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COMICS FANZINE

# Alter Ego™

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**No.145**

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# Alter Ego



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**On Our Cover:** So what do you do when (as will be explained in our "writer/editorial" on the very next page) you're doing a *Star Wars* issue of *Alter Ego* and you can't use an actual *Star Wars* image on your cover? Well, you consider the fact that the major illustrator of Marvel's *Star Wars* #1-10 was none other than future American Flag! writer/artist Howard Chaykin... then you recall that, just about the time he was really diving into work on *Star Wars*, his somewhat Han-Soloish space-hero "Monark Starstalker" was making his one and only appearance, in Marvel Premiere #32 (Oct. 1976)—and you go with that cover image, which can be seen as originally published on p. 14 of this issue! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

**Above:** On the Internet, *A/E*'s editor stumbled upon this lone panel from a German edition of *Star Wars* #10 (April 1978). Thus, since Jaxxon the "green rabbit" was writer Roy Thomas' principal creative addition to the *Star Wars* mythos (even if the Lepi from *Coachella Prime* was almost immediately exiled therefrom by George Lucas himself), a panel featuring the space lapine seemed a fitting image to hover above this contents page. Art by Howard Chaykin & Tom Palmer. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]



*Alter Ego*™ is published 6 times a year by TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. *Alter Ego* Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@tinetnet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices. Six-issue subscriptions: \$65 US, \$102 Elsewhere, \$29.70 Digital Only. All characters are © their respective companies. All material © their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. *Alter Ego* is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. ISSN: 1932-6890.

FIRST PRINTING.



# Makin' Wookiee

## ROY THOMAS Tells All—& We Do Mean All— About Marvel's 1977 *Star Wars* Comic

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

### INTERVIEWER'S INTRO-

**DUCTION:** After co-founding the original fanzine edition of *Alter Ego* with Jerry G. Bails in 1961, Roy Thomas labored briefly for Charlton Comics and DC Comics in 1965, then segued to a 15-year role as a writer and editor at Marvel Comics.

During that time, he scribed numerous titles there, including *The X-Men*, *Dr. Strange*, *The Avengers*, *The Invaders*, and *Conan the Barbarian*. The latter title is considered by many fans to signal the end of the Silver Age of Comics and the beginning of the Bronze Age. Roy became Stan Lee's first successor as Marvel editor-in-chief (from 1972-1974), then served under contract as a writer/editor at Marvel through 1980. In 1977 he scripted and edited the first ten issues of Marvel's *Star Wars* comic. In 1980 he moved to DC, for whom, during that decade, he developed such titles as *Arak*, *Son of Thunder*; *All-Star Squadron*; *Infinity, Inc.*; *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew!*, *Young All-Stars*, and a new series of *Secret Origins*. Over the years, he's been noted for his adaptations of literary properties to comics, including Robert E. Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Bram Stoker*, and various science-fiction and fantasy authors. In 1998-99, he revived *Alter Ego* for TwoMorrows Publishing. His comics-history magazine has done yeoman service in providing oral histories of 1930s-70s comic book writers, artists, editors, and publishers. It has also made this writer both richer (spiritually) and poorer (financially) while he tracked down great stories and titles I'd overlooked or simply never even heard of. This interview was conducted by phone in June 2016, with follow-ups in September.

**RICHARD ARNDT:** When did you first become aware that there was going to be a movie called *Star Wars*?

**ROY THOMAS:** It happened while I was having dinner, sometime in the winter or early spring of 1975, with George Lucas, my friend Ed Summer, and probably a third person. For a long time, I mistakenly thought that other person must've been George's merchandising man, Charley Lippincott; but Charley himself recently made me aware that it couldn't possibly have been him, and was probably Gary Kurtz, the [eventual] producer of *Star Wars*.

I'd gotten to know Ed Summer earlier. He'd opened a comics store, called *Supersnipe*, only a couple of blocks south of [then-wife] Jeanie's and my apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side. He was a knowledgeable comics fan, a half-dozen years younger

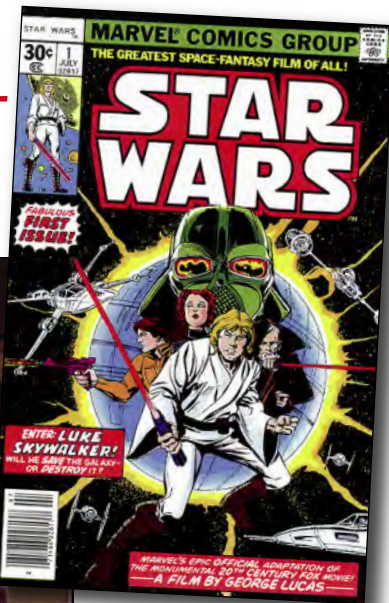


**Roy Thomas & Howard Chaykin**

(left to right) onstage in July 1976 at the San Diego Comic-Con, in a program/panel that clued many young attendees in for the first time that a film called *Star Wars* would open in theatres the following spring. Projected behind the lads is Chaykin's poster for the film, which will be seen a bit more clearly on p. 23.

Also on the stage was ringmaster Charley Lippincott. Thanks to Steve Sansweet.

At right is Chaykin's cover for Marvel's *Star Wars* #1 (July 1977), which despite the usual dated-ahead look actually went on sale circa March 8th of that year. There were later variants of that cover with a 35¢ price tag. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]



than me, and a former film student, who had a grant to make a film about some major comics creators—Kirby, Barks, and Eisner were on that short list. We became good friends for a time. He also had a lot to do with the fact that there was a *Conan the Barbarian* movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the early '80s, and he and I even worked together on that one in its earliest stages.

Ed had told me that George Lucas was his silent partner in his *Supersnipe* Comic Art Emporium—not in Ed's *Supersnipe* comic book store, but in a separate business that sold original art. At that time, I knew of George “only” as the director of what



**Gary Kurtz & George Lucas**

(left to right). Kurtz would produce *Star Wars*, while Lucas, of course, was the creator, director, and writer of the screenplay. Pic found on the Internet.

