

ROY THOMAS' LEGION-LADEN
COMICS FANZINE

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Alter Ego™

LEGIONNAIRES!
GO BACK TO THE 1960s
AND ALTER THE FATE OF
COMICS BY FINDING
JIM SHOOTER!

\$8.95
In the USA



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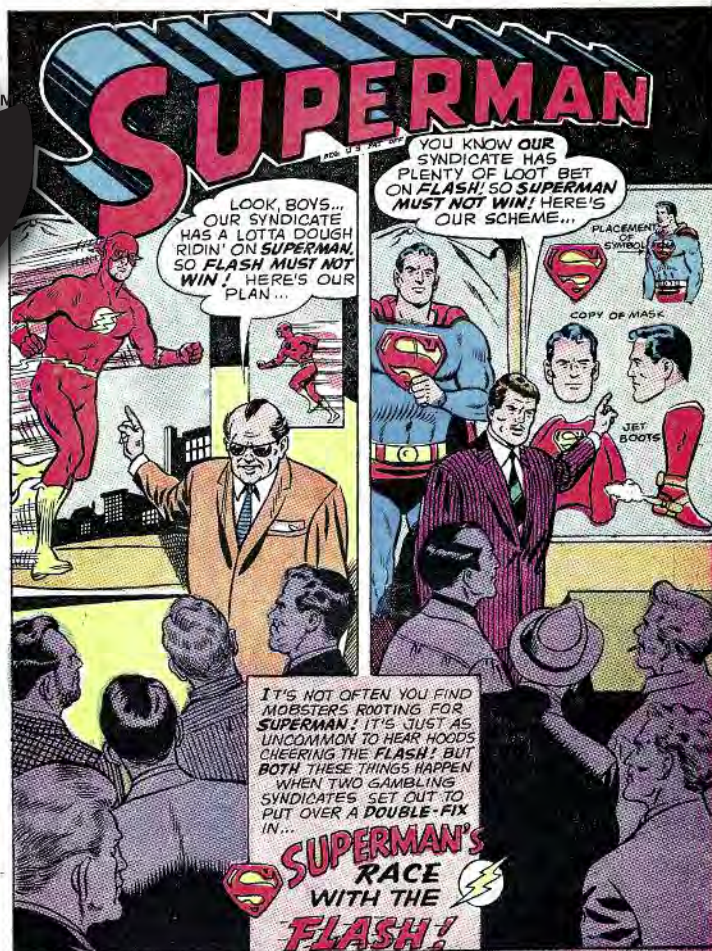
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P.C. Hamerlinck ushers in Gerald Edwards' take on Fawcett in the UK—1943-62!

On Our Cover: As it happened, the cover that accompanied one of **Jim Shooter's** earliest comics—and which is probably based on a cover sketch by the then-14-year-old writer of "Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes"—turned out to be the perfect image to accompany our unabashed interviewee's commentary on his early career, which began half a century ago. Pencils by **Curt Swan**; inks by **George Klein**. See the original printed cover of *Adventure Comics* #352 (Jan. 1967) on p. 30 of this issue. Thanks to Doug Martin; the photo of young Jim Shooter first appeared on the writer's blog. [Art TM & © DC Comics.]

Above: **Jim Shooter's** script for an early Superman-vs.-Flash race, in *Superman* #199 (Aug. 1967), brought gambling and organized crime into the mix for 24 pages. Art by **Curt Swan & George Klein**. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Herb Trimpe



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FIRST PRINTING.





“The Kid Who Wrote Comic Books” Speaks Out!

JIM SHOOTER On His First Decade In The Biz—And Then Some!

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: Jim Shooter was born in Pittsburgh in 1951 and saw his first story written for comic books appear in *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966), when he was just fourteen. For the next four years, he drew pencil layouts for every story, including covers, that he wrote for DC Comics. Those stories ranged from the adventures of “The Legion of Super-Heroes” to “Supergirl,” “Superman,” and “Jimmy Olsen,” spread over various titles. He left DC for a short stint at Marvel in 1969, then vanished from the mainstream comic scene for six years. He returned to write for both DC and Marvel in 1975 and became an associate editor at Marvel in 1976. In 1978 he became the editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics and continued in that job until 1987. In 1989, he attempted to actually purchase Marvel but was unsuccessful. In 1989, Shooter launched Valiant Comics, which

revived Dell/Gold Key titles such as *Magnus – Robot Fighter*, *Turok*, and *Doctor Solar*, as well as beginning new titles, including *The Eternal Warrior*, *X-O Manowar*, and the team of *Archer and Armstrong*. Shooter parted ways with Valiant in 1992 and launched *Defiant Comics* in 1993. *Defiant* lasted only a little more than a year. In 1995 Shooter launched yet another comic book company—*Broadway Comics*—but the company folded when it was sold to Golden Books. Since then, Shooter has worked periodically for *Acclaim Comics* (which was a renamed version of *Valiant Comics*), *Marvel Comics*, *DC Comics*, and *Dark Horse Comics*. He also writes a blog on his comic experiences and his views on modern day comics at www.jimshooter.com. This interview was conducted by phone on February 14, 2015.



I Was A Teenage “Superman” Writer

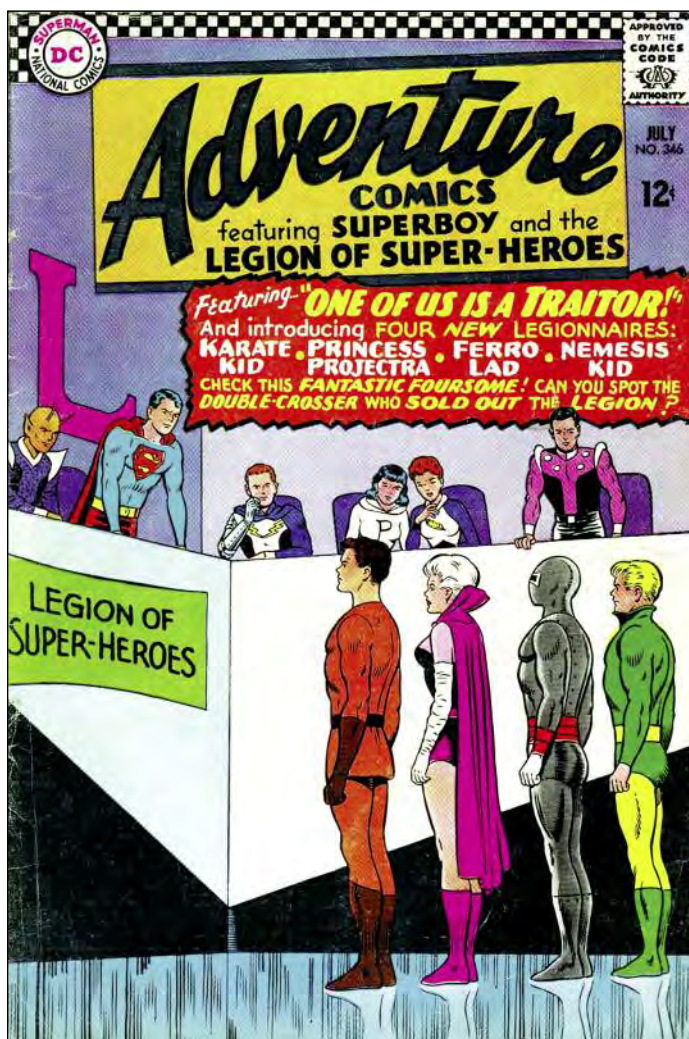
Jim Shooter (at top of page) as a teenager—and two prime products from those years: the “Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes” splash page of *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966)—and the lead splash from *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #110 (April '68). The former is the first story Jim ever sold, and was written in the summer of '65, when he was thirteen; the latter was produced as he neared the end of his first tenure as a DC Comics writer, which lasted into 1969. The first yarn was drawn by Sheldon Moldoff from Shooter's layouts; the second was penciled by Curt Swan and inked by George Klein. Thanks to Doug Martin. The photo came, originally, from Shooter's blog, although we picked it up from the Internet. [Pages TM & © DC Comics.]

"I Needed To Make Money For The Family"

RICHARD ARNDT: I know you're originally from Pittsburgh, but I don't know much more about your early life beyond that. Would you like to start with that?

