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COMICS FANZINE

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MORE TITANS OF TIMELY/MARVEL

**BELLMAN, BURLOCKOFF,
& NODELL!**

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**MORE
TITANS OF
TIMELY/
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Section**

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Blake Bell asks the genial co-creator of Green Lantern about when he traded in GL's ring for Captain America's shield.

Panoramic Potpourri Section Flip Us!

About Our Cover & Contents Page Illo: *What can we say? Roy implored his old friend and colleague (and sometime boss) Dick Giordano to draw this cover—he photocopied drawings of dozens of vintage Timely/Marvel super-heroes as reference—and Dick came through like the champ he is, starting with the above layout. Originally, we planned to have each and every hero's "photo" colored individually, but we didn't want to risk giving colorist Tom Ziuko a nervous breakdown. We'd also considered lettering each hero's name with his/her likeness, but frankly, even Ye Editor forgot who a couple of these guys were! So, tell you what—falling back on the time-honored tradition of all those no-prizes Stan Lee used to make Roy mail out to folks, Alter Ego will print (and send a free copy of issue #37 to) the writer of the first letter or e-mail we get that correctly identifies all 29 super-heroes on our cover and layout. Ready... set... go!* [Art ©2004 Dick Giordano; heroes TM & ©2004 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Pete Morisi



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FIRST PRINTING.

Bellman, Burlockoff, and Candle

I admit it—once again, I've been genetically unable to resist using a pun as the title for these introductory notes. This one's a riff on the famous stage play and movie *Bell, Book, and Candle*—but, of course, if I have to explain the pun, as I probably do to any non-old movie addict under the age of fifty, it's probably not a very good one.

Never mind. It's done. Let's move on.

Actually, interviewers Michael J. Vassallo, Jim Amash and I will probably also need to explain who our two long-form *interviewees* are, since the talented Allen Bellman and Sam Burlockoff are only slightly better known, even to diehard comics fans, than was their Timely colleague Bob Deschamps before *A/E* #20! Allen and Sam signed a *slightly* larger percentage of their work than Bob did (which was *none*), but both left the field nearly fifty years ago, to make their primary marks elsewhere... though that doesn't mean they don't have some great stories to tell, and considerable light to shed on the Golden Age of Timely Comics.

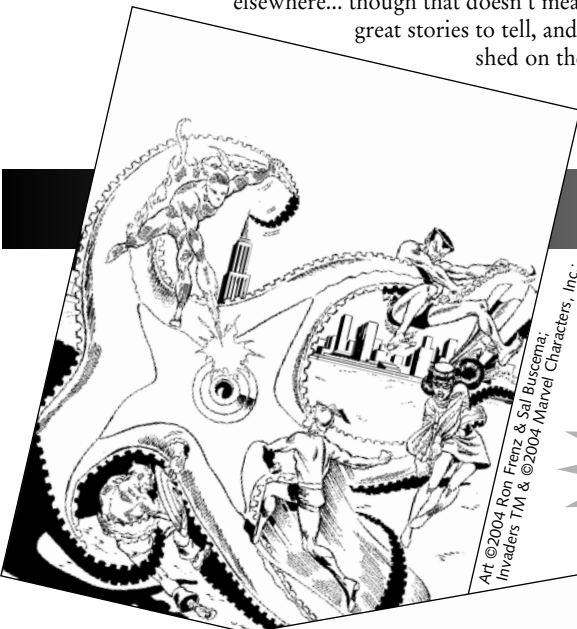
What's most amazing, perhaps, is that, although the pair were friends back in their youth, they hadn't been in touch with each other for half a century—and at least one of them even thought the other was long since deceased, until a juxtaposition of fortunate circumstances (i.e., their interviews for *Alter Ego*) led to their getting together again for a happy reunion! But I'll let Doc V. and Jim A., as well as Allen B., tell you about that in their own inimitable words.

Oh, and just to hit you over the head with it—the “candle” in the title is an oblique reference to the light of the first Green Lantern, which originally shone forth at the behest of artist Mart Nodell, who is briefly interviewed by Blake Bell about his late-1940s tenure at Timely/Marvel.

Hmm... maybe we should've just titled this page “Three Interviews” and let it go at that!

Bestest,

Roy



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if I had ever heard of, or had any copies of Timely work done by, an artist he was in the process of interviewing—named Sam Burlockoff! I froze in astonishment and told Jim that I was at the same time interviewing that artist's boyhood friend Allen Bellman, and that Bellman thought him long deceased!

[Jim, Roy, and I immediately realized that we had a unique opportunity here. We would print both interviews in the same issue of A/E and be able to get these two long-lost friends back together in the process! Happily, the two old friends have gotten together in person since that day—as photos accompanying these interviews well illustrate. Even so, I elected to keep the original interview as is, and the reader will note that, when Allen mentions Sam early on, it's with the assumption that he was deceased—but, by the end of the interview, conducted after the happy revelation, he refers to Sam in the present tense. —Dr. Michael J. Vassallo.]

"I Must Have Been Able to Draw Something!"

MICHAEL J. VASSALLO: *Let's start at the beginning, Allen. Where and when were you born? And tell me a little about your family.*

ALLEN BELLMAN: I was born in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City, on June 5th, 1924. Sometimes I get all choked up just thinking about how long ago it was and how quickly it seems to have passed. A lot of my contemporaries were also born on the Lower East Side.

My parents came from Russia. They were Jewish immigrants running away from the pogroms in the early part of the century. I have a picture of them that I'd never seen until recently. My sister, who passed away, had it. My father is sitting in a chair with a stiff collar. You could just imagine that time.

I had one brother and two sisters. A picture of my brother is looking down at me as we speak. My parents were in the bakery business, along with two or three of my uncles. They were the Bellman Brothers, but after a while the partnership split and the brothers went their separate ways. My parents migrated to Brooklyn, along with my two sisters and brother, when I was six or seven. I was the youngest of the four, and that allowed me more privileges than the rest of my siblings, so they tell me. It was the old Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Same place Mike Tyson came from.

MJV: *That's a tough neighborhood now.*

BELLMAN: Then it wasn't. It was a middle-class Italian, Jewish neighborhood. Brownsville was the home of the Jewish Mafia, widely known as "Murder, Incorporated." My father opened a bakery store, and I attended the local public school. In the bakery store, everything was put in brown paper bags. At some point I started drawing on the bags. I suppose this was the start of printing on paper and plastic bags that we know today. *[laughs]* I always wanted to tell a story in pictures. Airplanes intrigued me tremendously. As I got older, I started trying to draw my own comic strips. They were very crude.

I remember when *Flash Gordon* came out. I'll never forget the first time I saw it in the *New York Journal-American*. Boy, what beautiful work! I was so impressed by it. Alex Raymond was one of my idols. His untimely death was a great loss.

I was not in my teens yet, and I was drawing comic strips on notebook paper, in pencil. Later on I created characters like "Mander the Mystic" and "Big Hank O'Malley" that were run on the "Aunt Jean page" of the defunct *Brooklyn Eagle*. The *New York Daily Mirror* published one of my cartoons, a box panel called "Pete." It went something like this: one person says to the other, "I hear Hitler wants to be an athlete." The other replies, "Yeah, he wants to jump over the poles." They paid me \$2 and that was the beginning of my career. This was at the time when dark clouds of war hovered over Europe, and Hitler was marching on Poland.

I drew a comic strip called *Air Patrol* for my school newspaper in the Williamsburg/Greenpoint section of Brooklyn. I still remember that neighborhood well, with the Grand Street Theatre.

MJV: *I think it's still there! I know that area; my roots are in Greenpoint, also. The different ethnic groups change over the years, but the houses are all the same from the turn of the century. In addition to the comic strips you read when you were young, did you also read comic books and think about art as a possible career?*

BELLMAN: Well, I didn't think about it as a "career." I liked to do it, and in all honesty I didn't think I was too good. I developed when I started working. Well, someone *did* hire me, so I must have been able to draw *something!*

As for comic books, I remember when I was in junior high school. On our lunch hour there was a candy store. I went in and paid 10¢ for the first "Superman" in *Action Comics*. I remember there was a guy running towards you and Superman was holding up a car. I remember it clearly. There was nothing previously on the newsstands like that. I wish I still had it.

I don't know why there hasn't been a movie made about Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. What happened to them is very sad. I should suggest it to Mike Uslan. I knew him a long time and was a friend of his father. But it would show National, much of the time, in a less than favorable light. I remember Joe Shuster working as a messenger

for a company that made photo-offsets. He delivered these pieces of art to National. Can you imagine that? The man who *made* the company, reduced to a messenger boy? What an injustice!

