

ROY THOMAS' OUTSTANDING  
COMICS FANZINE

# Alter Ego™

**FACE FRONT!  
WE'RE CELEBRATING  
95 YEARS OF  
STAN LEE**



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**On Our Cover:** After the 1970 (and, as it turned out, temporarily temporary) departure of Jack Kirby from Marvel, nobody drew panoramic panoplies of the company's power-packed population any better than **John Buscema**—as witness this poster penciled by "Big John" and inked by the incomparable **Joe Sinnott**. However, due to lapsing licenses over the years since, we had to eliminate two of the halcyon heroes or super-villains originally shown in this tapestry, and move around the images of a couple of other stalwarts to fill their spots. Wanna know who had to be dropped? Check out the original version of this poster on p. 17 of this issue! Thanks to John Morrow for supplying this rendition of the art. Oh, and please note—no X-Men! They wouldn't even get their own mag again till '75! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

**Above:** Will the real **Stan Lee** please stand up—or something! Is it (left) Stan setting his handprints in concrete at Hollywood's famed Chinese Theatre on July 18, 2017? Or—in this issue, you'll see the original mailman **Willie Lumpkin** of the newspapers—"Mr. Lumpkin" in 1963's *Fantastic Four* #11—even live-action Stan in postman garb for the 2005 *Fantastic Four* film... so here's an undeservedly uncredited drawing from the Internet of *The Man* as—"The MailMan"! [Photo & illo both © the respective copyright holders.]



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FIRST PRINTING.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of  
**Joan Lee**





# The Retrospective STAN LEE

## A 1988 Interview With The Man Behind "The Marvel Age Of Comics"

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Will Murray

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** *Marvel Comics' Stan Lee has given many interviews over his staggering 75-plus-year professional career. Often, these sessions cover the same ground.*

*Back in 1988, I sat down for a lengthy and free-wheeling interview with Stan the Man at a busy New York convention. My intention was to get behind what I thought was the façade of a public persona, but which I soon realized was a genuine human being—one not very different from many modern fans who transformed their youthful love and enthusiasm for popular books and films into a writing career. Although few could claim Lee's astonishing influence on the global consciousness from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to today!*

*The following interview—an exploration of Stan's roots and feelings about his career—first saw print in Comics Scene 2000. As Lee moves through his 95<sup>th</sup> year, this unusually penetrating retrospective look at the one-time Master of Marvel Comics seems more topical now than it was when it was first conducted, nearly 30 years ago....*

**WILL MURRAY:** *You were the editor of Marvel Comics for 20 years before you stepped out of the relative anonymity of your given name to make a lasting impact on the field with The Fantastic Four. Why is that?*

**STAN LEE:** I never took comics seriously. It was just a way to make a living. I was always waiting for my chance to get out of comics, and do real writing. Then, for whatever reason in the '60s, I really was getting ready to quit, and my wife said to me, "Before you quit, why don't you once do a book the way you'd like to do it? Get it out of your system. You're going to leave anyway. What can they do to you?" So I tried to write *The Fantastic Four* differently, just to get it out of my system. This is the way I liked to treat characters. It worked! And it got so popular that [publisher] Martin [Goodman] asked for another hero. I think the next one

was *The Hulk*, and I tried to do that a little differently. Then "Spider-Man." By now, we started getting fan mail, and it got so interesting. I had never gotten feedback from readers before. I figured I would stay a little longer and see where this leads. Then it was like a whole new resurgence.

**WM:** *You almost didn't get your chance. Comics were in tough shape in 1961. And only a few years before, in '58, Marvel almost went under.*

**LEE:** What happened was: Martin Goodman made one of the big publishing decision mistakes that was ever made. He



### "The Greatest Comic Magazine In The World!!"

Stan "The Man" Lee, circa 1972, nearly midway between the first issue of *Fantastic Four* and the date of Will Murray's interview—plus two distinct incarnations of the cover of FF #3 (March 1962), with pencils in each case by Jack Kirby; inks by Sol Brodsky.

(Left:) The rejected version—probably bounced by publisher Martin Goodman—as touched up by fan Henry Kujawa a few years back. Thanks for sending it, HK!

(Right:) The printed version—doubtless a better approach, even if, as fan Ron Foss would point out in #5's letters page, The Human Torch, who in #3 got a fiery facelift from the lackluster rendition depicted in #1-2, is drawn with two left hands! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]





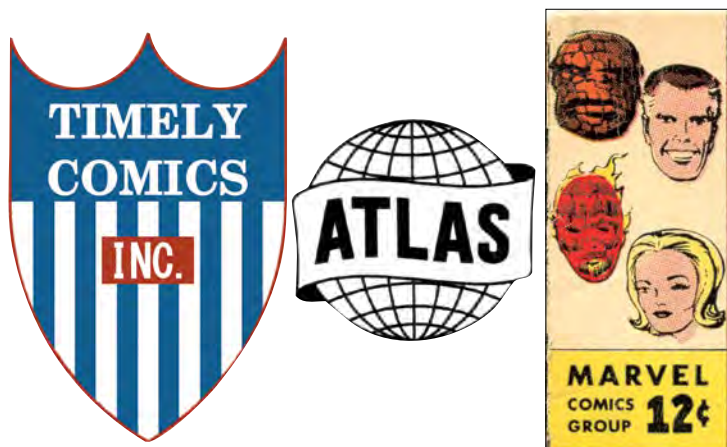
had his own distribution company, Atlas. The books were doing fantastically. His business manager talked him into giving up Atlas and letting the American News Company distribute him. Very shortly after he did that, American went out of business. We had no distribution. Martin couldn't go back to his own company because the wholesalers, whom the distributors sent the books to, got very angry at Martin because he had left them and gone to American. He couldn't form his own company anymore. So he had to go to DC [and its owned distributor, Independent News] and say, "Will you guys distribute me?" They said, "Yeah. But only eight books!"

**WM:** *Was that why you switched from Atlas to Marvel Comics?*

**LEE:** When we saw how well the books were starting to sell, I figured we ought to change our name and give ourselves a whole new image. So we thought a while and decided to come up with the name Marvel, because that was the name of the first book that we ever published, *Marvel Mystery Comics*. Also, I thought Marvel was a great word. You could make up slogans with it, like "Make Mine Marvel" and "The Marvel Age of Comics." All that kind of corny stuff, which I'm famous for—or infamous.

**WM:** *Eventually, DC followed Marvel's lead.*

**LEE:** DC decided to change the name of their company. They were called National Comics. Now, we came up with Marvel Comics, which kind of says something. What did they come up with? And they spent thousands and thousands on experts to research this. They came up with the great name—"DC." "DC" has about as much sex appeal as a rusty doorknob. "I'm with DC." Big deal.



### The Three Faces (Or Rather, Names) Of Marvel

(Left to right:) The original "Timely Comics" symbol, which Goodman's comicbooks sported off-and-on circa 1942... the "Atlas" distribution symbol for all of Magazine Management, which served as a de facto comics-division logo from 1951-57... and a "Marvel Comics Group" symbol from *Fantastic Four* #14 (May 1963), the first month in which that name began appearing on Goodman's line (not counting the year or so in the late 1940s when variations of the name "Marvel" had briefly adorned its covers)—pencils by Jack Kirby; inker uncertain. Stan gives artist Steve Ditko credit for suggesting and designing this box for the upper-left-hand corner of the company's covers, with the heroes shown varying from title to title. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Despite Stan's 1988 (and other) later remembrances, Roy Thomas vividly recalls him telling his young assistant editor circa 1965-66, when it was a much fresher memory, that in '63 Stan himself had wanted to christen the company "Atlas," but that it was his publisher who insisted on "Marvel." Stan swiftly realized Goodman had made the better choice... but obviously the line's rise to prominence, already in progress, would've continued either way. Is there any serious doubt that Stan would've soon been cover-blurring about "The Atlas Age of Comics"? Hey, by popular definition of the term, it's even *alliterative*!

**WM:** *Once you rivaled them in sales, was it a problem staying ahead of DC?*

**LEE:** No. I don't know why, but they never realized what we were doing in our stories that was grabbing the reader. I had a lot of friends there, and they used to tell me they'd have an editorial meeting once a month and they'd put our books down on the table and say, "Let's see if we can figure out why the Marvel books are outselling ours." They'd look at the covers and one genius would say, "I know why! It's because there's more dialogue balloons on the covers." So the next month they would put a lot of dialogue balloons on their covers. The minute I found out about it, I took off all the dialogue balloons. It didn't make any difference in the sales. That wasn't what did it. But it must have driven them crazy! Then they'd say, "It's because they use a lot of red on their covers." So the next month we'd stop using red! We played this little game for months. They never caught on.

**WM:** *I've heard from old-time DC editors that they would look at Kirby's or Ditko's unrestrained art, and thought fans were suddenly going for what they perceived as "bad" art. So they tried to copy that.*

**LEE:** One of the toughest things in the world is really to know what bad art is, and what good art is. If you look at *Dick Tracy*, you would say this is not one of the world's greatest artists. It's kinda cartoony and awkward. But it's wonderful art because it's perfect for that kind of a strip. There used to be an artist named Alex Raymond who did *Flash Gordon*. *Flash Gordon* was colorful and exciting. But Raymond also did a strip called *Rip Kirby*. It was one of the best-drawn strips you'll ever see. Other artists used to use it for reference. But *Rip Kirby* was never successful because, even though it was beautifully drawn, it was dull as dishwater. It was just nice drawings. So when you talk about good or bad art, every strip requires a certain style of art. Sometimes something that is good for one strip won't be good for another.

I'll give you one difference in artwork it took them years to catch on to at DC. I tried to get our artists to exaggerate everything. For example, if a monster was approaching a hero or heroine, and our character is supposed to look scared like this [reacts] and our artist would draw it that way, I'd say "That's no good. When our character is scared, I want him to look like this!" [bigger reaction] "AUGHHH! Exaggerate it! And if somebody is punching somebody, you don't want this, [throws a weak punch] because this is what you got in the DC books. You want this! [throws Kirby-style punch] I want that arm coming out of the socket." It's like in animation. There are directors, animators, and in-betweeners. The director does the key action drawings. The animator does middle poses. And the in-betweener does all the little poses in between. At DC, they'd do it like the in-betweener. It's a simple thing, but even today I don't think they fully understand it.