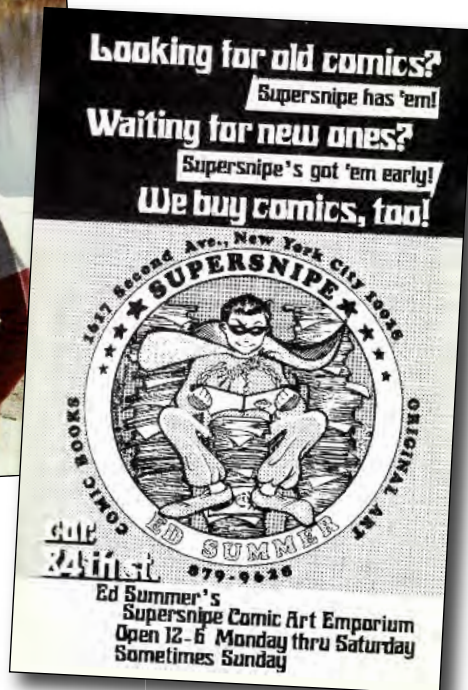




### Ed Summer, Frank Frazetta, & George Lucas

(left to right) in 1970. Summer had arranged for Lucas to meet Frazetta. Pic found on the Internet.

(Right:) This ad for Summer's Supersnipe comics store (and the original-art business in which Lucas was a silent partner) made up the inside front cover of the program book of the 1974 Creation Con in NYC. Artist unknown. Supersnipe was a humorous comics character from the 1940s... a kid with a huge comic book collection who dreamed of being a costumed super-hero. Thanks to John Benson. [Art © the respective copyright holders.]



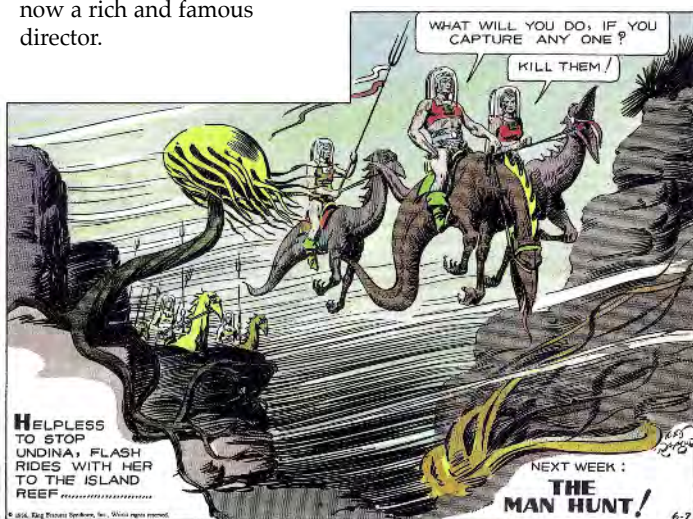
The main reason I've always believed there was a fourth person present is that I remember someone—either at that dinner or at some other meal related to *Star Wars*—and not George or Ed—telling an anecdote about having dinner at a restaurant in a group that included Alfred Hitchcock. He related how Hitchcock, whom he'd never met before, ordered the precise dinners for everyone at the table without bothering to consult them. I found that fascinating, and very much in keeping with the Hitchcock mythos. Charley had worked for Hitchcock before working for Lucas, so I figured he's the one who told me that story—only if he did so, it must've been on another occasion.

Anyway, Ed, George, and probably another guy were discussing *The Star Wars* as a sort of

science-fiction, *Flash Gordon* type of movie. I could tell that the basic storyline was still very much a work in progress. That night, I learned of two possible names for the main hero—he'd be called either Luke Starkiller or Luke Skywalker. Lucas and the others were just discussing things amongst themselves... I might as well not have been there during that part of the conversation, but I didn't mind being a fly on the wall.

At some point in the evening, George said some kind things about my writing, on *Conan the Barbarian* in particular, and naturally I told him how much I liked *American Graffiti*, but that's about all I really remember of the night's talk besides the mention of *The Star Wars*.

Afterward, George and Ed—and probably the other guy—came back with me to my apartment. Jeanie was there, which is how I know it was no later than the first half of 1975, since the two of us had split up for good by summer of that year. George wanted to see our Frazetta oil painting—and even more so Jeanie's and my Uncle Scrooge painting that we'd bought from Carl Barks. I remember her whispering to me, as they walked back into our bedroom where the paintings were hung, something to the effect of "Is that

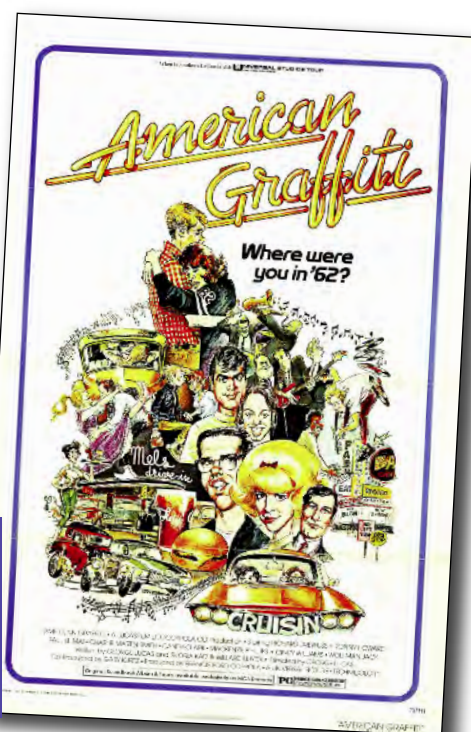


### That Crazy *Flash Gordon* Stuff

It's well-known nowadays that George Lucas came up with the *Star Wars* concept only after being turned down by King Features in his attempt to license its long-running comic strip *Flash Gordon*, created and drawn in 1934 by artist Alex Raymond. Seen above is a panel from the June 7, 1936, Sunday strip. [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

### Where Were You In '62?

A poster for the 1973 George Lucas film *American Graffiti*. It's the work of *Mad's* Mort Drucker. [©the respective trademark & copyright holders.]







### Masters Of The (Pop Art) Universe

(Above:) Frank Frazetta's 1960s painting now titled "Thor's Flight"—and owned in 1975 by Roy & Jean Thomas—was originally done as the cover of the Lancer paperback *Thongor of Lemuria*, written by Lin Carter. In the early '70s the couple had purchased it for \$4,000. [TM & © Estate of Frank Frazetta.]

(Top center:) Roy & Jean in July 1972, in the home of Carl & Garé Barks in Goleta, California. They had dropped by to pick up (and pay a whole \$250 for) the Duck painting that Carl had done especially for them. Photo probably taken by Garé Barks.



him—until he contacted me out of the blue roughly two years ago... but I'll tell that story later, where it fits chronologically.

