

ROY THOMAS' SUPERLATIVE  
COMICS FANZINE

# Alter Ego™



\$6.95  
In the USA

No. 56  
February  
2006

A Sensational  
Symposium of  
Super Men!

**JERRY  
SIEGEL**

AND

**JOE  
SHUSTER**

*The Men Who Midwived  
An Industry*



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ADAMS**

&

**JOE  
KUBERT**

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**JACK  
ADLER**

*DC Production  
& Coloring Guru*

**HOWARD  
STERN**

*Radio/TV Iconoclast  
(Oh, Yeah—And Comics Fan!)*



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# Contents

Writer/Editorial: *Faster Than A Speeding Bullet* . . . . . 2

“*Superman’ Grew Out Of Our Personal Feelings About Life*” . . . . . 3  
A previously-unpublished 1975 interview with Jerry, Joanne, & Laura Siegel.

“*I Didn’t Want To Know [What Other Companies Were Doing!]*” . . 22  
Jim Amash interviews DC coloring guru Jack Adler on three dynamic DC decades.

*Jack Adler’s Cousin—Howard Stern* . . . . . 49  
The radio/TV iconoclast says: “Jack, to me, was the star of the family.”

“*Coloring Really Started To Come Back With Jack Adler*” . . . . . 52  
Legendary artist Neal Adams talks about working with DC’s king of coloring.

*Joe Kubert On Jack Adler* . . . . . 61  
A Golden Age great, about school and coloring and 3-D—and friendship.

*Mr. Monster’s Comic Crypt: Fred Kelly Remembered, Part I* . . . . . 63  
Michael T. Gilbert and Robert Pincombe pay tribute to an artist of Canada’s Golden Age.

“*Vive La Différence!*” - *Alex Toth On Comic Art—Your Way!* . . . 69

*The Year of (Nearly) THREE New York Comicons —Part IV* . . . . . 70  
Bill Schelly introduces a 1966 Q&A session with the Comics Code’s Leonard Darwin.

*Tom Gill (1913-2005): “His Influence Changed Many Lives”* . . . . . 76  
re: [comments, correspondence, & corrections] . . . . . 77

*FCA (Fawcett Collectors of America) #115* . . . . . 79  
P.C. Hamerlinck presents Marc Swayze, Michael Uslan, & more Brazilian goodies.

**About Our Cover:** *Three years back, artist Scott Goodell mailed us a photocopy of a piece of Neal Adams art that really knocked our super-hero socks off—and if you didn’t somehow manage to get this far without first noticing this issue’s cover, you already know why it did! But the funny thing is—neither Neal nor Scott nor Jason Millet, who’d provided Scott with that nice photocopy, has any idea of precisely where (or if) this stellar “3-S” drawing was previously published! All the more reason why Roy is grateful to his former and valued collaborator Neal for allowing us to print it for our decidedly un-stellar rates—and for even coloring it especially for this issue of Alter Ego!* [Art ©2006 Neal Adams; Superman TM & ©2006 DC Comics.]

**Above:** *Maybe even the Man of Tomorrow himself is wondering where Neal’s cover illo first appeared, in this nice Curt Swan/Al Williamson panel from Superman #416 (Feb. 1986)! Reproduced from a photocopy of the original art, sent to us by Eddy Zeno.* [©2006 DC Comics.]



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This Issue Is Dedicated To The Memory Of  
**Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster**  
and Tom Gill

# Faster Than A Speeding Bullet

**T**hat's about how *quick* we'll have to be, if we want to squeeze in even a few words before launching into this chock-full issue of *Alter Ego*.

Jack Adler was the kernel of it. Several people, including longtime DC staff colorist Anthony Tollin, said we absolutely *had* to interview Jack, a kingpin of coloring and production there for several decades, starting in the mid-1940s. Equally important, they insisted, were the myriad *photos* Jack has taken over the years of comic book talents, including some DC staffers (such as romance editors Phyllis Reed and Zena Brody) whose likenesses had not surfaced elsewhere.

Jack was agreeable to an extended interview with Jim Amash (with Jim, nearly *all* interviews are "extended" ones—not that we're complaining!). In the meantime, I had the pleasure of spending some time with Jack myself at the 2004 San Diego Comic-Con. (On a bitter-sweet note, that's also where I met artist Tom Gill, who passed away recently; a tribute to him is featured in this selfsame issue.)

Jack, in turn, asked us to contact artists Neal Adams and Joe Kubert, plus his own cousin, radio/TV personality Howard Stern, for additional comments on his career. And, truth to tell, we'd already thought of the perfect Adams-drawn illo for the cover—one of Superman carrying his creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster on his ample shoulders.

This, in turn, spurred us to utilize a previously-unpublished 1975 Siegel & Shuster interview sent to us by Alan Light—as well as two

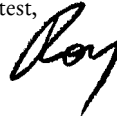
shorter pieces on that all-important team. Nearly before we began work on it, the issue was full—especially when we counted our regular features, which include a tribute to the late Fred Kelly.

A famous quote comes to mind, from Harriet Beecher Stowe's immortal novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, concerning a certain high-spirited slave girl:

"Topsy just growed."

So did this very special issue of *Alter Ego*.

Bestest,



P.S.: Jim Amash sent us the following paragraph, which he hoped could be included in this month's edition, as well.

**Sam Huffine (1931-2005)** was one of my dearest, closest friends. He erased my pages, occasionally filled in my solid black areas, and ruled my panels for most of my comic book career. He helped make what is often a lonely job fun and vibrant with his enthusiasm. He loved comics all his life and was fascinated by its history. Sam represented the very best of comics fans and was the kind of friend one seldom meets in life. The loss is great, but what was gained from his strength is immeasurable. His family and mine will always miss him. —**Jim Amash.**



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# “‘Superman’ Grew Out Of Our Personal Feelings About Life”

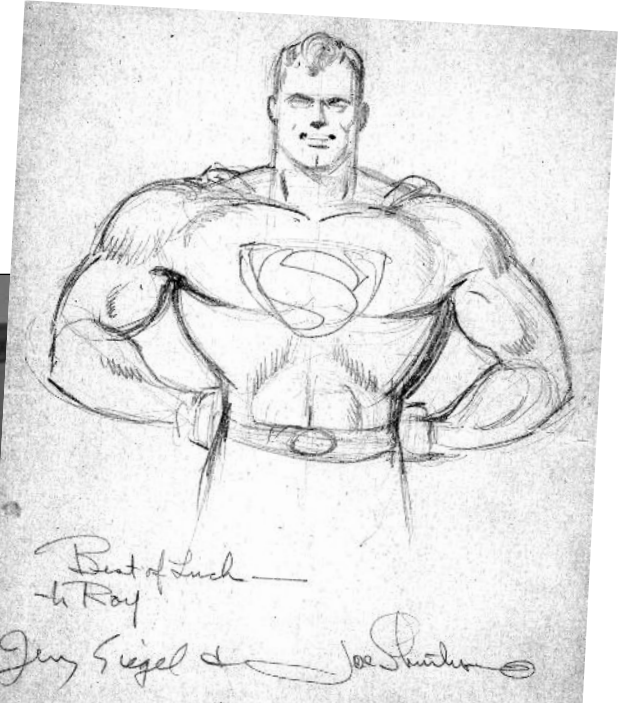
A Never-Before-Published 1975 Interview With JERRY, JOANNE, & LAURA SIEGEL

Conducted by Murray Bishoff & Alan Light

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

**A/E** EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following interview with the original writer and co-creator of Superman (as well as his wife and daughter) occurred at the San Diego Comic-Con in August of 1975. At this time, Alan Light's DynaPubs was publishing The Buyer's Guide to Comics Fandom as a combination advertising and news journal. The tabloid having only recently become a weekly, Alan was attending numerous comics conventions in its interests. Fan/collector Murray Bishoff wrote a regular column for it.*

Murray writes: "Someone whose identity will never be known mailed TBG a photocopy of a legal journal's documentation of the [1948] end of Siegel and Shuster's long-running lawsuit against DC over the Superman copyright." The April 1, 1975, edition of TBG, which was definitely not an April Fool's issue, carried a column by Murray containing what he calls "the only published account of the story anywhere." Reading that column led Shel Dorf, co-founder of the San Diego Comic-



The Superman Family

This photo of Jerry, Joanne, and Laura Siegel was taken at the 1975 San Diego Comic-Con—the selfsame convention at which Alan Light and Murray Bishoff taped this issue's interview. Photo courtesy of Alan Light.

The script page and drawing shown—both courtesy of St. Louis collector Bruce Mohrhard—were done on opposite sides of the same sheet of paper, probably in the very early 1940s, at the latest! The script must be from one of the radio interviews which Jerry mentions he and artist Joe Shuster did in the early days of "Superman". "Heidt" was probably Horace Heidt, who, as Jim Amash reminds us, was a well-known orchestra leader of the 1930s and '40s who had his own radio show from 1932-53. As to the nice vintage Shuster pencil sketch, Roy Thomas wants to assure one and all that he is not the "Roy" to whom the drawing was dedicated—more's the pity! [Materials ©2006 the respective copyright holders; art ©2006 Estate of Joe Shuster; Superman TM & ©2006 DC Comics.]

Con (which was then only five years old) and the Convention Committee to invite Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster to the August event in Southern California. Jerry and his family accepted the invitation.

Murray feels strongly that: "It was from this experience at the San Diego Convention that Jerry Siegel got the strength to get back in the fight. For the first time he had felt the support he always should have known from fans. A little over two months later, he went to the national press with his story." As partly documented in Jim Amash's interview with artist/writer Jerry Robinson in *Alter Ego* #39, this set in action a chain of events that led to the announcement circa Christmas 1975 of an agreement between DC Comics and Siegel & Shuster of an annual pension for Superman's co-creators, and restored credit in both comics and the forthcoming major Superman film. Murray's fuller account of these happenings, too detailed for inclusion in this issue, will be printed a few issues from now. Meanwhile, our thanks to Alan Light (who provided the 30-year-old audio tape, never before transcribed)

GIGANTIC MUSCLES?

JERRY: FROM MY WIFE - THE NIGHT SHE TOSSEL ME DOWN THE BACK STAIRS. (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: SOUNDS LIKE SUPERMAN'S SUPER WOMAN...JOE, SUPERMAN STEPS OVER BUILDINGS, OUT-RUNS TRAINS AND SWIMS DEEPER THAN A FISH...IS THERE ANYTHING HE CAN'T DO?

JERRY: ONLY ONE THING I KNOW OF...HE CAN'T BUY A NEW SET OF TIES. (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: JERRY, IS SUPERMAN GOING TO MARRY LOIS LANE?

JERRY: NO, I DON'T THINK SO.

HEIDT: WHY NOT?

JERRY: BECAUSE IF HE GOT MARRIED, THE SUPERPART WOULD CHANGE HANDS. (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: JOE, DO THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU DRAW SUPERMAN, ASK YOU TO DO ANY OF HIS STUNTS?

JERRY: NO, BUT THE SMALL BOY NEXT DOOR KEEPS STICKING PINS IN ME TO SEE HOW TOUGH MY SKIN IS. (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN HE STICKS YOU?

JERRY: OH, JUST OUCH! (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: I UNDERSTAND YOU BOYS HAVD JUST DEVELOPED THE NEW SUPERMAN ICE-CREAM SUNDAR, THAT'S IN IT?

JERRY: FOUR SCOOPS OF ICE-CREAM, TWO SCOOPS OF CREAMED SALMON AND ONE SCOOP OF CHOPPED GARLIC. (LAUGH)....

HEIDT: WHY CALL THAT SUPERMAN SUNDAR?

JERRY: BECAUSE IF YOU CAN GET PAST THAT, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING SUPERMAN DOES. (LAUGH)....