"Background Artist Wanted"

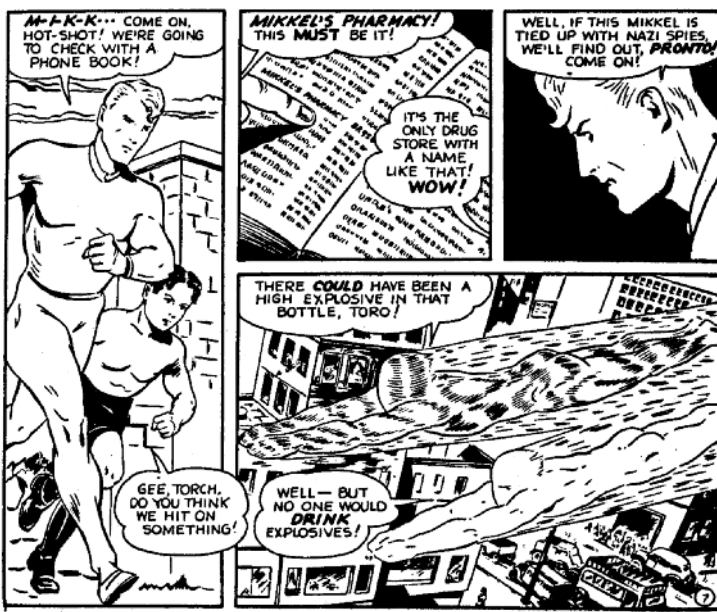
MJV: *There certainly was a lot of animosity remaining from their lawsuit with National over Superman. But what prompted you to seek a job as an artist? Did you put together a portfolio of samples?*

BELLMAN: Yes. They wouldn't have ever hired me without seeing some samples. I attended the High School of Industrial Arts, and on and off at Pratt Institute. At age 18 I saw an ad in the newspaper—I think it was the *New York Times*. The newspaper ad said, "Background artist wanted." It was for *Captain America*. I'm not sure it stated that in the ad, but I think it did.

I showed it to my father, may he rest in peace. He encouraged me to go down there. I told him it was Columbus Day and they'd probably be closed. He said, "You gotta try." Maybe I was a little lazy or I didn't think I'd get the job—I don't know—but I went. It was Timely Comics and they were in the McGraw-Hill Building. I went up and told them I was there to apply for the job. The receptionist disappeared in the back



Allen at about age three.
Photo provided by the artist.



According to Doc's calculations, *Captain America Comics* was "up to about issue #22" (Jan. 1943) when Allen Bellman found work at Timely in fall of 1942, and was soon doing backgrounds for C.A. artist Syd Shores, who seems to have drawn the cover at right. But Allen's first pro work was backgrounding for Carl Burgos on "The Human Torch," beginning with an issue around the time of this tale, "Prescriptions for Death," in panels repro'd from photostats of the original art from *Marvel Mystery Comics* #42 (April 1943). Burgos probably didn't draw this entire story himself, if he drew any of it. And the buildings' perspective in the final panel is 'way off, so hopefully this *isn't* the story Allen started off on! [©2004, Marvel Characters, Inc.]

for a minute. [Then] Don Rico comes out. He takes my work samples in. I waited a bit, and he comes back out and tells me I'm hired.

MJV: Boy, that was quick!

BELLMAN: Yes, it amazed me, too! I think I went back home and started the following Monday. I think they started me off at \$25 a week, when at that time a married man with a family was making \$35-\$45 a week. I thought I'd find it much tougher, as I was only 18.

There was one other brush with the comic book business before I started at Timely. There was a story in the defunct *Brooklyn Eagle* that mentioned that a Vincent Sullivan was getting married, and that he was



Doc V. has identified the "Patriot" story in *Marvel Mystery Comics* #62 (March 1945) as being drawn by Allen, though it probably wasn't his first. The splash was printed on p. 3, so here are a few more panels from that tale. [©2004, Marvel Characters, Inc.]



organizing or working for a comic book publishing house. I contacted him and met him somewhere, but nothing ever came of it.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: There's a slight anomaly here. In A/E #27, courtesy of artist Creig Flessel, we ran a photo of Vin Sullivan's bachelor dinner, which was apparently taken April 6, 1940. —Roy.]

MJV: Vin Sullivan was the first editor of "Superman" and "Batman." He later went on to start Magazine Enterprises. Did you ever have any formal art training?

BELLMAN: My training was mostly experience. My best friend Sam Burlockoff and I went to Pratt Institute at night, on and off. It was in a bad neighborhood, and I didn't like going at night. It was downtown Brooklyn, DeKalb Avenue... I forget the exact section. I also took the Landon cartoon mail-order course. That's about it. The rest was on-the-job.

MJV: In October of 1942, *Captain America* would be up to about issue #22. Joe Simon and Jack Kirby had done the first ten issues, then left Timely for National around the end of 1941.

BELLMAN: From what I remember, they had left about nine months before I got there. There was always talk among the office staff about how great Simon and Kirby were. Syd Shores was doing it now. Vince Alascia was inking.

MJV: Making this official, I guess you can say with certainty that the very first thing you did at Timely was backgrounds for Syd Shores on *Captain America*?

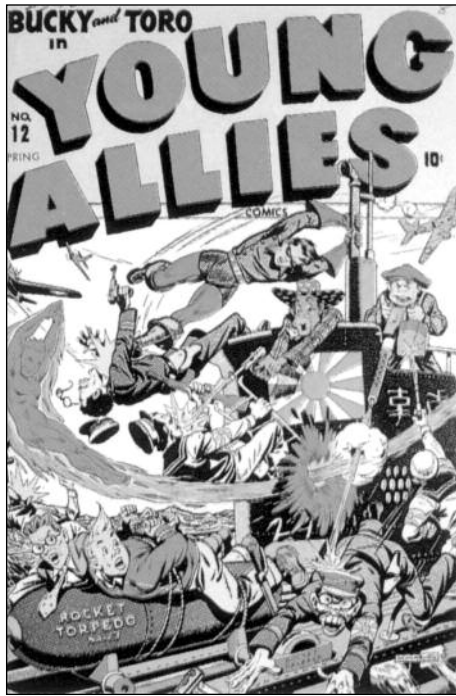
BELLMAN: Yes. It wasn't much. It was just drawing lines with a ruler, putting in a window, a tree, that kind of stuff. I didn't do it too long, just a couple of months. I really didn't like doing that kind of work at all. Then they started me off on a script and took me off backgrounds. [My first story] may have been "The Patriot." I just can't remember for sure.



MJV: “*The Patriot*” appeared in two of the earliest issues of *Human Torch* in mid-1941 and continued up through 1946, mostly in Marvel Mystery Comics. Many different artists drew this feature. Your “*Patriot*” stories seem to come later in the 1944–46 period. I’d place you on “*The Patriot*” at about Marvel Mystery #58. That’s an estimate, as I’ve not seen all those books.

BELLMAN: That sounds about right. Maybe I did backgrounds longer than I thought, or maybe it [“*The Patriot*”] wasn’t the first, after all. It’s hard to remember.

Anyhow, it was pretty crude. I was just starting to pencil. I was a staff artist; Timely had a large staff.



“I Wish I’d Kept Records!”

MJV: I’m trying to picture the work area there. How was it set up, and who was sitting near you?

BELLMAN: Mike Sekowsky, Frank Giacoia, George Klein, Frank Carin... his name was Carino and he changed it to Carin... Chris Rule—I think he was there then—I could be blending the years here. Ed Winiarski was also there that early on. Al Jaffe, too.

MJV: Was Vince Fago there? He became editor-in-chief during the war years when Stan Lee went into the service. This happened between the Feb.–March 1943 cover dates, putting it at about December ’42 real time.

BELLMAN: Stan must have left within a few months of my starting at Timely. I recall he worked on wartime filmstrips out in Astoria, NY. I don’t recall him being sent overseas.

MJV: He wasn’t. He worked on those Army films, as you say, but was down south, I believe. Jim Mooney told me he once drove Stan’s old car down to where Stan was stationed and spent a weekend holed up drawing while Stan was knocking out “*E. Claude Pennygrabber*” scripts for Terry-Toons.

BELLMAN: For some reason or other I seem to remember Stan just always being there. I’m sure he was away, as you say, but my memory can’t pinpoint it. Perhaps because his scripts were still coming in, his presence was still felt there.

I do remember Vince Fago. He was a thin fellow with one eye that seemed clouded. Years later I worked for his brother Al. He may have acted as an agent for some publication, but I just don’t remember the details. I recall doing one job that was about a devil. I was really happy with how the story came out. Usually, if I liked a script, I would put my heart into a story.

MJV: What about yourself? Were you in the service?

