, and trends.

He authored over 25 books on such luminaries as Otto Binder, Joe Kubert, John Stanley, and James Warren. His biography *Harvey Kurtzman: The Man Who Created Mad and Revolutionized Humor in America* won an Eisner Award in 2016. He also wrote an acclaimed autobiography, *Sense of Wonder*, the title of which perfectly described his love for the comic book medium. As associate editor of *Alter Ego* magazine, he wrote over 150 columns of comic book fandom history. He was proud to have been chosen to write the history of Comic-Con for its 2019 *Souvenir Book*.

Every project for Bill was a labor of love. His goal was to lead the reader through the story from page one to its final words as if he or she was reading a breathless thriller. Along the way, he used his sleuthing ability to discover untold facts and tales of his subject. Bill was generous to his subjects, never dragging them through the dirt no matter what he found out about them along the way.

He was equally generous to friends—always concerned more for how they were doing than what he was doing in his own life. He was warm and friendly, a great conversationalist who could speak for hours about his great love for comic books. He was also a great listener who respected the opinions of anyone with whom he had contact.

Bill was never happier than when he was at work on a project. He was very dedicated, working solidly for at least four hours a day writing and spending another several hours researching.

When not writing, Schelly enjoyed reading, especially comic books, fanzines, Ian Fleming, Robert E. Howard, and biographies. He was a big movie fan as well, devouring James Bond and superhero flicks, films noir, Marx Bros., and his personal favorite silent comedian, Harry Langdon, about whom he wrote a definitive biography. He loved all aspects of rock music, especially The Beatles.

Last September Bill died of complications from multiple myeloma, a relatively rare form of cancer. Days before his passing, he told friends and family that he was satisfied with his accomplishments and had led the life he had always envisioned.

Jeff Gelb is a writer and editor who was close friends with Bill Schelly for over 30 years.

ROBERT SCOTT (1962–2019) by Ted Adams

Robert Scott was a vital part of the San Diego comic book community for nearly 40 years. Beginning in the early 1980s, he ran a local comic convention at the Scottish Rite Center in Mission Valley. Comickaze, the store he ran for 30 years, first opened in the early '90s and made a couple of moves before settling into its current home on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. In 2015, after I put the bug in his ear, he opened a second store in Point Loma's Liberty Station, near IDW's publishing office.

Robert's passion for comics led him to start the Comic Book Industry Alliance (CBIA), an online forum where publishers and comic book retailers could discuss issues. In the days before social media, CBIA allowed retailers to come together to make suggestions on how to improve the way comics were marketed and sold. It was one of the first places to discuss the idea of the Final Order Cut-off (FOC) program, which allows retailers to adjust their orders based on how titles are selling in their stores.

Robert loved talking comics and making recommendations, and he knew he could find a graphic novel for everyone. When he opened his store in Liberty Station, I'd often walk across the courtyard from IDW's office and play hooky browsing the shelves and listening to Robert tell people about a graphic novel they'd like. I can see his smile and hear his wry sense of humor in my head now.

Robert was always the first person I'd run a new idea by, and he never pulled any punches when he let me know what he thought. When IDW started publishing retailer-exclusive covers with the release of *Godzilla: Kingdom of Monsters* #1, Robert was one of the first store owners to sign up. Over the years, he did a number of exclusive covers with IDW, including one where he was drawn as one of the original Ghostbusters.

Robert approached me about co-publishing a novel with IDW in 2005. *Wasting the Dawn* was written by San Diego local David Hurwitz, and the story was originally

published as a series of zines sold in San Diego coffee shops. Although we never discussed it, I assume Robert came across one of the zines and worked out a deal with the author to publish it. Robert loved helping San Diego creators and introducing like-minded people. I met Tom Waltz when Robert introduced him to me at his Clairemont store. Not long after, Tom joined IDW, where he's had a big career

as an editor and long-time writer of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Robert supported the local comics community by featuring books from San Diego writers and artists in his stores and having signing events for them. His love of the broader San Diego pop culture community led to him sponsoring Halloween costume contests and movie nights in Liberty Station.

Anyone who's been to Robert's store in Clairemont knows that shopping there is an adventure. The shelves are literally bursting at the seams with books also displayed in boxes on the floor. Robert's approach to retail allowed customers to discover books they might not otherwise come across, and he and his staff were always there to help find what you wanted and to make suggestions.

His Free Comic Book Day events were legendary, with mobs of people waiting for the store to open. He'd invite local creators to come and sign, encourage cosplay, and sometimes have the local

501st Legion of Imperial Stormtroopers make an appearance. He knew FCBD was his chance to do what he loved most: celebrate both comic books and San Diego while helping folks find a book they'd love.

Ted Adams, is the co-founder of IDW, where he served as the company's CEO and Publisher for 18 years. In 2019, he co-founded *Clover Press* and is the company's Publisher. He's also an executive producer on a number of TV shows, including *Wynonna Earp* and *Locke & Key*.



Photo: Jackie Estrada

TOM SPURGEON (1969–2019) by Eric Reynolds



Eric Reynolds and Tom Spurgeon (right) at CXC.

For a quarter-century, Tom Spurgeon was one of my best friends, period. For over half of my life. One can't underestimate these things. And it was all because of comics.

In 1994, I became the news editor of *The Comics Journal*. The *Journal* was a two-person staff at that time, news and managing editor, operating under Executive Editor and Publisher Gary Groth. A few months after I began, Tom was hired as managing editor. I didn't know what to make of him at first: A big, hulking bear of a man, he looked more like an offensive lineman than a comics fan. In fact, he had played college football and went to seminary for a while, two things I couldn't possibly reconcile, let alone relate to, and now here he was, editing a comics magazine.