### Tripping The Light Fan-tastic

Murray Bishoff (left) and Alan Light, around the time this interview was taped. Alan's publication *The Buyer's Guide to Comics Fandom* metamorphosed into *The Comics Buyer's Guide* after Alan sold his interest in it in the 1980s, and it's still going strong. Murray was a regular columnist for what was then referred to as "TBG" rather than "CBG." Photo courtesy of Alan Light.

transcription. Even more problematical was the matter of what to do about certain statements made by the Siegels which in 1975 they did not wish printed. Murray preferred to see the entire interview printed, but deferred to Alan. Here's what Alan had to say about the matter in 2005:

"To get picky and technical, Jerry and Joanne never asked us not to print something; they asked us not to 'put it on the album.' They knew we were recording the interview to put on a record. I'd run everything—for two reasons: One: they [the Siegels] made that request [not to print certain portions of the interview] because Jerry was going to 'write a book and tell all' himself. He kept saying he wanted to save it for his book *No book ever materialized*.... Two: if you take that stuff out, there isn't much of an interview left, is there?... Jerry gave fewer interviews in his life than you can count on one hand's fingers, so what little we've got is still important. The interview is a snapshot of where they were at that time, tears and all. In fact, the latter is what hammers home how traumatic the whole thing was to them. It should all be out there."

Seeing these comments, Murray added: "I'm inclined to go along with Alan for the historical significance of the material. Run it all."

Added to that, from my own point of view, is the fact that virtually all the material which the Siegels understandably held back in 1975, prior to any settlement with DC, is public knowledge today—particularly after the publication in 2004 of Gerard Jones' excellent book *Men of Tomorrow*:



and to Murray Bishoff for making this historic conversation available to us.

Some readers, even with the knowledge that things would get far better for both Shuster and the Siegels by year's end, may find this interview painful to read, at least in part, because of Jerry's obvious anguish over what had happened to Joe and himself. However, because it pulls aside a curtain on a very important moment in comics history, we felt it should be published. It had to be edited somewhat for length—and a few sentences have been omitted simply because they were too unclear for certain

Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book. If the Siegels had revealed anything that seemed as though it should still be "held back" these three decades later, we would most willingly have omitted it. It certainly would give neither Alan, Murray, nor me any pleasure to read (or to print) anything said by Jerry and Joanne Siegel, whom I also knew personally, though not well, any kind of discomfort. But, for all the reasons stated above, we have decided to run a fairly complete transcription of this essential interview.

Please bear in mind one all-important fact: the DC administration to which the Siegels refer is not that of today's management, nor that of then-publisher/editorial director Carmine Infantino (who had assumed power only in the late 1960s, two decades after Siegel & Shuster's lawsuit against what was then primarily known as National Comics), but rather the earlier administrations of Harry & Irwin Donenfeld and Jack Liebowitz, all of whom were gone from the company by 1975.

In addition, we at A/E, while always outspokenly sympathetic to the situation of the originators of the *Man of Steel* (I personally read a statement in support of them on behalf of the

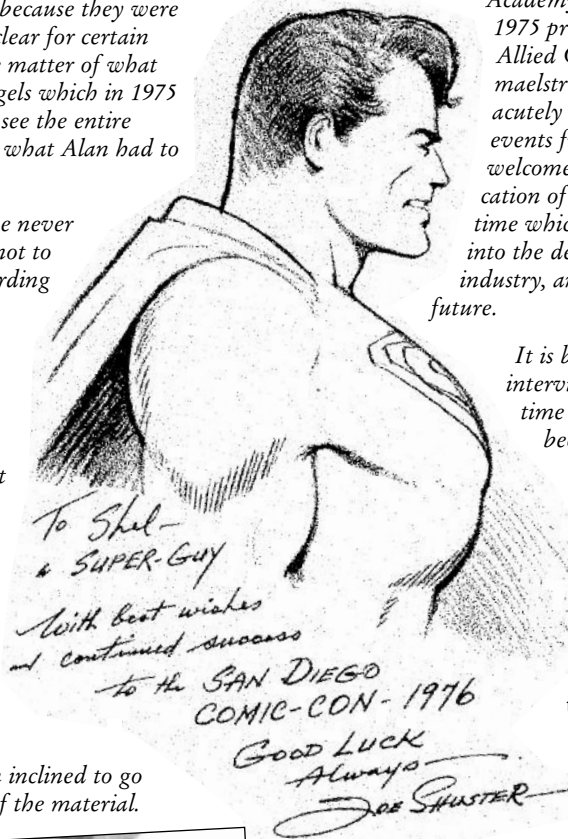
Academy of Comic Book Arts at the crucial 1975 press conference in New York City's Allied Chemical Tower which led in turn to a maelstrom of media coverage of their case), are acutely aware that other interpretations of events from 1938 on are possible, and we welcome their airing, as well. But the publication of this interview documents a moment in time which in 1975 cast long shadows both back into the decades-distant past of the comics industry, and forward into its then-unglimpsed future.

It is both humorous and ironic that the interview begins with a brief discussion of a time long before the San Diego event became the Godzilla of comic book conventions, dwarfing all others:

### "Now We're Really Up On What's Going On"

JOANNE SIEGEL: I understand you have a lot of people from all over the country here.

MURRAY BISHOFF: Yeah. The East Coast is the biggest geographic clump of collectors. The



### Shel, Siegel, & Shuster

(Left:) The first meeting (in Los Angeles, in 1974) between Jerry Siegel (at left) and San Diego Comic-Con co-founder Shel Dorf led to the former's appearance at the con, which helped bring worldwide attention to the Siegel & Shuster cause. Photo by Malcolm Schwartz. With thanks to Shel.

(Above:) The program book for the 1975 San Diego Comic-Con contains no salute to Jerry Siegel; he wanted his attendance there to be kept low-profile. One page of the 1976 program book, however, juxtaposed a "Tribute to Joe Shuster" written by Jerry, and the above sketch by Shuster done for Shel. By this time, Siegel & Shuster had made their settlement with DC, and could look forward to pensions and restored credit. Jerry wrote in the tribute that Joe's original rendition of the *Man of Tomorrow* "was absolutely inspired. There was a nobility, a grace, a force of sheer power, an imaginativeness, a touch of class, a drama, a glint of humor, that reflected certain unique elements in the characters of Joe himself." [Art ©2006 Estate of Joe Shuster; Superman TM & ©2006 DC Comics.]

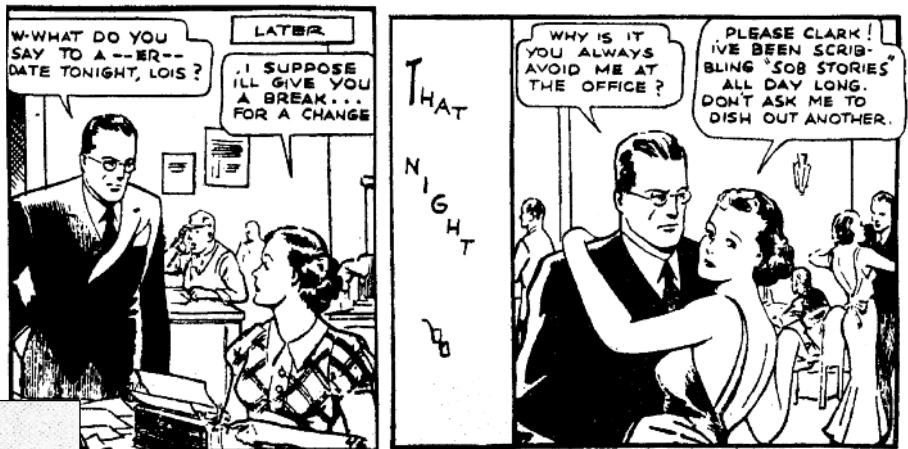
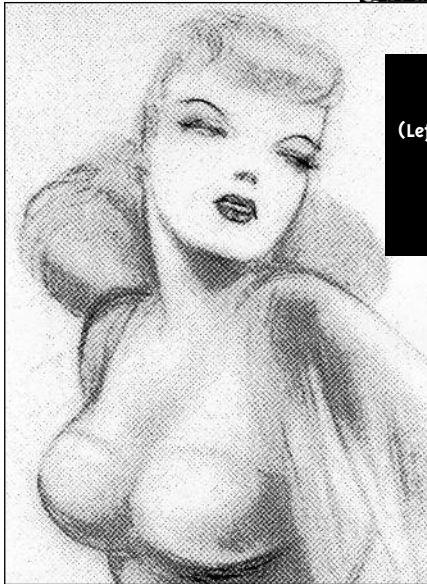
New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania/Massachusetts area there is just one huge glob of collectors. There's no other geographic part of the country that even comes close to that.

**JERRY SIEGEL:** Tell me, Murray, is this the second-biggest convention in the country? How does it rank with New York?

**MB:** This is about, I believe, the second-biggest. The New York convention is known for pandemonium. [laughs] They have a lot of fans come flowing in, and sometimes the dealers room is about three times the size of this one here.

**ALAN LIGHT:**  
This is a lot more fun than the New York conventions. This is so much more personable.

**MB:** There's so many wonderful people here, and we've just had an incredible amount of fun. Usually, you go to conventions and you work, and in the evenings you're ready to get out and run around town a little.



**Lois Lane May Be Superman's "Girl Friend"—But Clark Still Has Trouble Getting A Date**  
(Left:) An early Shuster sketch of a very sultry Lois Lane. [©2006 the respective copyright holders.]  
(Right:) Already in these two panels—the very first in which Lois Lane ever appeared, in *Action Comics* #1 (June 1938)—the dynamic between Lois and Clark was firmly established for another half century or so. Fortunately, Joanne and Jerry got along far better.  
Script by Jerry Siegel; art by Joe Shuster. [©2006 DC Comics.]

### "Joe [Shuster] Always Worked Under The Handicap Of Bad Vision"

**JERRY:** I want to thank both of you so very, very much for not only the mentions that you gave me, which brought me here in the very first place, but [for] some of the photographs you've run in recent issues, such as of Shel and myself. I wouldn't be here except for your people, and particularly Murray and his column.

I sent Joe [Shuster] a copy of your column... and he was very, very touched and very happy. He's off in New York. He doesn't attend conventions at present.

**JOANNE:** We asked him if he wanted to attend and he said no, he's not ready for it.

**JERRY:** However, he did indicate that, depending on circumstances, perhaps he might be able to go in the future.

**JOANNE:** Perhaps. But of course he's over there, and with us, it's a couple of hours' drive. But he couldn't afford the trip. He can barely exist.

**JERRY:** Well, we've had so many traumatic happenings happen to both of us, we wanted to be in seclusion for a very long time. Joe may be coming out of it.

**AL:** How is his health? Is it good?

**JERRY:** It's not too good. He took care of his mother, who passed away before Thanksgiving, and he never married.

**JOANNE:** So he and his brother are bachelors trying to keep each other going.

**JERRY:** Joe always worked under the handicap of bad vision. Working on "Superman"—though I guess if he had been working on anything else, the same thing would have happened—did continue to damage his vision because of the exacting work that had to be done. He gave everything... [chokes] he didn't receive enough.

**JOANNE:** Maybe we can get into something else for a while...

**JERRY:** Well, now that you [*The Buyer's Guide for Comics Fandom*] are coming out weekly, and some of these conventions are proliferating, I imagine it could cut a great deal into your time, and you have these problems of turning out your weekly publications and all the others.

**AL:** Yeah, my mom is home, putting this issue to bed. [laughs] She's been practicing for two weeks.

**JERRY:** I often wonder how you fellows manage to do that. You're turning out such a tremendous production, and there must be a million and one details, and everything has got to be just right.

**JOANNE:** Which is the oldest convention? Is it the New York?

**MB:** Yes. It started in '64. This one's a relatively new one. The science-fiction conventions started out in something like '37, I think [NOTE: Actually 1939. -Roy.]. Something like two dozen people got together. It really takes a dedicated person to decide, "We're going to have a convention," and he's got to be willing to put up with a lot of crap to get it done.

**JOANNE:** Well, Shel [Dorf] and Richard Buckner certainly were busy, busy. They were lovely people, too. And we're delighted to meet you, Alan.

**JERRY:** You two are a lesson to us, after all. [laughs] Now we get your publication every week and we avidly turn to it. Now we're really up on what's going on.