BELLMAN: I went into the Navy in 1943. I was painting insignias in Ships Service. It was just a few months before I returned to Timely, after



Allen says *Young Allies* was one of the Timely comics in which artist/writer/de facto editor Don Rico was heavily involved. In it, Bucky and Toro led a Simon-É-Kirby-created kid gang. The “Tommy Tyme” story from *Y.A.* #12 (Spring 1944) is listed on the Grand Comic Book Data Base as being drawn by Allen (the cover of the issue is by Alex Schomburg). Doc V., however, says it’s not Bellman’s work, and that some of the IDs of Timely art on the GCD, alas, were merely guesses which were not labeled as guesses. (Ray Bottorff, Jr., who currently handles the GCD, is valiantly trying to update and correct the files, and can use all the help and cooperation he can get, folks!) Still, Mark Muller of Australia kindly provided us with a scan of the “Tommy Tyme” splash, so we’re printing it as a specimen of 1940s Timely art. [©2004 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

receiving an honorable discharge due to illness. I notified Stan or Robby Solomon—I don’t remember who—that I was returning to Timely. It was no problem coming back.

MJV: How was the staff set up in the Timely offices?

BELLMAN: There was a separation of the guys who worked on the adventure books from the guys who worked on the animation [funny-animal] books. We called them the “animators.” I remember one time Walt Disney sent them a letter telling them to stop copying their characters. I don’t think anything came of it, because I don’t remember hearing about it again. I also remember the animators once made this moveable cartoon character which they manipulated from their room. They were crazy!

We used to play cards during lunch. Lunches were usually brought from home. Sometimes after hours we’d go out for a drink.

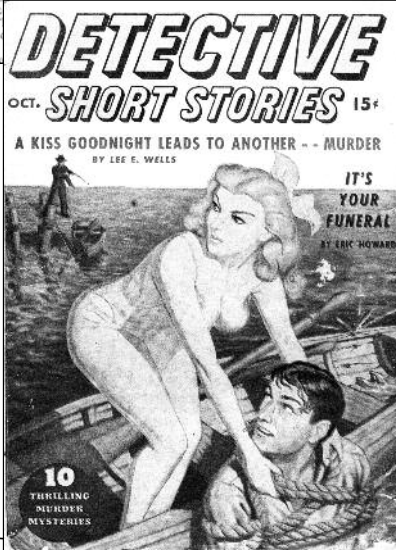
MJV: *Don Rico, as you said, seems to have been used in some managerial capacity, evaluating new talent.*

BELLMAN: Yes, but he wrote and drew, also. *Young Allies* was one of his books. He had a brother Chester, who was a prize-fighter. We used to go after work and watch him fight. There used to be a fight arena nearby—not Madison Square Garden—a local small Manhattan arena. Some of these fights were televised, and I would make sure I would wave to my wife and neighbors at home while attending them. I don't remember Chester ever winning. Having one of the first television sets in the area, my place was always host to neighbors and friends. I lived on the ground floor and never closed the blinds while the TV was on. Neighbors were resting on my open windowsill to watch the small screen.

Martin Goodman called Don Rico "Rat Rico," because Don and some of the other artists didn't bother with Syd Shores, who was the unofficial bullpen director. Rico was the ringleader of this "ignore Shores" group. He was always causing small problems in the office, and Goodman knew this, and hence the name "Rat Rico."

MJV: *Who were some of your biggest artistic influences at Timely?*

BELLMAN: At Timely there was an artist—and a darned good one at that—named Tom Tomasch [sp?]. He taught me a lot when I arrived. He was a short guy, very sophisticated and very nice. A real classy person. He even wrote a book on anatomy. He knew anatomy so well. He originally lived up in Lake Placid. His real name was, I think, Elmer Tomasch, but he was known as Tom. He



would look over my work and correct me early on. Syd Shores was also a great help.

MJV: *I find it fascinating how many "new" Timely names are being turned up after so much time has passed. Tom Tomasch is one. I'd never heard of Bob Deschamps until Jim Amash interviewed him [for A/E #22].*

BELLMAN: I can't believe Tom Tomasch got lost in the shuffle, as he was such a good artist. I wish I'd kept records! Who would have known people would be asking about them 60 years later?

"Mel Barry and Mel Blum"

MJV: *I want to talk about two people in management whose names I see in the credit pages of the early funny-animal comics, and in the credits of Martin Goodman's magazine line: Mel Barry and Mel Blum.*

BELLMAN: Mel Blum was the art director of Goodman's magazine line and pulp line. He was later divorced and we would bum around sometimes. We had that in common. Misery loves company, I guess. I remember one time he almost got us killed. We were out riding, and he was falling asleep at the wheel of the car! Anyhow, he had a brother named Barry Blum, who was a photographer. Mel told me one time that he occasionally took his brother's first name as his last name. I'm not sure why. I know he took jobs at some point with the *National Enquirer*. Maybe he wanted to hide the fact he was Jewish. I just don't know. I didn't know he had anything to do with the comics, though.

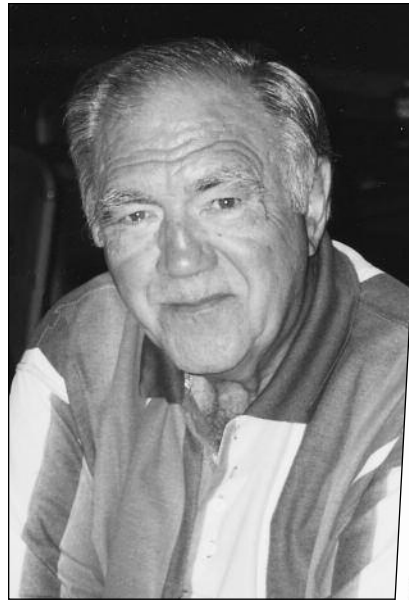
MJV: *He did at some point, at least early on. He's listed as Mel Barry on the credits pages of*

Allen Bellman had four drawings, one of which he signed, in *Detective Short Stories* (Vol. 4, #6, Oct. 1947)—which turned out to be the final issue of that Martin Goodman pulp mag. Cover artist unknown. [©2004, the respective copyright holders.]

II. The SAM BURLOCKOFF Interview

JIM AMASH'S INTRODUCTION:

Sam Burlockoff is another in the long line of artists who toiled in the burgeoning comic book industry of the 1940s, then jumped into the swirl of the uncertain 1950s. Sam had the distinction of working with some of the greats in comics, many of whom he recalls with fondness and accuracy. Sam left the comic book field to do important work for the United States government, where his acquaintance with one of the most important men in the history of broadcast news makes for an interesting tale. While he drew many comic book stories, it may be that Sam's slick inks over giants such as Reed Crandall and Jack Cole will be what most A/E readers remember best. Now, thanks to Sam, you'll get to learn and remember just a bit more about him. —[Jim.]



A recent photo of Sam Burlockoff, and the splash page of a story he penciled and inked for DC's *All-American Men of War* #11 (June-July 1953)—if we read the scan correctly. Thanks to Mark Muller for the DC page. [Art ©2004, DC Comics.]

JIM AMASH: Where and when were you born? And what made you gravitate towards art?

SAM BURLOCKOFF: October 12, 1924, in Russeltown, Pennsylvania. It was a coal-mining town near Pittsburgh. My family moved to New York when I was a year or so old, so I basically grew up in New York.

Nobody in my family had any art background or seemed to have that talent, so it just came out. I went to the School of Industrial Arts, which is now the School of Art and Design. I was one of the early pioneers,

because we all sat on orange crates. It was an old school on 43rd Street, right around from where the *New York Times*' trucks came and unloaded paper. That building was over a hundred years old. It still had slits in the walls where the rifles came out to fight the Indians or something. Frank Giacoia, Joe Giella, Allen Bellman, Carmine Infantino, Tony Bennett, the singer, Rudy Lapick, and cartoonist Rudy Johnson also went to the school. I also went to Pratt Institute.



Later, when I lived on Long Island, I found out to my amazement that Frank Giacoia lived about a block away from me. We renewed our friendship and he was really something. We remained friends until he passed away. I helped Frank on the *Johnny Reb* and *Sherlock Holmes* newspaper strips. Because we lived so close together, I was there when he needed help.

JA: Giacoia had a reputation for being slow. Was he?

BURLOCKOFF: We often talked about that. There are two schools of thought: either you're doing it to make a living or you're doing it as a hobby. In those days, you weren't paid that much to begin with, so it was a lot easier to ink, because you could do three times as much work as a penciler could. That's why a lot of people gravitated towards inking. It was a choice of economics.

In addition to *Johnny Reb*, the late and talented Frank Giacoia was at one time also the official artist of the *Sherlock Holmes* newspaper strip, as per these dailies from 1954. Frank often called on friends and colleagues for help on penciling or inking—or both, though Allen says he thinks these dailies are all-Giacoia. (Looks a bit like Infantino or Kane pencils to Ye Editor! The other name on the strips is that of the writer. [©2004, the respective copyright holders.]



