

FEATURING RETROSPECTIVES OF ARCHIE GOODWIN AND MARK GRUENWALD

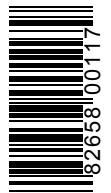
BACKISSUE!

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EVEN CAP
CAN'T DEFEAT
THE DREADED
DEADLINE DOOM!

...BUT OUR
ROUNDTABLE
OF ALL-STAR
EDITORS CAN!!

Diana Schutz and E. Nelson Bridwell interviews • Marvel Assistant Editors' Month,
issue-by-issue • Allan Asherman • and Great Caesar's Ghost, a Perry White history!



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Darkseid, Thanos, Doomsday, Dr. Doom... forget 'em. The most dangerous menace to ever plague the world of comic books is the Dreaded Deadline Doom, that devious disruptor of production schedules and fan enthusiasm. Readers who followed comics during the Bronze Age recall crushing nadirs of disenchantment when the latest installment of their four-color favorite was supplanted by an unexpected generic standalone story or a stale reprint, forced into print by the machinations of the Dreaded Deadline Doom. In more

recent years, the Dreaded Deadline Doom has foisted upon us lengthy gaps between "monthly" issues.

But the annals of comicdom are rife with inspirational chronicles of fearless, peerless editors who, with the blinding speed of a Colletta brush, have rallied forth, summoning their Crusty Bunkers and sharpening their wits to vanquish what seemed to be another triumph for the Dreaded Deadline Doom. These are their stories, gathered for BACK ISSUE readers in a feature that could only be called...



MARV WOLFMAN

Photo by Noel Wolfman.



BOB GREENBERGER



JIM SALICRUP



TOM BREVOORT



AL MILGROM

© Marvel.



BOB SCHRECK

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HOW I DEFEATED THE DREADED Deadline

DOOM

as told to *Michael Eury*

The Story of Marvel Fill-In Comics

by MARV WOLFMAN

When I took over as editor-in-chief at Marvel, books were either shipping very late or sometimes a reprint would be published instead of the planned new story. To make matters worse, there would often be a new cover (the cover meant for that issue), but the insides were reprints, which fooled readers into thinking they were buying a new story. Marvel letters pages called it the Dreaded Deadline Doom, poking some fun at it, if you wish. But I didn't see any humor in selling reprints under the guise of original material.

I came up with a solution and it began by creating a brand-new title, which I called "*Marvel Fill-In Comics*." At my insistence it was actually put on the schedule. I felt if there wasn't an actual deadline for this book it would keep falling back and back on the schedule. Bill Mantlo was my writer of record. He was both good and fast and at that point didn't have a lot of regular assignments.

Each month John Verpoorten, Marvel's head of production, and I would get together. John prepared a list of our very latest titles. For example, say *Iron Man*, *Hulk*, and *Captain America* were on the late list. Maybe *Avengers* was also close to being late. So we would do a large team-up featuring all those characters that could, depending on which book was the most late, be used in any of those characters' titles or in *The Avengers*. One story could fill four slots. Since we did this on more than one title a month, we were setting up conditions that would soon guarantee no more reprint titles when the reader was supposed to get a new story instead.

But that was a large Band-Aid. We needed to fix the problem. After we started commissioning material from Bill, I spoke with the writers who were often causing the late problems. They were all pretty much against the idea of a new story interfering with their long-range plans. I made each of them a promise and gave them all a certain amount of time to catch up. The promise was if they got on schedule by the new date, I would guarantee the fill-in story would not be used. But the onus of guaranteeing that was the writers getting on time. Many of the writers didn't mind having a reprint used instead of their late story, but they really didn't want to see an original one breaking into their continuity.

If my memory serves, most of the writers quickly caught up and maintained their on-time schedules and very few of those stories had to be used. Because they were all done-in-one stories, we later used some of them in books like *Marvel Spotlight* and others, but for the most part we didn't need to use them in place of the dreaded reprint.

I thought this was an elegant solution.

The Forgotten *Batman* Issue

by BOB GREENBERGER

I was holding down the fort while Len Wein was out at the San Diego Comic-Con during the first week of August 1986 when it became clear he forgot to commission an issue of *Batman*. He had a two-parter from Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy all set for issues #393–394, but never commissioned a story for #392. When production started asking about the issue, the problem became evident and by then, we had ten days to write, draw, and letter a 22-page story in order to make the shopping date of approximately October 8th.

I spoke with series writer Doug Moench, who could easily whip up a plot, and he got to work. Then I spoke with regular penciler Tom Mandrake, who gulped at first and later called back to say he could do it if his wife, Jan Duursema, could ink it. They'd collaborate at their home and send in the finished pages, requiring John Costanza to letter on velum overlays (letterers hated doing that).

I discussed the plot with Len over the phone and then rode herd over all parties, making the entire package come together. If memory serves, Ed Hannigan designed the cover and Tom executed it first. By the

time Len returned from California, there was a 22-page completed issue ready for him to proofread and send in to production. As he proofed, Adrienne Roy was furiously coloring the story, knocking it out in two or three days.

Bob Rozakis and the production department had it proofread and corrected in a single day to get it out for separations.

Interestingly, this was a very well received issue by fans and was reprinted a few times over the years. I never received credit for my work on the book, but it is the best example of working with a team of professionals in as collaborative a manner as possible.

And yes, the book shipped on time.

Better Call Sol

by JIM SALICRUP

So, instead of working on a couple of very late Papercutz projects, I'm writing this piece for *BACK ISSUE* magazine! That should tell you right off that I'm not the right guy to be writing this! Though I have nothing but great respect for all the hard-working comics editors that dutifully meet their deadlines, I'd be telling a great big lie if I claimed to be one of them.

But let me tell you about the time I was able to perform three miracles. It was back in 1984 and *The A-Team* was a surprise hit TV series. Universal, the studio producing the show created by Frank Lupo and Stephen J. Cannell and starring George Peppard, Mr. T, and Dirk Benedict, was eager to capitalize on that success with as much merchandising as possible and as quickly as possible.

Marvel was to publish three issues of an *A-Team* comic within a month, and they would be bagged together and sold in chain stores such as Woolworth's. Let me be clear, those *A-Team* comics needed to go from concept to printed comics—within a month. The entire process for creating the story and artwork for a comic and getting it printed usually took three months. Marvel's then-editor-in-chief Jim Shooter refused to work under such a crazy deadline. Marvel's management had gotten itself into a bit of a fix. They decided that they'd better call Sol...

Sol Brodsky was VP of special projects, which covered anything that wasn't one of the main line of Marvel Comics—stuff such as the syndicated Marvel comic strips, custom comics (such as *Kool-Aid Man*, etc.), pro-social comics, comic-book inserts, coloring books, and much, much more. John Romita, Sr. and Marie Severin worked as art directors, and David Anthony Kraft was a writer and editor for Sol. DAK was probably on vacation when these comics needed to be put together, so I wound up editing all three, and writing two of them. It was *The A-Team*, but it felt more like *Mission: Impossible*!

In those pre-digital days, I watched one entire episode on TV and delivered my plots (for Universal's approval) the next day. Alan Kupperberg was hired to write and draw the third issue, and got his plot in, too. I was thrilled to work with Marie Severin on one and Jim Mooney on the other. Believe it or not, we made the deadline!

But it wasn't because of me or my scheduling expertise. It was because of Sol Brodsky, who was, after all, Stan Lee's right-hand man back in the '60s! He just stayed on top of everyone and got 'er done! He did what he always did and devised a tight schedule, and made sure everyone got their work in on time—even me.

I'd like to thank my assistants Bob Budiansky, Lance Took, Kurt Busiek, Adam Phillips, Dwight Jon Zimmerman, Glenn Herdling, Michael Petranek, and Jeff Whitman for all their hard work and tireless efforts over the years being my Sol Brodsky.

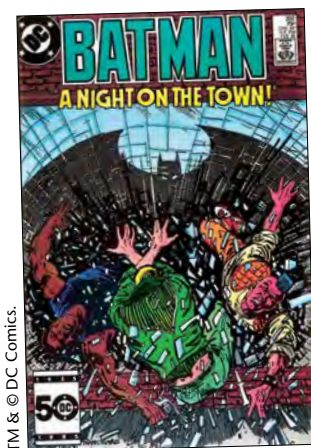
"If I can have three more weeks..."

by TOM BREVOORT

It was the *Venom Super Special* for 1995 (what we were calling *Annals* that year, for whatever reason). This was back during the time when color separations were done from color guides by a separations house. In this instance, somehow the color guides for the issue never made it to the separators—but they went ahead and separated the job anyway. And it was just as awful as you'd imagine, as probably very nice separators with no firsthand color experience attempted to use every color in the rainbow on every page. In the end, we wound up flying colorist Chia-Chi



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Nice. That's the word nearly everyone who knew him has used when they described Archie Goodwin (1937–1998) to me. They always coupled that word with how firm and right his instincts as an editor were, how outstanding his scripts were, how well he understood how to construct a script, how patient he was in conveying that knowledge to new writers, how much he knew about layout, coloring, lettering, etc., but it was his niceness that made them want to strive so hard to please him. It's no coincidence that when the *Batman Adventures* comic (based on the 1990s cartoon *Batman: The Animated Series*) created a trio of supervillains based on the DC Comics group editors of the time, Goodwin was not only included, but that his doppelganger's name was Mr. Nice. After Goodwin's death, the final fate of Mr. Nice in that title became one of the sweetest and most poignant send-offs of a character ever recorded in comics.