**JOANNE:** Right, because it's difficult when you're incognito and in seclusion.

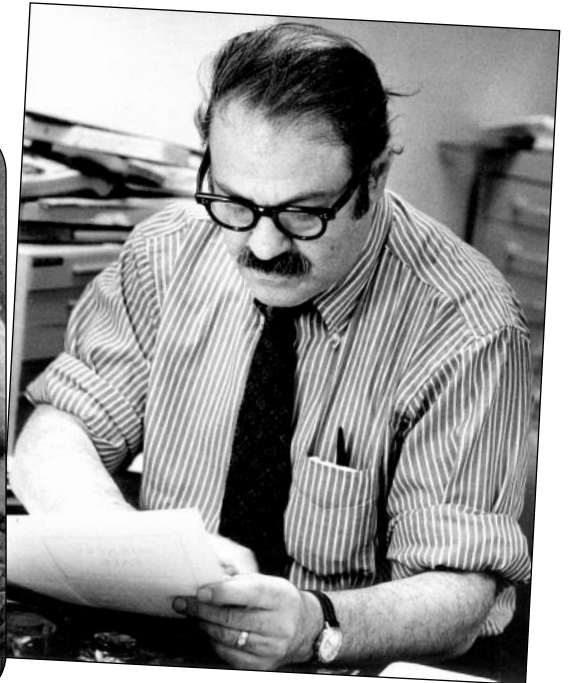
# “I Didn’t Want To Know [What Other Companies Were Doing]!”

Veteran Coloring Guru JACK ADLER On Three Decades At DC

Interview Conducted by Jim Amash

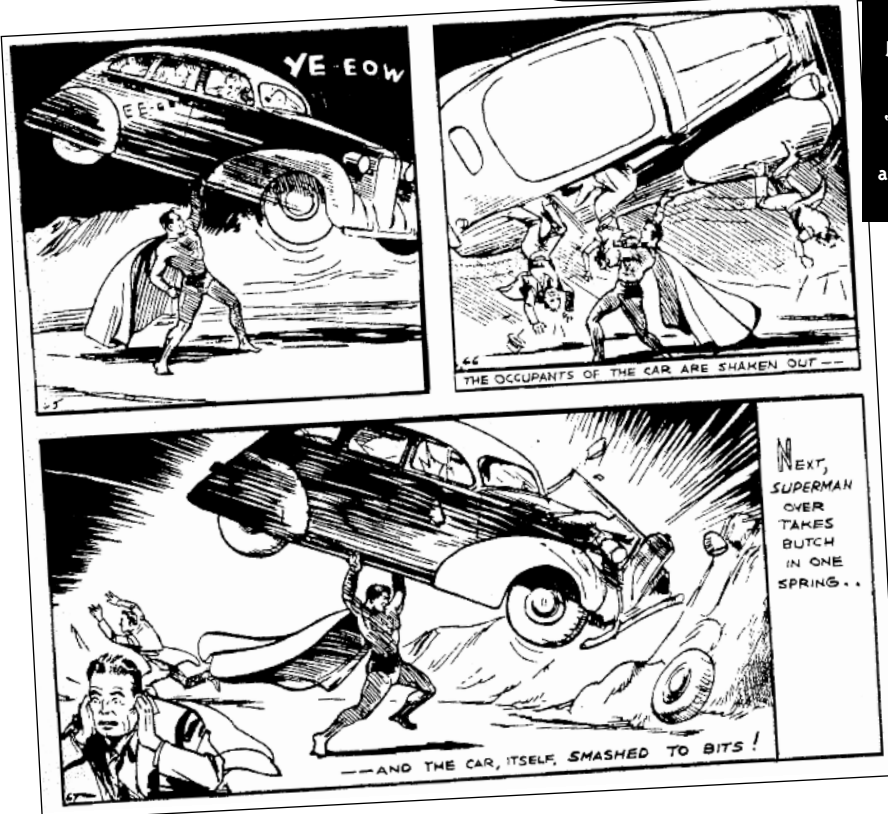
Transcribed by Tom Wimbish

**J**ack Adler’s prestigious career has its roots in the earliest days DC Comics’ first big success, *Superman*. Those roots took hold, as Jack became one of the mightiest oaks in the DC forest. His name may not be familiar to some readers, but in those pre-computer coloring days, Jack Adler was a revolutionary innovator (his introduction of wash covers at DC being one example): the “color guru” of DC Comics. In later years, Jack became the production department head, perhaps training more people than anybody else in comics history. He did it all with hard work and a hearty sense of humor, which has only sharpened during the years. Jack and I had a lot of fun doing this interview, and I’m grateful for the comics education he gave me, and for setting up my conversation with his cousin, Howard Stern. An influential man in both words and deeds, Jack witnessed a lot of DC history, and here he is to tell you about it. All photos taken by Jack that appear with this interview are ©2006 Jack Adler. —Jim.



## Look! Up In the DC Comics Offices...

Jack Adler in the 1970s and as a child with his parents—juxtaposed with art from easily the most important comic with which he was ever associated: *Action Comics* #1 (June 1938), which introduced “Superman” to an astonished universe of youngsters. Jack painted the plates for the engravers of that classic issue. To learn more about what that entailed—read the interview! Script by Jerry Siegel; art by Joe Shuster. [Art ©2006 DC Comics.]



## “I Have A Job For You Painting On Plates”

**JIM AMASH:** *When and where were you born, and how did you get interested in art?*

**JACK ADLER:** I was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 16, 1918, which makes me 40 years old now. When I was six, my mother was called to the school and told that her son was an artist, but this information meant absolutely nothing to her. We lived in the back of a grocery store, and that was her interest. She didn’t do anything with the information that I was an artist.

**JA:** *But you did something about it.*

**ADLER:** Absolutely! I drew and sculpted constantly; I was always making things. I was always good with my hands, and still have a complete workshop. I built a lot of the furniture in my house. Here’s how I got into the art field: I graduated from high school when I was 15 and



**Color-Separated At Birth?**

This photo appeared, courtesy of Jack Adler, in *Amazing World of DC Comics* #10 (Jan. 1976), where it was labeled: "The separations room at 487 Broadway in the 1940s. Sol [Harrison] is on the left, standing by a cabinet. Jack is sitting in the middle of the front row."

went to college, but I couldn't afford it, so I went to night school. I went looking for a job, and for the first year of school, I worked in our grocery store. Then I pushed a wagon in the garment district on Seventh Avenue, supplying furriers with their materials, for \$14 a week. A cousin that I went to school with knew Sol Harrison, and Sol said, "Tell Jack that I have a job for him at Photo-Chrome Engravers." Sol had been in my art class in high school, and my art teacher in school got Sol into that company. He told me, "I have a job for you painting on plates." I had no idea what he was talking about, but I took the job at \$6 a week, painting plates for the engravers. I wanted to be an artist, and using a brush and inks made me an artist. I worked on the engraving plates for *Action Comics* #1, in 1938. The company did newspaper strips as well as comic books.

**JA:** Obviously, this was the first time you saw the Superman character. Did you have an opinion about what you were seeing?

**ADLER:** I don't recall having any kind of reaction to him then. I hadn't read comic books, and had no frame of reference for Superman. I was classically trained, as far as my reading went. I went to Brooklyn College, and also to Hunter College. I switched schools in order to take the art classes Brooklyn didn't offer. I went to school at night and worked in the daytime. I got a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art and my minor was in education. My classes at Hunter were credited to Brooklyn, which was where I graduated. I also went to New York University.

**JA:** Explain how you worked on the plates at Photo-Chrome Engravers.

**ADLER:** I worked on the plates for the color. In other words, I painted red for the solid red areas and opening up the area for the faces. This was for printing; I wasn't doing color guides, which was a separate issue. We were doing very limited color work. The engravers worked in the most arcane

system possible, and I eventually changed that system.

It was a peculiar way of working. We were painting on the metal plates with ink and opening up areas so the engraver could put the dots down for flesh tones. On the Sunday *Little Orphan Annie* newspaper strip, the engraver spent one week on one page. You can't do comic books that way. The company was owned by Emil Strauss, who was a marvelous innovator. Both he and his son were very knowledgeable, and I learned from them.

So that was my job, which I did for a couple of years before I changed our working system. I was working for a union engraver where the minimum scale was \$63 a week. I was getting \$6 a week, which was legal. Finally, our company decided not to take in any work from the outside, and to use only union engravers to do the comic books, which meant there was no way for us to do the books. Emil Strauss told all of us—Sol Harrison, Ed Eisenberg, and me—that we didn't have jobs any more, because the union wouldn't let us do the work. "They want union men to do the work, and I don't know how they're going to do comic books."

I asked Emil, "Does your contract specify the process we use to do the Ben-Day and solid plates?" He said it did, so I read the contract. I went home, thought about it, and revolutionized the process. When I came in the next day, I had worked out another way to do it so that the engraver would have to accept our plates. I realized that the engraver would accept black-&-white work, which we would do. They could accept black-&-white plates, but each plate would be marked red, blue, or yellow. There was nothing that the union could do about it. With this new process, we went from doing one page a week to doing four pages a day. And this idea started a revolution that became a standard all over the world.

**"Touché!"**

**JA:** One of the features you worked on was the *Prince Valiant* newspaper strip.

**ADLER:** I didn't do the coloring, just the separations. The *New York Journal-American* was run by William Randolph Hearst, who submitted the *Prince Valiant* Sunday to my boss. I did four of them, and Hearst came into the place, a giant of a man who awed me because I had learned about him in school. My boss introduced him to me. My boss was a peculiar man: he liked to experiment and move on, so I only did four Sundays.

Shelly Mayer ran the All-American Comics line. [NOTE: The AA company was originally co-owned by M.C. Gaines and National/DC publisher Harry Donenfeld.] We got to be close friends, and used to have dinner together. Shelly asked me what I thought about the coloring on his comics, and I told him that I didn't like it, because coloring wasn't advancing the story. He wanted to give me freelance coloring jobs, but couldn't take work away from his regular colorist. I was dying for the extra work, but there was nothing I could do. One day, I got

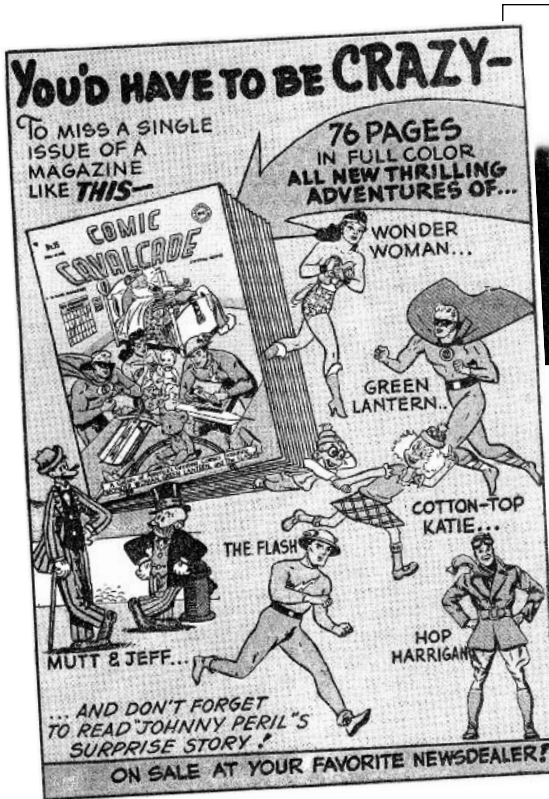


**The Valiant Also Dye**

For a joint interview with himself and DC Vice President/Production Manager Sol Harrison in *Amazing World of DC Comics* #10 in 1976, Jack supplied the above photo of himself hard at work in 1937 doing "color separations" for Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* Sunday strip for Oct. 16 of that year. One of that day's six lush panels is reproduced at left from Rick Norwood's beautiful, giant-size Manuscript Press folio *Prince Valiant: An American Epic - Vol. 1: 1937*. [Art ©2006 King Features Syndicate.]



LYING IN THE MUDDY SHALLOWS AND BREATHING THROUGH THE REED, HE WAITS FOR THE SEARCHERS TO GROW WEARY. 36 10-16-37



### The Editor's The One In The Middle

(Above & left:) Legendary All-American/DC editor (and cartoonist) Sheldon Mayer, the original overseer of all comics featuring "Wonder Woman," "The Flash," and/or "Green Lantern"—including *Comic Cavalcade* #25 (Feb.-March 1948), as per this house ad. Photo by Jack Adler.