This (basically Burgos?) page from *Human Torch #4* (Spring 1941) might have been drawn a little while before Sam Burlockoff came aboard, but it's the closest we could come. Repro'd from a photocopy of the original art. [©2004, Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Frank was a great inker, and he could draw, too. But he'd get behind in his work and call me or Joe Giella—who also lived nearby—to help him out. That *Johnny Reb* strip took so much of his time because Frank had to draw a lot of full figures and use a lot of research to accurately depict what things looked like during the Civil War.

Frank's studio was in the basement of his house. In this studio was his enormous collection of newspaper strips. They'd be in stacks so high that they almost went to the ceiling. Walking around in there was like walking through a maze, because there were so many stacks of papers. Frank's drawing board was in a little corner of this basement and it struck me as funny every time I went down there to see him,



walking around this maze of books and newspapers, just to get to where he was working. Frank always said he was going to go through them and clip out what he wanted to save, but I don't think he ever found the time to do it. I also remember he had a big comic book collection, which included a copy of the first *Batman*. I wonder whatever happened to all that great material.

JA: Sounds like the basement of a museum to me. When you were at the School of Industrial Arts, did any of you guys get together and make your own comics for fun? Or were you all already serious about making a career in comics?

BURLOCKOFF: Oh, yeah. I was already doing it in school. I did some penciling for Timely on "The Human Torch," but it was a group effort. Chic Stone was there and so was Al Bellman. I went to William J. Gainer High School in Brooklyn with Al. It was one of the first schools to have air-conditioning. We did "The Human Torch" around 1941, but that wasn't the only thing we did. We had our own cartoonists club and we put out some things.

I knew Alex Kotzky, though he went to the School of Music and Art. We worked together, too. He was a good man. I don't think there's a guy in the business that I didn't work with. [laughs] Alex and I worked on "Red, White, and Blue" for Elliott Caplin at Toby Press. I also did



(Left:) *Flyboy* was a Ziff-Davis title published during 1952—for two whole issues. (Above:) Kotzky penciled these character sketches for the "Red, White, and Blue" feature for Toby Press, but we're not sure when (or if) the series was ever published. Interestingly, its enlisted-men heroes are not unlike the crew of the same-name feature that ran in *All-American Comics* and other DC/AA titles in the early 1940s! [Art ©2004, the respective copyright holders.]

Flyboy, among other things.

JA: Was “*The Human Torch*” the feature you started on?

BURLOCKOFF: I did other things with Chic and Bellman, though I don’t remember what else we did. I only worked on one “*Human Torch*” story. We ended up getting tangled up in the finances and didn’t make any money at all. It wasn’t one of my most pleasant experiences. I laid out the stories, and someone else inked them.

JA: Did one of you get the job for the rest?

BURLOCKOFF: No. We got these jobs on our own. We hit all of the comic offices with pages that we had done; sometimes we made the pages up for samples and showed them. We’d meet downtown after we delivered our stuff and have lunch. That was fun.

I started out working for Lloyd Jacquet’s Funnies, Inc., not directly for Timely. That was more or less a permanent thing. I did a lot of inking for Jacquet—“*Sub-Mariner*,” for example. That was Bill Everett’s feature. Bill’s mother worked there, too; I think she colored and lettered. Al Plastino was there; in fact, he was the one who started me inking. Plastino would show me the different techniques he used. I remember that he used to go to Fred Waring’s club, and that he was an ardent golfer.

Jacquet was a sub-contractor for Martin Goodman’s Timely Comics. I didn’t have too much to do with Jacquet. He’d come into the office and look over my shoulder and say, “Keep up the good work.” He didn’t associate with us that much.

JA: Did you work there after school?

BURLOCKOFF: Yes. And I’d work there on my summer vacations. I started there around 1940.

JA: This explains why very few people at Timely remembered Bill Everett from those days. He worked at Jacquet’s shop instead of the Timely offices.

BURLOCKOFF: Yes. And so did my friend Mike Roy. He worked on “*Sub-Mariner*,” too. Everett was a little older than me, and I was in awe of him. We didn’t get to know each other that well, but we’d exchange pleasantries. I used to look over his shoulder and watch him work. I’m not sure who I inked on “*Sub-Mariner*.” It was either Bill Everett or Mike Roy.

JA: Did you meet Carl Burgos?



Sam mentions inking some “*Sub-Mariner*” but says that was “*Bill Everett’s feature*,” and it might have been either Everett or Mike Roy that he inked (or even Everett’s successor Carl Pfeufer). But—did Bill’s mother really color and letter for Lloyd Jacquet’s Funnies, Inc., shop? Maybe we should have accompanied all these questions with Namor art from *Marvel Mystery Comics*, but the above page is from *Sub-Mariner* #1 (Spring 1941), repro’d from photostats of the original art. [©2004, Marvel Characters, Inc.]

BURLOCKOFF: I might have... I really don’t remember him. I wasn’t really into “*The Human Torch*.” As I said, I just did the one story on speculation and ended up looking at an empty envelope. [laughs] In those days, you had to wait for your money, and when it finally came, you had to make a deal on how much you’d get. It was a very rough time.

JA: Did you have trouble getting paid from Jacquet?

BURLOCKOFF: No, no. That’s not what I meant. A lot of the companies would put you off. They’d say you missed the pay period and would have to wait another week or two. You know the old story: “the check’s in the mail.”

There weren’t many people working in the studio, which wasn’t that big a room. Most of the guys worked at home, only showing up to deliver and pick up work—and their paychecks. The ones I remember working there were Mike Roy, Bill Everett, Mickey Spillane, and Ray Gill.

JA: When you went into comics, was it your goal to be a penciler? Or was inking first on your mind?

BURLOCKOFF: I just wanted to draw—period! Jacquet was a stepping-stone for me. I didn’t work for him that long. I ran into Harry Sahle [pronounced “Sally”], and he more or less

steered me into MLJ. Harry worked for Jacquet, too. Harry said, “I’m going to work for MLJ. You want to come with me?” I went with him and started inking “*Archie*”—and “*The Shield*” over Irv Novick. I also inked “*Dusty*” and “*The Web*.” Harry was one of my best friends and was a little older than me. He was a nice guy, very free with his encouragement. He never shot down anyone.

Harry was a lot of fun to be with. He had a home recording machine and we used to make imitations and joke around on it. We did this on paper discs; they had a wax coating and you could make recordings on them. We made sound effects, too, and did our own comic stories on them... it was almost like doing radio shows. We used to go bowling together, too. Harry had one son and his wife was named Carrie.

He was medium height and prematurely balding. He had a very expressive smile on his face, almost like a Bugs Bunny face. He was a happy-go-lucky sort, always joking. Harry died from leukemia in the early 1950s. In fact, he was on the phone with me, telling me that his head hurt so much that it seemed like he was in a barrel. He died shortly after that.