Archie Goodwin was born September 8, 1937 in Kansas City, Missouri. He spent a lot of his childhood moving between small towns but eventually ended up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a town he considered home. By his teenage years he was an avid EC Comics fan and joined the EC Fan-Addict Club. Archie carried his membership card for the fan organization in his wallet for decades. Following high school, he attended Oklahoma University for a short period, before traveling to New York to attend the Cartoonist and Illustrators School of Visual Arts.

While at OU he began writing articles and illustrating cartoons and covers for the first EC fanzine—*HOOHAH!* When he sold his first comic script to Harvey Comics in 1958, he became one of the first of the original comics fans to become a professional in the field. Over the next decade and a half, dozens of other comic-book fans would follow him.

Archie's art style was a mix of James Thurber whimsy and 1950s advertising and poster art. After graduation from the School of Visual Arts, he worked as a cartoonist and wrote scripts and did art corrections for Leonard Starr's *Mary Perkins*, *On Stage* comic strip as well as working a day job for *Redbook* magazine. In the middle of all this, Goodwin was drafted and spent the years 1960–1962 in the Army.

Shortly after his discharge, that script he'd sold to Harvey four years early, "Hermit!," finally saw print, in *Alarming Adventures* #1 (Oct. 1962), with art by EC artists Reed Crandall and Al Williamson. A few months earlier he'd gotten his first prose story, "Killing Mr. Killiam," published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (July 1962). The editors of *EQMM* initially told him that he couldn't use what they assumed was the penname of Archie Goodwin, since that name was the name of a character in the well-known Rex Stout series about Nero Wolfe. I would imagine that Archie had fun telling them that that was his real name. The magazine certainly used the anecdote in their introduction to his debut story. "Killing Mr. Killiam" is a very amusing tale that easily could and probably should be adapted for comics, giving the world one more Archie Goodwin-written tale.

Following his Army stint, Archie returned to *Redbook*, where he met his wife-to-be, Anne T. Murphy. Anne tells *BACK ISSUE* that "*Redbook* was a woman's magazine and Archie worked in the art department. When I first met him, he'd just returned from his stint in the Army. His family opposed Archie's move to New York and his writing ambitions, particularly for the comics. It wasn't very long after he got out of the Army and returned to *Redbook* that he began writing stories for Jim Warren."

Archie Goodwin, circa late 1980s/early 1990s. Photo courtesy of Seth Goodwin. Comics © their respective copyright holders.

"Nice" is the Word



A Few Words on Archie Goodwin

by Richard J. Arndt

Little Archie

(top left) Parents Marvin and Flora Shoemaker Goodwin and baby Archie, circa 1937–1938. (top right) Archie Goodwin in 1955. Photos courtesy of Seth Goodwin.

THE WARREN YEARS

During his courtship with Anne, Archie had begun writing stories for the new Warren Publications comic magazine *Creepy*, initially edited by Russ Jones. According to Anne, exactly how he got that gig remains something of a mystery. It's possible that Warren and Archie met at one of the earliest comics conventions. According to his interview with Jon B. Cooke in *The Warren Companion*, Jim Warren himself remembered that Goodwin was one of a group of writers that he and editor Russ Jones had gathered together—with said writers apparently coming from fandom of the day. Besides Archie, early Warren writers, including Ron Parker, Larry Ivie, and, to a certain extent, Russ Jones himself had all done work for various fanzines. A few mainstream comic-book writers, chiefly Otto Binder, were also included, while the initial artists were drawn from the EC veterans as well as artists who came from much the much same artistic school of illustration.

Anne Murphy remembers that either Jones or Larry Ivie had a hand in getting Archie to Warren. I asked if artist Al Williamson—who knew Ivie, was a friend of Archie, and had inked that initial Goodwin comic strip for Harvey—may have played a hand in Goodwin getting to write three of the seven stories included in *Creepy* #1 (Winter 1965). Williamson certainly seems to have been a main link in obtaining many of the EC artists who appeared in the early Warren titles. Anne remarks that “Al Williamson was a friend of Archie’s, long before his appearances in the Warren books. Al also seemed to know Larry Ivie and Russ Jones as well and he certainly knew all the EC artists, since he was one of them himself. Al may well have been the connection between everyone. Russ Jones was the original editor of *Creepy* before Archie became the editor, but I don’t think he worked out too well. Archie wrote three or four stories for the first issue of *Creepy* and after that he never looked back.”

Seth Goodwin, Anne and Archie’s son, remarks, “I don’t think I can say that Al Williamson wasn’t the link between Archie and Jim Warren, but I never actually heard of that. It seems more to me that there was a circle of friends and EC Comics fans that got Archie connected with Jim Warren.”

One of those stories in that first issue, “The Success Story,” was amusingly based on Archie’s own ghost-writing experiences on *Dan Flagg*, a comic strip where the credited writer/artist on the strip, Don Sherwood, purportedly at some point quit doing any of the actual work, instead farming it out to ghost writers and artists, none of whom knew initially that Sherwood himself wasn’t doing anything on the strip. Al Williamson was one of those uncredited “ghost” artists while Archie was a ghost writer. Archie, Williamson, Angelo Torres, and Al McWilliams all modeled or portrayed various characters in “The Success Story.”

The quality of Goodwin’s scripts, right from the get-go, must have made an impression on Jim Warren. By the second issue, Goodwin was listed as the story editor for the title, with six out of eight stories in that issue featuring his scripts. By issue #4, Goodwin was both the full editor and the lead writer. Between the years 1964–1967, Archie provided scripts for about 80% of the contents for both *Creepy* and its sister magazine *Eerie*, while providing about 95% of the scripts for the war title *Blazing Combat*.



DEPARTMENT OF “FIRST STORIES”

This is the 26th “first story” to be published by Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine . . . Yes, the author of “Killing Mr. Killiam” is named Archie Goodwin. On the level! No kidding! We were suspicious ourselves, so we checked it out. And we learned that approximately since every time nearly everyone mentions to the author that he has the same name as Rex Stout’s New Wolfe’s legman and assistant . . . Next, perhaps, we’ll be receiving “first stories” from writers legitimately named Della Street, Captain Hastings, Nicky Potter—or even Dr. Watson!

Archie Goodwin (nearly name, Lay) was 36 when he wrote “Killing Mr. Killiam.” He has spent two years in the Army, “defending Petersburg, Virginia,” and his vocation is commercial art, including freelance cartooning.

Archie’s “first story” is an amusing, indeed a comic tale; but it has its serious implications—which, we hasten to assure you, in no way diminish the chuckling readability of this saga of Mr. Quimby, master (and in a curious way, man) murderer . . .

KILLING MR. KILLIAM

by ARCHIE GOODWIN

BY THURSDAY IT HAD USUALLY reached the blust instrument stage. It was easy enough on Monday and Tuesday to conceive quite elaborate plans for killing Mr. Killiam, especially after a week-end of run to build up one’s patience. In the five years since Mr. Killiam had won the position of head accountant for the Fitz-Glue Chemical Company over Mr. Quimby (an Accounting Department man of 22 years standing), owing to Killiam’s unshakable qualifications of being Mr. Fitz-Glue’s son-in-law, Quimby had given birth to numerous excellent methods for haunting Mr. Killiam’s demise—from the tactical snoring of the coal stake in the Accounting Department suggestion box to the elaborate scheme of poisoning the exact tips on Mr. Killiam’s pencils which he nibbled at constantly. These were usually Monday-Tuesday plans, but by Wednesday more violent measures were needed. Mr. Killiam was an insufferable person. He delighted in making all employees under him, chiefly Quim-

Seth Goodwin remarks that “it’s entirely possible that Archie was shopping stories around at a lot of different publications at the time. He’d already done that *Ellery Queen* story and, as a fan of the EC comics and a *HOOHAH!* contributor, it’s entirely possible that Archie just came into Warren’s offices with a batch of stories and got work right off the bat. Warren certainly recognized Archie’s talent and grabbed him for the editor’s role when Russ Jones didn’t work out.”

Anne Murphy also remembers that a number of Archie’s fellow contributors to *HOOHAH!* would work with Archie at Warren, including Ron Parker, who’d been the *HOOHAH!* editor, and Larry Ivie.

Seth also recalls that Paul Douglas, the renowned illustrator—his posters for the Broadway productions of *Three Penny Opera* and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* are world famous—was a friend of Archie’s from Tulsa and one of the people behind *HOOHAH!* They attended Will Rogers High School together and both he and Archie roomed together when Archie first came to New York. In fact, Paul Davis was the best man at Archie and Anne’s marriage.

It’s safe to say that Archie made his bones as an editor on the Warren books in his initial stint there from 1964–1967. His solid storytelling, his abilities as both editor and art director, and his ability to visually “see” a story

Early Goodwin work

(bottom left) The EC fanzine *HOOHAH!* #2, with a cover illustrated by Archie. (bottom right) No, it’s not a penname! Archie Goodwin’s first prose story, “Killing Mr. Killiam,” in the July 1962 edition of *Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine*.

Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine
© 2018 Penny Publications.



In November 1979, Archie Goodwin was recruited by Jim Shooter to take over Marvel's attempt at a *Heavy Metal*-style magazine title—*Epic Illustrated*. Shooter, who was aware of the circumstances behind Archie's abrupt departure from Warren in 1974, was worried about whether Archie would be willing to work as an editor on a Marvel title and yet have to report to an editor-in-chief who only two years earlier had been Archie's assistant. Special arrangements were made so that Archie nominally reported directly to Stan Lee, although according to Shooter, he was actually doing most of the liaison work between the mainstream Marvel comics operation and what was to become the *Epic* line.