(Right:) Before he graduated to his own title, Nutsy Squirrel starred in *Funny Folks*—no doubt the mag for which Adler did his first coloring for Mayer. This later splash is from *Funny Folks* #22 (Oct.-Nov. 1949). [©2006 DC Comics.]



a package from Shelly containing six pages of "Nutsy Squirrel," and everything on those pages was exactly the same: Nutsy Squirrel was sitting against a tree, talking to a rabbit. I decided to make a sequence with simple colors for the backgrounds, like yellow for the morning, light and medium blue for afternoon, and finally, on the last panel, I used purple.

I got a call from Shelly, who said, "I got your color job. Where the hell did you ever see a sky like that?" I said, "The same place you found a squirrel that talks." I heard him chuckle, then say "Touché!" From then on, I had all the freelance work I wanted, which eventually led to my being the "color guru" at DC.

Before that, All-American was doing a comic book called *Movie Comics*. This book used photographs to tell the stories, and they had to do a lot of retouching to make the pictures fit the stories. The retouching required airbrushing. Emil Strauss came to me and said, "You're my airbrush artist." I didn't know anything about airbrush art, but Emil bought an airbrush for me to use. I came in on a Saturday morning and tried to learn how to use it. I was holding it wrong, but that's the way I learned. People were amazed at how I used it, because I was almost doing it backwards, but it worked for me. However, I ruined the airbrush Emil bought in the process of learning.

Emil told me not to worry, because he was going to hire someone to teach me how to airbrush. He hired a European refugee named Emery Gondor, a Hungarian Jew who had been a German newspaperman. He said, "Jeckie dear, you airbrush *this* way." He started using the airbrush, and I quickly realized that he didn't know the first thing about airbrushing. "Emery, do you have a problem?" He said, "Don't worry, Jeckie dear; we will learn together."

**JA:** *The comic companies sent original artwork to Photo-Chrome Engraving. What happened to that artwork once it was used? Did the engraver destroy the pages?*

**ADLER:** No, they sent it back to the publishers, who stored it in a place in New Jersey. When I moved over to DC Comics, my first job was to destroy original art. Jerry Serpe was also there, helping me. One day, I

told Irwin Donenfeld that it was insane, that we should keep the work. Eventually, I set up a process by which we photographed the art on 35-millimeter film, so we'd be able to keep the work on hand, in case we ever needed it again.

**JA:** *If the artists wanted to artwork back...*

**ADLER:** They wouldn't have gotten it. It didn't belong to them at that point. The policy didn't change until many years later, and I had no involvement in that.

**JA:** *As far as I can tell, you worked for Photo-Chrome until around 1945, and then you went to DC.*

**ADLER:** The reason that we—Sol Harrison, Ed Eisenberg, and I—moved over was to do the covers solely for National [DC], not for the entire industry. Photo-Chrome was doing other companies' comics, too, though I didn't work on those. I think Sol and Ed were at National before me, in the production department. I was mainly hired to do color separations, and I started coloring covers.

**JA:** *Did you ever have occasion to deal with Harry Donenfeld or Jack Liebowitz?*

**ADLER:** Not with Donenfeld. My contact with Jack Liebowitz was very limited. He'd come in and ask me for a favor once in a while. His wife was a painter, and one time Liebowitz showed me some slides of her work and asked what I thought of them. I said, "The slide photography stinks. These are no good." He then asked me if I'd make slides for him, and I said I would. He asked, "How much would you charge?" and I said, "You couldn't afford me." Now, here was a guy who was a multimillionaire, and I was working for peanuts. He was very startled by what I said and took me seriously, but I wouldn't charge him for it. I said he couldn't afford me because I'd charge so much that he'd be uncomfortable. So I did the work and everything was fine.

I told him my daughter was getting married, and Jack said, "Fine. Do you need any money?" I said yes. Jack got on the phone and called Bernie Kashdan, who was the bookkeeper, and said, "Bernie, Jack Adler is coming to see you. He'll tell you how much money he needs. Write

him a check and work out a repayment schedule on his salary." Any time I told him I was going to buy something, he'd always ask if I needed money. That's the kind of guy he was.

Jack Liebowitz was one of the founders of Long Island Jewish Hospital. He donated something like a million dollars a year to it. He actually said hello to the first patients admitted to the hospital. He stood at the door and greeted them. It's one of the great hospitals in the country. Jack's first wife was very involved with the hospital, and one of the editors walked in there once and found her scrubbing the floor. In her own home, she had maids, but she would help scrub the floors at the hospital. That's really giving. They didn't make a big deal about it, but that's what she did. Jack donated a building and some other facilities there in her name; the building is called the Rose M. Liebowitz Pavilion. His second wife, who was an artist, was responsible for that ugly sculpture in front of the hospital.

**JA:** *You worked very closely with Sol Harrison.*

**ADLER:** Sol was my friend. He was in charge of the production department, and answered to Irwin Donenfeld and to Jack Liebowitz. When he called me "Jake," I knew he had something for me to do. One day he said, "Jake, I hear some companies are doing 3-D comics. Can you do it?" I said I could, so I sent out for some prints and by that afternoon, I showed him how to do 3-D comics.

I had daily contact with the editors and also with artists, like Neal Adams. Sometimes we discussed how the covers were to be colored before I did them, and other times, the editors would ask me for suggestions.

**JA:** *What was it like to work with Shelly Mayer? I've heard he could be easy to work with, but was also temperamental.*

**ADLER:** He could be temperamental, but so what? He was a gem to work with, a fountain of knowledge with a great ability to communicate. He always knew what he wanted. If he called me at home and my wife answered the phone, he'd talk to her for a couple of hours. He'd play the ukulele over the phone and sing songs. We were as close as two workers could be. He depended a lot on some of my suggestions. Sometimes he knew what he wanted, but didn't know how to get it, so he'd come to me for help.

**JA:** *You worked with the editors, not for them, correct?*

**ADLER:** Correct. We were different departments that worked together, though I'm sure *they* didn't feel like we were equals, since they had to give final approvals. They could tell me to try another color scheme if they didn't like what I brought in, and I'd have to do it.

I would say Julie Schwartz was the easiest to work with.

Because there was no art director, I often had to act as such. Later on, Joe Orlando resented that, but the job fell to me because somebody had to do it. Sol Harrison experienced the same thing. He was an art director most of the time and he was a damn good one. Speaking of being easy to work with, Jack

Schiff was a doll. He knew his stuff and was a real gentleman in the classic tradition.

## "All The People At DC Were Democrats"

**JA:** *Schiff has been described as the "house radical," due to the nature of his politics. Do you know anything about that?*

**ADLER:** I know a lot about that, because we had a lot of political discussions. Jack was a liberal Roosevelt Democrat—*period!* There was nothing *radical* about that. He was interested in what was best for people—the kind of feeling too many have forgotten about. That's all. Some people made too big a deal about it, calling him a Communist, but that wasn't true. Jack was very honest to work with. He was passionate in his interests and cared about his freelancers. I can't think of a nicer gentleman than Jack Schiff.

All the people at DC were Democrats. I'm a Roosevelt Democrat. I voted for him three times and have voted that way ever since. Think about what Roosevelt did for the common people: that's what *I* want. I want free college education for every American that wants to go to college. I want free medical coverage for every American citizen. I want what every Congressman and Senator gets; *that's* what makes me a Democrat. Every American citizen should be entitled to what our leaders get. I'm very politically oriented and I even listen to every commentator who irritates me, so that I hear their opposing viewpoints. I go to bed angry, but I want to know what's going on.

**JA:** *About the only person I knew who didn't get along with Schiff was Jack Kirby.*

**ADLER:** Everybody had problems with Jack Kirby. He wasn't easy to work with; he was an egotist, which made him difficult.

**JA:** *Did you know [editor] Bernie Breslauer?*

**ADLER:** Not really, because he was on the way out when I started at DC. I know he was highly respected, but I don't know anything else about him.

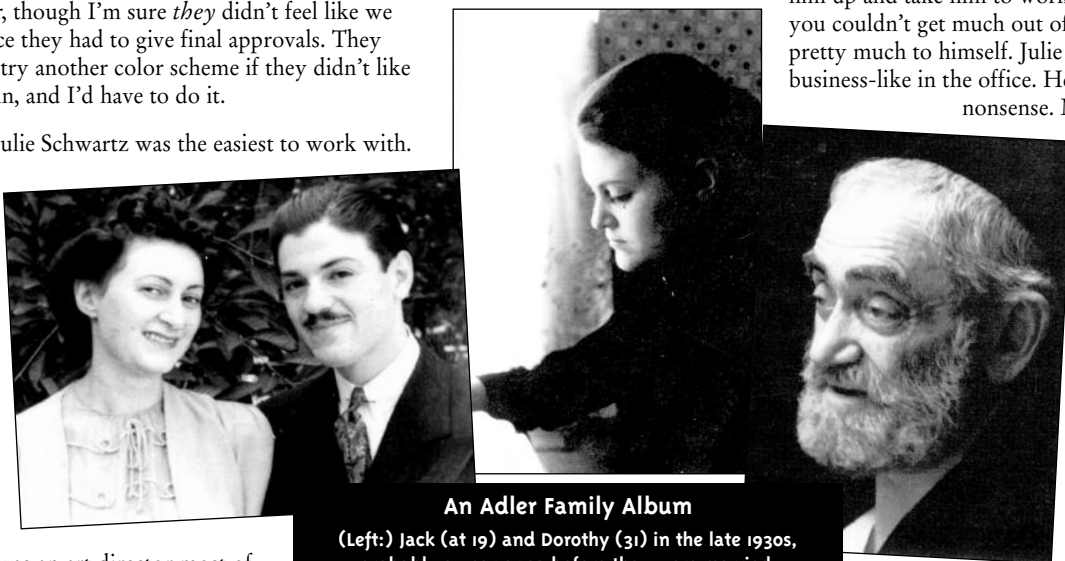
**JA:** *What was Julie Schwartz like?*

**ADLER:** I miss Julie. He was a *mensch*—a real *mensch!* A great human being, very kind, very sarcastic, but humorously so. For example, everybody called me "Jack" except Julie. He called me "Adler." I'd pick him up and take him to work and we'd talk, but you couldn't get much out of him because he kept pretty much to himself. Julie was very reserved and business-like in the office. He didn't tolerate any nonsense. My grandson once read his name as "Julias," and a few of us called him that.

**JA:** *How would you compare working with Julie to working with Shelly or Kanigher?*

**ADLER:** Shelly was easy to work with. He'd make a suggestion, or I would, and we'd

kick it around. Kanigher was a tough egg to work with; he lived in his own world.



**An Adler Family Album**

(Left:) Jack (at 19) and Dorothy (31) in the late 1930s, probably a year or so before they were married.

(Center:) Their daughter Karen. Photo by Jack Adler.

(Right:) A photographic study by Jack of his Uncle Chaim.

# Jack Adler's Cousin— HOWARD STERN

The Radio/TV Iconoclast Says: "Jack, To Me, Was The Star Of The Family"

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Jim Amash

**A**s everyone knows, Howard Stern is one of the major successes in broadcasting history. Just this once, however, he takes a back seat (happily, I imagine) to his cousin—Jack Adler! Jack had told me how nice a guy Howard is, and while I most certainly believed him, it was a pleasure to find out for myself. After our telephone interview, I called Jack and told him how gracious, warm, and funny Howard was with me, and Jack replied, "Say that in your interview!! Put that down in print!" Okay, Jack: I just did! And to Howard: a great big "Thank You" for your time and consideration, and for helping us give Jack the appreciation he so richly deserves. —Jim



## A Stern Taskmaster

Jack Adler's cousin Howard Stern—seen above in a production still from his 1997 film *Private Parts*. Howard says that, as a kid in the 1960s, he liked all the DC titles starring the JLA heroes—so chances are he wasn't exactly unfamiliar with this great Neal Adams cover for *Justice League of America* #66 (Nov. 1968). Repro'd from an image of the original art, as seen in a Sotheby's art catalog. [Art ©2006 DC Comics.]