Tom had left a decent job in Indiana at a home shopping network to work for peanuts at Fantagraphics, out of a passion for comics that we bonded quickly over,

as well as a mutual desire to rake muck and make the *Journal* the best we could. We formed what I selfishly consider to be the most formidable editorial tandem in *T/CJ* history. Yes, I'm biased, but in quick time we truly felt like world-beaters, and it felt like we perfectly complimented each other's skill sets. We had each other's back. Tom was the better conceptual thinker, steering the magazine in new directions and hiring new voices that reflected the changing times in our industry and art-form, whereas I was more detail-oriented, the dogged reporter. Tom was the key architect behind many *Journal* interviews and features, none bigger than the classic "100 Best Comics of the Century" issue from 1999. We had the most fun collaborating on the mag's "Viva La Comics!" section every month, which was basically the two of us trying to make each other laugh.

After we stopped working together, our friendship continued to flourish; even after he moved from

Seattle to New Mexico, where he founded the Eisner Award-winning Comics Reporter website, and then to Columbus, Ohio, where he co-founded the Comics Crossroads Columbus festival with Jeff Smith and Vijaya Iyer.

Tom schooled me about blindspots in my knowledge of comics history. I have a sneaking suspicion that the world may have lost its preeminent scholar of Tom K. Ryan's *Tumbleweeds* comic strip. Tom's father worked in the newspaper business and edited the comics pages for the local paper in Tom's hometown of Muncie, Indiana. I loved *Peanuts* and other strips of my youth, but Tom turned me on to the works of Harold Gray and Elzie Segar, now two of my all-time favorites. In 2001, due to something I'd written about Segar for *TCJ* at Tom's encouragement, I was given the great honor of inducting Segar into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame at Comic-Con International. Another thing I owe to Tom.

The Fantagraphics oral history *We Told You So: Comics as Art* was possibly the most serious challenge to our relationship over the years but ultimately one of the high points. As much as that book is Gary Groth and Kim Thompson's story, Tom and I took pride that our personal friendship was ultimately the glue that kept the project from falling apart more than once when tempers flared, and though it may not be perfect, we were proud of it.

My father died in 2018, and Tom was a steady presence who helped me through that, having lost his own father in 2001. He wanted to make sure I was okay, and continued to ask me about how I was doing long after most folks I knew had understandably stopped doing so. In fact, Tom had a habit of emailing me a short "Are you okay? Haven't heard from you in awhile" anytime we went more than a week or two without contact.

I am proud for all he accomplished over the past couple of decades. The Comics Reporter, the Stan Lee biography he co-authored with Jordan Raphael, *We Told You So*, and most recently, Comics Crossroads Columbus (CXC).

Speaking of CXC, it's telling that Tom left his archives to the Billy Ireland Museum. In Columbus, Tom finally found the place that he wanted to stay for the rest of his life, after decades of constantly contemplating moves to Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, etc. I'm grateful to the Columbus comics community, especially Caitlin McGurk, for welcoming Tom.

Eric Reynolds is a cartoonist, writer, and editor from Seattle, WA, and is the associate publisher of *Fantagraphics Books*. He was an Inkpot Award recipient in 2018.

STEVE STILES (1943–2020) by Mark Schultz



Photo: Jeff Schalles

Steve Stiles' catchphrase, "Death is nature's way of telling you when to stop," might be his best-known invention. Its reuse, often *sans* credit, exceeded the bounds of comics and fandom culture. It's a zen-like insight into the overlooked obvious, at which Steve's cartoons and illustrations excelled.

Nature told Steve to stop on January the eleventh of this year, and maybe it was his "when," but it didn't seem like he was nearly done. He was working on new projects up until the end, although he certainly didn't need more feathers in his cap. It would be impossible in this space to adequately cover all that he had accomplished throughout his 76 years, as both a professional and a devoted member of science fiction fandom, but I'll try to provide a rough breakdown.

Before he was even a teenager, Steve was publishing his own fanzine for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, issues of which were presented as portfolio pieces that got him accepted at New York's prestigious High School for Music and Art (the alma mater of many of his inspirations, including Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder), and after that, the School of Visual Arts. While continuing to contribute to fanzines, where he established relationships with important literary figures such as Dick Lupoff and Ted White, he began his professional career with an illustration for Paul Krassner's *The Realist*. After a stint in advertising, he plunged into freelance cartooning, splitting his efforts between children's books, underground comix, and mainstream comic books. At Marvel he ghost-penciled splash panels for superhero epics reconfigured for the British market, and he had a short stint doing illustrations for the *Baltimore Sun*.

With Dick Lupoff he chronicled *The Adventures of Professor Thintwhistle and His Incredible Flyer*, a serial strip in *Heavy Metal* that foreshadowed the coming Steampunk movement, although with tongue placed firmly in cheek.

He honed his skills as an incisive satirist contributing to numerous underground anthologies, including *Anarchy Comics*, *Snarf*, *Bizarre Sex*, and *Comix Book*. Most important, he created his own *Hyper Comics*.

For younger readers, he drew stories for *The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and Marvel's Star Comics line, as well as an aborted Scrooge McDuck adventure. He brilliantly mimicked Al Capp's style for a doomed attempt to resurrect the *Li'l Abner* strip. (He could also do a darn good *Spirit*-era Will Eisner.) He continued to be a regular contributor, both as an artist and a commentator, to science fiction fandom, winning the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist in 2016.

Outside the world of entertainment, he designed the Samaritan Medal for Peace and Humanitarian Achievement, which was awarded to Shimon Peres in 2008.

I didn't want this to turn into a list—but, what a career! And, as I said, this is just a rough breakdown.