I would imagine much to his relief, Archie was given a surprising amount of sovereignty during his *Epic* days. Having inherited a fairly large amount of material from the previous magazine editor, Rick Marschall, and with the need to have the premiere issue out on sale in just a few months, I suspect that it's likely most of the content of that first issue of *Epic Illustrated*, cover-dated Spring 1980 but going on sale in February of that year, was commissioned by the previous editor. However, the organization and presentation of that content was certainly Archie's. Goodwin was in full command of the title and its content from the first issue on.

The biggest complaint that one could level against *Heavy Metal*, at least during its first ten years, was that the art was superb but the stories themselves, or the translations of the stories, were often a bit thin. Archie, who for the first time was editing a magazine that both required and got a large enough budget to complete with *Heavy Metal*, must have relished the challenge of delivering both top-notch stories and art in a full-color and black-and-white magazine format.

From the spring of 1980 through February 1986, 34 issues of *Epic Illustrated* appeared, featuring both serials and standalone stories. [Editor's note: See BACK ISSUE #88 for an in-depth look at *Epic Illustrated*.]

Particularly noteworthy serials appeared by the likes of Jim Starlin (*Dreadstar*), Dean Motter and Ken Steacy (*The Sacred and the Profane*), Rick Veitch's science-fictional take on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (*Abraxas and the*



Earthman), Tim Conrad (*Toadswart d'Amplestone*), Chris Claremont and John Bolton (*Marada, the She-Wolf*), and Jon Jay Muth (*The Mythology of an Abandoned City*). Bill DuBay and Lee Elias brought *Epic* a leftover Warren story dealing with the Holocaust—"Rebirth!"—that proved to be a superior horror tale. That story was also comics great Lee Elias' last comic-book effort.

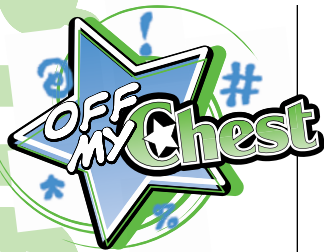
Great standalone stories such as "Klutzy" by Steve Perry and Steve Bissette, "Small Gifts" by Jon Jay Muth, "The Beguiling" by Barry Windsor-Smith, the reprinting of Vaughn Bode's violent yet beautiful *Cobalt 60*, "Little Otis's 5-Cent Ride" by John and Val Lakey, "Love Doesn't Last Forever" by Alan Moore and Rick Veitch, and the heartfelt "Death of a Legend" by Roy Thomas and Sandy Plunkett are all superior achievements.

Adaptations of the works of famous science-fiction and fantasy authors such as Michael Moorcock, Harlan Ellison,

Adult Fantasy at Marvel

(top left) Editor Goodwin's *Epic Illustrated* #1 (Spring 1980), with its astounding Frank Frazetta cover. (top right) Marvel *Star Wars* artists Carlos Garzon (left) and Al Williamson (center) chat while Archie takes a phone call in Goodwin's Marvel office. Courtesy of Seth Goodwin. (bottom) The Goodwin/Williamson/Garzon team's *Star Wars* #44 (Feb. 1981).

Epic Illustrated TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. Cover art © 1979 Frank Frazetta. Photo © Marvel. Star Wars TM & © Lucasfilm Ltd.



by **Allan Asherman**

[Editor's note: A familiar name to readers of Bronze Age DC Comics, Allan Asherman has worked in DC's editorial department, as one of its "Junior Woodchucks," and as the company's librarian, and he shares some of his experiences with BI readers in this exclusive guest column.]

I had become a fan of the Man of Steel from watching the Adventures of Superman TV series before I read my first comic book. I knew the names of all the people in the closing credits of each episode. During a visit to a local bookshop, I saw one of those names, story editor Mort Weisinger, on the cover of a thick paperback, *1,001 Valuable Things You Can Get Free* (inset), and bought it. As I looked through it later at home, one single listing in the book stood out from all the others. I could get a free, signed picture postcard of George Reeves as Superman just by requesting it from a certain address. I sent for it immediately.

A few years later, after having become an avid reader and fan of DC Comics, I took that book and the George Reeves postcard with me, and took the subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan. Uninvited and unannounced, I entered the DC Comics waiting room at 575 Lexington Avenue, hoping to meet Mr. Weisinger or anyone else who worked on the TV series. The receptionist invited me to sit and wait. It was just possible, she said, that someone going in or out might have time to speak with me. About half an hour later, a man came out and told the receptionist he was going to lunch. She leaned over and whispered to him, pointing at me. He came over, smiled, and introduced himself as Nelson Bridwell, and I told him who I was and why I had come. His lunch, he said, would wait until later, and he led me inside the hallowed

halls and I was shaking the hand of Mort Weisinger, the man with whom he shared an office. Mort edited the Superman comic books, in addition to being the story editor for *The Adventures of Superman*. Before long Weisinger directed me to editor Murray Boltinoff, who introduced me, via a long distance phone call, to his friend, Whitney Ellsworth, who had produced the TV series. Ellsworth and I would later correspond in a series of letters and phone calls that ended with Whit's death in 1980.

Having graduated from Long Island University in 1969 with a B.A. degree in journalism, I had learned enough to know that I didn't want to become a reporter. In 1972 I heard that Sol Harrison was seeking young assistants he could train to become the next generation of DC Comics staffers. Sol hired me.

DC had moved to 909 Third Avenue. The waiting room there led to a corridor along which were small offices, including those of Bob Kanigher and Julie Schwartz to the left, and Denny O'Neil, Joe Kubert, Murray Boltinoff, and Sol Harrison to the right. At the end of the corridor the production room was on the left, and Carmine Infantino's larger office was at the right.

My first assignment was to mail prepared "thank you" postcards to fans who had written letters to the company. Editor Bob Kanigher, whose office was near the desk at which I was working, said hello and sometimes chatted. In addition to being one of DC's most prolific writers, Kanigher edited *Wonder Woman*, *Supergirl*, *Superman's Girl Friend Lois Lane*, *Young Love*, and *Young Romance*, and needed an assistant. Sol soon informed me that I was no longer sending out postcards. I was now Kanigher's assistant, and would work at a desk to the rear of his office.

A small adjoining room was the office of artist Vince Colletta, who was then the company's art director. Most mornings Carmine Infantino visited Colletta to discuss the prospects of whatever horses were racing that day. Vinnie, as he preferred to be called, talked in a gravelly, low voice. He immediately made me his confidant, telling me of his out-of-the-office activities, giving me the lowdown on everyone in the company, and offering his protection if I should need it. Vinnie had a need for people to perceive him as a tough guy, but he was actually quite a complex character. Vinnie was usually assigned to ink stories that were late. He never failed to make his deadlines, but as a result he acquired the reputation of being more of a quick inker rather than a true artist. I knew better after seeing his sketchbooks, which were filled with serene landscapes and discerning studies of women, all inked with feathery strokes made with a triple-zero brush and Vinnie's perfect control. I would later see equally precise brushwork while watching Murphy Anderson inking pages at DC.

Each morning, Kanigher would announce his arrival by clearing his throat while setting down his flight bag and dark glasses with a dramatic flourish. Adjusting his white turtleneck and dark jacket, he would either ask me to get him coffee or go himself and return with a cup for each of us.

"The Bolshevik"

Asherman's Junior Woodchuck photo and profile, from *Amazing World of DC Comics* #1 (July 1974).

© 1974 DC Comics.

ALLAN ASHERMAN: After graduating from Long Island University (Brooklyn) with a B.A. in Journalism, Allan taught emotionally and physically handicapped children, then worked for M.G.M. before coming to DC. A professional writer, Allan has had published numerous articles on motion pictures. His staff duties include working as Editorial Assistant to Joe Kubert and Assistant Editor to Joe Simon and Nelson Bridwell. His collection of movies - television - comic book - science fiction-fantasy paraphernalia is almost as astounding as his ability to imitate the voices of the entire crew of the starship Enterprise!



It was Kanigher who taught me what was expected of an editorial assistant who hoped to become an assistant editor. (The two titles were largely interchangeable; the same pay scale, largely the same duties, but “assistant editor” implied that assistant might someday become a full editor.) I compiled letters columns, occasionally wrote special texts and photo features based on Bob’s ideas or my own, assigned production inventory numbers to the work the editor assigned to the freelancers, and maintained the editor’s account receipt books. I also made sure the freelancers delivered their work on time. When all the original art and other material for an issue was ready I created a worksheet for the book, listing each story and supplementary feature, along with credits and page counts, and presented the completed bundle to Kanigher. After filling out the forms that accounting would use to issue checks to the creators, Kanigher checked everything again. I then submitted the book to production and immediately began working on preliminary paperwork for the next issue.