Harry was a very fast artist. That was the important thing. If you

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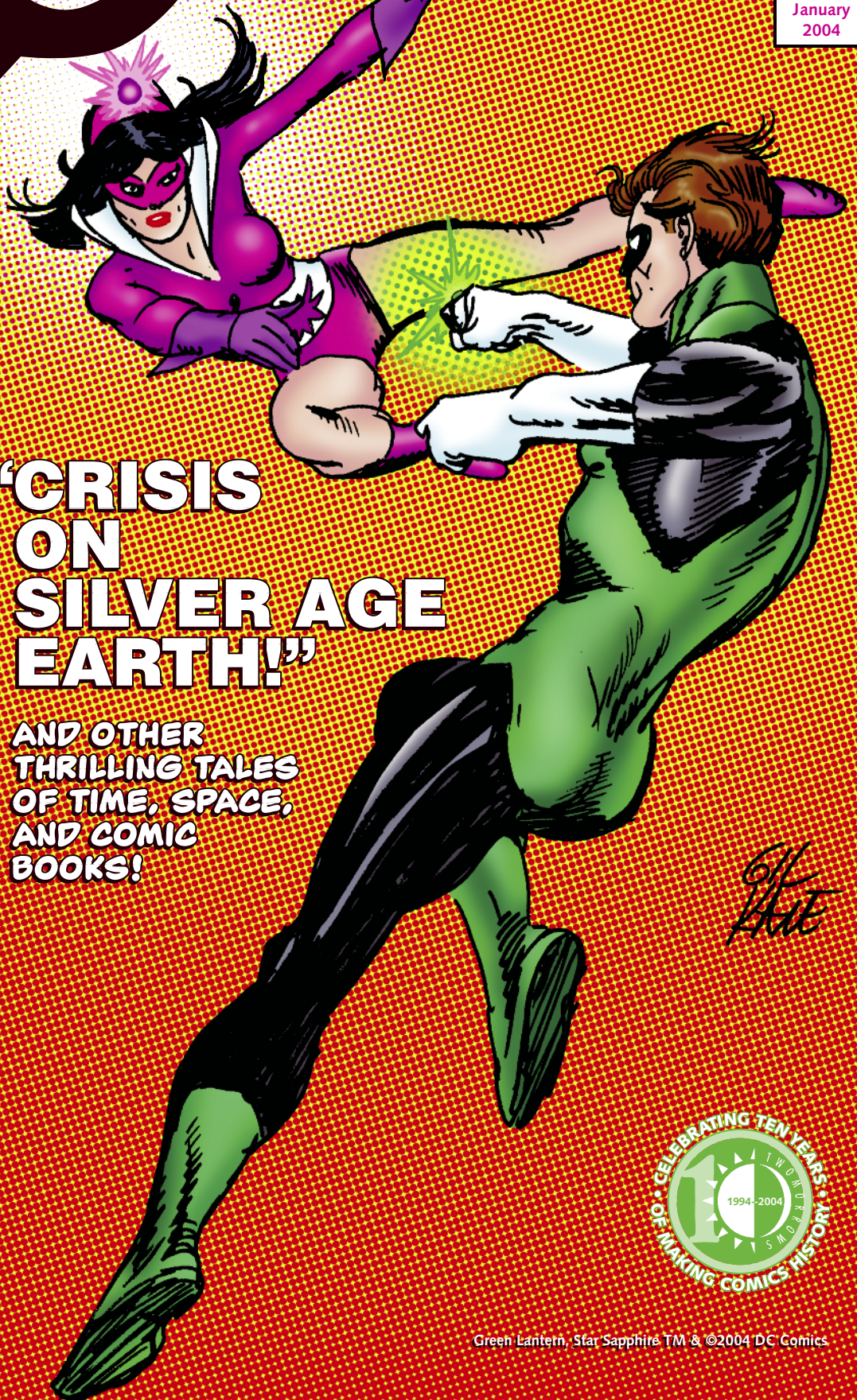
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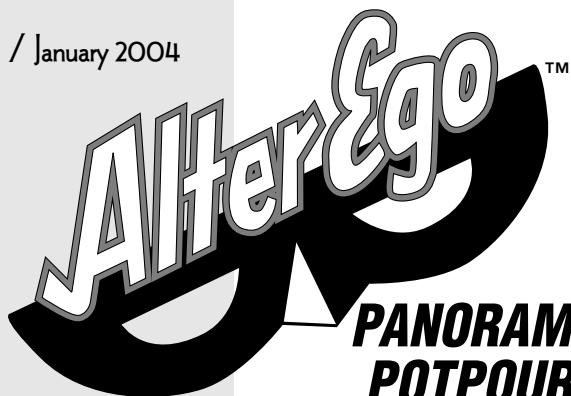
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Bellman, Burlockoff, & Nodell Section Flip Us!

About Our Cover: *When you're talking dynamic late-1950s super-hero art for an Alter Ego cover, you're definitely talking short list! Carmine Infantino's Flash, no doubt about it—Simon and Kirby's Fly, certainly—Steve Ditko's Captain Atom, for sure—or Gil Kane's Green Lantern (yes!). We were lucky that, at a crucial moment, collector Eddy Zeno sent us this drawing, done by Gil at an Atlanta, Georgia, con with his famous markers. You're a lifesaver, Eddy!* [Art ©2004 Estate of Gil Kane; Green Lantern & Star Sapphire TM & ©2004 DC Comics.]

Above: *Veteran comics colorist Carl Gafford writes a long-running feature for the apa-zine CAPA-alpha entitled “This Month in Comics,” for which he draws clever cartoons to accompany information about what was on sale 40, 35, 30, and 25 years earlier, as well as who wrote and drew that material. The above pair are from his March and May 1999 contribution. Mike Gold has a few more words to say on the subject on the pages that follow.* [Cartoons ©2004 Carl Gafford; characters TM & ©2004 DC Comics.]



This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Pete Morisi



A Guest Editorial by Jerry Bails

[NOTE: Alter Ego's founding editor and publisher Jerry G. Bails recently sent us the following thoughts about errata and corrections—and we felt they were worth printing as our first (but not necessarily last) guest editorial.]

Books about the people in the comics industry are real jewels that we all prize, but they allow errors to persist long after the author is embarrassed by them. On the other hand, the Internet is a wonderful medium that allows researchers to get instant feedback and rapid correction of their errors. It saves writers from a good many errors—not all, but it sure helps.

However, even with archives of Internet discussions preserved somewhere on the Web, errors discussed on the Internet do not yet rise to the level of print as the last word on a subject. That is where *Alter Ego* is so important. It is a living, growing instrument of research into the comics medium, and because Roy Thomas is so careful in publishing errata, it will serve for many years as a reference tool for writers. They may not always credit *Alter Ego* or get the facts straight, but the beauty of *A/E* is that it will be a research tool on the shelves of writers for decades to come, and we can consult back issues, knowing you cared enough to print additions and corrections, for which you are to be justly rewarded with an honorary degree from the School of Hard Knocks.

I'd like to take advantage of this wonderful aspect of the magazine to correct a few errors of my own that have appeared in book form in recent years. I believe that I can make the points so that they will be of general interest to its readers.

The first error appeared in the introduction I wrote for *The Golden Age Green Lantern, Vol. 2*. I mentioned in passing what I thought was a radio pilot based on the origin story in *All-American Comics* #16, by Bill Finger and Mart Nodell. I have had that recording in my possession for over twenty years. It had circulated with Old Time Radio recordings, some of which were pilots for shows that never got a sponsor. I presumed—wrongly—that this was the case with the “origin of GL” tape. As I learned on the Grand Comic-Book Chat List (www.comics.org), it was actually one of three recordings DC licensed in the late Silver Age (exact date unknown to me). The other two were Silver Age characters—one being Aquaman, I'm told.

I never saw this set for sale. I would have been flabbergasted to discover a Golden Age character released on a record during the Silver Age. Maybe one of your readers can enlighten me as to how that happened. Anyway, the recording is a faithful adaptation of the very first “Green Lantern” story from 1940, which should be of interest to Golden Age collectors.

In the very next paragraph of that same Archives introduction, I also mentioned The Green Lama and attributed his creation to Ken Crossen, a writer and later publisher. That may have been only partially true. Crossen was using the writing talents of Horace Gold to produce many of the “Green Lama” stories. I have no idea who initiated the idea, or how much input Crossen had, but I suspect he had some. I have evidence of other writers (like Ken Jackson) writing the feature,

especially when it was farmed out to the Jack Binder shop and was being published in *Prize Comics*.

The later appearances of The Green Lama in his own magazine from Crossen's Spark Publications seem to have been primarily written by Horace Gold. Gold was a friend of Jerry Siegel's, who, according to a letter from Siegel, assisted him by supplying plots for early “Superman” adventures.

Okay, I've got one more error to clean up—for now.

In the introduction to the recent *Spectre Archives, Vol. 1*, I repeated the conventional wisdom about Victor Fox, who published “Wonder Man,” a rip-off of “Superman” that was immediately sued out of existence. I repeated the traditional story that he was a former accountant for Harry Donenfeld at DC. As the story went, once Fox saw the sales figures of *Action Comics*, he went off and started his own line of comics.

Michael Feldman has since convinced me that this widely-told tale is very likely apocryphal. Fox would have had to have access to considerable capital to launch numerous titles, as he did in 1939. It's unlikely that an accountant working for a second-rate publisher in those days had access to that much capital. There are numerous other ways that someone in advertising, merchandising, publishing, distributing, or the paper industry might have learned early on of the success of “Superman.” We have yet to learn where Fox raised his capital, but I am now highly suspicious of the traditional story.

Nevertheless, we *can* all put Fox Publications in the same large office building as early DC Comics. That was 480 Lexington Avenue, known as the Grand Central Palace. It was a large building occupying an entire block, with at least one other street entrance. Will Eisner, who created “Wonder Man,” has told the story of Victor Fox opening the entrance doors on DC's floor and spitting out to show his disdain for Donenfeld. Well, Fox did lose that legal battle over “Wonder Man.”

I hasten to add that I photographed the Grand Central Palace on my family's trip to New York in the summer of 1948. So I *was* in New York City that summer. I just couldn't find the Seuling convention covered in *Alter Ego* #27. Someone must have made that up.

Jerry G. Bails

[So how about it, *A/Enthusiasts*? Keep spotting those errors, in *Alter Ego* and elsewhere. For instance, we hope Craig Delich (or somebody else) will find time soon to do a piece correcting the ID mistakes—including my own—that've sneaked into DC's basically excellent *Archives* series. Let's forget this “Print the legend” bull that often passes for both journalism and history nowadays, and examine any and all assumptions, even if they come from a revered comics icon. If it's truth, it'll withstand the scrutiny! Oh, and please—don't automatically trust anything you read on the Internet, either—it's a valuable tool, but it's also the greatest spreader of mis-information in the history of humankind!