**WM:** *It's interesting how Jack Kirby flowered as an artist once he left the restrictive atmosphere at DC for Marvel.*

**LEE:** At DC also they had a lot of rules. They told the artist everything to do. The only thing I used to say was, "Be exciting. Do it your own way. You want six panels, do six. You want to make a full-page spread, do that." Ditko, on some of the "Spider-Men," he'd have nine panels, 12 panels, tiny little figures—a lot going on. I feel the best rule was no rules at all. Just let an artist do it the way he wants.

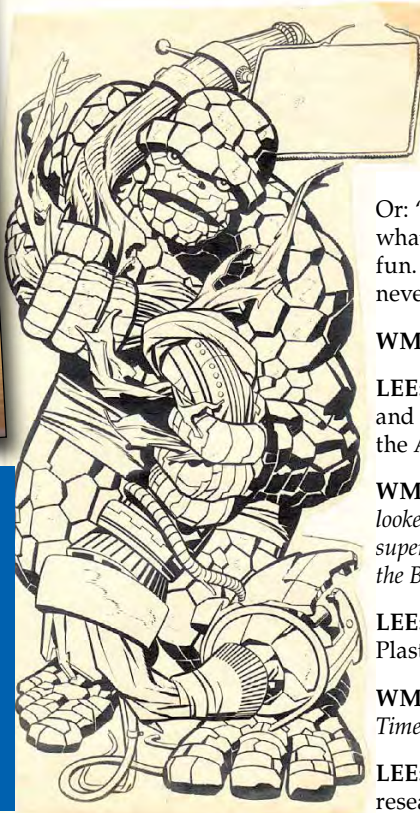
**WM:** *Wasn't there more to Marvel's resurgence than art style?*

**LEE:** Philosophically, there was another thing, and I had a big argument with Kirby about this once. We were being interviewed by Barry Gray in New York. He had a talk show. Jack and I went up



### Jack "King" Kirby

and a display drawing by him of the ever-lovin', blue-eyed Thing, probably done in the mid-1960s or so for the MMMS or other advertising purposes. The inking is so good, it's probably by Joe Sinnott! Thanks to Mike Mikulovsky for the photo, and to dealer Anthony Snyder ([www.anthonyscomicbookart.com](http://www.anthonyscomicbookart.com)) for the art scan. [Thing art TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



artwork. Strangely enough, I have always been in some ways more interested in the artwork than the writing. In fact, even later on, I always served as art director even when I became editor or publisher. The artwork was the thing. It was hard for me to tell writers how to write. But it's easier to say to an artist, "Your work is getting too convoluted. Simplify it." Or: "Use masses in your inking more than all that line work."

Or: "Tone down your layouts" or "Give me more long shots" or whatever. Somehow it's easier to work with artwork and it's more fun. I am very interested in the art. My big regret is that I have never drawn the strips. I wish I had studied art a little bit more.

**WM:** *You were an artist in your early days.*

**LEE:** I was a cartoonist. In the Army, I illustrated training manuals and I did posters. But I never really worked at it after I got out of the Army.

**WM:** *Tell me about the creation of The Fantastic Four. In hindsight, it looked as if you were reviving and reinventing old Golden Age Timely super-heroes like The Human Torch, Flexo the Human Rubber Band, and the Blonde Phantom, giving them new twists and spins.*

**LEE:** Flexo? I don't remember him. There was a character called Plastic Man. But I don't know any Flexo.

**WM:** *He was a very minor '40s Timely character. You didn't ransack old Timely comics to create your Fantastic Four?*

**LEE:** It's a strange thing. I have never done reference. I hate research. I never keep old books. If I wanted to go back, I wouldn't know where to look. Even today, if I'm doing a story and I have to find something out, I will call the office and ask one of the guys at Marvel. But I'm the first guy to admit it. I liked Plastic Man. That's a great power, and nobody was using it. So I gave Reed Richards Plastic Man's power. The Human Torch I always felt had been a great character. We weren't using him, so I brought him back. As for the Invisible Girl, she's a girl so I don't want her to be strong. I don't want her to be Wonder Woman and punch people. So what power should she have? I figured, "Gee, what if she's invisible?" I knew there have been invisible

there. He wanted to talk to us about Marvel and how it was selling. This was in the middle 1960s. Barry said, "I understand you people are starting to pass DC." And I said, "Well, we're doing the best we can, but they're such a big company and so rich, and we're just this little company." And Jack said, "That isn't true, Stan! Why don't you tell them we're better than them. And bigger than them." And I'm trying to shut him up. I said, "Jack, nobody likes anybody who's bigger and better. Let them think we're like Avis. We're just trying harder." And Jack never understood that. You've got to use a little psychology, also.

**WM:** Why did it take you so long to flower as a writer?

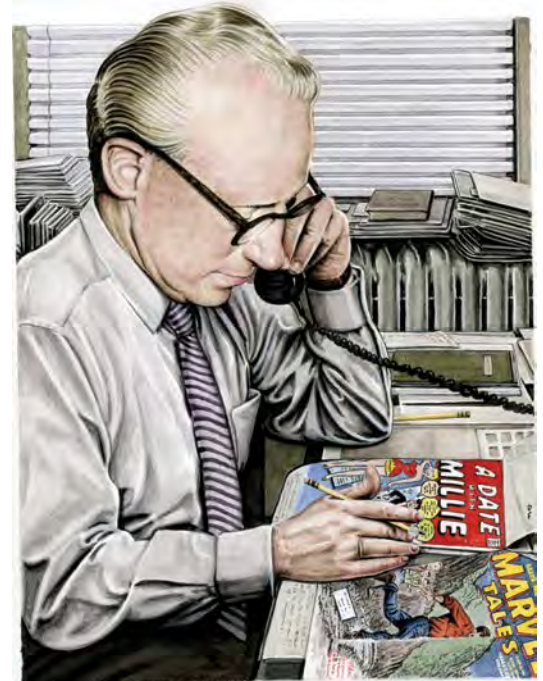
**LEE:** Well, the reason, I think, is because I was doing everything the way my publisher wanted me to. I was very much a company man. I wasn't a rebel. "Hey, that's the way you want 'em. You're paying my salary. Fine." But up to that point it was really because of the people I worked for. The industry never thought much of comics. It was a business, a way to make a buck. I'm afraid I felt the same way as they did. Once or twice I wanted to try new things, and they didn't want me to. They used to tell me I had to not use words of more than two syllables, and if I tried anything that was a little sophisticated: "Stan, don't do that. This is a children's medium. Don't write over the kids' heads. We won't make money. We won't sell the books." And I went along with it.

**WM:** *Considering that you're known for your emotional writing, that's amazing.*

**LEE:** Well, you can't be emotional and so forth when you think you're writing for young kids, or for idiots who are older but haven't got the capacity to understand. That was the mood of the industry in those days, really.

**WM:** *Looking back, do you feel those 20 years of toiling in relative obscurity as a comics writer-editor were wasted?*

**LEE:** No. I learned a lot. I learned a hell of a lot! I learned a lot about



### Martin Goodman

The founding publisher of Timely/Atlas/Marvel and the rest of the Magazine Management empire, in an essence-capturing painting by Drew Friedman for his fabulous book *Heroes of the Comics*. The color cover proof Goodman is perusing is that of *A Date with Millie* #4 (April 1964), with pencils by Stan Goldberg; inker uncertain. That comics title metamorphosed with #8 into *Life with Millie*, later into *Modeling with Millie*, as a companion title to the still-popular *Millie the Model*. [Painting © Drew Friedman.]



# “Get Me Out Of Here!”

## STAN LEE's Thankfully Fruitless Attempts To Escape Comicbooks (1956-1962)

by Ger Apeldoorn

**F**rom the mid-1950s, comicbook sales were down across the board. Whether it was because of the anti-comics crusade led by Dr. Wertham (as most surviving artists recall) or if the rise of television was a factor (as some modern historians have suggested) or maybe even because there were no super-heroes (which seems to be the feeling among some Silver Age fans), many companies were struggling to find an audience after the introduction of the Comics Code at the turn of 1955. Add to that the 1957 downfall of distributor American News Company (which distributed Martin Goodman's Timely comics line) and the 1956 bankruptcy of Leader News (which had Mike Ross, Mainline, and EC among its clients), and the decimation of the comics market was clear.

Many companies were forced to reduce their page rates, allow some artists to work on smaller paper, and find other cost-saving methods. Many artists were no longer able to make a living doing comics and left the field. Goodman's Timely comics were the beneficiary of this, picking up some of the best artists for peanuts. But Timely also cut down on its production costs, which meant the coloring in their books was often dull and uninspired. New talents entering the field were advised to find a better career, since the whole

comics business was walking on its last legs anyway.

So it's no surprise that, over at Goodman's, editor Stan Lee was looking for ways to get out of this ghetto. Some of his supporting editors from the early 1950s had already left (or may have been laid off). Hank Chapman had left for Arizona to start a career as a travel writer and photographer (though he kept writing war stories for DC into the '60s). Don Rico had stepped down from his position as editor of the war titles and would soon move to California to pursue other options, and "Patsy Walker" teen-humor editor Al Jaffee had likewise decided his luck lay elsewhere. Jaffee: "I remember all the efforts Stan Lee made to spread his talents into media outside of comic magazines. Of course, one must keep in mind that comic mags were in trouble at that time because of Congressional investigations and Dr. Wertham's accusations. We were all looking to have a plan 'B' in case comicbooks became verboten."

The most desired escape route was to sell a newspaper strip, a medium that was much more respected than comicbooks and had the potential to pay a lot better. "A successful syndicated comic feature," says Jaffee, "offered long-term security as well as the freedom to work at home instead of suffering rush-hour commuting." He himself succeeded in selling his panel *Tall Tales* to the Herald Tribune Syndicate in 1959; it ran weekdays and Sundays for five years.

Although not all of Lee's efforts centered around selling a newspaper strip, a lot of them did. As we shall see, he had various degrees of success and misfortune with those, until, circa spring of 1962, something happened that changed everything. But we'll get to that eventually....