Of course, I got to know Steve personally through our collaborations on my *Xenozoic Tales* stories. I'd first seen Steve's work in the second coming of Kitchen Sink's *Death Rattle* and was properly impressed with his understanding of the short-form comics story, something on which I was trying to get a handle. It was obvious that he had been influenced by masters like Kurtzman and Eisner, but clearly had developed his own satiric vision. Denis Kitchen was likewise an admirer, and when it became evident—after one issue—that I was not going to be able to deliver a full 30 pages of *Xenozoic* content on anything approaching a regular schedule, Denis suggested that Steve might be interested in working with me. I had my doubts—I didn't know if he cared for the more straight-ahead adventure stuff I do—but, as I learned, Steve was capable of adapting to just about anything. He inked my pencils expertly in issue 2 and, thereafter—for the remaining 12 issues of the series—provided the artwork for the 8-page back-up stories, the goal of which was to provide insight into the *Xenozoic* world beyond the adventures of the series' protagonists. Kurtzman's humanist war stories were the template, and Steve delivered every time.

It was a joy to collaborate with him—if he made any adjustments to my scripts they were invariably improvements. He knew how to tell the stories with clarity and impact, and he added humor to them. No one could draw a slow-burn as well as Steve. His ability to deftly convey a character's mounting frustration and/or confused, thwarted villainy was awesome. And hilarious.

Steve's many talents brightened time and space—what an amazing legacy he's left us.

Mark Schultz is a cartoonist/illustrator/writer best known for his *Xenozoic* stories and *Storms at Sea* and for co-creating *SubHuman*. He's also scripted *Superman*, illustrated *Robert E. Howard's Conan*, and since 2004 has written the *Prince Valiant* comic strip.

JOE SINNOTT (1926–2020) by Mark Evanier

If you were in a crowd of folks who worked in the comic book industry and announced, "Joe Sinnott was the best inker who ever worked in comics," you wouldn't get a lot of argument. If you said, "Joe Sinnott was the nicest guy who ever worked in comics," you'd get even less.

He was not only a great inker, he was the guy who elevated that craft to an art; the guy who taught everyone else how it should be done. Almost every one of his peers studied what he did. Almost every one of his peers was told by some editor, at one time or another, "Try to do it more like Sinnott."

I met Joe via correspondence before I met him in person at the 1970 New York Comic Art Convention. He couldn't have been nicer. A little later, I was sitting with Wally Wood, another fine artist whose work was much admired and studied. Joe walked by and Wally asked me who that was. I told him it was Joe Sinnott. Wood, who'd done a lot of inking of Jack Kirby's art in his day, said, "That's the guy who inked Jack the way Jack should be inked. If I ever get another chance to, I want to do it like he does."

Joe was such a good inker, you forgot how good he was as an artist, doing it all himself. His photorealistic style shouldn't have blended so well with such a wide range of pencil artists, but it did. He always understood what they were trying to achieve on the page and what he should do to try and help them get there.

Joe Sinnott was born on October 16, 1926 in Saugerties, NY, a city that would be his "hometown" for his entire life. He grew up in a boarding house that catered primarily to teachers, several of whom saw talent in the young man's attempts to draw and encouraged him in that direction. He studied art in high school and also while in the Navy, where he served in Okinawa during World War II. When he was discharged in 1946, he worked in a rock quarry for a few years before deciding it was time to resurrect his ambitions towards drawing. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, he was able to attend the Cartoonists and Illustrators School (later known as the School of Visual Arts) in New York, where his work caught the eye of the school's co-founder, Burne Hogarth, and one of its main instructors, Tom Gill. Gill was drawing westerns and movie adaptations for Dell Comics, and Sinnott spent nine months assisting him before deciding he was ready to go solo.

His first job on his own was for St. John Comics, but he soon broke in at Atlas (now Marvel), drawing war,



Photo: Mark Sinnott

western, and horror comics for editor Stan Lee. Lee liked Sinnott's crisp style and the fact that the work was always well-researched and in on time. Joe later worked for other publishers, including Treasure Chest, Charlton, and Archie, but his main work was for Marvel, especially after Stan discovered how well Joe could ink the work of other artists. Joe really got noticed as an inker for the pencil art of Jack Kirby. He inked several early, pre-superhero stories by Kirby, and when the "Marvel Age" began, he handled several key tales, including the first Thor story in *Journey into Mystery* #83 and the debut of Dr. Doom in *Fantastic Four* #5. Joe also drew the Thor strip for a time. Stan wanted Joe to ink as much as possible for Marvel, but at the time the company's low rates forced Joe to turn him down. Finally, though, the pay was raised and Joe abandoned his Archie inking to work full-time for Marvel.

Some would call him Kirby's best inker. Even though he didn't meet Jack until years after their major collaborations, he understood the way Kirby drew and knew how to separate the planes of a drawing and make Kirby's special brand of forced perspective work to maximum effect.

Joe inked almost every major Marvel artist at one time or another and kept *Fantastic Four* consistent

through a succession of different pencilers after Kirby. At times, he made their best artists like John Buscema and Gene Colan look great. At other times, editors knew that Sinnott could raise the quality of weak penciling (or finish sparsely penciled art) and assigned him to those jobs.

No matter what they threw his way, Joe made it look good and always got it in on time. Always. No editor ever had a problem with Joe Sinnott. No editor didn't wish he had a lot more Joe Sinnotts at his disposal.

I've met nearly every major writer and artist who worked in comics from the sixties through the eighties. I never met a nicer man than Joe Sinnott, and few who were as inarguably good at what they did. Joe was a gentleman in every sense of the word. I could cite dozens of examples but this one will do...

In 1975 at a comic convention in New York, we made plans to meet for lunch. Just before we were about to leave the con and head across the street, a fan asked Joe for an autograph. Then another asked, and another. The requests escalated into quick sketches and soon Joe was mobbed by folks who loved his work and simply had to have a little Thor or Thing drawing from the great Joe Sinnott. After several dozen

of these had delayed our lunch departure by close to an hour, I waded into the throng to play Bad Guy, stop the sketching, and drag Joe off to eat.