JIM SHOOTER: Sure. I grew up in a suburb of Pittsburgh. I needed to make money for the family. I read comics when I was a little kid, but I grew bored with them when I was about eight. Then, when I was twelve, in 1963, I was in the hospital for a week and, back then, the kids' ward in hospitals had stacks of old comic books. When I was a kid, all kids read comics. It wasn't a little cult thing, like it is today. I discovered these new-fangled Marvel comics there. I got interested in those Marvel comics and started picking them up when I could.

In those days you could go collect glass pop bottles around the neighborhood and turn them in at stores and get two cents apiece for them. Comics were ten or twelve cents, so it only took five or six bottles to get a comic book. I was fascinated by those stories.



Off To A Flying Start!

The Curt Swan-penciled, George Klein-inked cover of *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966)—the issue in which Jim Shooter, in his first-published (or at least first-written) comic book story, introduced Karate Kid, Princess Projectra, Ferro Lad, and Nemesis Kid. Overseeing both comic and cover was veteran "Superman" line editor Mort Weisinger. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Then, the summer I was thirteen—somewhere in June 1965, or a little later, after school let out—I wrote and roughly laid out a comic book. I based my work on what I'd been reading recently—those Marvel comics. I knew I couldn't compete with Stan Lee, so I did the story using DC characters. Specifically, I did a "Legion of Super-Heroes" story. The "Legion" was appearing, at the time, in *Adventure Comics*. I tried to write the story like Stan Lee, though, because I thought that DC Comics were kind of boring. I thought that if I could write like Stan, I could sell this stuff to those guys at DC. Of course, when you're thirteen, they're not going to give you a job in a steel mill. If you need to make money, then you've got to make something and sell it. So I made a comic book. I was pretty sure I was going to sell it, so I sent it off to DC Comics.

I've had a conversation with Roy Thomas, who told me he'd started to work at DC for the guy who would turn out to be my editor—Mort Weisinger. He told me that Mort was going around the office showing off this comic that a kid sent in. Mort didn't know how old I was at first. So Mort wrote me a letter and told me that he thought my comic was pretty good, and he mentioned that he thought I could draw features for them someday, based on my layouts. He told me to send him another story, so I sent him a two-part story, which was kind of rare for DC at the time. I was taking a chance there. So I turned that in to him in September of that year, when I turned fourteen.



Curt Swan

"[Mort Weisinger] Wanted To Buy Those 'Legion' Stories"

On February 10, 1966, I got a call from Mort. He said he wanted to buy those "Legion" stories that I'd sent in, and that he wanted me to write a "Supergirl" story. He wanted twelve pages and he wanted it in a week. So I wrote a "Supergirl" story called "Brainiac's Blitz!" that appeared in *Action Comics* #339 [July 1966]. It was a back-up story, which was fairly common for titles in those days. Later that month, that first "Legion" story appeared in *Adventure Comics* #346. That issue also introduced four new Legionnaires—Ferro Lad, Nemesis Kid, Princess Projectra, and Karate Kid, which I created.

After that, I just became a regular writer at DC. Every time I finished a story, Mort wanted me to do another one. He bought them all. He saw problems in some of them. One thing he said to me was that "You need to learn to spell." Things like that. But basically I never had to do any rewrites or corrections. I became the regular scribe on "The Legion of Super-Heroes." It was about that time that he found out I was fourteen.

He told me, "I want you to fly up to New York and spend a few days here." I hemmed and hawed, and he asked me, "How old are you?" I said that I was fourteen. [laughs] He said, "Put your mother on the phone!" [mutual laughter] So I had to wait until school was over, early in June, and I had to bring my mother with me on my first business trip to New York, which was maybe a little weird.



George Klein

Probably from the 1940s or '50s. Courtesy of the DC Comics Database.



Mort Weisinger

Undated pic from the Mort Weisinger Photo File at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. Thanks to MW's daughter, Joyce Kaffel.

Four On The Floor

This trio of pages from *Adventure Comics* #346 introduced Princess Projectra, Nemesis Kid, Ferro Lad, and Karate Kid, all instantaneous Jim Shooter additions to the series officially titled "Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes." The Grand Comics Database credits scripter Jim also with "pencils"... with "inks" by Sheldon Moldoff. Since some of that data was confirmed by Shooter, this may indicate that editor Weisinger had Moldoff ink (though undoubtedly with some additional finish-penciling) directly over, or else "lightboxing," Jim's layouts, which JS probably hadn't intended to be used as actual artwork. Or, perhaps more likely, Moldoff merely used Jim's penciled layouts as a general guide.

(Far right:) 1960s fan Irene Vartanoff tells us that, in 1966, Weisinger sent her Jim's script/layouts for this story (which were done on 8½" by 11" paper) because of her letter reprinted on p. 7 of this A/E issue. It was recently returned to Jim, via former DC president (and "Legion" scripter) Paul Levitz. Irene is currently the author of the novels *Temporary Superheroine* and *Crisis at Comicon*, available on amazon.com.

(Too bad those breakdowns themselves probably no longer exist! And it would be interesting to see the pay records for that story, to see to what extent Moldoff was reimbursed for any penciling. Jim states that he received no extra money for his layouts.) Thanks to Jim Kealy & Doug Martin for the scans. [TM & © DC Comics.]



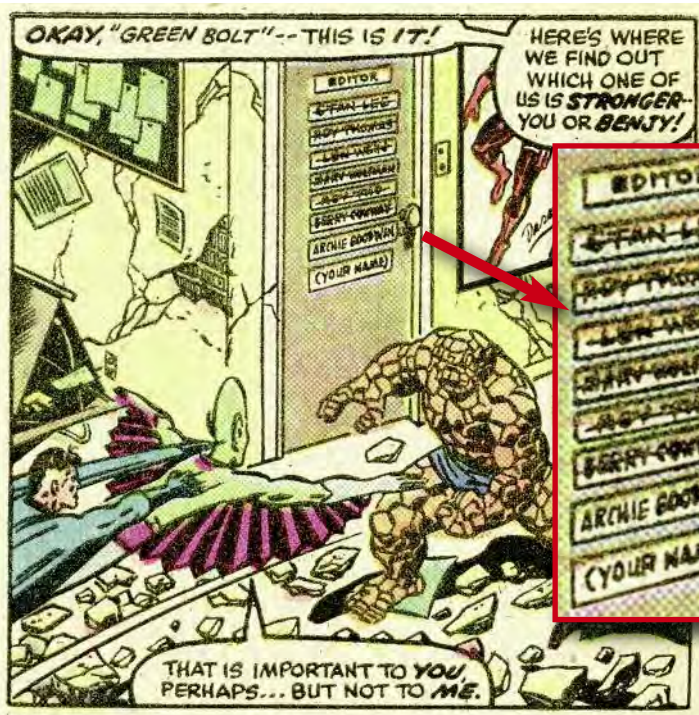
Sheldon Moldoff

In this early-1940s photo, the late artist is closer in time to the year (1965-66) when he inked *Adventure Comics* #346 than he is in the numerous pics taken of him at comics conventions in the 1990s and after. Photo sent to RT by "Shelly" circa 2000, for an interview in A/E, Vol. 3, #4.



Roy Thomas

at the Marvel Comics offices in late 1965 or early 1966. Courtesy of Flo Steinberg.



(JIM SHOOTER'S NAME HERE)

The so-called editorial "musical chairs" situation Jim Shooter mentions, which existed from 1974-'77 (or from 1972-'77, depending on how you're counting) led George Perez to pencil this panel when he and scripter Roy Thomas were producing the oft-reprinted *Fantastic Four* #176 (Nov. 1976), wherein The Impossible Man paid a flying visit to the actual Marvel Comics offices. The next name on the door, of course, would be that of Jim Shooter, at the start of '78. Inks by Joe Sinnott. Thanks to Barry Pearl.
[TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

chief of staff. The need that Marv had was so great that he hired me on a Thursday and he needed me to start work that following Monday. My first day at Marvel was the first working day in 1976.

I did that for a while. Needless to say, when there's anarchy and you try to establish order, the anarchists are not going to be too happy. I quickly became the Great Satan. I'd call writers and say, "Here's what I found here in this plot and let's talk about it. This can't take place because, for example, this guy's dead!" They'd be all mad at me. Some of them would swear at me and hang up. They'd tell me to fix it myself.