### Enter Toni Mendez

To sell his newspaper strip ideas, Stan Lee first persuaded Martin Goodman to create a separate division of his Magazine Enterprises (the by-now official name of Goodman's comics and magazine empire), in order to exploit the talent and material available to the company through its comics division. Timely Illustrated Features found and handled contracts for various premium/giveaway comics, employing some of the freelance and staff talent available (including, of course, Lee himself). Under the same banner, he also hired artists to do samples of his various comic strip ideas. And, to sell those, he looked up comic strip agent Toni Mendez.



**Stan Lee**

as editor of *Timely/Atlas* in 1954; said date is verified by the wall of cover proofs behind him. At this point, Martin Goodman's comic book line was riding high; but the end of good times loomed, thanks to Dr. Fredric Wertham, Senator Kefauver's Senate subcommittee investigating "the causes of juvenile delinquency," and other factors. Thanks to Ger Apeldoorn for all photos and art accompanying the article, unless otherwise indicated.



**Al Jaffee**

The one-time *Timely* writer/artist's *Tall Tales* daily panel, one of his tickets out of comic books, lasted from 1957-63—but his *real* ticket to ride was *Mad* magazine, for which he originated and drew "Mad Fold-ins" for more than six decades! [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



### Don't Call It A Teenage Crush!

As Timely's editor, Stan Lee probably wrote the cover text for both *Millie the Model Comics* #67 (March 1956) and *Patsy Walker* #65 (July 1956); art by Dan DeCarlo and Morris Weiss, respectively. We doubt Stan had any idea that, over the decades, Patsy would graduate to being a super-heroine called Hellcat in the comics—and later the best buddy of the super-powered *Jessica Jones* on a Marvel/Netflix "TV" series! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

In the meantime Stan wasn't finished with Vince Colletta or soap-opera strips. But first...

## Mr. Lyons' Den

Yeah, yeah, I know. The first comic strip Stan Lee sold, about a group of Cub Scouts and their den mother, was called *Mrs. Lyons' Cubs*. But it started life as *Mr. Lyons' Den* and was supposed to be a bit of a family sitcom with the Cub Scouts thrown in for extra interest. And that was not the only change it was going through. In Mendez's files there are *two* strips with this name. But soon after, the name (and potential audience) of the strip was changed.

Stan Lee had created the strip specifically to be drawn by his favorite artist of the 1950s, Joe Maneely. Since joining Timely Comics in the late '40s as a freelancer, Maneely had drawn just about every genre they produced: Western, war, horror, science-fiction, romance, jungle, and even Bible stories, always in a clear and dazzling style. In the mid-'50s he had even expanded his range by showing he could produce funny comics as well, for Lee's color *Mad* imitations *Crazy, Wild, and Riot*.

For *Riot* #6 (cover-dated June 1956) he produced a spot-on parody of the popular newspaper comic strip panel and comicbook series *Dennis the Menace*, written (and signed) by Stan himself. Immediately after that, Stan created his own Timely version of the precocious child, called *Melvin the Monster*. I don't know if that was the impulse that led to Lee creating a Cub Scouts strip with Maneely, but the latter *had* drawn a lot of kids'

comics. It seems to me that Maneely had found his niche in that genre.

Some people (among them such comics-history luminaries as Mark Evanier and "Doc" Michael Vassallo) have suggested that Maneely might have gone on to become a major artist of the Marvel Universe had he lived beyond the age of 32; I personally believe that, given half the chance, he would have chosen a career as a humor artist, maybe even joining his friend John Severin at the *Mad* imitation *Cracked*.

In Toni Mendez's correspondence we can follow the rise and fall of Stan Lee's first outing as a newspaper strip creator. Although Maneely's death and tinkering by the syndicate made it lose a lot of its fun towards the end, the first few months are gorgeous and unjustly forgotten.

The first mention of this idea is in a positive note by Rebel L. Robertson, director of public relations of the Boy Scouts of America National Council, addressed to Stan Lee himself. Apparently Stan had submitted the idea to the BSA in the hope that they would support it and have their members petition newspapers to pick up the strip. In fact, this effort went on all through the run of the strip, with various forms of frustration. Accompanying that letter was a long and detailed critique by George Frickel of the Cub Scouting Service; it had many suggestions Lee later included. The letter was addressed to his offices at Timely, indicating that all of these extracurricular efforts were done through or with the help of Martin Goodman's Magazine Enterprises, even though none of the later contracts describes any sort of payment to anyone but the writer and artist. Robertson indicated his enthusiasm for this project and offered his organization for any technical advice Stan might need. Frickel's memo hinted at some of the problems that such an association might bring:

To: Rebel Robertson

From: George C. Frickel

Re: COMMENTS CONCERNING STAN LEE'S COMIC STRIP, "MR. LYONS' CUBS"

You asked yesterday for some comments from the Cub Scouting Service and our advisor in Editorial in regard to the cartoon strip, "Mr. Lyons' Cubs."



### Life With Lizzie

Sometime after *My Friend Irma* ended its newspaper run (see p. 42), Stan Lee and Dan DeCarlo joined forces on another "dumb-blonde" strip—which may or may not be the one that Ger Apeldoorn mentions DeCarlo trying at one point to sell on his own, before he and Stan teamed up again. When the artist sent the above and other left-over samples to his biographer Bill Morrison, he appended this note: "Bill: This 'Life with Lizzie' is a strip that Stan Lee and I tried to sell to the syndicates—no luck. Year—around 1960." [© Stan Lee & Estate of Dan DeCarlo.]





### Sunday Is Fun-Day!

Another Sunday strip by Lee & Maneely, this one dated April 27, 1958, and emphasizing a couple of special Scout-related features. Thanks to Dr. Michael J. Vassallo. [TM & © Field Enterprises, Inc., or successors in interest.]

"They'll never learn!" He's probably referring to the lack of an apostrophe after "Lyons." I was in the newspaper. The people love it.... the local Scouters are pushing it and for it. The Den Mothers are using it in Den Meetings and in projects." As I have often said, just think, a few months ago you were a rich unknown.... now you are a bankrupt success.

Don "Be Prepared" Bringen

Bringen also wrote Robert Cooper and Toni Mendez with a new idea. In one of the issues of the magazine going out to all den mothers, he wanted to include a common activity for club meetings: "We suggest that your Cubs clip out the daily comic strips of 'Mrs. Lyons' Cubs' and, pasting them in a notebook, make a comicbook." To be able to do that, he wanted to be sure that the strip would be kept running at least until the end of the year, because otherwise the activity would be useless. As a lure to the syndicate, he added that den mothers clipping the strip could be a significant force if any paper they were clipping from was to drop the strip. It shows how committed Don Bringen was to keeping the strip alive. Stan had really made a good connection there. In the end, Bringen did all things he said he would do—except get new sales, it seems.

In the meantime, Stan was collecting all the positive letters he could find and sending them on to the syndicate through Mendez. Even though the name of the letter-writers may sound a little bit

familiar to us:

Dear Bob:

We just got a call from Stan Lee and he called our attention to the fact that a letter had appeared in the [New York Daily] Mirror on their "Letter to the editor department" complimenting the Mirror on their new feature, Mrs. Lyons' Cubs. The copy:

ENJOYS LYONS

I am enjoying your new comic strip Mrs. Lyons' Cubs very much. Hope it will be in the Mirror for a long time. - signed Gloria Simek

I believe anything that can be done at this point to call attention to the feature will be most helpful to you in stimulating sales.

Sincerely,  
Toni Mendez, Inc.

Dear Lib:

Stan Lee called again today to say that another letter appeared on the Editorial Page in the "Letter to the Editors" column. The copy:

LIKES MRS. LYONS CUBS

I enjoy reading this new strip, Mrs. Lyons' Cubs very much. The strip hits a happy medium of good clean fun. - signed Pete Morisi

My very best,  
Toni Mendez, Inc.

Of course, *Alter Ego* regulars will recognize both names. Gloria Jean Simek was the name of the daughter of Marvel letterer Artie Simek, and Pete Morisi was a comicbook artist who had joined the New York Police Department in 1956 and might actually have written in on his own (but somehow, I doubt that).

At the end of April there is some good news for Lee and Maneely, even though it is not about their newspaper strip. The premium books Lee produced for the Birds Eye company with



### Gloria Jean Simek

Gloria Jean Simek, daughter of longtime Marvel letterer Artie Simek, also became a letterer—first for Marvel under her then-married name "Jean Izzo," later for both Marvel and DC as "Jean Simek." She passed away, far too young, in 2012. From the 1969 *Fantastic Four Annual*.



### Pete Morisi

Besides drawing comics for Marvel and others, the NYC cop moonlighted in the mid-1960s as creator/writer/artist of Charlton's *Peter Cannon... Thunderbolt*. See the "Comic Crypt" sections of this issue and the previous two! Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert.



## FOR THE LOVE OF LINDA



## BY LEE AND COLLETTA



## FOR THE LOVE OF LINDA



## BY LEE AND COLLETTA



## FOR THE LOVE OF LINDA



## BY LEE AND COLLETTA



## For The Love Of Linda

These three Thursday-to-Saturday dailies written by Stan Lee and drawn by Vince Colletta are half of all that seems to have existed of this prospective comic strip. If such romantic-drama strips had been a bit more of a growth market, it seems likely theirs could have competed with *The Heart of Juliet Jones*, et al. Special thanks to Frankie Colletta. [© Stan Lee & Estate of Vince Colletta.]