He declined. He didn't want to disappoint all the people who were swarming around him, some of whom had been waiting for that hour. At his behest, my friends and I went to lunch without him. I brought him back a burger and found him in the same place, still sketching for fans. Three hours later, he was still at it and the hamburger was stone cold and untouched. If the convention hadn't kicked everyone out and closed that room, he'd probably still be there.

That was the Joe Sinnott I knew.

I miss all these great artists who are, way too often, the subject of this In Memoriam section, but I'm really going to miss Joe. He died peacefully on June 25 at the age of 93, beloved by all who knew the man and his work.

Mark Evanier is an award-winning writer/producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author. He is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons.

JOE SINNOTT: THE LIFE, THE LINE, THE LEGEND . . . by Walter Simonson

I'm required by law to open my remarks with the over-the-top alliteration above. Joe worked for Marvel Comics for so many years that a tribute in "Marvel-ese" seemed inevitable. In part, that's because of his long career at the House of Ideas. In part, it's because he inked so many issues of Jack Kirby's pencils on *Fantastic Four*, Marvel's flagship book back in the '60s. And in part, it's because Joe was so important in defining the appearance of the classic Marvel comic.

Joe Sinnott is without question one of the finest inkers who ever labored in the field of comic books. His India-inked brush line was a thing of beauty—smooth, fluid, the very definition of slick. Joe exhibited amazing brush control throughout his career, but just as important, Joe was a fine draftsman in his own right. He penciled and inked a number of comics back in the day, including some of the early issues of *Thor* for Marvel.

But Joe made his mark primarily as an inker, bringing his draftsman's eye to everything he worked on. The list of his credits, both as a penciler and as an inker, is extensive and available on the web, so I'll just mention the one that's special to me. I was drawing layouts for Marvel's *The Mighty Thor* for a year back in the late 1970s. And I lucked out when—really an accident of scheduling, I think—Joe Sinnott did the finishes on one of my issues and inked several of my covers as well. I couldn't have been more delighted. And thanks to Joe, I never looked more like a classic Marvel artist.

Many years ago, I was in upstate New York visiting friends. For reason that I have now forgotten, we stopped off at Joe's house, a home where he and his wife, Betty, had lived for years. And there, unexpectedly, I got one of the biggest thrills of my professional career. Joe took me into his studio, the space in which

he had inked all those wonderful Kirby *Fantastic Fours*. For all I know, he may have inked my *Thor* pencils on that very drawing board. But it was such a treat to be able to stand in the same room with Joe just to see where so much beautiful work had been created.

There's a Picasso quote I came across somewhere: "When art critics get together they talk about Form and Structure and Meaning. When artists get together they talk about where you can buy cheap turpentine."

That's pretty much how it was whenever my wife Weezie (Louise) and I saw Joe. We didn't talk about the fabulous work he had done or his art techniques or what it was like being at Marvel during its golden era in the 1960s. We talked about friends, family, and baseball.

Some of those talks took place in the Starway Diner in Saugerties, NY. For some years, a number of comics creators who lived in the Hudson Valley environs would gather in the diner once or twice a year to honor Joe, enjoy a lunch, and talk about everything under the sun, including comics. Sometimes, we needed two tables to accommodate everybody who came; sometimes folk came from other states just to be there. Now, of course, I can think of all kinds of questions I wish I'd asked Joe, but the time spent in his presence really rendered the point of those questions moot. It was a treat to be able to hang out with him and talk about baseball in the old days. I regret that I'll never be able to do that again; I'm immeasurably pleased that I got to do it as often as I did.

And that wasn't our only social interaction. In 2014, several of us who lived in the area worked out our schedules and got together at a minor league baseball game on a pleasant summer evening. I believe we



Simonson's pencils with Sinnott's inks.

saw the Hudson Valley Renegades in Fishkill, NY play. It was one of those minor league promotions, in this case an autograph session with some comic book pros before the game, and then the baseball game afterward. Weezie and me, Bob Wiacek, Mark McKenna, Fred Hembeck, Mark Sinnott, and Joe took part in the comic book attraction side of things. A row of tables was set just beyond the first-base line, and we signed stuff, mostly for kids whose parents had brought them, and shot the breeze. As always, Joe was as sweet as could be to the fans, chatting with the kids, and I think doing a little sketching as well. If you wanted a sterling example of a shining ambassador for comic books, you couldn't have found a better one. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention somewhere in here that Joe was a World War II vet, having served in the Navy in the Seabees. That alone would be reason enough to honor him.

Sometimes, writing the ending to these sorts of encomiums in the wake of someone's passing can be difficult. You don't quite know how to sum up a person's life in a few words. In Joe's case, it's easy.

As a human being, as a professional, Joe Sinnott was the best. Godspeed, pal.

Walter Simonson is the award-winning writer/artist best known for his runs on Marvel's *Thor* and DC's *Orion*, as well as his own *Star Slammers* series and most recently, *Ragnarök*.



Joe Sinnott (far left), Louise Simonson, Fred Hembeck, Mark McKenna, Walter Simonson and Bob Wiacek

ALBERT UDERZO (1927–2020) by Xavier Fournier

French artist **Albert Uderzo**, co-creator of the world-famous comic character Asterix the Gaul, died on March 24, 2020, at the age of 92.

Uderzo was born in France in 1927 into an Italian immigrant family. As a boy, his imagination was fired by the works of Walt Disney, Edmond-François Calvo, and Al Capp, among others. He began submitting his artwork as a teenager and was first published in the 1940s. In his early work, a recurring character was the knight Hector de Chactarac, a.k.a. "Flambergé," a parody of the cloak-and-dagger adventurers that were popular at the time. In this humorous vein, Uderzo went on to create various swashbuckling protagonists, most notably the barbarian Arys Buck, who at one point encounters Cascagnace, a tiny warrior wearing a winged helmet, who is clearly the prototype of the future Asterix. Belloy the Invulnerable (1948) is one of several other examples of noble adventurers who do not take themselves too seriously. They synthesize the cleverly exaggerated expressions of a Calvo with the prowess of American superheroes.