**HOWARD STERN:** Jack is a very special, special guy who was always very good to me, and obviously, a close family member. It was exciting to be his cousin, because, as a kid, to have a cousin who painted the covers to comic books and was an artist... it was very, very glamorous and exciting and quite magical. Jack was one of those people who was very good to me. I used to go to summer camp and was a huge fan of comic books; I had a massive collection of books because of Jack, who sent me all the first issues. He even sent me an issue of *Superman* written in Arabic, and I had never seen anything like it before. He knew I was a

true fan of comics and knew I appreciated [the books], and I sent him a letter every summer from summer camp that said, "Jack, none of my bunkmates think that you're really working for DC Comics," and of course, that meant "Send some comic books to prove it." [Howard laughs] He knew what was going on and was great about it.

Jack turned me on to *Mad* magazine, which was a huge influence in my life. What happened was that I was begging my mother for a subscription to *Playboy* magazine... I was about 12 years old. Jack heard about it and he sent me a *Playboy* in the mail. I opened it up and it had all these weird little cartoons in it. I was looking at this thing and thinking, "I thought *Playboy* was filled with naked women." What Jack had done was to glue the cover of a *Playboy* onto a *Mad* magazine. So when I opened it up, instead of *Playboy*, I had gotten *Mad*, which I had never seen before. I got quite turned on by *Mad* magazine, more so than *Playboy* because *Mad* reflected my whole sensibility about humor and revolting against authority. [laughs] My feeling about *Mad* magazine is that it was the beginning of the hippie movement, the counter-culture, and standing up to authority for young people. Jack was responsible for that.

**JIM AMASH:** There's quite an age difference between the two of you. Was he more like an uncle rather than a cousin?

**STERN:** Yeah, I was always confused by that. I thought, "How could a guy that old be my cousin?" [laughter] You know what I mean. My mother would say, "No, that's your cousin Jack." That actually made him kind of cooler, because I didn't have to think of him as an uncle,

# “Coloring Really Started To Come Back With Jack Adler”

Artist & Legend NEAL ADAMS Talks About Working With DC’s King Of Coloring

Interview Conducted by Jim Amash

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

**W**hile I was talking with Jack Adler, he suggested I interview Neal Adams about him. Well, I know a good idea when I hear it, and since I had never interviewed Neal (but had always wanted to), Jack didn’t have to do any arm-twisting. I also saw this as an opportunity to ask Neal about DC’s editorial mindset of the 1960s, and how he (and Jack) coped with it. This interview is not just about Jack Adler, but also about the company he was working for when Neal Adams’ art exploded onto the comics scene, spearheading a dynamic and groundbreaking look that still influences today’s comic book artists. —Jim.



## “To Me, Working At DC Comics Was A Step Down”

**JIM AMASH:** Tell me about the first time you met Jack. Do you remember that?

**NEAL ADAMS:** I don’t remember the first time I met Jack, because Jack was in the production room at DC Comics, and I reckon I met everybody when I was introduced around DC, when they decided to let me bring my ungracious self into the production room and sit at one of their vacant desks. This was at a time when they were not bringing new people into DC Comics, so my coming in and sitting at an empty desk was quite an occasion. I don’t think anybody new had come into the production room at DC Comics since Mort Drucker left. It had been something like, I don’t know, 7-8 years since that had happened.

**JA:** Since nobody new had come in there for so long, how were you received?

**ADAMS:** Well, you have to remember that there were many, many dichotomies going on. First of all, I was young, but I had had a syndicated strip [*Ben Casey*] for 3 years, and I had done commercial art for several years before that, starting at 18 years old. From my point of view, I was a working professional, and to me, working at DC Comics was a step down from what I had done before. So using a desk in the production department was pretty much the way it was all the years that I had worked professionally. What you

do is, if you have an artist come in and there’s some reason for him to be sitting there, like maybe knocking out a cover or something, you make, courteously, whatever desk is available and you allow him to sit there and to do his work. So there were people who would come in and sit at a desk. Not very often, you know. Maybe a Russ Heath or somebody like that, but they would be guys who had been there a long time.

**JA:** Like Murphy Anderson.

**ADAMS:** Right. I was a new guy and nobody quite knew what to make of me, so there was a kind-of scoping me out and trying to understand who I was, what I was doing there, what planet I had come from. [*mutual laughter*] Jack Adler made it his business in a very short period of time, maybe a day or so, to come over and say hello and to be a bit more genial than everybody else. Most everybody else was pretty standoffish, except for the letterers. A guy named Joe Letterese was pretty easygoing, and certainly Sol Harrison was not friendly, but Sol Harrison wasn’t paid to be friendly. [*mutual chuckling*] If you asked Sol, that’s what he would have said: “I’m not paid to be friendly.” Eddie Eisenberg was pretty friendly. He was not quite as friendly as Jack, but he was open and comfortable, and I kind-of liked Eddie.

**JA:** On a side note, I’m not quite clear on what Eisenberg did.

**ADAMS:** Neither am I. You know, it’s a weird thing. [*chuckles*] What did Eddie Eisenberg do up at DC Comics? It’s one of those—if Sol Harrison was head of production, and all those other guys were production guys, what did Eddie Eisenberg do? I don’t know, because

I never saw him color. I think he probably had a lot to do with scheduling. He worked as Sol’s assistant, but he wanted to be equal, and I don’t think he liked that he wasn’t.



### “My Favorite Adams”

That’s what Jack Adler calls the above photo, which he took. At right is a pencil sketch of Superman drawn by Neal in the 1970s, repro’d from a Heritage Comics catalog; check out the latest Heritage goodies at <[www.HeritageComics.com](http://www.HeritageComics.com)>. [Photo ©2006 Jack Adler; art ©2006 Neal Adams; Superman TM & ©2006 DC Comics.]

Well, anyway... so Jack made himself known to me and I, of course, because he was that way, I would come over to his desk and say, "What're you doing?" "Coloring this," he'd answer. Now, Jack did spend an awful lot of the time doing the color separations on the covers, so I found his job to be particularly interesting relative to the other guys around there who were doing, probably, the most atrocious coloring I've ever seen in my life. If there was a club for atrocious coloring, there they were. [chuckles]

And they didn't *know*, poor guys. If you only have the production guys around you to draw from, then there's nobody there to set a standard and say, "Well, you know, if you have a giant lobster come from the sea, and he's going to attack your boat, you don't color him the same color as a cooked lobster. A cooked lobster is red, but a *live* lobster is kind-of sea-green, blue-greenish, so you don't color him red." But they didn't have somebody who'd say that, so they'd color the lobster red, because the only lobster they saw was when they went out to eat lobster. [laughs] What you have to do is read the caption, and if it says, "Then the moon came up and the flier could see by the silver light of the moon that this isn't daytime and that's not the sun..." then you'll know it's nighttime. And over here on this page it states, "Seven, that's now daytime." And they didn't do that, so you really couldn't tell day or night if you were reading some of those comics, unless the artist made the sky black. That's one of the things that Alex Toth did that I thought was so good. The scene is set at nighttime? Make the sky black—then how can you miss?

## "In A Group Of Barbarians, [Jack Adler] Was The Civilized Man"

**JA:** Right. So what was Jack like when you started interacting with him?

**ADAMS:** Well, he was friendly. He was cautious and careful for his job, but he was more conscientious than all the other guys, and because he was doing the covers first of all, there were people who'd kind-of complain that he was doing the covers. I guess they couldn't understand it, but when Jack had a daytime scene, he'd *color* it like a daytime scene. [chuckles] In a group of barbarians, he was the civilized man. [mutual laughter] Jack naturally attracted *my* attention because he had the aura of civilization about him, so I could at least sit and talk with him about color, and why this works better than that, and all the rest of it. We had a lot of conversations about the use of color, and about the printing process that we were using at DC, and compared to the rest of the world, which was out of the Stone Age and DC being *in* the Stone Age. You know, they printed with what we call, in the business, "relief presses." Relief presses are pretty much what Benjamin Franklin used. It's *slightly* more sophisticated in its machinery. Basically, it was a press where you put ink on the plate—and the plate is this raised metal—and you put the ink on the raised metal, and it stamps it onto your paper. At the beginning of the run, that's not so bad because the process isn't so terrible. But then, after a while, the stamping of the metal starts to wear on the metal and it starts to flatten out around the edges, and then your



"I'm Late, I'm Late, For A Very Important Date"

The caption accompanying this photo in *Amazing World of DC Comics* #10, in 1976, reads: "Lillian Mandell hands Jack Adler a layout to a late book." She was Jack's secretary at the time.

dots get bigger. When you get down to about a hundred thousand copies, you're pretty much printing as if you were printing on blotter paper. But that was the process that DC Comics used.

**JA:** You had colored your Ben Casey Sundays, weren't you?

**ADAMS:** Yes, and I did color illustration, too. I understood color separation. Color separation today is way, way different than it was then. In those days, you basically broke down your colors into red, yellow, and blue, and you signified what percentages of red, yellow, and blue that you wanted on every color that you put down. The color guides had a fair amount of color on them, but it wasn't very sophisticated. And all the

colors had numbers on them, indicating what color they were, so that the separator would not pick the wrong color and give you a purple face.

**JA:** You say that Jack was more conscientious than the others. That's why he did the covers, because DC thought that's what sold the magazines back then.

**ADAMS:** A civilized man in a room full of barbarians is going to be chosen to do the most important stuff. So complain as the other guys may have done—and they did—Jack was heads and shoulders above them, quality-wise, enough so that there was no comparison. And to release a cover to somebody else... that would almost be like committing suicide. But also, Jack understood more about separations because the color separations for covers were not done in color. He would make a color guide. Nor were they done the way the women in Connecticut that we referred to as "the women in Connecticut who did the color separations for the comic book pages." It wasn't done even by the same methodology.

What Jack would do is, he would take what we call "blue lines" of the cover that were all exactly the same size and he would color the various layers of color—red, yellow, and blue—in tones of gray. Now if you know that, for example, a flesh tone is 25% red and 25% yellow, you learn after a time how to lay down a gray that represents 25% from white to black, what that tonality is. And so you take the red plate and you do that tonality on the face. Then you take the yellow plate and you do the tonality on the face. Then, when these gray tone sheets are sent to the printer, or the separator, what they do is they photograph the grays through a dot plate, and they get a metal plate, and the difference is that on their red plate that's metal and was made from gray, they put red ink and that's what prints. And on the yellow plate, they put yellow ink and that's what prints. And on a blue plate, they put blue and *that's* what prints. So Jack's grays then became the various colors, and that's how you used to get color on your covers.

So Jack not only had to be a good colorist, he had to know through his grays what percentage of his grays actually equaled the colors that he expected to get. That's a pretty sophisticated understanding. You can have that understanding, and not do it well, and get some really bad mixes of color. So essentially, you're doing these separations on these blue lines that will give you exactly what you want on the cover. And that's a skill that, once you've set somebody down, hopefully, you've got the right guy to do it. Nobody's going to step easily into that job.

## "Jack Was Perfectly Willing To Give Me This Information And Get Himself In Trouble"

**JA:** How easy was it to get Jack to open up about how things were done and to talk about it, and maybe even to try something new?

**ADAMS:** Well, remember that I was a subversive. [mutual laughter] And Jack is chatty. You really have to learn somebody's weaknesses, and Jack's weakness is that Jack loves to chat. And so I was willing to have Jack tell me anything and everything to the point of getting him in trouble. [mutual laughter] And Jack was perfectly willing to give me this information and get himself into trouble. Not that the trouble was really bad. I mean, there was no real big problems, but there was the question of, [gruff voice] "Why is Jack telling this guy all this stuff?" Jack was telling me because I was interested. So we had a party who wanted to give information and talk about this stuff, and a perfect recipient for that information who was totally interested in anything and everything that he could learn. It was a great relationship. And Jack had a lot of information to teach.