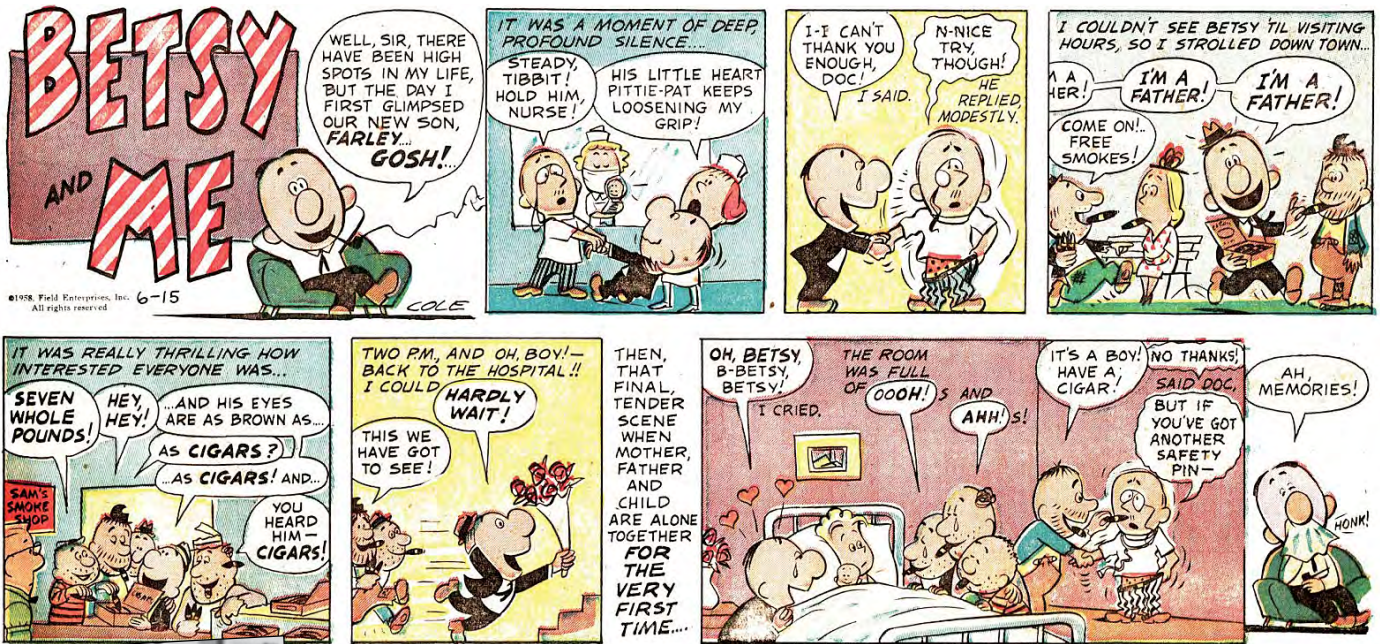
Holbein and Francisco Goya. For this feature, some art was added (probably by Joe Maneely), but there was also another important addition: the dialogue was now in speech balloons. A logical idea, but unused until that moment. So, if anyone was allowed (and capable) to exploit this kind of humor, it was Stan Lee.

But, original as it may have been, *Art Script* wasn't sold. On October 16, 1958, Ferris Mack from Doubleday replied that he found the samples very clever, but that he had seen a dozen similar submissions in the last year or two. One of those had even been picked up by another publisher and recently released under the

name *Captions Courageous*. Mack advised Stan Lee to take a look at it, as it had sold pretty well. That may have been a hint, however, to suggest he felt he knew where Stan had gotten the idea.

*Captions Courageous*, which had been published by Abelard-Schuman in January 1958, may have been forgotten since its early success, but seems to have had the same idea and concept as Stan's proposal. In January 1959 a second volume was published, and after that Bob Reisner became a famous music journalist, writing the seminal biography of jazz legend Charlie "Bird" Parker. It might have seemed likely to Ferris Mack that Stan had seen





Jack Cole

### Jack Cole, *Betsy And Me*

Cole, the creator of "Plastic Man" and 1950s cartoons for *Playboy*, landed his dream job of doing a newspaper comic strip—yet committed suicide in 1958. Seen above right is his strip for Sunday, June 15; courtesy of Art Lortie.

*Betsy And Me* was continued by other hands—but not by those of Stan Lee and Joe Maneely.

[TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

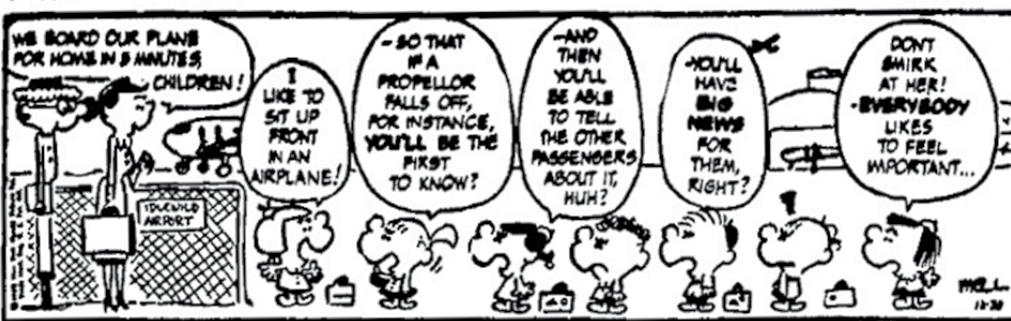
which used not panels but one long panel instead. I liked that idea very much, so when Harold Anderson, the head of Publishers Syndicate, asked me to do a strip, I came up with *Barney's Beat*, which was about a New York City cop and all the characters on his patrol who he'd meet every day and there would be a gag. I did some

samples with Dan DeCarlo, and I thought it was wonderful. Harold said it was too 'big city-ish' and they're not going to care for it in the small towns because they don't have cops on a beat out there. He wanted something that would appeal to the hinterland, something bucolic. He said, 'You know what I want, Stan? I want a mailman! A friendly little mailman in a small town.' I don't remember if I came up with the name Lumpkin or he did,

but I hated it. I think I came up with the name as a joke and he said, 'Yeah, that's it! Good idea!'

This is how Stan Lee related the origin of his comic strip *Willie Lumpkin* in a conversation with Roy Thomas for the magazine *Comic Book Artist* #2 in 1998. Perusing the files of Toni Mendez (and with a little help from Bill Morrison), however, a slightly different picture emerges. This much is true: as soon as Stan started developing properties for syndication, he seems to have thought about teaming up with DeCarlo. They had been working together since the late 1940s on a whole slew of successful teen comics, all making good use of DeCarlo's attractive yet Code-friendly way of drawing sexy women. In 1952, they even collaborated for a couple of months on the newspaper version of their comicbook hit *My Friend Irma*. Although the aforementioned Timely comicbook was a good seller well into the '50s, artist Jack Seidel got the job doing the newspaper strip in 1950; but when he left (presumably because of poor sales and income), Stan and Dan stepped in and finished off the strip. All through the '50s Stan kept DeCarlo busy

### MISS PEACH



### Miss Peach

The Dec. 30, 1957, daily of Mell Lazarus' very popular one-panel comic strip. The feature would apparently serve as a template of sorts for the early days of Lee's *Willie Lumpkin*. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

in comicbooks, but the artist did try to develop a strip on his own, called *Buzzy and Bunny*. Maybe that got in the way of Stan developing a project with him, or maybe Stan was busy enough with his 60+ comics a month. In 1956 the two of them did a parody of Jimmy Hatlo's newspaper panel *They'll Do It Every Time* called "Howcum" for Stan's *Mad* comics imitation *Riot* #4. For #5 they repeated it as "Why Izzit?," and this could just as well have been a proposal for a daily panel (as such single-drawing features are technically known, instead of being called "comic strips"). But maybe it was a bit too much "on





### Dan DeCarlo

It's hard to get hold of photos of this talented artist between 1948 and his above appearance at the All-Time Classic New York Comic Book Convention held in White Plains, NY, in June of 2000—so thanks to con host Joe Petrillak (and photog Anthony Koch) for this one! DeCarlo is flanked by the comicbook (right) and comic strip (bottom of page) versions of the popular radio/TV show *My Friend Irma* that he drew with writer Stan Lee in the early 1950s. Thanks to Tom Heintjes for the strips, and to Ger Apeldoorn for the Timely/Atlas house ad. [TM & © the respective copyright holders.]

the nose"; they needed something original.

On March 4, 1958, just after the start of *Mrs. Lyons' Cubs*, Toni Mendez received a copy of the first rejection letter for a new feature by Lee and DeCarlo. It was from the Chicago Sun-Times, which had a right-of-first-refusal deal with the writer. The reason the letter gives for rejecting the strip is that they felt they couldn't release a new feature by the same writer for at least another six months. Two days later Stan sent Toni Mendez a jovial note:

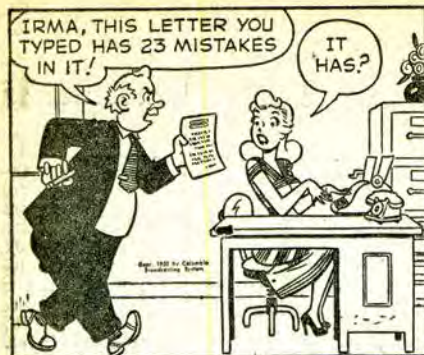
For Xmas, how about getting ol' Stan Lee a typewriter ribbon? S.

PS—Don't take above seriously—I'll get one out of stock room.  
(I know how literal you are!)

Later that week, Mendez sent the proposal on to several other papers. The response was mixed, as usual. King Features rejected it outright, suggesting it was "too close to *All around Home*." But, somewhere in September, there seem to have been



By Jack Seidel



MY FRIEND IRMA

By Jack Seidel





# The Second Coming Of STAN

## Rebooting The Marvel Age In *Britain* – In The 1970s

by Robert Menzies

**T**he year 1972 is a significant one in Marvel history. That was the year Stan Lee handed over the editorial reins to his successors and took the (figurative) elevator up to his new office as publisher and president. What is less well-known, and what makes 1972 even more significant than is generally recognized, is that it was also the year of Stan's Second Coming.

### The Mighty World Of Stan

In the British Isles in the autumn of 1972, Marvel launched *The Mighty World of Marvel* (hereafter MWOM). Until then, Marvel heroes had haphazardly appeared in magazines and books in Britain alongside a variety of comics features by other publishers. It was such a pale representation of the company that the very name "Marvel" was absent. Those experiments failed.