Mind you, in those days, everybody was paid by the page. Every hour you lost doing a re-do didn't get you any more money. You weren't getting paid for that extra work. A couple of guys, they would turn it in and if you didn't like it, go screw yourself. So I ended up doing a lot of fixing, which didn't help my popularity much. Some guys were great. Their scripts were clean as a whistle. Anything Archie Goodwin wrote was perfect. I was so very proud if I ever had reason to catch the tiniest little thing on Archie's scripts or plots. Same with Steve Gerber. Gerber's stuff was impeccable. With their scripts it was never anything more than little things, once in a while.

There were guys who were bulletproof and then there were guys who needed a little help. I understand that. You'd be writing three or four books a month. It was just like with Stan. You can get confused switching back and forth with the books. You lose track of something. I was the backstop. That went on for a couple of years.

At some point, Roy was actually going to come back as editor-

in-chief. Marv was only my boss for about three months. Then he left, as he put it. Marv is a great guy. I love him. The guy is an idea genius. His mind is like a machine-gun with ideas. But like a lot of writers, I don't think he was really interested with the administrative part of being an editor. He liked the creative side.

So he was followed by Gerry Conway. Gerry ended up firing guys like Steve Gerber, Don McGregor, and, I think, even Steve Englehart. He tried to keep Englehart, but there'd been some dispute and Englehart was not going to be told anything about anything. So Englehart went to DC. Gerry only lasted a few weeks, though.

Roy was supposed to come back in, I think after Marv left, but he changed his mind, and that's when they got Gerry. When Roy was still intending to return as editor-in-chief, he came into the office and was having meetings with several people. I sat down with him and told him that, when I worked in the advertising business, if a new boss came in, you offered your resignation in case he wanted to staff the place with his own people. You hope, as a result of that, that you'd get freelance work or whatever. But Roy said no, I was okay, and he'd keep me. But he changed his mind about coming back. I think he was planning to move to California or something like that. So that's when Marvel got Gerry.

After Gerry's very brief tenure, Archie Goodwin was hired as editor-in-chief. Roy had lasted about 2½ years as editor-in-chief. Len lasted eight months. Marv lasted a year. Gerry lasted three weeks, and Archie lasted nineteen months.

Everybody knew Archie was a creative genius. But it was soon apparent that he wasn't much of a businessman. He hated the administrative side of the editorial office. He had a superb work ethic. He'd spend all his time in his office, working on cover design. Doing all the creative stuff, which is what he wanted to do. Doing a budget or something like that, his eyes just glazed over. He hated stuff like that. So the way I got the job was that I continued on after Marv left, as Archie's assistant. That created a bit of conflict, because these writers were not cooperating, and I was having to shore up the bottom, as it were. You had to ignore what the best guys were doing because they weren't causing problems. It was simply impossible for one guy, or even two, to edit 45 titles a month, which Marvel was doing at the time.

So I was always having to deal with the worst. During the time I was associate editor, from 1976-1978, was also the time Stan stopped being a magazine publisher and came back to the comics. He'd been out of touch for a while with the day-to-day operations. When he got back, he started reading the make-readies. Do you know what a make-ready is?

"Guess Who Was #33?"

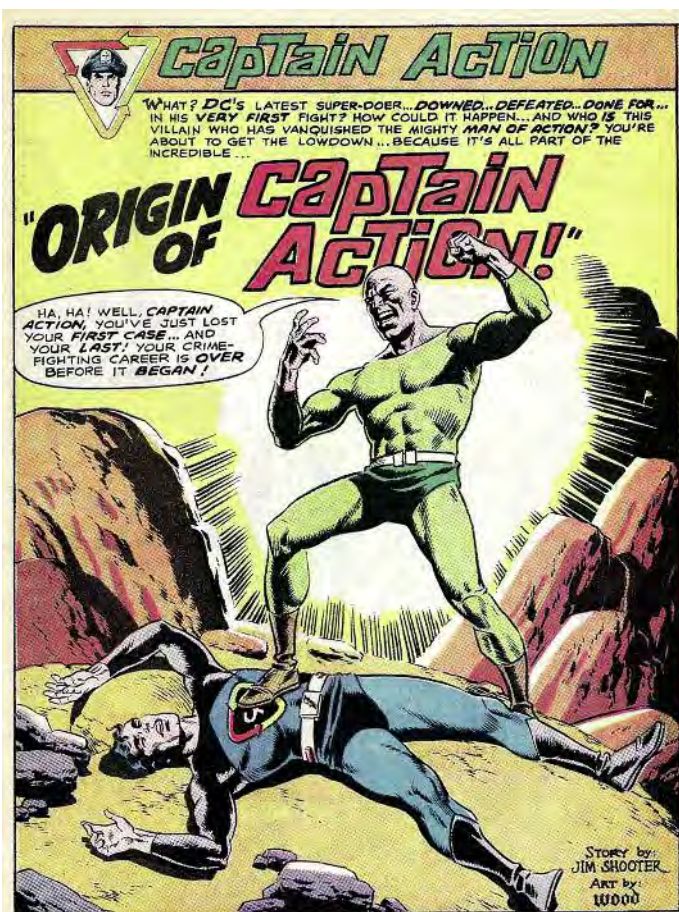
RA: *I have a vague idea, but go ahead and tell me anyways.*

SHOOTER: World Color Press, Marvel's printers, would send these rough-cut proofs, called make-readies, which were comic books without covers, page edges untrimmed. They were supposed to be basically proofs of the colored comic. But we were always so late sending in the books that, by the time we got back these proofs, there was no time for corrections because the book would be nearly on sale or actually on sale. But we'd still get these "advance" proofs from the printer. Stan started reading these make-readies and he started calling Archie into his office and saying, "Archie, look at what's happening on this page. How could you let this happen? It's so stupid, etc., etc." Archie, of course,

which was closest to the bullpen, and told them to give that office to Sol. It gave him a place, and Sol was really good at the Special Products materials.

The whole time I was there, I was in the tiny office until we moved to 387 Park, where it was all built out for us. There I had this enormous office with a couch that went on for seven or eight feet. Fancy stuff.

At Marvel, after being in the business since 1966, I could talk intelligently to the printer, to the colorist, the penciler, the inker—of course, none of them would admit that. I had a good background and I understood business. Up to that point, I was the only editor-in-chief that was ever taken out to a board meeting with Cadence Industries, Marvel's owners. One reason was that I dressed presentably. I didn't come into work in the sneakers and jeans. Second was that Jim Galton, the president of Marvel, who was also on the Cadence board, knew I wouldn't embarrass him. He knew I wouldn't say stupid things. I knew enough about the business, especially the financial part of the business, that I was both presentable and credible. I'm not guessing this. Galton *told* me this. But I'd been learning this stuff since my time with Mort. I had more editorial training than nearly everyone who'd come before me.



Lights—Camera—Captain Action!

Richard and Jim never quite got around to discussing the *Captain Action* comic he scripted in 1968 for DC Comics, which made a comic book hero out of a toy/action figure—and we couldn't take a chance on this interview ending without our giving you a delectable taste of it! The artist was the inestimable Wally Wood, who a few years earlier had drawn and even written *Daredevil* for Marvel. Seen above is the splash page of *CA* #1 (Oct.-Nov. '68). Thanks to Doug Martin. [© DC Comics; Captain Action TM the respective trademark holders.]

Since the early 1960s or maybe even the late 1950s, I can't name one person who was trained in everything you needed to do as an editor-in-chief. Even in those days, those guys who understood that part of the business were getting older. Comics hit their peak in 1951-1952, when Fawcett's *Captain Marvel* was selling two million copies a month. It hit a peak, and then the Kefauver Committee came about in 1954—the hearings about comics causing juvenile delinquency—plus all that stuff in *Seduction of the Innocent* by Wertham. When all that hit the fan, the comics went into decline. When comics are in decline, you don't have to develop new artists. There are a hundred unemployed ones just walking around the streets carrying their portfolios. It's easy to get someone to work for you.

You can count on one hand the significant figures who came into comics from 1955-1966. Buscema, perhaps. A few others. Not very many. So many guys left comics to do advertising because the jobs just weren't there. Or maybe they got tired of Mort, too.

