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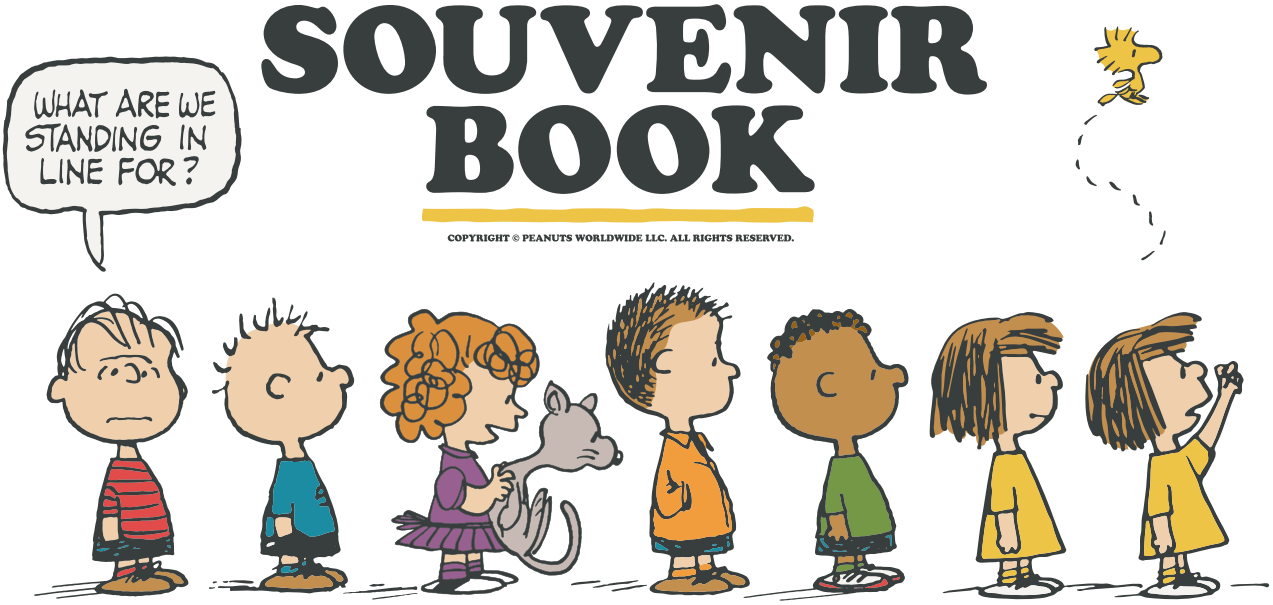
2025 SAN DIEGO

COMIC-CON®

SOUVENIR BOOK



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SAN DIEGO COMIC CON INTERNATIONAL

COMIC-CON 2025
JULY 25–28
PREVIEW NIGHT JULY 24
SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER

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Editor & Designer:
Dave Olbrich, Kirby Mitchell

Contributing Editors:
Robin Donlan, Mike Stoltz

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A huge "thank you" to the terrific folks at PEANUTS Worldwide for this year's Souvenir Book cover, featuring Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, and the gang. Copyright © PEANUTS Worldwide, LLC. All rights reserved.

COMIC-CON APP

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ANIME
GAMES
FILMS

SAN DIEGO COMIC CON INTERNATIONAL

SAN DIEGO COMIC CON INTERNATIONAL

2025 SOUVENIR BOOK

JULY 24 -27 PREVIEW NIGHT: JULY 23

SAN DIEGO COMIC CONVENTION

PHOTO: A. William © 2024 SDCC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
WELCOME BACK!

Welcome to Comic-Con 2025! We are excited to welcome you all to the beautiful San Diego Convention Center for another fantastic Comic-Con! Once again, we are given the opportunity to reunite in person to celebrate the wonderful diversity that is the popular arts, and we are grateful to share this time with you, our community that makes this magic possible. Thank you for joining us.

Comic-Con is an opportunity to make new friends and reconnect with old ones, to learn new things and discover new fandoms, and to share stories and experiences with like-minded fans and friends you have yet to meet. From its earliest days, this event has always had the popular arts community at its core. It's a place to renew old friendships and make new ones, to share your expertise and learn from others, to meet with others to celebrate the amazing world of fandom. Within the many venues of our campus, you will find a huge variety of events and opportunities that cover a wide diversity of interests … there is truly something for everyone at Comic-Con. Whether your goal is to spend time in a Program room, shop in the Exhibit Hall, join a tournament in the Games area, watch the amazing talent at the Masquerade, donate at the Blood Drive, watch the Eisner Awards ceremony, connect with a favorite artist, or visit one of the many activations outside, there is so much to do at this show. We are excited to share in the joy of seeing the many spaces bustling with activity and creativity as we celebrate the community that is Comic-Con.

We are only able to create this special place because of you, the fans, and we appreciate all of you who have chosen to spend these days with us … exhibitors, professionals, panelists, press, and attendees alike. As we begin this event together, we know this magic would never exist without the support of the magic-makers, the thousands of volunteers and staff who work tirelessly year-round to make this event happen. We are truly grateful for all the time they spend behind the curtain creating the joy that is Comic-Con. We are thrilled to share their magic with you. Your loyalty and support are the reason for our longevity and success. We thank you all and hope you have a fantastic Comic-Con 2025.

Robin Donlan

President
San Diego Comic Convention

ABOUT THE SOUVENIR BOOK COVER

The whole staff at Comic-Con International sends the biggest, warmest, happiest **THANK YOU** to the wonderful folks at PEANUTS Worldwide for our astonishing Comic-Con International Souvenir Book 2025 cover art.

Do you want the art for yourself? It is featured on the 2025 Convention Event T-shirt available during the convention at the Comic-Con Merch Store in Pacific Ballroom 23–26 of the Marriott Marquis San Diego.

If there were a Mount Rushmore of newspaper cartoon icons, Charles "Sparky" M. Schulz would be the cornerstone. His creation of *PEANUTS*, featuring Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the gang, is famous all over the globe and with good reason. They have conquered newspapers, books, magazines, TV, and movies to become some of the world's most recognizable characters.

The importance of Charles M. Schulz and PEANUTS to the foundations of comics fandom cannot be overstated.

This cover is a complete delight. Watch as Woodstock flits from top to bottom, Charlie Brown has a confidence problem, and Linus has some practical concerns, all to delightfully humorous effect.

Want to read more? We have a *PEANUTS* 75th Anniversary article in this publication. Check out the Table of Contents for the location.
–Dave

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SAN DIEGO COMIC CON INTERNATIONAL

SPECIAL GUESTS

★★★★★

2025

Julio Anta

Julio Anta is the author of many graphic novels, including the Eisner Award-nominated Frontera, plus This Land Is Our Land: A Blue Beetle Story, Speak Up Santiago, Home, and Si, Se Puede. He is the recipient of the Children's Book Council's Young Adults' Favorites Award and a New York State Council on the Arts grant. His work has been published by DC, Marvel, Image, HarperCollins, Penguin Random House, and more. Julio was born and raised in Miami, Florida, and currently resides in New York City, where he works to tell narratively rich stories for audiences of all ages.

Kia Asamiya

Kia Asamiya is a veteran Japanese manga artist and designer who is best known for Silent Möbius. He debuted in 1986 and expanded his reach internationally in 1999, working on titles such as Batman, X-Men, and Star Wars with DC and Marvel. His dynamic art spans manga, anime storyboards, and illustration. In 2024, he received the prestigious Japanese Nebula Award for his contributions to science fiction. 2025 marks his return to Comic-Con after 25 years, as he continues to captivate audiences worldwide with his fusion of visual storytelling and sci-fi imagination. **Sponsored by Udon Entertainment**

Alison Bechdel

Alison Bechdel's work includes the pioneering comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For (1983–2008) and the graphic memoirs Fun Home, Are You My Mother? and The Secret to Superhuman Strength. Fun Home was adapted into a musical in 2015 and received five Tony Awards. In her work, Bechdel is preoccupied with the overlap of the political and the personal spheres. She is the recipient of Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, as well as an Eisner Award. She was inducted into the Eisner Awards Hall of Fame in 2020. Her newest book, Spent: A Comic Novel, is hot off the press.

Eddie Campbell

Eddie Campbell is best known as the artist of the award-winning graphic novel *From Hell,* written by Alan Moore. He also writes his own stuff, including the two volumes of *Bacchus; Alec: The Years Have Pants*, which collects 30 years of his autobiographical comics, and the latest in that line, *The Second Fake Death of Eddie Campbell.* Lately, he has been writing about the history of cartooning, as in *The Goat Getters* and the Eisner-nominated *Kate Carew: America's First Great Woman Cartoonist*. Eddie has been living in Chicago since 2016.

Michael Cho

Michael Cho is a Toronto-based cartoonist and illustrator whose bold, vintage-inspired artwork regularly appears on covers for Marvel, DC Comics, and others. His illustrations have also been featured in everything from *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* to *Fortnite*, Disney, and the Joe Biden presidential campaign. He's received several awards for his work, and his art book *Back Alleys and Urban Landscapes* was published by Drawn & Quarterly in 2012. His debut graphic novel, *Shoplifter* (Pantheon, 2014), was a *New York Times* bestseller, and his newest project, *The Avengers in the Veracity Trap*, a Silver Age–style graphic novel created with Chip Kidd for Abrams' MarvelArts line, is set to hit shelves in August.

Chris Cross

ChrisCross has worked in comics for 35 years. His introduction to professional comics was working with Milestone Media, where he worked on both iterations of *Blood Syndicate* and a stint on a book called *Heroes*. He then worked for DC and Marvel on such titles as *Xero* (which was picked up for film*), Captain Marvel, Green Lantern Corps, JLA, M-man, Supergirl, Green Lantern* (John Stewart), *Batman & Superman,* and *Superboy,* among others. He also did work with the SpiderVerse (where he introduced a new character named Headline) and on the Star Wars character Mace Windu, as well as Marvel's *Weapon X-Men*. He is currently in the middle of a creator-owned project with writer Joseph Illidge called *The Winterfields*, to be published by Fair-Square Comics.

Max Allan Collins

Max Allan Collins is a Mystery Writers of America Grand Master and four-time winner of the PWA Shamus Award for his Nathan Heller novels. His graphic novel *Road to Perdition* became an Academy Award–winning film, and his produced screenplays include *Mommy* and *The Last Lullaby,* based on his Quarry novels, also the basis of a Cinemax series. He completed 14 Mike Hammer novels from Mickey Spillane's files, and (with his wife Barbara) he writes the *Antiques* mysteries. Max's comics credits include *Dick Tracy*, *Batman*, and co-creations *Ms. Tree* and *Wild Dog*.


ANTA


ASAMIYA


BECHDEL

Photo credit: Elena Seibert


CAMPBELL


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COLLINS


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DRAGOTTA


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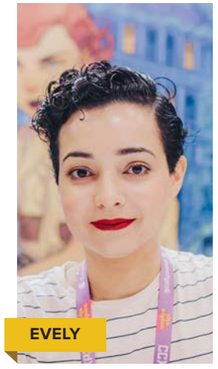
EVELY


FERRIS


HICKMAN

J. M. DeMatteis

Eisner Award winner J. M. DeMatteis was a musician and rock music journalist before launching a long career writing novels, television, film, and comic books. He has created a variety of memorable projects, from the superheroics of *Captain America* and *Spider-Man* to the personal visions of *Brooklyn Dreams* and *Moonshadow* and his celebrated collaborations with Keith Giffen on *Justice League*, *Hero Squared,* and other titles. Recent projects include the novellas *The Excavator* and *The Witness;* Amazon Prime's animated *Batman: Caped Crusader;* and the DeMultiverse line of comics: *Godsend, Anyman, Wisdom,* and *Layla in the Lands of After.*

Nick Dragotta

Nick Dragotta is one of the most dynamic stylists and storytellers in comics today. His fluid, high-energy artwork captured readers' attention on various Marvel projects, eventually leading to his breakout success on *Fantastic Four* with writer Jonathan Hickman. They reunited for the apocalyptic sci-fi western *East of West* at Image Comics, a series nominated for multiple Eisner Awards that highlighted his talent for creating iconic characters, intense action, and breathtaking landscapes. He's since co-written and illustrated *Ghost Cage* with Caleb Goellner. He is now co-creating and drawing the hit series *Absolute Batman* with writer Scott Snyder for DC Comics.

Mark Evanier

Mark Evanier attended his first San Diego Comic-Con in 1970 and has been to every one of these annual events ever since. He was then an assistant to the great Jack Kirby, whom he wrote about in his book *Kirby, King of Comics*. Mark has also written for live-action TV shows, animated TV shows (including various *Garfield* cartoons), and tons of comic books. The comics include working with Sergio Aragonés for 40 years on *Groo the Wanderer,* and many more. He is also a historian of comic books and animation.

Greg Evans

Inspired by his family and the antics of his young daughter, Greg Evans created the nationally syndicated comic strip *Luann* in 1985. He received the National Cartoonists Society's Reuben Award for Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year in 2003. In 2015, his daughter Karen joined him as co-writer, making his dream job even better! Now celebrating 40 years, *Luann* entertains fans worldwide in newspapers and online with humor, drama, and a beloved cast of characters.

Karen Evans

Daughter of cartoonist Greg Evans, Karen Evans never imagined his nationally syndicated comic strip *Luann* would become part of her adult life. After a career in education, she's now delighted to work alongside her dad, co-writing stories for the characters she grew up with. Karen is proud to celebrate *Luann*'s 40th anniversary and to serve as Board President of the National Cartoonists Society, supporting a community of over 500 professional cartoonists.

Bilquis Evely

Bilquis Evely, originally from São Paulo, began her career with the Brazilian comic *Luluzinha Teen e Sua Turma.* She then ventured into the American market, contributing to Dynamite's *Doc Savage* and *Shaft.* In 2015, she started working with DC Comics, illustrating such titles as *Sugar & Spike, Wonder Woman,* and *The Dreaming.* In 2020, she collaborated with Tom King and Matheus Lopes on the acclaimed miniseries *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow.* Following that, the same creative team developed the limited series *Helen of Wyndhorn.* Evely's work has earned her a Rudolph Dirks Award and multiple Eisner Award nominations across several categories.

Emil Ferris

Emil Ferris is the author and artist of the acclaimed *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters* series. Among other honors, she has received multiple Eisner Awards, multiple Ignatz Awards, the Lambda Literary Award, the Grand prix de la critique ACBD, the Fauve d'or at FIBD, and the 2025 Whiting Award. She was recently appointed to the rank of Knight in the Order of Arts and Letters. She grew up in Chicago during the turbulent 1960s, where she still lives, and is consequently a devotee of all things monstrous and horrific. She has an MFA in creative writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Jonathan Hickman

Jonathan Hickman is a bestselling and award-winning writer who is best known for his work at Marvel (*Secret Wars, Fantastic Four, Avengers, House of X*) and Image Comics (*East of West,*

Manhattan Projects, Decorum, Black Monday Murders). He resides in the southeast United States, where he also runs an agricultural co-op and is a board member of the Burnley-Smith Foundation.

Daniel Warren Johnson

Daniel Warren Johnson is a Chicago-based comic book writer, artist, and illustrator who has worked with Image, Skybound, DC, Marvel, Wizards of the Coast, and many other clients. His work includes such titles as *Beta Ray Bill, The Ghost Fleet, Murder Falcon, Space-Mullet, Wonder Woman: Dead Earth, The Moon Is Following Us,* the Eisner Award–nominated *Extremity,* and the Eisner Award–winning *Do a Powerbomb* and *Transformers*.

J. G. Jones

J. G. Jones is celebrating his 30th year as an illustrator and author of comic books. A three-time Eisner Award nominee, he is best known for his work on *Black Widow, Marvel Boy, Wonder Woman: The Hiketeia, WANTED, 52, Final Crisis*, and most recently, *Dust to Dust*.

Dan Jurgens

Dan Jurgens began his career in comics over 40 years ago as an artist on *The Warlord* for DC Comics and quickly established himself as a writer as well. While he is best known for creating Booster Gold and writing and drawing the record-setting *Death of Superman*, he has written and/or drawn a wide variety of titles, including *Justice League America, Green Arrow, Zero Hour, The Sensational Spider-Man, Thor, Captain America, DC vs. Marvel, Tomb Raider, Action Comics,* and *Batman Beyond,* along with numerous Superman projects. His most recent works include *Superman: Hero for All, Superman: The World,* and *The Batman: First Knight.*

Paul Karasik

Two-time Eisner Award winner Paul Karasik is an internationally recognized cartoonist and teacher who began his career as the associate editor of Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly's *RAW* magazine. His works include the graphic novel adaptation of Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (with David Mazzuchelli and Lorenzo Mattotti), *How to Read Nancy* (with Mark Newgarden), *The Complete Fletcher Hanks,* and *The Ride Together, a Memoir of Autism in the Family* (with Judy Karasik). Paul's work has appeared in *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Vineyard Gazette,* and *The New Yorker.*

Terry Kavanagh

Terry Kavanagh was a Marvel Comics editor from 1985 to 1997, overseeing *Marvel Comics Presents* (including the original Weapon X storyline), *Namor, Speedball*, and other titles. He also wrote *Moon Knight, Avengers, Iron Man, Web of Spider-Man, X-Man*, and more through the mid-2000s. He was one of the writers on the Maximum Carnage story arc, and he pitched a storyline involving the return of Spider-Man's clone, which then formed the basis of the long-running Spider-Man maxiseries The Clone Saga. Terry is now executive editor for 247 Comics, as well as being head of development for inksmyth, producing custom comics as high-end gifts.

Chip Kidd

Chip Kidd is the three-time Eisner Award–winning author and designer of *Batman Collected, Batman: Animated,* and *Peanuts: The Art of Charles M. Schulz.* As an editor of graphic novels for Pantheon Books for the past 25 years, he has worked with some of the best in the industry, including Art Spiegelman, Chris Ware, Charles Burns, David Mazzucchelli, Frank Miller, Alex Ross, Gengoroh Tagame, and Michael Cho. He is the author of the graphic novels *Batman: Death by Design* (DC Comics) and the forthcoming *The Avengers in the Veracity Trap* (Abrams ComicArts/Marvel) with artist Michael Cho.

Todd Klein

Todd Klein's comics career began in 1977 when he was hired to work in the DC Comics production department. During ten years on staff there, he tried many kinds of freelance work, including writing, inking, and coloring, but lettering suited him best. He developed a superb freelance career as a letterer and logo designer. After leaving staff in 1987, Todd continued to work mainly for DC, but also for Marvel, Image, Dark Horse, and Disney, among others. He has lettered over 75,000 comics pages and covers and designed over 800 logos. He has won 16 Eisner Awards for Best Letterer.

Jim Krueger

Jim Krueger is the former creative director of Marvel Comics and a *New York Times* bestselling author, best known for his work on such iconic comic book titles as *Earth X*, *Justice*, *Avengers, Foot Soldiers,* and *Star Wars.* Jim's ideas about world-building have been a major influence in shaping popular culture through comics, TV, and film. His groundbreaking *Earth X* trilogy became the basis for much of the Marvel Universe continuity, influencing movies and TV shows such as *Black Panther, Eternals, Moon Knight, Fantastic Four, Captain Marvel,* and *Loki.* In addition to his work in comics, Jim has written for film, television, and video games, contributing to projects such as the Spider-Man 2 video game, Mortal Kombat, and the animated series *Justice League*.


JOHNSON

JONES


JURGENS


KARASIK


KAVANAGH


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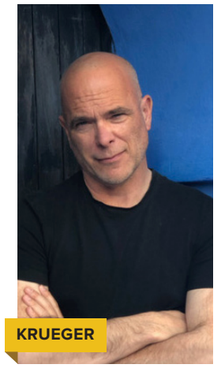
Photo by Alan Amato


KLEIN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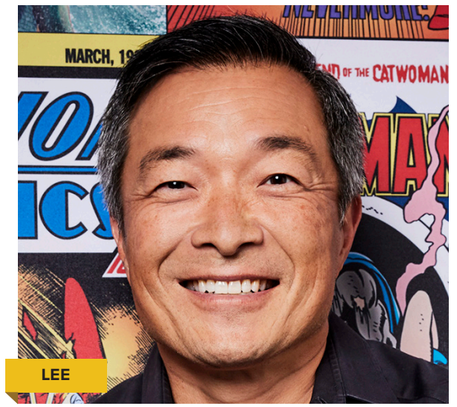

LEE


LEVITZ


LINIERS


MABERRY


MARTÍN

Jae Lee

Jae Lee is a Korean American comic book artist known for his dark style. In 1990, he became one of the youngest artists ever to work for a major publisher. He is an Eisner Award winner for his work on Marvel's *The Inhumans*. His art can also be seen in Stephen King's *Dark Tower* and *Batman/Superman.* Jae is also the co-creator of The Sentry for Marvel Comics.

Jim Lee

Jim Lee, the world-renowned comic book artist, writer, editor, and publisher, is currently president, publisher, and chief creative officer of DC. He leads creative efforts to integrate DC's publishing portfolio of characters and stories across all media, supporting Warner Bros. Discovery's family of brands and studios. Jim joined DC in 1998 and has overseen many of the company's highly successful publishing programs, including the Rebirth line of comics and The New 52 initiative that relaunched the entire line of monthly superhero comic books. As part of the revamp, Lee designed and reimagined the new, more contemporary costumes for some of the DC Universe's most iconic characters, including Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman. Jim holds a BA in psychology from Princeton University and started his professional career at Marvel Comics, where his work on the X-Men continues to hold the all-time sales record for single-issue sales.

Paul Levitz

Paul Levitz has been a comic fan (*The Comic Reader*), editor (*Batman*), writer (*Legion of Super-Heroes*), executive (decades at DC Comics, ending as president & publisher), historian (*Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel*) and now teacher of subjects related to comics and transmedia at Pace University and Columbia University. His *75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Mythmaking* won an Eisner Award and international awards. He has been inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Hall of Fame. A new edition of his acclaimed collaboration with Keith Giffen, *Legion of Super-Heroes: The Great Darkness Saga,* is being published by DC in August.

Liniers

Born in Argentina in 1973, Ricardo Liniers Siri (a.k.a. Liniers) is the creator of the daily strip *Macanudo* and graphic novels for younger readers, including the Eisner Award–winning *Good Night, Planet.* The *Macanudo* strip has been syndicated in the U.S. since September 2018 by King Features and received the National Cartoonists' Society Reuben Award for Best Newspaper Comic Strip in 2021. It has been nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Reuben Awards. Liniers has also received a nomination in the 2025 Eisner Awards for Best Publication for Early Readers: *Night Stories* (Astra Books/Toon Books). Coming from Papercutz in September is *The Ghost of Wreckers Cove,* in which Liniers and writer Angelica del Campo re-create the world of 19th-century lighthouse keepers in a delightful supernatural tale about ghosts and shipwrecks.

Jonathan Maberry

Jonathan Maberry is a *New York Times* best-selling author of over 50 novels, a five-time Bram Stoker Award winner, and a four-time Scribe Award winner. He writes comics (Marvel, IDW, Dark Horse, IPI) and is an executive producer and writing teacher. His *V-Wars* was a Netflix original series; *Rot & Ruin* is in development for film with Alcon Entertainment; and his Joe Ledger thrillers are being developed for TV by Chad Stahelski (director, *John Wick*). He writes horror, sci-fi, fantasy, adventure, thrillers, and more. He's president of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers and the editor of *Weird Tales Magazine*.

Marcos Martín

Marcos Martín is a Catalan comic book artist whose work at Marvel and DC includes such titles as *Batgirl: Year One*, *Breach*, *Absolute Batman*, *Dr.Strange: The Oath*, *Amazing Spider-Man*, and *Daredevil*. In 2013 he founded the online platform Panel Syndicate together with writer Brian K. Vaughan and illustrator/colorist Muntsa Vicente in order to distribute their creator-owned comic, *The Private Eye,* which went on to win an Eisner Award for Best Digital/Webcomic and

the Harvey Award for Best Online Comics Work. *Friday*, his latest series with acclaimed comics writer Ed Brubaker (collected into three books published by Image Comics) has earned them two more Eisner Awards

Frank Miller

Frank Miller is regarded as one of the most influential creators in the entertainment field today. He began his career in comics in the late 1970s, first gaining notoriety as the artist and later writer of *Daredevil* for Marvel Comics. Next came the science fiction samurai drama *Ronin,* followed by the groundbreaking *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Batman: Year One* with artist David Mazzucchelli. Following these seminal works, Miller fulfilled a lifelong dream by doing an all-out crime series, *Sin City*, which spawned two blockbuster films that he co-directed with Robert Rodriguez. Miller's multi-award-winning graphic novel *300* was also adapted into a successful film by Zack Snyder. In 2015, Miller was inducted into the Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame for his lifetime of contributions to the industry.

Stephanie Phillips

Stephanie Phillips is a comic book writer known for her work on such titles as *Spider-Gwen*, *Harley Quinn*, *Phoenix*, *Wonder Woman*, and *GRIM*. She has written for top publishers including Marvel, DC, BOOM! Studios, and Image. Stephanie also holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition and is a founding creator of DSTLRY, a new publishing venture focused on creator-owned comics.

Erica Schultz

Erica Schultz is a Ringo Award–nominated comic book writer. She started her career as an animator for the *Astonishing X-Men* motion comic "Gifted" with Continuity Studios. While there, she lettered, provided ink and color assists, and worked on backgrounds for multiple projects, including *Batman: Odyssey*, *The First X-Men*, *The New Avengers* #16.1, and others. Erica is a graduate of the DC Comics Talent Development Workshop pilot program with Scott Snyder, and she has gone on to write for several series for Marvel and Image, including *Spawn: Rat City*. She was previously the writing instructor at The Joe Kubert School.

Steven T. Seagle

Steven T. Seagle is a foster parent and founding partner of Man of Action: creators of *Ben 10, Big Hero 6,* and *Generator Rex,* and executive producers/writers of animated shows and video games, including *Sonic Prime, Ultimate Spider-Man, Avengers Assemble,* and *Hello Neighbor.* In comics, Seagle is a nine-time Eisner nominee. Notable works include *It's A Bird..., Get Naked, Sandman Mystery Theater, House of Secrets, American Virgin, Camp Midnight, X-Men,* and *Kafka*. Upcoming projects include *Mercury, Donor,* and *Jaguar Stories Podcast.*

Janice Shapiro

Janice Shapiro is the author of *Bummer and Other Stories* (Soft Skull Press, 2010). Her stories and comics have been published in *The Rumpus, Catapult, The North American Review, Electric Literature, The Santa Monica Review,* and *Everyday Genius*, among other periodicals and journals. Her graphic essay "Good Grief" was included in *The Peanuts Papers* (Library of America, 2019); another graphic essay, "Crushable-Neil Young," appeared in *Crush: Writers Reflect on Life, Longing and the Power of Their First Celebrity Crush* (HarperCollins, 2016). *Honoria: A Fortuitous Friendship* (Fantagraphics 2025) is her debut graphic novel.

Scott Shaw!

For over 50 years, Scott Shaw! has worked on underground comix, mainstream comics, children's books, syndicated strips, graphic novels, TV cartoons, toys, trading cards, advertising, T-shirts, and music album art. Scott's recent books include *Kilgore Home Nursing*, *Scott Shaw!'s Comix & Stories,* and *Dinosaurs Unleashed.* His current projects include *Li'l Dragon* for Image, "Packratt and the Scroungers" for the tabloid *A Kid and a Comic,* his regular column for TwoMorrows' *Retrofan* magazine, and his "Oddball Comics" online column for 13th Dimension, as well as his longtime project, an *Oddball Comics* book for TwoMorrows. Scott has received Emmys, an Eisner Award, and a Humanitas Award for his work.