Except that I may as well mention right here that, in late 2014, Charley e-mailed me the rough draft of an article he was in the

process of writing about his connection to *Star Wars*. Since then, he's firmed up the prose into several online articles—or maybe they're from his Facebook page, and they've gotten out onto the Internet from there. In both versions of the article, he states that it was his idea "from the very beginning"—which means the fall of 1975, at the earliest, which is when he formally got his job with Lucas—to use a comic book adaptation to help market *Star Wars*, because he felt adventure movies and comics had very much the same audience. That was a very prescient action on Charley's part, since such things weren't being done much in the mid-'70s. Dell and a few other comics companies had done film adaptations through at least the early '60s, though Marvel had recently done two (*The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and *Planet of the Apes*) and would soon begin another (*Logan's Run*).

Charley and Ed have somewhat different takes on how and why Charley came to Marvel to do the adaptation. Since Charley was more intimately involved in that than Ed was, I suspect his version may be the more accurate one. They're not really *that* much at variance... but there *are* differences.

In the course of an interview that was spread over three issues of the Lucasfilm magazine *The Star Wars Insider* in 2013, Ed

George Lucas?" I wasn't that much less starstruck myself, I've got to admit. Anyway, they didn't stay long, and the dinner with George became a dimming but pleasant memory.



### Charles Lippincott

In 1976 his official title, as he told Roy Thomas, was "media projects director"—but he had others. Photo by Bob Seidmann. Thanks to Michael Grabojs. [Photo © the respective copyright holders.]

**RA:** An online article states that Charley Lippincott, who at that stage was in charge of merchandising and publicity for the movie, approached Marvel Comics at some date in 1975 to get a comic book adaptation of the movie going and that he talked to Stan Lee, but was turned down.

**THOMAS:** I've heard that account, but it's wrong. It was in early '76, not '75, that Charley started trying to arrange a comic book adaptation of the upcoming *Star Wars* movie. Over the past couple of decades, I tried at various times to contact him to check out details about the genesis of Marvel's *Star Wars* comic, especially after I revived *Alter Ego*. But I was never able to get hold of



### Read A Good Movie Lately?

The then-new films *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and *Logan's Run* were adapted in the pages of Marvel Comics not long before *Star Wars* made its debut. *Worlds Unknown* #7 (June 1974) saw the first of two issues adapting the *Sinbad* movie, with cover art by George Tuska, John Romita, & Vince Colletta—while the first five (of a total of 7) issues of *Logan's Run* told the story of that MGM flick. *LR* #1, with its cover by George Pérez & Al Milgrom, was dated Jan. 1977—six months before the debut issue of *Star Wars*. Thanks to the Grand Comics Database. [Cover art TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc., or successors in interest.]





### All The Whirl's A Stage

A pair of long shots of (sitting left to right on stage) Charley Lippincott, Roy Thomas, & Howard Chaykin, at the *Star Wars* presentation panel at the July 1976 San Diego Comic-Con. Behind the gents is a projection of Chaykin's original *Star Wars* poster, reproductions of which Lippincott was selling for \$1 apiece (and a bit later, giving away). Note that all three gents are wearing the earliest-ever "The Star Wars" T-shirts, designed by Ralph McQuarrie. Thanks to Steve Sansweet. [© the respective copyright holders.]







### Close Up & Personal

Charley Lippincott onstage at San Diego, 1976. Found on the Internet.  
[© the respective copyright holders.]

Charley in George's office on the Universal lot. I just barely recall it—I had a lot of other things on my mind, having just moved to L.A. a few weeks before—but a transcript of it has been reprinted in *The Star Wars Insider* and elsewhere, and it's also available online... both in its original rough form, and as cleaned up later by editors. The tape clearly starts a little after the meeting began and ends rather abruptly, perhaps just because someone ran out of tape.

**RA:** That's the impression I got. The meeting took place on July 27, while the Comic-Con had run from July 21-25. The version you sent me [from *Star Wars Insider* #122, Jan. 2011] was much more coherent than the online version I'd read, where it appeared to have been transcribed by someone learning English as a second language. Even in the cleaned-up version you sent me, though, the transcriber clearly had no knowledge of anybody or anything related to comics. Solomon Kane is transcribed as "Silent Kane." Alex Nino's name comes out as "L.S. Neil." Bernie Wrightson's name is mangled into "Righton"... Walt Simonson is "Siminon"... Ralph Reese is Ralph "Raes." However, they do know who Harlan Ellison is and how to spell his name. [chuckles]

**THOMAS:** [laughs] The transcription of that meeting, after lying buried in the "Lucasfilm Archives" for years, apparently also ran in that great big book on the various *Star Wars* comics series.

**RA:** I think they actually mention in the transcription that they'd flown Howard Chaykin in for the convention. The meeting apparently happened just eleven days after the movie wrapped principal photography, with "barely a single special effects shot [having been] completed."

