

ROY THOMAS' MARVEL OF A COMICS FANZINE



Alter Ego™

A 1970s BULLPENNER
TALKS ABOUT
MARVEL COMICS
& SOME COMIC BOOK LEGENDS

\$8.95
In the USA

No.108
April
2012

WARREN
REECE
ON CLOSE
ENCOUNTERS
WITH:

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EVERETT

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BURGOS

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JOHN
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by CARL BURGOS & BILL EVERETT



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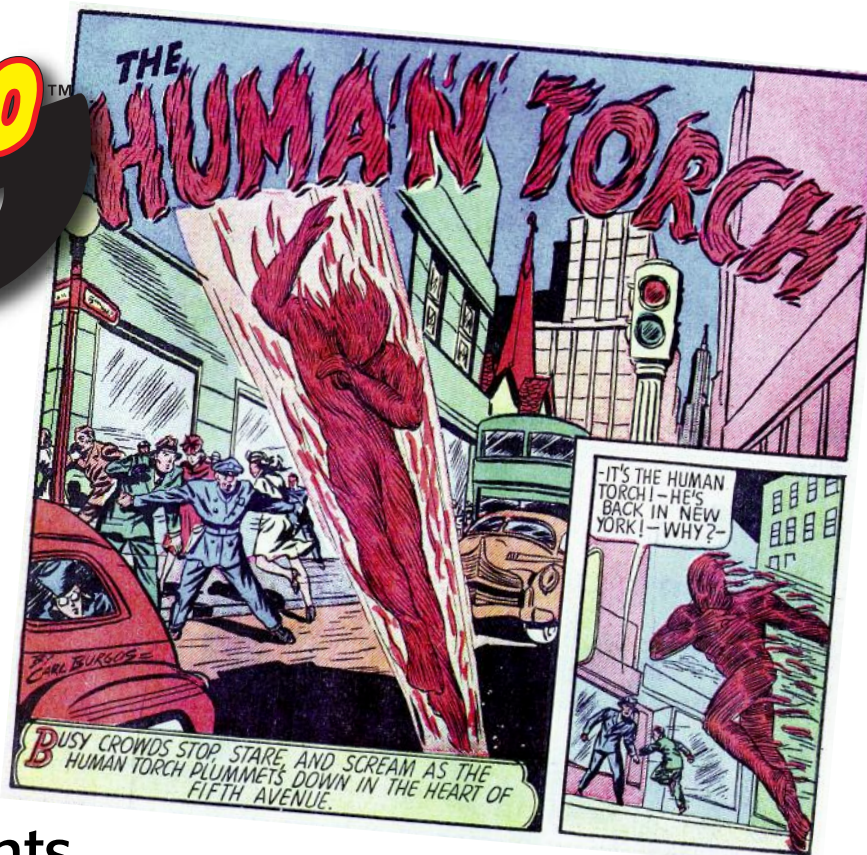
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On Our Cover: *What do you do when most of the art and story mentioned in an issue's featured piece has been reprinted in hardcover Marvel Masterworks: Golden Age volumes over the past few years? Well, first of all, you realize that it really hasn't—'cause most of those vintage pages have had to be retouched and fixed up (albeit with increasing skill and improved results in recent times), 99% of the original art having been blown away forever by the errant winds of time. Luckily, thanks to collector/historian Robert Wiener, Ye Editor has been in possession for some years of good photocopies of pristine Photostats of original art for a number of those early Timely pages—including the Torch/Namor splash page of Marvel Mystery Comics #17 (March 1941), the first time the mag's two stars battled the Axis together rather than pasting each other. Presto—a Carl Burgos & Bill Everett image which has never before appeared on a cover! [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]*

Above: *The first image (out of many) in this issue which is reproduced from color photocopies made from original comics of late 1939 through the early 1940s: Carl Burgos' "Human Torch" splash panel (plus one) from Marvel Mystery Comics #4 (Feb. 1940), courtesy of Warren Reece. The "Torch" scripting, too, is presumed to be by Burgos, at least in the earliest issues. [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]*

This issue is dedicated to the memory of:

**Bill Everett
& Carl Burgos**



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FIRST PRINTING.

“With The Fathers Of Our Heroes”

Personal Memories Of CARL BURGOS, BILL EVERETT, & Others—And Of Collecting The Earliest Appearances Of Their Seminal Brainchildren

by Warren Reece



A World Discovered

Cartooning fandom was a different world when I was a teenager, back in a period that was, metaphorically, analogous to what Australian aborigines term “the dream time.” In that bygone era, there were few shops where you could find old “comic books” (cartoon magazines might be a more accurate term), few books about their history (and little money to buy them), and even fewer opportunities to meet the creators of the legendary characters: “the fathers of our heroes.”

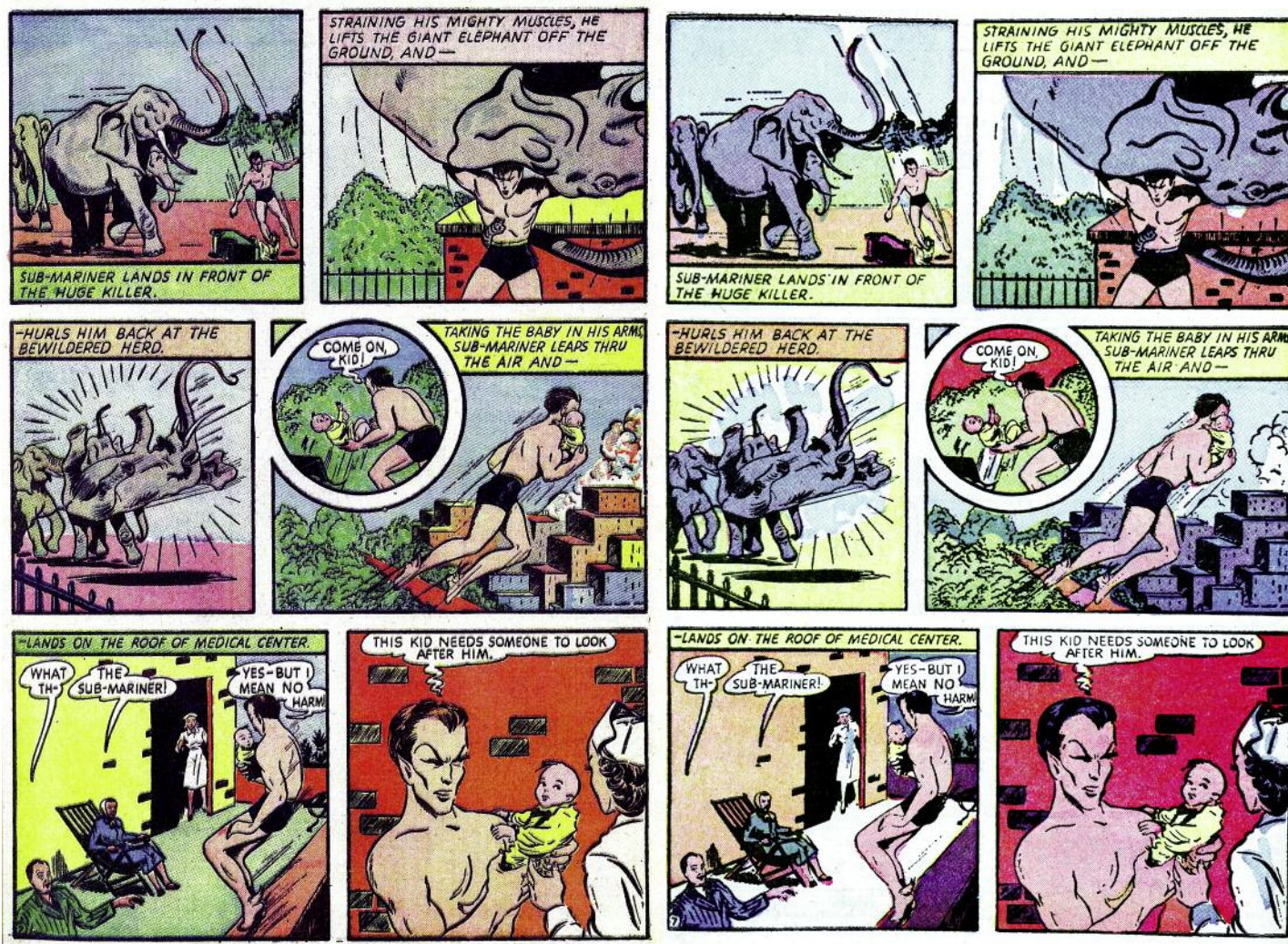
For me, the first of these awesome encounters occurred when I was seventeen and I became aware of the new phenomenon of comics conventions. Until then, besides, I had been considered too young to be traveling to and from Manhattan on trains. All I’d had up till that time was the printed page, but that was a wondrous fate:

In 1966, following my first few months of collecting *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Fantastic Four*, and the anthologies that presented “Hulk,” “Iron Man,” “Captain America,” and company, I bought *Marvel Super-Heroes* #1. In this one-shot, 25¢ special edition, a lost era was briefly glimpsed through a somewhat blurry reprint “window,” when Smilin’ Stan Lee elected to include the “Sub-Mariner” story from *Marvel Mystery Comics* #8 (June 1940). Readers like me witnessed a furious young Prince Namor destroy a Hudson River tunnel and an airplane, release animals from their enclosures in the Bronx Zoo (an act softened by his rescue of an infant from the path of stampeding elephants), damage the George Washington Bridge, and, as a

Marvel Super-Heroes — From 1939 To The 1960s

Warren Reece (then Warren Storob) in the 1980s with his collection of goodies—which includes the Oct. ’39 edition of *Marvel Comics* #1, the very first Timely/Marvel title. At the time the photo was taken, only one copy with an October cover date (as opposed to the larger-print-run second edition of #1, which had a cover date of November) was known to exist. Warren’s copy is autographed by three of the artists featured therein: Bill Everett, Carl Burgos, and humor-cartoonist Fred Schwab. Photo by Mary Jane Medvecky originally taken for *Spigot* magazine, as reproduced in *Comics Interview* #8 (Feb. 1984); with thanks to David Anthony Kraft. [© 2012 the respective copyright holders.]

Also shown: the composite Bill Everett & Jack Kirby cover of *Marvel Super-Heroes* #1 (1966), which trumpets at bottom the first Golden Age super-hero story ever reprinted by Marvel—or seen by young Warren. All comic art repro’d with this article was provided by Warren, unless otherwise noted. [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



A Herd Of Stomping Elephants Couldn't Stop Me!

(Left & right:) A key "Sub-Mariner" page written and drawn by Everett for *Marvel Mystery Comics* #8 (June 1940)—and that page as reprinted (as retouched on Photostats) in 1966's *Marvel Super-Heroes* #1. Thanks to Barry Pearl for the latter scan. [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

topper, have his first bout with the original, android Human Torch. This was not only *their* first meeting; according to one scholarly source, it was the first time in publishing history that cartoon characters from separate strips "crossed over" into one story. The opening caption explained that the fantastically-powered Sub-Mariner, master of travel undersea, on land, and in the air, was seeking revenge on humanity for attempting to electrocute him after he had refused to lend his powers to its cause. I didn't thoroughly understand, but I soon found myself obsessed with the quest for every rare old issue that could tell me more!