In 1958, Uderzo's fascination with American comics would inspire his first collaboration with the writer René Goscinny. Together they conceived a new character, the Native American Oumpah-pah, believing that such a protagonist would appeal to U.S. readers. But, as it turned out, the humor in Oumpah-pah did not cross the Atlantic very well.

In 1959, Uderzo and Goscinny, along with a few other French creators, launched the magazine *Pilote*, which would be a landmark in the history of European comics.

Following the mediocre results of Oumpah-pah in the United States, Uderzo and Goscinny decided to create a character for *Pilote* that would appeal most to their French audience. This would be a cunning lit-

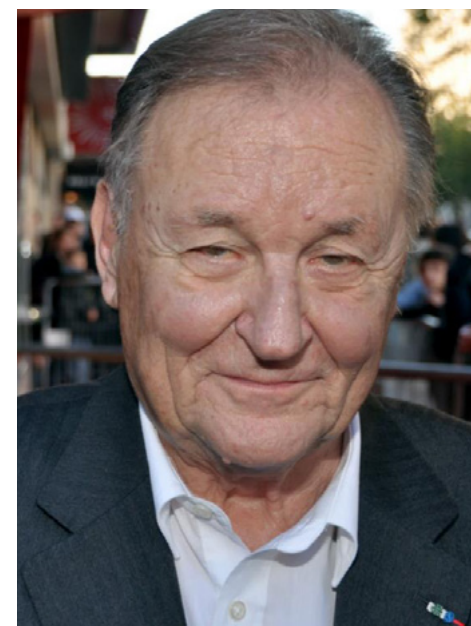


Photo: Georges Biard

tle Gaul who, thanks to a magic potion, takes on the Roman invaders in 50 BC. The moment he drinks the potion the hero is struck by lightning and develops Herculean strength. Blend Cascagnace and the lightning bolt from Captain Marvel—and, voilà, "I am Asterix!" But we also have an incredibly rich supporting cast: Besides Asterix's sidekick Obelix, there are numerous feisty villagers, Cleopatra, and even Julius Caesar. Ironically, this series, though conceived primarily for a French and Belgian market, with numerous cultural references and puns that are difficult to translate, would become a worldwide phenomenon.

That same year, Uderzo illustrated a new story for *Pilote*: the adventures of Tanguy and Laverdure,

scripted by Jean-Michel Charlier (co-creator of *Lieutenant Blueberry*). For this project Uderzo used a realistic style to recount the exploits of two modern-day French air force pilots, demonstrating his artistic versatility.

In 1977 a disagreement arose between the creators and their French publisher, Dargaud, concerning foreign rights. As a result, Goscinny and Uderzo left the publishing company. A few months later Goscinny suddenly died of a heart attack. But Uderzo decided to complete the album they had been working on at the time, *Asterix in Belgium*, and then to set in motion the plan they had envisaged a few months earlier: the founding of a new company, Éditions Albert René, which would continue the successful franchise that they had created.

Since 1959 Asterix has been translated into more than 110 languages and has sold 380 million copies worldwide. It has generated radio shows, numerous feature films (both animated and live action), merchandising, and a large-scale amusement park in the style of Disneyland, which opened near Paris in 1989.

Due to his advancing years and declining health, Uderzo gradually stopped producing the adventures of Asterix, passing the baton to successors he closely supervised. However, in 2018 Uderzo made it clear that he did not want Asterix's adventures to continue after his death.

Alberto Alejandro Uderzo will remain in the annals of comics as one of the greatest artists that ever lived.

Xavier Fournier is a French journalist, essayist, and lecturer, a former editor-in-chief of the French magazine *Comic BoX*, and author of several books (*Super-Héros, une histoire française, Kirbysphere* . . .)

GAHAN WILSON (1930–2019) by Steven-Charles Jaffe

"If there were no Gahan Wilson, we'd have to invent him to prove that there's beauty in the grotesque and hilarity in the outrageous." — STAN LEE

The first Gahan Wilson cartoon I saw was in 1962, on a hot and sultry summer afternoon in the Connecticut woods. A friend snuck a *Playboy* magazine from his father's den and we were about to see what all the fuss was about. As we flipped through the pages, I blushed at first, and then became bewitched seeing a naked woman swimming underwater, adorned only in scuba gear. Searching for more photos, I stopped abruptly at an arresting cartoon of Da Vinci looking at an exploding mushroom cloud on the horizon with an aide asking, "And supposing you do repress it, Leonardo? Somebody else is certain to come across it again in a few years."

Well, this was eye candy for the demented and it rocked my prepubescent brain, as this was insanely different from any other cartoonist, with the exception of Charles Addams, but with lurid colors and asymmetrically drawn humans. I would later become familiar with the theme represented here, *gaiety in the presence of doom*.

Gahan was not simply a brilliant gag cartoonist, he was an environmentalist, beginning with one of his earliest cartoons of a dead black bird in the snow with the caption, "Look Mommy, the first robin of spring." These evolved into strong political cartoons with the imagery becoming outrageously grotesque and dark—politicians wearing gas masks rallying for corporate pollution and corruption.

He had a huge following for his compelling look at disenfranchised kids in the series *Nuts*, which ran in *National Lampoon*. But it was his love of monsters that gave him the title of the "Master of the Macabre" that was embraced by so many of his fans, especially at Comic-Con.

I was fortunate to have produced the movie *Ghost*, which among other benefits enabled me easy access to many important people. Instead of reaching out to studio bosses, movie stars, bankers, I sought out the artist that Guillermo del Toro



Photo: David Kennerly

referred to as the “Poster Child of the Disenfranchised.” Shortly thereafter, I was on the phone with Gahan. We immediately struck up a friendship that lasted over two decades.