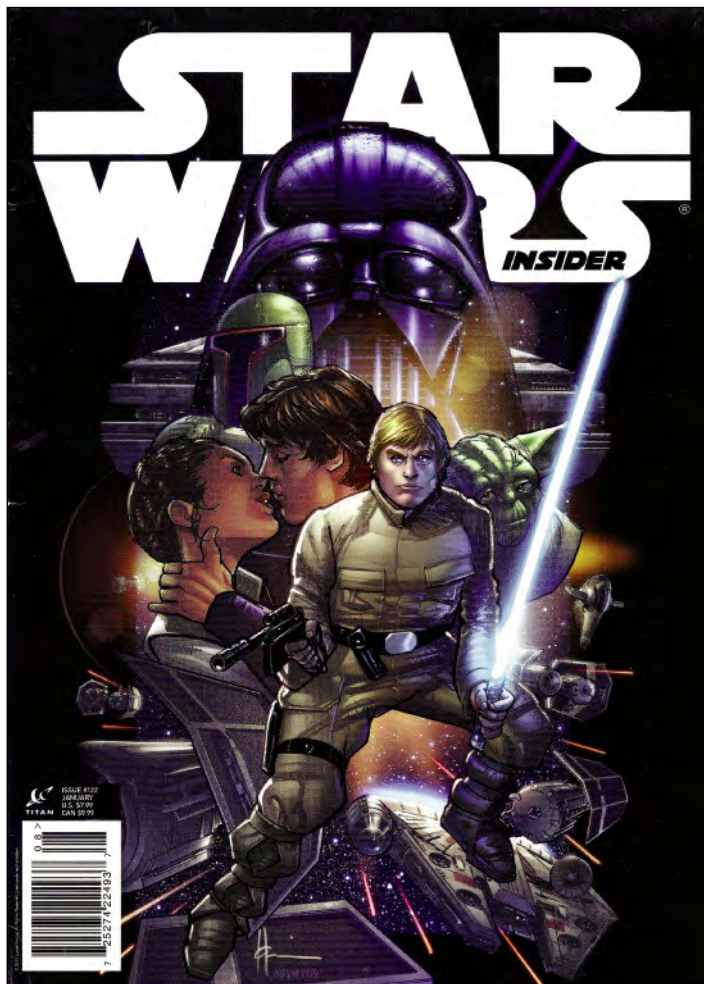
**THOMAS:** He wouldn't have

that wasn't likely to affect the future of comics conventions much.

**RA:** I know that earlier conventions did stuff related to movies that were just coming out or had already come out, especially science-fiction, but nothing so far in advance of the film's release. At that point, the world premiere of *Star Wars* was still at least nine months in the future.

**THOMAS:** There's also a photo of Mark Hamill, reputedly at that '76 convention... but I don't recall meeting him then, though I may have.

A day or so after the con, Chaykin and I had a meeting with George and



### Insider Out

Howard Chaykin provided a new cover for Lucasfilm's official magazine *Star Wars Insider* #122 (Jan. 2011), bringing the original 1976 poster and 1977 comic book cover scenes up to date. That issue featured J.W. Rinzler's article "Movie Frame to Comic Frame: The Genesis of the *Star Wars* Comic Book," most of which was devoted to a transcription of the July 27, 1976, meeting of George Lucas, Charley Lippincott, Howard Chaykin, and Roy Thomas in the former's office on the Universal Studios lot. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Inc.]



### Star Wars At San Diego, 1976 - Continued

(Left:) Mark Hamill at the 1976 San Diego Comic-Con, with a photo credit to Joe Johnston in the *Star Wars Scrapbook*. Thanks to the Tenth Letter of the Alphabet blog.

(Right:) Charley Lippincott at a table in the dealers' room, "selling" *Star Wars*. The sign says that the comic book was then slated to go on sale beginning February 1977, with the movie premiere then set for April. Each was delayed by one month. Thanks to Steve Sansweet. [© the respective copyright holders.]



# HOWARD CHAYKIN On *Star Wars*

## The Artist/Co-Adapter Of Marvel's *Star Wars* #1-10 Takes A Brief Look Backward

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** *Howard Chaykin started his comics career working as an assistant to Gil Kane, then moved on to assist Wallace Wood, Neal Adams, and Gray Morrow in the early 1970s. By 1972 he was doing short pieces for DC's various anthology titles and fill-ins at Marvel on "Man-Thing." His first major assignment was drawing Fritz Leiber's sword-&-sorcery characters Fafhrd and The Gray Mouser in DC's adaptation of their adventures in 1973's Sword of Sorcery. Following that short-lived series, he created "Ironwolf" for DC and his creator-owned "Cody Starbuck" for the early independent title Star\*Reach. Throughout the 1970s he largely appeared as a utility player for the mainstream publishers, drawing and sometimes writing material for World of Krypton, "War of the Worlds," "Enemy Ace," and various anthology titles. In the late '70s and early '80s he did a series of highly acclaimed, fully painted graphic novels adapting The Stars My Destination by Alfred Bester and original works by Michael Moorcock and Samuel Delaney. He hit his stride in 1983 with his own creation, American Flagg!, which ran for over 40 issues, although he would prefer you ignore anything he didn't write and draw. Since then, he's worked as either writer/artist or as writer or as artist on The Shadow, Time (Squared), Blackhawk, Black Kiss, Twilight, Pulp Fantastic, American Century, Mighty Love, City of Tomorrow, the online 24 College Ave., Hawkgirl, Guy Gardner: Collateral Damage, Blade, War Is Hell: The First Flight of The Phantom Eagle, Supreme Power, Rawhide Kid, Buck Rogers, and many more. In the 1990s he worked as a scriptwriter for the first Flash television series. In 1976 he began work with Roy Thomas on the adaptation for Marvel Comics of the forthcoming and then largely unknown film Star Wars. This interview was conducted by phone on January 17, 2016.*



**RICHARD ARNDT:** How did you get involved in doing the adaptation for the first movie?

**HOWARD CHAYKIN:** I really don't remember. I think I was asked to do it because [George] Lucas had seen the "Cody Starbuck" stories I'd done for *Star\*Reach*. That was through Ed Summer, who ran the comic art business that

**Howard Chaykin**

in a recent convention photo—plus a fabulous commission piece of Luke and Leia. Thanks to Howard for the latter—and to Hero Initiative, the comics charity of whose disbursement board he's a long-time member, for the former. Learn more about Hero Initiative on p. 57. [Luke Skywalker & Princess Leia TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]





### Trust The Force, Luke!

A fairly recent Luke Skywalker commission illustration, courtesy of artist Chaykin. It's a bit easier to find stills from the movie these days than it was in 1976! [Luke Skywalker & Darth Vader TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]

Lucas was a part owner of. They felt I was the right guy to do it. There was a lot of influence from my Cody Starbuck character on Han Solo.

**RA:** Yes, I remember thinking the same thing when I first saw the movie in 1977. Now, you inked the first issue solo, but after that you had either Steve Leialoha (#2-5) or Rick Hoberg and Bill Wray (#6, which concluded the original adaptation) as inkers. Was that because of a deadline problem?

**CHAYKIN:** I think it was hubris, more than anything else. In retrospect, and as I've said more than once, I don't think I did the best possible job that I could have. I did do the best job I was capable of at the time on the material but, in looking back, I wish I'd done better work. Frankly, Steve Leialoha saved my ass.



**RA:** Did you do your page breakdowns off the original screenplay?

**CHAYKIN:** I broke the screenplay down into six issues. Roy then wrote dialogue to accompany that material.

**RA:** The reason I asked was that there's a minor character in the comic who doesn't really appear in the movie.

**CHAYKIN:** You're talking about Biggs Darklighter. Well, that happens a lot. You know, stuff just disappears between green-lighting the script and actually filming.