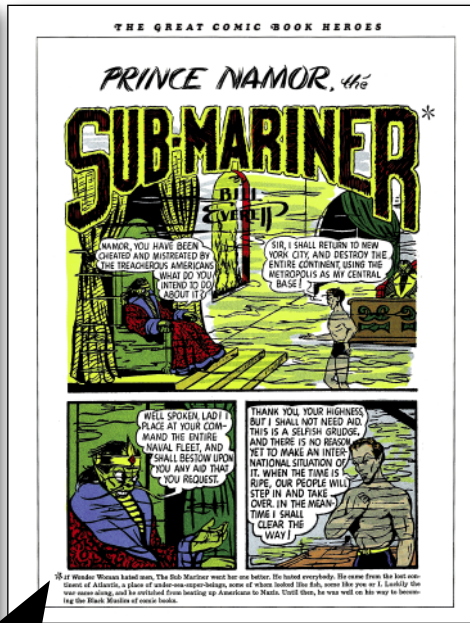
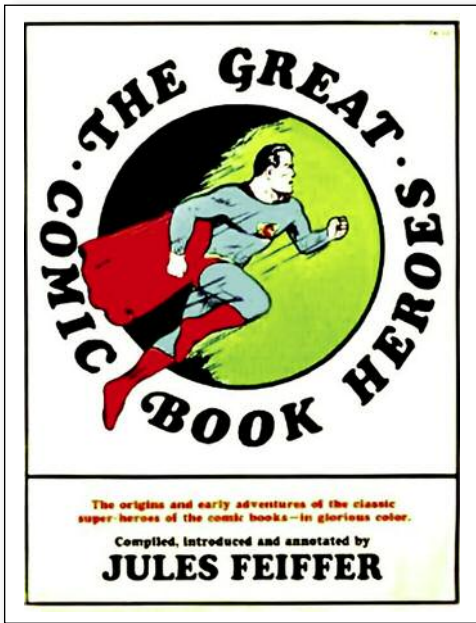
With further vintage stories being reprinted in *Fantasy Masterpieces* #7, 8, & 9 in 1967, I became more familiar with the lost "Golden Age" genesis of Marvel from 1939-41. Of particular interest to me were Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner, and his encounters with the original Torch in *Marvel Mystery Comics* #8-10. The reprints were slightly edited and condensed, but they were all that were available at the time, at least for kids. I saw more of Namor's savage rampage against what he perceived as a villainous America, as the Torch and the authorities tried to stop him. I was also introduced to Namor's undersea people, and was particularly struck by the large-eyed male Sub-Mariners with their huge, spine-like mustaches, which I mistook for products of primitive drawing technique by signing artist Bill Everett. I soon learned not to underestimate his titanic talent, for those undersea guys looked just as their creator

wanted them to look in those pre-revisionist Marvel times.

I also quickly came to look upon the character of Officer Betty Dean with great respect. This clever, classy, charismatic, cute, courageous cop, introduced in the *Marvel Mystery* for January 1940, was originally assigned as a decoy to trap Namor, but soon became his friend, an ally against the Nazis, and the mediator who settled his battle with the Torch and humanity. As a character and a female role model, she was, I think, ahead of her time. I had to get more old mags and learn more.

Shortly after my return from living in England for a year and a half, the opportunities for fulfillment began to present themselves. I was sixteen when I purchased *Marvel Mystery Comics* #78, 81, & 85, for \$15, at My Friend's Book Store in Brooklyn, NY. Before that, I had never seen any older Marvels. That summer, one of the first big conventions for comic book collectors was held in New York.

Meanwhile, Jules Feiffer's 1965 book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, featuring an impressive array of Golden Age reprints, came belatedly to my attention. Among the stories therein was the "Sub-Mariner" episode from *Marvel Mystery* #7. In it, the hero renewed his quest for vengeance, planning to invade and conquer America single-handed. Before long, he was shoving a ferryboat into the path of an ocean liner, wrecking a trestle and train, and hurling the



Comics #1 (the series' first issue lacked the word *Mystery* in its title) was missing its back cover; even so, he treasured it, and it was not for sale. His face beamed with wonder and delight as he made reference to "the Torch in the bottle." For my part, I was transfixed by artist Frank R. Paul's cover rendering of The Human Torch as a fiery, pointy-eared genie with a blazing top-lock. After I snapped out of my trance, I worked out a deal for *Captain America* #1 and *Marvel Mystery* #13, 24, & 28, the earliest issues he had for sale. The batch was priced at \$152, but Roger, perhaps touched by my awe, let me have it for \$125, which constituted my life savings. Then, some big guy at the door was shouting for everyone to get out of there, because the convention was closing soon. What a drag that was!

For the rest of the summer, I found myself dealing doubles of old mags and saving my allowance. I phoned Phil Seuling, who told me he had a beautiful *Marvel Comics* #1 for sale at \$250. I think I worked for my dad in order to earn a little extra. After some rocky negotiations, the two of us went to the Seulings', whose apartment overlooked the famous Cyclone roller-coaster in Coney Island. I think my dad, who didn't approve of my hobby, loaned me \$150 so I could make the purchase before another collector could beat me to the treasure. Upstairs, I recognized Phil as the loud guy at the convention who'd been ordering everyone out. I also met his wife Carole, who, like Phil, eventually did some writing for Marvel, and their two sweet little daughters, whom I recognized from the newspaper photo.

*If Wonder Woman hated men, The Sub Mariner went her one better. He hated everybody. He came from the lost continent of Atlantis, a place of under-sea-super-beings, some of whom looked like fish, some like you or I. Luckily the war came along, and he switched from beating up Americans to Nazis. Until then, he was well on his way to becoming the Black Muslim of comic books.

The Great Comic Book Nostalgia

(Top left:) The cover of the original 1965 Dial Press edition of Jules Feiffer's all-important collection *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, with its Joe Shuster Superman figure. This book, and an excerpt from it that appeared a couple of months earlier in *Playboy*, did much to trigger the nostalgia (or at least the admission of nostalgia) of a number of adults for the comics of their allegedly misspent youth. [Superman art © 2012 DC Comics.]

(Top right:) The splash page of the vintage "Sub-Mariner" story reprinted in *GCBH*, complete with a footnote by Feiffer, enlarged above. His full text for the tome was reprinted by Fantagraphics a couple of years back, but minus the comics reprints, all of which are available elsewhere today. [Sub-Mariner page © 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.; text © 2012 Jules Feiffer.]

dirigible mooring-mast atop of the Empire State Building down upon the crowds below! There was more than a little *King Kong* in the latter two depredations. I was hooked, and I don't think I was the only one, because *The Great Comic Book Heroes* was always checked out from my local public library, and my high school's library, as well.

It was a hot vacation day in July of 1968 when my father brought me some newspaper articles about the convention. One featured a photo of old Henry Keller, a dealer of cartoon treasures, with Gwen and Heather Seuling, young daughters of convention chairman Phil Seuling. On Sunday, July 7th, my father's birthday, he and I took the train into Manhattan to attend the last day of the convention. On the way into the Statler Hilton Hotel, I bought a *Marvel Boy* #1 for \$4. Up on the hotel's 18th floor, I went from table to table, asking the dealers if they had *Marvel Mystery Comics* #1 or *Captain America Comics* #1. Finally, I was directed to Roger Nelson, an elderly, bespectacled gentleman from Chicago with an impressive batch of Golden Age mags, including those two first issues!

Roger explained that his copy of *Marvel*

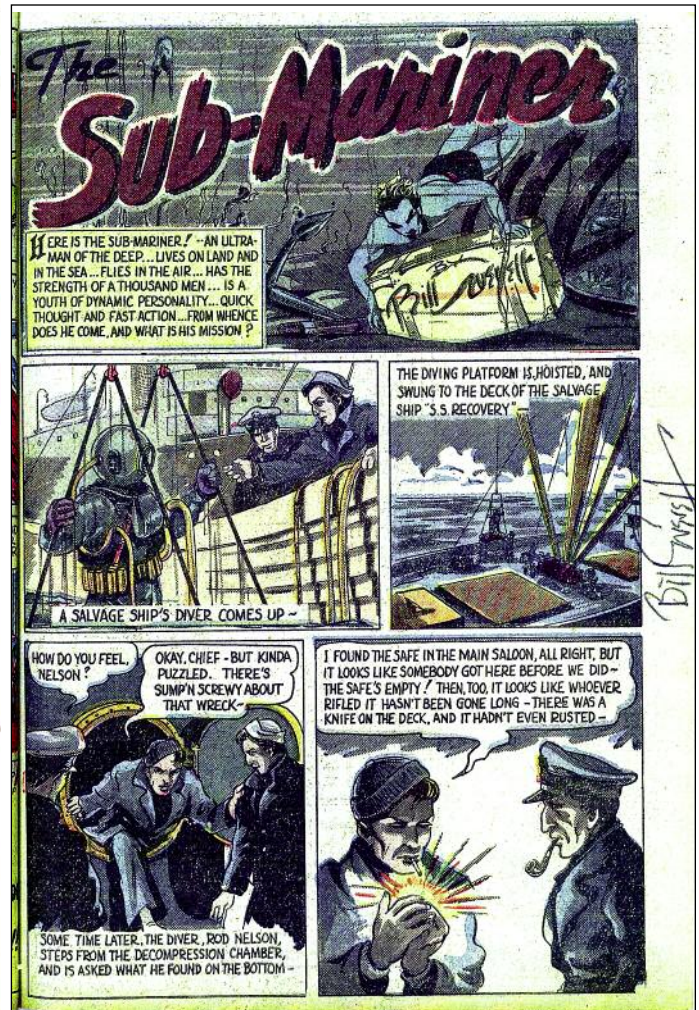
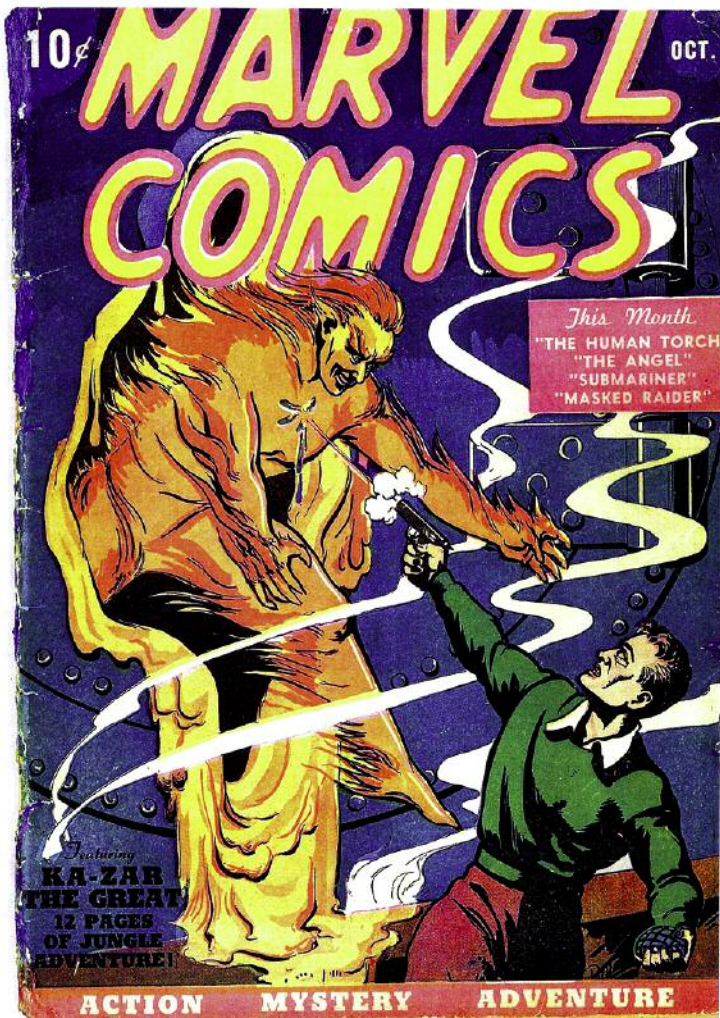
little daughters, whom I recognized from the newspaper photo.