So, when the House of Ideas finally launched its own line of weekly reprint comics, they—and Stan—were perfectly positioned to follow the template that had worked so well in the USA. By the early 1970s the Marvel brand as defined by Stan had been road-tested and refined, not just in terms of characters—arguably all the main characters except the second generation of X-Men had been created—but also the slogans and rallying cries, the ranks of Marveldom, the No-Prize, Soapboxes, Bulletin pages, merchandise, and so on. The advent of MWOM was quickly followed by the launch of *FOOM*, which was heavily promoted in the UK, so all the stars were neatly aligning.

Added to this was one crucial marketing decision: unlike in the States in the early 1960s, the rebooted Marvel would make Stan Lee the centre of their universe from Day One. Here, then, are the eight reasons that explain why Stan "The Man" Lee can take an enormous amount of credit for making British Marvel a success and also explain why he is a bigger icon in Britain than anywhere else in the world.

### Written By Stan The Man!

In the U.S. Marvel comics published in the 1960s, Stan the writer was seemingly ubiquitous. However, his output was magnified a great deal in Britain, as a schedule of *weekly* rather than *monthly* comics concentrated and accelerated his work. Anyone



### THE DRAMA OF DRACULA!

A Personal Message from Stan Lee

Dracula! The very sound of his name sends shivers up your spine! Dracula! The inhuman scourge of Transylvania—the vampire who stalks by night!

What manner of man or monster is he? After all these centuries why do the legends refuse to die? Is he truly a deadly demon in human form—or a soul in torment, doomed to a destiny he can never escape?

Now, at long last, mighty Marvel dares to seek the sinister secret of the Count who dwells in darkness! We, who have brought you the wondrous adventures of THE INCREDIBLE HULK, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, and THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, now bring you the most menacing, the most mysterious, the most supernatural saga of all—a modern masterpiece of the macabre—the strange and startling story of Dracula!

But have no fear, I pray you. We know there is no living dead. We know that Dracula is but a myth. We know it well—or, do we?

Excelsior!  
Stan

### Mighty Marvel Takes Over The Mighty World!

Stan Lee in 1974, introducing the first issue of the Marvel UK edition of *Dracula Lives!* (a couple of years after Marvel first took a bite of the British Adam's apple)—flanked by the Buscema-penciled cover of the weekly *Mighty World of Marvel* #1, dated Oct. 7, 1972. The photo of Stan and his dialogue (however authentic or un- it may be) were prepared under the direction of Sol Brodsky, who reported directly to Stan and was in charge of Marvel UK at least into the 1980s, though his name rarely appeared in the British publications. Thanks to Ger Apeldoorn & the Grand Comics Database, respectively. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

picking up MWOM #1 read the first appearances of "The Fantastic Four," "Spider-Man," and "The Incredible Hulk" the *same day*, whereas the original debuts are spread over nine months in the U.S. Moreover, for the first two years at least, some characters like Spider-Man had an entire U.S. edition reprinted every single week.

### Stan Lee Sounds Off!

Right from the outset, Stan was very keen that British Marvel foster the same clubhouse friendliness and reader-engagement that characterized the Marvel Age in the U.S. Even if Stan wasn't





As for your comment about Stan, he was so pleased that he's going to be impossible to live with for at least a week! Sheesh!

SMCW #4  
(March 10, 1973)

Later that decade, when the British Bullpen was based in Sevenoaks, they labeled a door with Stan's name so that if any young fans came calling they could say he was in conference or out of the office!

Not everyone was fooled, of course. In *The Avengers* #108 (October 11, 1975) a Neil Fisher of Merseyside asked: "Could you tell me why the people who write to you start their letters off with 'Dear Stan,' when Stan can't possibly read them, and he is over in the USA?" The printed answer:

[L]etters are read by the Bullpen and analysis of them is sent to Stan. Stan reads this and directs the general path which the replies should follow. So ... it's reasonable to argue that each and every letter to Marvel is a letter to Stan.

### Stan As The Face (ε Hotseat) Of Marvel

(Above left ε right:) Mirthful Marie Severin looks to have had a hand in the art on both these color "questionnaires"—the first from *MWOM* #11 (Dec. 16, 1972), the second from #14 (Jan. 6, 1973). [TM ε © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

BULLPEN BULLETINS MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS BULLPEN BULLETINS

## BULLPEN BULLETIN BOARD

### ART COMPETITION NEWS

"MY VILLAIN-DOMINO THE DRAUGHTSMAN- DRAWS PICTURES IN THE AIR AND THEY COME TO LIFE"

"MY HERO-Dr. LICHEN HAS COMPLETE CONTROL OVER ALL KINDS OF FUNGI ON EARTH"

"MY HERO-FUNNY GIRL-MAKES THE VILLAINS LAUGH SO MUCH THAT THEY FORGET THEIR EVIL PLANS"

THESE, AND SO MANY OTHER TRULY AMAZING IDEAS HAVE BEEN PULLED OUT OF THE SACKS OF ART CONTEST ENTRIES AND SORTED BY THE BULLPEN'S EDITORIAL STAFF.

YOU CAN SEE PICTURES OF THE WINNING ENTRIES NEXT WEEK, BECAUSE FRANK DICKENS-THE WRITER AND CREATOR OF THE EVENING STANDARD'S 'BRISTOW' IS HELPING STAN LEE AND THE BULLPEN TO FIND THE WINNERS - AND IT'S GOING TO BE A VERY HARD JOB !!

SO TILL NEXT WEEK... PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SOME ASTRONOMICAL FINDINGS

### Is This Maybe How Dr. Doom Got His Start?

(Above:) A page from *Spider-Man Comics Weekly* #62 (April 20, 1974) has Stan announcing a brand new art competition—with readers submitting ideas for new super-villains. He apparently had help with the judging, though. [TM ε (C) Marvel Characters, Inc.]

502 PUNCH, October 11 1972

## PASSING THROUGH

STAN LEE talks to David Taylor

HERE HE COMES now, clump clump, just a little under six feet, maybe a hundred and fifty pounds, handsome, dapper, wise-cracking, altogether neat. For the purveyor-in-chief of spine-chilling fairy tales for grown-ups, he doesn't look that cataclysmic. It's Mr Stan 'The Man' Lee, who's a writer. More exactly, Stan Lee is The Mighty World of Marvel, the original creator and currently the publisher of the Skrulls from Outer Space, Dr Doom ("he's one of my all-time grunts"), The Mole Man, Spider Man, The Human Torch, The Hulk. He's the man who writes in SKRRRAKK! and ARGGH! and VROOOOM! ("as we all know, the third O is silent"). The whole creepy crew sells upwards of 60 million magazines every year.

"My wife, Joan, and I would go to a party and people would stop by and say, 'Hi, what do you do for a living? And I'd have to say, well, I'm a writer. Hoping they'd leave it at that. Then somebody always has to come up with 'What are you writing right now, Stan?' and it would have to come out, I write comics. Oh."

After thirty-three years in the game (and on appearances you'd have to suppose that he began at around age two), churning out disaster at the super-hero rate of two completed comics every week, Stan Lee is getting used to that. He is not, thank God, one of the self-conscious sort who is inclined to take his horror strips apart and go burrowing for the deep, psychological, sociological meaning in the stuff. He's not a dimwit either. He's a man who's having fun with his own kind of lunatic, cultic, "utterly terrific" formula and making pots of dollars on the side.

"When I got started I was just producing routine trash along with everybody else. I always had this feeling that I'd be out of it soon, writing for real in TV, perhaps, even books. And I have tried that. One day, my wife said to me, 'You know, Stan, it's been a couple of decades now. You really ought to start concentrating on this comics line, it looks like it could turn out to be a steady job.' I stayed. Maybe out of sheer boredom, I was so sick of doing the regular stuff, I decided I was going to break out a little, write the kind of stuff that I would like if I had read comics. I started the put-on.

"We had, we still have, basically the same ideas as everybody else in comics. Intergalactic monsters, bent on world domination."

Stan Lee is a big satirist, or it was relevant or something. It was just realistic, if you can call it that. And that made it more fun. Then we'd get a lot of in-stuff into it, little asides, footnotes, joke words and sound-effects. I love the sound-effects. Sometimes an AAAAAARRKK! will have two R's, sometimes just the one. The kids notice these things. The kickback from the readers is just unbelievable."

One of the chores of that kickback for Stan is lecturing, twice a week sometimes, to the millions of high school fans. His subject: *Comic Books and The World About Us, With Some Emphatics on New and Unique Philosophical Concepts*. "I kind of see and

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### Stan Packed A Punch!

This 1972 half-article/half-interview re Stan for the British publication *Punch* was reprinted in one of the Marvel UK weeklies. [ε the respective copyright holders.]





### Captain Britain Can Take It!

(Right:) Stan's message to UK readers upon the introduction of the new (U.S.-produced) hero Captain Britain, flanked by (above left) the cover of *Captain Britain* #1 (Oct. 13, 1976) was pencilled by Larry Lieber and inked by Frank Giacoia; and (above right) the cover of *CB* #16 (Jan. 26, 1977), in which, inevitably, Captains Britain and America go at it hammer and tongs, before they team up in the next issue to clobber the bad guys. Artists unknown—but Herb Trimpe and Marie Severin illustrated the promo ad at right. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



### "Merry X-Man!"—Uh, We Mean, "Merry X-Mas!"

(Above:) Stan and a couple of costumed acquaintances decorate a Christmas tree on the back cover of Marvel UK's *Avengers* #67 (Dec. 28, 1974). As usual, Marie Severin probably contributed some of the art; other artists not identified. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM STAN LEE

IT HAD TO HAPPEN!

Even though Marvel's heroes are the world's most popular comic book characters, the time has come for a new superhero — one who will be BRITAIN'S OWN!

Month after month you have demanded him! Comicdom has needed him! All of Britain has been waiting for him! And now, he's here at last!

Imagine — specially written and drawn just for you! Never before printed in any other magazine! With indescribable pride — we have presented, for the first time anywhere, Britain's greatest superhero, defender of the weak and oppressed, destroyer of evil and injustice, the mightiest, most mysterious man on earth, the one and only — CAPTAIN BRITAIN!

If all this sounds as though we're wild with excitement about our newest magazine — we are! We spent nearly a full year creating the characters, developing the themes, and producing the greatest possible stories and illustrations!