**RA:** I noticed the same thing in the 1979 Alien adaptation by Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson. There's an interesting scene in the book that explains the fate of the captain which doesn't actually appear in the film.

**CHAYKIN:** Darklighter wasn't all that important a character, so



### Not A Biggs Deal

(Above:) This early all-Chaykin-art page from Marvel's *Star Wars* #1 (July 1977) illustrates a scene that was in the more or less final screenplay—but was eventually left on the cutting-room floor. Naturally, the artist and scripter/editor Roy Thomas (and Marvel Comics) got blamed by unsophisticated fans for “not being faithful to the movie”—even though that issue went on sale more than two months before the movie's world premiere! Thanks to MinuteMen-DarthScanner website—or is that counted as a blog?

(Left:) Garrick Hagon (on left) as Biggs Darklighter and Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, either in a scene set on Tatooine, or else conversing between shots. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]





### McQuarrie Magic

(Above:) The center spread of Jim Steranko's tabloid pop-culture magazine *Mediascene* #22 (Nov.-Dec. 1976) spotlighted Ralph McQuarrie's fantastic 1975 production sketch of Luke fighting Darth Vader, months before the film came out. The McQuarrie art was one of Howard Chaykin's most valuable artistic reference sources while he was drawing *Star Wars* #1-6. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]

dropping him from the film probably saved some time.

**RA:** How much production art or stills did you have before working on the book?

**CHAYKIN:** I had about 400 stills and all the Ralph McQuarrie paintings. The stills looked like stuff from Ikea. The McQuarrie paintings were inspirational. When I finally saw the movie, it was like the McQuarrie paintings. That's a demonstration of how good a job Lucas did in achieving his vision.

**RA:** Then did you experience any difficulty working from the resource material? Obviously the stills weren't a great deal of help to you.

**CHAYKIN:** You have to remember that, at that time, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford, and Mark Hamill weren't well-known faces. They were non-entities, visually. The stills were supposed to give me an idea of what they looked like. I did what I could with what I had to work with. You got what you could from the photos, but frequently I had no idea what these characters actually looked like from the stills I was provided. Darth Vader, in particular, was very unclear.



Peerless TOM PALMER

**RA:** I suppose that would be true. The way he moved and how he sounded when he talked was a major theme in the movie, but I have no idea how you would show that when your only knowledge of him is from a still photograph. They may have even been trying to keep his appearance somewhat of a secret before the movie debuted.



### The Palmer Raids

"Peerless Tom Palmer," says the cutline beneath the legendary inker's photo in the 1975 Marvel Con program book—and Howard C. (as well as Roy T.) would concur. Depicted above is the Chaykin/Palmer splash page from *Star Wars* #8 (Feb. 1978), with thanks to Paul King. Script by RT. Frank Springer had ably embellished issue #7. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]





### Look Homeward, Howard!

(Above:) A commissioned, black-&-white version of the first *Star Wars* poster that Chaykin painted in 1976, courtesy of the artist. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]

(Right:) Howard enjoying himself at the New York Comics Convention, Oct. 11, 2014—photo courtesy of Todd Klein.



### Alan Kupperberg

(Above:) Actually, it's three Kupperberg brothers and a then-new member of the clan in a pic from the '90s. (Left to right:) Paul K., himself a comics writer, and his young son Max, now twenty... Lewis K.... and Alan K., who notably drew runs of *The Invaders* and several other Marvel comics over the years.

**CHAYKIN:** It was Alan Kupperberg, not Paul—who is a writer, not a cartoonist. Alan helped me out with a few pages of rough layouts here and there for those numbers—not full issues, though, as I recollect.

Well, I have to wrap this up because we've got to get out of here. We're taking the grandkids to see the new *Star Wars* movie. It's not my choice, but the grandkids want to see it.

**RA:** You take care and I appreciate your time.

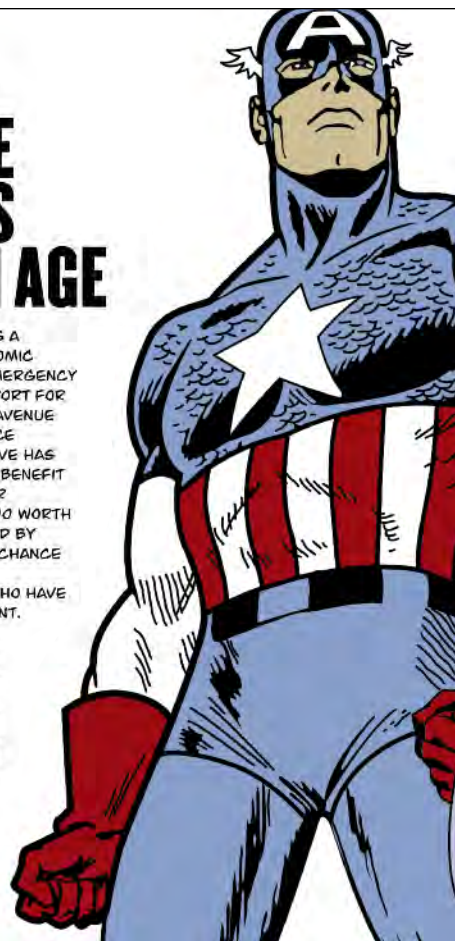
**CHAYKIN:** I appreciate your attention. Bye now!



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**CHAYKIN:** I don't know if that was the case.

**RA:** Did you have any input to have Rick Hoberg and Bill Wray ink the last issue of the adaptation?

**CHAYKIN:** None. You have to understand that I was simply a utility player. Nothing special. I didn't become anything of any value in the comic book business until I did *American Flagg!* in the early 1980s. In the 1970s I was just a chucklehead working.

**RA:** To be honest, I actually followed your work from book to book.

**CHAYKIN:** Thanks, but I wasn't anything special. I didn't get any good until I'd woodshedded for a couple of years and then came back on *Flagg!*. The art I did in the 1970s will haunt me for the rest of my life. So, please.

**RA:** Okay, I'll let it haunt you.

**CHAYKIN:** You're very kind.

**RA:** You did continue on the *Star Wars* book for four more issues after the adaptation was completed...

**CHAYKIN:** That was a terrible mistake, but I needed the work. Tom Palmer did most of the inking on those stories. Tom is one of the great guys.