Phil took my dad and me into a little back room, where he kept lots of Golden Age mags and two framed pieces of original art. He pulled *Marvel Comics* #1 from a box on a top shelf. With trembling hands, I glimpsed wonders as I paged through the mag. I noticed that the Human Torch's costume was blue, not red as it had been in the *Fantasy Masterpieces* reprint. I flipped past the debuts of "The Angel" and "The Masked Raider" to reach "The Sub-Mariner," which was drawn by Bill Everett with an artistic process Marvel had been unable to reproduce in *FM*. Apparently the use of Craft Tint, an illustration board that allowed shading by bringing out fine parallel and cross hatchings by brushing two different photographic developers on the illustration boards, combined with the screened tones of the colored inks added at the printers, had been perceived as "muddy" by the artist/writer and his superiors in 1939, so its use was dropped after the first two stories.



Phil 'Er Up!
Comics dealer Phil Seuling at the 1969 New York Comic Art Convention—his first solo con, after he'd been a co-host of the SCARP-Con the year before. Reprinted from *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1] #10, 1969.

Still, I was captivated by Namor's origin: Captain Leonard McKenzie's accidental bombardment of the Antarctic undersea city of the Sub-Mariners; the Emperor's deployment of the lovely Princess Fen as



A Marvel Of The Ages!

(Left:) The Frank R. Paul-drawn cover of the ultra-rare Oct. 1939 edition of *Marvel Comics* #1 that Warren Reece purchased from Phil Seuling. Warren gives its pedigree as: sold by a Mr. Edwards, a Philadelphia druggist/newsagent, to one Paul Zack for a dime in 1939... sold by Zack to Dave Waxman of Great Neck, NY, for \$100 in 1968... sold by Waxman to Phil Seuling for \$150 later that year... and sold soon thereafter to Warren for \$220. Warren's copy has appeared in numerous exhibits and publications, as well as on television.

(Right:) The first page of the "Sub-Mariner" story therein, autographed by Bill Everett at a New York con. The Craft Tint illustration board was intended to achieve a feeling of "depth under water." © 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

a spy among the "white monsters" of the surface ship (written in a beautiful Shakespearian parlance); the ill-fated marriage of Captain McKenzie and Princess Fen; Namor's birth and later discovery of his surface heritage; and his first mission of revenge against the surface people for the deaths and damages inflicted on his people when McKenzie's ship, the *Oracle*, had blasted its way out of an ice floe—an action mistaken by the undersea race as an act of war. Such plotting was to become standard Marvel formula more than two decades later, but it began in *Marvel Comics* #1, back in 1939. I paid every penny I had in the world to Phil, along with a large loan from my father which I repaid over several months. It was the best purchase I ever made, with the possible exception of my original, illustrated *King Kong* script, years later.

"It Was An Ancient Mariner..."

The year went by, and I continued to collect Marvels. I got to know Henry Keller, who had been in the newspaper photo with the Seuling girls, and bought some nice Golden Age Marvels from him and his partner, Al Faruggio, at their old shop on Grand Street in Brooklyn, which looked like a cover for Operation Rebirth, the

project that had spawned Captain America! Finally, July arrived, and, to my great anticipation, there was another of Phil's Comic Art Conventions.

I was hoping and praying I'd be able to buy there the original *Marvel Mystery* battle issues that featured the first cross-overs between the Torch and Sub-Mariner, as well as the second "Sub-Mariner" story with its odd Craft Tint murkiness. Tired but "wired," I packed my English duffle bag (symbol of the comic book collector when I'd visited the market bookstalls in England) with my *Marvel Comics* #1, *Captain America* #1, and maybe a couple of other non-conventional status symbols, and, armed with a \$200 loan, headed off for the D-Train into Manhattan.

On the 18th floor of the Statler Hilton, I found a mob of enthusiasts on line; they soon spread all over every floor area with open suitcases of mags for sale. In the dealer room I quickly spotted a *Marvel Mystery* on a wall—issue #2! With a little negotiating, Tom Altschuler dropped the price from \$100 to 80 bucks!

I had been given a tip by an acquaintance, Jerome Tepper, that one Louis Valladeres, a guy he'd met in Robert Bell's famous comic



Portrait Of The Artist And A Young Amphibian
 (Left:) Presumably, both the artist-portrait and Sub-Mariner figure accompanying the (partly bogus) Everett text bio in *The Human Torch* #2 (Fall 1940; actually the first issue) were drawn by Bill himself; the title utilized his distinctive signature. Too bad much of the line art on Namor's head dropped out, even in the original comic. You can read the whole bio in the hardcover *Marvel Masterworks: Golden Age Human Torch, Vol. 1*.
 [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]
 (Center & right:) Bill E., seen in a circa-1970 photo, drew this Sub-Mariner profile for Warren Reece at a 1969 comic-con, on a piece of typing paper he found lying about, using a felt-tipped pen. Warren still has it. [Sub-Mariner TM & © 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

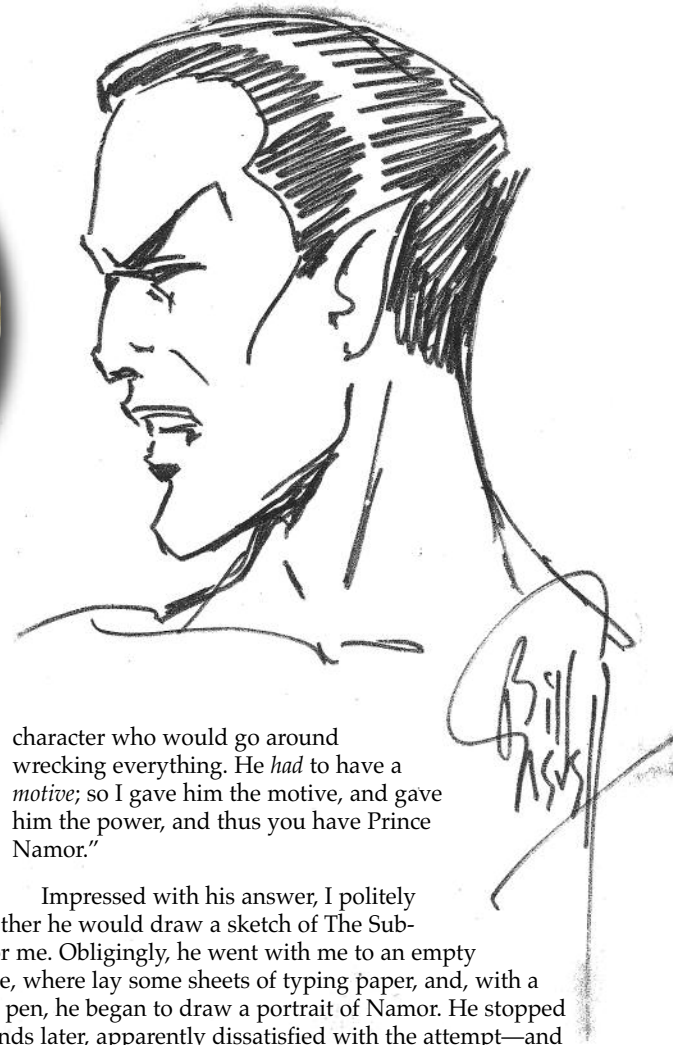
book shop in Queens, was going to be at the show with *Marvel Mystery* #8 & 10. As it turned out, Valladeres also had #7, the issue with the great "Sub-Mariner" story reprinted in Feiffer's book. With some high-powered bargaining, I got the price down from \$120 to 80 samoleons. Thank you, Lord!

Over the next few hours, with the help of my new acquaintance Perry Albert (whom I'd met that morning, as I had writer Nicola Cuti), I met Jeff Gordon, who had *Marvel Mystery* #9, priced at \$75—an absolutely essential battle issue with the famous Torch-Sub-Mariner cover by Alex Shomburg. I had to have it, but he had to have his price, and I only had \$45 left. For the balance, Jeff agreed to take *Captain America* #8, which I intended to repurchase when I was "in the money" again! Wow! What a morning! I had accomplished my mission, and then some!

Broke but ecstatic, I received some exciting news: Later that day, Bill Everett, creator of Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner, would be at the convention! With the same exuberant, almost fanatical drive that impelled me to those fabulous original editions of his work, I went from person to person asking where Everett was, not having a clue as to how he looked!

Soon, in the main dealer room, not far from the spot where I'd bought Golden Age mags from Roger Nelson at the previous convention, I was directed to a tall, slim Caucasian man in his fifties with back-swept black hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a fashionable Army field jacket. I very politely greeted the artist and engaged him in conversation, soon asking him how he had come up with such a great concept as The Sub-Mariner.