And then, to top it all off, we decided to point each and every Captain Britain adventure in glorious colour, so you can savour every thrilling panel! Indeed, we are determined to make Captain Britain the greatest comics weekly of all time and with your help and support, we cannot fail!

But, before I turn you loose to thrill again to the excitement of our incredible adventure, I first must thank writer Chris Claremont, artist Herb Trimpe, and editor Larry Lieber, as well as the entire splendid staff of Marvel Comics London — Neil Tennant, Alan Murray, George Mina — for the magnificent feat they have performed on this, the most sensational new weekly we have ever launched! To each and every one of you I say "Well done, lads!"

And now that you have met the newest, most daring superhero of all, never let yourself forget — the best is yet to come!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

This contorted justification is, perhaps surprisingly, basically true. Breakdowns of letter content were prepared in London and sent to the New York office. The admission of Stan's absence notwithstanding, the majority of letters continued to open with the words "Dear Stan."

## Spearheading Promotions

Stan has always felt an affinity with the British Isles and, like many Americans, has a rather romanticized view of the English in particular.

I like Shakespeare more than anything.

1967 interview for *The Penguin Book of Comics*

I'm an Anglophile, I really love things British. I love Shakespeare and Sherlock Holmes and everything.

2013 Interview with *PlayStation Limited*  
(<http://www.psillustrated.com/psillustrated/news.php/1551>)

He's even gone so far as to say "I wish I were British" in a 2012 interview with *TNT Magazine* #1484 (February 6-12, 2012)! Even correcting for Stan's natural instincts for exaggeration, flattery, and producing a great sound bite for an interviewer, that's a telling comment.

He is especially enamoured with London. When interviewed for *Geeky Monkey* magazine's April 2017 edition, he said about the Sky TV series *Stan Lee's Lucky Man*:



# My Life In Little Pieces—Part II

Continuing The 1998 Memoir By Golden/Silver Age Writer JOHN BROOME



**EDITOR'S INTRO:** Last issue, we began our serialization of the unusual 1998 memoir of the major 1960s writer of the

Silver Age Green Lantern and Flash, who also contributed to DC's Golden Age, as well as working for various other comics companies beginning in the mid-1930s. Irving Bernard (John) Broome's small, intimate book was published in Japan, where he spent most of his later years, after leaving the United States in the mid-1960s originally to live in Paris with his wife and daughter. Our thanks to the latter, Ricky Terry, for permission to serialize her father's reminiscences over a number of issues of Alter Ego. In #149, we gave a bit of background about John Broome (something he doesn't really do in his own volume) and presented the first few pages of the work, much of them devoted to out-of-the-blue remarks by his remarkable wife Peggy. He continues with a look at their lives during the time in Japan... and at his love of the English language....

## Wenkie Wenkie

**L**iving in Japan, as I've been doing for the past 20 years, makes it easy to travel in southeast Asia. Incidentally, it took me some time to figure out that southwest Asia, a term I'd rarely seen, must refer to India and the countries around it. Malaysia, of course, is in SE Asia and one day, while hiking along there, I fell in with a group of small boys who began to be obstreperous. One who was larger than the rest asked me some bold questions which made his little followers giggle and shriek uproariously. Did I know about Wenkie Wenkie? Did I do Wenkie Wenkie? It sounded like the old parlor game we used to play: Do you Coffee Pot? But it turned out that Wenkie Wenkie was Australian lingo for masturbating.



**John & Peggy Broome**

(On left in photo) with friends at Jacob's Pillow, Massachusetts, in July 1954. The painting at bottom left, created by John and recently photographed by their daughter Ricky Terry, bears the notation: "Burma - The Irra Waddy at Pagan 1983 (1)." And that's as close as we can get this issue to anything visually Broome-related to Malaysia, the scene of his opening anecdote—let alone to Japan. Although Broome lived in the latter for two decades, so far as we know he never wrote a single comicbook story wherein Japan played a part! Thanks also to Ricky for the 1954 photo. [Painting © 2017 Estate of John Broome.]

As we went on, the bigger lad became downright irritating in his manner and I confess to giving him a slap (maybe the only time ever to hit a child) followed by a no doubt priggish insistence on the importance of clean living. Soon after, my inquisitor took off red-faced and discomfited and I and my entourage of little ragamuffins continued for a spell. They were quiet after their leader had gone, subdued, and I began to feel I'd not wasted my time in lecturing them.

At a fork in the road we parted company. They bid me goodbye politely but as we separated, they began to run wildly as little boys will do. And as the distance between us increased, in the lingering beauty of that tropical twilight, their thin, flutelike voices came wafting back to me through the soft air gently as a rain of flowers falling.

"Wenkie Wenkie," they were crying joyously. "Wenkie Wenkie!"

I hadn't impressed them at all. And indeed, who was I to stand up against the ineradicable force of life that everywhere must have its way? A bit deflated, but yet strangely contented with this





thought, I plodded on alone in that land of perpetual summertime where all things were accepted and where everything, no matter what, was forgiven, almost before it could happen.

## Only in Japan

are you likely to come across a town – Motosumi-yoshi near Tokyo – whose sad name means *Things Were Better Before*.

will you see a sign offering “Flesh Meat” for sale, which is not just improvised English as you might suppose but a common mistake in spelling, substituting an “l” for the “r” in *fresh*.

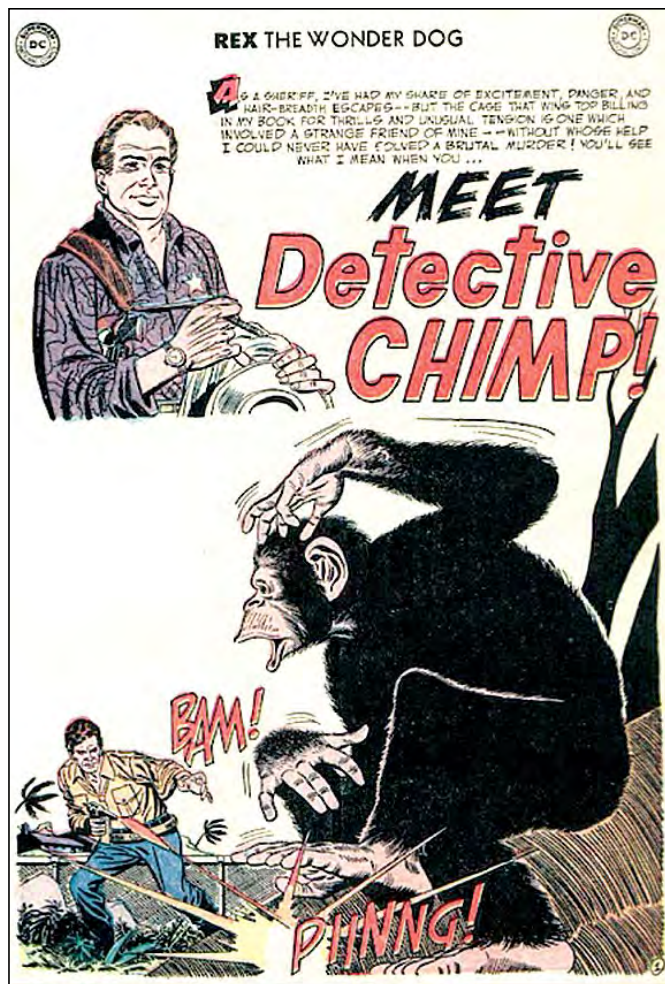
are you likely if you are an English teacher as was I to be asked by an admiring, low-profiled pupil, “How tall is your nose, Mr. Broome?”

will your Japanese friend, still learning your language, greet you at year’s end with a hearty, “Have a New Year!” (to which a British chum listening may promptly echo: “And have a Christmas too!”)

will you see (as I did in the teachers’ room at Aoyama Gakuin university) a Japanese man on the telephone bowing deeply before ceremoniously hanging up the receiver.

can an entire nation be tuned in to one scholastic event, the nationwide high school baseball tournament in early April, at cherry blossom time just before the start of the regular baseball season.

is there a monkey that drives a train. (There’s a story attached to this last item that further illustrates Japanese humor. The monkey is “at the controls” of his little train in Ueno Zoo. Saru no densha, it is called. In 1976, a Shinkansen Bullet train departed its station and ran for 15 minutes with no one at all at the controls. Finally, an off-duty motorman who happened to be on the train became suspicious and ran to take over while the real motorman, who had been checking a faulty door, according to the account, was left behind at the station. So no one was harmed. But after the incident, a purported communication was received by a Tokyo



### Let's Not Monkey Around!

Yes, yes, we *know* a chimpanzee isn't technically a monkey like the precise anthropoid John mentions at left—but again, it's the closest we can get! Carmine Infantino, who starting in 1956 would work with JB on tales of the Silver Age “Flash,” penciled and inked this first “Detective Chimp” yarn from a Broome script for *The Adventures of Rex the Wonder Dog* #4 (July–Aug. 1952); the artist always claimed “Chimp” was his all-time favorite series to illustrate! Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

newspaper from the “monkey-motorman” who warned, “That’s very dangerous.”)