I wanted to bring his fertile imagination to the big screen, so we ended up working on several spec projects, including *Eddy Deco's Last Caper* based on GW's illustrated novel, which I adapted with writer-director Nicholas Meyer for the biggest of big screens, IMAX. It was a project I spent over 15 years trying to get produced. One of the joys on this project was that we (Meyer, me, and Gahan) met Roman Kroiter, the inventor of the IMAX camera, who wanted us to use his real-time ani-

mation device SAANDE for *Eddy*. During the ongoing gestation process known as “development hell,” I decided to take a sabbatical from producing and return to my early passion, documentaries, spurred on in part by seeing *Crumb*, in the hope this might be a sales tool for the project.

After over five years and 175 hours of footage I directed *Gahan Wilson: Born Dead, Still Weird* (2013). I reached out to a number of celebrities to participate, and to my delight several responded eagerly, including Stan Lee, Guillermo Del Toro, Stephen Colbert, Neil Gaiman, and Bill Maher, as well as many cartoonists from *The New Yorker* and *Playboy*. The film received rave reviews, and it won the Best Documentary Award at the Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival.

As I interviewed Gahan, I learned about his childhood growing up in Evanston, Illinois during the Depression, and the hardships he endured as a child of alcoholics. He explained that he had been drawing monsters since he was three. In an early drawing of a monster hovering over a child, Gahan's mother wrote a caption, “Horrible monster come to kill us all.” Intriguingly, when you look closely, the monster seems to be protecting the child.

I wondered who were these monsters that a preliterate Gahan had drawn? Did he survive his trauma-ridden childhood through art? What's the significance that after 50 years of cartooning, he still loves monsters? As it turned out, I was not the only one he haunted. His extraordinary talent for darkly humorous cartoons influenced entire generations of readers and played a pivotal role in the childhood of many of today's leading artists, thinkers, politicians, and humorists. I miss him but do speak to his ghost in my head often.

Steven-Charles Jaffe is an award-winning film producer and director whose credits include *Ghost*, *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, *Strange Days*, *Near Dark*, *The Day After*, and *Gahan Wilson: Born Dead, Still Weird*.

MEMBERS OF THE COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL FAMILY WHOM WE'VE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR

ALAN CAMPBELL (1959–2019) By Chris Sturhann



It was the afternoon of Christmas Eve. My family was in the car on the way to my brother's house for dinner when we got the news. Our friend and longtime Comic-Con cohort Alan Campbell had died of cardiac arrest a few days earlier in his sleep. He was 60. He'd had some health issues about nine months earlier, but had seemed to come through them well, so the news came as quite a shock.

I'd known Alan for close to 30 years, from the time I'd started volunteering for Comic-Con in the early 1990s. Alan had already been volunteering in the

Comic-Con onsite Show Office when I started. There are many stories I could share about Alan, but by far, many, many more I could not share. That's just the way he was. To say his sense of humor was inappropriate would be a gross understatement, but that's what made it all the more funny. At times, it was just wrong, but in a good way. Though biting, his humor was rarely mean-spirited, but it did have a way of cutting to the heart of the matter, especially if the situation involved stupidity.

For much of the time I knew Alan, he was on the Comic-Con Board of Directors. Though he never lived in San Diego, it was rare that we didn't see him at least once a month for meetings. Often the Board meetings seemed to go on forever—his humor made that situation a lot more bearable.

One of my favorite Alan stories happened when he was the head of Exhibitor Registration. At the time, all of the badges for Comic-Con staff members were processed through Exhibitor Registration and included the person's job title on the badge. I'd had a run of bad luck and managed to lose my badge three years in a row. Thus, I had to come to him hat-in-hand asking for a new badge to replace the one he'd already given me, again. He did give me some grief, but it was said with a smile. He also gave me something else: a new job title. Typed

neatly under my name was, “King of Lost Badges.” I wore that with pride, and managed not to lose it.

When you talked to Alan, you kind of had to take what he said with a grain of salt. He had been in the military for many years, after joining right out of school. Sometimes, he would talk about something from when he had been in the Army, and it sounded like something out of a Tom Clancy novel. Then one time a bunch of us went to play laser tag, and all I know is that Alan kicked butt, so maybe there was some truth in his stories.

San Diego Pride weekend often falls the week before Comic-Con, and Alan would always come to town early for that. Or on the weekend of a normal Comic-Con meeting, he'd come down early and/or stay late to have breakfast or dinner. I think that's what I'm going to miss the most, just hanging when he was visiting. Rest in peace, Alan.

Chris Sturhann is a longtime member of the Board of Directors of Comic-Con International and is the editor of the at-show newsletter, *Comic-Con Today*.



FRANC JIMENEZ (1976–2019) by Beth Gunther

Francisco (Franc) Jimenez III (or Kiko to his family) was a part of Comic-Con's Guest Relations Team from his teenage years until his passing last December. He loved pop culture and being a part of SDCC. He had a great deal to do with building up the GRT Department from the very beginning in the 1990s, working with dedication, kindness, and respect for the people put into his care. That care extended to many of his volunteer family in other areas, always taking time to talk and check in on them. No matter where or what group we might be in didn't matter; growing up Con means family. To Franc, family was everything.

Beth Gunter was a fellow GRT volunteer with Franc and his many friends at SDCC.

DORIS PIERSON (1942–2019) by Janice Guy



Doris (middle) brought cookies to fan-favorite celebrities such as Julie Newmar and Frank Gorshin.

I met Doris Pierson (a.k.a. “The Cookie Lady”) in 1976. It was at my very first convention. It was Easter weekend: Equicon 76 at the LAX Marriott. I was 15 then. We were both waiting for William Campbell (Trelane and Koloth) from *Star Trek: TOS* to arrive. We started talking to each other, and the rest is history. We both became good friends with Bill for many years.