Scott Sigler

New York Times best-selling author Scott Sigler is the creator of 20 novels, seven novellas, and dozens of short stories. Scott began his career by narrating his unabridged audiobooks and serializing them in weekly installments. He continues to release free episodes every Sunday. Launched in March of 2005, "Scott Sigler Slices"


MILLER

Photo by Joël Saget/AFP


PHILLIPS


SCHULTZ


SEAGLE


SHAPIRO


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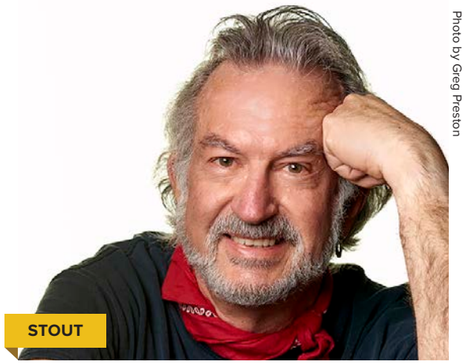

STOUT

Photo by Greg Preston


THOMPSON


XUNISE

is the world's longest-running fiction podcast. His fans fervently anticipate their weekly story fix, so much so that they dubbed themselves "Sigler Junkies" and have downloaded over 55 million episodes. An inaugural inductee into the Podcasting Hall of Fame, Scott is a co-founder of Empty Set Entertainment, which publishes his Galactic Football League series. A Michigan native, he lives in San Diego with his wife and their wee little Dogs of Doom.

Jen Sorensen

Jen Sorensen's weekly comic strip appears in alternative newspapers throughout the United States, in *The Nation* and *In These Times*, and online publications including Daily Kos, GoComics, and formerly The Nib. Sorensen has also created commissioned comics for NPR, the ACLU, *Nickelodeon Magazine,* and *MAD* magazine. She was a graphic journalism editor for Univision. In 2023, Jen received the Berryman Award from the National Press Foundation. She has been named a Pulitzer Finalist and is the recipient of the Herblock Prize and Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.

William Stout

Artist William Stout has worked with Russ Manning, Harvey Kurtzman, Will Elder, Jean "Moebius" Giraud, Will Eisner, Jack Kirby, and Al Williamson, to name a few. His studiomates included Dave Stevens and Paul Chadwick. Bill co-founded the Comic Art Professional Society and was their tenth president. He created the iconic *Wizards* movie poster, then worked on over 70 movies, including *Return of the Living Dead* and *Masters of the Universe.* He helped *Pan's Labyrinth* win two Oscars. Michael Crichton claimed Stout's dinosaur reconstructions inspired *Jurassic Park*. Bill's 50-year career overview, *Fantastic Worlds: The Art of William Stout* (2018), precedes a Flesk Publications box set collecting Stout's comics-related work. Upcoming is a volume on his work in underground comix, to be published by Last Gasp.

Maggie Thompson

When she was four years old, Maggie Thompson began collecting comic books, and her parents encouraged her. When she was 18, she and Don Thompson co-edited the pioneering fanzine *Comic Art* and went on to co-edit and publish a monthly *Newfangles* comics newsletter. In 1976, the first year they attended Comic-Con, she and Don received Inkpot Awards for Achievement in Fandom Service. Eventually, they became co-editors of *Comics Buyer's Guide* and attended Comic-Con every year, as they wrote both *for* comics and *about* comics. Following Don's death in 1994, Maggie continued to collect, write, research, and edit a variety of comics-oriented projects. She edited *Comics Buyer's Guide* for three decades and sums up her identity these days as being a "celebrity-adjacent award-winning pop-culture nerd." She indexes Fantagraphics' *Pogo* reprints, puts digest comics into Little Free Library boxes, and encourages everyone to spread the delights of comics old and new to readers young and old.

Bianca Xunise

NAACP Image Award winner Bianca Xunise is an illustrator, writer, and educator based out of Chicago. With two Ignatz Awards under their belt, Bianca enjoys being a voice for those who march to the beat of their own drum. In 2020, Bianca became the first nationally syndicated non-binary cartoonist when they joined the comic strip *Six Chix.* When Bianca isn't doodling, they are usually at an underground DIY punk show dancing with friends by the Chicago riverside. Their graphic novel *Punk Rock Karaoke* debuted in 2024 with rave reviews.

STRANGE ADVENTURES

DC'S GATEWAY TO THE COSMOS TURNS 75

BY ROBERT GREENBERGER

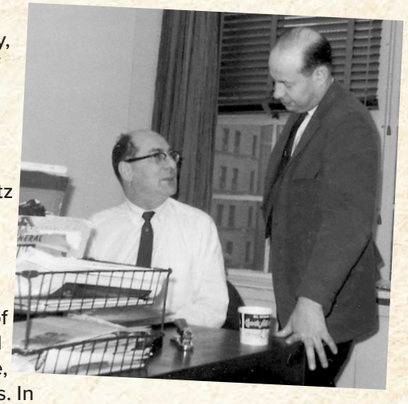
In the 1940s, humanity dealt with the horrors of a world at war. In the 1950s, these horrors were replaced with the possibility of global atomic war, which propelled the general public into a new appreciation for science fiction. Once a niche portion of the newsstands' pulp magazines section, the genre seeped into mass media, thanks partly to the success of the Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon comic strips and movie serials, and a newfound appreciation for scientific advancement. As comic book publishers sought the next big genre to replace the winnowing superhero titles, they introduced a variety of new genres in the hopes of finding success. Science fiction was an obvious choice.

After all, science fiction had always been part of the comic book mix, with Fiction House's *Planet Comics* leading the way from 1940 to 1953. At National Comics, editor Julius Schwartz had his dream come true when, in early 1950, management handed him a new series to edit—initially entitled *Project: Science*. More commercially-minded heads changed the title to *Strange Adventures*. In his autobiography, *Man of Two Worlds*, Schwartz noted, "... my favorite of favorites were the science fiction comics, *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery in Space*, and when I was assigned editorship of these two titles, a lifelong dream was fulfilled. Finally, I was a science fiction editor, one of the gods on earth!"]

ENTER: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

As a teenager in New York, Schwartz devoured science fiction pulp magazines and befriended like-minded people across the boroughs, including another future editor, Mort Weisinger. The pair produced one of the first science fiction fanzines and then formed the Solar Sales Service, the first agency for purely SF writers. In time, Weisinger was hired by the pulps, while Schwartz worked solo until 1944 when he was hired by National's sister company, All-American. Both of them hired writers they admired or agented for, although Schwartz claimed he stopped reading science fiction when he entered the world of comic books.

When the two companies merged in 1946, they spent the next 24 years working side-by-side at what we know today as DC Comics. National had staff letterer Ira Schnapp develop a logo, which was first used on an ashcan edition cover-dated July–August 1950. The first issue, with an August–September 1950 cover date, went on sale June 21. While EC Comics' well-regarded *Weird Science* arrived on October 2, *Strange Adventures* outsold it and endured. "When Schwartz began Strange Adventures, he looked for writers



LEFT
Deadman first appeared in *Strange Adventures* #205 (Oct. 1967) Neal Adams first drew Deadman in *Strange Adventures* #206 (Nov. 1967)

ABOVE
Editor Julius Schwartz at the DC offices, in the mid-60s with artist Sid Greene.

who had experience in the field—authors he had worked with and represented in the past. Unlike most comic books of the time, the writers were given a byline in the magazine. Schwartz even put their names on the covers for the early issues and sometimes had their likenesses drawn in the comic stories," wrote Mike Benton in *The Illustrated History of Science Fiction Comics*.

The series lasted 244 issues, being published continually from 1950 to 1973. Several other comics have used the title in the years since. While *Mystery in Space* is better remembered today thanks to its use of Adam Strange and Hawkman, Schwartz set the tone with this title, which helped him establish a stable of writers and artists that followed him to the Silver Age of superheroes. It can be seen in that very first issue, which introduced the title's first recurring characters: Chris KL-99, written by Edmond Hamilton, illustrated by Howard Sherman; and the character Darwin Jones, written by David Vern (credited as David V. Reed), Paul Norris, and Bernard Sachs. The cover story was an eight-page preview of the forthcoming feature film Destination Moon, which Gardner Fox, Curt Swan, and John Fischetti adapted from Robert A. Heinlein's script. The George Pal film starred John Archer, Warner Anderson, Tom Powers, and Dick Wesson, and was released that August.

It wasn't long before some familiar tropes were introduced, such as the cover story of issue #8, "The Incredible Story of an Ape with a Human Brain." Once the higher sales figures came in, "[Publisher] Irwin Donenfeld called me in and said we should try it again. Finally, all the editors wanted to use gorilla covers," Schwartz recounted to Les Daniels. Gorillas on covers became a staple of DC's output across the board for the next two decades

FAR LEFT
Cover art: *Strange Adventures #1* (Sept. 1950)
Art by Howard Sherman

ABOVE
What started DC's mania with gorillas? *Strange Adventures #8* (May 1951) sold very very well.

ABOVE
Captain Comet first appeared in *Strange Adventures* #9 (June 1951) in a story by Broome, Infantino and Sachs

HERE COMES CAPTAIN COMET

An issue later, Schwartz introduced readers to Captain Comet, his first super-heroic space hero, in a story by John Broome (writing as Edgar Ray Merritt, a pseudonym honoring Edgar Rice Burroughs, Ray Bradbury, and A. Merritt), Carmine Infantino, and Bernard Sachs. While Chris KL-99 was a space adventurer, Captain Comet Adam Blake was a mutant, with the skills and attributes of a human a million years in the future.

Chris KL-99 lasted a mere eight installments, whereas Captain Comet appeared frequently from #9 through #49, often as the cover feature. "I really enjoyed working on Chris KL-99, which was an Edmond Hamilton story, very much like [his] Captain Future. I took that over after two or three stories. When I worked on Edmond Hamilton's characters, it was a dream come true. No one could write a story that was more science fiction to my taste than Hamilton," Murphy Anderson told R.C. Harvey in The Life and Art of Murphy Anderson. The other recurring hero, Darwin Jones, a man with a keen scientific intellect, appeared in thirteen stories, spanning #1–160, then was not seen again until 1985's *DC Challenge*. Chris KL-99 made three 1980s cameos and hasn't been seen since.

Strange Adventures was so successful that a year later, Donenfeld gifted editor Schwartz with a second book, *Mystery in Space*, telling him to ignore the premise and produce *Strange Adventure*–type stories.

Mike W. Barr, in *Silver Age Sci-Fi Companion* added, "The types of stories in SA and MIS were called 'space opera,' fantastic, imaginative, fast-moving adventures cartwheeling across space and through time, best personified in prose by the 1930s *Lensmen* novels of E.E. 'Doc' Smith, the work of Edmond Hamilton, and later, Poul Anderson."

Schwartz believed in a strong cover image, something he picked up from the pulps. Most of the time, he and an artist brainstormed a cover and found the story behind it. This became a game that delighted his regular scribes.

For most of the early artwork, Schwartz used Carmine Infantino, Murphy Anderson, Gil Kane, Bernard Sachs, Sid Greene, Alex Toth, and Sy Barry. They were later joined by figures relatively new to DC, such as Mike Sekowsky, Sid Greene, and Joe Giella. Throughout the run, occasional stories were self-referential, using the title's editorial offices as part of the story, with the editor and creators appearing in their own stories. Greene, in particular, worked Schwartz into every story he drew."In *Strange Adventures*, especially from 1959 on, Schwartz's staff played with characters and stories that weren't quite super heroic, but that set standards for the coming heroic revival," wrote historians Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs in their book, *The Comic Book Heroes*.

"THROUGHOUT THE RUN, OCCASIONAL STORIES WERE SELF-REFERENTIAL ... WITH THE EDITOR AND CREATORS APPEARING IN THEIR OWN STORIES."

"Most science fiction in comics had tended to the horrific or cautionary, the vision of an industrial working class gaping up at the monstrous machines that both provided and mattered, of a provincial America recently thrust into the horror of a global technological slaughterhouse. Schwartz, an optimist and a technophile in an America becoming briefly more optimistic and technophilic, saw that a lighter approach could be better suited to his medium and his moment. He, Fox, and Broome displayed a remarkable sensitivity to the imagination of their young readers, for the themes of their stories seemed to spring straight from the fantasies of ten-year-olds. The plots were still repetitive, but now they drew a special enhancement from the details around which they were wove, images that held magical significance for kids at the beginning of the 1960s: astronauts, aliens, pets, dinosaurs, cavemen, toys, ray guns, apes, contests, scientists, lost civilizations, and heroic fathers."

In May 1959, with the super-hero revival underway, Schwartz introduced the first of several rotating series fondly remembered by fans. Set in the 25th century, Howard Parker told his son Tommy about a pair of contact lenses on display in a museum and how they saved mankind. Thus was born the Space Museum series, which Fox wrote. After one story by Mike Sekowsky and Bernard Sachs, the team that produced the original *Justice League of America*, the subsequent Museum stories were pencilled and inked by Infantino.

With private eyes populating television, creating a space-age version was a logical step. Star Hawkins, complete with his robotic gal Friday Ilda, was conceived by Broome, Sekowsky, and Sachs. He was a down-on-his-luck PI, struggling to pay the bills and keep Ilda oiled. It had a lighter tone than the rest of the stories. Schwartz defended it in issue #144 (Sept. 1962), "We believe the 'Star Hawkins' stories offer a much-needed comic relief from serious science fiction."

POPULAR NEW CHARACTERS

The best-remembered series from this era had to be the Atomic Knights, by Broome and Anderson. Set in the aftermath of

ABOVE
Strange Adventures #190 (July 1966). First appearance of costumed Animal Man, originally A-Man.
Cover art by Infantino and Anderson.
Story by Dave Wood and Infantino.

BELOW LEFT
First Neal Adams Deadman cover. *Strange Adventures* #207 (Dec. 1967)

BELOW RIGHT
Deadman first appeared in *Strange Adventures* #205 (Oct. 1967) Art by Arnold Drake

World War III, which occurred on October 9, 1986 (remember?), six survivors donned radiation-proof armor and traveled a devastated United States atop mutated giant dalmatians. Broome told Mark Evanier in 1999, "I remember, in the beginning, we both got the feeling that it had something to do with King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. We thought if we could make a modern version of that spirit and the feeling, that would be a new kind of comic that hadn't been done, and we would enjoy doing it. So we worked out a third World War where life was almost destroyed, and crime was all over. And the Atomic Knights stand for justice and faith and all that. So that is the way the story began."

Anderson recalled joining the editor and writer for lunches, where the story was worked out. He often tweaked ideas first laid out in the office. It was a wonderfully collaborative experience, a rarity in those days.

In 1963, Schwartz was forced to relinquish his beloved science fiction titles in exchange for *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. He turned the books over to Jack Schiff, who took a different approach to his stories, going more for high concepts and weaker plotting. He brought with him his stable of creators. His first *Strange Adventures* was issue #164 (May 1964), and his talent included Mort Meskin, Sheldon Moldoff, Howard Sherman, Howard Purcell, Jack Sparling, and Lee Elias. Fellow editor Jack Miller was one writer, along with Ed Herron and Dave Wood.

In issue #180 (Sept. 1965), readers were treated to Dave Wood, Infantino, and George Roussos' "I Was the Man with Animal Powers," which introduced Buddy Baker, who proved popular enough to return as Animal-Man four issues later. Coming from #177's introduction of Immortal Man, Schiff was on a roll with new characters. Readers got regular doses of Immortal Man, Animal-Man, and Star Hawkins (now from Dave Wood and Gil Kane) while one-off stories diminished in frequency.

They were followed by the less well-received Enchantress, who arrived from Bob Haney, Howard Purcell, and Sheldon Moldoff, in issue #187 (April 1966). After one appearance with Supergirl in the 1970s, she remained out of sight until her revival in *Suicide Squad*.

It took until 1967's issue #205 for the character most associated with the title to be introduced. Editor Jack Miller commissioned a new character, Deadman, from Arnold Drake, Infantino, and George Roussos. Circus performer Boston Brand was shot in mid-air, and his spirit was nurtured by the goddess Rama Kushna, who returned him to earth to track his killer, allowing him to inhabit living humans for brief periods. By the second story, Neal Adams stepped in as penciller, and his dynamic work made readers pay attention. In time, Adams took over the writing and inking, producing some of the most memorable stories of the decade.

The party drew to a close, beginning with 1969's issue #218. Schwartz was back in the editor's chair, but to helm a reprint comic. He used Adam Strange stories, and they made it appear as if the book's title was *Adam Strange Adventures*. The reprints featured Adam Strange and the Atomic Knights, along with selected stand-alone tales and some nice original covers from Infantino, Anderson, and Joe Kubert. The series came to a quiet close with issue #244 (Oct.–Nov. 1973), featuring assorted reprints and a promise of a subsequent issue which never arrived.

"BY THE SECOND STORY, NEAL ADAMS STEPPED IN AS PENCILLER, AND HIS DYNAMIC WORK MADE READERS PAY ATTENTION. IN TIME, ADAMS TOOK OVER THE WRITING AND INKING, PRODUCING SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE STORIES OF THE DECADE."

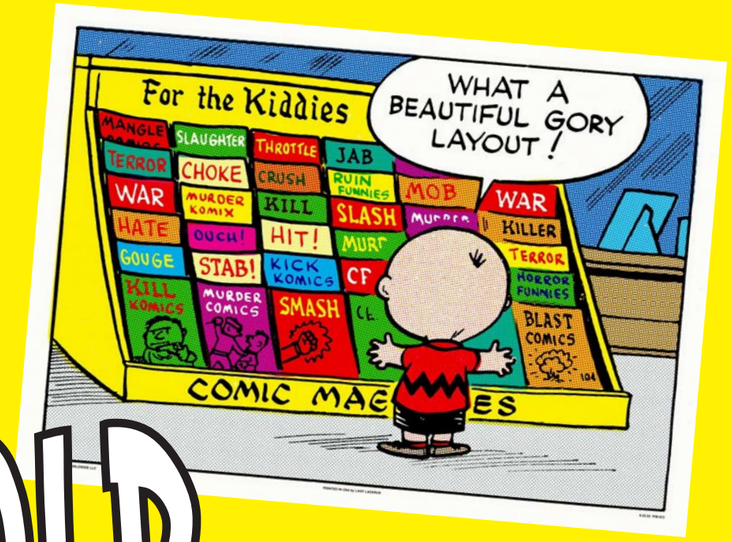
As DC ramped up a few years later to explode with 50-cent comics boasting 40 pages of new content, plans were being made to revive *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery in Space*. However, the infamous 1978 implosion shelved those plans before they could be announced.

There's a belief that science fiction comics don't sell, but there are still SF comics published every year. When asking longtime readers which titles they remember, it's a sure bet that *Strange Adventures* is one of the first to be mentioned. It set a tone and became a proving ground that launched creators, most under Julie Schwartz's guidance, into the forefront of the seminal Silver Age of comics.

Robert Greenberger is a lifelong comic book reader. He spent 20 years on staff at DC Comics and a year at Marvel Comics, among other places. He continues to write about comics for various outlets and teaches Making Graphic Novels at the Maryland Institute College of Art and high school English in Maryland.

ABOVE
Strange Adventures #217 (Apr. 1969) Logo changed for the lead (reprints) of Adam Strange.

THE COMIC STRIP THAT HAS NEVER GROWN OLD



BY MICHAEL CAVNA

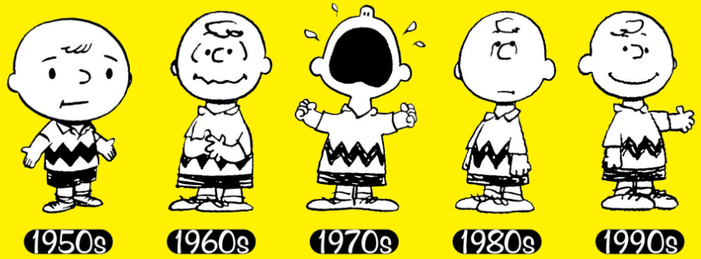
AFTER 75 YEARS, FANS ARE STILL ADORING PEANUTS

RIGHT
The very first "Peanuts" comic strip. Published Oct. 2, 1950

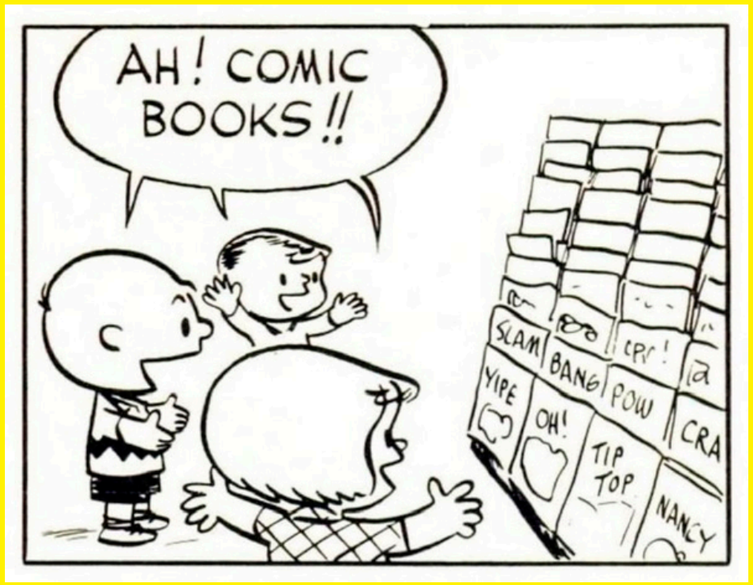
Here is an experiment. As you're chatting up people at Comic-Con, ask a few to say the first words they think of when they hear two names: "Charlie Brown" and "Snoopy." *Look* more than listen. More often than not, their eyes will smile with warm recognition. They may even grin before they speak. Those iconic names are so universally imbued with reassuring connection, feeling, and nostalgia that their mere mention is like an act of close-up emotional magic.

Let's face it: What birthday party — say, when a round-headed kid, his beagle, and their funny friends celebrate turning 75 — isn't better with a touch of magic?

"Dear Friends, I have been fortunate to draw Charlie Brown and his friends for almost 50 years. It has been the fulfillment of my childhood ambition," Charles M. "Sparky" Schulz wrote, addressing his millions of global readers 25 years ago, in his final Sunday "Peanuts" strip.



"PEANUTS," OFTEN CENTERS ITS CLEVER EMOTIONAL SPARK SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FUTILITY AND FANTASY."



ABOVE
It was common for Charlie Brown to speak about his love of comic books. This from Oct. 1951.

TOP
The different looks of Charlie Brown through the decades

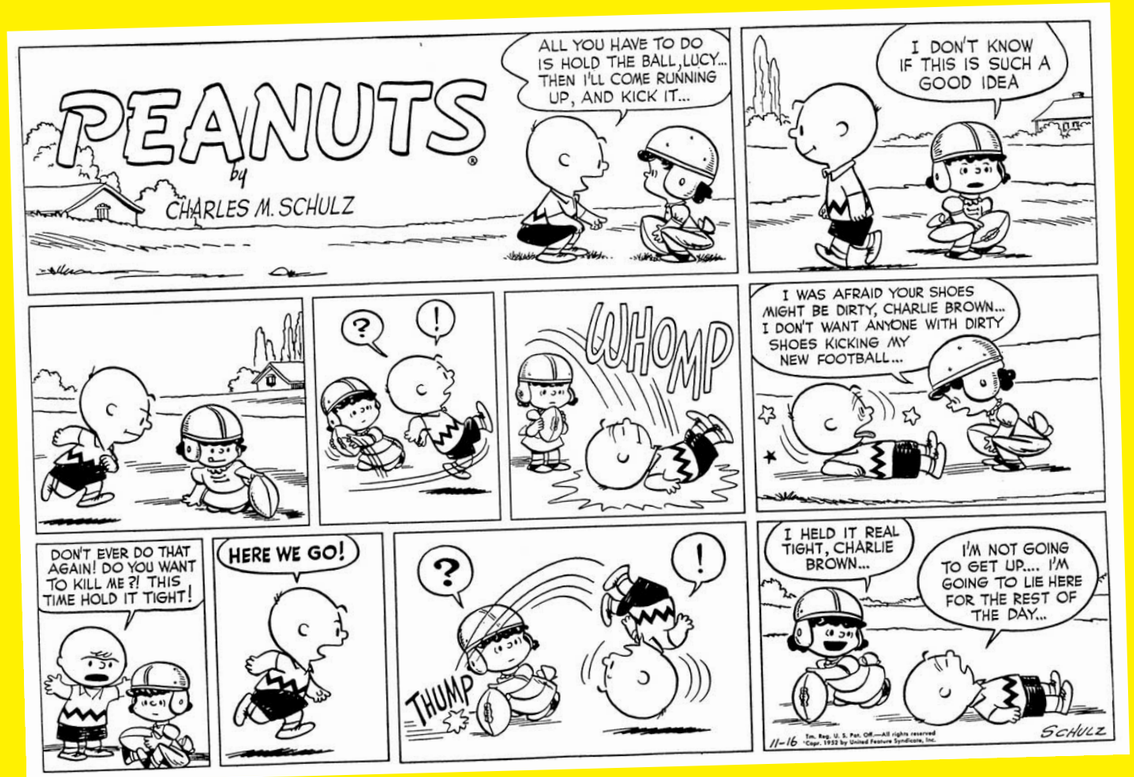
This year, upon the 75th anniversary of "Charlie Brown and his friends," fans continue to embrace the late cartoonist's beloved cast of characters. Through books and movies, museum shows and merchandise, attractions and animated specials, streaming shows and social media, and as ever on the comics pages, many of us relive our "Peanuts" memories. We revel in Charlie Brown still trying to win a baseball game or the attentions of the Little Red-Haired Girl; Lucy pulling away the football ("Aaugh!") or propping up against a toy piano to win the affections of Schroeder; Linus waxing philosophic while waiting to get an evening glimpse of the Great Pumpkin; and Snoopy launching into his myriad adventures of high-flying imagination.

"Peanuts," in other words, often centers its clever emotional spark somewhere between futility and fantasy. Its characters are frequently foiled in achieving their desires, there is universality in the unaccomplished and unrequited. "Peanuts" asks us conspiratorially: What is best left to do but live a life examined with humor and heart? Dogged optimism and relentless disappointment might not seem like natural companions, yet they coexist as a yin/yang of fertile comedy within the work of Schulz, feelings as opposite yet as organic together as the two words that form one of the greatest "Peanuts" phrases: "Good grief!"

Schulz knew two things intimately as a genius four-panel composer of the human condition: There is lyricism in plunging ahead in life, just as there is music in the melancholy. That dynamic ticks like a metronome at the heart of the artfulness that makes "Peanuts" one of the greatest comic strips.

Aiming to pinpoint why the popularity of "Peanuts" endures at 75, attempting to isolate the secrets to its lasting brilliance, can make for a mission as elusive as Snoopy's flying ace trying to outmaneuver the Red Baron. Jeannie Schulz, widow of the cartoonist and president of the Charles M. Schulz Museum's board of directors, told me that "Sparky" deployed pure sublime lines and subtle humor to plumb a sense of our shared humanity.

For years, as a cartoonist who once shared a syndicate editor with Schulz, I have maintained a humble mission: I often ask fans and colleagues to name something top of my mind about "Peanuts" — a moment, a monologue, a feature, a scene — that particularly appeals to them. For context: That roster of respondents has varied from schoolteachers and students to such celebrities as Billie Jean King, Ben Folds, and Jimmy Kimmel, to visual creatives like Chris Ware, Gene Luen Yang, Robb Armstrong, and Pixar's Pete Docter — a testament to the characters' lasting mass appeal.