"Well," he replied, "I was an angry young man. I was fed up with the world, and I wanted to see the world get what was coming to it! I was fascinated by the sea, so I decided to create a character who came from the sea, and he would have his revenge on mankind. But it wasn't enough to have a super-powered



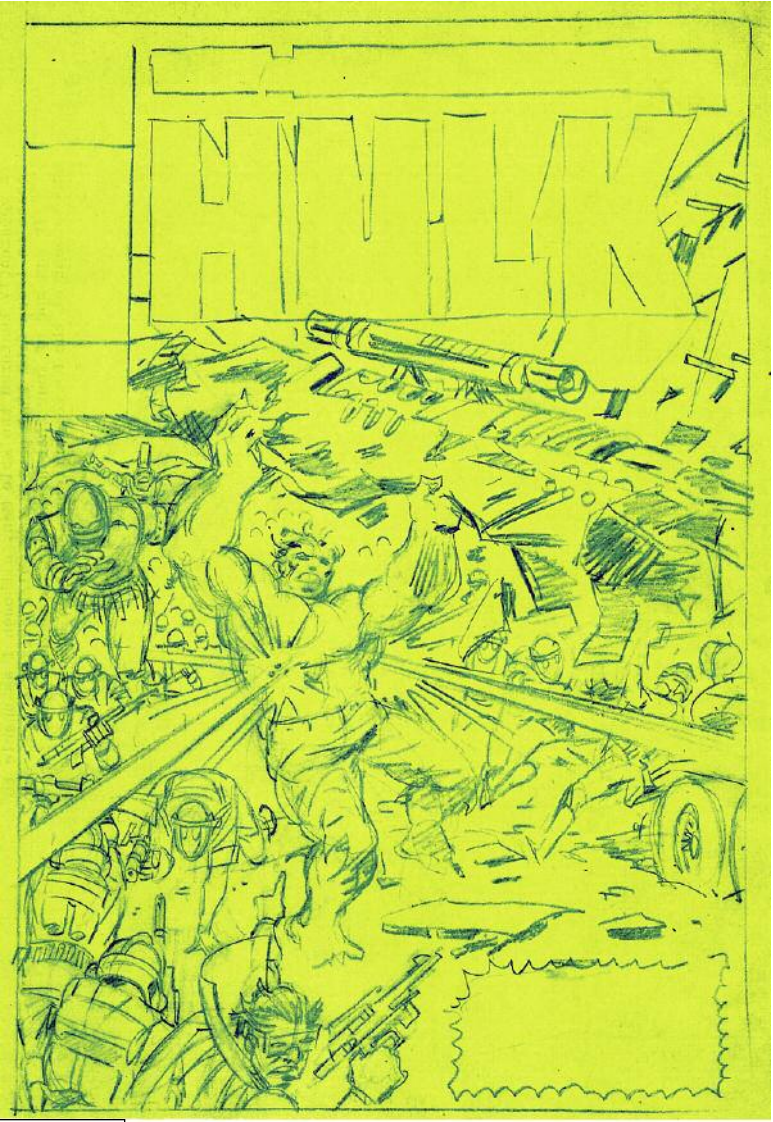
character who would go around wrecking everything. He *had* to have a motive; so I gave him the motive, and gave him the power, and thus you have Prince Namor."

Impressed with his answer, I politely asked whether he would draw a sketch of The Sub-Mariner for me. Obliging, he went with me to an empty dealer table, where lay some sheets of typing paper, and, with a felt-tipped pen, he began to draw a portrait of Namor. He stopped a few seconds later, apparently dissatisfied with the attempt—and began again on a fresh sheet of paper. Within a short time, he completed a nice portrait of his brainchild. He also signed my *Marvel Comics* #1 in the right margin of page 1 of his first "Sub-Mariner" story, then signed the first page of each "Sub-Mariner" story in issues 2, 7, 8, 9, & 10.

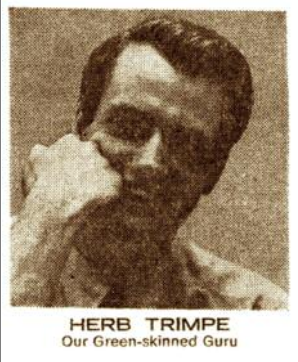
I thanked him for his generosity, at which point he was approached by several other fans who wanted sketches. Patiently, he obliged them all.

I attended the rest of the convention that week, broke but happy; and, each evening at home in the Seacrest Apartments in Sheepshead Bay, I pored over those wonderful, rare old cartoon magazines. I immersed myself into the depths of New York Harbor, the East River, and Central Park Lake with Prince Namor, and into the adventure-fantasy world of William Blake Everett, as richly illustrated in the long-lost pages of *Marvel Mystery* #2, with its undersea Craft Tint look.

As Bill would later explain in an interview with friend, editor, writer, fan, and sometime roomie Roy Thomas (which would eventually be published in *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1] #11, in 1978), the artists had had no control over the way their art was colored back in those early days. Beyond guides for specific costumes, all color decisions were made by the printers, so Bill had attempted to provide watery tones and shadows with Craft Tint. It had line screens that were invisible until two different chemical "developers" were applied, each making a screen of parallel lines appear in black. The overlapping of these tonal screens actually produced a third gradation of black line screening. The results were three



I'd Rather Be Blue
 Herb Trimpe, as per the '69 *FF Annual*, and two of the four blue-pencil cover roughs he generously gave to Warren during that office visit: an alternate Hulk/Glob sketch to the one used for *The Incredible Hulk* #129 (July 1970), and one for a *Hulk* issue which was to have showcased *The Mole Man*, a story apparently not done at that time. [© 2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]



used for selfish gain by profiteers who might sell the signed mags for a higher price—just as (to repeat an earlier image) the Torch had declared, at the end of his debut story, that he would never again allow himself to be used for selfish gain or crime. Off went the letter, and quite a bit of time went by with no response.

"With the 'Foster Fathers' Of Our Heroes"

My later encounters with Bill Everett had some connection with my first appointment up at the Manhattan offices of Marvel Comics, at 635 Madison Avenue, in Manhattan. I managed to get an appointment around two years after my first personal letter from Stan Lee, for whom I had boundless high regard. Upon arrival, I was greeted by a robust, clean-shaven, dark-haired man in a white shirt with rolled-up sleeves. Smiling, he vigorously shook my hand, introducing himself: "John Romita." Away I went with Marvel's de facto art director, who was drawing *The Amazing Spider-Man*, to very good effect, in the wake of co-creator Steve Ditko's resignation; that made Johnny Romita a sort of "foster father" to Spidey.

We settled into a cubicle partition that served as the in-house art department. Sharing the area was a tall young man, also with dark

paper upon which Carl had simultaneously signed his name, forwards and backwards, with a pen in each hand, several times. There they were like mirror images. I thought that was absolutely brilliant: a cosmic power exclusively possessed by Golden Age Marvel cartoonists! Actually, like most magic tricks, it can be performed in a simple, effective way, for people can move their right and left limbs in relatively symmetrical patterns if the movements are simultaneous.

Remembering his telling me that he had never autographed any other mags, and recalling a story I'd heard about a fan who'd had Frank Frazetta sign a paper cup and then sold the darned thing, I asked Carl in my letter whether he might want to let the several signed mags in my archive *remain* the only ones he ever signed. I reasoned that, if he didn't autograph any others, they would become incredibly important collector's items, as well as not *being*

wonderful thing happened there. Chairman Phil Seuling presented Bill with a lifetime achievement award. It did my heart good to learn that this modest man, so under-discussed by overall fandom, was receiving that special recognition before an enthusiastic crowd of cartoon fantasy aficionados and professionals. There was Seuling, a giant in the collecting field, a man who had revolutionized it, giving more than a trophy to Bill: giving attention, appreciation, respect, recognition, and warmth, to Bill Everett, one of the great “fathers” of our heroes.

Not too long after that ceremony, Bill suffered a heart attack. He seemed to rally toward recovery, though. His family, friends, and colleagues were hopeful. However, the period of alcoholism, and years of smoking, had done too much damage to him. He had another heart attack. Gary Friedrich recalled going to visit Bill in Manhattan’s Roosevelt Hospital. About the last thing he remembered Bill saying was: “Friedrich! Get me a damned cigarette!” Bill Everett soon died—way *too* soon. He was only about 56 years old.

Like most of Bill’s admirers, I didn’t learn of the loss until I read of it on the Bullpen Bulletins page in a Marvel comic, around three months later. It was a loss that would become more and more meaningful to me during the years that followed.

Bill’s pal, Carl Burgos, survived him by around a dozen years. At one of the lunches Carl regularly attended with Marvel head letterer Danny Crespi, Morrie Kuramoto (I think), and perhaps others, Carl announced that he had cancer. In the brief period that followed, they still got together with him when it was possible, and kidded him that he’d beat the silent, hidden villain. How wonderful that victory would’ve been!

Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 **—And A Shot On Live TV**

Bill and Carl were gone, but their legacies lived on. Around two years after Bill’s death, the estate of John Compton, a writer who had once worked for the Funnies, Inc., studio that had produced the contents of *Marvel Comics #1* for publisher Martin Goodman, yielded some amazing and controversial items. One was a drawing of the Torch by Carl Burgos, in the revised style he used for *Marvel Mystery #4*, with a notation indicating to Goodman that it was the new look for The Human Torch (mainly, we could see his face when he was aflame); it eventually sold at auction for approximately \$4,000. An Everett color rough of the rampaging Namor,



A Man of Marvels

Comic book phenom Alex Ross painted this portrait of “Wild” Bill Everett and his immortal creation, Prince Namor, which graced the cover of the second edition of late Jerry Weist’s *Comic Art Price Guide* (2000).
[Art ©2012 Alex Ross; Sub-Mariner TM & ©2012 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

intended (but not used) for the cover of *Marvel Mystery #2*, fetched a reputed \$14,000 at auction. Those prices exceeded any I’d heard for cartoon-book art at that time.

Perhaps the most controversial items in the history of cartoon-magazine collecting also emerged from that estate: five copies (one of them incomplete) of *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1*. The proposed premium giveaway had a color front cover, with a solicitation to theatre managers on its back, which told them how they could contact Funnies, Inc., if they wanted to carry it in their theatres. Its black-&-white interior included the first eight pages of the origin and debut of Bill’s “Sub-Mariner,” pages which also appeared in *Marvel Comics #1*. The empty caption box in the final panel of page 8 was filled with the words “Continued Next Week.”

MPFW #1 was soon marketed by dealer Don Phelps as the first appearance of “Sub-Mariner,” and the rarest, most valuable comic book in the world. The publisher of *The Comic Book Price Guide* bought the incomplete copy for a reputed \$2,000 and promoted the magazine in the *Guide*. The promoters claimed the use of Craft Tint illustration board proved that Bill Everett created Namor for the black-&-white *MPFW*.

Marvel super-collector George Olshevsky and I became the primary opponents of those claims.

These people had perhaps failed to read the definitive Everett interview published in 1978 in *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1] #11, prior to the discovery of the then-unknown *MPCW #1*; it would be reprinted in *A/E #47* in 2005. In it, Bill stated that he had used Craft Tint to give the feeling of being underwater, and he related the problems that had occurred in *Marvel Comics #1* and *Marvel Mystery Comics #2* when the Ben Day color dots were printed over the Craft Tint black line screens. He clearly speaks as if he had intended the feature for Goodman’s color mags, but didn’t count on the consequent muddiness that would occur in the printing processes.

The rare specimens of *MPFW #1* were continually promoted as the first appearance of “The Sub-Mariner,” and were offered for thousands of dollars apiece. The asking price for a sixth copy that was later revealed, accompanied by vintage studio notes concerning the pay for each feature listed in it, was in the tens of thousands of dollars, while prices for copies of *Marvel Comics #1*, including the pay-noted specimen from that publisher’s estate, skyrocketed way beyond even those for the sample movie premiums, as the years rolled by.