I would spend weekends with Doris. My parents would drop me off on Friday and pick me up on Sunday. We would either go out with other friends or hang out at her place. We always had a great time. We would have to take public transportation or rely on those with cars to take us to the movies or to S.T.A.R. meetings. When I finally got a car we would venture to LA for various conventions. We would always take a buttload of her homemade cookies so she could hand them out to the various pros who attended. They always looked forward to her cookies.

I got involved with Comic-Con because of Doris. She was on the Committee for a short time in the mid-1970s. She gave me a pass in 1976, and I was hooked. I became a Committee member for years after that. Every Comic-Con she would always bring baggies of cookies for the guests, and I always had cookies that lasted me the whole Con. Those were the best years. Her cookies were basic chocolate chip cookies. She added a secret ingredient, but she would never tell me what it was. I figured it out years later. To this day, I have never told anyone what it is.

One of my fondest memories is when Doris volunteered at the Old Globe Theater Telethon. She was taking pledges over the phone. Christopher Reeve was one of the guests. If you came to the studio to pledge a certain dollar amount, you would get a kiss from Reeve. I met Doris at the studio after the Telethon, and she introduced me to Reeve. There I was, face to face with Superman in the flesh! He gave me a kiss. I was over the moon. A moment I have cherished for years.

As we both got older and life happened, we did not see each other as often. We did talk to each other on the phone at least once a week. We would talk for hours about anything and everything. We used to say we should write a soap opera or a book about all of our adventures and all the drama we experienced.

In 2016 I left San Diego and moved to Kansas to be with my remaining family. I have not been to Comic-Con or seen Doris since. We did talk to each other once or twice a week up until she had a stroke late last year. Her caregiver Jayme kept me updated on her health and state of mind. I knew it was just a matter of time before she would be gone.

When Doris passed away I was heartbroken. I lost my best friend, my Sister, and my partner in crime. She was always there for me whenever I needed it. She had a heart of gold. She helped mold me to be the person I am today. There will always be an empty space in my heart.

Live Long and Prosper, my sweet Doris. You continue to do you in heaven. We will meet again someday, and we will pick up where we left off.

Janice Guy volunteered for Comic-Con in its first three decades, serving, among other things, as secretary of the Board of Directors, blood drive coordinator, and guest coordinator.

REMEMBERING OTHERS WE'VE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR

FRANK BOLLE (1924–2020)

Prolific comics artist Frank Bolle passed away on May 12 at the age of 95. The veteran illustrator drew *Doctor Solar* and *Flash Gordon* for Gold Key, *Tim Holt*, *Red Mask*, and *Black Phantom* (which he co-created) for Magazine Enterprises, *Robotman* for DC Comics, *The Phantom* for Charlton, and the *Encyclopedia Brown*, *Winnie Winkle*, *Girls of Apartment 3G*, and *Heart of Juliet Jones* newspaper strips. Frank also assisted Leonard Starr on the *On Stage* daily and Sunday strips. In 2003 he received an Inkpot Award at Comic-Con.

ELLIE DEVILLE (1947–2020)

Ellie deVillie, one of *2000 AD*'s most prolific and longest-serving letterers, passed away from cancer on Christmas Eve 2019 at the age of 72. Originally trained as a teacher, Ellie began working for *2000 AD* in 1992 on *Tharg's Future Shocks* before working on such series as *The Ten-Seconders*, *Absalom*, *The Alienist*, *Judge Anderson*, *Atavara*, the *Judge Dredd/Batman* crossover, *Rogue Trooper*, *Button Man*, *Sinister Dexter*, *Sláine*, *Strontium Dog*, *Terror Tales*, *Past Imperfects*, *Time Twisters*, and many others. Ellie was also one of the letterers on Fleetway's *Sonic the Comic*, and she worked on many other titles such as *Aliens*, *Batman*, *Flex Mentallo*, *The Invisibles*, *Lucifer*, *Conan*, *Star Wars*, and *Tank Girl*.

JACK ENYART (1950–2019)

Cartoon writer and cartoonist Jack Enyart died at home on Sunday, October 13, taken from us by pancreatic cancer. He was 69 years old and one of the cheeriest, friendliest people I ever met. That first meeting was around 1976, give or take a year. He'd been drawing gag cartoons for magazines that didn't pay all that well and decided to try writing comic book scripts for Western Publishing's Gold Key line. After many a rejection, he appealed to one of the editors to tell him what he was doing wrong. The editor there gave him copies of a couple of my old scripts and said something like "This is what we're looking for." My phone number was on them so Jack called and asked if he could pay me to tutor him. I wouldn't do this today, but back then, no one had ever asked me for any kind of advice ... and Jack seemed so nice on the phone that I invited him over. I didn't think I told him anything he didn't already know but after that, he began selling scripts to Gold Key and that somehow led to work writing cartoons.

Warner Brothers was doing a lot of what they called "paste-up" shows for CBS—half-hour Bugs Bunny specials that contained a few minutes of new animation wrapped around judiciously chosen clips from the classic era. So Jack was the writer of the 1979 *Bugs Bunny Thanksgiving Diet* special and the 1980 *Bugs Bunny Mystery Special* and the 1982 *Bugs Bunny's Mad World of Television* and so on. He also wrote for all the local cartoon studios on shows including *Scooby Doo*, *Heathcliff*, *Bionic Six*, *Fraggle Rock*, *Duck Tales* and *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and occasionally did voices as well. He worked for me on *Richie Rich* and on some of the Hanna-Barbera comics I edited in the seventies.

Jack—a notorious snappy dresser—billed himself as "Man About Toon" and taught the craft of animation writing for many years in many venues, including online. He was smart and funny and he really loved cartoons ... though not as much as he loved Kay, his darling wife/partner of 36 years.
—Mark Evanier

DANA FRADON (1922–2019)

Dana Fradon attended the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League of New York, where he met and married comic book artist Ramona Fradon. He wanted to pursue a career in political cartooning and landed his first contract with *The New Yorker* magazine in the late 1940s. He went on to become one of the magazine's top tier cartoonists for some 55 years, contributing nearly 1400 cartoons. He also sold work to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Playboy*, and other magazines. After retirement, he published a series of award-winning children's books on medieval history, with a character named for Dana.