Here is what I've gleaned from their answers: "Peanuts" serves as a security blanket (a term coined by Schulz, naturally) of memory and meaning — something most often introduced to us in childhood that still holds relevance and resonance when we're adults. It deals with dreams, disappointments, and the need for daily resilience. "Peanuts" as an artistic security blanket forever urges us: Love, laugh, and don't let the blockheads get you down.

Fifteen years ago, through a series of seeming coincidences, I met and later befriended Lee Mendelson, the Emmy-winning producer of many of the "Peanuts" animated specials. What I most remember about our initial meeting is that Lee was a big believer in serendipity. As he told it, even Lee and Sparky becoming creative partners in the Sixties was remarkably serendipitous.

Mendelson had completed a 1963 documentary about the best baseball player around (Willie Mays) and was looking for his next screen project. Reading a "Peanuts" strip convinced him he should next set his sights on the world's worst baseball player (Charlie Brown). He cold-called Sparky, who was initially reluctant to join forces until Mendelson mentioned the Mays special. It turned out, the Bay Area-based Schulz was a fan of the documentary. Soon, their long partnership was yielding the celebrated first "Peanuts" network special, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" (with animator Bill Melendez as the third brilliant mind in their long-running collaboration).

Mendelson told me about moments that seemed creatively fated, including how he

ABOVE
Charlie Brown, Lucy and a football may be the most famous running gag in "Peanuts." Here is the first time poor Charlie Brown didn't learn the lesson, from Nov. 1952.

ABOVE
Classic elements: Lucy VanPelt as therapist and her brother, Linus holding tight to his blanket as he feels her rage.

FAR UPPER RIGHT
Another "Peanuts" cornerstone, Linus and Peppermint Patty in the pumpkin patch awaiting the arrival of "The Great Pumpkin."

chanced upon the music of Vince Guaraldi, whose jazzy compositions would become as central to the tone of animated "Peanuts" specials as their use of child voice actors. It became easy to believe that Lee Mendelson had cast his fate to the wind and fate had favorably answered.

The more Lee and I spoke over the years, the more I realized that I had first been introduced to "Peanuts" at a serendipitous time. Even as I became a professional cartoonist at age 12, my family moved frequently, instilling me with a chronic case of New Kid Syndrome. With each move, classmates wanted to get a read on the newbie, so I quickly discovered a truism of such environments: Define yourself before your fellow students saddle you with their own definition of you. What version of me could I give them? Well, I had learned how to draw Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, and Lucy. To other kids, this was like a magic trick. Soon enough, I became known as the "Kid Who Could Draw Funny." (I first shared aspects of this anecdote in my foreword to the Eisner Award-winning "Peanuts" book *Celebrating Snoopy*.)

Out of that experience, I especially discovered this: If we truly tune in and listen to the wisdom of "Peanuts," it routinely provides words and pictures to bolster us, teach us, and comfort us.

Here is a second social experiment: Once you are chatting with someone who is a "Peanuts" fan, ask them to name a personal favorite thing about Schulz's world. Often, when I've conducted this test, respondents will quote a line that has stuck with them, as if branded upon their funny bone or stitched inside their heart. Here are a few of the quoted lines I have heard most often:

1. "Good ol' Charlie Brown ... How I hate him!" — Shermy
Schulz set the comedic tone from Day One. "Peanuts" wouldn't be just some cute kid strip; "Peanuts" would be imbued with human truth. To Sparky, part of the truth of childhood was that meanness was a feature, not a bug. When "Peanuts" debuted in a handful of newspapers on Oct. 2, 1950, readers saw Patty and Shermy seated on a sidewalk, watching Charlie Brown stroll blithely by; the fourth-panel punch line is Shermy, having referenced "ol' Charlie Brown" thrice, blurting: "How I hate him!" Schulz had launched his creation by declaring: His moppets wouldn't wink with syrupy, empty-headed "witticisms"; his kids would traffic in the truth.

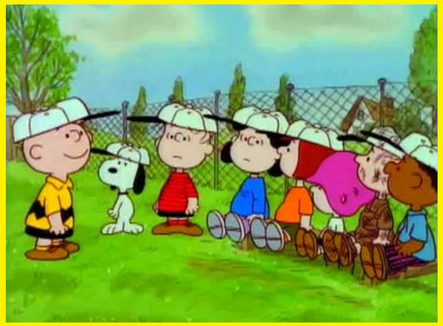
2. "My anxieties have anxieties." — Charlie Brown
In one famed "Peanuts" strip, Linus tells Charlie Brown he looks depressed. Turns out, the character who aptly wears a zigzag-patterned shirt even worries about his "worrying so much about school." Thus setting up the kicker: "My anxieties have anxieties." For Charlie Brown, the perpetual therapeutic patient of Lucy "The Doctor Is In" van Pelt, life is an ongoing mental health challenge. Sparky let us peek into his mindset, prompting us to care about — and perhaps identify with — both the cartoonist and his lead cartoon boy. (Worth noting: Fans who cite that line sometimes also quote Charlie Brown's "new philosophy" of life: "I only dread one day at a time!")

3. "I got a rock." — Charlie Brown
In the 1966 animated special "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," when the gang goes trick-or-treating, only our hard-luck hero keeps getting stones in his sack instead of candy. Mendelson told me he had initial reservations about this gag, but Sparky was sure it would work. The scene became a franchise touchstone. Ever since, we learned to laugh through the recognizable pain as Charlie Brown feels, yet again, fate has handed him the harder stuff of life.

4. "Happiness is a warm puppy." — Lucy
The chronically crabby Lucy often spars with Snoopy, her diatribes smacking headlong and headstrong into Snoopy's wordless playfulness. But for one feel-good 1960 strip, Schulz drew a friendly Lucy patting and hugging the smiling pet before uttering her famous phrase. Sparky knew that some days, the daily reader craved a simple moment of uplifting sweetness, with the emotional support beagle effectively serving as a source of therapy instead of Lucy.

5. "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown." — Linus
What fan isn't moved by Linus's recitation from the Book of Luke (as memorably voiced by the late child actor Christopher Shea) in 1965's "A Charlie Brown Christmas"? This quote is spoken when school-play director Charlie Brown, exasperated and glum, questions the reason for the season. Once Linus ends his center-spotlight monologue, he concludes with this line, powerful in its understated poignancy. Such great creatives as Ware and novelist Michael Chabon have told me they adore this scene, with Ware sharing that, as a child, he would then hug the TV set. Out of the mouths of babes, into the minds of future adults, where that quote will stay, providing comfort and guidance.

"IF WE TRULY TUNE IN AND LISTEN TO THE WISDOM OF "PEANUTS," IT ROUTINELY PROVIDES WORDS AND PICTURES TO BOLSTER US, TEACH US, AND COMFORT US."



ly seems we can never forget Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy ...

When I spoke with Schulz at a National Cartoonist Society's Reuben Awards ceremony, I told him "Peanuts" deserved a special Pulitzer Prize. Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel and Art Spiegelman had received that honor. Sparky would have none of it; he didn't see the jury and board appreciating "Peanuts" in that way.

Instead, he looked content. He appeared pleased. He knew he already had the continual love, acclaim, and appreciation of us all, his legions of fans, who today are pleased to say, "Happy Birthday, Charlie Brown!"

MICHAEL CAVNA, a four-time Eisner Award finalist, has covered "Peanuts" since meeting Charles M. Schulz in the '90s. He is the creator of the Andrews McMeel comic strip "Warped" and the creator of the Washington Post "Comic Riffs" column.

ABOVE
The Peanuts Movie (Nov. 2015) This is the movie poster. Worldwide box office $246.2 million

UPPER RIGHT
Snoopy as the World War I flying ace. His battles with the Red Baron spawned a chart-topping pop song.

LOWER RIGHT
If you are a certain age, you probably discovered "Peanuts" on television, this from "It's Spring Training, Charlie Brown."

"Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy...how can I ever forget them... ." Those were the touching words that concluded Sparky's final original "Peanuts" strip, published the same weekend in 2000 that Schulz died.

Since last year, the franchise has launched an excellent podcast, "You Don't Know Peanuts: The Untold Stories," and the animated specials on AppleTV+ have racked up major awards. (Members of the Schulz family are involved in animated projects.). This fall, to mark the strip's big anniversary, Abrams ComicArts will launch a deluxe box set, "The Essential Peanuts." It certain-

THE LEGACY OF

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

BY HENRY G. FRANKE III

"Often overlooked is Burroughs as a romance writer, especially unique for his time. Despite the "damsel in distress" plot device common to many of his stories, ERB's female characters were brave, intelligent, resilient, and morally strong… "

American author Edgar Rice Burroughs is best known today as the creator of Tarzan of the Apes, one of the most recognizable literary characters on the planet for over a hundred years. Burroughs profoundly impacted popular culture and the lives of generations of fans in the United States and around the globe. With the 150th anniversary of his birth this year, an appreciation of the author highlights why Burroughs is worthy of continued study as a true pop-culture icon whose works will not only remain important for years to come, but can be read with the same wonder they prompted over a century ago.

Renowned author Ray Bradbury best described the influence of Burroughs and his stories in the 20th century and into the 21st century. Bradbury was sincere in his praise of ERB, as fans nicknamed Burroughs, when he declared, "Burroughs is probably the most influential writer in the history of the world. By giving romance and adventure to a whole generation of boys, Burroughs caused them to go out and decide to become special."

Bradbury consistently extolled ERB through the years. "Burroughs . . . probably changed more destinies than any other writer in American history. I've talked to more biochemists and more astronomers and technologists in various fields, who, when they were ten years old, fell in love with John Carter [of Mars] and Tarzan and decided to become something romantic. Burroughs put us on the moon."

ERB wrote for adults, both men and women. His tales of adventure, action, and romance were meant to entertain this audience, but the power of his storytelling reached out to youngsters as well. ERB's stories, appearing as simple escapist fiction, were also morality plays about honor, chivalry, friendship, tenacity, and the capacity of the individual. These ideals made a lasting impression on generations of young people.

Often overlooked is Burroughs as a romance writer, especially unique for his time. Despite the "damsel in distress" plot device common to many of his stories, ERB's female characters were brave, intelligent, resilient, and morally strong, fitting partners for his male heroes: Tarzan and Jane, John Carter of Mars and Dejah Thoris, David Innes of Pellucidar and Dian the Beautiful, Carson Napier of Venus and Duare.

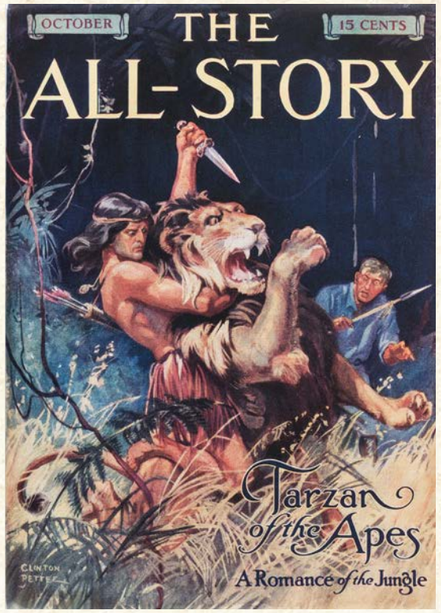
DRAWN TO ADVENTURE

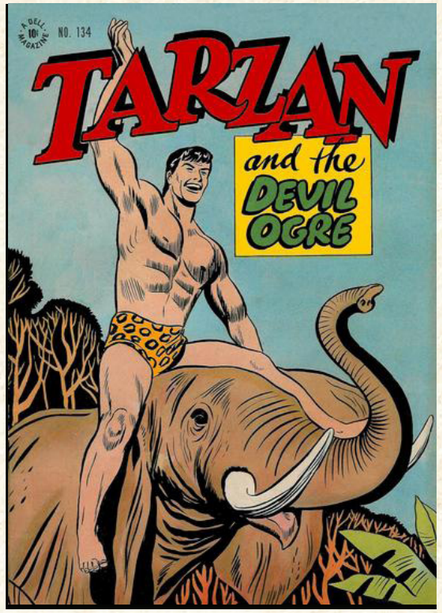
The author's tales grew from his restless imagination, steeped in his desire for adventure. Born in Chicago on September 1, 1875, Burroughs was the youngest living son of a successful businessman and former major in the Union Army during the American Civil War. Burroughs was briefly introduced to a rigorous outdoor life when he was sent west to work for two of his brothers in Idaho, still rough, frontier country. Just sixteen, he toiled as a cowboy, inspiring a lifelong love of horses and riding.

A rambunctious youth, ERB wound up at the Military Michigan Academy, proving himself, despite his rabble-rousing tendencies, to be a natural leader and adept at sports. By the time he graduated, Burroughs had grown to embrace the military life. Unable to attend West Point, he enlisted at age twenty as a private in the U.S. Army. In May 1896, Burroughs arrived at Fort Grant in the Arizona Territory, assigned

TOP
Burroughs at age 16 in cowboy garb, in Idaho, circa 1891

ABOVE
Burroughs learned to fly an airplane in his 50s





Edgar Rice Burroughs

TOP
Burroughs in his World War II correspondent's uniform, with his grandchildren, circa 1944

ABOVE
Burroughs looking to the heavens in his correspondent's uniform.

to B Troop, 7th U.S. Cavalry.

Due to a heart condition, he was discharged less than a year later, but not before he rode the countryside in search of the Apache Kid and other desperados, served with Buffalo Soldiers, and experienced the hardships of soldiering. While in Arizona, the respect he gained for Native Americans would eventually result in two Western novels sympathetic to the Apaches, at a time when such stories were shunned by editors.

After his discharge, he helped his brothers dredge for gold on the Snake River in Idaho, owned a stationery shop in nearby Pocatello, and then worked at his brothers' ranch before returning to Chicago. Burroughs married in January 1900, but his wanderlust sent the couple back to Idaho in 1903 and more work at dredging for gold, then a brief stint as a railroad policeman in Salt Lake City. Burroughs and wife Emma finally returned to Chicago for good in 1904. What followed were years of household moves and a series of jobs aimed at getting rich quickly but leading to financial insecurity, even while his family added a daughter in 1908 and a son in 1909.

Partly out of desperation, in the summer of 1911, Burroughs started to pen a highly imaginative adventure set on Mars. He wrote, hoping he might earn a little money, but the effort also allowed his imagination to run free. He wrote of John Carter, a soldier of fortune who remembered/recalled no childhood, who was mining for gold in Arizona when a band of Apaches cornered him in a cave. The pull of Mars as it hung in the nighttime sky drew Carter through the void of space and left him naked on Barsoom, as the inhabitants called it.

Burroughs had no experience in writing a novel and had little idea of how to submit his story for consideration. Rather than spend more time on what could be another fruitless endeavor, he simply mailed the partial manuscript to *Argosy* magazine in New York City. In one of the great turns of good fortune in literary history, the incomplete story was given to an editor who was intrigued enough to ask ERB to finish it. "Under the Moons of Mars" appeared a few months later in six installments in *The All-Story* magazine, starting with the February 1912 issue. Burroughs was paid $400, a significant amount of money to him.

When the editor suggested ERB work on a historical novel set in medieval times, the fledgling writer did so without question, only to have the story rejected even after rewrites. The initial promise that writing would break the cycle of failure seemed doomed, but Burroughs's imagination now demanded an outlet. By the summer of 1912, he completed the novel he thought was not as good as the historical tale, but his editor quickly accepted it and paid him $700. *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared complete in the October 1912 issue of *The All-Story*, with Tarzan featured on the cover.

This is generally considered to be the most sought-after issue of any pulp magazine. In less than a year, Burroughs had kick-started two genres of popular fiction, the scientific romance and the feral-man adventure. At the age of thirty-six, the author was an overnight sensation. Dozens of writers would try to imitate Burroughs's creations over the years, but he remained the master of both for three decades. With the birth of his second son in February 1913, ERB decided he would be a full-time writer. Still learning his craft, the author generated hundreds of thousands of words over the next few years.

TOP LEFT
The first appearance of "Tarzan of the Apes" *The All-Story Magazine* (Oct. 1912)
Art by Clinton Pettee

TOP RIGHT
The first original Tarzan comic-book story *Dell Four Color* #134 (Feb. 1947),
Art by Jesse Marsh

LEFT
First appearance of the "John Carter of Mars" Sunday comic strip, by son John Coleman Burroughs (Dec. 7, 1941)

TOP LEFT
DC Comics' first Tarzan
Tarzan of the Apes #207
Continuing the numbering
from the Gold Key series
(Apr. 1972)
Art by Joe Kubert

TOP RIGHT
Malibu Comics publishes
Tarzan in the 90s
Tarzan the Warrior #1
(Mar. 1992
Art by Marc Hempel

A BUSINESS INNOVATOR

Burroughs was far ahead of his time in grasping both the importance of a writer owning his intellectual property and in aggressively pursuing every outlet for his stories to maximize profit. Despite being a novice, he soon demanded that all rights to his stories stay with him following their initial magazine appearance, and that copyrights for his stories be in his name, uncommon in his day. He convinced dozens of newspapers to serialize his tales.

Believing that *Tarzan of the Apes* deserved to be published as a hardcover book – an unlikely possibility for most pulp writers – ERB tirelessly sought a publisher despite numerous rejections. In 1914, the novel was released in first-edition hardcover, just the start of dozens of his tales appearing in book form over the years. His first Mars novel was retitled *A Princess of Mars* when it appeared in hardcover in 1917. Millions of copies of his books were sold by 1920. By then, his stories had begun being translated and published in other countries.

The author also saw opportunities in the burgeoning film industry. The first movie based on one of his stories was *The Lad and the Lion*, released in 1917. But it was the original Tarzan film, premiering in January 1918, that kicked off one of the most successful franchises in film history. That silent 1918 movie, *Tarzan of the Apes*, was one of the first films to gross over a million dollars.

California's warm climate, along with the growing importance of Hollywood, led Burroughs to permanently move to the West Coast in 1919. His 540-acre Tarzana Ranch would one day become the town of Tarzana.

Burroughs was the first American writer to incorporate himself, establishing his company on March 26,
1923. He took over publishing first-edition hardcover books of his stories in 1931. Animator Bob Clampett's attempt in 1936 to produce an animated film featuring John Carter of Mars was a great opportunity missed. If a full-length movie, it might have beaten Disney's *Snow White* to theaters. If one or more shorts, it could have appeared years before the Fleischer *Superman* cartoons.

The demand for new Tarzan stories continued unabated for decades. The ape-man's appearance continued to expand to more media, leading to many firsts. "Tarzan" was the first adult-oriented adventure newspaper comic strip, debuting the same day as the "Buck Rogers" strip in January 1929. The level of talent on the strip remained high with Bob Lubbers, John Celardo, Russ Manning, Gil Kane, Mike Grell, and Gray Morrow.

The original "Tarzan" radio show, running from 1932 to 1934, with Burroughs's daughter and son-in-law as stars, was the first radio program syndicated via transcription discs. Tarzan merchandising was relentless beginning in the 1930s, with Tarzan bread, ice cream cups, and clay figures among many hundreds of items

The first original comic book stories appeared in Dell Comics in 1947 and continued in Gold Key Comics, then moved to DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, and Malibu, presenting work by such greats as Jesse Marsh, Russ Manning, Mike Royer, Doug Wildey, Joe Kubert, and John Buscema.

INNOVATOR OF INFLUENCE

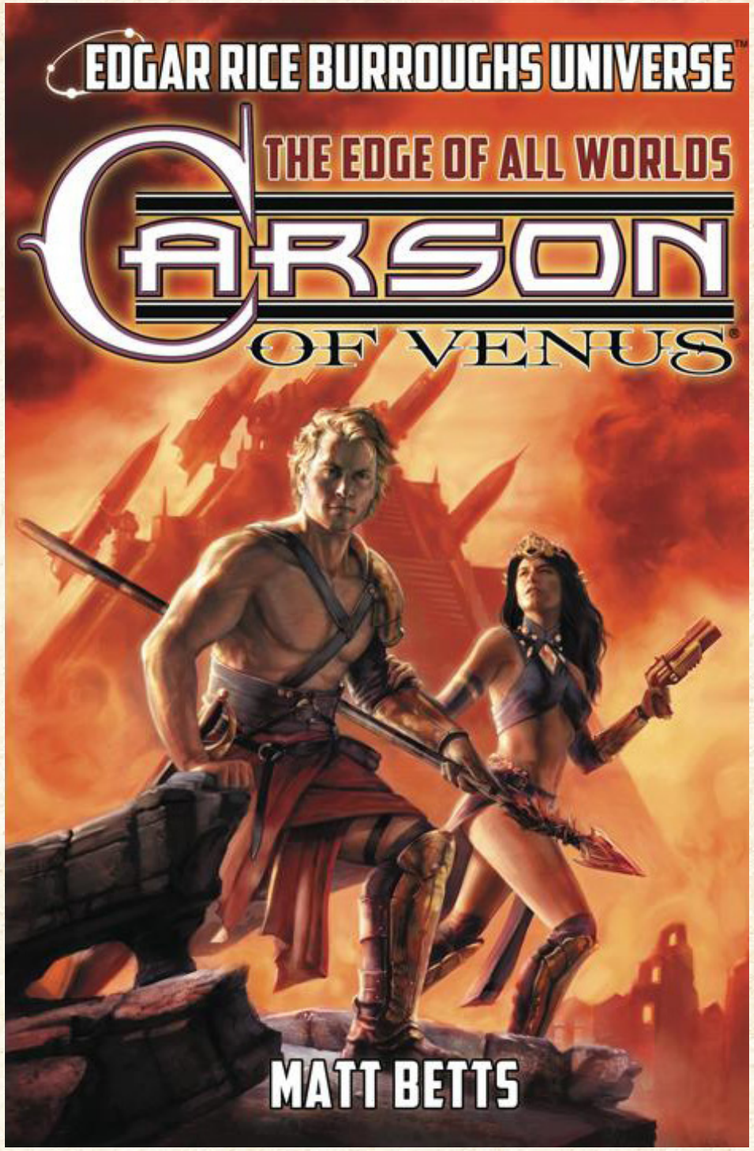
As wildly popular as Tarzan of the Apes became, arguably it was Burroughs's Martian tales that have proven to be his most influential creation, inspiring legions of writers, artists, scientists, and many others, while earning him the title of Grandfather of American Science Fiction. Burroughs is considered to be the first great world-builder in science fiction, with Barsoom his greatest achievement. He even created an integrated "universe" linking nearly all of his stories. Burroughs also appeared as a fictional version of himself in many of them, starting with the first Mars novel.

The creators of some of the most popular fictional characters and films today were inspired by ERB, notably John Carter and the Mars series. Jerry Siegel, co-creator of Superman, described how John Carter was a template for the character. George Lucas acknowledged his debt to the Mars stories for *Star Wars*, as did James Cameron for *Avatar*. In developing *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Steven Spielberg said that he had "always wanted to bring a serial to life that blends... elements from Edgar Rice Burroughs."

An introduction to Burroughs when young helped to motivate Carl Sagan to become an astrophysicist and Jane Goodall to pursue primatology. Even Ronald Reagan, early in his presidency, wrote a letter describing the significance of the Mars stories he read in his youth.

It was Burroughs's unparalleled storytelling ability that hooked all of these individuals and many more, but the author's personal views permeated his fiction. The importance of the individual was fundamental to ERB's stories at a time when industrialization threatened to smother individuality. ERB was ahead of his time in championing conservation, man's place in nature, evolution, protecting the environment, and care in the treatment of animals.

When living in Hawaii, ERB and his elder son witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Wanting to be a part of the fight, he became the oldest accredited war correspondent at age sixty-seven, deploying



three times from Hawaii into the theater of war. His experiences in World War II altered his view on war, as reflected in the last fiction he wrote. He suffered a serious heart attack returning from his last deployment. Returning to California, his health faded. ERB died on March 19, 1950.

Most of his books were soon out of print, although Tarzan movies, comic books, and strips continued. Unexpectedly, ERB was rediscovered in the early 1960s, triggering a

ABOVE
Carson of Venus: The Edge of All Worlds, an ERB Universe novel by Matt Betts
Cover art by Chris Peuler
(April 2020)

paperback boom that lasted through the 1980s and selling millions of books. Nearly all of his stories were reprinted, but the public demand for Burroughs-like adventure stories led to other forgotten writers appearing in mass-market paperbacks, notably Robert E. Howard. Once again, ERB's impact on popular fiction was significant and extended beyond his own work.

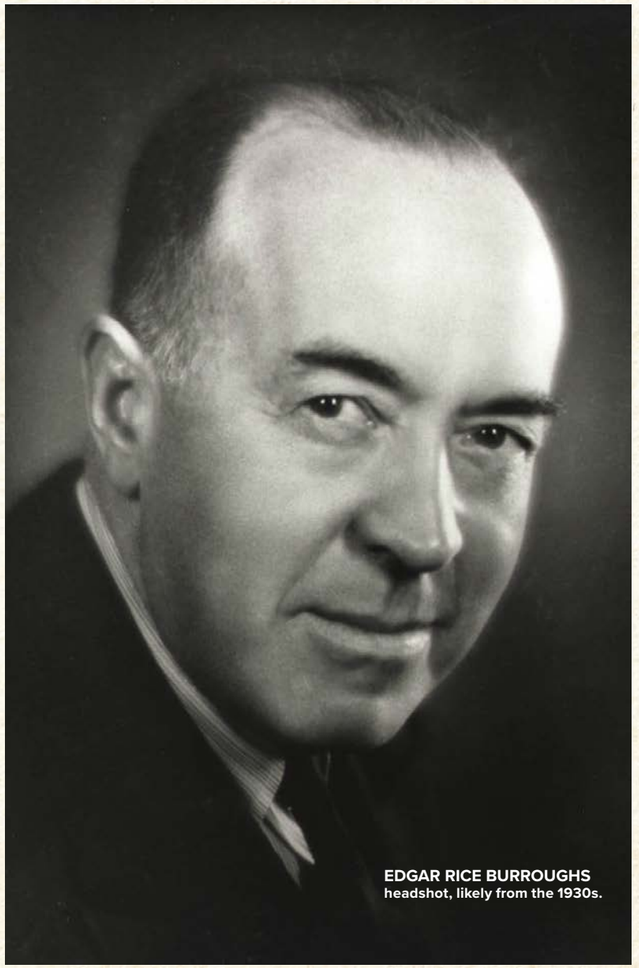
Burroughs, a competent cartoonist himself, always appreciated great illustrators who created art for his books, with J. Allen St. John his favorite. The paperback boom brought forward fresh talent, notably Frank Frazetta and Roy G. Krenkel.

Burroughs passed away seventy-five years ago, but his corporation continues on today in its original offices in Tarzana. Among its many projects is the publication of the ERB Authorized Library, a uniform hardcover set of all of the author's original stories with cover art by fan-favorite Joe Jusko. New authorized stories that fit into the original canon are being released under the ERB Universe banner, while non-canonical books appear in The Wild Adventures of ERB Series. New comic books and graphic novels, some under the Burroughs imprint, have expanded to feature more female characters. Debuting in 2012, their online comic strips have grown to more than two dozen, based on numerous tales by the "Master of Adventure."

Edgar Rice Burroughs lives on today through his tales of wonder and their adaptations in a wide range of media. His 150th birthday is a great time to acknowledge his legacy of creativity and innovation.

—

Henry G. Franke III is the editor of* The Burroughs Bibliophiles*, the nonprofit literary and educational society devoted to Edgar Rice Burroughs and his works.



EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
headshot, likely from the 1930s.

The Most Important Comic of 1975:

GIANT-SIZE X-MEN'S

ENDURING MAGIC

BY GAIL SIMONE

UPPER LEFT
Giant-Size X-Men #1
splash page
Notice the most important characters are in front.

UPPER RIGHT
Wolverine meets Professor Charles Xavier for the first time. This feels typical.