Bestest,




An early Will Eisner panel—from *Wonder Comics* #1 (May 1939).
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Crisis On Silver Age Earth

The Year (or So) the Future Started

by Mike Gold

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *Mike Gold was one of the founding editors of First Comics in Chicago in the mid-1980s, and from the late 1980s through much of the '90s, he served as an editor at DC Comics. His current bio follows this piece, which he wrote at the time of *Alter Ego* V3#1 and which has been sitting undeservedly on a shelf for more than thirty issues, awaiting a berth. —Roy.]*

It was a deeply fearful time for the comic book industry. Business was bad and a great many writers and artists who had dedicated their livelihoods to the medium found themselves staring unemployment in the face. A legion of talent left in search of reliable engagement elsewhere. Many new titles fell into the abyss, discontinued shortly after their debut.

Most smaller comics companies had already gone out of business. Distributors were folding, as well—major, well-known distributors. Retail outlets were disappearing, with no replacement venues on the horizon. A great many people believed the end was near.

Riddle me this: when did this happen? Here's a clue: at the time, just about the only comic with variant cover art was *Mad*. And *Mad* had become a magazine several years earlier, no longer counted as a comic book.

The time was the end of comics' third decade: 1958 and 1959. Market conditions were not unlike those of recent years, although the response to the problem was quite different. The concept of generating a multitude of expensive artificial collectibles was not an option. Indeed, those clever few that had kept their wits and their jobs believed the best way the medium could ward off oblivion was through creativity and talent.

As an outlet for the publication of new material, the comic book medium was a mere two decades old. For much of that time, it had suffered through castigation, restriction, and external censorship; if they wanted to stay in business, the few surviving publishers had a very good idea what they should *not* publish. To start with, they could not publish



Mike Gold (as sketched a few years ago by DC editorial head honcho Mike Carlin) ponders a six-pack of *Superman* covers from the 1950s, a montage done for the 1971 hardcover *Superman from the 30's to the 70's*. In many ways, Gold feels, a looming era of transition related to the Man of Steel was the starting-point for comics events of the late 1950s and beyond. Read it and find out how! [Sketch ©2004, Mike Carlin; *Superman* art ©2004, DC Comics.]

violent crime and horror comics—two significant profit centers for the first half of the 1950s.

Western comics had peaked, and science-fiction titles had never truly taken off. With the obvious (and important) exception of "Archie," teen humor had been hit-or-miss, and the broader funny-animal genre had run aground. Only Dell and Harvey Comics were committed to its continuance. Even though certain Dell titles were, by some accounts, selling more than three million copies each month, Harvey was moving away from newspaper strip reprints towards a line of funny ghosts, funny devils, funny witches, and funny people with really thick ankles. Sports, music, and movie star titles were short-lived, and romance comics were a matter of tonnage: successful at present levels, but without room for expansion.

Super-hero comics had been the staple of the industry throughout the 1940s, but the hundreds of super-hero titles had been whittled down to perhaps half dozen a month, in a good month. A few years earlier, Marvel had tried a revival with Captain America, The Human Torch, and The Sub-Mariner; all three had been major successes during the 1940s, but in revival, the first two lasted only a year, and Namor only two. At roughly the same time, the most successful post-Siegel and-Shuster creative team in comics history, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, flopped with *Fighting American*, which lasted only seven issues.

National Comics still had Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman, along with Aquaman and Green Arrow in six page back-up features, and the Blackhawks, who almost qualify as costumed heroes. National's



With or without Simon and Kirby, two of that super-team's patriotic-garbed heroes didn't set off any sales fireworks in the mid-'50s. John Romita recapped the SEK origin for Timely/Atlas' revival of Captain America in *Young Men* #24 (Dec. 1953)—while SEK themselves found a new way to turn a 90-pound weakling into a *Fighting American* (in #1, April-May 1954). Both series are fondly remembered today. Two Romita-drawn "Captain America" tales were reprinted in the 1997 trade paperback *The Golden Age of Marvel* [Vol. 1], and the entire run of *Fighting American* was collected in a glorious 1989 hardcover. [Captain America art ©2004, Marvel Characters, Inc.; Fighting American art ©2004, Joe Simon & the Estate of Jack Kirby.]

The time for scattergun experimentation had passed. It was time for writers, artists, editors, and publishers to buckle down and do what they did best—but now do it in a more contemporary fashion. They had to inspire new readers, regain the attention of those they had lost, and run like the devil down the tunnel toward that dim light at the end. In so doing, these stalwarts paved the way for the so-called Silver Age, creating or refining many of the devices we have taken for granted ever since.

First and foremost, they started paying attention to the readers. One might think that publishers *always* paid attention to their readers, because they followed sales figures. If something sold well or better, they'd do more. If something sold poorly or worse, they'd do less. This belief contains a fundamental flaw. There is an enormous difference between paying attention to sales figures and paying attention to the readers. Sales figures tell you what the readers have liked, and that is important as far as it goes. But if you would only listen to them, the readers will enthusiastically tell you what they *would* like. They will show you the future. But you have to give them the opportunity for feedback, and you've got to cultivate and capture and hold on to their enthusiasm.

The door had been opened two years earlier. National had launched a title that would allow them to experiment without going through the logistical trouble of launching new titles. Their new book, *Showcase*, was conceived as a series of one-shots covering unexplored themes: underwater adventure, firemen, heroic animals, and sundry types of detectives and adventurers. As we all know, the fourth issue truly resurrected the super-hero genre with the modernized revival of "The Flash."



endurance was propped up by the *Superman* television show—it had been an enormous hit, but it had gone out of production after 1957, and thoughts of a restart were mitigated by the increasing age of its cast. Unfortunately for everyone's peace of mind, no one could have foreseen its healthy afterlife in the rerun market.

Cavemen, high adventure, satire, heroic animals like *Rex the Wonder Dog* (launched shortly before the 1950s *Rin Tin Tin* and *Lassie* craze)—these were interesting attempts at taking the medium into new directions, but they hardly set the world on fire. Whereas Jack Schiff introduced the first new ongoing super-hero of the period in 1955 in the back pages of *Detective Comics*, this did not fundamentally alter comics' condition. Initially, "John Jones - Manhunter from Mars" was little more than a different take on Superman, combined with the imagery of the science-fiction movies of the time (a favorite Schiff device). There is little reason to believe that it provided impetus to launch "The Flash" the following year.

Clearly, *Showcase* #4 sold well, as the second appearance of The Flash followed a mere eight months later, which was barely enough time to get serious sales figures in and commission, print, and distribute the work. Following that issue, National upped the ante by changing their format from single appearances to two-issue runs, starting with Jack Kirby's "Challengers of the Unknown."

From today's perspective it's easy to see "The Challengers" as part of a movement towards super-heroes, but at the time they were just another team of unclothed, unpowered adventurers—far better conceived, written, and drawn, of course, but the series neither indicated nor fostered any change in editorial direction.

The two-issue "Lois Lane" try-out in *Showcase* followed the Chals, but the gamble on Lois had more to do with launching a title that featured a female lead. Her exposure on television and Superman's consistent appearance mitigated National's risk. After Lois and two more issues with the Challengers, they brought back The Flash in *Showcase* #13 and #14 for his final try-out run.

When *Showcase* launched its next significant characters, Adam Strange, Green Lantern, and The Atom were all done in three-issue arcs. This philosophy was ported over to *The Brave and the Bold*, with the Justice League of America (at the very end of 1959) and Hawkman try-outs. From the sales figures on the first two issues and the "flash" (preliminary) numbers on the third, National could tell the difference between a fad and a fluke and could minimize the amount of time between the final tryout and the first ongoing appearance.

This evolution in format from one-shot to the three-issue runs we came to associate with *Showcase* was a significant change in marketing philosophy: a three-issue run represented a move away from scattergun publishing, and that gave National—and later, the industry—the way out of their circulation nightmare.

It was proven that intelligent and contemporary super-heroes were a fad, at the very least, and genre-oriented concepts were a fluke, at the very best. But this information only provided a sketchy map out of the sales morass. Publishers needed more information. They needed market research.

The most obvious way to elicit readers' opinions was to establish a letters column. In and of itself, this was nothing new: in this publishing category, letter columns date back to the earliest pulp days, when even President Teddy Roosevelt was a member of *Adventure* magazine's fan club. Lettercols, as they were often called for short, had been seen in comics as well, and several titles carried the readers' praise (and occasionally their sketches) during the 1940s.