"The Streets Were Awash With Unemployed Artists And Writers"

RA: After the Comics Code started, around 50% of the comic book companies went out of business.

SHOOTER: Exactly! The streets were awash with unemployed artists and writers. There was a fellow—I think his name was Alvin Schwartz. He used to write "Superman" in the 1940s and early 1950s. I met him when he was about a million years old. He ended up in Canada, working on industrial films or something like that. I met him at a convention one time. He told me he used to write "Superman" and I told him, "Me too." He asked who I worked for. I said Mort Weisinger. He said, "Me, too! He's why I quit comics!" I replied "Me, too!" [laughs] He said, "I like you!"

The point here is, in those years, there was no reason to develop new talent. But by the mid-1960s, enough of the writers and artists had died, retired, or found other employment that all of a sudden they needed people. This new wave came in. I can't put them in order, but among this new wave was Archie Goodwin, Denny O'Neil, Roy Thomas, me, Neal Adams, Cary Bates, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein....

RA: Mike Friedrich and Gary Friedrich (no relation to each other) came in around that time.

SHOOTER: Yeah, somewhere in there. So there's this large generation gap between old and new. When I started working, everyone was fifty years old or older. I was thirteen. Archie and Roy were older, but only by about ten years. Those guys were really the

bridge. Neal is also ten years older than me. Most of them were older than me, but not as much as the old-timers. I was a kid, and fairly suddenly all those old guys were dying or retiring and the kids are running the ship. Most of them hadn't had any training whatsoever. Roy, I think, was an exception because he worked with Stan for a few years. Although I don't think working with Stan gave you much preparation for business or production work.



Wally Wood

at a 1974 New York comics convention; the photo was printed in its 1975 program book.

All these guys, with very little to no training, were running the ship. In a lot of ways, they just didn't know what they were doing. Even with the best of intentions. Even though some of them were brilliant writers

The Many Facets Of DAN BARRY: The Latter Days Of *Flash Gordon* —And A Return To Comic Books

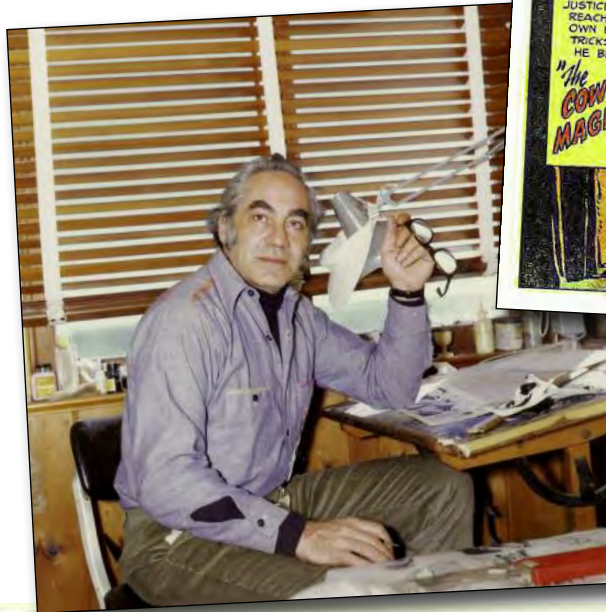
The Final Chapter Of Our Look At A Controversial Artistic Talent

by Alberto Becattini

A/E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Issues #130, 131, & 134 presented the first three parts of this artistic biography of Dan Barry (1923-1997).

Unless otherwise noted, all art and photos accompanying this article were provided by Alberto Becattini. In his day, Dan Barry was both a leading comic book illustrator and the long-running force behind the iconic *Flash Gordon* newspaper comic strip that had been created in 1934 by Alex Raymond. The earlier installments dealt with Barry's comic book career; his and King Features' 1951 re-launching of the daily *Flash Gordon* strip (dormant for seven years since Mac Raboy's death); and Barry's first three decades of work on it, often with the help of a revolving door of friends and hired scripters and artists, with many of whom he had an often difficult relationship, including important artistic collaborator Bob Fujitani. In early 1978, Barry hired comic book artist Rich Buckler to ghost the daily strip, while he and Fujitani moved toward a parting of the ways after Barry unilaterally altered the financial terms under which they were co-creating a poster for the early-'80s *Flash Gordon* film produced by Dino DeLaurentiis. Fujitani kept drawing the strip for a time, despite their estrangement....



Four Decades Of Dan

Dan Barry in Connecticut, early 1970s—flanked by a primo example of his early comic book work (a "Vigilante" splash for *Action Comics* #145, June 1950) and the *Flash Gordon* comic strip daily for April 11, 1977, drawn by Barry and Bob Fujitani (reproduced from a scan of the original art). The photo is courtesy of Fujitani and Shaun Clancy, via Alberto Becattini. ["Vigilante" splash TM & © DC Comics; *Flash Gordon* strip TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]



Flash Gordon Cartoonist May Draw in Jail

The "Flash Gordon" comic strip may originate from jail for the next year. Daniel Barry, a cartoonist who creates the strip, was sentenced to a year in jail and fined \$10,000 for willfully failing to file a federal income tax return. Barry, a former Connecticut resident who now lives in Florida, was sentenced in Bridgeport, Conn. He failed to file for the years 1975-1978, when his income was estimated to be more than \$200,000.

A Taxing Problem

Early 1982 newspaper item about Dan Barry's bout with the Internal Revenue Service. [© the respective copyright holders.]

There, Barry continued writing his outlines for the *Flash Gordon* comic strip, made quite a few friends—lawyers, bankers, embezzlers—and got a wonderful tan as he spent a good deal of the time as the greens keeper of the golf course.

Barry came out of jail early in 1983 and immediately went back to the drawing board. Besides scripting the *Flash Gordon* dailies, he was now writing and drawing the Sunday page, which took Flash and friends on an expedition to Mongo's twin planet Kkorbu, a world ruled by women whose queen, Matara, got married to Zarkov. It was around this time that Dan met Carolyn Hayes, who would later thus recall her brief yet intense relationship with him:

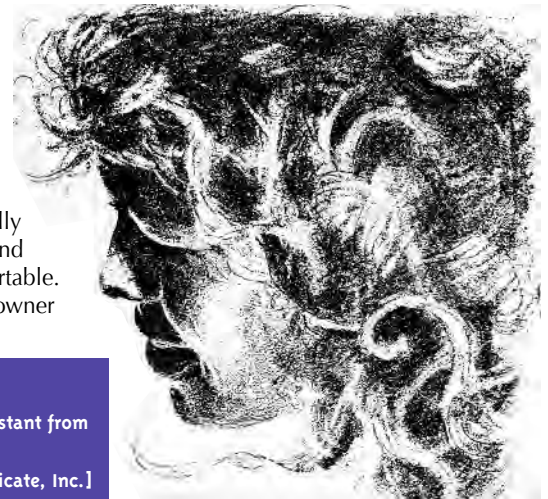
Barry Behind Bars—And Back To The Drawing Board

From Connecticut, Barry moved to Sarasota, Florida, where he married Martha Subers Hetrick on June 21, 1981. Even this fourth marriage would end up in a divorce. Early in 1982, Barry got a call from the IRS. The artist had "forgotten" to pay income tax for four years, not filing returns during 1975-1978, when his income was estimated to be more than \$200,000. Eventually, only the fourth count was considered, but he was fined \$10,000 and sentenced to a year in jail for income tax evasion. He was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, which was considered a country-club jail.

Dan Barry... I never lived with him. I spent a week with him at his home in Sarasota, Florida. The rest of the time I saw him was here in Sautee, Georgia. The year was 1983. I met him in May. He had come to this area to visit mutual friends. We became lovers. By the end of the summer, early fall, the relationship was over. Dan was 20 years older than me. He was a handsome man, intelligent, and to me, exotic. I was intrigued by the stories of his childhood in New York.... Dan had very strong opinions. I soon learned that everything in the end was about him, and that he was a very bitter person. The short time I spent with Dan was not bad, but I just knew he was not the person I wanted to have involved in the process of raising my son.²²

That was also the time when Barry gave up painting to devote all of his time to the *Flash Gordon* Sunday page. His artwork was as fresh as ever. The lettering was now being done by Gail Beckett, whom Barry had met while spending a holiday in Georgia. Beckett recalled:

I had been doing some painting and carpentry at the Stoval House, a lovely bed & breakfast in Sautee Valley near Helen, Georgia. One Saturday I noticed there was a picnic and musical event in the yard of the Presbyterian Church I often attended about a quarter-mile away. One white-haired man really caught my eye, because he looked really out of place and very uncomfortable. Later on, the owner



Beckett & Barry

(Right:) Gail Beckett self-portrait, circa 1970. Born in 1942 in Staten Island, NY, Beckett was Barry's assistant from 1983-97. [© 2015 Gail Beckett.]