ABOVE
Comic creator and character design master Dave Cockrum

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the release of *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, and I've been asked to share some thoughts on the impact this one remarkable comic had on Marvel, comics in general, and the growth of comics fandom for decades to follow.

Sometimes, when I'm asked to do a piece like this, I put on the hat of a poor scholar or a snarky humorist, but, in this case, I'm afraid the only perspective I can offer that means anything is that of a fan. I've also asked some professional comic book friends to share their feelings on what the book meant to them, many of whom weren't even born when the issue was released.

I'm an X-Men fan. It was this book that I picked up at a garage sale, tattered and clearly loved, that made me an X-Men fan. I can even point to the exact page where the lightning bolt hit me.

Throughout the history of Marvel Comics, there have been comic books that arrived like an earthquake and made a demarcation between what had come *before* and everything that came *after,* like a shift in the continental plates.

Fantastic Four #1.

Frank Miller's *Daredevil*.

Gwen Stacy's death in *Amazing Spider-Man*.

There were others, but in thousands and thousands of published books, there were perhaps a scant few that left a tremor like that.

Giant-Size X-Men carried a seismic impact from the very start that only grew and devoured more of the landscape as time went on. Even its aftershocks broke windows and knocked dishes off the shelves.

Chris Claremont and Jim Lee on *X-Men* #1

The first appearance of Deadpool in *New Mutants*.

The Dark Phoenix Saga.

I could go on and on, but the point is, a low-selling Marvel team book, which ended in reprints and ultimately cancellation, came back roaring so loud that for a long while, it felt like Marvel was two companies: Mutants and everything else.

Certainly, there were a multitude of X-verse readers who didn't follow any other comics title.

It all began with this single book.

*"I was collecting comics then and had my collection of X-Men and Neal Adams brought his 'A' game to it, but otherwise it was always a bit of a throw-away book, and then this came out, and had a big story, introduced new characters, and read so different and I loved it."-- Jimmy Palmiotti (*Harley Quinn, The Pro*)*

It's hard to call any book produced by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee a misfire, and the book clearly had its charms. Most notably, what set it apart from other hero teams of the era is that it was, first and foremost, a school, a place for young mutants to train. It's not hard to look at popular fiction around the globe and see hugely popular books, animated series, and films that reproduce that central concept...the school where you might accidentally get killed.

But for whatever reason, *Uncanny X-Men* didn't quite take off in the same way that other Marvel books had. Neal Adams and Roy Thomas attempted a powerful rejuvenation of the book, but after a series of reprints, it was finally canceled with issue #93. The franchise that would create billions in film and merchandise couldn't quite crack a hundred issues, despite the talent of the creators involved.

It could have ended there.

*"I was ten when it came out, and it was like the comic book equivalent of seeing Star Wars for the first time. Instant obsession, constant revisiting and re-examining, influencing my art, imagination, and leanings toward large casts of characters. A superhero game changer. I read my copy to shreds." –Evan Dorkin (*Milk & Cheese, Beasts of Burden*)*

"THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF MARVEL COMICS, THERE HAVE BEEN COMIC BOOKS THAT ARRIVED LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE AND MADE A DEMARCATION BETWEEN WHAT HAD COME BEFORE AND EVERYTHING THAT CAME AFTER ..."

Thankfully for comics fans, Marvel, retailers, and Hugh Jackman's agent, it didn't end there. In 1975, the title came back.

Gone were the kid students, and most of the cast. Cyclops remained the field leader of the team, but man, oh, man, did the book take a jump. It felt like seeing the comic book version of the Beatles for the first time.

I mentioned I could pin down the exact page where I became a believer. This page hangs in my memory to this day.

I was already a fan of both Len Wein and Dave Cockrum, so even as a little kid, I had some taste. I lived on a farm, in the boonies in Oregon. We didn't travel. I ached for stories

TOP LEFT
Giant-Size X-Men #1 -- Storm wields her power to help a draught ravaged village.

that talked about people who were from places I was sure I'd never get to visit.

To this day, when I see this, my first thought is, "How did they create so many absolute BANGERS in one comic book?"

And my second thought is, "Dave Cockrum designed the best costumes of anyone ever, ever, ever."

I chose my favorites immediately. Pretty sure everyone who read the book did. (Nightcrawler, Thunderbird, and Storm, all tied for most favorite).

*"It's pretty difficult to sum up the impact Giant-Sized X-Men had on me and comics in general. The introduction of Storm and Nightcrawler changed the game, as far as I'm concerned. Sure, everyone talks about Wolverine and Colossus, but the team added an ACTUAL GODDESS! I mean, that trumps a dude covered in metal and one with steak knives coming out of his hands in my mind." –Erica Schultz (*Laura Kinney: Wolverine, Spawn: Rat City*)*

When I put the word out to friends, asking their feelings about the impact this book had, Scott Edelman graciously responded. Scott was an assistant editor at Marvel at the time, and he was there, in the office when it all went down.

"I did get to see Len Wein and Dave Cockrum create Giant-Size X-Men #1 out of nothing more than a basic concept. Three or four of us watched as Len, at first leaning back in the swivel chair behind his desk, and Dave, across from him on a couch, scribbling in his sketchpad, bounced ideas off each other. Len would occasionally leap up and pose just as I imagined Stan would have done once upon a time.

As the plot points built, there were many questions from each, many "How abouts?" and "What ifs?" and "Now whats?" It was that questioning collaboration that made the story. Their quest to find the story arc taught me a great deal about how a writer writes, and how you need to trust the process, since it was clear to me neither knew when they began exactly how that issue was supposed to end. So it was magical to see them knit together something out of nothing.

Oh, and one last thing — it's important to note there was much laughter as the two of them attempted to top each other. They were having fun! It's what they were both born to do, and there was much joy in the room." –Scott Edelman, Marvel Editor

Imagine being in THAT office on THAT day.

"I'd become a fan of the original series early that year, to the point that I already had a near-complete run. So I was thrilled to have new adventures and was an instant convert. Missed the next couple of issues because I simply never saw them, but I was absolutely in on the new series.
*I mean, Len Wein, Dave Cockrum, great-looking new characters that promised to be interesting to learn about, what's not to like?" –Kurt Busiek (*Astro City, Marvels*)*

As I'm currently writing *Uncanny X-Men* (which I think I may have mentioned a few million times to pretty much every random stranger I meet on the street), I hear all the time about the jolt readers got from *Giant-Size X-Men* #1. Over and over, from that group shot, people chose a favorite, and five decades later, they still love that character best.

What was it that made such an impact regarding those particular characters? Was it the look, the voice, the personality? Oh, brothers and sisters, it was all of that! The foundation for all the movies, all the animated series, all the blockbuster spin-offs, so much of it is right there, staring you in the face.

It was two young creators (Dave Cockrum was 31, Len Wein was just 26 years old) trying to find a new gear and succeeding. Could they possibly have imagined what would come from it?

But again, let's not underestimate the costumes. I can say with authority that to this day, when we are looking at giving one of these characters a new look, the first reference, the first inspiration, is almost always from Dave's original designs.

*"Bought it off a newsstand spinner rack. I only had a few issues of the original X-Men, but this jumped out at me because of DAVE COCKRUM. Loved his art on Legion and recent Marvel stuff. Was instantly hooked by the new characters, the story, and of course, the force of Cyclops's optic blasts." –Fabian Nicieza (*Cable & Deadpool, Suburban Dicks*)*

Even beyond the costumes, it was the spectrum of characters that made me swoon. They came from Canada, Africa, Japan, Ireland, Germany, Russia, and a reservation in Arizona. To me, on a farm in the middle of nowhere, these seemed as far away and exciting as a moon launch. I ate those characters up with a spoon.

It's been said that it was Marvel's corporate owner, Cadence Industries, specifically requested that the team should be international, with the hope of creating worldwide appeal. The creative team had the talent to make it more than a corporate edict.

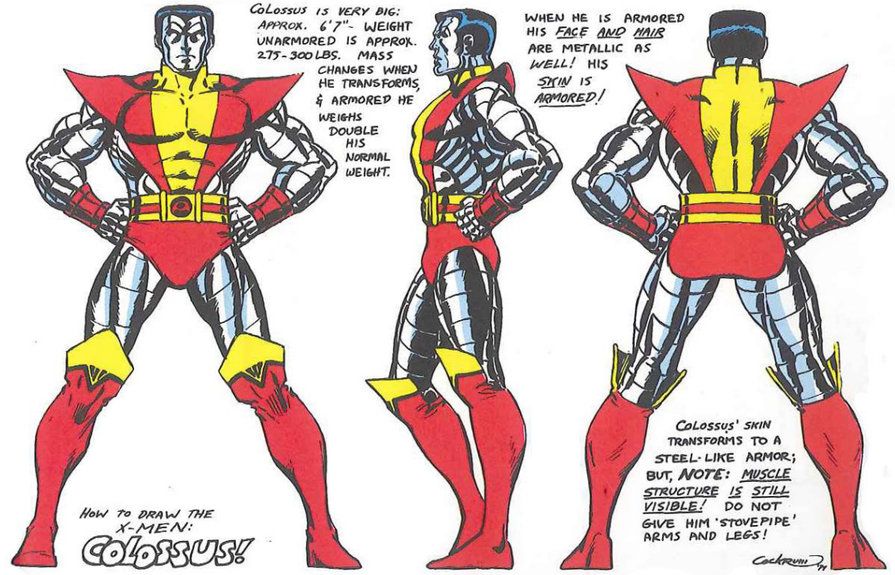
The team just *felt* like something new, something less safe than the beloved team books I was already reading, in Justice League and Teen Titans. For one thing, whereas any team might have a loudmouth jerk, this new X-team had *four,* in Wolverine, Banshee, Sunfire, and Thunderbird. This had the unexpected quality of making sunny good guys Nightcrawler and Colossus feel like the minority party of the group, with Storm's slightly aloof quality a solo act.

This also gave the cast a problem. It had already been decided Banshee and Sunfire would fail the entrance exam. But that still left two loudmouths. So one had to go. I suspect, even if you have never read an X-Book, you can guess which one that was (50-year-old spoiler alert: It was John Proudstar, Thunderbird, and I'm still mad about it, but decades later, he's back!).

All of this made the X-Men stories feel like they had stakes, like you could lose any character at any moment. This gave the book what I think remained its best quality throughout its most successful runs: *unpredictability.*

I believe it's not the claws or the healing factor that made people gravitate towards Wolverine in those early issues, although he had immediate star power. I think it was, *you didn't know when he was going to pop the claws.*

Later, he'd SNIKT over too much sugar in his coffee, but at that time, the danger was...is this guy, this hero, going to kill these people?



TOP LEFT
Cockrum had a special place in his heart for Nightcrawler. From the 1985 limited series. Cockrum wrote and pencilled.

TOP RIGHT
From *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 Colossus makes quite an impact with this debut.

TOP
Colossus model sheets by our generation's best designer, X-Men's Dave Cockrum

ABOVE
Cockrum draws a group of X-Men heads to celebrate issue #100.

ABOVE
Thunderbird, we barely knew you! John Proudstar sacrificed his life in this scene in *Uncanny X-Men* #95, only three issues after *Giant -Size* #1.

It was thrilling and a little dangerous. That storytelling started a tradition that ran through all the best runs, from Jean turning Dark to the origin of Cassandra Nova. *X-Men* was never at its best, telling villain-of-the-week stories. One of the main cast dying nearly immediately, though painful, brought an impact other books would try to emulate, sometimes successfully, sometimes failing spectacularly.

That page where they first appear together. I still thrill to see it. I believe it's one of those pages every writer who handles these books tries to recreate in some way. Echoing still, five decades later.

*"It wasn't just about the cool new mutant characters. Giant-Size X-Men #1 fully embodied the reality of varying perspectives and diverse backgrounds to tell a creative story about humanity."--Murewa Ayodele (*Storm, I Am Iron Man*)*

*"I'd been collecting for a few years by then, including the reprint era of the X-Men. It's safe to say I loved comics already, but they still felt like stories, y'know? Things I read and loved, but at a sort of distance. GSX was the first time I felt the comics actually included me, they were talking to me personally. And I never looked back."-- Geoffrey Thorne (*X-Force, Leverage*)*

So, yeah, I became an X-Men fan. One day, a long time later, new *X-Men* head editor Tom Brevoort asked me if I would consider writing the flagship title, *Uncanny X-Men*. My answer was brief and profane and delivered with a speed Quicksilver would envy.

When you write in the *X-Men* universe, you are pumping donated blood through your veins. Grant Morrison. Brian Michael Bendis. Rob Liefeld. Bill Sienkiewicz. Jim Lee. John Byrne. Louise Simonson. Jonathan Hickman. Frank Quitely. Paul Smith. John Cassaday. Alan Davis. Kelly Thompson. Kieron Gillen. Gerry Duggan. Walter Simonson.

Chris Damn Claremont.

I can't list them all because it's endless. It all leads back to that first beating heart that revived the patient and put him on his feet.

You know what book did the resuscitation, right?

*"My dad got hit by a car while he had Giant-Size X-Men #1 in his backpack. The way he tells it, he was more worried about the comic than he was about his bike. Mangled bike, pristine comic!" –Alex Paknadel (*Sentinels, All Against All*)*

Thank you for reading, everyone. I'm going to finish with some words by the great Jim Lee, who drew and co-wrote (with Chris Claremont) the relaunched *X-Men* #1, which became the best-selling comic of all time.

"I still remember trading a friend in middle school for a copy of Giant-Size X-Men *#1—it felt like I had opened that mysterious briefcase from* Pulp Fiction*. That single issue didn't just introduce new heroes; it redefined what a superhero team could be. Nightcrawler, with his swashbuckling charm and outsider's heart; Storm, regal and powerful, commanding the weather like a goddess; Thunderbird, fierce and uncompromising, representing a voice too rarely seen; and Colossus, the gentle giant torn between duty and art. Each character felt fully formed from the start—flawed, noble, and unforgettable. And then there was Wolverine, who transformed overnight from a scrappy Hulk antagonist into a complex, brooding antihero destined for greatness.*

*What struck me most, though, was how different these characters were from the generation that came before—they weren't just superheroes, they were from somewhere: Germany, Kenya, Russia, Canada, the American Southwest. In Professor Xavier's global search for new X-Men, I saw something new. That moment didn't just make me a fan. It made me believe we were all part of something bigger, something better. Senses shattering indeed!" –Jim Lee (*X-Men, Batman*)*

"I STILL REMEMBER TRADING A FRIEND IN MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR A COPY OF GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1—IT FELT LIKE I HAD OPENED THAT MYSTERIOUS BRIEFCASE FROM PULP FICTION."
-- JIM LEE (X-MEN, W.I.L.D.CATS)

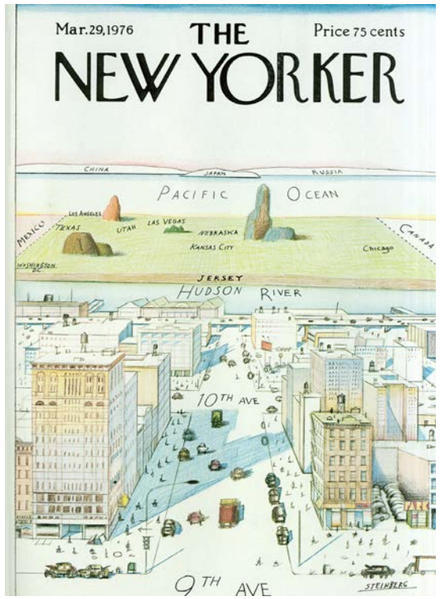
BELOW
Fan -favorite artist Arthur Adams draws the team from *Giant-Size X-Men* #1
No surprise fans were excited.

A Century of Ink & Insight
The New Yorker's 100-Year Cartoon Legacy

By Michael Maslin

A long time ago – just over a hundred years --*The New Yorker* magazine began life as a sophisticated comic weekly; its goal was a fresh take on humor, poking fun at the exciting culture swirling about Manhattan and its environs in the Roaring Twenties. According to the magazine's creator and first editor, Harold Ross, *The New Yorker* would avoid "bunk."

The idea for a humor magazine focused on metropolitan life began percolating in Ross's mind in the early 1920s, and he finally brought it to life in 1925, with help from his wife, Jane Grant, and a wealthy investor, Raoul Fleischmann. Ross wanted a magazine that would leave behind what he perceived as stale humorous remnants still inhabited by existing magazines like *Judge*, *Punch*, and *Life*. Ross's *New Yorker* would cherry-pick various elements from those magazines, while taking in some of their better artists.



Initially, one of the most significant old-timey conventions Ross wanted to abandon was the so-called "he-she" cartoon: a single panel containing a somewhat lifeless drawing, tagged onto a caption conceived by a writer. He-she cartoons carried at least two lines of dialogue, and often more.

Ross perceived "he-she" cartoons as detached from reality. Maybe he just felt they were boring. The readership he imagined for *The New Yorker* wouldn't possibly find anything amusing about an old uncle yakking away to his nephew while they fished, creekside. That sort of thing reeked of great grandma's life – it had nothing to do with the wild ways of 1925 New York.

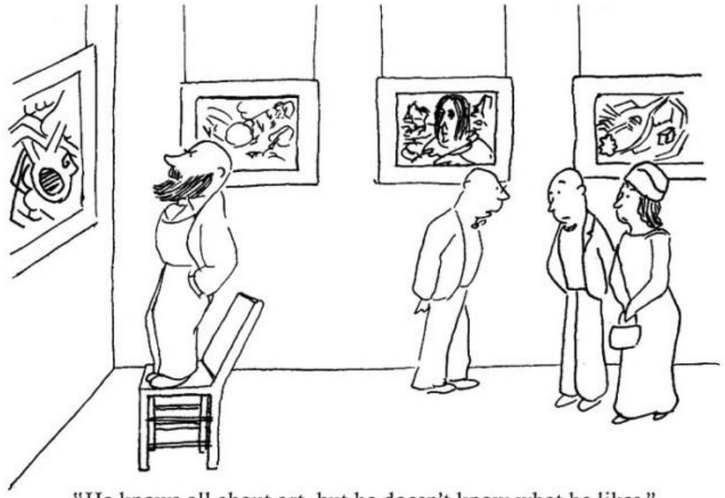
"He suggested, in a memo sent out to his artists, that they roam the streets of New York City looking for situations to bounce off their comedic DNA."

For his magazine, Ross wanted cartoons that depicted real situations experienced by real people. He suggested, in a memo sent out to his artists, that they roam the streets of New York City looking for situations to bounce off their comedic DNA. New York City life presented a goldmine of fresh ideas for the magazine's artists.

This seemingly simple suggestion – record real life – was the foundation of a cartoon culture that created what we

LEFT
One of a vast array of iconic images from *The New Yorker*. "View of the World from 9th Avenue" by Saul Steinberg (Mar. 1976)

ABOVE
The New Yorker co-founder Harold (H.W.) Ross (1892 - 1951)



"He knows all about art, but he doesn't know what he likes."

today think of as "*The New Yorker* cartoon."

As James Thurber wrote: "The best thing *The New Yorker* has ever done in comic art is the probable or recognizable caption dealing with the actual relationships of people in our middle-class society. All of us have had a fling at fantasy and formula, but they should never predominate."

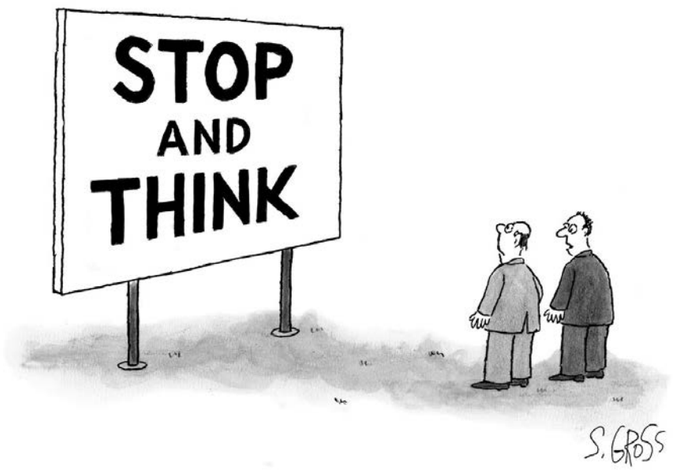
Cartoon recording of real life led to a zillion cartoons clipped from the magazine and taped to refrigerators. The readership identified with the drawings – the humor was personal.

As Ross began his magazine, he had the very good fortune to have as his art supervisor a fellow named Rea Irvin, who educated Ross in humorous art. As Philip Wylie, an early *New Yorker* employee, put it: "Irvin rubbed most of the uncouthness and corn-love out of Ross's mind in the all afternoon Tuesday art conferences..."

Irvin was all about accepting and publishing a wide swath of styles and sensibilities. Together, Irvin and Ross became graphic adventurers: there would be no *New Yorker* house style.

Irvin's education of Ross's sensibilities led to an unprecedented model: the art would be treated as carefully as the editorial text-driven features of the magazine. During the art meetings, Ross, Irvin, the fiction editor, an "art boy," and a secretary sat around a long table, assessing each cartoon deemed worthy of possible publication. The afternoon art meetings were taken seriously: no interruptions, no other business but art business. The door was locked to prevent intrusions.

Ross insisted that there was no confusion as to which person (or animal) in the cartoon was speaking. The speaking character's mouth had to be open. This



"It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn't it."

ABOVE
The New Yorker cartoon by James Thurber, published Nov. 1939

LEFT
The New Yorker cartoon by Sam Gross that made folks stop and think.

"In those early years, the magazine assembled a stable of artists whose collective work made 'The New Yorker Cartoon' synonymous with excellence."

LEFT
Cartoonist Charles Addams freqently featured his popular characters in cartoons in the pages of *The New Yoker.*

"I shall now quote the passages which I consider obscene."

attention to detail was in line with Ross's desire that *everything* in the magazine exhibited clarity. Cartoons would be subject to the same rigorous fact-checking as the editorial text.

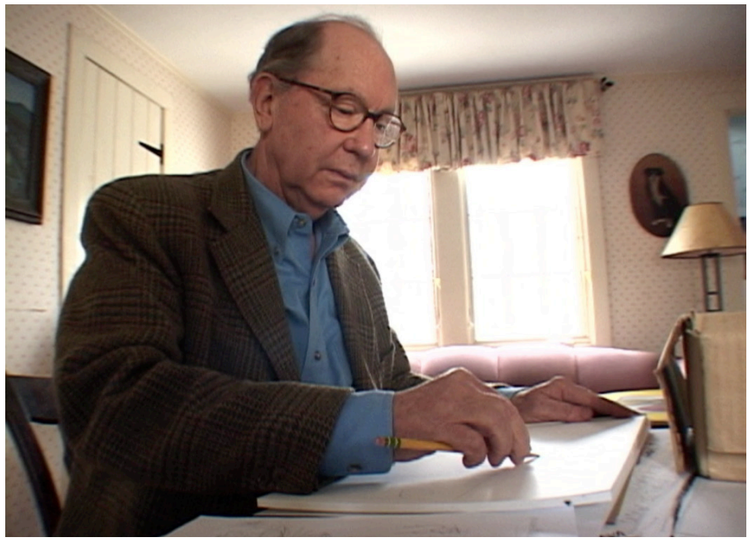
When *The New Yorker*'s first issues appeared, it was the art that stole the show, not the articles. One could argue it's been that way ever since. That old saying, *"The first thing anybody looks at in The New Yorker are the cartoons,"* remains valid to this day.

In those early years, the magazine assembled a stable of artists whose collective work made "*The New Yorker* Cartoon" synonymous with excellence. A short list of the magazine's ground floor stars included Helen Hokinson, Peter Arno, Mary Petty, Otto Soglow, James Thurber, Reginald Marsh, Gluyas Williams, George Price, William Steig, and E. Simms Campbell.

Due to *The New Yorker's* exceptionally inclusive reach over this past century, we've experienced art as graphically diverse as Peter Arno's reinforced steel ink and wash drawings, James Thurber's fluid single lines, and the buzzy nerve-ending disciplined lines laid down by Saul Steinberg.

For comic artists, the lure of *The New Yorker* was the variety and quality of the voices published. It didn't hurt that the magazine paid well! Cartoonists began their "look day" at *The New Yorker.* What *The New Yorker* rejected was then offered around town to other magazines, with the last of the artists' batches offered to magazines paying the lowest fee per cartoon.

By the mid-1930s, a number of the veteran cartoonists were using ideas supplied by writers, many of them young, aspiring cartoonists. A turning point occurred in the 1950s when these newbies became frustrated by their



TOP
The New Yorker cartoon by pioneering female cartoonist Helen Hokinson. Published May 1933.

LEFT
Editor Lee Lorenz guided *The New Yorker* cartoons from 1973 to 1997.

ideas being handed over to the veterans – they wanted their ideas with *their* drawings, published. It wasn't a revolution within the ranks but more of an evolution. One of the newbies providing ideas was James Stevenson, hired to be an in-house idea man. Eventually, he successfully lobbied to be a full-fledged cartoonist and went on to be one of the most prolific contributors in the magazine's history.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the magazine's art and artists break out in a new direction. Edward Koren was at the forefront – his furry beasts (or whatever you want to call them) expanded the magazine's cartoon culture. Koren's world was soon followed by George Booth's community of eccentrics, Charles Barsotti's Thurber-like characters, and Sam Gross's modern madnesses set down in pen and ink.

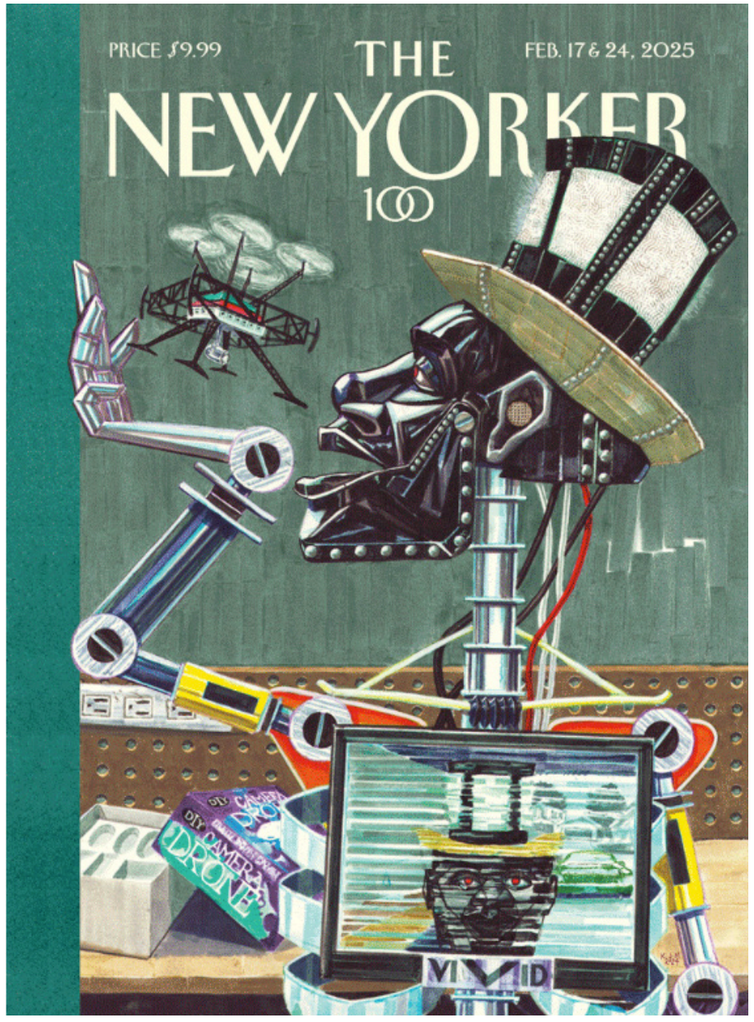
By the time the first wave of *New Yorker* contributors raised on comic books and *MAD Magazine* arrived at the magazine, in the mid-to-late 1970s, using gag writers seemed, as Roz Chast put it, "like cheating." Jack Ziegler was the first of this generation to pump a new take on humor into *The New Yorker*'s pages. Ziegler's debut was followed by Roz Chast, Bob Mankoff, Mick Stevens, Liza Donnelly, Peter Steiner, and me. What Thurber had brought to *The New Yorker's* pages in the 1930s – a zaniness and playfulness, at times divorced from reality- was now the preeminent cartoon culture.