**RA:** One thing that Roy wanted me to ask was Paul Kupperberg's claim to have ghosted the layouts for #7-10.



# RICK HOBERG On *Star Wars*

## From Finishing *Star Wars* #6—To A Career At Lucasfilm

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** Rick Hoberg's first big break in comics came with his cover art for the original adaptation of the *Star Wars* movie for Marvel Comics. Both before and after that, he assisted Russ Manning on the newspaper strips *Tarzan* and *Star Wars*. He's also worked for various comics companies on such titles as *The Invaders*, *Kull the Destroyer*, *Savage Sword of Conan*, *What If*, *Batman*, *The Brave and the Bold*, *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew!*, *Eternity Smith*, *Green Arrow*, *Green Lantern*, *Justice League*, *DNAGents*, and *New Gods*. He currently works on licensing merchandise for *Star Wars*. The interview was conducted by phone on January 21, 2016.

**RICHARD ARNDT:** How did you get involved with the *Star Wars* comic in the first place? You were drawing the covers before you did any of the interior artwork you did on #6.

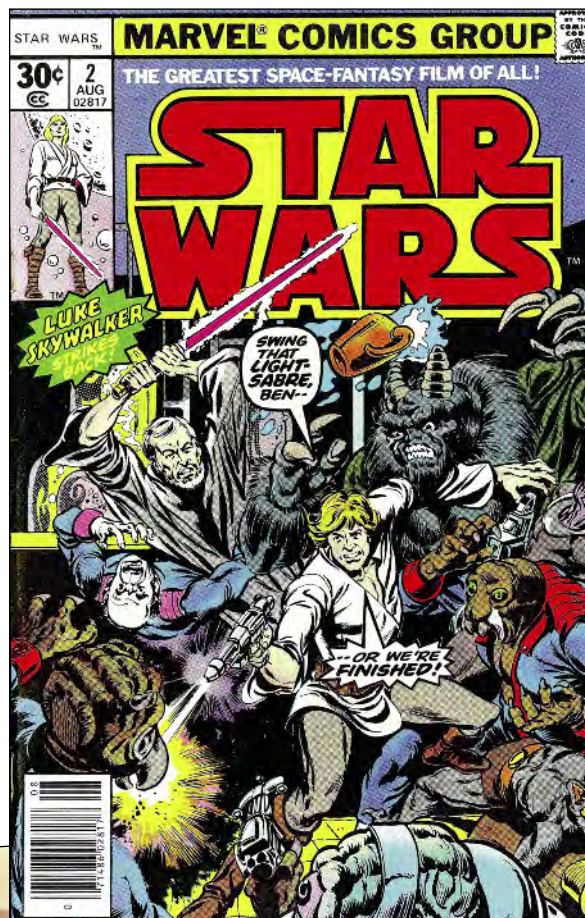
**RICK HOBERG:** In two words—Roy Thomas. Roy Thomas literally gave me my big break in comics by allowing me to work on *Star Wars*. What I understood from Roy was that he had a real interest in this property, as did I. I'd actually been following news of it for several years, as a fan, in the local media. The *L.A. Times* in particular, as that paper's Charles Champlin had been following George Lucas' career. I was enthralled with Lucas' first film—*THX 1138*—as well as *American Graffiti*. When I found out that Lucas was making this kind of a film, I was very excited. I was a huge fan of things like *Flash Gordon* and

*Buck Rogers*. I loved the science-fiction of the 1950s. What Lucas was doing seemed to fit in with those things.

Somewhere along the line I expressed this to Roy, and he very quickly gave me a tumble with #2, doing the cover. I'm not quite sure exactly why I got the nod. It may have had something to do with Roy wanting Chaykin to continue working on the interior and he wanted to get the covers out ahead of time. That's how Marvel used to work. You did the cover much ahead of the actual books. So I was doing the cover way ahead of the interior art that Chaykin was doing.

The covers reflected the fact that Roy was trying to do a more “Marvelly” approach to the story. I drew the covers for #2, 4, 5, and 6 of the adaptation, as well as #10 and the first two Treasury editions. For some reason, fans really like those two Treasury edition issues. Tom Palmer inked the covers of [regular issues] #2 and 6, Frank Giacoia inked #4, Dave Cockrum did #5 as well as the two Treasury editions, while Tony DeZuniga inked #10. I just got the *Artifact Edition* of the *Star Wars* issues from IDW, and I didn't realize until I saw that what a spectacular job Tom Palmer did inking #6's cover. The coloring, no offense to the colorist back then, was just terrible on the original printing and it didn't represent what a fine job Tom did on that issue. It's just beautiful.

On those covers, mind you, none of us at that point knew exactly what



**Rick Hoberg**

is seen on the left with wife Aleta, circa the late 1970s—the era when he had his first (but far from last) artistic assignment related to *Star Wars*: namely, penciling the cover of issue #2 (Aug. 1977), which was inked by Tom Palmer. As Rick surmises, he was tapped instead of Howard Chaykin so that the latter could plunge ahead with the interior penciling of #3. On right is a photo of Rick more recently, speaking at the San Diego Comic-Con. Thanks to Rick & Aleta for the first photo. [Cover TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]





# BILL WRAY On *Star Wars*

## The Inker Of The Film-Finale Issue Talks About Working In An Intergalactic War Zone

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** Bill Wray began his professional career at Marvel in 1976. He's worked for Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Mad magazine, and is currently drawing comics for publisher and fellow artist Ashley Wood. He's also contributed to the Ren and Stimpy cartoon show. This interview was conducted by phone on January 20, 2016.

**RICHARD ARNDT:** We're talking to artist Bill Wray about his work on the Marvel adaptation of the first *Star Wars* movie. Welcome, and thanks for agreeing to this interview. How did you get involved in inking the last issue of the *Star Wars* adaptation, working with Rick Hoberg? [NOTE: On *Star Wars* #6, Hoberg completed the penciling from Howard Chaykin's layouts and was the person given the inking assignment by editor Roy Thomas.]

**BILL WRAY:** I can't remember if Rick Hoberg and I met Roy Thomas at the same time or if Rick met him first and brought me in. What I do remember is that Rick and I were both trying to break into the business at the same time. We were involved with the same comic book club—I think it was called the West Coast Comics Club, run by a guy named Eugene Henderson. He's still involved in comics. For years he ran the Russ Manning Award presentation at Comic-Con.