(Below:) "Don" [sic] Barry's *Flash Gordon* Sunday page for March 27, 1983. [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

FLASH GORDON





EVERY CARTOONIST HAS TO START **SOMEWHERE!** JAUNTY JIM STERANKO BEGAN HIS COMICS CAREER PENCILLING CHEESY CHARLTON LOVE STORIES FOR VINNIE COLLETTA IN THE LATE '50S. UNDERGROUND COMIX GENIUS BOB CRUMB PAID HIS DUES DRAWING NOVELTY CARDS FOR AMERICAN GREETINGS.

AND MY BOSS, MICHAEL T. ? WHY, HIS VERY FIRST COMIC BOOK STORY WAS SOMETHING CALLED...

IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE!



"...In the Interests of Science"

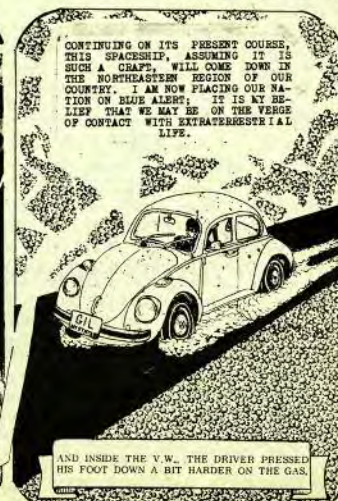
© 1971 Michael Gilbert

PROLOGUE

THE WIND HOWLED ON PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, AND, INSIDE THE OBSERVATORY, MENCURSED, A DISCOVERY HAD JUST BEEN CONFIRMED AS THE WIND WAILED ITS DISAPPROVAL.



THE DIRECTOR OF HUGE, IMPRESSIVE PALOMAR OBSERVATORY WAS A FIDGETY MAN WHO LOST NO TIME IN DIALING A SPECIAL NUMBER.



Story begins next installment...

Artist-Michael Gilbert Writer- Harvey Sobel

"Tricky Dick" Nixon made a cameo in the very first episode of *In the Interests of Science!* on December 1, 1970. It was all uphill from there!

[© 2015 Harvey Sobel & Michael T. Gilbert.]

"In The Interests Of Science!"

by Michael T. Gilbert

Previously, "The Crypt" spotlighted my "lost" late-'70s Berkeley Barb comic strip, *Inkspots*. At the time I stated that it was my first attempt at a newspaper strip. But that's not quite true.

My very first strip—and indeed my very first completed comic story—was one I drew shortly after graduating high school. A few months earlier, I'd met a fellow Commack High student at a gathering at my old girlfriend's house. Harvey Sobel was a couple of years younger, but the two of us were rabid comic fans and quickly hit it off. A few months later, he called and asked if I'd be interested in illustrating a sci-fi comic strip he'd come up with called *In the Interests of Science*.

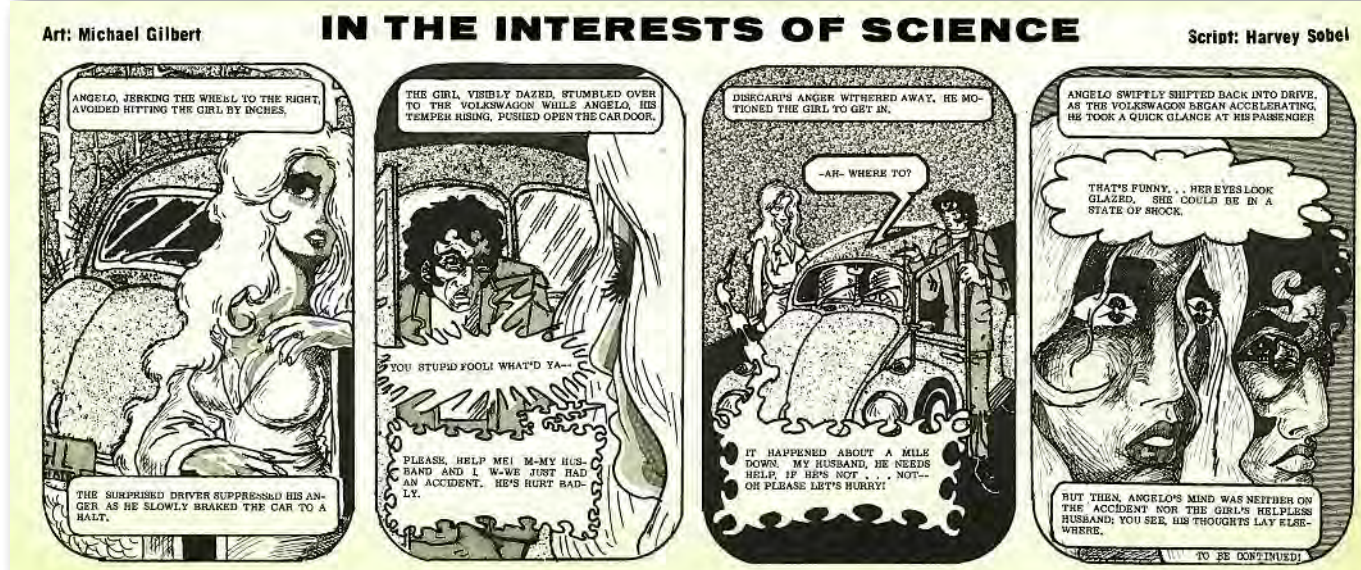
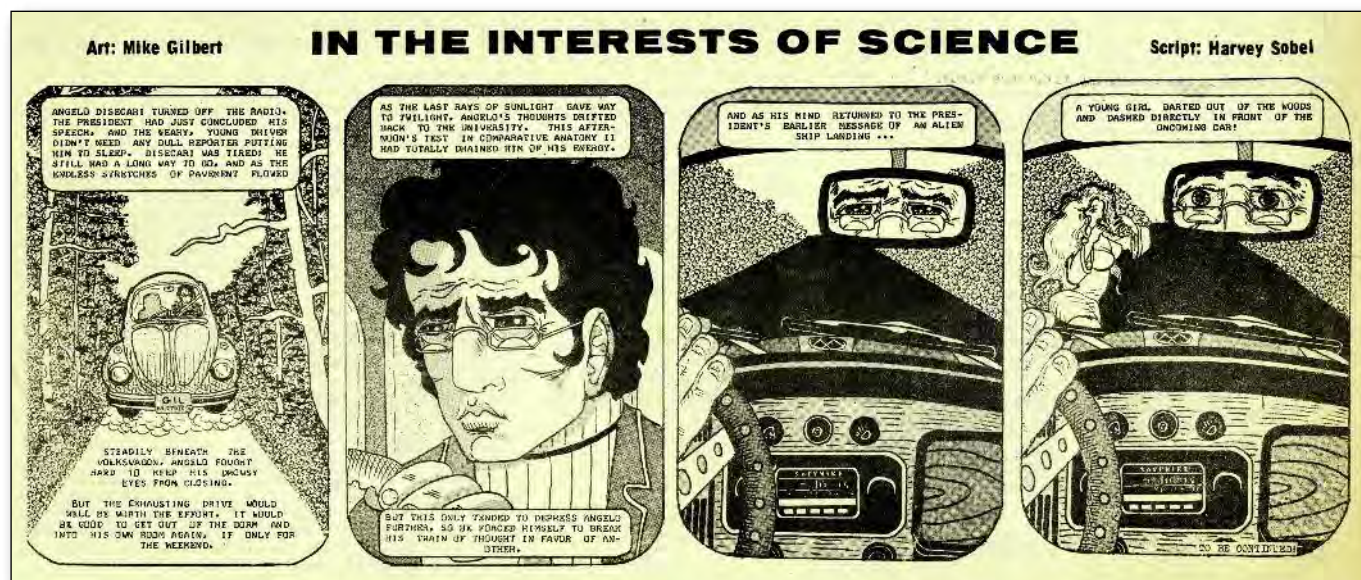
Earlier, I'd attempted a couple of comic book stories, but my

ambitions outstripped my abilities and I'd given up after a page or two. But this was different. Harvey planned to offer the strip to our high school paper, *Varohi*. The paper came out monthly, which meant I only had to do one daily strip every 30 days. Even at my snail's pace, that sounded quite doable.