Lee Lorenz, who edited the cartoons during this period (beginning in 1973 and continuing into 1997) somehow managed to balance several generations of *New Yorker* artists, with such veterans from the 1930s as George Price, Charles Addams, William Steig, and Al Ross working alongside the likes of Ziegler, Stevens, and Donnelly.

TOP ROW
A collection of *The New Yorker* variant covers produced to help celebrate its 100th Anniversay. (artists from left to right) Camila Rosa, Anita Kunz, Diana Ejaita, Rea Irvin

JUST BELOW
Another 100th Anniversary variant cover by Javier Mariscal.

LEFT
The special "Eustace Tilley" logo made for the 100th Anniversary of *The New Yorker.*



ABOVE
The New Yorker 100th Anniversary variant cover featuring Kerry James Marshall's reinterpretation of "Eustace Tilley."

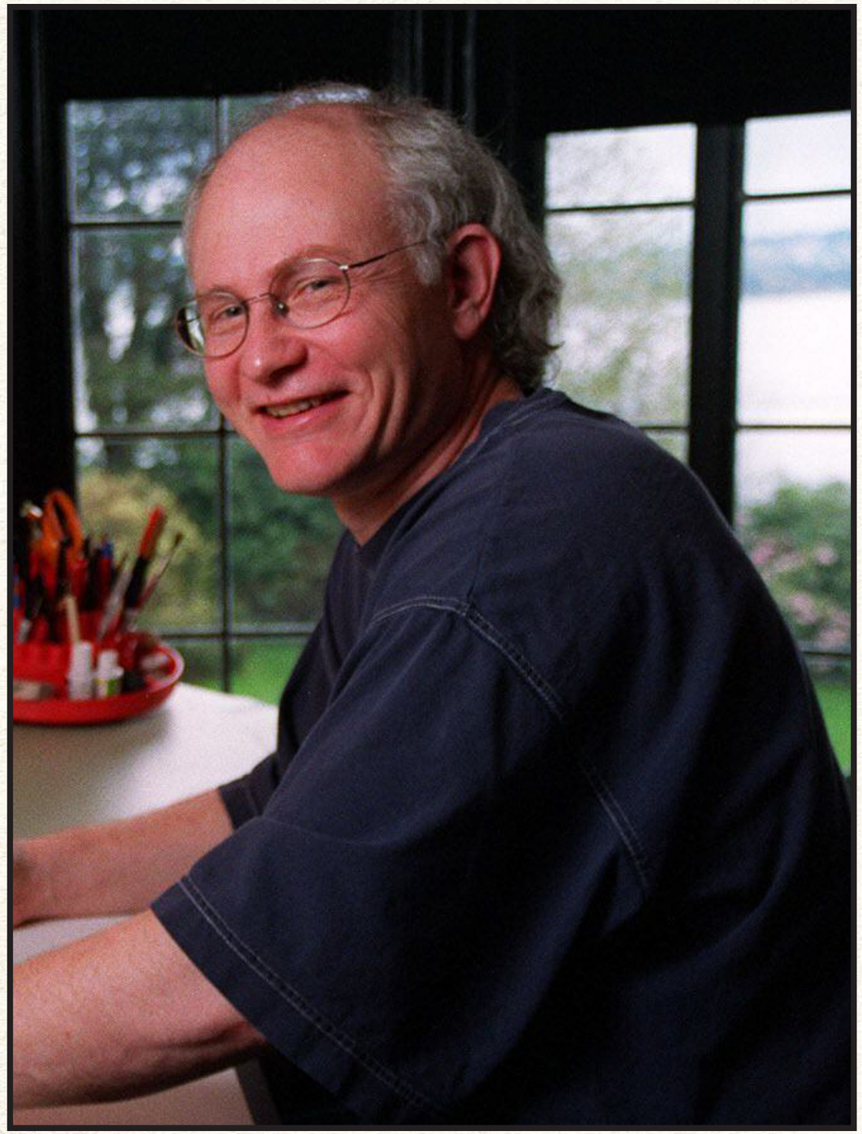
Lorenz honed the cartoon department to a small but highly productive stable; aspiring cartoonists found it tough, if not impossible, to find acceptance into *The New Yorker*'s ranks during the Lorenz years. One cartoonist, David with previous editors, Ms. Allen brought in many new voices, such as Pia Guerra, Zoe Si, Ivan Ehlers, and Lonnie Millsap. What's truly amazing about this single-panel cartooniverse is that it continues to attract practitioners despite a dearth of paying venues for them to appear outside of *The New Yorker.* If the internet hadn't happened along, there'd be very few places for cartoonists to publish their work. Back in the 1980s, Lee Lorenz was saying publicly that the business of being a single-panel cartoonist was in dire straits, although he had high hopes for the art itself: "...I don't think cartooning is a dying art, just on the strength of the young people I see coming into it."

And here we are, one hundred years after the magazine's debut, opening up the latest issue of *The New Yorker* and finding brand new voices.
The fundamentals that Harold Ross insisted on for his new magazine have held for a century. Cartoons still reflect real life, captions echo 2025 speech, 2025 culture, mannerisms, and thinking. In the past century, approximately 750 cartoonists have published their work in *The New Yorker.* Some had just one cartoon published, others contributed over a thousand.

John Updike somewhat famously called *The New Yorker* a "sheltering place" – I believe that idea accounts for a great deal for aspiring cartoonists. The magazine has taken in artists for a century and let them be themselves, let them explore their art, with the slightest of editorial direction. How incredible! That is why they continue to knock on *The New Yorker*'s door. That is why they pursue the very idea of one day being able to say, "I'm a *New Yorker* cartoonist."

Michael Maslin has been contributing to *The New Yorker* for 48 years; he is the author of *Peter Arno: The Mad Mad World Of The New Yorker's Greatest Cartoonist*. His website "Ink Spill," covers news and history of New Yorker cartoonists and cartoons.

LOOKING AT HUMOR THROUGH THE FAR SIDE LENS



GARY LARSON TURNS 75.

BY JAKE MORRISSEY

It shouldn't have worked.
Really. It shouldn't have worked at all.

On the last day of 1979, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published an ad that included six black-and-white panels by a 29-year-old cartoonist. The copy read: "Laugh in the New Year. The Seventies brought us offbeat humor that we weren't afraid to laugh at. And the Eighties? Take a trip to "The Far Side" and see for yourself."

Unlike the successful cartoons of that era – "Peanuts," "Doonesbury," "Garfield" – "The Far Side" wasn't a comic strip. It was a single panel. With no recurring characters. No memorable setting. No standing jokes. It ran six days a week in the *Chronicle*'s TV listings (except, for some reason, on Wednesdays), and it was easy to overlook.

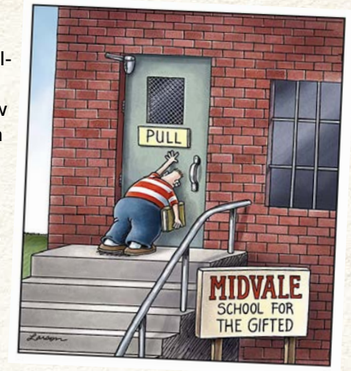
This was not a promising beginning for a worldwide phenomenon.

Yet over the next fifteen years, panel by panel and cow by cow, Gary Larson transformed cartooning and American humor. Forty-six years later, it is impossible to talk about either without discussing the enormous influence that Larson and "The Far Side" had on both.

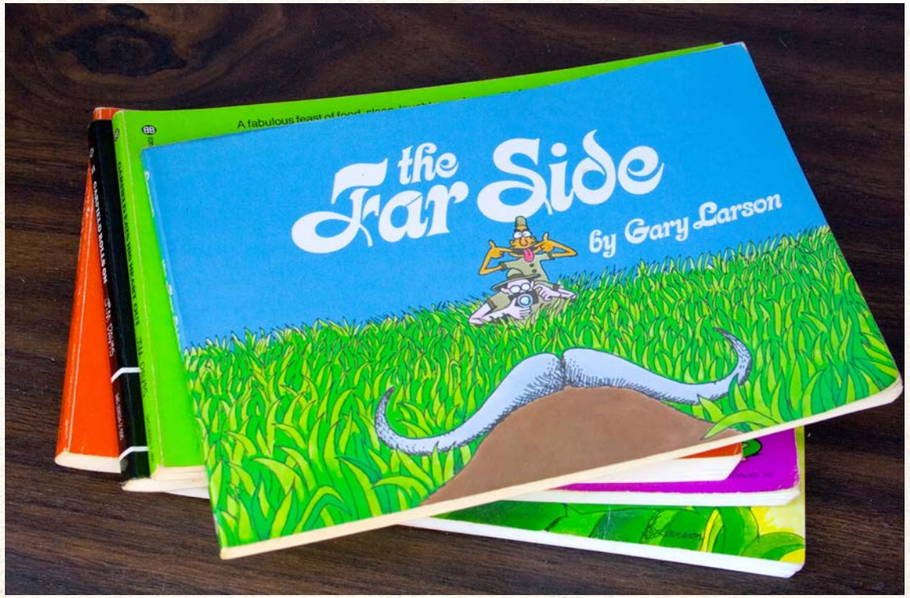
As he turns 75, Gary Larson is one of the giants of cartooning, a cultural icon whose humor sprung from neither children nor politics. His creatures – mammalian, reptilian, and amphibian – were just as likely to show us the foibles of who we are ("Bummer of a birthmark, Hal") as they were to challenge our perspectives on the world ("The real reason dinosaurs became extinct"). Even today, three decades after Larson drew his last panel for syndication, "The Far Side" reads as fresh, as unexpected, and as anarchistic as it was in the twentieth century when it was published in thousands of newspapers around the world.

For the last ten years that "The Far Side" was syndicated, I worked with Gary Larson as his editor at Universal Press Syndicate. I was his first line of defense against a puzzled public and an endless line of cranky editors irritated by readers who were offended by "The Far Side." I learned to explain (as concisely and politely as I could) the joke in each of Larson's panels. I developed ways to deflect callers who insisted they had the perfect gag for Gary, if only I would give them his phone number.

It wasn't long after Larson and I started working together in 1985, it became clear to me that the task Larson



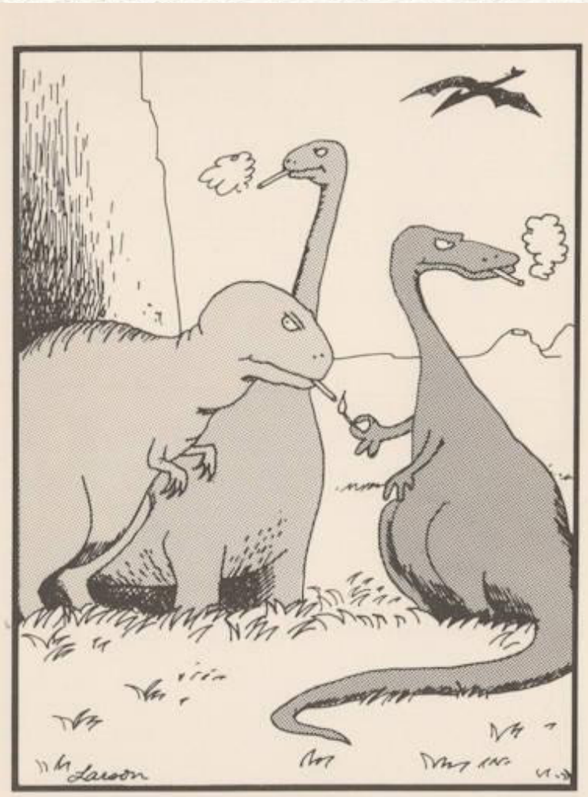
Through some unfortunate celestial error, Ernie is sent to Hog Heaven.



LEFT
There have been more than 20 The Far Side paperback book collections. The first in (pictured) in September 1982.

papers?). The conversations were invariably engaging and enjoyable, but there was a serious purpose to them: to make sure each "Far Side" panel, art and text, was as funny as Larson could make it.

One of my jobs was having the week's captions typeset and pasted under the original artwork, which would then be photographed, reproduced, and mailed–yes, *mailed*–to subscribing newspapers. (This was before email and digital publishing changed everything, which is why an original "Far Side" cartoon is so valuable today: It's actually *art*.) It didn't take me long to realize, the artwork alone or its caption alone often were not funny, or



The real reason dinosaurs became extinct

even comprehensible. The alchemy occurred when the two came together: They created a combination that was unexpected, surprising, and hilarious. For "The Far Side," the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The fact that Larson was able to pull off this feat six days a week – and for a time in color on Sundays – for fifteen years astonishes me to this day. It's an astonishing level of creativity and quality.

As crucial as the link is between Larson's art and his writing, the tone of his humor is just as important. What distinguished "The Far Side" from its brethren on newspaper comics pages was that the humor was fundamentally different from the comic strips and panels published around it. And it still feels different today.

I didn't really understand why for a long time. It wasn't until I came across a 2024 Apple TV+ documentary on comedian/actor/writer Steve Martin that I began to get an inkling.

In the documentary, Martin talks about his humor and what he hopes to achieve with it.

"There's two kinds of laughter," Martin says at one point. "One is when you're watching the comedian and he says a joke and then you laugh at it, because you heard the punchline. ... But there's another kind of laughter. When you're at home with your friends and you're laughing so hard you're crying. You can't stop laughing. And when you think about it, you don't know why you're laughing, you're just laughing."

That, to me, is the essence of "The Far Side's" humor*:* It comes at you obliquely, from an angle you didn't notice, with a perspective you didn't expect. It startles you into laughing by prompting you to think differently about something you thought you knew or took for granted. Maybe it's about how cows behave when there are no cars around. Or what Neanderthal families actually argued about. Or that aliens, or monsters, or sea creatures are more like us than we think. And that's what made "The Far Side" worth returning to: You never knew who – or what – you might meet.

(I probably should have come to this conclusion decades ago, as the foreword to Larson's magisterial two-volume collection, *The Complete Far Side*, published in 2003, containing every published "Far Side" cartoon, was written by Steve Martin.)

A lot has changed about how and where we read comic strips since Larson debuted "The Far Side" more than forty years ago. Physical newspapers have made way for digital versions, and the life spans of comic strips now seem eternal. Within minutes, you can read a new "Blondie," a cartoon that debuted in 1930 and continues to be published today and also a webcomic that didn't exist last week. While the choice is wide, in some ways it's predictable: It can be difficult finding humor or a voice you haven't read before.

As someone who has spent his career as an editor, I am a reader and a re-reader. I actually enjoy rereading books and rewatching movies and television shows to see if my perspectives on them have changed over time. (I suspect that makes me an oddity in today's culture of insatiably devouring the new.) I'm often surprised by how frequently I'm disappointed. When my wife notices I am finishing a book I've read previously or watching a movie she knows I've seen already, she'll ask, "Does it hold up?"

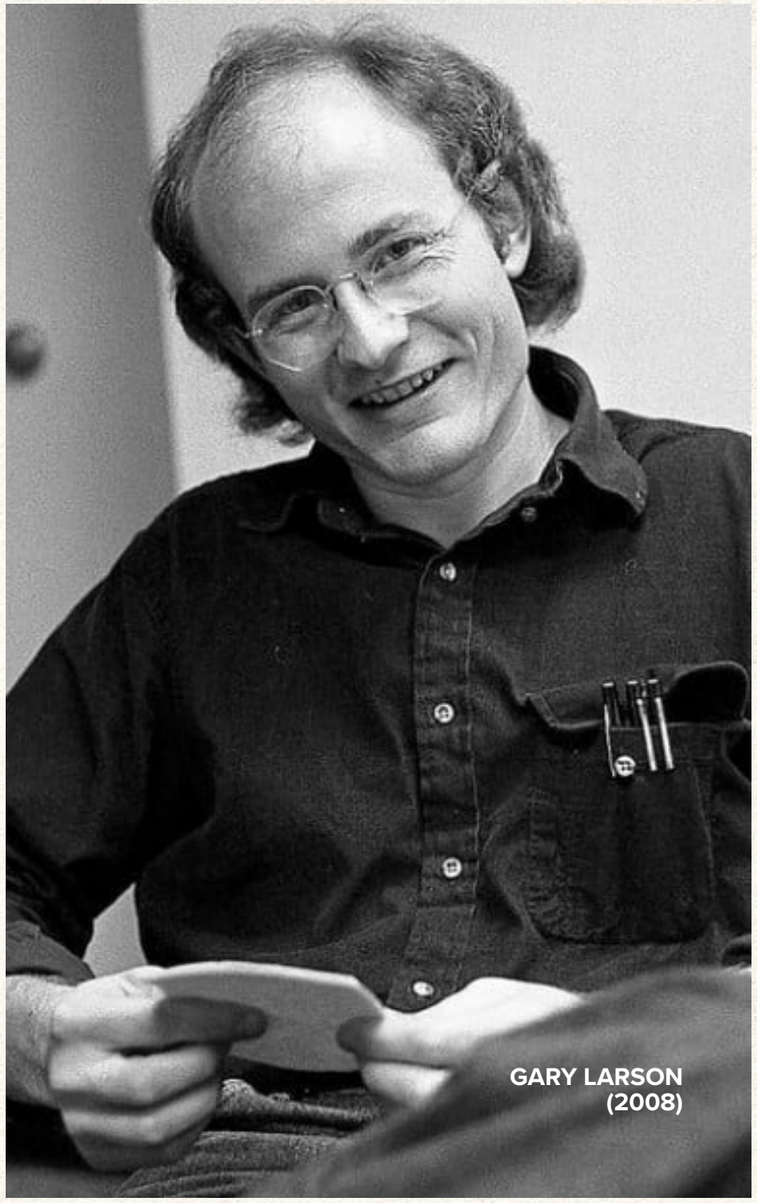
In the case of "The Far Side," the answer is yes, "The Far Side" holds up.

Thinking about Gary Larson and *"The Far Side"* this way reminded me of the famous quote about Michael Phelps, the American swimmer who, at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, won eight gold medals – a record. When an interviewer asked British swimmer Simon Burnett half-jokingly if Phelps is an alien, Burnett replied, "He's not from another planet, he's from the future."

In some ways, Gary Larson and the humor in 'The Far Side" are, too. In a world where scientists claim to have resurrected the dire wolf from extinction and brain tissue has been successfully frozen and reanimated, anything is possible. Maybe a family of cows will visit the Grand Canyon, or the family dog will write "Cat fud" on the dryer door.

It could work. In "The Far Side," anything is possible.

Jake Morrissey is a former editor at Universal Press Syndicate who is now executive editor at Riverhead Books.



GARY LARSON (2008)

FIFTY PHASES OF THE MOON KNIGHT

Why I love the Crescent Avenger!

By Glenn Greenberg

"With each revival has come an evolution, a reinterpretation, and a reinvention of thecharacter, resulting in distinct takes on Moon Knight that, fittingly, reflect his multiple identities..."

He's never been what you'd call an A-lister among the superhero set, but over the last 50 years, Moon Knight has proven time and time again to have remarkable staying power, with an ability to keep endearing himself to comic-book readers and creators alike. Both he and the series that bears his name have experienced enough deaths and resurrections to make even X-Man Jean Grey jealous. With each of these revivals has come an evolution, a reinterpretation, and a reinvention of the character, resulting in distinct takes on Moon Knight that, fittingly, reflect his multiple identities that, as it said on the cover of the first issue of his original monthly series, "become one... to do what they must!"

Created by writer Doug Moench and artist Don Perlin, Moon Knight debuted in a two-part story spanning *Werewolf by Night* #32-33 (August-September 1975). He was established as hardened mercenary Mark (immediately changed to Marc) Spector, hired by a cabal of evil businessmen called the Committee to adopt the costumed identity and use an arsenal of silver, moon-themed weapons to capture the titular lycanthrope.

In that first appearance, Moench portrayed Moon Knight as neither a full-on hero nor villain, which gave him multidimensionality and a certain degree of unpredictability. "Someone fighting a werewolf is someone who is not necessarily a bad guy," he told *Back Issue* magazine in 2007. "But the Werewolf is the star of the book, and he is kind of a good guy, so the villain we needed would have to be a combination of a hero and a villain."

Moon Knight's heroism emerges at the end of the story, when he learns the extent of the Committee's nefarious plans and turns on his employers. At this initial stage of the

"The whole point was that he was different from any other superhero that we were doing... I remember having arguments over that."

-- Doug Moench

Moon Knight's Ongoing Appeal		No. of issues
Aug. 1980	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 1	38
Mar. 1985	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 2	6
Nov. 1997	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 3	4
Dec. 1998	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 4	4
Apr. 2006	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 5	30
May 2011	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 6	12
Mar. 2014	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 7	17
Apr. 2016	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 8	14
Jul. 2021	MOON KNIGHT Vol. 9	30
Jan. 2023	VENGENCE OF MK Vol. 2	9
Jul. 2024	MK FIST OF KHONSHU Vol. 1	12

character's development, some key elements of his mythos were already in place, most notably his associate and pilot, Frenchie. At the time, Moench had no plans to bring the character back. "I didn't really think beyond that first appearance," he said in 2016. "It was other people who kept asking and pushing for him."

Among those other people: Moench's colleagues at Marvel, particularly editors Len Wein and Marv Wolfman, who enjoyed Moon Knight's appearance in *Werewolf by Night* and wanted to see more of him. Moench said in 2007, "[Wein and Wolfman] were like, 'Aw, man, that was cool! Why don't you guys do [a story in] *Marvel Spotlight* with just Moon Knight and without the Werewolf?'"

Moench and Perlin accepted the challenge and produced a two-part storyline published in *Marvel Spotlight* #28-29 (June-August 1976) that led to a change in approach to the character. "The balance between hero and villain had to shift more toward the hero," Moench explained in 2007. "Now he was a man who was trying to atone for his past mercenary ways and trying to make himself into a good guy."

It was in the *Marvel Spotlight* two-parter that the Moon Knight mythos truly started to come together. The story acknowledged his Marc Spector identity but also added two more alter egos: millionaire Steven Grant and New York City cab driver Jake Lockley. It also introduced Moon Knight's beautiful assistant-slash-lady love, Marlene Fontaine (later changed to Marlene Alraune), his butler, Samuel, and two of Lockley's key informants, diner waitress Gena Landers, and Crawley, a hygienically challenged older man and regular patron at Gina's eatery. In addition, the story established that Moon Knight's strength increased or decreased depending on the phase of the moon, an element that would disappear, resurface, and disappear again over the years.

FAR LEFT
Marc Spector gets his series *Moon Knight* Vol 1 #1 (Nov. 1980)
Cover: Bill Sienkiewicz

NEAR LEFT
His first of many, many returns *Moon Knight* Vol 2 #1 (Jun. 1985)
Cover: Chris Warner

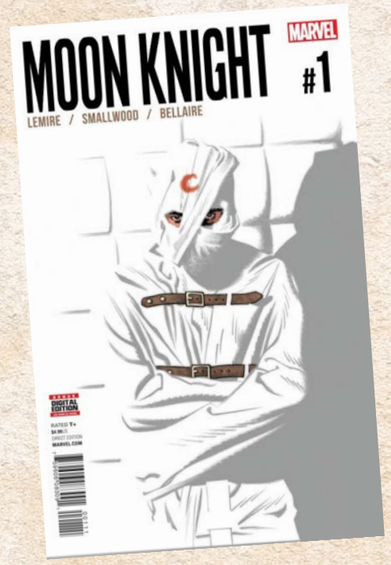
TOP
Very early Moon Knight art by Bill Sienkiewicz for Marvel's black-and-white magazines.

ABOVE
First appearance! *Werewolf by Night* #32 (Aug. 1975)
Cover: Gil Kane/Al Milgrom

TOP LEFT
Another early black-and-white by Bill Sienkiewicz. The Many Faces of Marc Spector

TOP RIGHT
Before his own series a back-up story in *The Hulk* magazine #11 (Oct. 1978)

ABOVE
Fourth time a charm *Moon Knight* Vol 4 #1 (Feb. 1999)



For Moench, the multiple identities element was what made Moon Knight stand out amongst the costumed crimefighters of the time. "That was me, wanting to do a hero who was not like any other Marvel hero," he said in 2007. Elaborating in 2016, he explained, "The 'real guy' is Marc Spector, the mercenary. But he's the guy that he ultimately doesn't like. He doesn't like how he went out and fought and killed for money. He decided that he should atone for that. That psychological crisis sort of split him up a little, but he also decided that these other identities could help him as a hero.

"He made all this money as a mercenary, so he used that money to create Steven Grant, the rich guy who invested that money and made even more money and provided a base of operations and supplied all of the stuff that Moon Knight would use, such as the Moon Copter. Then you needed a guy close to the ground who could keep an eye on crime. And I wondered why nobody had ever thought about a cab driver—he goes all over the city, hears everything, and can mingle with people in a diner—so Jake Lockley was specifically created for that purpose. But he was still Marc Spector."

With his second appearance, Moon Knight gained even more traction. Over the next couple of years, he guest-starred in issues of *The Defenders*, *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man*, and *Marvel Two-in-One*—though Moench did not write any of them. "I turned [the] team-up stories down," he explained. "I did not want Moon Knight to become part of the 'Merry Marvel Pals and Gals.' The whole point was that he was different from any other superhero that we were doing. … I remember having arguments over that."

Before long, Moon Knight was back in Moench's hands. Needing a backup feature for the full-color Marvel magazine, *The Hulk!*, associate editor Ralph Macchio zeroed in on the character, seeing great untapped potential, and recruited Moench for an ongoing strip. "I found the character very interesting and I thought he could move in the direction of being Marvel's answer to Batman," he said in 2025.

Macchio sought an artist who could help make that vision a reality. After having Gene Colan pencil the first installment, with inks by Tony DeZuniga, and Keith Pollard pencil the second, inked by Frank Giacoia and Mike Esposito, Macchio hired a young, unknown artist whose Neal Adams-influenced style was exactly what he was looking for. That artist was Bill Sienkiewicz—and with the combination of his illustrations and state-of-the-art, full-spectrum coloring by Steve Oliff, Moon Knight was truly on the rise.

On a personal note, I was a regular reader of *The Hulk!* magazine at the time, and those backup stories, spanning issues 11 through 20 (October 1978-April 1980), were my first exposure to Moon Knight—thus planting a seed that would fully blossom 20 years later. (Explanation to come!)

As Moench and Sienkiewicz's collaboration continued, Moon Knight's popularity grew. They also produced a black-and-white MK story published as the lead feature in *Marvel Preview* #21 (Spring 1980). Just a few months later, they moved Moon Knight out of *The Hulk!* and into his own comic book. It was in *Moon Knight* #1 (November 1980) that, after five years of bouncing around the Marvel Universe, Marc Spector was finally given a full origin.

With Denny O'Neil now providing editorial oversight, Moench and Sienkiewicz revealed that while on a mission in Egypt during his mercenary days, Marc Spector fell out with his commander, the brutal Raoul Bushman. Left for dead by Bushman, Spector was seemingly revived by the Egyptian moon god Khonshu, for whom he would now act as an avatar and mete out vengeance on evildoers. (Moench was always careful about keeping Spector's connection to Khonshu ambiguous, never establishing definitively whether it was real or imagined, or if he was ever actually resurrected from the dead.).