Meanwhile, I continued my efforts to bring public attention to

“I’m Responsible For What I’ve Done”

Part III Of A Candid Conversation With Veteran Artist TONY TALLARICO

Conducted by Jim Amash Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

INTERVIEWER’S INTRODUCTION:

In parts 1 & 2 of this interview with the comic book artist (and sometimes writer), we discussed his entry into comics as an assistant to various artists and his early work for Avon, Youthful/Story, et al., as well as his long partnership with fellow artist Bill Fraccio both for Charlton and elsewhere. This time, we conclude the part of our talk that deals primarily with the Charlton years. —Jim.

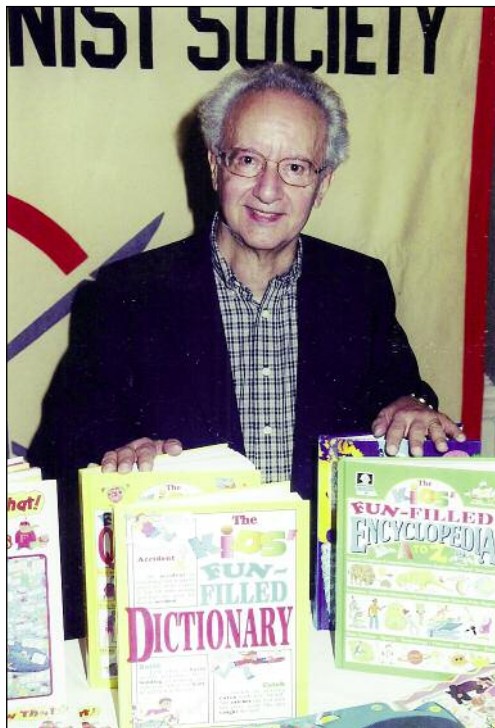
“[Editor Pat Masulli] Was Always The Boss’ Pet”

JIM AMASH: You started working at Charlton under Al and Blanche Fago. Pat Masulli soon became your editor. Tell me about him.

TALLARICO: I felt he didn’t really know that much about comics, editing, or anything else, but he was there. He was a body, which is all you can say about most of the people who were there. I guess that’s a criticism to say that somebody was just there. He didn’t strike you as being brilliant or bad or anything. Masulli had a coloring company with a man named Pallet, but that didn’t mean he [knew much about putting a good book together]. As far as my work was concerned, he was very uncritical.

JA: How long did Charlton have that New York office?

TALLARICO: They had it for several years, because at one time they had a knock-off of *Playboy* that they were doing out of that office. I don’t remember the title.



Tony Gets Toasted

Tony Tallarico at an exhibit of his work, at a “Berndt Toast Gang” function in conjunction with the National Cartoonists Society—and a chapter-splash from *Gerónimo Jones* #1 (Sept. ’71) that he both scripted and inked, with pencils by Jose Delbo. That issue’s opening splash was seen last issue. Tony says in this installment that creating, writing, and inking the latter series was his most pleasurable experience at the Connecticut-based comics company. Thanks to Gary Watson for the comics page scan. [Page © 2012 the respective copyright holders.]



JA: After Charlton closed the New York office, did you go in person or did you do it by mail?

TALLARICO: By messenger. They would send a messenger down to the city, and we still met at the same office. Only they weren’t Charlton anymore—it was a law office, and they allowed Charlton to use the office as a drop-off or pick-up area. Then I started doing illustration spots for their Word Search magazines. Somebody at Charlton went to Canada and saw a Word Search magazine, and thought it was great, so they did a knock-off.

JA: You hardly ever went to the Derby, Connecticut, offices?

TALLARICO: I was there twice. Once for this magnificent feast to try to talk us all into moving up there; and the second time, Sal [Gentile, editor] invited my whole family to have a barbeque at his house, and we had to stop at Charlton to pick him up. It was a

Saturday or something. He worked half a day.

JA: Do you think Masulli paid much attention to the content of the material?

TALLARICO: No, and here's an example. Once, he asked me if I knew anybody who could write? I said, "Yes, I have a friend of mine who is a very good writer, and is having a bit of a problem getting work. Let me ask him if would be interested." And he was. This guy's name was Don Siegel [NOTE: Also spelled "Segall." —Jim]. So he was writing for Charlton, and everything was okay for a while. Then one day, Masulli said to me, "You've got to change writers. I don't like his stuff. His stuff is terrible." Now, Pat had never met Don Siegel face-to-face. I said, "Okay, I'll look around." And Masulli said, "I want to meet the guy that you choose." I called Don. "Hey, look. He's never met you. Get a different typewriter, do a different layout, and let's see what happens. There's no reason not to use you! Your stuff is fine for what they do." And Don did this.

I showed Pat the work, and he loved it. He wants to meet this guy. So one Wednesday, Don went up there with me, using the name "Max Weldon." We sat at a big conference table and I said, "Pat Masulli, this is Max Weldon." "Oh, I'm glad to meet you. You're a terrific writer, and we can keep you busy all the time." End of story.

Don was a very nice man, very talkative. He came from Boston and his family was involved in entertainment. They had travelling shows and things like that, but he was a very smart, clever guy. He wanted to break into show business. He later left comics to go into television and wrote a number of episodes for various TV shows, but he never became an important writer in television.

I remember my daughter and a couple of her friends went to California on a vacation, and I gave them Don's address. "He'd love to see you." But they chickened out. They drove by the house, and there was a car parked in the driveway, and on the license plate was the phrase "REWRITE." [laughs] Rewrite, that's probably what he did. That's what most screenwriters do, rewrite each other's stories.

JA: Did he write anything before he worked with you?

TALLARICO: Yes. I met him at Dell. He wrote *Car 54*, which I drew. He wrote a lot of stuff for them. He and [editor] D.J. Arneson were good friends.

JA: And then you brought him into Charlton.

TALLARICO: Well, that's another fiasco. One day, I guess Don was feeling his oats, and he said to D.J., "You'd be doing me a favor not to give me any more comic work. This way, I'm forced to go to the West Coast." So Arneson took it literally, and never gave him

another piece of work. That's why he was desperate for work.

JA: What did he write for you?

TALLARICO: Generic stuff, mostly romance stories. He wrote for me as Don Siegel, for maybe six months, seven months. And then as "Max Weldon," I would think about two years.

JA: Speaking of names, you and Bill Fraccio were "Tony Williamsune," which was spelled two different ways.

TALLARICO: Yeah, depending on who lettered it. That was Jim Warren's idea. I guess he didn't want to have any association with any other publishers that we were working for.

JA: Was Pat Masulli the type of guy to initiate a new series at Charlton?

TALLARICO: Yes. He was the one who created *Son of Vulcan*, or so he claimed. Masulli wrote the first story, and then Joe Gill took over.

JA: I don't have the impression Masulli was creative. He may have been told, "Let's start doing super-heroes."

TALLARICO: I'm sure of that, because he was always the boss' pet. He did anything the boss wanted, and the strange thing was that he was fired, and I have no idea why. Masulli was editing comics, and then they replaced him with Dick Giordano.

JA: Nobody knows why he was fired. If Joe Gill knew, he wouldn't tell me. Joe Gill hated him with a passion.

TALLARICO: Oh yes, I know that.

JA: When I told him Pat Masulli was dead, he said, "Good." When you were in communication with Masulli, how much of it was by telephone?

TALLARICO: Probably 95%. We talked maybe once a week, once every two weeks, depending on the amount of work that he needed. He was giving me a list of things to do.

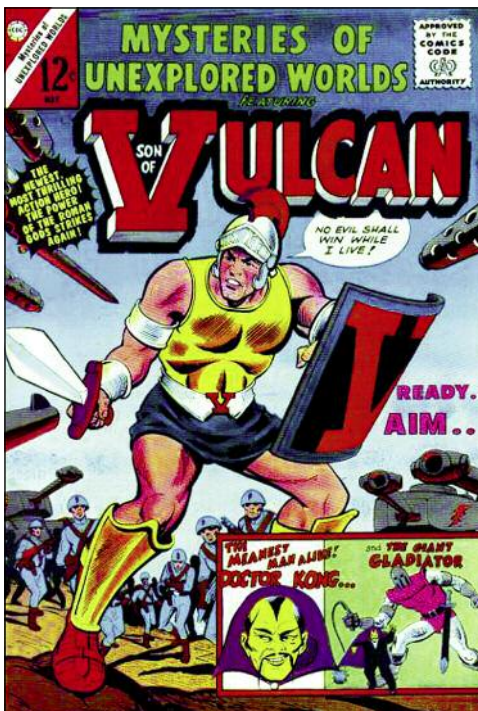
"The Only Good Thing About Working For Charlton"

JA: In the case of *Son of Vulcan*, Roy Thomas wrote the final issue, and he wrote a *Blue Beetle*. Those were his first comic book stories. In fact, when you saw Roy's name on a script, you probably didn't even pay any attention, I'd imagine.

TALLARICO: True. I mean, I didn't know him, and I always thought, "Nobody knows us." [laughs] You know, we just do what we do, doing something because we have to make a living, and you don't worry about the other stuff.

JA: What did you think of the "Son of Vulcan" idea?

TALLARICO: I thought it was not bad. I mean, you had to give it a little time for it to generate, and the problem with Charlton was



Mysteries Of Unphotographed Editors

Future Charlton editor Dick Giordano's cover for *Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds* #46 (June 1965), introducing "Son of Vulcan," a feature that was apparently the brainchild of then-editor Pat Masulli. Thanks to the Grand Comics Database; see info on p. 72. With #49, the comic's title was officially changed to *Son of Vulcan*—but it still crashed and burned with #50, the issue written by Roy Thomas (for panels from that one, see A/E #106). This mag's editor has tried for years, to no avail, to locate a photo of Pat Masulli, who as Charlton's editor bought the first two comics scripts he ever sold. [Son of Vulcan TM & © 2012 DC Comics.]

“Being A Cartoonist Didn’t Really Define Him”

Spotlight On Golden & Silver Age Inker MIKE PEPPE
—By His Wife FERN PEPPE And Others Who Knew Him

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Dewey Cassell

INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:

Inkers are the unsung heroes of comic artistry. Their craft is often undervalued and their contribution frequently overlooked. But there are many pencilers of the Golden and Silver Ages whose graphite was refined, enhanced and improved by the work of exceptional inkers. The best of them were able to finish the artwork, leaving it better than when they started without overpowering the pencils with their own style. Mike Peppe (pronounced “pep’-i”) was one such unsung hero, whose inks graced the work of such legendary comic artists as Alex Toth, Mike Sekowsky, Steve Ditko, Mike Roy, John Celardo, and George Tuska.

Mike Peppe was born on October 4, 1921, in the Greenwich Village area of New York City. His family was of Italian descent, but his parents were born in America. His father worked as a truck driver and later as a bartender. His mother raised four children, of which Mike was the oldest.