Rick was the penciler and I was the inker. We did some samples together and ended up doing a few things for Marvel, mostly through Roy. *Star Wars* was the first big thing that we got. For one reason or another, Howard Chaykin had gotten behind on the deadline and we were given #6 as an issue to "ink," but the pencils we got from Howard were arguably not even layouts. There was only a week left before the deadline. Rick had to pencil the whole issue and I had to ink the whole thing.

One good benefit of that was that—see, we didn't get any references to work from. Either Howard didn't have any or he needed them for future issues or something. Maybe there simply wasn't time to get any references to us. We really had nothing to work with except for a few bits of pre-publicity art that had come



out in a couple of obscure film magazines.

**RA:** Would that have been the McQuarrie artwork?

**WRAY:** We may have seen some of that. Still, there was literally almost nothing out there at the time we needed to work on the comic. But somebody was kind enough to get us both to a screening of the movie.



Bill Wray

poses at left "for an Uncle Creepy sample drawing," to use his own phrase—while above is the fifth-from-last page of *Star Wars* #6, as rough-penciled by Howard Chaykin and inked/finished by Rick Hoberg, Bill Wray, and perhaps Dave Stevens. Script by RT. Thanks to Paul King. [Page TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.]



# The 1978 STAR WARS Adaptation

Notes by Lee Harsfeld

**A/E**

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:

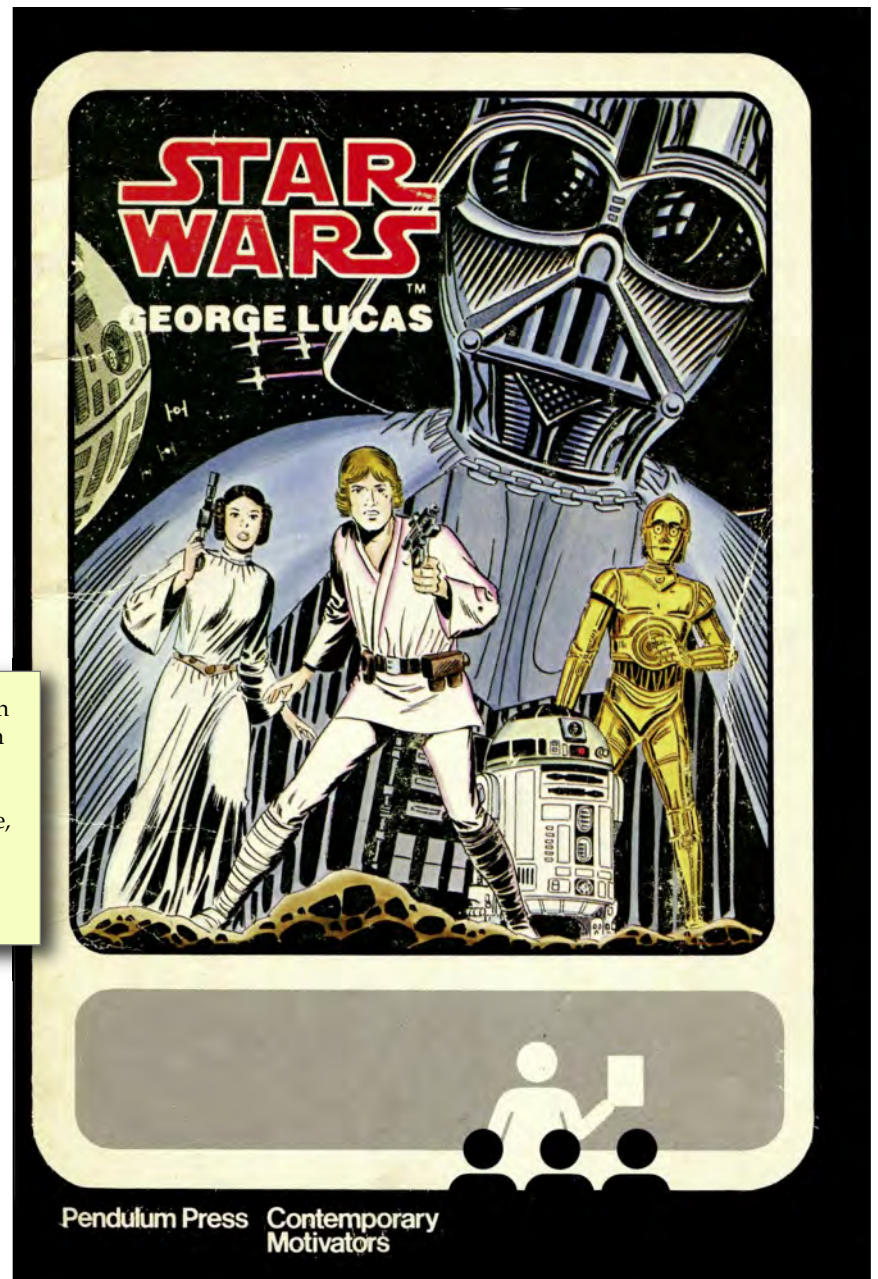
While this issue was in the early stages of preparation, Steven Rowe and Chet Cox forwarded to me an installment of the blog “Lee’s Comic Rack” that “reprinted” highlights from a 1978 adaptation of the film *Star Wars*; just a year after the one Howard Chaykin and I produced for Marvel. It was published by Pendulum Press, the same company that also issued a set of comics-style adaptations of various literary classics with art by artists such as Alex Nino. The illustrator of this greatly truncated (but well-done) version was comics veteran Charles Nicholas (presumed co-creator of *Blue Beetle*, among other things); the writer was one Linda A. Cadrain. But, rather than rephrase what Lee Harsfeld had written in his notes accompanying various panels from this later *Star Wars* adaptation, we got permission to reprint the piece just as it appeared on January 20, 2015, under the title “Charles Nicholas Stayed Busy after Charlton, Part 2.” All art & story are TM & © by Lucasfilm or its successors in interest—oh, and as you’ll very soon realize, the panels were not reprinted by Lee in the order in which the events occurred in the movie. Our thanks to Lee for the whole megillah! And now, we happily turn the narration over to him...