For the next three years, Moench and Sienkiewicz expanded Moon Knight's world, further developing MK and his identities along with Marlene, Frenchie, and the rest of the regular cast. They also introduced unique antagonists, including the ebon-clad art thief Midnight Man, the telepathic nightmare inducer Morpheus, the crossbow-wielding vigilante Stained Glass Scarlet, the armored African mercenary and warlord Arsenal, and of course, Bushman. They even reunited Moon Knight with the Werewolf.

Through it all, readers got to see the remarkable artistic growth of Sienkiewicz, whose style evolved from that of Neal Adams into something all his own, incorporating abstract and expressionist influences. With issue 30 (April 1983), Sienkiewicz left the series to expand his creative horizons. Moench departed with issue 33 (September 1983), after which he moved over to DC Comics—to write Batman.

And Moon Knight was never quite the same.

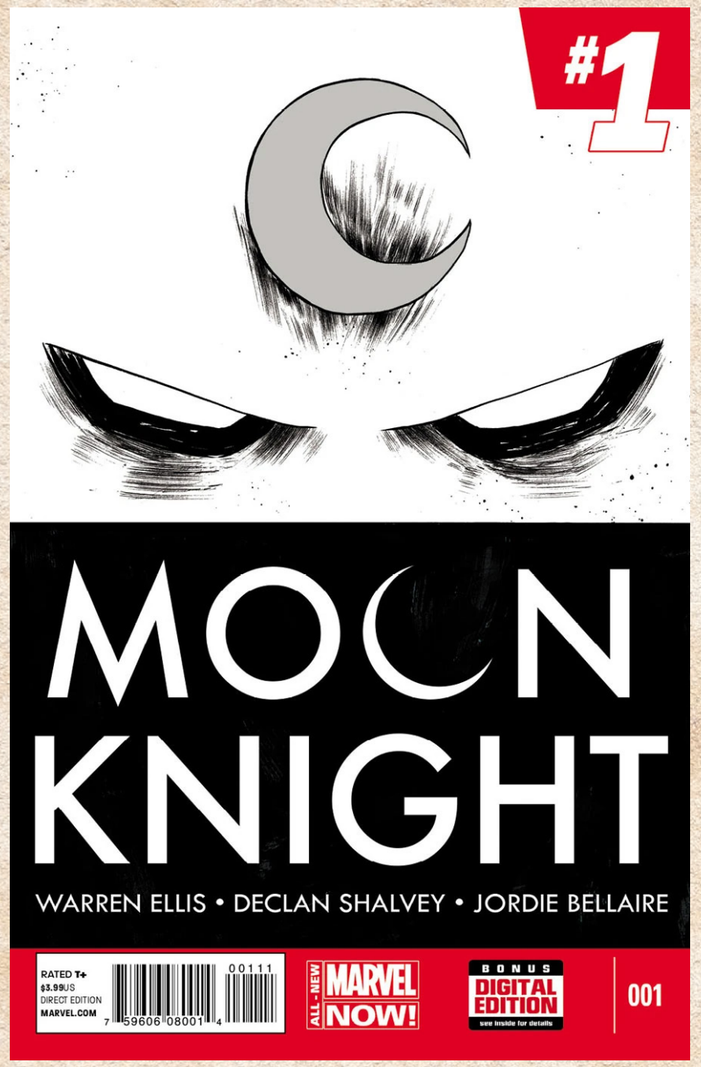
The series ended with issue 38 (July 1984), the conclusion of a two-parter written by Alan Zelenetz, penciled by Bo Hampton, and inked by Armando Gil, that delved deep into Marc

TOP LEFT
Vengeance of the Moon Knight #1 (Nov. 2009)

TOP MIDDLE
Moon Knight Vol 5 #1 (Jun. 2006)

TOP RIGHT
Moon Knight Vol 8 #1 (Jun. 2016)

ABOVE
Moon Knight Vol 9 #1 (Sept. 2021)



ABOVE
Moon Knight Vol 7 #1 (May 2014)

TOP RIGHT
The long-awaited rematch with Jack Russell, the Werewolf by Night. Black -and -white art by Bill Sienkiewicz

Spector's Jewish roots. Moench had originally named Spector after an acquaintance of his, unaware at first that the man was Jewish. "It was all an accident," he once said in an interview. "I didn't say, 'I'm going to sit down and create a Jewish character.'"

In the years that followed, Moon Knight would get his own series again, several times, produced by a succession of talented writers and artists that included Zelenetz, Chris Warner, Chuck Dixon, Sal Velluto, J.M. DeMatteis, Ron Garney, Terry Kavanagh, and Ste-

phen Platt, each of whom delivered their own takes on the character—which meant numerous changes. Spector's connection to Khonshu was now depicted as literal. Moon Knight crossed paths with other superheroes more frequently, even joining the West Coast Avengers for a time. The look, the feel, the tone, and the overall approach to the character and his status quo had drifted away from what they had once been. He was even killed in *Marc Spector: Moon Knight* #60 (March 1994), the last issue of his third series.

After I joined Marvel's editorial staff in 1992, I would hear various colleagues talking about how much they loved the character and wanted to get their hands on him and do him right. Fortunately, one of those colleagues was my fellow editor and dear friend Mark Bernardo, who managed to turn that desire into action.

Bernardo oversaw the creation of a 1998 four-issue limited series that resurrected Moon Knight, both in-story and as an ongoing property. Picking up on Marc Spector's death, it brought him back to life in a way that left the exact details open to interpretation, by both the characters and the readers. Writing Moon Knight's revival was none other than Doug Moench, whom Bernardo brought back, intending to restore Moon Knight to his best version. Working with artist Tommy Lee Edwards, Moench immediately restored the status quo of the original Moon Knight series, including MK's four identities and his loving, supportive relationship with Marlene.

It was at this point that my direct connection to Moon Knight took root. Impressed with the Bernardo-edited limited series, I recruited Moench to produce a follow-up. I paired him with Mark Texeira, a popular artist whose style I felt was reminiscent of Sienkiewicz's without being a carbon copy. Published in late 1998/early 1999, it turned out to be one of the very last things I edited before I left Marvel. Working on that limited series, I got to see firsthand how Moench approaches Moon Knight and what he feels makes the character unique, first and foremost, the multiple identities, which most of his successors had either ditched or interpreted to be a form of insanity. Moench has made it very clear that as far as he's concerned, Moon Knight may skirt the edge of insanity, but never crosses into it.

Since that return, other notable writers and artists—including Charlie Huston, David Finch, Gregg Hurwitz, Jerome Opeña, Brian Michael Bendis, Alex Maleev, Warren Ellis, Declan Shalvey, Brian Wood, Greg Smallwood, and Jed MacKay, to name just a few—have come along to put their unique spins on Moon Knight. Of course, there was also a 2022 Disney+ television series that was very much its own thing.

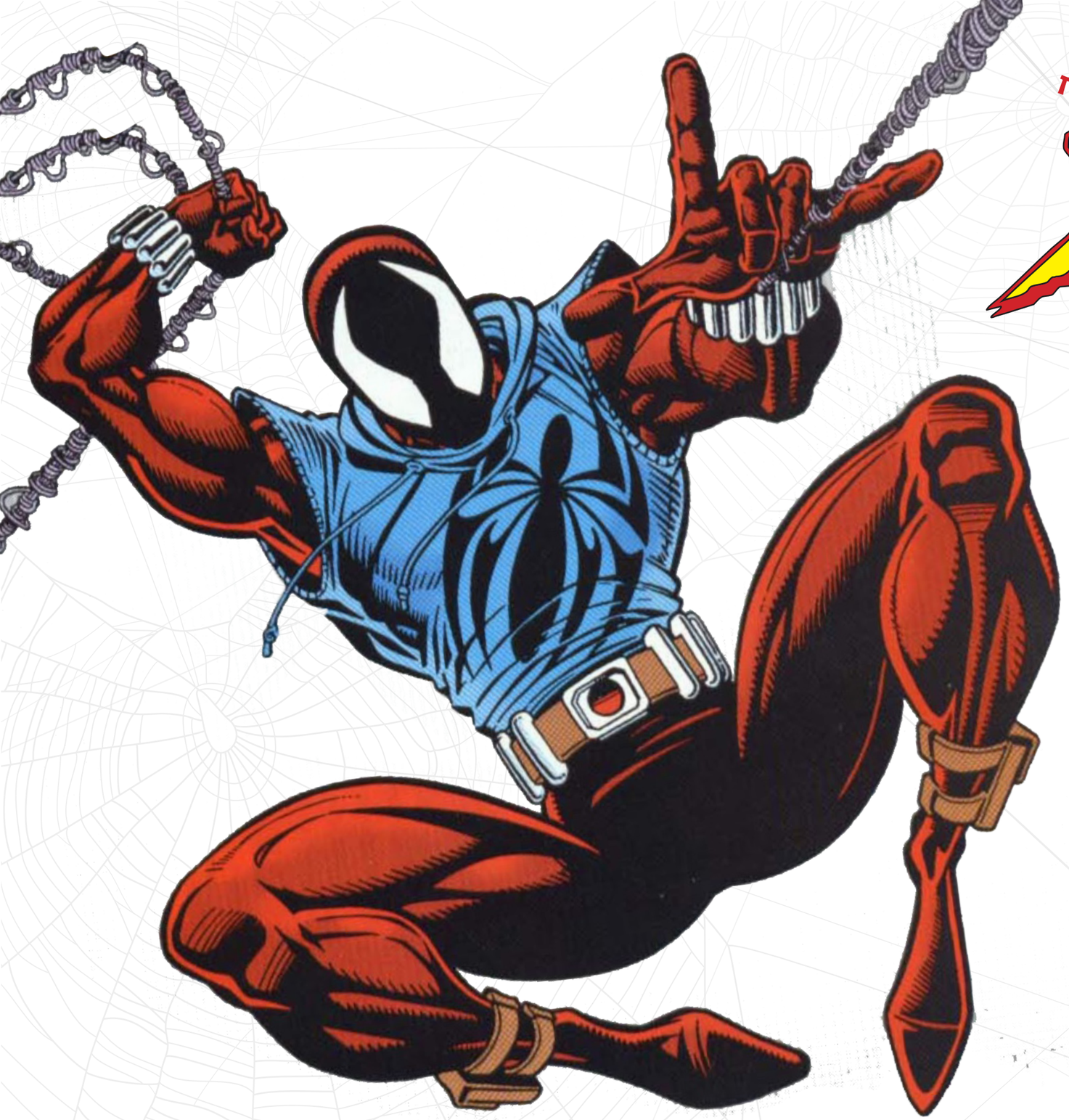
It's safe to say that over the last 50 years, Moon Knight has come a long way—and his complicated, often convoluted journey will continue for many years to come, filled with more evolutions, reinterpretations, and reinventions.

So who's to say which version is the "right" one?
Me! Now get off my lawn!

Happy 50th, Moonie. Proud to be part of your history.

Glenn Greenberg is an award-winning editor, journalist, author, and pop-culture historian. As an editor and writer at Marvel, Glenn worked on Spider-Man, the Hulk, the Silver Surfer, Thor, Iron Man, Moon Knight, Star-Lord, Star Trek, and Dracula—and even DC's flagship character, in the acclaimed crossover graphic novel, *The Incredible Hulk vs. Superman*. Since 2020, he has authored more than a dozen special nonfiction publications devoted to a variety of pop-culture topics, including Star Trek, the Beatles, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Stan Lee, Superman, Spider-Man, Dracula, and Batman. Glenn has also written two Star Trek novellas, as well as an X-Files novella that was nominated for a Scribe Award for Best Short Fiction by the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers.

ABOVE
Variant cover art by Elizabeth Torque for *Moon Knight* Vol 9 #30 (Feb. 2024)



THE SPIDER-MAN

CLONE TURNS 50

BEN REILLY AND ME– AND YOU!

By DANNY FINGEROTH

"I CAME UP WITH THE NAMES BEN REILLY, SCARLET SPIDER, AND SPIDERCIDE. THE IDEA FOR THE LOOK OF THE SCARLET SPIDER'S HOODIE COSTUME WAS ALSO MINE."

Although most fans associate Marvel's Spider-Man "Clone Saga" with the 1990s, it really began in 1975, fifty years ago.

Let's start in 1994 and go backwards—and forwards—from there.

The early '90s were the era of The Big Story. In Marvel Comics's editorial Spider-Man Department, we had already done "Maximum Carnage" and were looking for something to wow the readers even more. Maybe our department could even leave our friendly rivals in the X-Men office looking over their shoulders. That's where the Spider-Man "Clone Saga" comes in. (And yes, I was the editor who greenlit that storyline. I also came up with the names Ben Reilly, Scarlet Spider, and Spidercide. The idea for the look of the Scarlet Spider's hoodie costume was also mine. Take THAT, Wikipedia!)

But the whole story—in both senses—does indeed REALLY start in 1975.

That year, clones were in the air in real science news, movies, and comics. And before that, doubles, doppelgangers, and evil twins—proto-clones—were mainstays of popular fiction. Those situations all ask the same eternal questions: Who am I? What am I? Why am I here? Am I just who I look like, or is there some inner me—some "soul"—that makes me distinctly *me*? Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities,* Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper,* and Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors* all ask those questions. So do Patty Duke's identical cousin, Jerry Lewis's Nutty Professor, and on and on.

In comics, we'd had endless tales of Superman's robot doubles, Superman Red and Superman Blue, Bizarro, the Captain America of the 1950s—infinite versions of the iconic characters that played off the idea of who an individual "really" is.

Back to Spider-Man: Two years earlier in 1973 Gerry Conway, Gil Kane, and John Romita, Sr. (and maybe Stan Lee) had killed off Spider-Man's girlfriend, Gwen

TOP
Web of Spider-Man #117
Peter Parker faces off with his clone on the cover. (Oct. 1994)

ABOVE
Amazing Spider-Man #149
Spider-Man faces off with his clone for the very first time. (Oct. 1975)

Stacy. This move was highly controversial, but did pave the way for Peter and Mary Jane Watson to eventually marry (and then not be married...).

But readers missed Gwen. In an attempt to return her to continuity in some way, it was decided to have a clone of the character enter the scene, as well as, almost as an afterthought, a clone of Peter/Spidey. (Did I mention clones were in the media a lot in those days?) So, in a story whose main goal was to return Gwen as a clone, a clone of Peter Parker/Spider-Man was also created by Miles Warren, Peter and Gwen's teacher, who had a crush on Gwen! (Ewww!) Warren also turned out to be the villain called The Jackal.

That storyline led to the climactic battle of Spidey vs. the Clone (who had no name at that point) in Shea Stadium, which ended with one of them dead in an explosion. In a major act of carelessness for a science major, the victorious—and living—spider-person assumed he was the real deal because *he felt really strongly* that he was. He then did what anyone would do in such a situation—he dumped his dead double down a factory smokestack to be cremated in the bowels of that building's furnace.

Yes, in real life, you could easily tell who was the authentic one via dental records or any kind of scars, not to mention memories. Those are just the kinds of things that are usually sidestepped in clone stories, conventions of the clone genre.

So the creators of the 1975 story inadvertently left open the possibility that the Spidey who emerged alive from that battle was actually the cloned Spidey, which would have left poor Peter Parker as a charred skeleton lost inside an industrial furnace.

Cut to the 1990s. 1994, to be exact. Comics, including "Spider-titles," were coming off some record-breaking sales years. I was Group Editor of the Spider-Man line, supervising seventeen or so Spidey-related titles every month—a veritable company within a company, just like the offices of the X-Men, Avengers, and other popular lines. Part of what was driving those sales, or so we in Marvel editorial believed, were multipart crossover storylines that made major changes in the status quo of popular characters. Besides the idea that we'd increase sales, major changes—what some called "stunt plotting"—became an in-house competition. What editorial office could produce the craziest-seeming storyline that would juice sales? From that kind of thinking came "Maximum Carnage" and "Onslaught," among others. (Over at DC Comics, they seemed to be doing the same kind of thing with the "The Death of Superman" and "Batman: Knightfall" storylines.)

Besides the competitive aspect, there was also a bunch of stress. Sales were declining industrywide from the unheard-of peaks of a year or two earlier. In the Spider-office, we had to do what we could to keep Spidey sales strong, especially with the upstarts at Image Comics recruiting popular creators and setting all sorts of sales records themselves.

So the various editorial groups, including the Spider-Man group, would have big meetings with editors, artists, and writers attending. At one of our "Spider-Summits," *Web of Spider-Man* writer Terry Kavanagh and his partner-in-crime, *Spider-Man* (no adjective) writer Howard Mackie, pitched the idea that the Spider-Man who survived back at the 1975 Shea Stadium battle was actually the Clone and that the cremated one was the real Spider-Man, Peter Parker.

Maybe you're seeing a problem with the mechanics of this story already.

Of course, as R. Crumb famously said about comics, "It's just lines on paper, folks." The choreography of having the deceased Spidey (whoever he was) survive was reasonably easy to figure out. This story COULD be done.

To be honest, I wasn't wild about the storyline. I said "No."

Terry and Howard, and *Amazing Spider-Man* writer J.M. DeMatteis—who they had convinced of the potential of the storyline—held firm. Not just that, they all displayed something rarer than the proverbial hen's tooth: ENTHUSIASM.

All the writers and artists were psyched to do this story. It wasn't just another day at the office for them. They were jazzed about it. That's an attitude no amount of money can buy. Editors live for that kind of excitement.

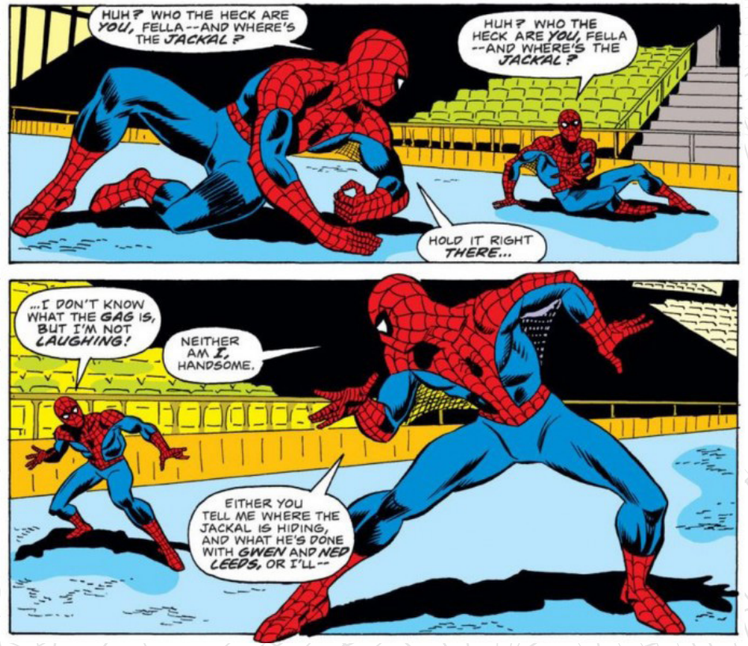
Plus, they outnumbered me.

So I said, okay, let's do it. But, I continued, let's face it, even if I approve it, there's no way Editor in Chief Tom DeFalco would go for it.

I was right. When I told Tom the idea back at the office, he shot it down, noting, among other objections, that if the person we believed to be Peter was really the double, that would mean Mary Jane had been intimate with a clone all these years.

Upon hearing of Tom's decision, the creators suggested that we invite him to the next day's creative meetings to try to change his mind. So I did, and he came, ready to be the bad guy. Once there, however, he also sensed the enthusiasm in the room. He then supported my decision to greenlight the storyline. Since the writer's slot on *Spectacular Spider-Man* was vacant, it was suggested Tom would write the series, so we'd be sure to get it right. Since Tom is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on Spider-Man—and loves the character dearly—he gladly took on the *Spectacular* scribe role.

Sidebar here: While I didn't love the idea, for all the reasons you'd imagine, I felt (and still feel) that the enthusiasm in the room was worth the risk the storyline would entail. Enthusiastic creators lead to enthusiastic retailers and enthusiastic readers. After all, that was our job: To keep readers on the edges of their seats, even if it meant, occasionally, they would be shocked and angry at the creators. "What will those idiots do next?!" is what we wanted our readers to wonder so they'd buy the next issue, but not so much that they'd ditch the titles. That's a delicate balance to maintain, but rewarding creatively and sales-wise if done right.



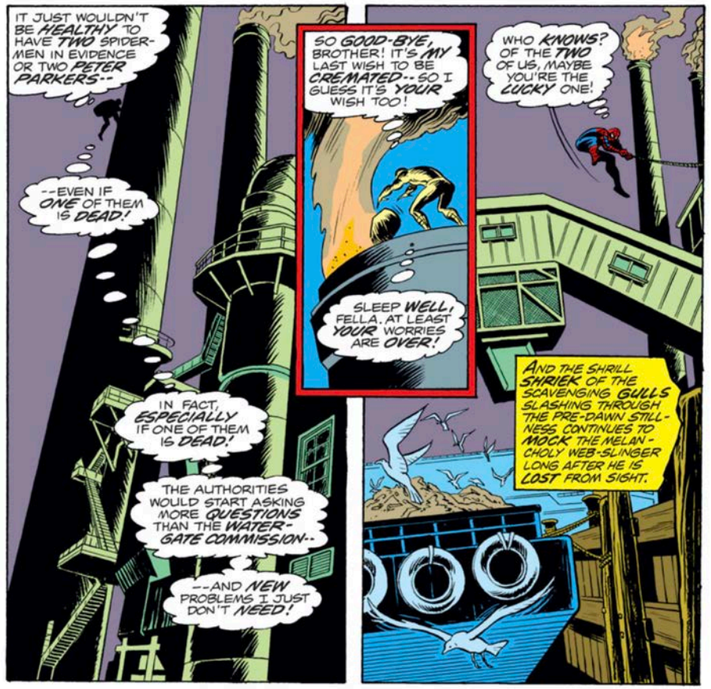
ABOVE
The nameless clone's ill-fated, first encounter with Peter Parker. He'd wait almost 20 years to get his name, Ben Reilly.
Amazing Spider-Man #149 (Oct. 1975)

The Clone Saga, as you may have heard, was controversial from the get-go. Of course, Tom and I each had plans for how we'd weasel out of the character switch if we had to.

Interestingly, despite or perhaps because of all the controversy, sales on the Spider-Man titles started going dramatically *up,* when the industry trend was the opposite. Readers fervently wanted to know what happened next.

Apparently, the "Clone Saga," Ben Reilly, and the new supporting cast struck a chord with the comics-reading public. Not everyone loved the storyline, but no one could ignore it, either. Before we knew it, we were, in addition to the regular monthly Spider-titles, putting out Clone-related one-shots, spinoffs, limited series, and specials. Readers were Clone crazy!

Why? I'd say it was because the creative teams, fueled with that enthusiasm I mentioned above, made the saga of Ben Reilly *compelling.* Everybody who's ever felt like



they don't fit or don't belong, or like they've ever been an exile or outcast, related to the story of this guy trying to re-establish a life and discover his true self, all while trying to do the right thing as a friend, colleague, and superhero.

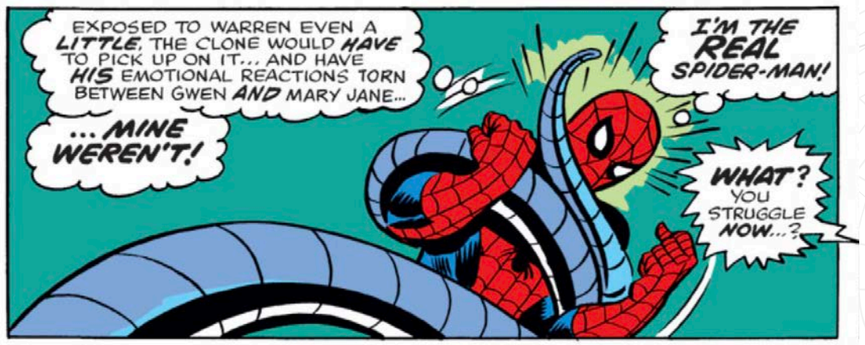
Sound familiar? It should. Because, clone or not, Peter or Ben, the guy's strength of character, his instinct that "With great power, there must also come great responsibility," manifested itself every time out.

Whoever Ben Reilly was or would turn out to be, what he was for sure was someone who shared Peter Parker's sense of duty and mission. The essence of the Clone spinoffs and limited series—starting with *The Lost Years* (by J.M. DeMatteis, John Romita, Jr., and Klaus Janson)—is the essence of who Spider-Man is. Ben and May Parker's idealistic influence, combined with Peter/Ben's innate sense of decency, were always the stuff that superheroes are made of, whether Spider-Man Clone or original.

Fans responded to the genuineness of both Peter and Ben. The creators' enthusiasm and passion radiated off the pages and into the readers' hearts. Love or hate the "Clone Saga," people wanted to know what would happen next, how it would all turn out.

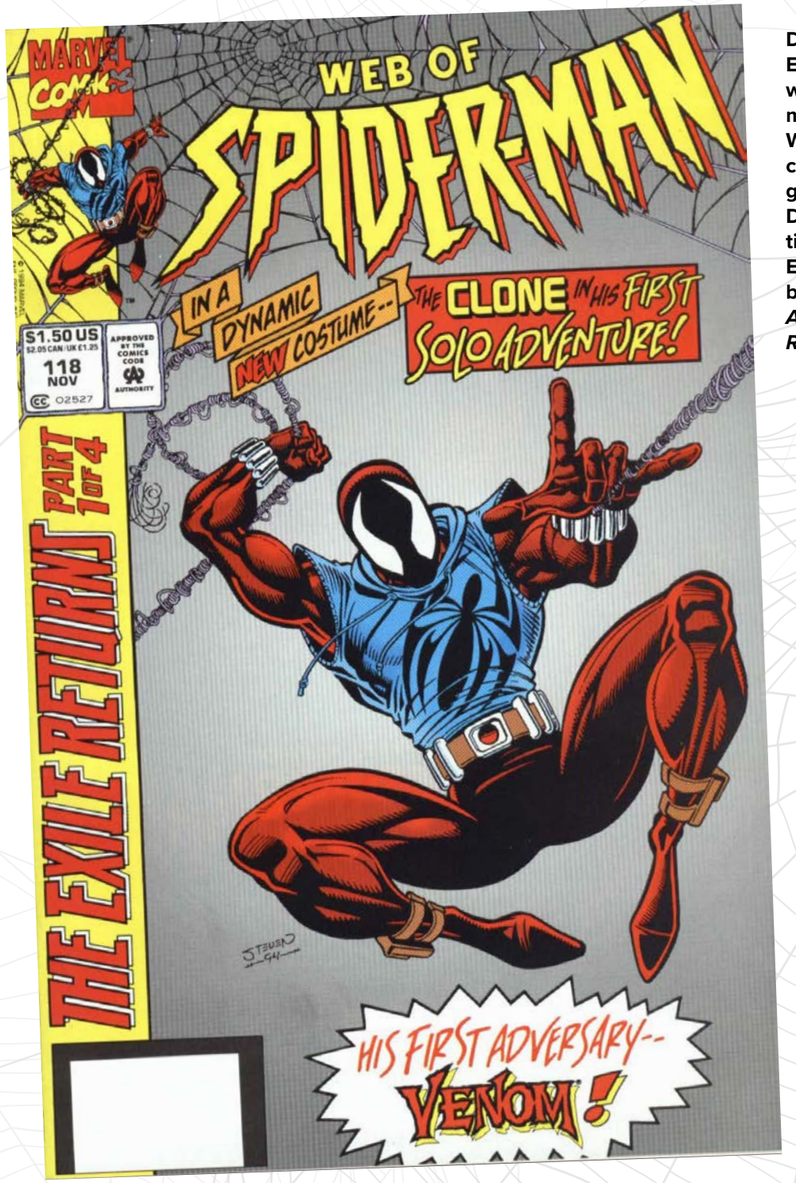
In the years since the "Clone Saga" formally ended in 1996, there have been numerous stories that utilize the characters and concepts that were key to the storyline. Ben Reilly himself has even returned! There have been many reprintings for those who missed them the first time around. The Clone storyline has become "just" one more memorable storyline in comics' long history. Ben Reilly is as much a part of Spider-Man lore as Doc Ock, Venom, and the Vulture.