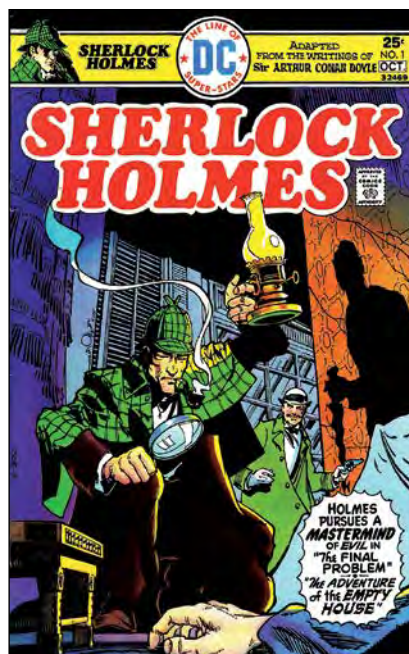
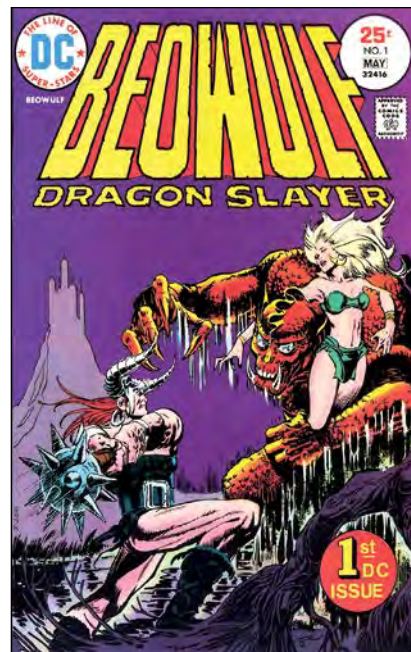
Kanigher was one of the most intriguing people at DC. Everyone there was respectfully aware of his accomplishments in writing and editing for the company, but there was also talk about how difficult it could be to work with him. I ignored these stories, and while I worked for him we treated each other with respect. He was always an eager teacher, telling me proudly about his past accomplishments. Knowing I was interested in old radio serials he lent me a paperback book he had written in 1943, *How to Make Money Writing for Radio*, published by Cambridge House.

Kanigher’s wife and his daughter Jan occasionally stopped by. I was wearing my hair long at the time, which prompted Mrs. Kanigher to begin referring to me as “the Bolshevik.”

Joe Kubert’s office was across the hall. He and Kanigher conversed often, and Joe would sometimes summon Bob so they could plot a new Sgt. Rock or Enemy Ace story. It never took long. Bob always had ideas, which he would offer while chewing on his unlit pipe. When Joe heard one he liked he asked for more details, and as Kanigher provided them with enthusiasm Kubert took notes and made his first rough character and panel sketches.

Among the other newcomers to DC were Bob Rozakis, Carl Gafford, and Anthony Tollin, who worked in the production room under Harrison and Jack Adler. Jack Harris, Mike Uslan, and a few others joined them, and one day Sol announced that the “Junior Woodchucks,” as BobRo had named us, would write, design, and edit *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, a sort of in-house fan magazine that would be sold by subscription and include articles and interviews dealing with company projects, personnel, and history. It was good training, great fun, and provided opportunities to interact with company legends and write about our favorite superhero films and TV series. For us it was also a dream come true, and we did a good job. Even Sol Harrison thought so, and Sol rarely praised anyone. I don’t recall whose idea it was. The first person I heard discuss it was BobRo. To Sol it was useful in determining which Woodchucks had the best skills in various areas, as well as a means of generating additional profit for the company, and an opportunity for him to function as a big brother to all of us. [Editor’s note: See BACK ISSUE #100 for an AWODCC history.]

After observing me for a few weeks, making sure that I was respectful and industrious despite my long hair, Kubert invited me to become his editorial assistant, too, and I began working on *Our Army at War*, *Tarzan*, and *Korak, Son of Tarzan*, shortly to be joined by *Rima, the Jungle Girl*; *Blitzkrieg*; and *Ragman*. My location on any given day depended upon who needed me.



Watching Joe draw was an exhilarating experience. He would start a facial closeup with the eyes and sculpt the other features quickly, apparently effortlessly, determining where the light was coming from within the panel and shadowing accordingly, giving minimal attention to the ears, which he would often just outline.

DC Comics’ policy was to pay assistants \$15 a page for creating letters columns, but I never got a cent for the columns I wrote for Kubert. Having entered the industry in his youth, working for some of the world’s most frugal editors and publishers, Joe had been treated as an apprentice, being paid on the basis of how much his employers felt he was contributing to each periodical. To Joe I was still an apprentice, and letters columns were necessary because of mailing requirements, but not especially creative. While we were wrapping up one issue I suggested something different, showing him a photo I had in my collection, a shot of Johnny Sheffield as “Boy” [from the *Tarzan* movies] reading an issue of *Boy’s Life* magazine. He found it

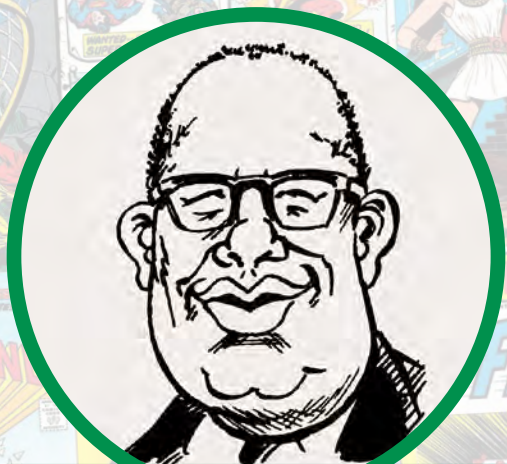
Your Demand is His Command

Roving editorial
Jack-of-all-trades
Allan edited or assisted with a variety of DC projects during the early Bronze Age, including these titles.

TM & © DC Comics.

E. Nelson Bridwell Interview

by John G. Pierce



E. NELSON BRIDWELL

Caricature by Dave Manak. © 1976 DC Comics.

TM & © DC Comics.

As in any industry, the field of comics contains numerous unsung heroes, those whose work is mainly behind the scenes, but without whose support the “stars” couldn’t do their jobs.

And then there are those people such as E. Nelson Bridwell, who, though he was a long-time writer and editor, never quite got the recognition he deserved. It is perhaps no wonder, as he lived and operated in the shadows of two powerful editors, Mort Weisinger and Julius Schwartz. Yet this amazing man from Oklahoma, afflicted with a physical handicap which produced strange tics that seemed to emanate from deep inside his body, may well have been the glue which held together much of the DC line for many years.

Certainly, if any DC staffer had a question about some arcane point of comics lore, Nelson was the go-to guy for information. He possessed eidetic imagery, commonly known as a photographic memory. When he first arrived in New York City, he looked at a map of the streets and subway system for a few minutes, and instantly knew his way around. So it is no wonder that he had memorized several Shakespearean plays, and was an expert on many subjects, both in and out of comics. Thus, when a DC staffer asked him “How many moons did Krypton have?”, he responded with, “You mean originally, or when it exploded?” Not many comics people can be experts on the history of Krypton as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls and many other areas in between—but Nelson was.

Of greatest interest to me personally was Nelson’s work on and relationship to the Fawcett characters; therefore, that is where the focus of most of the following will be.

But before we get to by-mail questions and answers from 1977, I’d like to quote extensively from Nelson’s letter to me from March 9, of that year:

“The real trouble with the early SHAZAMS was that we were doing as lead stories what should have been backups at best. And I never felt we did Mr. Tawny right. I hope to correct that in #32, when he decides to go in for professional sports with the Detroit Tigers. I’ve got Mr. Mind and some of his minions in it, too.

“We had planned to ask Otto Binder if he’d like to do some SHAZAM stories, but he anticipated us with a firm no. By the way, [back in the Golden Age,] Beck certainly [had done] a number of Marvel Family stories, and Kurt Schaffenberger assured me that it was Beck who designed the new Mary Marvel costume. The Mary Marvel origin looks like he may have had a hand in it, while he probably drew much of the Captain Marvel, Jr. origin—though it was [Mac] Raboy who drew Junior and Captain Nazi. The mixture of styles is curious. Also the cover, which gives not the slightest hint that a new member of the Marvel Family is being introduced! (DC could be just as stupid—there was no mention of Superboy on the cover of the MORE FUN feature in which he debuted!)” [The Mary Marvel origin story, from Captain Marvel Adventures #18, was actually the work of Marc Swayze.]

Nelson also clued me in to a comic book “which is so rare few people know of its existence”: Mary Marvel #1, March 19, 1943. What? Mary Marvel #1 was dated December 1945. “The one that reached the newsstands was—but the earlier one never got that far. It was probably the fault of the wartime paper shortage. It only exists in a few sets of proofs (black and white), which were among those sent us by Fawcett. I don’t even know what the cover was supposed to look like, though it may have been the one used in ‘45—Mary looks more like the ‘43 version on that cover. Two of the stories done for the first #1 were eventually used in Marvel Family #51—but greatly cut. It’s possible the others were used earlier in Wow, but as Mary had dropped out of it well before the Marvel Family issue appeared, this seems unlikely. And this is one comic which I can confidently state is in no collection!”

And now, the interviews.

— John G. Pierce

JOHN G. PIERCE: About how old were you when you first discovered Captain Marvel comics?

E. NELSON BRIDWELL: Probably about ten—around the time the [Adventures of Captain Marvel] serial hit the theatres. [Interviewer’s note: Nelson was born in 1931.]

PIERCE: Did you like the serial?

BRIDWELL: I loved it as a kid—except for removing his powers at the end.

PIERCE: When and how did you discover fandom?

BRIDWELL: During the EC days. Don’t recall exact details after more than 20 years.

PIERCE: How were you hired at DC?

BRIDWELL: I’d been trying to break in (I’d been writing for MAD), and I read, got back issues, wrote letters. Still, living in Oklahoma, prospects did

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Crimebusters! (top) *Watchmen's* Captain Metropolis was inspired by Nelson Bridwell and Gardner Fox. (bottom) While Nelson admitted in this interview that he preferred writing to editing and that editing reprints had become "a bit of a job," his selection of oldies educated a generation about DC lore. Covers to *Wanted* #1 and *100-Page Super Spectacular* #DC-14 by Murphy Anderson and Nick Cardy, respectively.

TM & © DC Comics.

not look bright. Then, in December 1963, I got a letter from Weisinger, offering me a job as his assistant.