My copy of Pendulum Press’ *Star Wars* adaptation (Contemporary Motivators, 1978) must have been a big hit at Jefferson Middle School’s Reading Department in Meriden, Connecticut—the worn front and back covers attest to as much. Of course, for the following photo, I software-restored the front-cover border to something like its original state. I cheated, in other words.

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The Cover Of Pendulum Press’ *Star Wars* Comic





# COMICS

AND ALL THAT JAZZ!



Count Basie and  
"literature."

SWING  
BANDEADER  
COUNT BASIE LOVED  
GRUESOME HORROR  
COMICS! HERE WE SEE  
HIM PORING OVER A  
PARTICULARLY JUICY  
ISSUE. AND HE'S NOT  
THE ONLY MUSICAL  
GENIUS C-C-CRAAZY  
ABOUT COMICS!



(LEFT) COUNT BASIE FROM JET MAGAZINE (APRIL 22, 1954) -- AND (ABOVE) AS DEPICTED BY JIMMY THOMPSON (OF "ROBOTMAN" FAME!) IN JUKE BOX COMICS #3 (JULY 1948) FROM FAMOUS FUNNIES/ EASTERN COLOR. [© 2017 THE RESPECTIVE COPYRIGHT HOLDERS.]



# Comics And All That Jazz!

by Michael T. Gilbert

**W**hat do you get the man who has everything? Well, for Christmas of 2011 my inventive wife came up with the perfect solution. Since I'm always on the lookout for unusual comics-related material, Janet decided to scour the library and online archives for some four-color goodies. On Christmas day she presented me with a most unusual gift: articles connecting two indigenous American art forms, comic books and jazz... and some *swing* and *blues* tossed in for good measure! What's not to love? Here's a sampling...

## Count Basie

(Aug. 21, 1904 - April 26, 1984)

Let's start off our comic book Hit Parade with legendary bandleader William James "Count" Basie, an avowed hardcore horror comics addict! But, with the help of Dr. Wertham and similar "experts" as seen below, our boy seems to have gone "cold turkey." Confidentially, I'm betting he fished the comics out of the trash the second the photographer left!

Here are a few comic book quotes worth noting:

"Count Basie the bandleader, telephoning his wife, Catherine, at their St. Albans, L.I., home just before she left for Paris to join him on his current European tour: "Baby, bring me some comics books. I haven't got anything to read."

— *Jet*, April 22, 1954.



Basie Loved His "Shockers!"

(Left & below:) Two comics trashed by the Count: Harvey's *Chamber of Chills* #25 (Oct. 1954), drawn by Lee Elias; and Farrell's *Fantastic Comics* #10 (Nov. 1954), illustrated by the Iger Shop. [© the respective copyright holders.]



Count-down For A Jet

(Below:) Count Basie from *Jet* (Oct. 28, 1954). [© 2017 *Jet*.]



📰 **Horror Comics Fan Swears Off:** Giving up his favorite horror comic books in cooperation with a nation-wide drive against the bloodthirsty literature, bandleader Count Basie looks over his last batch before swearing off.





G.B. Love.  
(1939-2001)  
Courtesy of  
Robert Brown.

## Alter Ego's Multi-Part Tribute To G.B. Love & RBCC – Part 8

# EARL BLAIR, JR., Remembers G.B. Love & Houston Fandom

by Bill Schelly

**INTRODUCTION:** In order to run more photographs, and an excerpt from the article on G.B. Love's passing by James Van Hise from Comics Buyer's Guide, we divided my interview with Earl Blair, Jr., into two parts.

In the previous installment, we discussed the birth of Houston comics fandom (briefly), G.B.'s arrival there from Miami in 1974, his role as co-publisher of the fanzine *Trek*, and his part in putting on mini-cons and Houston Cons in the mid-1970s. Now, for the final part of our tribute to Love and his prominent place in 1960s-70s fandom, we focus on his involvement in putting on Star Trek conventions in Texas, his friendship with Earl Blair, Jr., and his untimely passing on January 17, 2001.

Special thanks for photographs to Earl Blair, Jr., Robert Brown, and Roy Bonario, and to Jim Van Hise for the excerpt from his article in Comics Buyer's Guide on Love's passing. This interview was transcribed by Brian K. Morris.

### G.B. Love On Horseback....?

**BILL SCHELLY:** G.B. didn't have any family or anybody in Houston, right?

**EARL BLAIR, JR.:** His mother and father lived in Galveston. They'd moved to Galveston from Miami. We'd go down there and see them occasionally. And in those days, you could rent horses. See, G.B. always loved cowboys and horses and all of that. And occasionally, G.B. and I would ride horses. We went to the beach a couple of times to see his parents, and we'd rent horses and go along the beach for a little bit just to let him ride. There was one old horse named Booger that was pretty well worn and was easy for G.B. to ride. I'd put him in the saddle, take a belt, and wrap it around the saddle horn to give him sort of like a safety belt on there, which is okay as long as the horse doesn't bolt and go crazy. That all ended one day when Booger took off! G.B. held on, and it looked like The Lone Ranger riding Silver! I mean, he was on it for all he was worth! And then the horse slammed on the brakes, and G.B. went over the saddle horn. He could have been hurt really bad, but fortunately, he wasn't. That was the last time you ever saw G.B. Love on horseback. [Bill laughs]

**BS:** You had some other business ventures with G.B., didn't you?

**BLAIR:** Yes, G.B. bought an interest in the company I worked for, which was United Films. We had the maritime division down here. That's what I did for a living. Crews on cargo ships and freighters and oil tankers used to while away the hours by watching



Earl Blair, Jr.  
Recent photo portrait, courtesy  
of (and © 2017 by) Earl Blair, Jr.



### "Keep 'Em Buying!"

(Above:) G.B. Love at a 1970s Houston Con. Courtesy of Roy Bonario.

(Right:) Houston fan Ray Jones with Earl's first wife Wilene, and G.B., at a mini-con in that Texas city sometime between 1974 and 1976. [Latter photo © Earl Blair, Jr.]





P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

# FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

#204  
Feb 2017



Art by Jay Piscopo.  
Shazam hero™ & © DC Comics.  
Other art © Jay Piscopo.



## by P.C. Hamerlinck

*Steamboat was the top African-American character in comic books by default during the war years, simply because he appeared in one of the industry's best-selling features, "Captain Marvel." While Steamboat didn't quite measure up to either Rochester or Ebony, at least the Fawcett*