For example, he taught me how to do 3-D, theoretically. I learned it to the point that, when the opportunity came to do a 3-D album for Grand Funk Railroad, there was essentially nobody in the world that knew how to do the old 3-D technique except me, and I only knew how to do it theoretically from Jack. And I produced a Grand Funk Railroad album cover that truly was the first 3-D job that had been done, I think, in the country—which meant maybe the world—in like 20 years. And I did it all from theory, not having ever done it. So you can tell that the explanation that Jack gave, and that my absorption of that explanation, was a deep and abiding thing that took place over quite a number of hours, where it's not the easiest thing in the world to explain and to get. So Jack and I spent many, many, many hours together kicking ideas around and arguing color theory and all those things. And I was able to bring things to Jack that he didn't know about. Jack was able to teach me things that I didn't know about. That was pretty cool.

**JA:** When you started doing covers for DC, did you talk to Jack about the coloring?

**ADAMS:** I would talk and argue with Jack about my covers, because you must remember that DC Comics was held back, reproduction-wise in many other ways, by the history of what had happened to comic books [in the 1950s]. It was as if DC Comics had stood still for all that time and everything else had moved on. When the time came for me to do work at DC Comics, they were sufficiently far behind in the times that things that I thought were regular, were shockingly new to them.

They didn't know what to do. They didn't know how to approach it. I had to find allies that would at least experiment with me for things that in my head were a given, but in DC Comics, it was like "boogie-boogie" from civilization. For example, I said, "We can print from the pencils; print it and color it, just like black ink." And of course, they said, "No, that's gray." I said, "Well, no-o-o... It's gray when you put it down in a pencil, but if you take a photostat of it... the nature of the photostat will turn whatever you see as a pencil mark, to black."

"No, it won't do that. It's gray," they claimed. They would all freak out and take the art into the photostat room and photostat the pencil, and sure enough, it would turn black and, "Oh, gray turned black." "And now you can print it, right?" I asked. "Oh, I guess we can print it. Are we paying you for inks?" [pause] "Yes, you are," I said. "Out there in the real world, we call it rendering. Rendering is the thing you do for the finish. We render."

I would say things like, "Look, I want to do this face"—we were doing 'Deadman'—"I want to do this big face in the sky as a dropout. Can we do dropout, Sol?" Sol said, "What is a dropout?" I said, "I want to take my black ink line and print it in red and blue so it's a purple." Sol said, "Oh, that's a dropout. Okay, we don't that. You can't do that. Now go away." I said, "No, no, I want to print this in purple and—" "Go away, go away." "No, I want to print this in purple." "Okay, talk to Jack." [mutual laughter]

I went to Jack and said, "Jack, I want to print this line in purple." "Oh-kay," Jack said. "We'd have to do a dropout." [bappily] "Yeah, Jack. We'd have to do a dropout. Let's do that." Jack would immediately get it, but asked, "Will they let you do that?" "I guess they will, Jack. They sent me to you." So we'd do a dropout. Then everybody goes, "Ohh, woo. Oooh." And they'd say, "This is new. We never did this before." "No, no," I said, "they used to do that in comics. They had dropouts everywhere back in the old days."

The only way I could do anything different was if I had Jack there, because Jack would say, "We can do that." I had drawn a *Tomahawk* cover [#116], and I said to Jack, "I want to try to get a feeling of paint on here. So I need you to, like, drybrush paint." I said "drybrush" to my editor, and I thought he'd have an epileptic seizure: "Drybrush, what is drybrush? You can't put down ink if you have drybrush." I said, "No, it's a technique. It's not really dry. It's sort-of dry, and it makes a scrubby—never mind." [mutual laughter]

I went to Jack and described what I wanted to do and did a sample, and I said, "Ah, gee. It looks like paint." He said, "What's the idea?" "I'm trying to do an action scene and Tomahawk's on the ground, this Indian's coming up at him, and I want this background to look like



Is There A Doctor In The Casa?

Neal was a rarity in having drawn a nationally-syndicated daily comic strip—which was then the ultimate ambition of many a comic book artist—before he worked in the latter field. Above is a 1966 *Ben Casey* daily (based on the hit TV series about a two-fisted physician, starring Vince Edwards), in Spanish translation. Thanks to Scott Goodell. [©2006 NEA, Inc.]

# JOE KUBERT on JACK ADLER

About Schools And Coloring And 3-D—And Friendship

Conducted by Roy Thomas

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

**J**oe Kubert is one of the great comic book artists... period. —Roy.

**ROY THOMAS:** Jack really wanted to make sure I called you, and I've kept assuring him, "Yes, I'm going to talk to him." [laughs]

**JOE KUBERT:** Well, I'm glad. He's been a good friend and a fascinating guy, a real fascinating guy. One thing I want to mention up front before I forget: when I started the school 30 years ago, one of the guys that I spoke to, one of the few guys I wanted some input from, was Jack. Jack was a guy with whom I discussed what kind of curriculum should be included in the school I wanted to start. And a lot of the stuff, a lot of the advice he gave me, a lot of things we had talked about, I've been able to put into the school's curriculum and institutes for the students' study. I think that a good piece of the success we've had with the school is directly related to the discussions that I had with Jack before I started the school.

As a matter of fact, I'd spoken to Burne Hogarth, and I'd spoken to Sol Harrison, and maybe one or two other people. But Jack was *extremely* helpful in the discussions we had in terms of what we felt was important for anybody who wanted to get into this business to learn.



## Kubert & The (Recent) Kompetition

Joe Kubert, as photographed by Jack Adler during the 1970s. Jack wrote on the back of the pic: "One of my favorite people." At right is the cover of *Comic Book Marketplace* #92 (July 2002), which featured two (count 'em—two) interviews with Joe, and a cover featuring his classic rendition of the Silver Age Hawkman. [Art ©2006 DC Comics.]



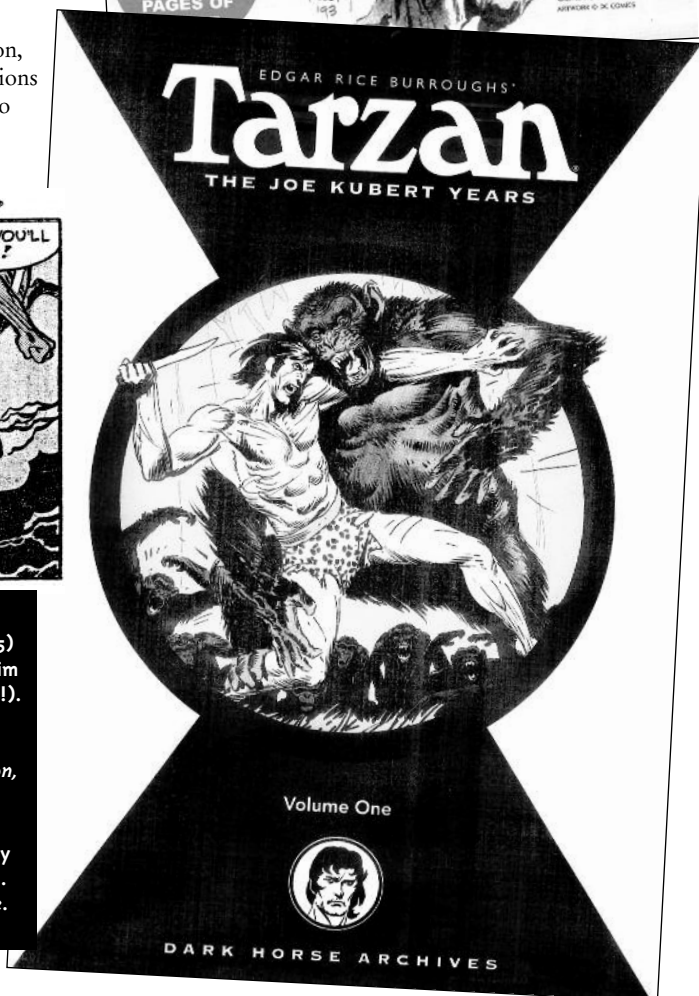
## Heroes By Kubert

(Above:) One of Joe's earliest "Hawkman" stories, in *Flash Comics* #66 (Aug.-Sept. 1945) introduced an offbeat character called Neptune Perkins, whose skin condition forced him to live in the sea but whose webbed feet enabled him to swim with real porpoise (ouch!).

Script probably by Gardner Fox; thanks to Al Dellings for the photocopy. Nep also appeared in *Flash* #81—and in the 1980s was inducted by Ye Editor into the *All-Star Squadron*. Learn more about both his '40s & '80s incarnations in *The All-Star Companion*, Vol. 2—out this June! [©2006 DC Comics.]

(Right:) One of Joe's most impressive accomplishments was as the artist/writer of DC's *Tarzan* in the early '70s. The first eight issues of that series have been collected by Dark Horse in the hardcover *Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan: The Joe Kubert Years, Vol. 1*. No fan of adventure comic art should be without this breathtakingly beautiful volume.

[©2006 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.]





RECENTLY, I HEARD THE SAD NEWS THAT FRED KELLY, CREATOR OF THE GOLDEN AGE MR. MONSTER, HAD PASSED AWAY AT AGE 84. YOU MAY RECALL OUR COLUMN ON FRED IN THE MAY 2004 ISSUE OF *ALTER EGO*. AT THE TIME, LITTLE WAS KNOWN ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS CANADIAN CARTOONIST WHO'D VANISHED FROM THE COMICS SCENE SHORTLY AFTER DRAWING A SINGLE 8-PAGE MR. MONSTER STORY IN 1947.

I WONDERED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO FRED KELLY, AND CONCLUDED MY ARTICLE WITH A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO "... MR. KELLY — WHEREVER YOU MAY BE!"

THEN, MERE DAYS AFTER MY ARTICLE APPEARED, I HEARD SOME AMAZING NEWS: FRED KELLY HAD BEEN FOUND!!

HERE'S THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY ...

MICHAEL T. GILBERT 10/15/05



Above: Michael T. Gilbert and Fred Kelly at the 2004 Paradise Toronto Comicon. Below: *The Globe's* respectful, if not-entirely-accurate obituary (see next page).

## FRED KELLY, ARTIST AND REALTOR 1921-2005

He drew the original Mr. Monster, a wartime superhero drafted by comic-book publishers during trade restrictions

BY TOM HAWTHORN, VICTORIA

Fred Kelly was an artist from Canada's brief golden age of superhero comics. He created the original Mr. Monster and then vanished until tracked down last year by a diligent fan.

Mr. Kelly drew for Bell Features of Toronto during the Second World War, as government restrictions on American periodicals gave birth to a homegrown comic-book industry. In place of Superman, Batman, Torch, The Shield and countless others, Canadian artists churned out scores of characters. Among Mr. Kelly's creations was Dr. Jim (Doc) Stearne, a medical doctor and crack marksman who hunted monsters. Mr. Monster, as his alter ego was known, appeared in the third issue of "Super Duper Comics." Mr. Monster wore black boots and white gauntlets, a helmet with goggles, and a red body stocking with a white skull on the chest. He was armed with a pistol and boasted no special powers other than his wits.

According to Library and Archives Canada, Bell comics varied in quality but were identifiably Canadian. Mr. Kelly joined a stable of such Canadian artists as Adrian Pringle, who produced the heroes Nelvana of The Northern Lights and

the Penguin, and illustrator Edmund Legault, who drew Dixon of the Mounted. Also part of the Bell lineup was Phantom Rider by Jerry Lazare and the character Rex Baxter, drawn by Edmond Good. Best known, however, was Johnny Canuck. Drawn by Leo Bachle, who died in 2003 and also went by the name of Rex Barker, "Johnny Canuck — Canada's answer to Nazi oppression" had no powers other than an inexhaustible source of courage and a killer right-hook.

Bell Features was not alone in stepping into the regulatory gap. Such other publishers as Vancouver's Maple Leaf Publishing and Anglo-American Publishing of Toronto also offered their own fighters of crime and fascism, including such homegrown heroes and heroines as Freelance, Black Wing and Commander Steel, to name a few.