PIERCE: *Who are some of your favorite artists (contemporary or otherwise)?*

BRIDWELL: Swan, Adams, Giordano, Schaffenberg, Williamson, Mayer, Davis, Drucker, Krugstein, Eisner, Cole, Evans, [Joe] Kubert, Beck, Severin, Wood, Crandall, Frazetta, Kirby, Oksner, Caniff—I could go on and on!

PIERCE: *Do you like funny animal comics? How about Carl Barks?*

BRIDWELL: Yes! I love Barks' stuff. I still cherish the original edition of "Christmas on Bear Mountain" I bought when it first came out—the mag that introduced Scrooge!

PIERCE: *You are definitely a well-informed individual, being considered an expert in mythology, history, literature, and, I recall, that DC's Bible tabloid book listed you as "Resident Biblical Expert." Would you care to comment on your academic background?*

BRIDWELL: I never went to college. But I read a lot!

PIERCE: *Okay, so who are some of your favorite authors?*

BRIDWELL: My literary tastes are very broad. A few of my many favorites: Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, Gilbert and Sullivan, H. Rider Haggard, Poe, Twain, Baum, Ogden

Nash, Kipling, Damon Runyon, Bradbury, Stevenson, and on and on...

PIERCE: *What was your working relationship with Weisinger?*

BRIDWELL: You can't tell it in a few words—and it changed over the years.

[*Interviewer's note:* Jim Shooter later alleged that Weisinger "tortured Nelson. He was just awful" to his assistant.]

PIERCE: *Whose artistic version of Superman is your favorite?*

BRIDWELL: Swan—when he's at his best.

PIERCE: *What is your opinion of the work of Otto Binder on Captain Marvel?*

BRIDWELL: Fantastic! (I recall liking his Jon Jarl texts, too.)

PIERCE: *Did you ever work directly with Otto while he was at DC?*

BRIDWELL: A great deal! I even completed two stories he started when he was having personal troubles and couldn't finish them.

PIERCE: *Would you care to comment on the works of Gardner Fox, John Broome, and France Herron?*

BRIDWELL: All top men in their day. Gardner was one of my boyhood heroes, and later became a good friend.

[*Interviewer's note:* In *Watchmen*, Captain Metropolis was named "Nelson Gardner" as a tribute to Nelson and Gardner. Another homage to ENB was in *Astro City* #5, which introduced a "Mr. Bridwell," an alias for a shape-shifting extraterrestrial and undercover advance scout for the invading "Enelsians," in the process compiling an encyclopedic database of Earth's superheroes—in other words, emulating the real-life Bridwell! Finally, in the early '80s, an episode of the animated *Shazam!* television series had newsboy Freddy Freeman greeting a "Mr. Beck" and a "Mr. Birdwell" (sic).]

PIERCE: *If you could work with any character—DC, Marvel, other, old, new, alive, defunct—other than those you already have worked with, who would it be, and why?*

BRIDWELL: Well, I dropped the names of a couple in *Super Friends* #5—Larry Davis (Funnyman) and Linda Turner (Black Cat). I just liked 'em.

[*Interviewer's note:* Another character who appeared there was Tony Stark. Nelson used this story as "proof" of his theory that the DC's Earth-One characters and those of the Marvel line inhabited the same Earth. However, he was challenged on this by late fan and researcher Rich Morrissey, who protested, "But you wrote that story yourself!" Nelson seemed unperturbed by this accusation. As he told me in correspondence, *SF* #5 was "the name-droppingest issue yet. Superman meets Larry Davis! Batman talks with Tony Stark! I went absolutely mad!"]

PIERCE: *Who were some of your other favorites during your childhood, other than those from Fawcett and DC?*

BRIDWELL: Kid Eternity, Black Cat, Sheena, Popeye, Dick Tracy, Flash Gordon, Tarzan, Buck Rogers, and, later, Funnyman.

PIERCE: *Is Captain Marvel your all-time favorite? If not, how does he rank among your favorites?*

BRIDWELL: I can't rank them first, second, etc.—but he's right up there with Superman, Batman, etc.

PIERCE: *When did you first learn that you would be working on Captain Marvel, and what was your immediate reaction?*

BRIDWELL: When Julie [Schwartz] got the word he was to edit, he told me I'd be helping on it. I was delighted! Ecstatic!

PIERCE: *Did anyone besides Murphy Anderson, Bob Oksner, and Beck submit art samples for Captain Marvel when DC acquired the rights? (It would, I think, be very interesting to see how a more realistic artist such as Murphy would have handled Captain Marvel.)*

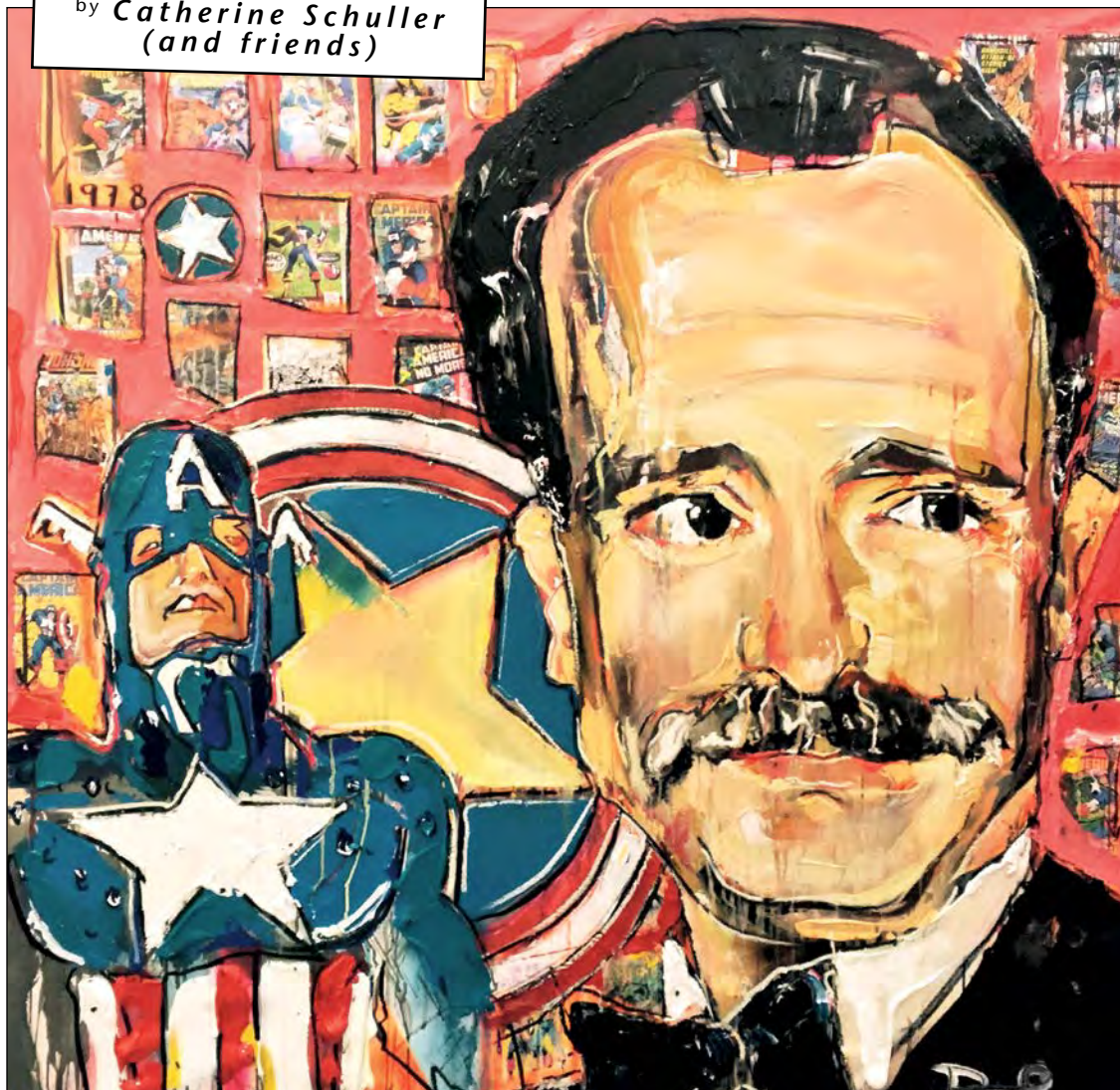
BRIDWELL: I don't recall any others.

PIERCE: *What is your working relationship with Julius Schwartz? Specifically, how did it affect Shazam! as opposed to, say, Superman or JLA?*



Gru the Influencer: Leaving An Indelible Mark

by Catherine Schuller
(and friends)



That's Gru for You

David Banegas produced this painting of Mark Gruenwald and some of the *Captain America* issues he wrote for a June 14, 2016 auction in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Mark's passing. Courtesy of Catherine Schuller.

Captain America TM &
© Marvel Characters, Inc.

"Comics have never been just a hobby to me, nor even just my favorite form of entertainment. Comics relate to everything I do and have done. They are the single unifying strand in the ordered confusion of my life. Personal Entropy is my testament to comics, fear of entropy, and my attempts at being worthwhile. I believe many things are worth the effort of doing and doing right, even though ultimately what difference it will make is nil. To sum it all up, my feeling of personal entropy in one line: everything gets worse and progress only speeds it up. Even though it seems ironic, I am still functionally optimistic. In the time I have allotted me, I must find a way to carve out a significant life."