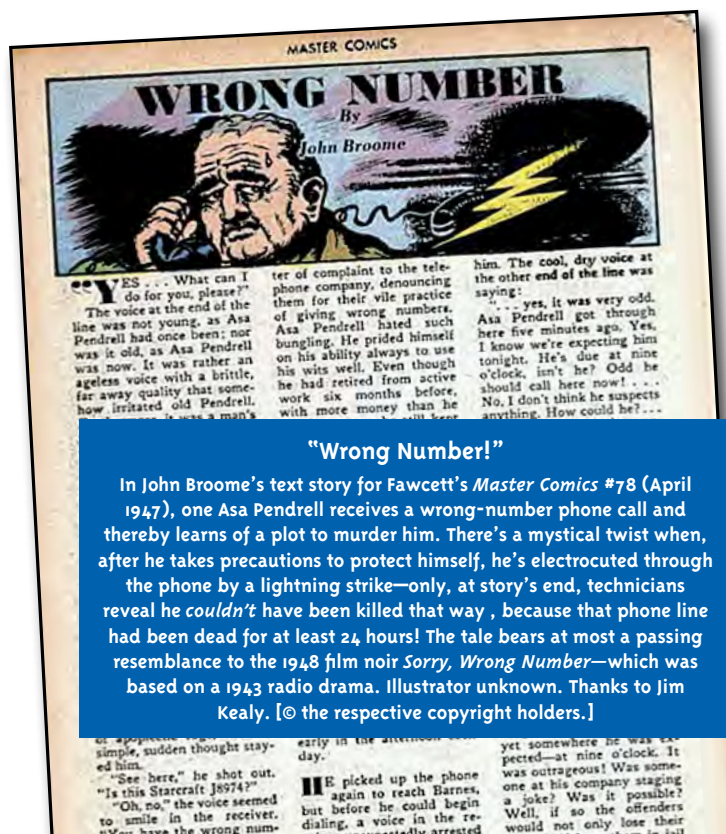
are there inns or public hostelries where a man may not pee standing up after 10 P.M. due to the noise. Like it or not he has to pee sitting down.

can you say about the weather only that it is good or bad (ii tenki or warui tenki) and no other adjective, like delightful or beautiful, will even be understood.

## Splendor of Love’s Praise

One love of my life has been English, this language of ours that is so quickly spreading over the globe, and deserves to in my estimation. Of course, if you’ve read this far you may rightly conclude that English doesn’t love me as much as I love it. Ah, yes, alas, but as a British lady I knew was fond of saying with a perky flaunt of her boyish-cut head, Never mind! I love it anyway.

Why? Well, let me count the ways. I love it for its sinuous spareness, its multifold moods, its heights and depths, its roots and flowerings, its vigorous no-nonsense verbs. Yes, and its gritty,



### “Wrong Number!”

In John Broome’s text story for Fawcett’s *Master Comics* #78 (April 1947), one Asa Pendrell receives a wrong-number phone call and thereby learns of a plot to murder him. There’s a mystical twist when, after he takes precautions to protect himself, he’s electrocuted through the phone by a lightning strike—only, at story’s end, technicians reveal he *couldn’t* have been killed that way, because that phone line had been dead for at least 24 hours! The tale bears at most a passing resemblance to the 1948 film noir *Sorry, Wrong Number*—which was based on a 1943 radio drama. Illustrator unknown. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [© the respective copyright holders.]





PETER A. MORISI (AKA PAM) WAS A SUPERB CARTOONIST, AS WELL AS A KNOWLEDGABLE COMIC BOOK HISTORIAN. PETE WAS ALSO AN OPINIONATED COMICS CRITIC, AS WE'LL DISCOVER IN PART 3 OF . . .

# The PAM Papers!



A montage of Pete's greatest hits.

(Clockwise:) Kid Montana, Peter Cannon...

Thunderbolt, Johnny Dynamite. [© Estate of Pete Morisi & other respective copyright holders.]

COLOR BY GILBERT



# The PAM Papers (Part 3)

by Michael T. Gilbert

**T**his issue we continue exploring a treasure trove of comics history, courtesy of Glen D. Johnson. Glen, a former editor of *The Comic Reader* fanzine, was a fan of cartoonist Pete A. Morisi (who often signed his work "PAM"), who became his friend and longtime pen pal. The earliest letters, written between 1964 and 1968, are often undated. But PAM occasionally makes reference to then-current comics, which helps to nail down the approximate dates. We've excerpted and edited PAM's comments for greater clarity.

PAM, like Glen, was a true-blue comics fan, conversant in comicbook history (and indeed, a *part* of comicbook history!). Pete had strong opinions on his work and on that of his fellow artists, writers, and editors. His comments provide a fascinating snapshot of the comic scene from the '60s on, by a respected industry insider.

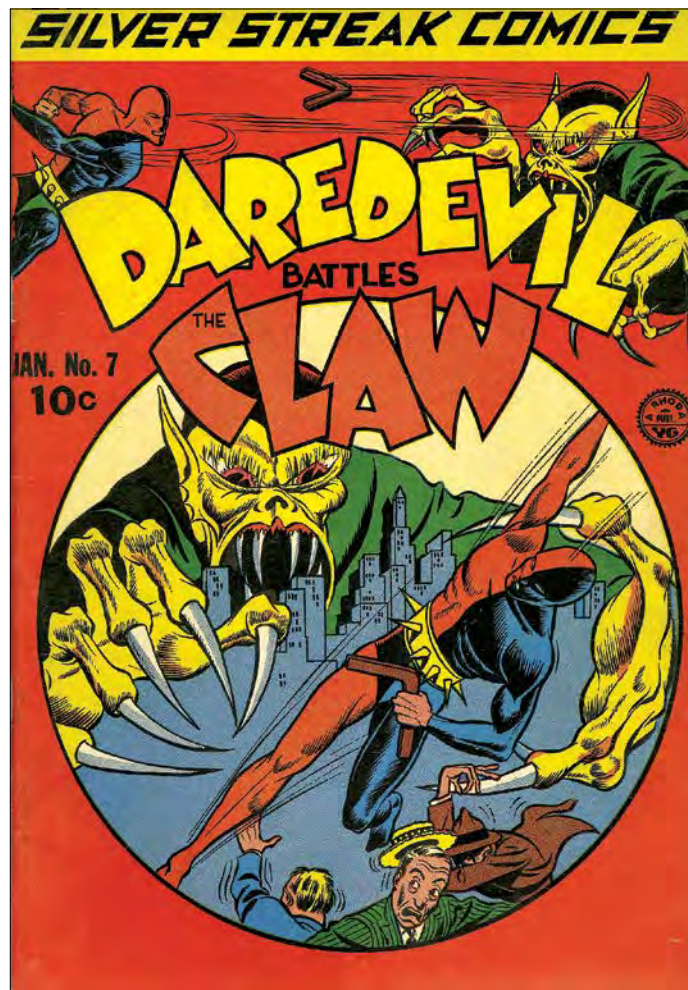
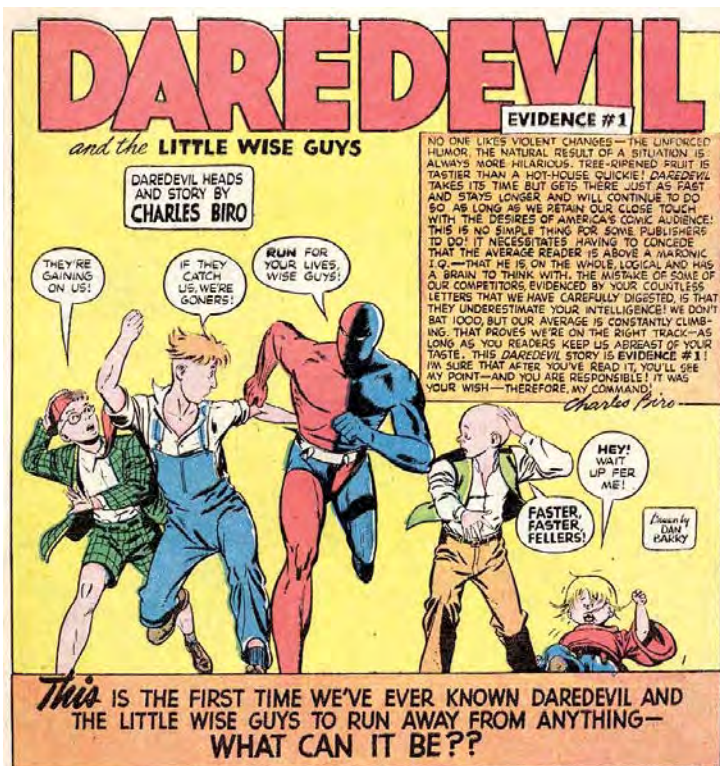
This issue, we've culled quotes from a number of letters focusing on PAM's views of different comic book editors. But first, let's begin with Pete Morisi's thoughts...

## On Pronouncing Names

The name is pronounced MORE-EEE-SEE. Charlie Biro's name is BEER-O. Doesn't really matter, though. I've been called MORIS-EEE, MORE-EYE-SIGH, etc. Etc. Among other things.

## On Charles Biro

Yeah, I know Biro, I worked for him for a year or so. He is a talented guy, but as I mentioned, tough to get along with. In fact, I tried to buy the old Daredevil from him when he stopped publishing it, but he didn't want *one* cash payment—he wanted to own a piece of it—*always!* So I backed out.



## Battle Royale!

(Above:) Jack Cole re-designed Jack Binder's original Daredevil costume. From *Silver Streak* #7 (Jan. 1941). Whether or not Cole scripted the tale, as well, is unknown. [© the respective copyright holders; Daredevil is now TM Marvel Characters, Inc.]

[1965] "Steel Sterling was one of my favorites in the old days when Biro, and then Novick, did it. But I'm sure that MLJ will kill it once and for all this time around. Too bad. I was going to approach MLJ about a year or so ago with the idea of letting me revive *The Thing* for them, but I was too darn busy.

PAM is referring above to Charlton's *The Thing* comic, not the Marvel monster-hero. Charlton's version was an omniscient narrator, the type popular on early radio shows. Of course, it's extremely unlikely that, in the mid-1960s, Archie Comics—formerly MLJ—would have published a comic featuring a character with the same name as the co-star of Marvel's *Fantastic Four*.

This letter also refers to Archie's uninspired and short-lived 1965 super-hero revival of their old MLJ characters—including Steel Sterling (as drawn by Paul Reinman and written by Jerry Siegel). And now back to our regularly scheduled comments by PAM....

## It Was A Barry Good Year!

(Left:) A classic "Daredevil" splash page drawn by Dan Barry for *Daredevil* #42 (May 1947). Script officially by Charles Biro. [© the respective copyright holders; Daredevil is now TM Marvel Characters, Inc.]



# TED WHITE On Comics, Part 4

## In Which He Talks About Interviewing Stan Lee, Writing A Captain America Novel, & More!

Interview Conducted by Bill Schelly

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRO:** In Part 1, prominent SF author, editor, and fan Ted White filled us in on his boyhood as a comic book fan and collector. In Part 2, he talked about meeting noted EC fans Fred von Bernewitz, Bhub Stewart, and Larry Stark. In Part 3, he discussed visiting the EC offices and writing his chapter for the "All in Color for a Dime" series in the fanzine Xero.