I was still living on Long Island with my parents while commuting to nearby Suffolk Community College, which made it easy for Harvey and me to collaborate. We also stayed in touch after I transferred to SUNY New Paltz (in upstate New York) a couple of years later.

I hated lettering, so Harvey typed out the balloons and captions for me to cut and paste. With a month to draw four or five panels, you'd think it would be a snap getting the strips in on time. But college classes kept me busy, and I invariably found myself rushing to make my deadlines. The story of my life!

But it was a great training ground, and the single-strip format gave me the opportunity to experiment with a variety of layouts and art techniques. At age nineteen, my drawing skills were nothing to write home about, but my storytelling was solid enough, thanks to years studying Eisner and Ditko.





Two Heartfelt Tributes To HERB TRIMPE, Artist

I. The Accomplished Herb: A Remembrance HERB TRIMPE (1939-2015)

by Jon B. Cooke

By the time I was in my teens, I'd seen a fair share of famous people. I had viewed the Queen of England visiting the Smithsonian Institution, watched President Richard Nixon zoom through Dublin in a motorcade, and shaken hands with Dr. Benjamin Spock at an anti-war fundraiser. But, go figure, all of those encounters pale beside my experience when, while walking along in New York's Central Park, "Happy Herbie" Trimpe brushed by my brother and me while he was out taking a run. The Marvel Comics contributor, whom Stan Lee dubbed the Bullpen's "smilin' sunbeam," was tall, dark, and handsome, no doubt about that, but what impressed Andy and me the most was that this was the incredible Herb-freakin'-Trimpe, stalwart artist on *The Incredible Hulk*, whose work had given us so much joy and who had proven, at the 1973 Comic Art Convention we were attending at the time, an all-around nice guy, always ready with a smile and warm greeting for his fans.

Years later, Herb would confirm with an embarrassed chuckle that he did indeed take regular jogs through the park, and Roy Thomas recently remarked in this magazine that his dashing figure would be "mistaken for Alan Alda when he went running in Central Park, during the heyday of *M*A*S*H* on TV. (At least one guy yelled out to him, 'Hey, Hawkeye!' And they weren't talking about an archer.)" If you had the pleasure of ever meeting Herb—and especially of becoming a friend—you'd agree that Heaven bestowed not only artistic talent on the late comics creator, but also that indefinable gift of charisma.

Robin Green, who had replaced "Fabulous Flo" Steinberg at the House of Ideas and would go on to fame as a writer on *Northern Exposure* and *The Sopranos*, discussed his sex appeal in her 1971 *Rolling Stone* feature about Marvel: "I had lunch with Herb, and it was good to talk to him. He'd been my favorite Bullpen artist, not just because I dug the way he drew the Hulk, but because he was so nice to look at. He's incredibly handsome, tall, and wiry with deep-set eyes and black hair. He looks like a super-hero, like the Phantom Eagle, or a good-looking Hulk. Or maybe the Hulk looks like an angry, ugly him."

Obituaries about the artist, who passed away suddenly on April 13, at age 75, all invariably mention in the lead the fact he was the first to draw Wolverine in a story, sometimes mentioning that Trimpe years ago *gave away* the page of *Incredible Hulk* #180 that featured the mutant's very first appearance (a page that fetched over \$650,000 in auction for a fan named Ben, who, it must be said, donated a sizable chunk of the proceeds of that sale to Hero



Two Tall, Two Dark, One Handsome...

(Top left:) An undated snapshot of the "tall, dark, and handsome" Herb Trimpe, shared by his second-oldest daughter Amelia, via Jon B. Cooke.

(Above:) A detail from Trimpe's back-cover art for the "Hulk on the Rampage" issue of *Marvel Treasury Edition* (#5, 1975), depicting Dr. David Bruce Banner in various stages of metamorphosis changing into Ol' Greenskin. Thanks to JBC. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Initiative, as well as giving a chunk of the remainder to the artist, in gratitude for his generosity to a kid). But, most of all, they describe the freelancer's long association with a certain green-skinned goliath, a character he drew for nearly eight years. In the fourth volume of the *Marvel Masterworks: Incredible Hulk* collection, Trimpe wrote, "Me being a textbook Gemini, the Hulk and I suited each other very well. People have commented on this, and I reluctantly admit that there were times when I related very closely to the Hulk's dual personality."

Trimpe's second daughter, Amelia, shares: "Herb was a fantastically complex man." And that is certainly true. The guy was

Survivors Of The First Comicon

Fans "Who Were There" Appear On Panel To Celebrate 50th Anniversary Of The First-Ever Comics Convention

The Panelists: BERNIE BUBNIS, LEN WEIN, ETHAN ROBERTS, HOWARD ROGOFKY, ART TRIPP, FLO STEINBERG, and RICK BIERMAN

Introduction by Bill Schelly

On July 27, 1964, comic fans from the New York and New England area—as well as a number of fans from states to the west, such as California—gathered at the Workmen's Circle Building in Manhattan for what is generally considered the first comic book convention. The Comic Fandom Archive presented a special feature describing the event in detail in *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #7 (Winter 2001). "The 1964 New York Comicon—Two Views" consisted of an article by Ethan Roberts, who was part of the organizing effort, and a discussion of Bernie Bubnis's 1964 Comicon Souvenir Booklet by Yours Truly. (A few copies of that issue are still available at www.twomorrow.com.) This panel transcript serves as a perfect adjunct to that original piece, and to the

guest column by Bernie Bubnis that appeared in A/E #118 (July 2013).

The "Survivors of the First Comicon" panel was organized by Ethan Roberts, who chaired it and taped it for posterity. The panelists were Ethan himself, Bernie Bubnis, Len Wein, Howard Rogofsky, Art Tripp, Flo Steinberg, and Rick Bierman. As you'll discover, due to certain technical deficiencies of the recording and to some panelists' tendencies to ramble, the discussion in places is a bit difficult to follow. However, the CFA is dedicated to presenting such important historical moments, whatever their vagaries—and with a minimum of editing. In that spirit, we present the following piece, transcribed by Brian K. Morris.

First, however: I asked Ethan to write a brief piece describing how the panel came about....



On The Button

(Clockwise images, from above left, of the "Survivors" panel members, around the Comicon 1964 button designed by Art Tripp:) Group shot of most of the panelists. (Standing, left to right:) Bernie Bubnis, Art Tripp, Rick Bierman, Ethan Roberts. (Seated:) Len Wein. Howard Rogofsky; photo courtesy of Aaron Caplan. Flo Steinberg (with the afore-seen Bernie Bubnis); photo taken by Bernie's wife Lucille.

Putting On The "Survivors Of The First Comicon" Panel

By Ethan Roberts

Fifty years is a long time. The first comicon, held July 27, 1964, with 44 attendees, has now been superseded by events with over 100,000 individuals. In 2012 it looked to me as if no one was paying attention to the con's upcoming anniversary. Public memory is short. Most comic book enthusiasts weren't alive for the first comicon. Comicon focus had shifted from Manhattan to San Diego.

I thought the 50th anniversary should be commemorated. So I decided to do something. For me, San Diego could not be the proper place anyway. San Diego celebrates its own milestones, but not those of other comicons. It had to be Manhattan.

For two years, I tried to interest ReedPop, sponsors of the New York Comicon (the largest NYC comicon) to host a celebration. I got no commitment. In early 2014 I tried again. A young female representative of ReedPop was favorably disposed to the idea. With that encouragement, I tried to invite survivors of the first con to the celebration. I attempted to find attendees in several ways. I contacted Roy Thomas and Bill Schelly. I put announcements with attendee names on the CFA-APA and comicon-I websites. I went on "white pages" computer sites to look for NYC area residents with rare names. There were too many Howard Levines or Thomas Wilsons to find the right ones. I checked names by age (64-70) to determine possibility and sent them letters. I was able to contact the panel

members plus Joe Azzato, Paul Gambaccini, Steve Keisman, Phil Liebfred, George R.R. Martin, Carole Seuling, Paul Vizcarrondo, Rick Weingroff, Malcolm Willits, and Andrew and Patricia Yanchus. Some did not want to come. Some could not



Members Remembered

(Above:) Dr. Jerry Bails, fandom founder who first got the ball rolling for the 1964 comicon—by appointing fan George Pacinda to organize it. 1960 photo.