Mike started with the S.M. (“Jerry”) Iger shop in 1944. Iger had many clients, Fiction House being one of the biggest. Rumor has it that Mike left Iger after making a delivery to Fiction House and discovering that company had much better working conditions. Mike joined the staff at Fiction House in 1945. While at Fiction House, Mike penciled and inked a number of two-page filler pieces with titles like “Jungle Facts” that appeared in Jungle Comics and other books of their line. He remained at Fiction House for several years, working with artists like Celardo, Tuska, and Bob Lubbers.

Mike left Fiction House in 1948 for Standard Publications, where in



The Hands Of Mike Peppe

Mike Peppe during the comic book years—and the splash page he inked superbly over Alex Toth’s dramatic pencils for Standard’s *Adventures into Darkness* #9 (April 1953), as re-colored for the mid-1980s Eclipse reprint title *Seduction of the Innocent*. Scripter unknown. Thanks to Fern Peppe for photos and other artifacts accompanying this piece; all comic art herein was provided by Dewey Cassell, unless noted otherwise. [Page © 2012 the respective copyright holders.]

some respects he made his biggest mark in the comics industry as art director, alongside editor Joe Archibald. Mike worked closely with artist Alex Toth at Standard, and the two of them defined the style by which Standard would be best known in both romance and adventure stories. Mike reportedly encouraged Standard artists to draw like Toth, but Mike’s own influence is clearly evident in the brushstrokes of other inkers who were working at Standard at that time, such as Frank Giacoia.

Mike left Standard in 1954. As a freelance inker, he did some crime, adventure, and romance stories for Timely and St. John. He also assisted Mike Roy on newspaper strips such as Ken Weston and Nero Wolfe. In addition, he was one of the artists who contributed to the Picture World Encyclopedia.

As a member of the National Cartoonists Society, Mike was invited to play in a celebrity golf tournament held every year at Shawnee on the Delaware, a resort in the Poconos owned by Fred Waring, renowned bandleader and inventor of the blender. Mike, George Tuska, Al Plastino, and others, along with their wives, were treated to a weekend of luxury, hobnobbing with the likes of TV star Jackie Gleason.

Starting in the mid-1950s, Mike worked predominately for Dell (and later Western Publishing), frequently inking the pencils of Mike Sekowsky and Mike Roy. Peppe worked on unique Dell properties (e.g., Frogmen), as well as on many of their media-related titles such as Around the World in 80 Days.

He later also worked for DC Comics, where he inked horror stories in House of Secrets and Steve Ditko's pencils in the last couple of issues of Beware The Creeper. Mike's last work for Western and DC was in the early '70s, after which he did little other comics work before his untimely death in 1982. Mike was survived by a sister and brother, his two children, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and his wife Fern.

—Dewey.

Interview With Fern Peppe

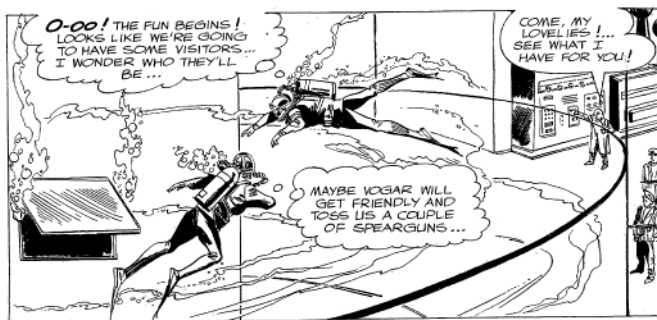
Mike married Fern Bishop in July 1944. In this interview, conducted in October 2005, Fern Peppe talks about her husband, his work, and their family. The interview was copy-edited by Mrs. Peppe, and preceded the passing of Alex Toth, John Celardo, and George Tuska.

DEWEY CASSELL: Where did Mike go to school?

FERN PEPPE: He went to high school in Brooklyn. When he graduated, he went in the Army. After he left the Army, a very good friend's mother asked him to come work in a glove factory in Manhattan. That's where we met. I worked in the office and he worked as a shipping clerk. A year later, we were married.

DC: Did Mike go to art school?

PEPPE: Not a day. My husband learned how to ink by himself. He



CREDITS: DENNY ONEIL - WRITER - STEVE DITKO - ARTIST - MIKE PEPPE - INKER - DICK GIORDANO - EDITOR - THESE NATIONAL LLY-KNOWN BEINGS BRING TO PROSPERITY ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE SAGA OF THE WORLD'S MOST BIZARRE HERO.

THE COLOR OF RAIN IS DEATH!

used to sit with the black ink and a brush and do swirls, brush-strokes. That's how he became a very good inker.

DC: How did Mike get into inking professionally?

PEPPE: Before we were married, I saw some of his work, samples of drawing that he did, and I felt that he was very talented. I kept pushing him. One day, he came back to the house, because I had quit my job in the office and I was looking for something locally. We weren't even married a year. He came up the stairs and said, "I have an appointment. I came back to get my samples." They weren't anything like you would do today. He took his samples to this man, Jerry Iger. Iger wanted to hire him for \$18 a week. But the last thing I said to him when he left the house was, "Mike, don't work for less than \$25." So, he told Iger, "My wife said I can't make anything less than \$25 a week." So they hired him. The war was on, so they could use another person.

He stayed there for a short time. He sat on an egg crate and was learning how to use a brush and developed a very good talent for it. He left there and went to Fiction House on 40th Street and Fifth Avenue, right across from the Library. Every month, he would get one picture about an animal, say, a bear, and he did a story about it that was included in the comics. Then he went to Standard, and after a while, he was put into the position of art director.

DC: Who did Mike work with at Standard?

The Frogmen Creep In On Little Frog Feet...

After leaving Standard, Peppe inked for Dell and DC, among other companies. Here he is over Mike Sekowsky pencils on Dell's *The Frogmen* #9 (May-July 1964) and over Steve Ditko on *Beware The Creeper* #5 (Jan.-Feb. 1969). The *Frogmen* page is repro'd from black-&-white photocopies of the original art. Its script is by Don Segall, *Creeper's* by Denny O'Neil. [Frogmen page © 2012 the respective copyright holders; Creeper page © 2012 DC Comics.]



A Sekowsky Double-Dip

At both Gold Key (Western) and DC, Peppe inked some interesting work penciled by Mike Sekowsky—and he did it up proud. The script for the moody page from *Twilight Zone* #6 (Feb. 1964) is attributed to Dick Wood—while the "Supergirl" tale in *Adventure Comics* #398 (Oct. 1970) was written as well by Sekowsky. The latter, Dewey Cassell notes, was the first appearance of the Maid of Steel in a re-designed costume, but the artists clearly hadn't quite got the hang of it yet: note the missing "s" symbol in panel 2, and the indication of fingernails on her gloves! [Gold Key pages © 2012 the respective copyright holders; "Supergirl" page © 2012 DC Comics.]

supplemented his income. We lived very nice. We never lived poor. I had a beautiful home on the Island. In those days, you could buy a house for five or six thousand dollars down. We bought it in 1960 and we sold it in 1970. My mother passed away and we went to live in New Jersey in my father's house because he was alone.

DC: Tell me about the *Voice of America*.

PEPPE: My husband applied for a job at the Voice of America. He had a very good friend in Washington, DC, Mike Roy, who went to work for the Voice of America in the art department. He encouraged Mike to fill out an application for it, because it was a steady job. This probably was about 1970-something. Mike asked for too much money, so he didn't get that job. He had quite a few disappointments. That's part of living and you have to accept them.

DC: Did you save any of Mike's comics?

PEPPE: No, I'm very sorry that I didn't save his comic books. I have to be honest with you. I never read comic books as a kid. Every month, when we got a check, we received two issues of whatever comic book he worked on, that his inking was in. They would kick around the house for a couple of weeks, and then I

would say, "Honey, we don't need these books. Do you need these books?" "No, that's okay."

We used to go to Frank Giacoia's house and he would be working downstairs in the basement. We didn't socialize with him too much, maybe once a year. He had files and files filled with reference material and books. And I would be throwing Mickey's books out.

DC: Did Mike do any advertising work?

PEPPE: He did *Smokey the Bear*. And he also did *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* My husband did Jackie Gleason's comic book, too. If my husband were alive, he could tell you so much.

DC: Did Mike ever get any original art back?

PEPPE: He had a few [pages]. I don't know what happened to them. I don't have any of Mike's artwork. Very seldom do you see his name on his artwork.

DC: Did it ever bother him that he didn't get credit?

PEPPE: He didn't care. He really liked what he did. Do you know how many men go to work that hate their jobs? My husband never



THE CAPTION THAT ACCOMPANIED THIS LIFE MAGAZINE PHOTO READS "ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH OF CHARLES ATLAS, 'WORLD'S MOST PERFECTLY DEVELOPED MAN,' IN THE ACT OF TOWING THE 72 1/2-TON CAR ALONG THE TRACKS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD."

IN 1939, IN A REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL PUBLICITY STUNT, ATLAS PULLED THE OBSERVATION CAR OF THE BROADWAY LIMITED ALONG 112 FEET OF PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD TRACK. IN 1941 THE FLEISCHER BROTHERS BEGAN WORK ON THEIR THIRD SUPERMAN CARTOON, "BILLION DOLLAR LIMITED," WHICH WAS RELEASED ON JAN. 1942.

THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE ATLAS PHOTO AND THIS SUPERMAN CEL ARE OBVIOUS. THE ATLAS STUNT WAS WELL-KNOWN, AND LIKELY INSPIRED THE SCENE (NOTE THE SIMILAR NAMES OF THE BROADWAY LIMITED AND THE BILLION DOLLAR LIMITED). IN HIS SPARE TIME ATLAS ALSO BENT STEEL BARS AND RIPPED TELEPHONE BOOKS IN HALF! TODAY WE'LL DISCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT THE REAL MAN OF STEEL...

**CHARLES
ATLAS!**

Before Crowds of Thousands



World's Most Perfectly Developed Man TOWS NEW "STREAMLINER" 112 FEET

New York, N. Y.—Charles Atlas demonstrated his might before a group of reporters and photographers by pulling the 145,000 pound observation car of the famous "Broadway Limited" a distance of 112 feet along the tracks at Sunnyside Yards (Long Island) of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Charles Atlas— Man And Myth!