In Part 4, Ted explains that he was a fan of the Marvel heroes, and talks about interviewing the co-creator of most of them, Stan Lee. He also recounts writing the ill-starred novel *Captain America: The Great American Gold Steal* and attending the monthly meetings of the Comic Art Group in Manhattan. The interview took place by telephone in November 2014. This portion was transcribed by Sean Dulaney and reviewed by Ted White. Special thanks to John Workman for providing the scans from *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. Let's go...

**BILL SCHELLY:** Getting back to the comics, you were saying that you weren't really that impressed with the quality of the DC hero revivals on the late 1950s and early 1960s?

**TED WHITE:** They had a quality of blandness to them. Not only was the writing pretty bland, but the art was pretty bland. Okay, Gil Kane is doing *Green Lantern*, but he's not getting to ink it, so it's inked "DC bland."

**BS:** Well, I didn't feel Joe Giella was the most exciting inker.

**WHITE:** Then you had Carmine Infantino doing *The Flash*. There was a time when Infantino had some style, but he'd lost it by then

and pretty much become steamrollered into the DC blandness. He had elements of his own style, little trick things like he would do, but in general, I vastly preferred Lee Elias' *Flash*.

**BS:** What were your impressions of the comics from Stan Lee, like *Fantastic Four* and *Amazing Spider-Man*?

**WHITE:** I was on and off following Stan Lee's pre-super-hero Marvel stuff. The Atlas stuff. I was mostly following it for the Kirby work. Although I never was that happy with Kirby inked by Dick Ayers. I thought Ayers was a fantastic artist when he was doing *Ghost Rider* around 1950. But by the time he was inking Kirby, it just seemed like he slopped up Kirby.

**BS:** I liked Ayers' inks on Kirby, but they did look kind of muddy.

**WHITE:** Yes. That's a good description. He kind of rounded off the sharp edges and loosened things up, and just generally—I mean, Kirby came through enough that I was still following it, but I wasn't excited by it. And I had a sense that Kirby was grinding the stuff out, which I think he was.

At any rate, I was following those comics. When *Amazing Adult Fantasy* started coming out, which was a sort of a pseudo-EC comic, I didn't buy it, but I did look at it on the stand every issue. Just to see what was happening with it. Maybe I bought some for the Ditko art. I was fond of Ditko.

**BS:** I think I read that somewhere that he was one of your favorites at Marvel.



### Mushed By Marvel

Ted White, seen a few years ago—flanked by the first two pages of his 1968-printed interview with Stan Lee, from *Castle of Frankenstein* #12. Photo courtesy of TW; art penciled by Jack Kirby. [Art TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]







### The Stan In The High Castle

Ted White's interview with Stan Lee in *Castle of Frankenstein* #12 was conducted in late 1965 or early '66, but not published until 1968. It was perhaps the first substantive interview done with Smilin' Stan. Stan's name is so difficult to read on the CoF cover that it's a good thing that an image of Spider-Man and the words "Marvel Comics" were prominently featured. (What was CoF publisher Calvin Beck thinking?) The photo of Lee is from the inside front cover of *Fantasy Masterpieces* #1 (Feb. 1966). [CoF cover © the respective copyright holders; Lee photo & Spider-Man image TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



**WHITE:** Oh, I first encountered Ditko when he was drawing for Charlton back in the middle '50s. I liked his work there a lot. It stood out so much from everything else Charlton was publishing. At any rate, I was following the Marvel comics before they were Marvels, in kind of a desultory way. So when *Fantastic Four* appeared, and then *Amazing Fantasy* #15 appeared, I bought both of those. And I started buying *Fantastic Four* and *Amazing Spider-Man* on a regular basis, and I thought *they* were exciting in comparison to the DC comics.

**BS:** *They were!*

**WHITE:** So I followed them a lot. And then—I can't remember the year, but it was before Stan Lee got popular around the college circuit, so it would have been the middle '60s. He and I were both on a radio show—a midnight to 3:00 a.m. or something in the morning radio show on the Columbia University radio station where a guy named Jim something-or-other, who I kind of knew, was doing this show. It was a talk show. You could call in and stuff like that. And he had me and Stan on one evening...

**BS:** *Together?*

**WHITE:** Yeah. Well, he didn't know the questions to ask and I did.

**BS:** *I see.*

**WHITE:** He had me on, and Stan and I hit it off. Stan and I got along very well together, and that was the beginning of my relationship with Stan.

**BS:** *I was going to ask you about that, because I know that you did that early interview—maybe the first substantive interview with Stan Lee.*

**WHITE:** Apparently. That was in *Castle of Frankenstein*. It's been reprinted a lot. [NOTE: It appeared in *Castle of Frankenstein* #12 (1968), but was recorded circa 1965-66, per Ted. It was reprinted in *Alter Ego* #74. —Bill]

**BS:** *It's a pretty good interview.*

**WHITE:** Yeah, I'm happy with it. Bhub Stewart asked me to do that and set it up with Stan. I went in there and did the interview.

afternoon in his office.

**BS:** *So, I guess it's no surprise you got an opportunity to write that Captain America novel, The Great American Gold Steal?*

**WHITE:** Are you familiar with the story behind that?

**BS:** *I know that Otto Binder kind of fouled the water on that by writing a lousy Avengers novel called The Avengers Battle the Earth Wrecker.*

**WHITE:** Oh, there's more to it than that. You see, basically, Otto Binder wanted to write for Marvel Comics. Stan wanted me to write for Marvel, but I passed on it. But Stan did not want Otto Binder writing for Marvel. Otto's approach was almost the direct opposite of the Marvel approach. I would say that, among other things, he was past his peak as a productive writer. His peak had been years earlier. In any event, because Stan wouldn't hire him, Otto decided to make an end run around Stan Lee. He went to Martin Goodman and cut some kind of a deal with him about writing paperback books. Marvel paperback books for Bantam Books.

At the same time this was going on, I was wanting to do a Batman novel. This is slightly before the *Batman* TV show, but I think we knew it was coming. My agent had been talking to Bantam Books about doing a Batman novel. Bantam was very interested in doing this and liked my proposal and wanted to do it, but they discovered that legally they couldn't. That was because DC Comics and Independent News were all really one thing... Independent News was distributing Signet Books at that time, and contractually, Signet Books had first refusal on any book originating from a DC comic. So Bantam couldn't do it. Therefore Bantam was, at that point, open to the idea of doing Marvel books instead.

Binder found fertile territory when he went to Bantam and sold them on the idea of doing—I'm not sure what it was originally. It might have been six books, it might have been less than that. It wasn't less than three or four, anyway. But only *some* Marvel properties were available. Neither Spider-Man or *Fantastic Four* was available. It had to be what were then considered the lesser titles and characters, of which *The Avengers* were one and *Captain America* another. Stan found out what was going on, and was really upset about it because he knew that Otto would not be true to the Marvel style in the book he was going to write. And there was nothing that Stan could do about it.

**BS:** *And most of these were his characters, or co-creations.*

**WHITE:** Right. So Stan said—to Bantam, I think he said—"If you're going to be doing this, at least get someone better than Otto! Get Ted White." And so, he recommended me and Bantam already knew about me from the *Batman* proposal. So I went into the Bantam offices and met one of their vice-presidents—a really nice

Stan and I were friends by then, so it was a very easy interview to do.

**BS:** *He was comfortable with you. It's funny. He keeps getting interrupted by phone calls.*

**WHITE:** Well, you know, it was part of his working day. It was just done on an



P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

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#209

Jan. 2018

Art by Bill Black  
Shazam heroes™ & © DC Comics.



**BILL BLACK'S 1969  
CAPTAIN MARVEL  
REVIVAL**

BLACK



# Paragon's 1969 Captain Marvel "Revival"

by Bill Black

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck / J.T. Go

## "Strange Luck"

**A**fter graduating from Florida State University in December of 1966, with a BA degree in art, I was promptly drafted into the U.S. Army. This was unfortunate for many reasons, not the least of which was that 1967 was the peak of the Vietnam War. I was faced with the prospect of possibly being put in the position of killing another human being or being killed myself. And now, following a career in art would be put on hold for 24 months in any case. In the late 1960s the world of pop art was exploding. It was an exciting time to be an artist and I would miss participating in this movement, or so I believed.

It must be mentioned that, during my military career, I first became aware that I was blessed with a phenomenon that I have come to call "strange luck." Relating all the incidents of strange luck would fill volumes, so only those directly connected to the creation of my first fanzine, *Paragon Golden Age Greats*, Vol. 1, No. 2, are noted here.

After basic training, I was stationed in Georgia, the closest Army base to my home. In my spare time, I did some miraculous manipulations, I had been a civilian artist at Training Aids, where I would be a civilian artist. My boss, Mr. King, also a nice man who gave me a key to the facility. I used a drawing table during my off-duty hours. As an advantage of this benefit, I continued to draw just as I had done in civilian life. Here, I drew a horror story executed in ink wash that I submitted to Publications in hopes of having it printed. Although Warren did not use the story, it was solid with then-editor Bill Parente, who was a friend after my military service.

During the course of Training Aids, I found a copy machine that made large transparent copies. A document, when placed under a sheet of plastic, then run through this machine, would transfer the black image to the plastic sheet. I used this to make a comicbook page and it worked. Only

### A Paragon Of Virtue

(Top:) Bill Black in 1970, a year after he published *Golden Age Greats*, Vol. 1, #2. "Free of the military, I grew out my hair," Black says. "Wish I still had it!"

(Right:) Black's cover for *Paragon Golden Age Greats*, Vol. 1, #2 (1969), which featured his 17-page revival of Fawcett's Captain Marvel, several years before the authorized resurrection of the hero occurred via license at DC Comics. Bill's artwork was later re-used for the cover of G.B. Love's *RBCC (Rocket's Blast Comic Collector)* #101 (Spring 1973). The images from the original edition of *PGAG* Vol. 1, #2 are reproduced from Roy Thomas' personal copy. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics; other art © Bill Black.]



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