(Right:) Roster of the "members" of the 1964 New York Comicon, as published in the comicon booklet published by Bernie Bubnis after the event. Ethan writes: "The list is not completely accurate. Jerry [Bails] did not make it to the First Con. I found out later than Pat Yanchus was there but not listed...." Unfortunately, due to policies of the New York Comic Con, Ethan found himself unable to get

Andy and Pat Yanchus, or Carole Seuling and her daughter, free tickets to attend the panel, even though they had attended the con in 1964. Oh, and incidentally, despite Ethan's addressing him tentatively at the start of the panel, Paul Gambaccini, who has been a major presence on BBC-Radio for decades, was not at the con, though he had hoped to attend and Ethan thought perhaps he had showed up at the last moment.

come (illness, funding, other commitments). Some wanted to, as you will see.

Complications arose. I found out on June 14, 2014, that a panel spot was not assured. I had to apply for one, which I did. Our spot was confirmed on August 23, 2014. Unfortunately, tickets to the con began selling earlier in August, without my knowledge. By the time I learned about the situation, tickets were only available through ticket brokers. Prices were \$100 a day rather than \$35. I could only get five free tickets for panel members. Some survivors could not afford to buy tickets at \$100 and didn't come. I wish more could have attended. I think the panel was a success, but it would have been better had more survivors been able to attend.

And Now—The Transcript:

ETHAN ROBERTS: If there are any other survivors who are in the audience or weren't formally on the panel... I've been looking for Len Wein. He's still to show up. Paul Gambaccini... anyone else who was at that first convention, we have a couple of extra chairs. You're welcome to come up and sit. [pause] Folks, it's closing in on time. We have a couple of panelists who haven't made it, but we're going to get started. This is the "Survivors of the First Comicon" panel. [audience cheers] We are here. We are all slightly older than we were on July 27th, 1964.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: You need to be louder.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE 1964 NEW YORK COMICON

George Martin, 35 E. 14th St., Bayonne, N.J.
 Andrew Yanchus, 69 Hudson Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Jerry Bails, 22529 Karen Court, Warren, Michigan
 Paul Gambaccini, 8 Elizabeth Dr., Westport, Conn.
 Len Berman, 123 Gifford Ave., Jersey City 2, N.J.
 Carter de Paul, 375 E. Graton Parkway, E. Orange, N.J.
 Bernie Velleman, 4105 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, N.Y.
 Anthony Fibbie, 124 Gotling Place, Brooklyn 9, New York
 Margie Gemignani, P.O. Box 9432, Midtown Plaza Station, Rochester, N.Y.
 Phil Librero, 25-12 46 Street, Long Island City 3, N.Y.
 Don Schank, 7 Glendale Drive, Freshfield, N.Y.
 Phil Liebfred, 105 Parkway Road, Bronxville, N.Y.
 William Chapp, Jr., 58 E. 206 St., N.Y.C.
 Phil Seuling (Doug Berman) 2881 W. 12 St., Brooklyn 24, N.Y.
 Don Foote, 703 South Perry St., Johnstown, N.Y.
 Claude Held, 1152 Kensington Ave., Buffalo 15, N.Y.
 Thomas Wilson, 625 Euclid St., Santa Monica, Calif.
 Rick Weingroff, 3231 Southgreen Road, Baltimore, Maryland
 Ethan Roberts, 226-20 68th Ave., Queens Village, N.Y.
 Bill Mitchell, 3622 55th Ave., Elmhurst 73, N.Y.
 Dave Ealer, P.O. Box 392, Cooper Station, N.Y.C.
 Paul Vizcarrondo, 2521 Burro Lane, E. Meadow, N.Y.
 Rick Berman, 552 Wagstaff Dr., E. Meadow, N.Y.
 Joe Azzato, 135 Cole Dr., E. Meadow, N.Y.
 Dave Bibby, 40 Hillside Ave., Verona, N.J.
 Alex Almaraz, 4528 South Pauline St., Chicago 9, Ill.
 Fred Landerman, 87-21 160 St., Jamaica, N.Y.
 Art Tripp, 6 Grand Boulevard, Wyndanch, Long Island
 Al Russell, 6832 Felt Ave., Baltimore, Maryland
 George Kopp, 10 Pillet Place, W. Orange, N.J.
 Phil Ressegini, 1563 68 St., Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Steve Keisman, 1165 Gerard Ave., Bronx 52, N.Y.
 Steve Griffin, 1972 Harris Gate, Seaford, New York
 Marc Madel, 512 Westminister Road, Brooklyn, New York
 Peter Tulp, 235 Hartshorn Drive, Short Hills, N.J.
 Thomas Chung, 217 E. 27 Street, N.Y.C.
 Karl Gutauski, no address listed
 Howard Rogofsky, 246-87 135 Rd., Rosedale, N.Y.
 Malcolm Willits, P.O. Box 35242, Santa Western Stat., Los Angeles, Calif.
 Bill Thilling, Box 352, Station D, Cleveland 27, Ohio
 also in attendance were Dick Lupoff and Howard Levine both from N.Y.

These are the people who made it all possible—the gang that helped me every inch of the way with their support. I know they'll all be back again next year for another fling and I hope each one brings a friend. I am almost positive that next year's attendance figures will be more than double those listed above. More people are now aware that the con was not a joke, but a serious excursion into the organized realms of comic book fandom. My best wishes go to all those who joined the con and I hope to see you all again next year for the '65 NYCON!

P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

#196

January 2016

Art by Jay Piscopo.
Shazam Heroes™ & © DC Comics.


**KEEP
CALM
AND
READ
FAWCETT**



R

Britain's Fawcetts— L. Miller Style!

Captain Marvel & Co. In The UK—1943 To 1962

by Gerald Edwards

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

British publisher L. Miller & Son, Ltd., used their country's ban on importing printed matter to their full benefit (and to the satisfaction of UK comics fans) by producing hundreds of British editions of American comic books for 23 years—predominantly comics that had originally been published in the United States by Fawcett Publications... an association which eventually led to the 1954 creation of their Captain Marvel byproduct known as Marvelman. (The full story of Miller's hybrid hero was told in *Alter Ego* #87, July 2009.)

Established in 1943, Leonard Miller and his son Arnold signed a licensing agreement with Fawcett Publications two years later and launched their line of Fawcett black-&-white reprint comics with their own versions of Captain Marvel Adventures, Whiz Comics, The Marvel Family, and Captain Marvel Jr. L. Miller also went on to publish other Fawcett-originated books over the years (most with patchy frequency), including: Gift Comics, Master Comics, Wow Comics, Mary Marvel (1 issue), Spy Smasher, Bulletman, Captain Midnight, Ibis the Invincible, Lance O'Casey, Nyoka the Jungle Girl, Captain Video, Don Winslow of the Navy, Fawcett's Funny Animals, Slam-Bang, Puppertoons, Battle Stories, Soldier Comics, Life Story, Romantic Story, Romantic Secrets, Bob Swift, Mike Barnett, Motion Picture Comics, Fawcett Movie Comic, and numerous Western titles: Golden Arrow, Rod Cameron, Hopalong Cassidy, Bill Boyd, Ken Maynard, Bob Colt, Bob Steele, Lash Larue, Rocky Lane, Tom Mix, Tex Ritter, Monte Hale, Young Eagle, Western Hero, Six-Gun Heroes, Smiley Burnette, and Gabby Hayes. In their heyday, some titles were even bestowed with deluxe hardcover annuals.

By the late '50s, the Fawcett super-heroes were long gone, and Miller had dropped all their cowboy books. Even their very own Marvelman had shouted "Kimota!" one last time in 1963, after a prodigious 9-year run. L. Miller held on for a few more years, publishing pre-Code horror/mystery comics before shutting their doors for good in 1966.