Mark Gruenwald on Mark Gruenwald

When the task of writing the definitive article on Mark Gruenwald's (1953–1996) editing contribution to the comic-book industry fell on me, I panicked slightly, but then realized that this was very reminiscent of everything about my relationship with Mark. And as his widow, that whole "till death do us part" clause in the marriage vows doesn't really pertain to Mark with me. It started with my having to be the executor of his will and arrange for his outrageous wish to have his ashes stirred into the ink of *Squadron Supreme*, his bestselling graphic novel. I have a real relationship with a dead guy, and I'm busier with him now in comics than I ever was when he was alive! Perhaps I'd go to the Marvel parties, distributors' retreat, or the San Diego Comic-Con every year. Over the past two decades,

I've been convinced it is my destiny to polish his star, keep his formidable legacy alive, and his memory relevant and going strong.

Mark was one of those rare individuals whose passions were transparent at all times. He kept continuity and community going in every aspect of his existence. He was solid as a rock and true blue. He was like an actor studying for a role, immersing himself in the day-to-day credos and life of the character. When he wrote *Captain America* for ten years straight, he embodied the essence of Cap and made decisions based on the question: "What would Cap do?" He was a superhero in his mind and in his life he taught us what a hero could be.

Over the past 22 years since his untimely passing, hearing the stories and accounts about him have made me realize his "rare gem" status, not only in our marriage, but in the world of comics. He truly deserves the titles of "Heart and Soul of Marvel Comics" and "Patron Saint of Marvelism." Mark didn't know the word "*can't*," nor did he believe in luck. "You make your own luck," he would say. It was all about constantly doing, doing, doing. He said his creativity was a compulsion. He was absolutely compulsive and driven. He said he felt "compelled" to write and create stories. The genius of Mark was that he loved the process as much as the end result. He wasn't all about the dream without hard work behind it. His drive was unceasing. He often said that the comics world doesn't owe anyone a career in the business. He was a hard worker and loved being viewed as indispensable and devoted. And if you loved your career choice as much as Mark did, that was a 24/7 compulsion.

Peter Sanderson, Mark's comic-book scholar/archivist mentee, originally chosen to write this article, had fallen and fractured his hip in April of 2017 and wound up in the hospital with complications and unable to give his proper concentration to the endeavor. I can't believe I suggested to Michael Eury that I do the article on Mark's influence! What was I signing up for? I realized, however, that I may actually be the right person to do it because it wasn't going to be an article on analysis of story- and plotlines, of issues and numbered volumes. All that anyone can find on Wikipedia! From 1978 when Jim Shooter hired Mark to be his assistant editor, Mark rose up the ranks and in 1982 became an editor in charge of *The Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Spider-Woman*, and *What If?* He was everywhere from that time on whether creating *D.P. 7*, *Quasar*, "Mark's Remarks," or even having characters named after him to continue his legacy. Who can forget his immortalization in the pages of *Thor* by Walt Simonson, who made him the director of the multiverse monitoring agency, Time Variance Authority, as a tribute to his status as Marvel's resident continuity custodian? Everyone knows he has garnered innumerable fans, legions of admirers, and friends, and a body of work that is among the industry's most impressive list. I wanted to do something on what made the man tick. Why he was such a great editor. What it was like to be his wife and watch him work.

I must admit, it was the most fun marriage you can imagine. I watched him continually carve out our life and allow it to evolve. It was a truly organic experience. I never had one argument with him except when I was offered a chance to go to Bahrain and start the plus-size industry there due to my status as an icon in the full-figured women market. He said it was too risky, that kidnappings were happening regularly there, and it wasn't worth going over there to work when it would take me away from our new marriage. In hindsight, seeing as I was only married to him for three years and ten months, I am very thankful I had every moment with him that I did. I knew he was idealistic and a romantic and he proved it with that request.

We were both living out our childhood fantasies, mine as a fashion icon and him as a creative suit at a comic-book company. He imagined and dreamed of what it was like to work at Marvel when he was a kid. We were both supportive of each other's dreams and passions, and together in a relationship we supported and played off each other's ambitions in the playing field of life. With Mark, you needed to realize that his life was one giant interchangeable equation: creativity = work = play. His life was his work and his passion. I got swept up in his contagious notion of inclusivity and engagement. If you were in love with anyone or anything,

that was the motivating factor. He made you reach further, try harder, and never look back. He taught you to trust your instincts and to act on them. I wound up attempting things I never would have thought I could do in a million years. He always made me dream and scheme, plan and execute elaborate projects, appointing me the entertainment director and event producer of our personal lives. He was guiding and steering, supporting, encouraging, advising, never once making me think I didn't have what it took to make the task at hand manifest. Once I fully committed to him and proclaimed my love, he felt comfortable, accepted, and validated. He needed to have that trust and soulful knowing to be free to be his full self. He was the locomotive and I was the track.

It was prophetic that we were married on Columbus Day in October of 1992. I focused on the buzz word "discovery" as the theme for my wedding speech, hinting at the metaphor of our love as a newfound land of wonder and exploration. He, on the other hand, opened his speech by joking that he had "washed up on these shores before and hadn't fared so well at the hands of the natives." Everyone chuckled as they knew he had never had a woman in his corner who "got him" and didn't fight him on the complete package that was the inimitable Mark Gruenwald. It was a reference to his past failed marriage, but also to the bright future, infinite potential, and hope that he had for the institution of this marital union now with the "girl of his dreams" by his side. He was always willing to be optimistic. A Gruenwald family aphorism was: "Hope for the best, but don't forget to plan for the worst." He enjoyed being a good provider.

He constantly referred to all of life's scenarios as reflective of "good casting." Characters in the play of life (or any great scenario) have chemistry, are perfectly cast to play the role assigned to them based on their onscreen talent and off-screen image. Even though I was cast as his wife and soulmate, I was constantly working out of my comfort zone, yet never feeling as if I wasn't somehow the only one who could rise to the occasion and deliver on his wishes. That's what he did for everyone who worked with him in the comic-book world, too. He would learn your strengths and weaknesses and always assume that you would do the very best job you could. He was always there to go to for guidance or direction, or inspiration. He believed in giving everyone with talent



Wedding Photo

Note the star-spangled heroes atop the cake.

Courtesy of Catherine Schuller.

Photo by Henry O.

Outside of comics Mark, myself, and third stooge Eliot R. Brown actually wrote and performed our own eight-episode cable TV “comedy” show for Manhattan Cable around 1984. We enlisted the help of other Marvel editors and freelancers and shot the show in my apartment in Brooklyn. Is it good/funny? I dunno, but, man, it was the most fun to do with my friends!

SCHULLER: *What was the best and worst thing about working with Mark?*

CARLIN: The best thing was that Mark was a great audience, and the worst thing is that he never wanted the “show” to end. His stamina for the work (we actually slept over weekends in the Marvel offices to get *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe* out every month) and his stamina for goofing around, sometimes meant there was no other time left for anything at all.

SCHULLER: *Did you two ever have a disagreement? What was it over?*

CARLIN: Nope. Never a problem, ever, not once. It’s part of how I know he is my best friend.

SCHULLER: *What was his philosophy on storytelling and editing?*

CARLIN: Mark’s philosophy on storytelling was all about being clear and truthful to the characters themselves. His philosophy regarding editing was similar. It was his job to make sure that what the writers and artists were doing was coming across clearly and in being true to the characters.

Beyond that, Mark’s bedside manner was all about being honest with the talent he was working with. There are times when hard news must be delivered, a scene’s not working or an artist’s style isn’t gelling, things like that, and many editors avoid leveling with a writer or artist—but not Mark. He’d do the job part of the editing job, and having shared an office with him it’s one of the things that I hope I have learned and perpetuate when I edit stories.

SCHULLER: *His editing classes were epic. Did you take them as well?*

CARLIN: Sadly, the classes mostly started after I was at DC, but, as I said, I shared an office with Mark and there is no better way to learn anything than by osmosis. I saw how Mark talked on the phone, how he’d ask for changes, and how he’d solve problems. I think what I had with Mark was better than classes.

I said this at his memorial in 1996—I knew that my five years at Marvel Comics in the early ‘80s were the “good old days” while I was living them. They were then, they are now, because Gru made sure they would be.

GREGORY WRIGHT

Mark Gruenwald was not your typical comic-book editor. His office was spartan. Nothing was allowed on the desk. No files were to be labeled, and all comic books were in magazine boxes, turned so you could only see the unlabeled back of the box. Desks were on an elevated platform, with art files underneath. There was a secret compartment in the platform one might hide away in. There was a large bulletin board that covered up the windows that looked out onto the Bullpen. This was covered by meticulous updated pages from *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. From his desk, Mark could always see the progress of each issue at a glance.

Despite this seemingly OCD and uptight outward manner, Mark was the heart of Marvel and generally the center of all pranks and fun. All of us who had the privilege of working with him were touched by him forever, because of his generosity of creativity and spirit.

It’s easy to say that Mark’s meticulous attention to detail rubbed off on me in my comic work as a writer and color artist. We frequently collaborated to correct so-called mistakes other creators made in comics by coming up with new stories to explain those mistakes. He taught me to use mistakes as a starting point for something new and better. He taught me to open my mind to ideas that were not my own, and that I may have rejected.

Clash of the Titans

(left) Gruenwald and Carlin, at Marvel.

(top right) Hamming it up in a Marvel vs. DC publicity photo.

(bottom right) The big event!

Left photo © Eliot R. Brown. Right photo courtesy of Catherine Schuller. Marvel characters TM & © Marvel. DC characters TM & © DC Comics.



BEWARE: IT'S ASSISTANT EDITORS' MONTH! DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU!



by John Trumbull

TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.

Bullpen Bulletins

WE'RE BACK!