In the early-to-mid-1950s, the EC titles offered critical analysis from future comics writers and editors like Archie Goodwin and E. Nelson Bridwell, but, given the nature of the EC line, they had little influence

over the company's direction. Various romance comics had their "advice to the lovelorn" letters—letters of dubious origin. But an across-the-board effort to elicit, gauge, understand, and incorporate the thoughts of the readers was as yet unrealized. Mort Weisinger's Superman titles carried highly self-promotional letters: the response to an incredible percentage of letters was a plug for an upcoming Superman family title.

But Weisinger's letter columns had at least one more effect: they generated mail.

Bolstered by the success of the television series, Mort Weisinger's Superman line was comparatively strong. But Weisinger also served as the TV show's story editor, and whereas the program was still being broadcast, production had come to an end in 1957. The time was ripe to shore up his line, and the best place to start was with the traditionally marginal *Adventure Comics*.

Astonishingly self-promoting though they were, his letter columns provided a font of conceptual energy, all provided without charge by his loyal fans. How did Superboy learn to use his powers? What if Superboy met Robin? And—let's see more of Bizarro. Let's see more of that Legion of Super-Heroes.

Ever since the pulp days, editors had been receiving story ideas from willing readers, but all that produced was a (hopefully) good story, and that was that. It was revolutionary to reach out to the consensus of fan desires—indeed, even the idea of recognizing that fan input could be representative of the broader readership was something new, and something National didn't fully accept for another twenty years. This *de facto* empowerment of the hardcore reader was the way the comics industry altered its future, saving its

butt in the process. The most identifiable moment when this corner was turned was 1958.

The idea of crossovers was not new, but crossover stories were extremely rare. They were all the more unusual at National Comics, where each editor operated his line as a separate fiefdom. By 1958 there were four main editors who handled super-heroes: Julius Schwartz with The Flash (still bound to *Showcase*), Jack Schiff with the Batman books, Robert Kanigher with *Wonder Woman*, and Weisinger with the Superman titles. Murray Boltinoff and George Kashdan were editing at the time, working under Jack Schiff. *World's Finest Comics* was the



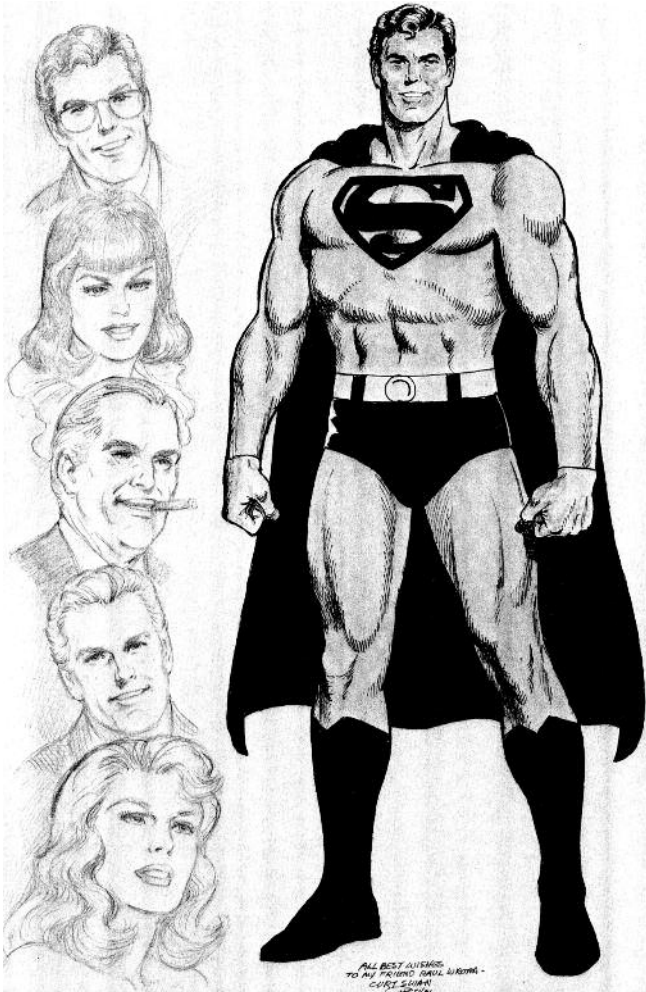
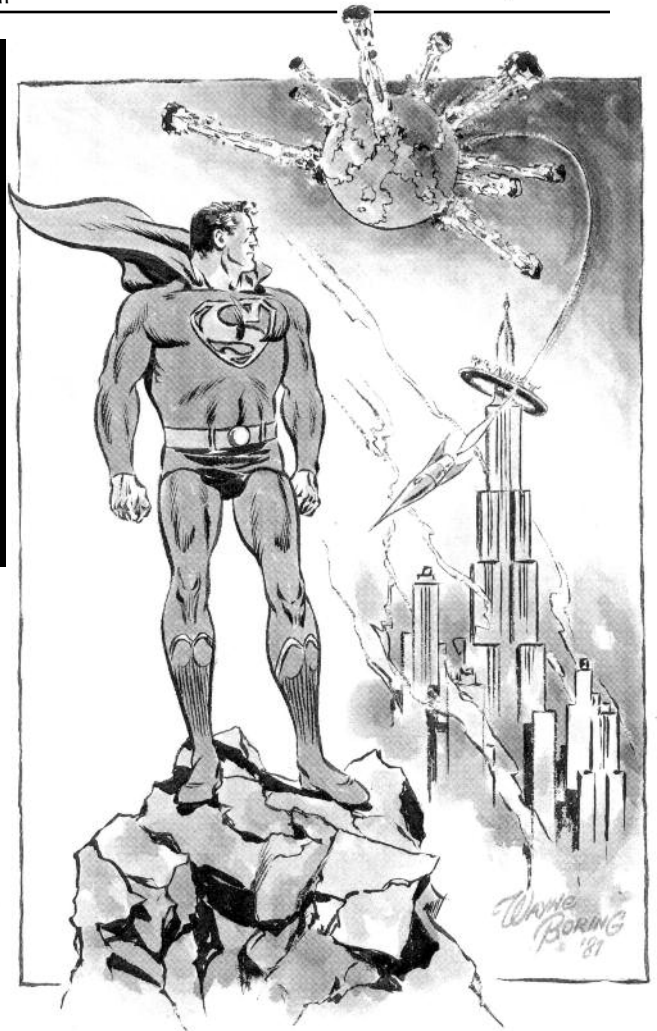
DC editor Julius Schwartz came into his own in the latter 1950s, with the revival/revamping of The Flash. *Showcase* #14 (June 1958) spotlighted the last of the speedster's four strategically-spaced tryouts; with later heroes, a three-issues-in-a-row approach became more common. The cover is repro'd here from a copy of the original black-&-white art by Carmine Infantino and Joe Giella, which was sold in a Sotheby's auction exactly forty years later. Photo by Beth Gwinn. [Art ©2004, DC Comics.]





Mort Weisinger, who like Schwartz emerged from the shadow of chief editor Whitney Ellsworth in the late 1950s, edited all Superman-starring mags except *World's Finest Comics*. He utilized some of the field's top talent, including the trio of artists whose work is depicted here: Win Mortimer, Wayne Boring, and Curt Swan. The photo of M.W. appeared in the 1985 publication *Fifty Who Made DC Great*, while the commissioned art is courtesy of collector Eddy Zeno, author of the recent illustrated biography *Curt Swan: A Life in Comics*, which may just still be available from Vanguard Press; see <creativemix.com/vanguard> for details. [Art © the estates of the respective artists; Superman TM & ©2004 DC Comics.]

To Wally Harington
with best regards
Win Mortimer



ALL BEST OFFERS TO MY FRIEND SWAN - CURT SWAN

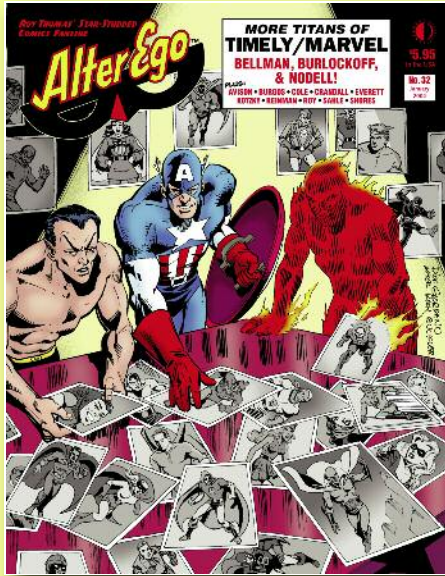
only title that regularly indicated an awareness of a “universe,” as Superman, Batman, and Robin had been teaming up ever since page restrictions forced them to share the same apartment. On at least one occasion in the late 1950s, Blackhawk mentioned the existence of Superman, but there was no indication they had ever taken lunch together.

Indeed, there was more crossover between those editors than there had been among their characters: various editors shared offices from time to time, Kanigher wrote for Schwartz, and everybody reported to editorial director Schiff—who covered for Weisinger when he was working on the TV show.