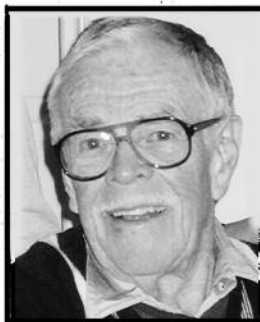
Interestingly, Mr. Kelly also chose to work for a less dashing line of characters offered by Educational Projects of Montreal. Published as Canadian Heroes, the series featured profiles of prime ministers and other worthies, and was surely more popular among parents and teachers than the children on whom they were foisted. Among the real-life figures given the comic treatment was First World War air

ace Raymond Collishaw, hockey star Howie Morenz, and Sir John A. Macdonald. Canadian Heroes did offer one clean-cut fictional hero, a stalwart named Canada Jack who combined healthy outdoor activities with crime-busting and spy-fighting.

Among the other characters he created for Bell were Betty Burd, a shapely roving reporter who found every opportunity to wear a revealing swimsuit; Cinder Smith, the manager of a train station in the Rockies; Steve Storm, a monocle-wearing British commissioner in colonial Africa; and race car driver Clip Curtis, The King of the Dirt Track.

After the war, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Monster returned to obscurity, as Canadian publications became overwhelmed by American imports, but not before trying his luck in the United States. In 1946, he worked with Damon Runyan and produced a comic strip that featured characters from the writer's popular stories about the gamblers, petty thieves, actors and gangsters of New York's Prohibition period. To be titled *The Other Half*, it was on the cusp of acceptance by a major publisher when Mr. Runyan died and the project collapsed.

After that, Mr. Kelly returned



KELLY FAMILY PHOTO

Fred Kelly and his creation, Mr. Monster, aka Dr. Jim (Doc) Stearne.

home and attended the University of Toronto to study medical illustration. He graduated in 1949, found steady work as an illustrator and then took up a successful career selling real estate in the Toronto area, most notably in the Willowdale area where he was a partner in Kelly & Craig Realtors.

The Mr. Monster character was revived in 1984 by Michael T. Gilbert, an American illustrator who had purchased a coverless copy of the original in 1971. The rejuvenated hero was presented as the son of Doc Stearne.

Just last year, Toronto comics historian Robert Pincombe tracked down Mr. Kelly, who had retired and divided his time between Mexico and Owen Sound, Ont. Mr. Kelly, who taught art classes in his retirement, attended the Toronto Comicon 2004 convention in June,

where he appeared on a panel with contemporaries Ed Furness and Jerry Lazare. He also got to meet Mr. Gilbert.

"He was gratified, but thought the whole thing was all a bit silly," said Mr. Pincombe. "He felt it was great to be remembered and was pleased to learn that Mr. Monster had come back but didn't want a piece of it. He was a very pragmatic man."

Frederick George Kelly was born in Toronto on Sept. 8, 1921. He died in Owen Sound, Ont., on Sept. 14 as the result of a stroke suffered in 2003. He was 84. He leaves his wife, Rita, a son; two daughters, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Special to *The Globe and Mail*; *Globe and Mail* archives

**NOTE from Canadian comics fan Robert Pincombe:** The Globe and Mail obituary [reprinted on the preceding page] is a loving tribute to Fred Kelly, but mistakes crept in. First, premier Canadian-white artist Adrian Dingle is misidentified as "Pringle," and artist Leo Bachle went on to become an entertainer named Les Barker, not Rex Barker. Though Fred did work for Educational Projects in Montreal (work was work!), he did not actually draw pages featuring all the dignitaries listed. In addition, the wording may lead one to believe that Fred created Canada Jack, which he did not. And finally, although the newspaper account quotes my word "silly" to describe Fred's thoughts on the newfound attention, Fred thought nothing of the kind. He was surprised and delighted to be remembered for something he cared so passionately about and worked hard on. He just wasn't the type to gush.

## Fred Kelly Remembered (Part I)

by Michael T. Gilbert

I can't honestly say I had more than a passing acquaintance with Fred Kelly. We only met twice, in the course of a three-day comic convention in Toronto in 2004: once on a comic book panel, and then at breakfast the next morning. For most of my life Fred Kelly was just a name on the splash page of an old comic book. But in spite of that, Mr. Kelly had a profound impact on my life.

I've often told of spending half a buck on a coverless 1947 Canadian comic book at a 1971 New York comic con. The comic featured the Golden Age "Mr. Monster," written and drawn by Fred Kelly. I was instantly smitten with Kelly's striking splash page, and when given the opportunity in 1983, I revived Mr. Monster—re-inventing him for a new generation. By then, the Golden Age "Mr. Monster" had been dead almost 40 years. As for Fred Kelly, he'd vanished from the comic scene shortly after drawing that single "Mr. Monster" story.

Over the years I often wondered about Fred Kelly. Was he still drawing comics somewhere? Was he even still alive? If so, how would he feel about my reviving his character? My questions seemed destined to remain unanswered.

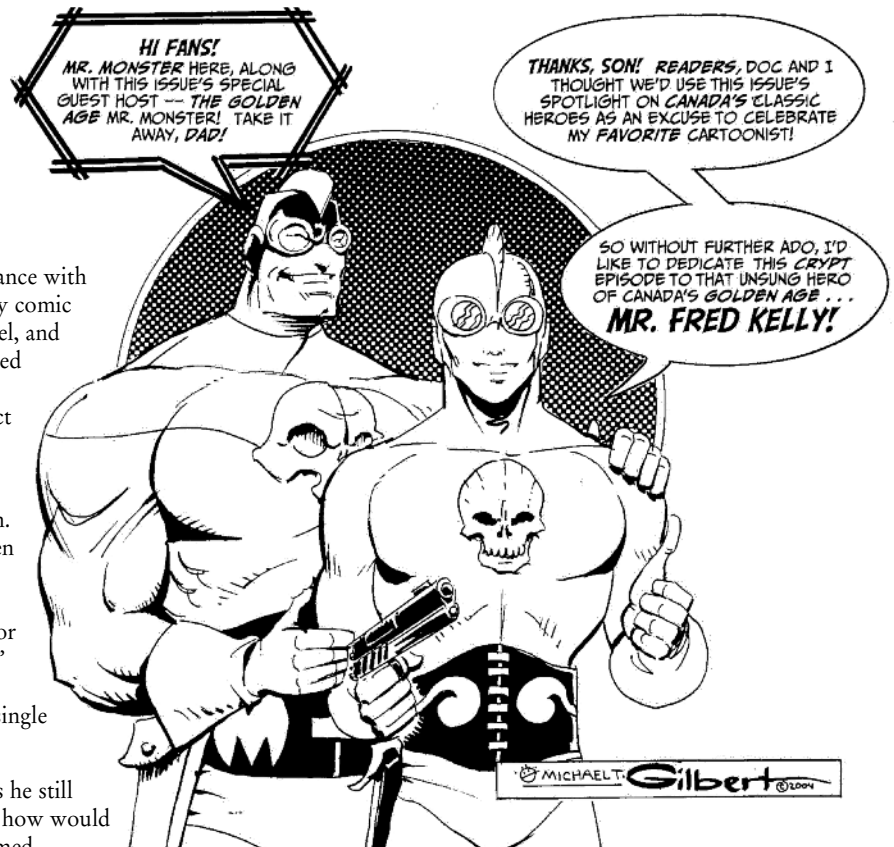
A few tidbits of information popped up here and there. A book on Canadian comics briefly discussed Kelly's 1940s comic book career. Several of his contemporaries made passing comments about working with him. But beyond that, nothing.

Or *almost* nothing. One such 1973 interview mentioned the fact that Fred had gone into medical illustration after leaving the comic book field. Still later, he sold real estate. Curious, I Googled "Fred Kelly/Canada/Real Estate." Instantly, my computer came up with a book on selling real estate, written in 1990 by Fred Kelly. But was it THE Fred Kelly? Not likely. But even if it was, there was no way to track him down. Or so I thought.

Sometime in 2003, Roy Thomas informed me that *Alter Ego* was planning a special issue devoted to Canadian comic book heroes. What better opportunity to write a Fred Kelly tribute? In the course of my research, I made the acquaintance of Robert Pincombe, a Toronto native and a long-time collector of Canadian comics who proved to be a valuable source of information.

The Golden Age Mr. Monster was featured on the cover of that issue of *A/E* (#36). I also drew a splash page with both versions of Mr. Monster to go with my Fred Kelly article. The issue came out near the middle of May 2004.

On May 19th, I received the following e-mail from Robert. Its breathless heading screamed: "I Found Fred Kelly!!!!!"



Michael's gift to Fred: Two Mr. Monsters from *Alter Ego* #36.  
[©2006 Michael T. Gilbert.]

Dear Michael T,

*The latest issue looks great! I devoured all the articles and artwork voraciously. And your cover is superb. Now for my news... I've tracked down Fred Kelly! No, I'm not kidding.*

*I just got off the phone with his wife, Rita, and I'll be talking to him Saturday to see if he'd be interested in an interview. I will also see if I can get him to join the panel at the Toronto Comicon next month (Roy will be there). If I can get him here, is there any chance you could come down, too? It'd be a great chapter in your search for Fred.*

*I'll keep you posted! Whew! What a great start to my day!*

*Cheers, Robert*

Robert will tell you how he found Fred later. But for me, this was stunning news. Fred Kelly—alive? And I had a chance to meet him? This was one offer I couldn't refuse!

Toronto's Paradise Convention was scheduled for June 18-20, 2004, mere weeks away. The con organizers liked the idea of the two Mr. Monster creators meeting, and put me on their guest list. Ordinarily, a last-minute plane ticket would have been a budget-breaker, but Fate clearly wanted this meeting to happen.

First, the con generously agreed to pick up our room tab. More

# Leonard Darvin Speaks (About The Comics Code)— & Ted White Answers!

## Part IV of “1966: The Year Of (Nearly) THREE New York Comicons!”

Interview Edited by Bill Schelly

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

In issue #53, the Comic Fandom Archive began running a series related to what we believed to be three comics conventions held in New York City in 1966: an early-in-the-year “mini-con” sponsored by Calvin Beck’s Castle of Frankenstein magazine—a larger convention hosted by EC fan John Benson—and, only three weeks after the latter, a comicon put on by David Kaler, who had produced the “Academy Con” the year before. However, I recently learned that my memory had played tricks on me—and that the Beck con was actually held not early in 1966, as I’d recalled—but early in 1967, several months after the Benson and Kaler cons. Despite the mis-recollection, this approximately half-year period did see three comicons in New York—only now, by sheer happenstance, we’ll be covering them in chronological order!

Parts I & II presented an overall view of the Benson con at the Park Sheraton Hotel in Manhattan on July 23–24, 1966; and Part III, last ish, featured a transcription of the first part of a debate between Leonard Darvin, an attorney who in 1966 was the acting administrator of the Comics Code Authority, the organization that passed judgment on comic book material submitted to it, and Don Thompson, journalist and comics fan (and later, with wife Maggie, the longtime co-editor of Comic Buyer’s Guide). Darvin would soon be officially appointed administrator, and would



hold the post for something like two decades. At this point, we pick up right after Thompson asked the audience if they had any

questions. They did, of course...and some of them proved to be quite pointed. We've had to edit for space, but have tried to preserve the feel of the exchanges...!

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #1:** Mr. Darvin, I have here a piece of original art by Wally Wood from T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #2, which shows a picture of a robot striking a policeman. This was rejected by the Comics Code. Do you believe, or does the Code believe, that if kids see this, they'll go out and hit policemen? Is that why it was rejected?

**DARVIN:** No. That's a very good question. The Code has a specific provision which says that policemen and other government officials shall not be put in an embar-

rassing or undignified position. [laughter] Normally, we can allow some violence when police are involved. But this is an area where we are very careful. We probably suggested that they change the policeman into a [security] guard. As long as this provision is in the Code, we don't allow cops to be mauled too much, and we don't allow police cars to be battered up too badly. As I say, a criminal can resist arrest, but he can't

### Swat Team — Comics Code Style

We couldn't find either a robot or a cop in all of T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #2—but could the above page from issue #3 (March 1966) being eyeballed by moderator Don Thompson (right) and Leonard Darvin (left) be the one a fan asked Darvin about on the Benson con panel? As it turned out, though, reporter Don was not destined to be Comic Code administrator Darvin's principal antagonist that day in July '66!