And it all started with an innocent attempt, half a century ago, to insert some topical science into a superhero comic book. Happy anniversary, Ben Reilly. It's been quite a ride!



ABOVE
Spider-Man disposing of the evidence, Ben's body. Odd decision. Also from *Amazing Spider-Man* #149 (Oct. 1975)

RIGHT
With very little reliable evidence, Peter decides he must be the real Spidey.



RIGHT
The Scarlet Spider gets his own costume as designed by artist Tom Lyle. *Web of Spider-Man* #118 (Nov. 1994)

Danny Fingeroth was the longtime Group Editor of Marvel's Spider-Man titles and the writer of *Deadly Foes of Spider-Man*, among many other comics. Danny is the Chair of Will Eisner Week, the annual, worldwide celebration of the pioneering comics figure, graphic novel literacy, and free speech. Danny is a winner of Comic-Con International's Inkpot Award and has served as an Eisner Awards Judge. His nonfiction prose books include 2019's *A Marvelous Life: The Amazing Story of Stan Lee* and 2023's *Jack Ruby: The Many Faces of Oswald's Assassin*.

DYING TO BE READ:

TALES FROM THE CRYPT'S

75-YEAR REIGN OF TERROR

BY GRANT GEISSMAN

Tales from the Crypt is one of the most recognizable comic book titles in the horror genre, primarily because of the television show of the same name that ran for 93 episodes on HBO from June 10, 1989, to July 19, 1996. But only comics fans know that *Tales from the Crypt* was originally a comic book published by EC Comics from 1950 to early 1955.

Prior to 1950, when EC launched what they called their "New Trend," EC's comics were knock-offs of other comic book genres that they thought might sell well, including western, crime, love, and even western love. But EC publisher Bill Gaines's right-hand man, artist/writer Al Feldstein, had ambitious plans for the company. He started pushing Gaines to start their own comic-book trend instead of just following the leader.

Gaines and Feldstein had talked about the old radio dramas they had loved as kids, shows like *Inner Sanctum* and *The Witch's Tale*. Both shows featured hosts who introduced the tales—one by "Raymond," a spookily sardonic punster, and the other by "Old Nancy," a cackling witch. Feldstein recalled that, as a kid, he used to climb down the stairs to sneak a listen and was happily terrified by them. Gaines had similar recollections. Feldstein kept pushing Gaines to do horror comics inspired by those old radio shows, and Gaines finally said, "Okay, we'll try it."

TOP
House ad for *Crime Patrol* (1949) Cover art by Johnny Craig

ABOVE
William Gaines and Al Feldstien (1954) in the EC Comics offices.

So, with the December 1949–January 1950 issues of *Crime Patrol* (No. 15) and *War Against Crime!* (No. 10), EC introduced what was billed on the covers as "an Illustrated Terror-Tale from the Crypt of Terror!" and "an Illustrated Terror-Tale from the Vault of Horror!" Feldstein wrote and illustrated both stories.

The story from the Crypt of Terror was hosted by The Crypt-Keeper (and the story from the Vault of Horror was hosted by The Vault-Keeper). The covers of both comic books were done by Johnny Craig, who had done all of the previous covers for both titles.

The Crypt-Keeper is now quite a recognizable character, also due to the HBO series. However, Feldstein said to this writer in 1996 that "it was not my idea of the Crypt Keeper that he was a cackling, screaming dummy," as depicted in the HBO show. Of the initial version of the character, Feldstein said, "I didn't know exactly what I was doing with this guy, I just wanted to have him scary and eerie, so I had his hair hanging all over his face like Al Capp's Shmoo, and that was the beginning."

Gaines liked the experiment well enough, because the next issues of both books (*Crime Patrol* No. 16 and *War Against Crime!* No. 11, both cover-dated February–March 1950) contained further installments. Craig again contributed the cover art for both books.

Gaines and Feldstein liked doing these stories, and it did seem like they were on to something. In the 1940s and 1950s, wholesalers employed "road men," guys who checked the newsstands to see how things were selling. When they sent back the "ten-day check-ups" indicating strong sales for the experimental issues of *Crime Patrol* and *War Against Crime!,* Gaines and Feldstein ushered in the "New Trend" at EC.

Gaines and Feldstein went all in with the horror concept, bringing artist/writer Johnny Craig along. With the 17th issue, they changed *Crime Patrol* to *The Crypt of Terror*, and with the 12th issue, they changed *War Against Crime!* to *The Vault of Horror.* Both comics were cover-dated April–May 1950. A month later, they changed a western title, *Gunfighter,* to *The Haunt of Fear.* And three issues later, they changed the title of *The Crypt of Terror* to *Tales from the Crypt* after "the wholesalers made some noise," according to Gaines. All three books continued the numbering from the previous titles, Gaines's usual ploy to avoid paying the fee for a second-class mailing permit on a new title.

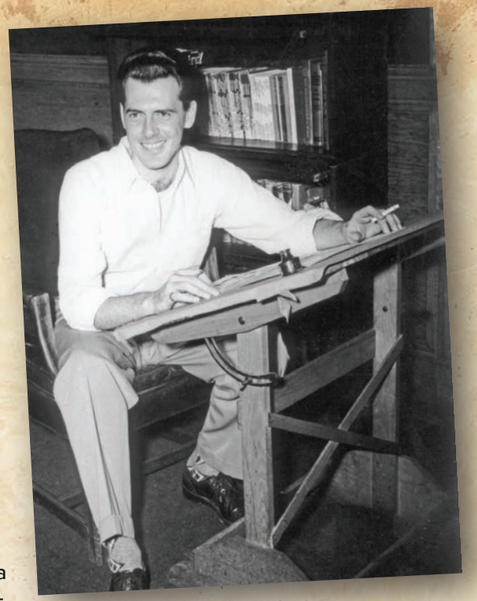
With the second issue of *The Haunt of Fear* (No. 16, July–August 1950), Gaines and Feldstein added a third horror host, The Old Witch, and the unholy trio of hosts was complete. The Three GhouLunatics—as the three horror hosts came to be called—would appear at the beginning and end of each story and offer up punny, smart-alecky commentary. EC's new horror comics were an instant hit with the readers, bringing some much-needed revenue into the company.

"GAINES WOULD STAY UP HALF THE NIGHT READING PULPS AND COLLECTIONS OF HORROR AND SCIENCE-FICTION STORIES. HE SCRIBBLED PLOT IDEAS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER HE CALLED "SPRINGBOARDS,"..."

Feldstein wrote (and drew) all of his earliest EC horror stories on his own, and the rest of the stories in the early horror comics came from outside scriptwriters like Gardner Fox and Ivan Klapper. Within a very short time, Gaines started bringing in snippets of ideas to be fleshed out into complete stories. At the time, the perpetually chubby Gaines was taking a prescription appetite suppressant that contained Dexedrine, which affected his sleep. Gaines would stay up half the night reading pulps and collections of horror and science-fiction stories. He scribbled plot ideas on scraps of paper he called "springboards," and brought them to Feldstein the next morning. Gaines also worked with Johnny Craig on stories in a similar fashion.

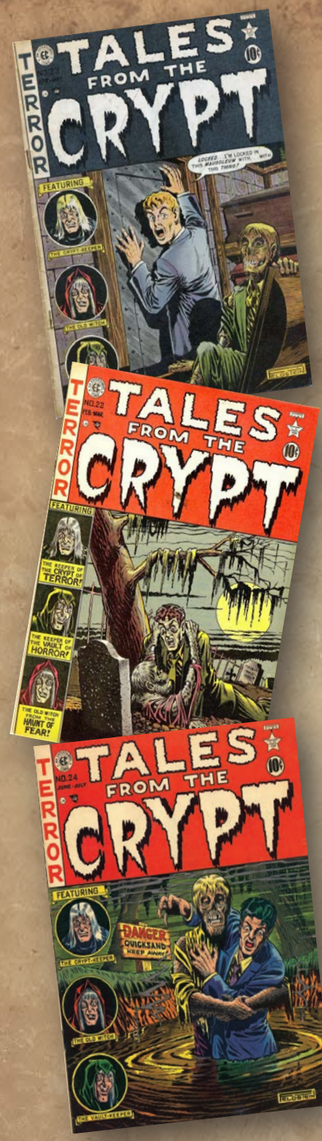
The horror stories Feldstein and Gaines came up with were all designed to have twist endings, with the protagonist virtually always exacting a well-deserved measure of poetic justice against the antagonist, even if the protagonist had to somehow return as one of the walking dead to exact his revenge. The EC horror stories were gory, and many went way over the top. Gaines said, "The old EC stories were largely sick humor. Almost every one of those horror stories was tongue-in-cheek. That stuff was strictly fantasy, and in the field of fantasy, I'll go as sick as you want. But if I see real blood, I'll faint."

After the first four issues of *Crypt*, which had covers by Johnny Craig, Feldstein took over the cover duties for the next several issues, creating some of the most iconic early covers for the series. His cover to issue No. 22 (February–March 1951) perfectly sets the horror tone, with a reanimated corpse pulling his killer into the grave, with a moonlit



TOP
Johnny Craig at his drawing table.

LEFT
EC's three "horror hosts" or "GhouLunatics."



TOP
Tales from the Crypt #23
(Apr. 1951)
Cover art by Al Feldstein

MIDDLE
Tales from the Crypt #22
(Feb. 1951)
Cover art by Al Feldstein

BOTTOM
Tales from the Crypt #24
(June 1951)
Cover art by Al Feldstein

RIGHT
The unpublished
cover art for issue #38

graveyard and kudzu-covered tree branches. Feldstein's cover to No. 23 (April–May 1951) is another classic, with the "I'm locked in the mausoleum with . . . with this thing!" dialog balloon, and EC's signature circular "Featuring" cameos with Feldstein's versions of the Crypt-Keeper, the Old Witch, and the Vault-Keeper.

The earliest issues of *Tales from the Crypt* contained only one story hosted by the Crypt-Keeper, but after about six issues they generally settled in to the formula of having two stories hosted by the Crypt-Keeper (initially done by Feldstein, and later by Jack Davis) and one story each hosted by the Old Witch (usually drawn by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels) and the Vault-Keeper (various artists, including Johnny Craig and Joe Orlando).

Jack Davis soon became the signature artist to depict the Crypt-Keeper, and if another artist subsequently illustrated a story that was told by the Crypt-Keeper, they would paste in a Jack Davis image to keep the character on-model and on-brand. Davis had a scratchy, almost cartoony style that proved to be a perfect foil to the increasingly gruesome EC horror stories.

Al Feldstein's cover of issue No. 24 (June–July 1951) is probably his most iconic, the "Danger/Quicksand/Keep Away!" cover with the corpse exacting its vengeance by dragging an evildoer into a quicksand pit. This issue features Johnny Craig's final story for the series, "Midnight Snack!," which he both wrote and illustrated (which was his usual practice).

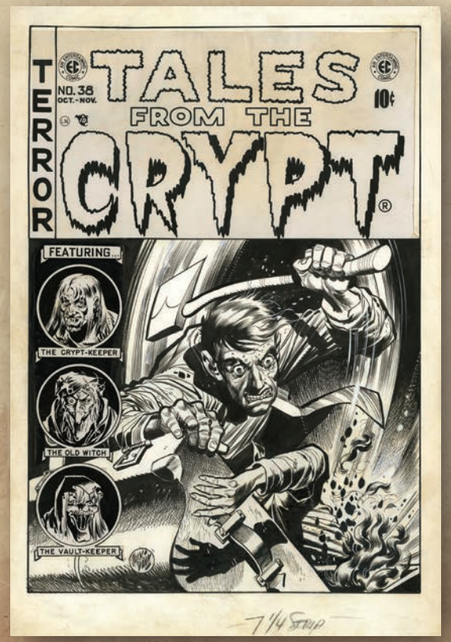
Starting with issue No. 29 (April–May 1952), every cover was illustrated by Jack Davis. This continuity, paired with Davis's signature style, gave a consistently coherent look to the title that it might have lacked previously. In an interview published in *The Comics Journal*, Davis said, "As a kid, I loved ghost stories. I loved *Frankenstein*; that scared the hell out of me, and I love that. So, I learned to draw it. It comes out that way: gruesome. I've never been one to draw romantic things, or sweet or nice things. I've always drawn grotesque things."

Davis's *Crypt* covers are uniformly good, but there are some standouts. The "stampeding elephant" cover on No. 32 (October–November 1952) employs one of EC's go-to cover devices: depicting a gruesome event that is *about* to happen, leaving it to the reader to imagine the horrific, actual event. Of course, EC's artists would just as often depict gruesome, horrific events actually happening, which the young readers loved, but which stretched the boundaries of what might be called "good taste"!

EC's in-house colorist was the brilliantly talented Marie Severin. If she thought that EC's editors had gone too far, instead of coloring all the gore in a "traditional" way, she would color the panels in question in a single color, usually yellow or blue, to tone down the gore. Bill Gaines called her "the conscience of EC," and said that "Marie was about the only one we'd allow to trample on our creative efforts."

The "Wax Museum/Frankenstein" cover to *Tales from the Crypt* No. 34 (February–March 1953) is Jack Davis's magnum opus for the title, with ample use of his signature cross-hatched style, amplified by Marie Severin's stunning use of color. This issue is also the first in the series to feature an authorized adaptation of a Ray Bradbury story, "There Was an Old Woman!," adapted by Al Feldstein and illustrated by Graham Ingels.

Trolling for stories, Gaines and Feldstein had used several of Bradbury's tales as inspi-



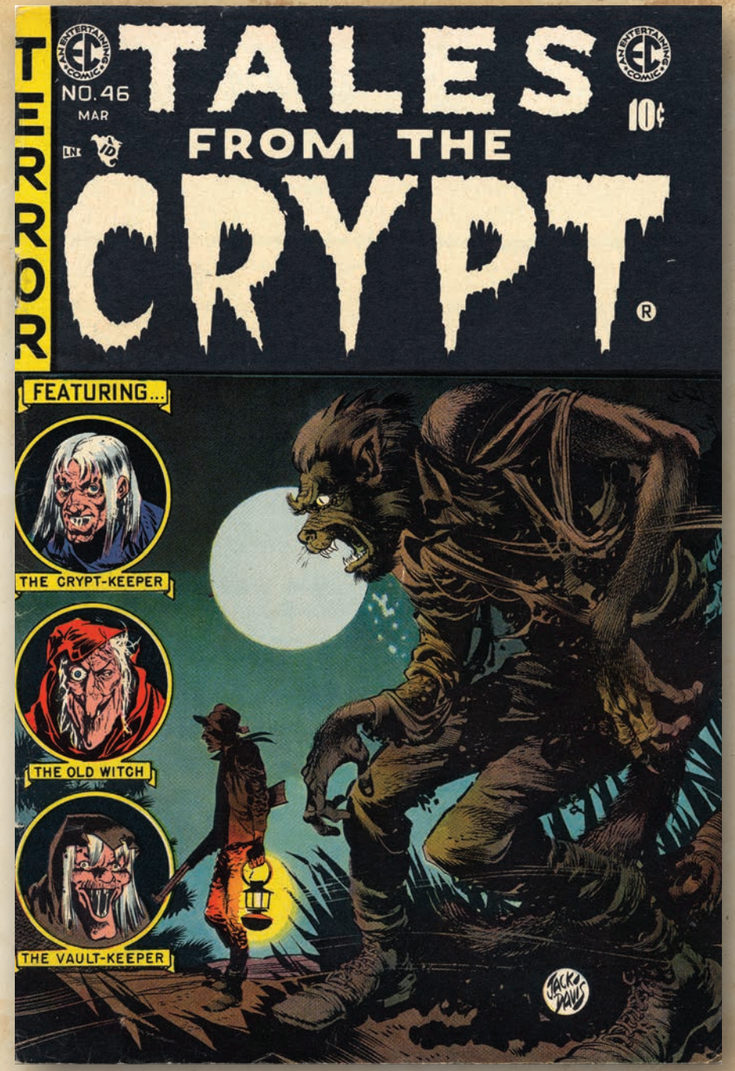
"ATTACKS ON COMIC BOOKS IN THE MEDIA, WHICH HAD EXISTED ALMOST AS LONG AS THE COMIC-BOOK FORMAT, HAD BEEN INCREASING IN INTENSITY FOR MANY YEARS ..."

ration, and Bradbury finally caught wind of it. Instead of threatening legal action, he asked for a $25 usage payment for each story, and suggested that a number of his stories might be suitable for adaptation. Gaines and Feldstein were thrilled at the prospect. Feldstein said, "This became the love of my life, adapting Ray Bradbury into comics. That was where I think my writing really started to improve, because I was immersed in his writing."

Davis's cover to No. 38 (October–November 1953) was self-censored by EC before publication, due to the increasing outcry over horror comics. The original version had appeared in a couple of EC house ads and showed bits of hacked-off flesh flying out of the coffin.

Attacks on comic books in the media, which had existed almost as long as the comic-book format, had been increasing in intensity for many years, and by the early part of 1954, these attacks had reached a boiling point. Getting the most publicity was Dr. Fredric Wertham, a psychiatrist whose 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent* had whipped the nation's guardians of morality to a frenzy. The book was supposedly based on actual case histories of children who had been adversely affected by comic books, but Wertham worked only with extremely disturbed children. He never talked to any normal, well-adjusted children about comics. His theories basically boiled down to this: because juvenile delinquents read comic books, comic books cause juvenile delinquency. Gaines's friend William Woolfolk had previously told him, "If you keep your horror comics going, you're going to bring down the whole industry. I hate censorship, but even I get a little uneasy when I read a comic in which a man eats the corpse of his fiancée." Gaines couldn't agree. EC's horror stories were all just tongue-in-cheek, harmless, cheap thrills. Gaines didn't count on the tenor of the times, though.

All of this publicity led to a Senate Subcommittee investigation, held in New York on April 21 and 22, 1954, regarding the alleged link between comic books and juvenile delinquency. Gaines asked to appear before the Subcommittee to defend his comics. His prepared statement to the Subcommittee (writ



ABOVE
Tales from the Crypt #46
(Feb. 1955)
Cover art by Jack Davis

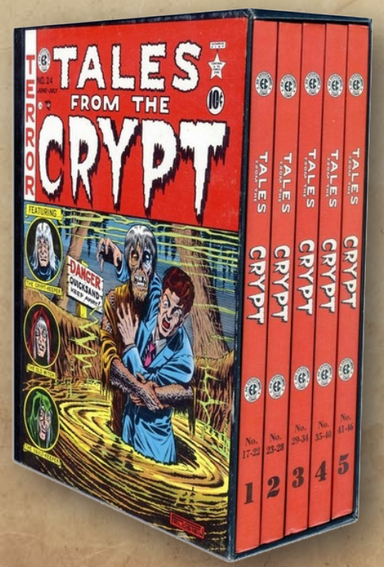
ten by Gaines and his business manager, Lyle Stuart) was brilliant, but as a result of the Subcommittee's subsequent intense questioning, Gaines inadvertently became the personification of the irresponsible horror comic publisher.

Despite all the bad press, EC's horror and crime comics were still profitable, and they had been planning to launch a fourth horror comic, called *The Crypt of Terror*, reviving what had been the original title of *Tales from the Crypt*. Bowing to public pressure, though, on September 14, 1954—five months after the Senate Subcommittee hearings—Gaines held a press conference to announce that he was dropping his horror and crime comics. The material for the first issue of *The Crypt of Terror* was already completed when Gaines pulled the plug, and it later appeared as the final issue of *Tales from the Crypt* (No. 46, February–March 1955).

The comics industry self-established the Comics Code on October 26, 1954, and comics without the Code seal would simply not get onto the newsstands. Forced to "clean up" his comics or go out of business, Gaines dropped most of his titles, and in 1955 began a "New Direction" in comics, emphasizing that these would be a "clean, clean line." These titles ran into retailer and distributor resistance, and much of the print run never even made it onto the newsstands. Many news dealers were sending back anything that had an EC logo on it. A magazine-sized experiment for adult readers, dubbed "Picto-Fiction," also proved to be unsuccessful. By January 1956, the EC comics were dead and buried.

Just like all those shambling corpses returning from the grave, EC and *Tales from the Crypt* never stay buried for long, and *Crypt*'s tales can be found today in several different, high-quality reprint formats. So Happy Anniversary, *Tales from the Crypt*, and here's to at least 75 more years!

Grant Geissman is the four-time Eisner Award–nominated author of several books related to the EC comics and *Mad* magazine, the most recent being *The History of EC Comics* (Taschen). He is also an Emmy-nominated guitarist and composer (for co-writing the theme to *Two and a Half Men*), and his most recent solo album, BLOOZ, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2022.



ABOVE
Al Feldstein painting of William Gaines and the "Three GhouLunatics." (1996) *From Tales from the Crypt: The Official Archives.*

LEFT
Read 'em yourself.
Tales from the Crypt Hardcover The Complete EC Library. (1979)

Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

NOMINATIONS | 2025

Best Short Story

- "Anything Sinister," by Ross Murray, in *NOW* #13 (Fantagraphics)
- "Day 1703," by Chris Ware, in *Smoke Signal* #43 (Desert Island)
- "Pig" by Stacy Gougoulis, in *NOW* #13 (Fantagraphics)
- "Spaces," by Phil Jimenez, in *DC Pride 2024* #1 (DC)
- "Water I've Loved: Moving Day" by Pam Wye, in *MUTHA* magazine
- "You Cannot Live on Bread Alone" by Kayla E., in *NOW* #13 (Fantagraphics)

Best Single Issue/ One-Shot

- *Abortion Pill Zine: A Community Guide to Misoprostol and Mifepristone* by Isabella Rotman, Marnie Galloway, and Sage Coffey (Silver Sprocket)
- *Ice Cream Man* #39: "Decompression in a Wreck, Part One," by W. Maxwell Prince and Martin Morazzo (Image Comics)
- *PeePee PooPoo* #1, by Caroline Cash (Silver Sprocket)
- *Sunflowers*, by Keezy Young (Silver Sprocket)
- *Unwholesome Love*, by Charles Burns (co-published with Partners and Son)
- *The War on Gaza*, by Joe Sacco (Fantagraphics)

Best Continuing Series

- *The Department of Truth*, by James Tynion IV and Martin Simmonds (Image)
- *Detective Comics*, by Ram V, Tom Taylor, Riccardo Federici, Stefano Raffaele, Javier Fernandez, Christian Duce, March, and Mikel Janín (DC)
- *Fantastic Four*, by Ryan North, Carlos Gomez, Ivan Fiorelli, and others (Marvel)
- Santos Sisters, by Greg & Fake, Graham Smith, Dave Landsberger, and Marc Koprinarov (Floating World)
- *Ultimate Spider-Man*, by Jonathan Hickman, Marco Checchetto, and David Messina (Marvel)
- *Wonder Woman*, by Tom King and Daniel Sampere (DC)

Best Limited Series

- *Alan Scott: The Green Lantern*, by Tim Sheridan and Cian Tormey (DC)
- *Animal Pound*, by Tom King and Peter Gross (BOOM! Studios)
- *The Deviant*, by James Tynion IV and Joshua Hixson (Image)
- *Helen of Wyndhorn*, by Tom King & Bilquis Evely (Dark Horse)
- *Rare Flavours*, by Ram V & Filipe Andrade (BOOM! Studios)
- *Zatanna: Bring Down the House*, by Mariko Tamaki and Javier Rodriguez (DC)

Best New Series

- *Absolute Batman*, by Scott Snyder and Nick Dragotta (DC)
- *Absolute Wonder Woman*, by Kelly Thompson and Hayden Sherman (DC)
- *Minor Arcana*, by Jeff Lemire (BOOM! Studios)
- *The Pedestrian*, by Joey Esposito and Sean Von Gorman (Magma Comix)
- *The Power Fantasy*, by Kieron Gillen and Caspar Wijngaard (Image)
- *Uncanny Valley*, by Tony Fleecs and Dave Wachter (BOOM! Studios)

Best Publication for Early Readers

- *Bog Myrtle*, by Sid Sharp (Annick Press)
- *Club Microbe*, by Elise Gravel, translated by Montana Kane (Drawn & Quarterly)
- *Hilda and Twig Hide from the Rain*, by Luke Pearson (Flying Eye)
- *Night Stories*, by Liniers (Astra Books)
- *Poetry Comics*, by Grant Snider (Chronicle Books)

Best Publication for Kids

- *How It All Ends*, by Emma Hunsinger (Greenwillow/ HarperCollins Early Readers)
- *Next Stop*, by Debbie Fong (Random House Graphic/ Random House Children's Books)
- *Plain Jane and the Mermaid*, by Vera Brosgol (First Second/Macmillan)
- *Weirdo*, by Tony Weaver Jr. and Jes & Cin Wibowo (First Second/Macmillan)
- *Young Hag and the Witches' Quest*, by Isabel Greenberg (Abrams Fanfare)

Best Publication for Teens

- *Ash's Cabin*, by Jen Wang (First Second/Macmillan)
- *Big Jim and the White Boy*, by David F. Walker and Marcus Kwame Anderson (Ten Speed Graphic)
- *The Deep Dark,* by Molly Knox Ostertag (Scholastic)
- *The Gulf*, by Adam de Souza (Tundra)
- *Lunar New Year Love Story*, by Gene Luen Yang and LeUyen Pham (First Second/ Macmillan)
- *Out of Left Field*, by Jonah Newman (Andrews McMeel)

Best Humor Publication

- *Adulthood is a Gift!* by Sarah Andersen (Andrews McMeel)
- *Forces of Nature*, by Edward Steed (Drawn & Quarterly)
- *Kids Are Still Weird: And More Observations from Parenthood*, by Jeffrey Brown (NBM)
- *A Pillbug Story,* by Allison Conway (Black Panel Press)
- *Processing: 100 Comics That Got Me Through It*, by Tara Booth (Drawn & Quarterly)

Best Anthology

- *EC Cruel Universe*, edited by Sierra Hahn and Matt Dryer (Oni Press)
- *Godzilla's 70th Anniversary*, edited by Jake Williams and others (IDW)
- *Now: The New Comics Anthology #13*, edited by Eric Reynolds (Fantagraphics)
- *Peep* #1, edited by Sammy Harkham and Steve Weissman (Brain Dead/Kyle Ng)
- *So Buttons* #14: "Life and Death," by Jonathan Baylis and various artists (So Buttons Comix)

Best Reality-Based Work

- *Djuna*, by Jon Macy (Street Noise Books)
- *The Heart That Fed: A Father, a Son, and the Long Shadow of War*, by Carl Sciacchitano (Gallery 13/S&S)
- *The Mythmakers: The Remarkable Fellowship of C. S. Lewis & J. R. R. Tolkien*, by John Hendrix (Abrams Fanfare)
- *The Puerto Rican War: A Graphic History*, by John Vasquez Mejias (Union Square)

- *Suffrage Song: The Haunted History of Gender, Race, and Voting Rights in the U.S.*, by Caitlin Cass (Fantagraphics)