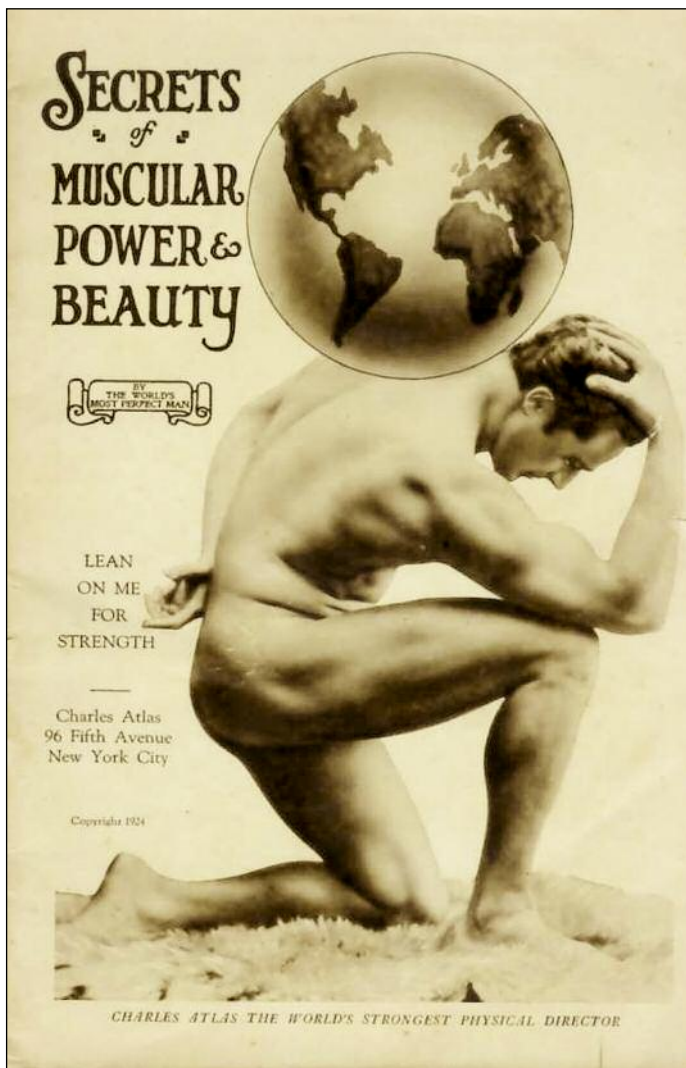
by Michael T. Gilbert

If Charles Atlas had never existed, Angelo Ciciliano would have had to invent him.

Come to think of it—he *did*!

According to his *New York Times* obituary, Ciciliano was born on October 30, 1893, in Acri, Calabria, Italy. When he was ten, he moved to Brooklyn and changed his name to Charles Ciciliano.

He later changed it again to become the iron-muscled Charles Atlas, legendary icon of those famous comic book ads. You know, the ones where poor slob got sand kicked in their faces until they wisely bulked up with the Atlas Course—and instantly became the Hero Of The Beach! But how many fans know anything about the man himself?



No Sweat!

(Above:) Charles Atlas has the world on his shoulders on this cover to his 1924 booklet, *Secrets of Muscular Power & Beauty*. [© 2012 Charles Atlas Ltd.]



At 15, Atlas was so puny that he practically invited a punch in the snoot—but look at him now!



Young Atlas!

(Above:) "At 15, Atlas was so puny that he practically invited a punch in the snoot — but look at him now!" reads the caption in *Life* magazine, April 17, 1964. But when the same photo appeared in 1924's *Secrets of Muscular Beauty and Power*, it listed his age as 11! Also, he was called both Angelo and Angelino Ciciliano back then. But this 1941 letterhead shows the Charles Atlas we grew up with! [© 2012 Time-Life Books, Inc.]

According to Robert Lewis Taylor's article "I Was Once a 97-Pound Weakling!" (*New Yorker*, January 3, 1942), Charles was indeed the archetypal skinny nerd. Taylor writes, "A picture of him in his mid-teens shows a spindly youth standing in an attitude of listless dejection. People who lived in the neighborhood remember him as being sensationally feeble. Atlas does not misrepresent the facts when he cries out in his advertisements in the pulp magazines, 'I was once a 97-pound weakling!'"

According to Taylor, the 16-year-old Ciciliano was inspired to change his puny physique after seeing a statue of Hercules at the Brooklyn Museum. Disappointed with the standard muscle-building techniques, he came up with another method while watching a Bronx Zoo lion keep in shape by flexing his muscles. Charles called his system "Dynamic Tension," based on the idea of "pitting one muscle against another."



Proof Positive!

(Left:) Charles Atlas won the "America's Most Handsome Man" contest in 1921 and the "America's Most Perfectly Developed Man" contest in 1922, as proven by this \$1000 check and certificate, (made out to Angelo Siciliano Atlas).

Fandom's 50th Birthday Bash!

Part 1: The Reunion Party—A Photo-Feature

by Bill Schelly

When I heard, sometime in late 2010, that the Comic-Con folks had designated the 50th anniversary of comic fandom as one of the themes of their next mega-gathering in San Diego, it occurred to me that this would be a perfect opportunity to have some sort of a Fandom Reunion.

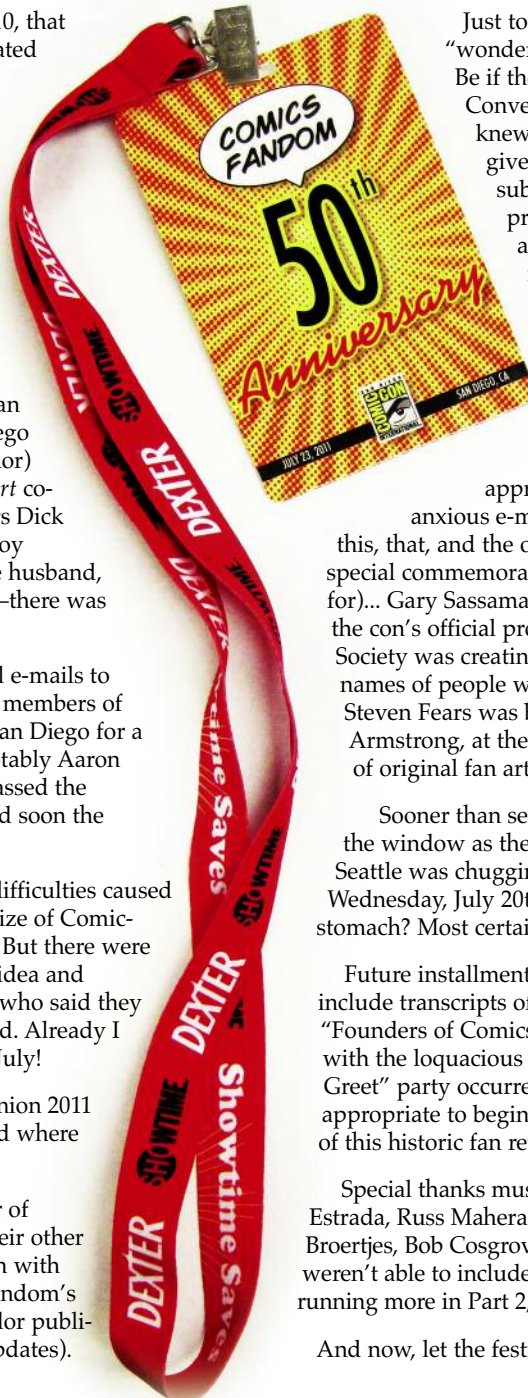
The 1997 Fandom Reunion held in Chicago during the 1997 Chicago Comicon was one of the greatest experiences of my fannish life. How could meeting Jerry Bails, Howard Keltner, and Grass Green and the other 29 old-time fans in attendance *not* be an immutable memory? And, since the San Diego con would be bringing in (as Guests of Honor) celebrated fan writer Richard Kyle, *Comic Art* co-editor Maggie Thompson, *Xero's* progenitors Dick and Pat Lupoff, *Alter Ego* co-editor/editor Roy Thomas, and Jean Bails on behalf of her late husband, the founder of *A/E*—as well as yours truly—there was already a good start for a special gathering.

Accordingly, I sent out the first of several e-mails to my mailing list touting the idea and urging members of fandom from those early years to come to San Diego for a 50th-anniversary blow-out. Others, most notably Aaron Caplan (fanzine collector extraordinaire), passed the query-announcement to even more fans, and soon the buzz began building.

Understandably, the expense and other difficulties caused many to opt out. For some, the staggering size of Comic-Con was more than they wanted to handle. But there were also those who enthusiastically ratified the idea and vowed to be there, and a fairly large group who said they would like to go and would see if they could. Already I was looking forward to the fourth week in July!

But.... to *what*, exactly? How would Reunion 2011 come together, what form would it take, and where would it be held?

Enter: Gary Sassaman, intrepid purveyor of peerless publications for Comic-Con and their other events. Actually, I had already been in touch with Gary, when I contributed an article about fandom's history to the *Comic-Con Annual* (the full-color publication that has taken the place of the old Updates).



Just to get his reaction, I sent Gary an e-mail “wondering” the best way to ask the Powers That Be if they would provide a room at the San Diego Convention Center for a reunion. Next thing I knew, the CCI Board of Directors had not only given us a room, but had committed substantial funding to the event (to print programs and provide food). We were off and running! Saturday night, July 23, 2011, in the San Diego Convention Center, the reunion/party—now dubbed a “Meet and Greet”—was officially “on”! (And, happily, longtime fan Jackie Estrada, chair of the Comic-Con committee, was deemed coordinator of the event.)

As Comic-Con and the Reunion approached, excitement built. Flurries of anxious e-mails arrived from fans wanting to confirm this, that, and the other thing. Aaron Caplan designed a special commemorative button (which he generously paid for)... Gary Sassaman lined up “history of fandom” features for the con’s official program book... the Shel Dorf Memorial Society was creating a display... Jackie Estrada kept a list of names of people who had RSVP’d her e-mail invitations... Steven Fears was bringing the Guest Book... and Dave Armstrong, at the eleventh hour, organized special displays of original fan art and photographs to line the room.

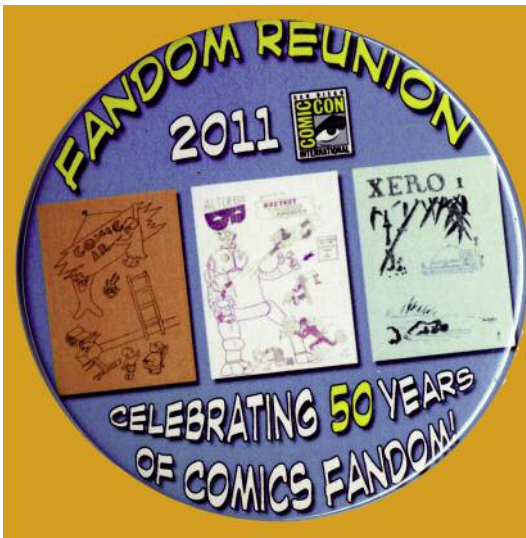
Sooner than seemed possible, I found myself looking out the window as the ancient Boeing 737 that I’d boarded in Seattle was chugging over downtown San Diego on Wednesday, July 20th. Could that really be butterflies in my stomach? Most certainly it was!

Future installments of the Comic Fandom Archive will include transcripts of the special “Fanzine” panel and the “Founders of Comics Fandom” panel, as well as an interview with the loquacious Richard Kyle. But, though the “Meet and Greet” party occurred after those panels, Roy and I felt it was appropriate to begin our coverage with a 2-part photo feature of this historic fan reunion.