We've been away for almost a month, the Marvel editors and me, attending the

THEIR
FATE
IS IN
YOUR
HANDS



ANN NOCENTI
CARL POTTS ASST



JIM OWSLEY
LARRY HAMA ASST



MIKE CARLIN
MARK GRUENWALD'S ASST



LINDA GRANT
DENNY O'NEIL'S ASST



ELIOT BROWN
LOUISE JONES ASST



MIKE HIGGINS
BOB BUDIANSKY'S ASST



BOB HARRAS
RALPH MACCHIO'S ASST



BOB DENATALE
DANNY FINGEROTH'S ASST

ChicagoCon, Comix Fair '83 in Houston, the San Diego Comic Con, and more — and taking a few days of working vacation in Los Angeles. At last, we're back. I'm sitting at my Editor in Chief desk in my Editor in Chief office, and the editors are all back in their respective rooms.

You wouldn't believe what went on here while we were gone. Or maybe you saw last month's Marvel Comics...

I'm not sure what my reaction is. I'm half convinced that congratulations are in order, and half convinced that heads should roll. So it's up to you people out there — should we give the assistant editors, who were solely responsible for last month's, um... rather zany Marvel Comics a raise? Or should we give them their walking papers? Or feed them to the fishes? I'll be waiting for your letters...

In 1983, before Civil War, before The Infinity Gauntlet, even before Secret Wars, Marvel Comics had the company-wide event to end all company-wide events. An event so outrageous it featured pages with no artwork, Galactus gorging himself on Twinkies, and David Letterman. It was Marvel's Assistant Editors' Month, and comics haven't seen anything like it before or since.

Assistant Editors' Month was the brainchild of Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter, inspired by an unusual source: Macy's department store. As Mike Carlin related in a Pro2Pro interview with Danny Fingeroth in BACK ISSUE #19, "Macy's would have sales where their assistant buyers would be in charge of buying all the stuff that they'd sell. So the idea was that Jim was going to be taking all the editors out to the Comic-Con in San Diego—all the main editors were going to be out of the office at the same time—

and wouldn't it be funny if the books that came out the month that they were traveling to San Diego reflected the fact that the editors were gone.

That, to him, meant that the books wouldn't be quite normal. [laughs]

Former Marvel editor Denny O'Neil says today, "I'm pretty sure it must've been Jim's idea. It kind of seems like a Jim idea. And I had reservations, as I've had about a lot of things that are inside jokes. This is just a guess on my part, but anything like that that seems so 'inside baseball' might scare off new readers. But [Assistant Editors' Month] almost had to have been Jim's idea because nobody else on the editorial side would've had enough clout, I don't think." Fellow editor Bob Budiasky shares some of O'Neil's concerns: "I

thought it was a cute idea, although I questioned—to myself—how much it would mean to our readers since I doubted many of them knew what an assistant editor was.



BOB BUDIASKY

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Blame Them

Caricatures of the guilty parties—uh, we mean, assistant editors—from Marvel's notorious 1983 stunt. Scan courtesy of John Trumbull.

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TOM DEFALCO

© Luigi Novi / Wikimedia Commons.

Beware...

(below) Editor-in-chief Jim Shooter's 1983 Bullpen Bulletins column announcing the forthcoming Assistant Editors' Month. Scan courtesy of John Trumbull.

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Probably many of them didn't even understand what an editor was. But it didn't really matter how much our readers understood the bureaucratic structure of a publishing company... it was still a cute idea."

Although Assistant Editors' Month was presented to the readership as the assistants running amok, the truth was quite different. In reality, the AEM books were produced long before the summer convention season, with many of the regular editorial teams in their usual roles. Mike Carlin stated in *BI* #19, "Everything was run past, obviously, the editors and Jim Shooter before we even started the project, and based on where any given series was at the time, you had a little more leeway or a little less leeway." Editor Tom DeFalco explains, "The way the books were produced depended on the individual editorial office. Some editors took an active role. Others stayed back and let their assistants take the lead. I remember a lot of assistants seeing AEM as a chance to prove their skills." Assistant editor Bob DeNatale recalls, "I got into a little trouble with Danny for taking the myth of Assistant Editors' Month too seriously when I approved a pretty bad cover for that month's *Ka-Zar* while Danny and the other editors were away at the convention."

What follows is a rundown of the various Assistant Editors' Month books, along with the memories of their creative teams. All books were cover-dated January 1984 and hit the stands in September 1983.

MIKE CARLIN

As the unofficial ringleader of the assistant editors, Mike Carlin was in charge of reporting on the contents of the AEM books to Jim Shooter, in addition to supervising Mark Gruenwald's books for the month. "I did a few little things that nobody else did to make mine unique," Carlin recalled in *BI* #19. "I put the old DC 'Go-Go Checks' on my Marvel covers. I also put a takeoff on the old National Periodicals DC Bullet, using M and C instead of D and C. (I told the bosses it stood for Marvel Comics—but it *really* stood for Mike Carlin.) I even had my corner symbol figures drawn facing the wrong way. So instead of Captain America jumping toward you, he was jumping away. [laughs] He was trying to get away from the issue."



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Captain America #289: "Tomorrow, the World?" "Bernie America, Sentinel of Liberty" After a lead story wrapping up a time-travel adventure with Deathlok, *Captain America* #289 features a five-page backup entitled "Bernie America, Sentinel of Liberty," where Steve Rogers' girlfriend Bernie Rosenthal is struggling with being in a relationship with Captain America. She tries to put herself in

Steve's shoes, imagining "if I was the one rushing off at the stop of a hat to save the world." Of course, some details of Steve's superhero life get a little muddled in translation, as Bernie America and her fellow Avengers fight the Mo-Skull, a hybrid of the Red Skull and MODOK, who dreams of conquering the galaxy and opening a chain of Pizza Hut restaurants across the Milky Way. It was a fun change of pace from the regular *Cap* team of J. M. DeMatteis, Mike Zeck, and John Beatty.



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Thor #339: "Something Old, Something New..."

As *Thor* writer/artist Walter Simonson was just three issues into his run, it was decided not to disrupt his storylines with an Assistant Editors' Month stunt. The status quo is still shaken up, though, as Odin grants the alien Beta Ray Bill Stormbringer, an enchanted hammer that enables him to transform back and forth to his superpowered form. The lone

AEM representation comes in the form of "Carlin & Simonson's Page O' Thor Stuff," a humorous cartoon by Mike Carlin that replaces the letters page.



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Iron Man #178: "Once an Avenger, Always an Avenger!" "Struggle!"

As Assistant Editors' Month rolled around, *Iron Man* was embroiled in a long-range plot where Tony Stark had lost his company, Stark International, and relapsed into alcoholism. Interim Iron Man James Rhodes does not appear in issue #178, which features two stories, one humorous and one dramatic, along with another Mike Carlin Page O' Stuff.

"Once an Avenger, Always an Avenger!" by Bob Harras and Luke McDonnell features a group of kids who dress up in homemade costumes as Earth's Mightiest Heroes, protecting Brooklyn from the petty crimes of Blackie Donovan. Seeking to emulate their heroes in every way, the Kid Avengers ask their Iron Man, Mikey, to leave the group when they learn that the real-life Iron Man has left the Avengers. Finding his nemesis' discarded stew-pot helmet, Blackie Donovan begins menacing the neighborhood by impersonating the Golden Avenger. Thankfully, Mikey is shaken out of drowning his sorrows in sugary sodas, defeats the imposter, and clears his good name, rejoining the ranks of Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

Sadly, the real Iron Man is not so lucky. "Struggle!" by Denny O'Neil and Luke McDonnell finds Tony Stark at his lowest point: destitute, wandering the streets, without friends, and desperate for his next drink. In spite of all this, Stark still refuses to admit his alcoholism. Recognizing Stark's problem, a policeman challenges him to stay sober until midnight, promising

Bullpen Bulletins

HERE'S THE SITUATION...

I, Editor in Chief and Supreme High Kahuna of Marvel Comics, will be leaving very soon on a month-long trip around the country to attend several of the biggest Comics Conventions of the year. Every single one of the Editors here at Marvel will be going with me. That means no one will be here at the House of Ideas guarding the fort — except the Assistant Editors!

They will be in complete charge of one entire month's worth of Marvel Comics. For that month, they will be the absolute masters of the Marvel Universe.

And they're up to something! Something... strange.

This is no gag. No joke. Really, honestly, I thought it would be good for our assistant editors to have a real chance on the firing line — to have a shot at wielding the enormous responsibility and power of being editors-for-a-month under actual combat conditions — so I arranged it. Somewhat to my amazement, they're taking it very seriously! They see this as their opportunity not to merely caretake the comics for a month, but to do the stories they've always wanted to do! To oversee a month's worth of the wildest, most spectacular, most unforgettable and possibly weirdest Marvel Comics ever published! To prove themselves by knocking the world on its ear with every single issue coming out that month!

What month? Next month, All Marvel Comics which bear a January cover date, which will be on sale next month, in September, are the ones to watch for.

The Assistant Editors have been very secretive about what they have planned, so I can't tell you anything about next month's stories — I honestly don't know what they've got cooking. I firmly believe that these issues are going to be one-of-a-kind collector's items, though, and if I were you, I wouldn't miss any of next month's issues. I don't

say that lightly, by the way. If you read this column regularly, you know that I don't hand-sell anything, and rarely even give a plug. I leave the hype for the Hype Box. This is an unusual circumstance, though, I think. Assistant Editors Month has really grown from an innocent little educational exercise into an event!

Okay, enough about that. You've been advised — or warned, depending upon how you look at it. By the way, Editor Mark Gruenwald's assistant

Mike Carlin asked me to run the ad which appears below. So there it is!

Stay well,
Shooter

P.S. Being that I'll be away for a month, the next Bullpen Page will be written by my assistant-and-secretary, Lynn Cohen! I'll be back writing this, the most-widely-read page in comics the following month! See you!