Great Britain resident and erudite comics connoisseur Gerald Edwards



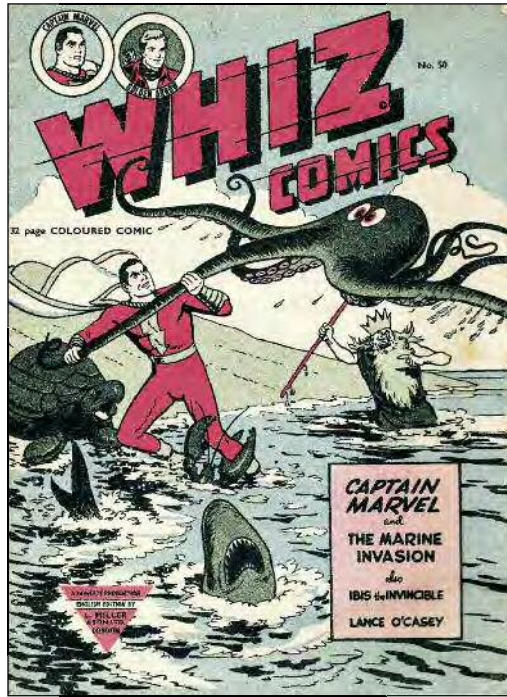
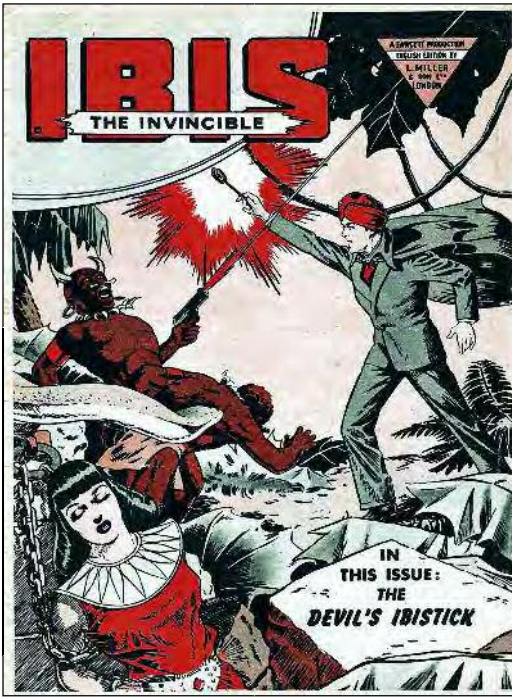
Marvel Family Values

Variant UK covers that you probably never knew existed! Many of the British firm L. Miller's reprints of U.S. Fawcett material utilized 100% of the cover proof art, unlike the American versions—as seen here with Miller's larger-sized *Marvel Family* #59 from 1951 (reprinting the Beck-Costanza cover and contents from U.S. issue #19, Jan. 1948) ... and, with a later Miller issue, #88 (reprinting the Pete Costanza cover and material from Fawcett's *Marvel Family* #54, Dec. 1950), revealing even more "expanded" proof art, if you look close enough. Afraid you'll have to seek out the U.S. covers in the Grand Comics Database or somewhere, though—we've barely room to print all these UK covers, let alone their U.S. forebears! All covers accompanying this article courtesy of Gerald Edwards. [Shazam heroes TM & © DC Comics.]

takes us on L. Miller & Son's sprightly journey throughout the Golden Age of Fawcett comics in the UK. —P.C. Hamerlinck.

L. Miller's Tale

After the end of World War II, Britain had no spare foreign currency to trade with the United States. This meant that no American comic books could be imported into Britain; this situation lasted until late 1959. In the meantime, in order to meet the demand for U.S. comics, some enterprising British companies bought the rights to reprint American comics in Britain. One of the biggest of these companies was L. Miller & Son of London, England. Len Miller owned the company and partnered his son, Arnold. (Later on, Arnold split away and formed his own comic book company called ABC—Arnold Book Company. They published many of the EC horror titles that were later banned, just like in America.)



What Is So Rare As A Day In June? Well, As A Matter Of Fact...

Many early L. Miller comic books had a low survival rate. So, unless if you have one of these two old British issues stashed under your bed, then only one copy of each book is known to exist! The Miller *Ibis the Invincible*—circa 1948—partly reprints Fawcett's *Ibis the Invincible* #5 (Fall '46), cover art by Gus Ricca... and the Miller *Whiz Comics* #50 (actually #1) reprints material from the U.S. of A.'s *Whiz* #115 (Nov. 1949), with art by Kurt Schaffenberger. If these two issues were any rarer, they'd be nonexistent! [Shazam hero & Ibis TM & © DC Comics.]

L. Miller & Son had a deal with Fawcett Publications and took a large part of their previously published comic book inventory and reprinted it in London for the British market. This led to many Fawcett comics titles being reprinted in unusual combinations and often with divergent, British-produced covers, to a greater or lesser extent.

At the core of Miller's reprint objectives were Captain Marvel and family, as well as the rest of the Fawcett heroes. Many Fawcett Western books were also produced. In fact, L. Miller turned their hand to just about anything they could get the rights for. The British comic market had only just begun to recover by April of 1950 with the arrival of *Eagle* featuring "Dan Dare." At this stage, Miller comics were already well-established. They had started earlier publishing comics, beginning in the mid-1940s with just a handful of Fawcett comics titles. These initial Fawcett-Miller reprints were un-numbered and photogravure in nature—basically just newsprint publications with covers containing minimal colors, and with interiors mainly in black-&-white.

Only the prime Captain Marvel/Fawcett titles were reprinted in Miller's early days. They were issued very haphazardly during the '40s, undoubtedly because there was still rationing in Britain and paper was hard to come by. These early Miller comics were unpriced, as they were designed to be sold by street traders or small corner shops, so a fixed price was not necessary. The early Miller-Fawcett reprints are extremely scarce, due to the poor-quality paper not surviving the passage of time, and the relatively low print runs. They are also difficult to quantify, because there are no records extant from this early period; hence no one can be sure exactly what was printed. (Because of this rarity, all L. Miller comics pre-1950 are in the Gerber 8/9/10 categories and, I suspect, all will be Gerber 10s, as they are rarely seen.)

The covers were altered in Britain to insert the L. Miller name and new numbering, and to take into account the various differing comic sizes, yet in all cases the "expanded" artwork still retains a seamless look to it. L. Miller simply used the *entire* cover art on the proof. The "extra artwork" modification on the Miller covers presents even more appeal to the Fawcett aficionado.

Into The 1950s

In June of 1950, undoubted restrictions, L. Miller started Fawcett title reprints. This was ongoing and had consequences from issue #50, so as to appear consequently, any issue bear

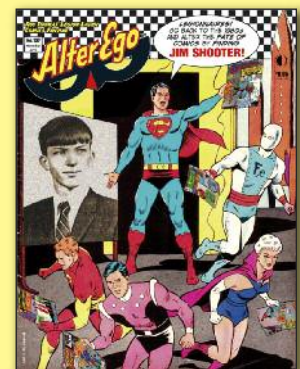
The comic size dimension and *Whiz Comics*. The other sizes. The larger-sized *Whiz* each before reverting to a standard early issues were printed in their size disparity. Page numbers and 36-page comics were printed at given times. Generally, the count, and not all the stories be in the Miller British editions the books, since at times a reprint had been dropped in the British market, and in some cases o

The cover of L. Miller's *Whiz* #115, Nov. 1949), has Golden of the cover, but he does not

For example, the L. Miller *Ibis the Invincible* comic showcased in this article is the only copy known to exist. This particular issue, circa 1948, partially reprints the contents of the original U.S. *Ibis the Invincible* #5 (Fall '46). The cover is slightly different, reflecting the removal of the cents price and U.S. issue numbering. The beauty of the Miller comics is their deviation from their U.S. counterpart covers, thus giving Fawcett collectors an alternative or "variant" cover to add to their collections.

Miller obviously had access to Fawcett's original cover proofs. As many collectors are aware, cover proof artwork tends to be slightly larger than the final product, and allows for a full bleed of the image. Due to their size, many Miller covers have "extra artwork" at the edges of the cover image. Some of the early-'50s Miller reprints were quite a bit larger than standard comic size... then they became the same dimensions as US comics... and were later reduced to be even smaller in size! It appeared that Miller used different printers, so the sizes of their comics often varied.

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ALTER EGO #137

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