WOLFGANG FUCHS (1945–2020)

German comics journalist and writer Wolfgang Fuchs was one of the first authors in German-speaking countries to seriously deal with the medium of comics. With Reinhold C. Reitberger, he wrote *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium* (1971), which for many American fans was their first introduction to comics outside the U.S. He also worked on Maurice Horn's *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* and *The Who's Who of American Comic Books* (4 volumes, by Jerry Bails and James Ware, 1973–1976). He was editor of the German magazines *Peanuts* and *Garfield* and wrote numerous articles for radio and magazines. As a translator, he tackled *Garfield*, *Prince Valiant*, *Asterix*, a number of Disney comics, and Brian Fies' Eisner Award-winning *Mom's Cancer*.

SID HAIG (1939–2019)

Actor Sid Haig was best known for his roles in horror films, notably as psychotic clown Captain Spaulding in the Rob Zombie films *House of 1000 Corpses*, *The Devil's Rejects*, and *3 from Hell*. He also appeared in numerous TV programs, including *Batman*, *Gunsmoke*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Star Trek*, *Get Smart*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Fantasy Island*, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, *The A-Team*, and *MacGyver*. He was very popular with fans and appeared at Comic-Con a number of times.

TOM PATTISON (1955–2019)

DC comics staffer Tom Pattison served as the company's Royalties & Participation Manager from 1996 until his retirement in 2011, overseeing the royalty payments for their creators. Former DC Comics Publisher/President Paul Levitz posted this tribute on Facebook: "For many years, DC had the reputation of making its royalty payments promptly and fully, and with detail ample for talent to understand the basis on which they were being paid. While many of us were involved in the process, there was one person disproportionately responsible for making it happen every month. Tom was soft-spoken, and largely invisible to the wider comics community. But his efforts made so many people's lives better, simply by ensuring that an important flow of their income would arrive smoothly and honestly ... Tom made the whole company look good."

LEE SALEM (1946–2019)

Lee Salem served as editor and then president of Universal Press Syndicate, now called Andrews McMeel Syndication beginning in 1974. In his nearly four decades at Universal, he is credited with editing and developing some of the iconic comic strips of our time, including *Calvin and Hobbes*, *Cathy*, *Cul-de-Sac*, *Doodlesbury*, *The Far Side*, and *For Better or For Worse*. Lee's calm demeanor and steadfast defense of cartoonists' creative rights resulted in close friendships with numerous creators. In 2013, he was awarded the Silver T-Square award by the National Cartoonists Society for his contributions to the industry. He retired in 2014.

RICHARD WILLIAMS (1933–2019)

The Academy Award-winning director Richard "Dick" Williams is best known for his masterpiece, the live-action/animated *Who Killed Roger Rabbit?* (1986). As the story goes, Dick saw *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* when he was five years old, and his life was never the same. He grew up in Toronto, where his mother worked as an illustrator. At age 15 he took a bus trip to California and took the Disney Studios tour three days in a row, getting to meet several of the animators. When he was in his early 20s he moved to London and began his career as an animator. In the 1960s he set up Richard Williams Animation there, achieving huge success with its production of some of the best TV commercials of the period, as well as Dick's own films. He won his first Oscar (best animated short) in 1973 for a half-hour version of *A Christmas Carol*. His greatest project (according to critics) remained unfinished: He began work on *The Thief and the Cobbler* in the 1960s.

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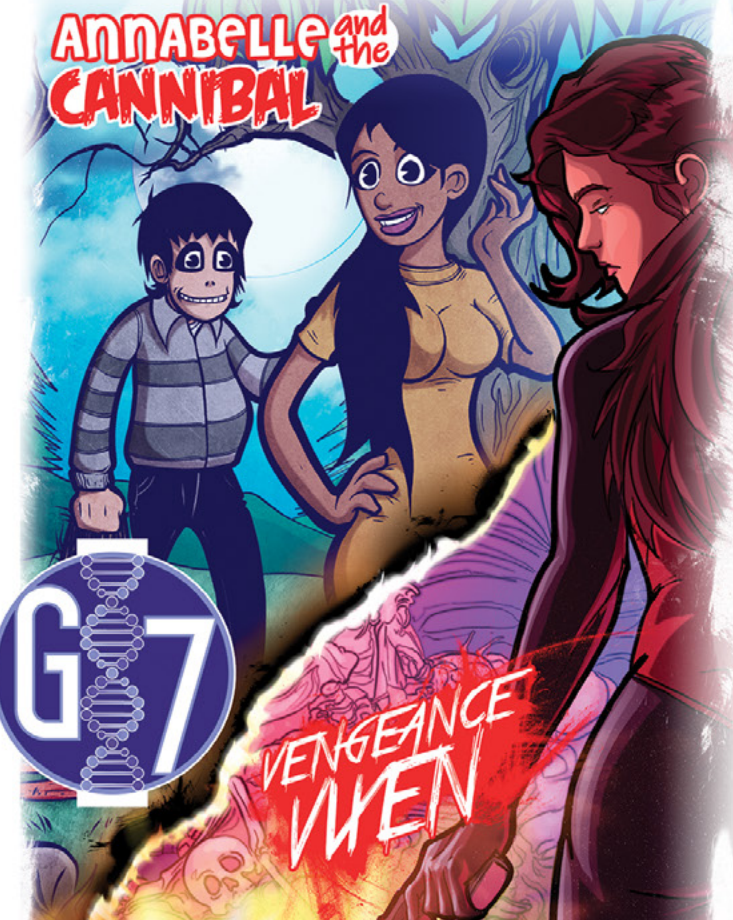
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