Special thanks must obviously go to the photographers: Jackie Estrada, Russ Maheras, Aaron Caplan, Dave Armstrong, Lorraine Broertjes, Bob Cosgrove, Bill G. Wilson, and Batton Lash. We weren’t able to include a pic of all 150 guests, but we will be running more in Part 2, as well as a list of everyone who came.

And now, let the festivities begin!

NOTE: This is the first installment of our extended, multi-issue coverage of the “50th anniversary of comics fandom” events at Comic-Con International 2011 (San Diego).



(Above:) The commemorative Fandom Reunion button, depicting the 1960-61 covers of *Comic Art* #1, *Alter Ego* #1, and *Xero* #1, was designed and paid for by Aaron Caplan. One was given away free to each attendee as a memento of this historic gathering. It measures 3" in diameter.



(Above:) The Reunion Program, designed by Gary Sassaman, gave each attendee a place to gather autographs of fandom's founders and others on hand.



(Above:) Jackie Estrada hands out badges at the registration table for the Fandom Reunion. Also on the registration table were programs, special buttons, and a guest book. Later, it was determined that about 150 people were in attendance. Photo: hubbie Batton Lash.



(Above:) As they approached the registration table, Lorraine Broertjes snapped this photo of a trio of fans from the Sunshine State (left to right): Gary Brown, Alan Hutchinson, and Harry Broertjes.



(Above:) Moments before it filled up, Bill Schelly (#1), Bud Plant (#2), and Mark Wheatley (#3) were already inside the large room in the San Diego Convention Center that was provided for the event. Photo: Aaron Caplan.



(Left:) Fans are quickly drawn to the wonderful displays of fan photos and original art from the fanzines put together by Dave Armstrong. The original art was donated by Buddy Saunders, Mike Vosburg, and others. Photo: Dave Armstrong.

P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

No. 167

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Roy Ald

The Fiery Finale

[Captain Midnight art by Leonard Frank ©2012 the respective copyright holder.]

“Is This What I Want To Do For The Rest Of My Life?”

The ROY ALD Interview, Part 5 (Conclusion)

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Shaun Clancy

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

Roy Ald was an editor and writer for Fawcett Publications' comic books from 1946 to 1953, applying his talents to such titles as Wow Comics (featuring Mary Marvel, the Phantom Eagle, Commando Yank, Mr. Scarlet, and his comical creation "Ozzie and Babs"), Captain Midnight, Don Winslow of the Navy, This Magazine Is Haunted, Captain Video, Life Story, Worlds of Fear, Strange Suspense Stories, Beware! Terror Tales, Gabby Hayes Western, Sweethearts, Suspense Detective, Negro Romance, and others, as well as developing Fawcett's early graphic novel experiment, Mansion of Evil, before editing various Fawcett magazines after the publisher terminated its comics line. Ald later moved on to other noteworthy publishing ventures with various companies and also authored dozens of books—predominately in the health and fitness fields.

Last issue, the 90-year-old Mr. Ald shared with interviewer Shaun Clancy more memories of the many people with whom he worked at Fawcett Publications. As we wind up this fascinating five-part discourse, Ald divulges more stories—and a few misgivings—from his publishing endeavors.

—PCH.

SHAUN CLANCY: What happened to you after Fawcett terminated their comics line?

ROY ALD: They transferred me to *True Confessions* magazine, where I worked with all women! [laughs] When the editor needed a quick story, I'd go home and write one for him in one night. The magazine would have its main story—the actual “true” story—but some of the back-up features were fabricated, and whenever

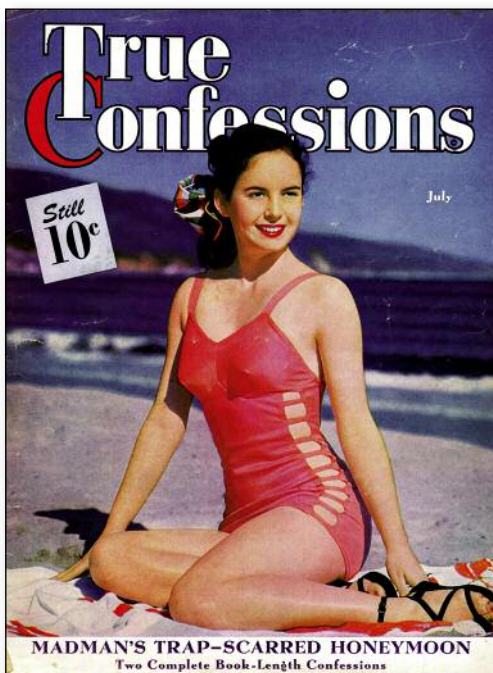
[editorial director] Ralph Daigh found out about anything fictitious being used, there would be trouble. Since it was a reporting-type magazine, there wasn't the need for me to use a pseudonym like I had done with the comics. I once wrote an article in *True Confessions* about a famous court trial involving a \$500-a-night call girl named Pat Ward who had dated a judge, and which became a national sensation. The issue sold very well and, because of the story, they not only reprinted the issue, but Fawcett also published a separate book on Pat. She also became my companion. As a result of her story being published, a large number of high-class call girls in town tried to get me to do their stories—many of whom I spent time with. They kept me busy... but I never wrote a word! [laughs]

SC: Did you ever happen to appear in photographs for any of Fawcett's magazines?

ALD: No, but when I ran a gymnasium in Manhattan, a German investor approached me about doing a muscle/fitness magazine. When I later met with him about getting a job writing for it, he asked me to take off my shirt... so instead of writing for it, I posed in it! [laughs]

SC: After Fawcett, where did you go?

ALD: I had an office at St. John [Publications] in Manhattan after I left Fawcett in 1954. I didn't do any work for St. John; I just had rent-free space there to work on my own publications. One of them was called *Photographers Showplace*. The arrangement I made with Archer St. John when I moved in there was that they cover all the expenses of whatever magazine I was doing at the time.



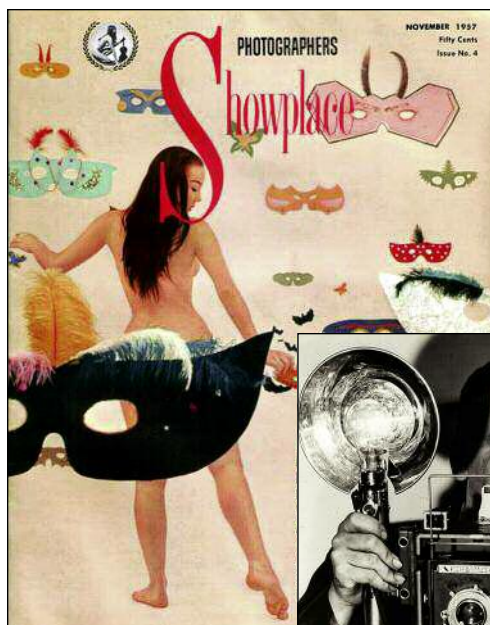
Ald Acquaintance

(Left:) After Fawcett ditched their comics line, Ald transferred over to *True Confessions* and made his mark on that top-selling Fawcett magazine before going out on his own. Above is the cover of the July 1948 issue, released several years before his tenure with the publication.

(Top right:) Ald at the Fawcett offices in 1947, with fellow comics department co-workers Bob Laughlin and (on left) Virginia "Ginny" Provisiero in a cropped photo, which was seen in its entirety back in *A/E* #104. Photo courtesy of Len Leone.

(Right:) As detailed in a recent issue, Roy Ald was a U.S. Army Intelligence officer prior to becoming a comic book editor at Fawcett Publications in 1946. Photo provided by Glenn Ald.

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SC: Bernard Baily had worked with you on Photographers Showplace.



Naked City
 (Far left:) One of the publications Ald produced after leaving Fawcett was a "girlie"-type magazine called *Photographers Showplace*; here's the cover of the 4th issue, from Nov. 1957. Ald's art-directing collaborator during this period was Spectre/Hour-Man co-creator Bernard Baily, whom Ald had met and befriended while Baily illustrated crime, romance, and horror comics at Fawcett during the '50s.

(Left:) Baily's cover for Fawcett's *Beware! Terror Tales* #2 (July 1952)—edited by Roy Ald.

(Inset:) Arthur "Weegee" Fellig, the famous photographer known for capturing grisly street scenes from NYC's Lower East Side during the '30s and '40s, was another Ald friend/collaborator who joined forces with him as his photo editor. Ald later did a book with the photojournalist. [© 2012 the respective copyright holders.]

ALD: Bernard was my art director.

SC: So you had

ALD: Yes. Bernard was the art and layout photographer I worked with for years in 1959 called

SC: Did you keep working with Fawcett after you

ALD: I stayed on with Fawcett and Ray Cohan

SC: How long

ALD: I published there, so long

SC: When you were just getting

ALD: [laughs] I worked in comics! And then I worked in color

SC: How would

ALD: Bernard was very friendly, and I

he deserved something better out of himself than what he was doing. He and his wife had a wonderful relationship. I think he may have said some things about me to his wife, because I don't think she thought very kindly of me. I'm glad he got back into comics, because I felt badly for him when he was doing girlie magazines. I was so glad

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ALTER EGO #108

1970s Bullpenner WARREN REECE talks about Marvel Comics and working with EVERETT, BURGOS, ROMITA, STAN LEE, MARIE SEVERIN, ADAMS, FRIEDRICH, ROY THOMAS, and others, with rare art! DEWEY CASSELL spotlights Golden Age artist MIKE PEPPE, with art by TOTH, TUSKA, SEKOWSKY, TALLARICO Part 3, plus FCA, MR. MONSTER, BILL SCHELLY, cover by EVERETT & BURGOS, and more!

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to handle known friend of mine with him

SC: Was that one of the reasons why you would use a fictitious name when writing books?

ALD: No, that had nothing to do with it. It was just a way to get more assignments. I was one person at one publisher, and another person at another publisher. You needed to do that if you wanted to work at several places at once.



Suspense In Publishing

After a simple phone call to renowned film director and Master of Suspense, Alfred Hitchcock, Roy Ald was the first person to secure the rights to do a Hitchcock magazine ... but he didn't hang on to them for long.

that I got away from it. At the time, I didn't even like what I was doing with comics, *True Confessions*, etc. I had no respect for it.

SC: Do you recall anything else about working with Bernard Baily?

ALD: I remember while working on magazines at the St. John office, sitting there with Bernard—and each day we'd hear from what was called a "celebrity-locating service," who'd inform you where all the celebrities were at the moment... which hotels they were staying at, phone numbers to contact them, and so forth. I picked up the phone once to make a call when a startled Bernard heard me say, "Mr. Hitchcock?" I was talking to Alfred Hitchcock, and I said, "You know, you're doing so well on TV that you should have a magazine." And he said, [imitating Hitchcock's voice] "Do you want to do it?" of which I replied, "Yes!" Then he said, "If you give my daughter an editorial job for \$15,000 a year, then you may do it." That was, of course, manageable, so I acquired the rights and knew I had a valuable property.

SC: So you just cold-called him?

ALD: Yes. The locating service had told me