Actually, the attackers aren't really robots—just subterraneans in armor—but they sure look like robots. It's easy to imagine the policeman in the middle panel being swatted in the next one—even easier to imagine the Code “requesting” that that drawing be changed to something less “disrespectful” of law enforcement officers. Art by Dan Adkins & Wally Wood, as repro'd in DC's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents Archives, Vol. 2; scripter unknown. [Art ©2006 John Carbonaro.]



### More Than Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

In pre-Code days, even cops who didn't actually get shot by the robbers were liable to get hurt, as per this panel from a (coverless) copy of an issue of Lev Gleason's *Crime Does Not Pay*. Art by Fred Kida. Thanks to Jim Amash. [©2006 the respective copyright holders.]

P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

# FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

No. 115

Feb. 2006

BILLY TURNS AND GIVES THE  
K-SIGNAL TO THE OTHERS.

SHOUT  
BOYS D

AM I REALLY A  
CAPTAIN MARV

IT  
WORKED!

SNACK

FOLLOW ME,  
GANG! LET'S CLEAN  
UP SIVANA AND  
HIS MOB ONCE  
AND FOR

# MICHAEL USLAN RETURNS

[Caricature ©2006 P.C. Hamerlinck; Captain Marvel art ©2006 DC Comics.]

*PCHamerlinck*



# Hollywoodchuck – Part II

## Batman Begins Co-Producer MICHAEL USLAN On Being a Filmmaker— & A Junior Woodchuck

by P.C. Hamerlinck

**INTRODUCTION:** Part I of this article, in A/E #54, dealt with Michael E. Uslan's youthful discovery of comic books in New Jersey, his experience with friend Bob Klein on the fabled "DC tours" in the early 1960s (including pleasant run-ins with future Shazam! editor Julius Schwartz), and with his attendance of the 1965 David Kaler comicon in Manhattan. It also recorded his visits to the home of Golden Age "Captain Marvel" scribe Otto Binder in Englewood, NJ. While attending Indiana University, he persuaded the folklore department to let him initiate an accredited course on comic books. By a skillful use of publicity, he parlayed this into first obtaining considerable cooperation from Marvel editor/writer Stan Lee—and was soon called by DC vice president Sol Harrison, who was eager to fly Uslan to New York and "talk about ways you might be able to work with us." Ere long, Uslan found himself in the DC offices of Sol and editorial director Carmine Infantino. "As a longtime fan," he said, "it was an incredible feeling...."

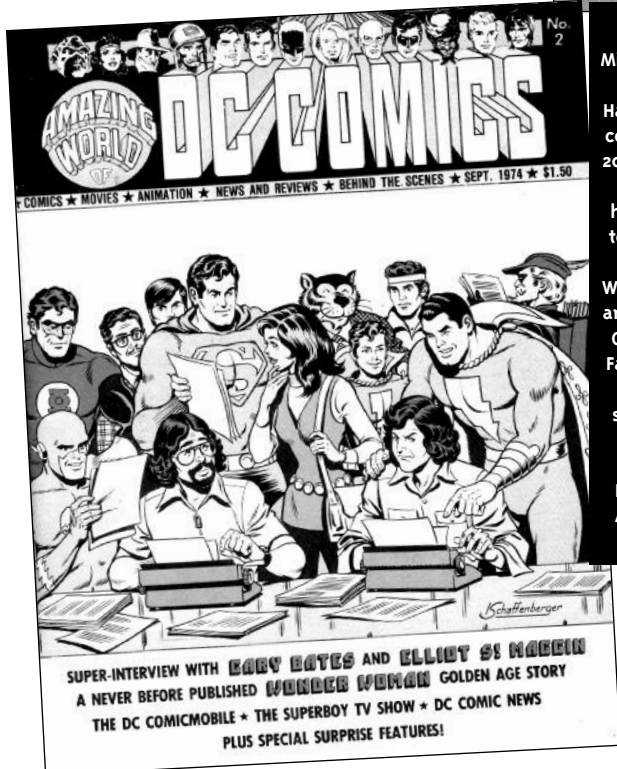
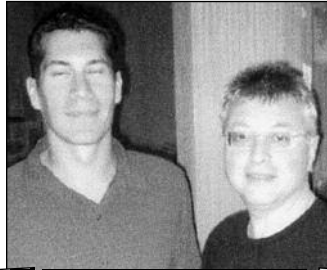
### The Junior Woodchucks

Sol Harrison was a key figure in Uslan's life. He mentored the younger man into the business, paving the way towards Uslan's life dream one day coming true: to produce a dark, serious version of "Batman."

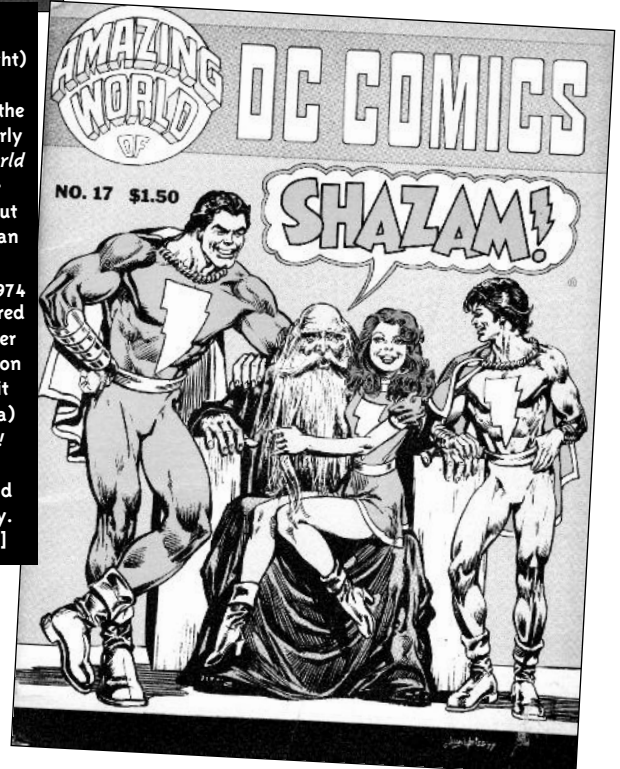
Harrison had three programs he felt Uslan could help them with. The projects became a part of Uslan's duties during his early involvement with DC Comics.

One was a program to get comic books distributed via college bookstores, as DC found their market was growing older and older each year. The second was the development of a series of educational comics to teach learning-disabled children to read and to teach English as a second language, utilizing the services of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. DC worked with a team of researchers from the Graduate School of Education of Harvard. DC asked Uslan to work on the program with the goal of selling it to the New York City Board of Education, which was ultimately achieved. The third program was Harrison's experiment involving a new way to distribute comics called "The Comic Mobile"—selling comic books à la an ice cream truck selling its treats up and down neighborhood streets. "I tried to make use of every second while I was there," Uslan said.

He was inducted into a new group within the company. Since the term "interns" didn't exist at that time for comics workers, the group was named "The Junior Woodchucks." Members included Paul Levitz (who arrived at DC several months before Uslan), Guy Lillian, Carl Gafford, Allan Asherman, Jack Harris, Anthony Tollin, Steve Mitchell, and later Bob Rozakis, who replaced Uslan when he went back to school in Indiana. One of the Junior Woodchucks' many duties was to produce the scholarly fanzine *The Amazing World of DC Comics*. "DC saw us as the first generation of real fan-boys who had futures in the business in various capacities," Uslan said, "and we were being developed in that way."



**Woodchuckin' It**  
Michael Uslan (above right) with FCA editor P.C. Hamerlinck—flanked by the covers of two of the nearly 20 issues of *Amazing World of DC Comics*. That in-house DC fanzine was put together by Michael Uslan and the other "Junior Woodchucks" between 1974 and 1978. #2 & #17 featured Captain Marvel and other Fawcett-derived heroes on the covers... and #17 (it says "#16" in the indicia) was a mostly-Shazam! issue. Art by Kurt Schaffenberger and Alan Weiss, respectively. [Art ©2006 DC Comics.]



In addition to Woodchucking, Uslan made time to become friendly with many of the DC staff. One in particular was Gerda Gattel. “She was one of the nicest ladies I’ve ever met in my life,” Uslan recalled. “I would talk to her about the old days at DC. At the time she was in charge of DC’s library. She knew how interested I was in comic book history. Most days around lunchtime Gerda would let me go into the library, and she would pull down volumes of books for me. Ultimately, over my summers with DC, I wound up reading every comic book they had ever published. I also had a chance to talk to Ira Schnapp, who had designed virtually every DC logo. He had refined Joe Shuster’s logo for ‘Superman.’ Amazing people ... it was a phenomenal time to be there.”

The Junior Woodchucks were more than just a working group; everyone socialized and hung out together on weekends. “Allan Asherman would show up with his 16 mm film collection of old science-fiction movies,” Uslan said. “We’d have BBQs and swim parties. There was real camaraderie amongst us.”

Each Woodchuck was assigned to assist a different DC editor: Bob Rozakis with Julie Schwartz; Paul Levitz with Joe Orlando; Jack Harris with Murray Boltinoff; Alan Asherman, Levitz, and Uslan with Denny O’Neil. “I was there summers through 1974, and then I started writing for DC,” Uslan said, “so when I went back to school in Indiana I would send in my scripts through the mail, working closely with O’Neil, Asherman, and Rozakis. I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. The Woodchucks knew everything that was going on behind-the-scenes at DC in those days.”

How did Uslan transform from Junior Woodchuck to Writer? It was around 6 p.m. one evening when he heard screams of anguish coming from O’Neil’s office. Carmine Infantino had cancelled *The Shadow* comic. Then revised sales figures came back showing a spike in sales for the book. Suddenly, *The Shadow* was uncanceled, but weeks behind schedule. “Denny was going crazy,” Uslan recalls. “He was under deadline pressure ... he was writing ... he was editing ... and he needed a *Shadow* script immediately.” Uslan heard opportunity knocking as he stood in O’Neil’s office. “Denny, I have an idea for a ‘Shadow’ story,” Uslan said. Actually, he didn’t, but knew he had to seize the moment. Uslan and his wife had just returned from a vacation up in Niagara Falls. With that in mind, he described to O’Neil a visual: set in the ’30s, a time when it was in vogue for the ambitious to walk across the Falls on wires, *The Shadow* is seen balancing on top of a wire fighting a guy over the Falls.

O’Neil loved it: “That’s a great visual. OK, what’s the story?”



Splash of Mike Uslan’s first pro script—*The Shadow* #9 (Feb.-March 1975). Art by Frank Robbins & Frank McLaughlin. Thanks to Mike. [©2006 DC Comics.]



**Guilty Pleasures?**

This Dave Manak illustration of Superman and Captain Marvel accompanied Michael Uslan’s article “When Titans Clash... in Court.” From *Amazing World*

Uslan tried to dig up something quick. “Uh ... it’s about ... smuggling ... from Canada to the United States,” Uslan exclaimed.

“Smuggling what?” O’Neil asked.

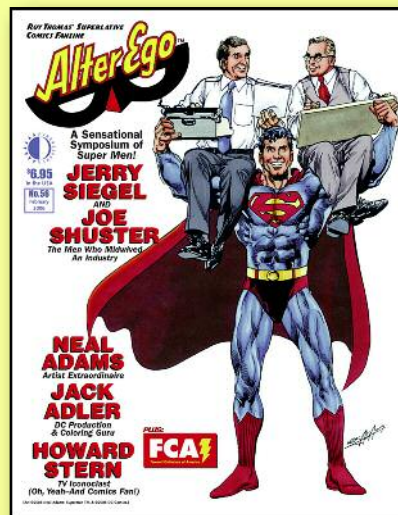
“Uh ... uh ... drugs ... smuggling drugs!” Uslan said.

“Well, what’s the catch? How do they do it?”

“Well, you know how in the ’30s and ’40s people were going over the Falls in barrels ... well, the smugglers would go over the Falls with false bottoms on their barrels and they would wash over to the Canadian side from the American side ... that’s how they’re doing it.”

O’Neil was satisfied with the scenario: “Great—can you have the story on my desk by 6 o’clock tomorrow?” Uslan told him no problem, and started writing the script on the train back to Jersey. A full pot of coffee was made as he put in an all-nighter ... and was still writing on the train back to the city the next morning. Uslan “cut a deal” with one of the secre-

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