So when *Adventure Comics* #253 came out in the summer of 1958, my little eight-year-old fanboy head exploded (when it came to comic books, I was quite precocious; by age eight I was a veteran). “Superboy Meets Robin,” the cover proclaimed—and there he was, little bare-legged Robin, just about to take a baseball bat to Superboy’s favorite intergalactic grandfather clock! Okay, the conflict seems weak by today’s standards, but the cover could have showed the two of them flagging baseball cards for all I cared—the idea of Robin, from Batman fame, meeting Superboy, from Superman fame, was revolutionary. And the idea of Robin, from our contemporary time, meeting Superboy, from a Depression-less, pre-World War II America, in his native environment—well, folks, that made *World's Finest* seem routine.

By now, Mort was getting mail on *Adventure* #247, and readers wanted more of The Legion of Super-Heroes. Undoubtedly, sales on that issue were at least average, but editors did not routinely revisit “used” concepts—unless that used concept was a particularly popular villain. Beginning in the fall of 1959, the Legion began a lengthy series of

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ALTER EGO #32

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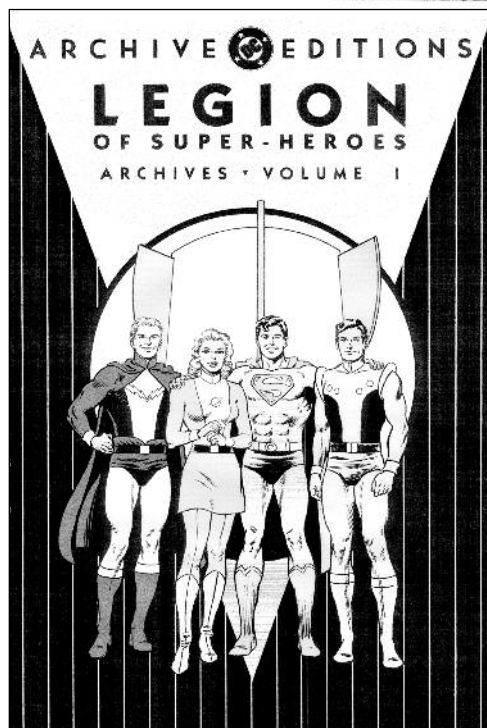
guest-shots throughout the Superman line, leading up to their own series in 1962.

The readers also clamored for the return of two different one-shot characters, each of whom had met an unfortunate destiny. In that fateful summer of 1958 Weisinger brought a heavily-promoted Frankenstein tribute to the pages of *Superboy*, introducing a tragic figure named Bizarro. The character became so popular that he was introduced into various Superman family titles, until he earned his own short-lived series in the back pages of *Adventure Comics*. The “Tales of the Bizarro World” series was replaced by the far more popular “Legion of Super-Heroes”; this event marked the greatest fan influence to date.

The Legion continued to appear in other Superman titles, although far less frequently. So did Bizarro and his undead family—but Bizarro achieved something no other comic book

character had done before: his name became a part of the English language, and is noted in various dictionaries as a person who is strange and unusual—and, according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, brave. (The word “superman” had entered our lexicon long before *Action Comics* #1, by way of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and playwright George Bernard Shaw.)

In *Superman* #123 (August, 1958), Superman met his near-equal in

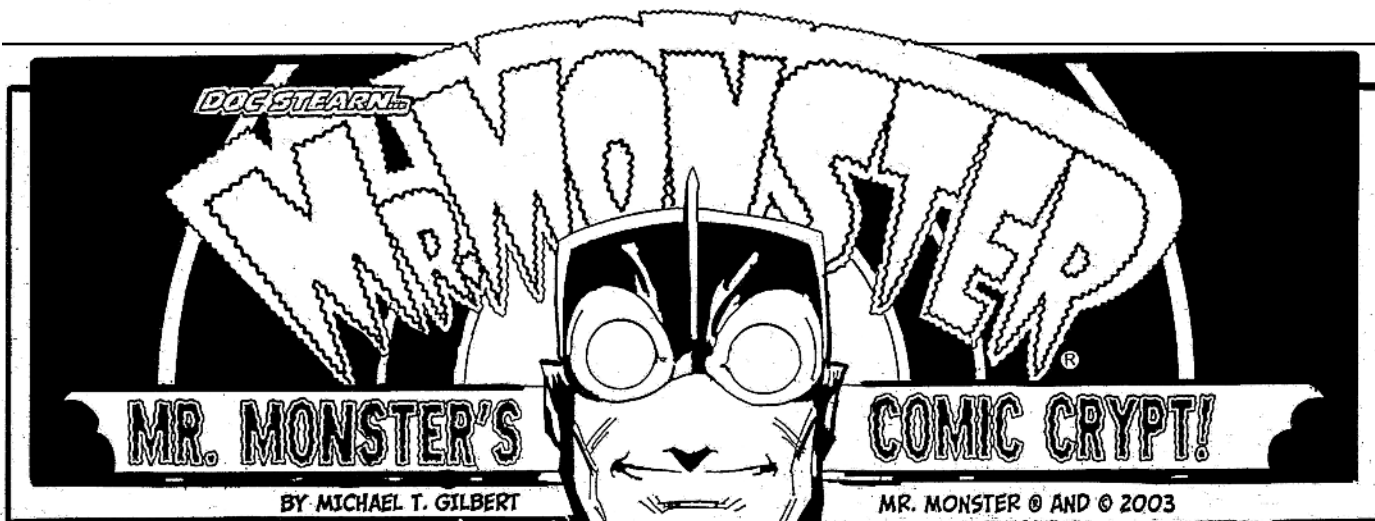


Mike feels that the above second appearance by the Legion of Super-Heroes, in *Adventure* #267 (Dec. 1959), more than a year and a half after their debut in #247, was the result of mail response and burgeoning fan-mail, as well as sales reports. At any rate, the upshot to date has been twelve volumes of *Legion of Super-Heroes Archives*, beginning in 1991—and the end is not yet in sight. [©2004, DC Comics.]

the form of a Girl of Steel—a Super-Girl. Sales were strong, and fan response was even stronger. So he created a new “Maid of Steel”—it’s hard to believe, but in 1959 the idea of simply bringing a character back from the dead had not occurred to anybody; or, if it did, it was probably believed to be in bad taste.

So in *Action Comics* #252 (May, 1959), Super-Girl “came back” in the form of a new Supergirl. Score another one for the fans.

Indeed, what made the “Supergirl” series unique was not that she was a female version of Superboy, but that she had to earn her wings. She was a super-hero in training, whose movements were restricted to those that would not reveal her existence to the world until



MR. MONSTER'S

COMIC CRYPT!

BY MICHAEL T. GILBERT

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HEY, GANG! WELCOME BACK!!

LAST ISSUE WE DISCUSSED *WEIRD MYSTERIES* AND *EERIE TALES*, TWO OBSCURE 1959 HORROR MAGAZINES. THOUGH ALMOST FORGOTTEN, THESE MAGAZINES PRECEDED BOTH *CREEPLY* AND *EERIE* BY FIVE YEARS -- AND WERE THE FIRST HORROR COMICS TO DEFEY THE COMICS CODE!

DON'T BELIEVE ME? WELL, HERE'S A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON BY DAVID A. ROACH, TAKEN FROM JON B. COOKE'S SUPERB *WARREN COMPANION*. IN IT, DAVID STATES THAT *EERIE TALES* WAS...

"... one of the most obscure and least understood comics of the '50s. *Eerie Tales* was a black-&-white magazine published by Hastings Associates whose combination of a painted cover and short horror strips introduced by a sarcastic, tall, thin host (in this case "Morgue'n") will be familiar to all Warren fans. There's never been a suggestion that Jim Warren ever saw *Eerie Tales* and in any case the magazine format itself had long been established by EC with both their picto-fiction line and *Mad Magazine*. Nevertheless, it was the first time non-Code approved horror strips had been featured in a black-&-white magazine and for that reason the comic is of enormous historical significance. Unfortunately for historians, the magazines origins are obscure at best. It appears to have been Hastings Associates only publication, and the editors' identities were obscured by obvious pseudonyms like Vanessa Vampire and Basil Darkerton. Another interesting Warren connection was the presence of Gray Morrow, Angelo Torres, Al Williamson and George Tuska, all of whom would go on to work for Warren barely five years later. Posterity might well have forgotten it, but it was a significant step in the evolution of comics."

INDEED IT WAS! BUT WHY DID BOTH MAGAZINES FAIL -- AND WHO WAS THE MYSTERY MAN BEHIND THEM? JOIN US AS WE ATTEMPT TO UNRAVEL THESE "WEIRD MYSTERIES" AND REVEAL THE STARTLING SECRETS OF...

"HORROR'S MISSING LINK!!"