Diana SCHUTZ INTERVIEW

by **Michael Eury**
conducted by email in June 2017



“A Tribute to our 2009 Joe Shuster Canadian Comic Book Creator Awards Hall of Fame Inductees”

Hall of Fame

In 2009, Diana Schutz was the first woman to be inducted into the Joe Shuster Canadian Comic Book Creators Hall of Fame. Illustration by Faith Erin Hicks.

Ask the elite of comicdom to name their dream editor, and they'll probably answer Diana Schutz. Is it any wonder? After breaking into the business by editing a comic shop newsletter, the Canadian-born Schutz, along with then-husband Bob Schreck, rose to acclaim in the mid-to-late '80s at Comico the Comic Company, producing a high-quality, eclectic line including Grendel, Jonny Quest, The Elementals, and The Rocketeer Adventure Magazine. She later spent 25 years editing at Dark Horse Comics, working with cutting-edge newcomers as well as superstars including Frank Miller, Harlan Ellison, Will Eisner, Michael Chabon, Harvey Pekar, Stan Sakai, Matt Wagner, and Neil Gaiman. A staunch advocate for creators' rights, Diana excels at nurturing creative visions and teaching young editors (I should know—she was my first mentor in comics, at Comico)... never missing a deadline in the process! In this exclusive interview, she looks back at her long career and provides insights into the craft of editing comic books and graphic novels.

— Michael Eury

MICHAEL EURY: What traits make a good comic-book editor?

DIANA SCHUTZ: Attention to detail and strong organizational abilities, to start. Social skills, because, y'know, you have to actually talk to your creators! A thorough grounding in story, language, and art, a sense of comics history as well as an awareness of the contemporary players, and an understanding of at least some of the business aspects of publishing. Oh dear, I've really narrowed the field, haven't I? Well, you did ask for the traits of a "good" comic-book editor, not a description of the current crop—obvious exceptions notwithstanding.

Your knowledge that commas and periods always go inside quotations was a mark of excellence, Michael. And you were indeed an excellent comic-book editor.

EURY: Thanks!

SCHUTZ: Since no one seems to know what the hell a comics editor does (the Eisner Committee nixed the Best Editor award altogether, arguing exactly that), let me

add that editors are both project managers and quality control officers, thus expected to ensure that the work is both *on time* and *good*. Though the roles aren't quite this circumscribed: editors represent the business interests of the publishing company to the creator, and they (should) represent the aesthetic interests of the creator to the publishing company. I've always advocated more strongly for the latter, but let's face it, the editor spends her working life stuck pretty squarely between a rock and a hard place!

EURY: Who are comics' all-time best editors, and why?

SCHUTZ: Archie Goodwin, because he understood what makes a first-rate comics story, and he edited a goodly amount of same. As an experienced writer and artist himself, Archie already had the requisite background knowledge for the job, and he was a vocal champion of creators' rights at a time when that was an unpopular position for a staff editor to take. He also put his money where his mouth was by establishing the Epic imprint for Marvel's very first creator-owned publications. He took the time to explain his editorial decisions, giving his freelancers advice and criticism. He was truthful and unpretentious and funny. And most importantly, he was a kind soul.

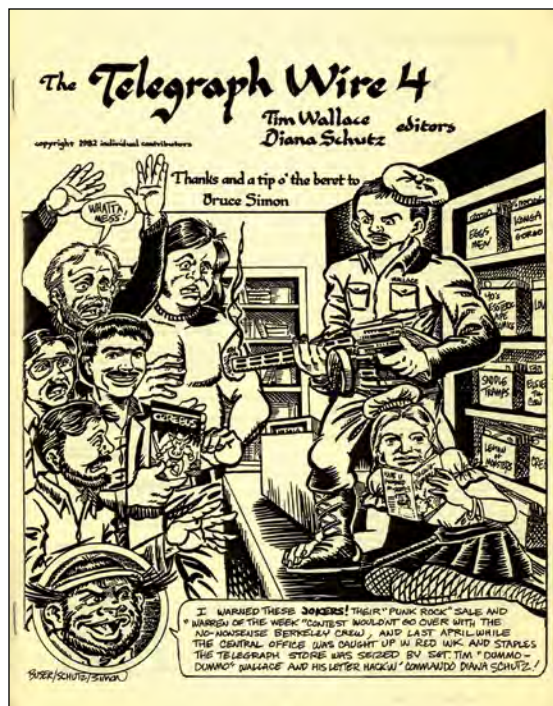
I'm not sure Ruth Hermann or Dorothy Woolfolk would make the cut since they were both working at a time when *no one* considered comics worth anything more than trash (Will Eisner being the perennial exception), but as pioneer female editors in an otherwise overwhelmingly male industry, they deserve a nod, at least.

There are some living comics editors who might eventually join Archie on this list, but since they're friends, I'll just leave this question here.

EURY: Supergirl was your favorite childhood superheroine. Why the Girl of Steel instead of Wonder Woman? After all, you and Wonder Woman have the same name...

SCHUTZ: Simple. Despite the shared name, Wonder Woman was a *woman*, whereas Supergirl was a *girl*. I was five. Of course I'd identify with the *girl*! She was in school like me, she had homework like me, she lived with a family like me, she could fly like me... oh, wait.

And WW's shorts sucked. I was all about the skirt.



EURY: You had outgrown comics by the time you started college. What drew you back to them?

SCHUTZ: Steve Gerber's *Howard the Duck*. In that bland mid-'70s marketplace full of spandex heroes, a wise-quacking duck was like nothing else on the stands! Steve Gerber's writing on *Howard* was fearless in its satire and mordantly funny. By then I was down to reading comics only once in a blue moon... until I saw *Howard* on a corner store spinrack in 1974 or '75. I've never looked back.

EURY: You dropped out of grad school in 1978 to work in a comics shop in Canada. Tell me about that decision.

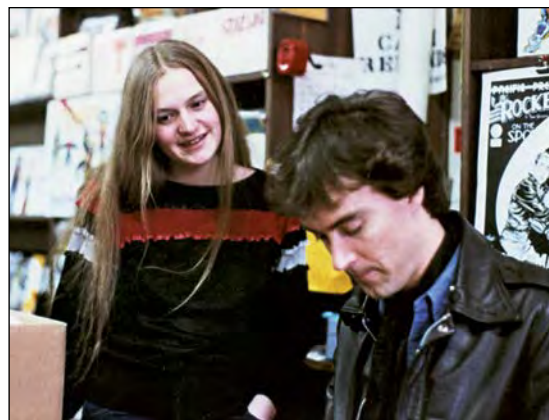
SCHUTZ: At 23, I was painfully shy, having spent my life to-date in the ivory tower—where I was also suffering from impostor syndrome (a term I didn't even know at the time; it was coined that same year). Finding the Comicshop in Vancouver, British Columbia, in the still-early days of the direct market, was like finding my tribe! Among other things, working there taught me the social skills I'd never learned in academia. And owners Ken Witcher and the late Ron Norton taught me everything else!

I did return to grad school, by the way—in 1990, when Mike Richardson moved Bob Schreck and me to Portland—and completed my Master's degree in a then virtually unknown field: Comics Studies!

EURY: How did fandom and the comic-shop scene differ in Canada from what US readers might recognize?

SCHUTZ: Canada's a much smaller country in terms of population, so we had fewer cartoonists hanging around the shop, fewer signings, fewer conventions, and Canadian Customs made it tough for us to maintain a healthy stock of underground comix. But otherwise: the same obsessive nerds, the same fanboys afraid to speak to the girl behind the counter.

EURY: Tell me when and why you moved to the US.



Letter-Hackin' Commando

(left) Cover of *The Telegraph Wire* #4 (1982), by Bruce Simon. According to Diana Schutz, "As you can see (through the paper), the *Wire* was just a xerox-zine at first." (top right) Diana Schutz's (center) first meeting with fellow Canadians Dave and Deni Sim, at Comics & Comix, October 1982, during their "First American Tour." Diana points out, "See all those back-issue boxes behind us? Bagged, tagged, graded, priced, organized, and filed by yours truly: lettering by me and a big-ass Magic Marker." (bottom right) Diana's first meeting with Dave Stevens, at Comics & Comix, March 1983, during Dave's promotion of *Pacific Presents: The Rocketeer* #1, published by Pacific Comics. Photos courtesy of Diana Schutz.

The *Telegraph Wire* © 1982 Comics & Comix.

Hold the Presses!

MAKING HEADLINES WITH PERRY WHITE

by John Schwirian



ELLIOT S. MAGGIN

Elliot S. Maggin
Facebook

Great C
Perry soa

Cardy cover to *Action Comics* #436 (June 1974).

TM & © DC Comics.

It is hard to imagine Superman comics without the *Daily Planet* or Perry White, but in 1971, that almost happened. When editor Julius Schwartz was assigned Superman following the retirement of longtime editor Mort Weisinger, Schwartz wanted to shake things up, including updating Clark Kent's job. Schwartz felt that young readers preferred television to newspapers and the comic series should reflect that. Thus, Schwartz brought in Morgan Edge, CEO of WGBS (Global Broadcasting Systems), and used him to "modernize" Kent's professional life. Edge moved Kent from an investigative reporter for the *Daily Planet* to anchorman for the evening news on WGBS. The supporting cast was shuffled around, with new characters introduced and old ones taking on new roles. Unfortunately, when the dust settled, there was no reason to keep Perry White around.

Like many elements of the Superman mythos, Perry's origins in the *Adventures of Superman* the second episode became an integral part of the series, w... that led... was... su...

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