Best Graphic Memoir

- *Degrees of Separation: A Decade North of 60*, by Alison McCreesh (Conundrum)
- *Feeding Ghosts: A Graphic Memoir*, by Tessa Hulls (MCD/Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
- *The Field*, by David Lapp (Conundrum)
- *I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together: A Memoir*, by Maurice Vellekoop (Pantheon)
- *Something, Not Nothing: A Story of Grief and Love*, by Sarah Leavitt (Arsenal Pulp Press)

Best Graphic Album—New

- *Final Cut*, by Charles Burns (Pantheon)
- *Lunar New Year Love Story*, by Gene Luen Yang and LeUyen Pham (First Second/Macmillan)
- *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters Book Two*, by Emil Ferris (Fantagraphics)
- *Sunday*, by Olivier Schrauwen (Fantagraphics)
- *Victory Parade*, by Leela Corman (Pantheon)

Best Graphic Album—Reprint

- *Breaking the Chain: The Guard Dog Story*, by Patrick McDonnell (Abrams ComicArts)
- *Lackadaisy*, vols. 1–2, by Tracy J. Butler (Iron Circus)
- *The One Hand and The Six Fingers*, by Ram V, Dan Watters, Laurence Campbell, and Sumit Kumar (Image)
- *Rescue Party: A Graphic Anthology of COVID Lockdown*, edited by Gabe Fowler (Pantheon)
- *Seattle Samurai: A Cartoonist's Perspective of the Japanese American Experience*, by Kelly Goto and Sam Goto (Chin Music Press)
- *UM Volume One*, by buttercup (Radiator Comics)

Best Adaptation from Another Medium

- *Thomas Piketty's Capital & Ideology: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*, by Clare Alot and Benjamin Adam, translated by Margaret Morrison (Abrams ComicArts)
- *The Hidden Life of Trees*, by Peter Wohlleben, adapted by Benjamin Flao and Fred Bernard (Greystone)
- *The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy, adapted by Manu Larcenet (Abrams)
- *Winnie-the-Pooh*, by A. A. Milne, adapted by Travis Dandro (Drawn & Quarterly)
- *The Worst Journey in the World, Volume 1: Making Our Easting Down*, by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, adapted by Sarah Airriess (Iron Circus)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material

- *All Princesses Die Before Dawn*, by Quentin Zuttion, translated by M. B. Valente (Abrams ComicArts)
- *The Jellyfish*, by Boum, translated by Robin Lang and Helge Dascher (Pow Pow Press)
- *Mothballs*, by Sole Otero; translated by Andrea Rosenberg (Fantagraphics)
- *Return to Eden*, by Paco Roca; translated by Andrea Rosenberg (Fantagraphics)
- *Sunday*, by Olivier Schrauwen (Fantagraphics)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material—Asia

- *Ashita no Joe: Fighting for Tomorrow*, by Asao Takamori and Tetsuya Chiba, translated by Asa Yoneda (Kodansha)
- *Hereditary Triangle*, by Fumiya Hayashi, translated by Alethea and Athena Nibley (Yen Press)
- *Kagurabachi,* vol. 1, by Takeru Hokazono, translated by Camellia Nieh (VIZ Media)
- *Last Quarter*, vol. 1, by Ai Yazawa, translated by Max Greenway (VIZ Media)
- *Search and Destroy* vol. 1, by Atsushi Kaneko, based on the work of Osamu Tezuka; translated by Ben Applegate (Fantagraphics)
- *Tokyo These Days*, vols. 1–3, by Taiyo Matsumoto, translated by Michael Arias (VIZ Media)

Best Archival Collection/Project—Strips

- *All In Line*, by Saul Steinberg (New York Review Books)
- *Frank Johnson, Secret Pioneer of American Comics*, vol. 1, edited by Chris Byrne and Keith Mayerson (Fantagraphics)
- *Stan Mack's Real-Life Funnies: The Collected Conceits, Delusions, and Hijinks of New Yorkers from 1974 to 1995*, by Stan Mack, edited by Gary Groth (Fantagraphics)
- *Thorn: The Complete Proto-BONE Strips 1982–1986, and Other Early Drawings*, by Jeff Smith (Cartoon Books)

Best Archival Collection/Project—Comic Books

- *The Complete Web of Horror*, edited by Dana Marie Andra (Fantagraphics)
- *David Mazzucchelli's Batman Year One Artist's Edition*, by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli, edited by Scott Dunbier (IDW)
- *DC Comics Style Guide* (Standards Manual)
- *The Farewell Song of Marcel Labrume, by Attilio Micheluzzi*, edited by Gary Groth and Conrad Groth, translated by Jamie Richards (Fantagraphics)
- *Wally Wood from Witzend: Complete Collection*, commentary by J. David Spurlock (Vanguard)
- *X-Men: The Manga Remastered,* vol. 1, edited by Glenn Greenberg and others (VIZ Media)

Best Comics-Related Periodical/Journalism

- *The Beat*, edited by Heidi MacDonald and others
- *ICv2: The Business of Pop Culture*, edited by Milton Griepp
- *INKS, The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*, edited by Susan Kirtley (Ohio State University Press)
- *SOLRAD: The Online Literary Magazine for Comics*, edited by Daniel Elkin, www.solrad.co (Fieldmouse Press)
- *Zdarsky Comics News*, edited by Allison O'Toole (Chip Zdarsky)

Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards
NOMINATIONS | 2025

Best Comics-Related Book American Comic Book

- *Chronicles: 1945-49*, by Keith Dallas, John Wells, Richard Arndt, and Kurt Mitchell (TwoMorrows)
- *Kate Carew: America's First Great Woman Cartoonist*, by Eddie Campbell with Christine Chambers (Fantagraphics)
- *Q&A*, by Adrian Tomine (Drawn & Quarterly)
- *Reading Love and Rockets*, by Marc Sobel (Fantagraphics)
- *Tell Me a Story Where the Bad Girl Wins: The Life and Art of Barbara Shermund*, by Caitlin McGurk (Fantagraphics)
- *Walt Disney's Donald Duck: The Ultimate History*, edited by Daniel Kothenschulte with text by David Gerstein and J. B. Kaufman (TASCHEN)

Best Academic/ Scholarly Work

- *Comics and Modernism: History, Form,& Culture*, edited by Jonathan Najarian (University Press of Mississippi)
- *Drawing (in) the Feminine: Bande Dessinée & Women*, edited by Margaret C. Flinn (Ohio State University Press)
- *From Gum Wrappers to Richie Rich: The Materiality of Cheap Comics*, by Neale Barnholden (University Press of Mississippi)
- *Petrochemical Fantasies: The Art and Energy of American Comics*, by Daniel Worden (Ohio State University Press)
- *Singular Sensations: A Cultural History of One-Panel Comics in the United States*, by Michelle Ann Abate (Rutgers University Press)

Best Publication Design

- *Bill Ward: The Fantagraphics Studio Edition*, designed by Kayla E. (Fantagraphics)
- *Brian Bolland: Batman The Killing Joke and Other Stories & Art, Gallery Edition*, designed by Josh Beatman (Graphitti Designs)
- *David Mazzucchelli's Batman Year One Artist's Edition*, designed by Chip Kidd (IDW)
- *One Bite at a Time*, designed by Ryan Claytor (Elephant Eater Comics)
- *Scott Pilgrim 20th Anniversary Color Hardcover Box Set*, designed by Patrick Crotty (Oni Press)
- *Walt Disney's Donald Duck: The Ultimate History*, designed by Anna-Tina Kessler (TASCHEN)

Best Digital Comic

- *The Beauty Salon*, based on the novella by Mario Bellatin, adapted by Quentin Zuttion; translated by M. B. Valente (Europe Comics)
- *Beyond the Sea*, by Anaïs Flogny; translated by Dan Christensen (Europe Comics)
- *Gonzo: Fear and Loathing in America*, by Morgan Navarro; translated by Tom Imber (Europe Comics)
- *My Journey to Her*, by Yuna Hirasawa (Kodansha)
- *The Spider and the Ivy*, by Grégoire Carle; translated by M. B. Valente (Europe Comics)

Best Webcomic

- *The Accidental Undergrad*, by Christian Giroux (Fieldmouse Press)
- *Life After Life*, by Joshua Barkman (False Knees)
- *Motherlover*, by Lindsay Ishihiro (Iron Circus)
- *Practical Defence Against Piracy*, by Tony Cliff, Rigsby WI, by S. E. Case (Iron Circus)

Best Writer

- Tom King, *Archie: The Decision* (Archie); *Animal Pound* (BOOM! Studios); *Helen of Wyndhorn* (Dark Horse); *Jenny Sparks, The Penguin, Wonder Woman* (DC)
- Ram V, *Rare Flavours* (BOOM! Studios); *Dawnrunner* (Dark Horse); *The One Hand* (Image); *Universal Monsters: Creature from the Black Lagoon Lives!* (Image Skybound)
- Kelly Thompson, *Absolute Wonder Woman, Birds of Prey* (DC); *Scarlett* (Image Skybound); *Venom War: It's Jeff* #1 (Marvel)
- James Tynion IV, *Something Is Killing the Children*, *Wynd* (BOOM! Studios); *Blue Book, The Oddly Pedestrian Life of Christopher Chaos* (Dark Horse); *Spectregraph* (DSTLRY); *The Department of Truth, The Deviant, WORLDTR33* (Image)
- Gene Luen Yang, *Lunar New Year Love Story* (First Second/Macmillan)

Best Writer/Artist

- Charles Burns, *Kommix* (Fantagraphics); *Final Cut* (Pantheon); *Unwholesome Love* (co-published with Partners & Son)
- *Emil Ferris, My Favorite Thing Is Monsters Book Two* (Fantagraphics)
- Jon Macy, *Djuna* (Street Noise Books)
- Paco Roca, *Return to Eden* (Fantagraphics)
- Olivier Schrauwen, *Sunday* (Fantagraphics)
- Maria Sweeney, *Brittle Joints* (Street Noise Books)

Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team

- Filipe Andrade, *Rare Flavours* (BOOM! Studios)
- Nick Dragotta, *Absolute Batman* (DC)
- Bilquis Evely, *Helen of Wyndhorn* (Dark Horse)
- Manu Larcenet, *The Road* (Abrams ComicArts)
- Javier Rodriguez, *Zatanna: Bring Down the House* (DC)
- LeUyen Pham, *Lunar New Year Love Story* (First Second/Macmillan)

Best Painter/ Multimedia Artist

- Frederic Bremaud and Federico Bertolucci, *Donald Duck: Vacation Parade* (Fantagraphics)
- Leela Corman, *Victory Parade* (Pantheon)
- Benjamin Flao, *The Hidden Life of Trees* (Greystone)
- Merwan, *Aster of Pan* (Magnetic Press)
- Eduardo Risso, *The Blood Brothers Mother* (DSTLRY)
- Maria Sweeney, *Brittle Joints* (Street Noise Books)

Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

NOMINATIONS | 2025

Best Cover Artist

- Juni Ba, *The Boy Wonder* (DC); *Godzilla Skate or Die, TMNT Nightwatcher* and others (IDW)
- Evan Cagle, *Dawnrunner* (Dark Horse), *New Gods, Detective Comics*
- Bilquis Evely, *Animal Pound* (BOOM!); *Helen of Wyndhorn* (Dark Horse)
- Tula Lotay, *Groupies* (Comixology Originals), *Helen of Wyndhorn #1*, *Count Crowley: Mediocre Midnight Monster Hunter #3*, *Dawnrunner #1*, Barnstormers TPB (Dark Horse); *Somna* and other titles (DSTLRY); *The Horizon Experiment* (Image)
- Hayden Sherman, *Absolute Wonder Woman, Batman: Dark Patterns, Superman, Ape-ril, Batman: The Brave and the Bold* (DC)

Best Coloring

- Jordie Bellaire, *Absolute Wonder Woman, Birds of Prey, John Constantine, Hellblazer: Dead in America, The Nice House by the Sea* (DC); *The City Beneath Her Feet* (DSTLRY); *The Exorcism at 1600 Penn* (IDW); *W0rldtr33* (Image); *G.I. Joe, Duke* (Image Skybound)
- Matheus Lopes, *Batman & Robin: Year One* (DC); *Helen of Wyndhorn* (Dark Horse)
- Justin Prokowich, *Jimi Hendrix: Purple Haze* (Titan Comics)
- Javier Rodriguez, *Zatanna: Bring Down the House* (DC)
- Dave Stewart, *Dawnrunner, Free Comic Book Day Comic 2024* [general], *The Serpent in the Garden, Hellboy, Hellboy and the BPRD, Paranoid Gardens, Shaolin Cowboy Cruel to Be Kin Silent but Deadly Edition* (Dark Horse); *Ultramega, Universal Monsters: Creature from the Black Lagoon Lives!* (Image Skybound)
- Quentin Zuttion, *All Princesses Die Before Dawn* (Abrams ComicArts); *Beauty Salon* (Europe Comics)

Best Lettering

- Becca Carey, *Absolute Superman, Absolute Wonder Woman, Plastic Man No More!* (DC); *Radiant Black, Rogue Sun* (Image); *When the Blood Has Dried, Murder Kingdom* (Mad Cave Studios)
- Leela Corman, *Victory Parade* (Pantheon)
- Clayton Cowles, *Animal Pound* (BOOM! Studios); *FML, Helen of Wyndhorn* (Dark Horse); *Absolute Batman, Batman, Batman & Robin: Year One, Birds of Prey, Jenny Sparks, Wonder Woman* (DC); *Strange Academy, Venom* (Marvel)
- Emil Ferris, *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters, Book Two* (Fantagraphics)
- Nate Powell, *Fall Through* (Abrams ComicArts); *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (New Press)

Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

HALL OF FAME | 2025

The following 21 people are being inducted into the 2025 Eisner Awards Hall of Fame, as chosen by this year's judges.

Peter Arno (1904–1968)

Cartoonist Curtis Arnoux Peters Jr. helped create the *New Yorker*'s signature style. With the publication of his first spot illustration in 1925, Arno began a 43-year association with the weekly magazine. His many iconic covers and cartoons helped build *The New Yorker*'s reputation for sophisticated humor and high-quality artwork.

Gus Arriola (1917–2008)

Gus Arriola wrote and drew the Mexican-themed comic strip *Gordo.* The strip, which prominently featured Mexican characters and themes, set a high standard with its impeccable art and design. *Gordo* had a long and successful life in newspapers (1941–1985).

Steve Bissette (1955–)

Steve Bissette was one of the first graduates of the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. Together with writer Alan Moore and inker John Totleben, he was responsible for revitalizing the DC series *Swamp Thing* into a critically acclaimed horror classic. His later work includes editing and publishing the influential anthology horror comic series *Taboo* and drawing and self-publishing *Tyrant,* the epic biography of a Tyrannosaurus rex.

Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908)

The German 19th-century artist is regarded as one of the founders of modern-day comics. He pioneered several elements that have become staples of the medium, such as onomatopoeia and expressive movement lines. His iconic series *Max und Moritz* (1865), about two naughty young boys, was the first children's comic in history. Its success proved that young readers were an important market for comics.

Lucy Shelton Caswell (1944–)

Lucy Shelton Caswell is the founder (in 1977) and former curator of the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum at The Ohio State University. She is also the founding editor emerita of *INKS: The Journal of the Comics Study Society*. She has curated more than 75 cartoon-related exhibits and is the author of several articles and books on the history of newspaper comic strips and the history of American editorial cartoons.

Philippe Druillet (1944–)

Philippe Druillet is one of the most influential French comics creators and is known for his baroque drawings and bizarre science-fiction stories. He made his debut in comics with *Lone Sloane, le Mystère des Abîmes* in 1966. He became a regular contributor to the Franco-Belgian comics magazine *Pilote*. Then in 1975, Druillet co-founded the publishing house Humanoïdes Associés and the *Métal Hurlant* periodical. Many of his stories from that magazine were published in the U.S. in *Heavy Metal* magazine.

Phoebe Gloeckner (1960–)

Phoebe Gloeckner's first comics work appeared in underground comix publications during her teenage years. She continued to do stories for such titles as *Weirdo, Young Lust, Buzzard, Wimmen's Comix,* and *Twisted Sisters.* In 1998, her quasi-autobiographical strips were collected in *A Child's Life,* and her shattering *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2002) was later adapted into a film.

Richard Edward "Grass" Green (1939–2002)

Grass Green was an American underground comix artist and part of the pioneer generation of the 1960s. He is best known for creating superhero parodies like *Xal-Kor the Human Cat* (1964) and *Wildman and Rubberroy* (1969), as well as erotic stories for underground comix and the Eros Comix line by Fantagraphics. Green holds historical significance for being the first black underground comix artist. He also created REGCo, which offered comic artists and cartoonists pages where the layout, borders, and panels were already put on paper beforehand.

Rea Irvin (1888 –1972)

Rea Irvin was *The New Yorker*'s first art editor, but that title barely begins to suggest his importance to the magazine. Not only did he draw Eustace Tilley (the magazine's mascot) for the first cover, he also designed virtually the look of the magazine. He was instrumental in inventing the one-line gag cartoon, *The New Yorker's* signature contribution to comic art.

Jack Kamen (1920–2008)

Jack Kamen was one of the most prolific and influential artists for EC Comics, drawing crime, horror, humor, suspense, and science fiction stories. After EC, he drew Sunday supplement illustrations and created advertising art for a wide variety of clients. He also drew all the comic book artwork for Stephen King and George Romero's 1982 horror anthology film *Creepshow,* their homage to the EC horror comics.

Joe Maneely (1926–1958)

Between the late 1940s and late 1950s, Maneely was a frequent contributor to Atlas Comics (which became Marvel Comics), and one of the key collaborators with Stan Lee. He is best remembered as the co-creator and main artist of such titles as *Ringo Kid, Black Knight,* and *Yellow Claw*. This latter series introduced both the master villain Yellow Claw and the heroic secret agent Jimmy Woo, who was later featured in several other Marvel comic books. A tragic train accident ended his career at age 32.

Shigeru Mizuki (1922–2015)

Shigeru Mizuki was one of Japan's most respected artists. A creative prodigy, he lost an arm in World War II. After the war, Mizuki became one of the founders of manga. He invented the *yokai* genre with GeGeGe no Kitaro, his most famous character, who has been adapted for the screen several times, as anime, live action, and video games. In his hometown of Sakaiminato, one can find Shigeru Mizuki Road, a street decorated with bronze statues of his Kitaro characters.

Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

HALL OF FAME | 2025

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Phil Seuling was a comic book retailer, fan convention organizer, and comics distributor primarily active in the 1970s. He was the organizer of the annual New York Comic Art Convention, originally held in New York City every July 4 weekend beginning in 1968. Later, with his Sea Gate Distributors company, he developed the concept of the direct market distribution system for getting comics directly into comic book specialty shops, bypassing the newspaper/magazine distributor method, where no choices of title, quantity, or delivery directions were permitted.

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In Memoriam

Remembering those we've lost

REMEMBERING JIM SHOOTER (1951–2025)

by Paul Levitz

Jim Shooter was a towering figure in American comic books for much of the second half of the 20th century, and not simply because his 6' 7" height literally cast a shadow over most of his contemporaries. His will, determination, and single-minded pursuit of his goals were consistently impressive and often inspirational.

For comics fans, the most amazing part of his story comes first. As a youngster in Pittsburgh, he dove deeply into a stack of 1960s superhero comics. Like so many of us, he was moved to try to create his own comics. Unlike virtually all of us, he deeply analyzed not only the stories and artwork but thoughtfully considered where he might market his work: The Marvels were better written, he felt, and of the DC titles, he measured that Adventure Comics Featuring Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes could be better done. He produced a 24-page tale, carefully written and drawn in pencil on ordinary typewriter paper, and submitted it. The fact that it was bought by editor Mort Weisinger, rarely a patron of new talent, is surprising. The detail that Shooter was only 13 years old at the time makes it astounding.

Jim Shooter with Stan Lee at the 1986 San Diego Comic-Con. Photo by Jackie Estrada.

Shooter went on to create major parts of the Legion's cast and mythology, with a gift for simple naming and what, for the time, were deeply emotional relationships and attitudes. His issues were considered the best of that series to date, outshining three legendary writers who had preceded him (Otto Binder, Jerry Siegel, and Edmond Hamilton). He added heroes (Karate Kid, Princess Projectra, the doomed Ferro Lad), villains (The Fatal Five, Mordru, and in his Superman stories, the Parasite), and handled subjects such as drug addiction that the publisher hadn't dared touch. If he never did anything else, the roughly 70 stories he produced in a four-year period of his youth would have made him memorable. The accomplishment before graduating high school made his life an inspiration to any number of people who would go on to careers in comics, all starting a bit older at best, including this writer.

Weisinger was a powerful teacher: a master storyteller who had moved from the pulps to comics and who had developed rules that helped catapult his Superman line of comics to the top of the charts with the boost of the George Reeves–starring television series. It's worth noting that the stories Shooter wrote (he soon gave up sketching the tales out) outsold anything in the Marvel line in those peak Stan Lee/Jack Kirby years.

The lure of the modest contribution to his family's difficult finances from his comics work faded. Shooter dropped his creative career for a half-dozen years before returning, lured back by Legion fans who had hunted him down. He moved to New York, became part of the comics community, connected at Marvel, and returned to his Legionnaires at DC. Before long, he was behind a junior editorial desk at Marvel, at a time when the company was burning through editorial leaders.

When Archie Goodwin gave up the editorial seat (the fourth in a handful of years to do so), Shooter inherited it as 1978 began. Instead of quickly burning out, he made the role his own. He imposed creative discipline on the company and built an editorial staff that led freelance writers and artists to do some of the best work in the field: the commercial triumph of *X-Men* by Chris Claremont and collaborators like John Byrne, *Daredevil* by Frank Miller, *Thor* by Walter Simonson—and on and on. Shooter built on Weisinger and offered his own rules for doing comics, often to good effect, but occasionally bringing him into conflict with the talent. Shooter saw the value of the emerging direct market and became an important advocate for it at Marvel, the leading publisher for comic shops. He played a role in the launch of the Epic line, an important step for Marvel in trying creator-owned content.

As the years went on, Shooter's leadership style, his very specific sensibilities, and his personal and creative prejudices caused problems. Ultimately, his ambition ended his nine-year run as Marvel's Editor-in-Chief. When he pressed Marvel's new owners to promote him and fire the existing business leaders, the publishing company ousted Shooter.

He next launched his own comic company, Valiant, which would acquire rights to classic Gold Key properties and launch a slew of new heroes that Shooter and his team would create. Valiant's financers eventually pushed Shooter out and went on to sell the worlds Shooter had helped create to the Acclaim video game company. Of the many new lines created in the boom years of the 1990s, Valiant's heroes would prove among the most enduring.

Shooter would go on to other ventures, launching comics imprints Defiant and Broadway, but neither of those found lasting success. He returned to writing, briefly working on Legion of Super-Heroes again, and spent his last decades mostly doing custom comics for commercial partners.

It's hard to sum up as complex a figure as Jim Shooter, who had so much impact on the American comics field for the decades when it shifted from a newsstand-driven kids' medium to the more mature material for comic shops. Shooter was determined to succeed at whatever he did and often met with more success than his peers: a top superhero writer, a creator of lasting characters, an editor who shaped the material he commanded, and a serial entrepreneur in our field. His critics point to positions he took or battles he fought or provoked; his admirers point to the lasting work he produced or oversaw. Both are right.

But there are many of us who wouldn't have been in comics if not for the inspiration from a smart and gutsy 13-year-old Shooter, or the brilliant work he had a part in bringing to life. And next year's most commercial movie will likely be Secret Wars, named and based on the very successful crossover series that he wrote, edited, and made memorable to comics fans worldwide.

Paul Levitz has been a comic fan, editor, writer, executive (DC Comics president & publisher), historian, and educator.

KC CARLSON (1956 –2025)

by Brigid Alverson

KC Carlson's love of comics led him to a career that touched every aspect of the comics industry, from loading trucks to editing blockbuster comics to selling comics and advising retailers.

Born in Illinois in 1956, KC literally learned to read from comics, starting with the classic Walt Disney titles.He got a subscription for his fifth birthday and kept it until he was in college. KC gravitated to superheroes when he was in elementary school. While a student at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire in the late 1970s, KC persuaded his boss at the record store Truckers Union to carry mainstream comics in addition to their line of undergrounds, making them an early direct market retailer. After college, KC went to work for Capital City Distribution, first in the warehouse and later as office manager. From there, he moved to the retailer Westfield Comics, editing their customer newsletter.

In 1989, he moved from Wisconsin to New York City to work for DC Comics, where he assisted design director Richard Bruning and edited collected editions that included *V for Vendetta* and *The Sandman.* The concept of publishing comics in book format was still relatively new at the time, and his work helped shape the way we read comics to this day. He left after a year, returning to Wisconsin, where he became the first editor of *Comics Retailer* magazine. 1992 found him back at DC to edit *Legion of Super-Heroes* as well as the Superman family of titles and the *Zero Hour* crossover event.

In 1997, KC moved to Richmond, Virginia, with his future wife, comics blogger Johanna Draper Carlson. He worked as assistant manager of a local comic shop and wrote for the Westfield Comics blog, offering commentary on current comics and recounting tales of his time in the trenches. (Read these columns at https://comicsworthreading.com) He also wrote some stories for DC, including "Wish Fulfillment" in *Legion of Super-Heroes* #109 and "Missing Persons" in *Legionnaires* #66. KC and Johanna were married in 1999, and in 2012, the couple moved back to Wisconsin, where he continued writing about comics for many years and was a regular Wednesday customer at Westfield for over a decade.

KC Carlson passed away in February 2025 from complications resulting from cancer, diagnosed two years previously; he had also been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for several years.

KC was a nerd with a sense of humor, someone with a broad knowledge and deep love of comics who never took the field too seriously. He could sometimes beat Mark Waid at comic trivia. He had myriad other interests, including music (he was a huge fan of the Who, and he and Johanna shared a love of the Monkees), animation, and classic TV shows. He was kindhearted, gentle, humble, funny, and well-liked by his colleagues, making friends in every corner of the comics industry over the years.

Brigid Alverson is a journalist who writes about comics for *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*, and *The Comics Journal*. She is a contributing editor at ICv2.com and the editor of the Good Comics for Kids blog.

KC Carlson with his wife, Johanna Draper Carlson.

JOHN CASSADAY (1971–2024)

by Heidi MacDonald

Writing these is always hard. Writing about John Cassaday is the hardest. Let me tell you his story.

John will be remembered as an artist who created fantastic worlds and characters, but he started out as a Texas boy. Born December 14, 1971, in Fort Worth, the future cartoonist studied film in school and the great illustrators and comics artists while working as a TV news director. He made his way to New York City to break into comics in the 1990s—back before the internet, being in the same town as the editors who could hire you was considered crucial to breaking in.

John worked in construction for a summer while he was waiting for his break. That came at San Diego Comic-Con in 1996 when he showed his work to Mark Waid, who connected him with writer Jeff Mariotte for the Homage series *Desperadoes*. From there, he kept getting work at Dark Horse, Wildstorm, and DC. In 1999, he started drawing *Planetary,* written by Warren Ellis and colored by Laura Martin.

The story was perfect for the time: three adventurers led by the mysterious Elijah Snow, who uncover secrets and conspiracies, mostly based on pop culture icons. It was a chance for John to cut loose with all his love of illustration, film, and design. The covers were spectacular, the characters were uncanny, and Cassaday's note-perfect storytelling was the perfect foil for Ellis's acerbic writing. Ellis was deconstructing myths, but Cassaday was building worlds.

The story to this point is kind of a Bildungsroman: The young man struggles and dreams and makes good. After *Planetary,* John was an in-demand comics superstar and had great runs on *Captain America* and *X-Men*.

I wish the story had a happy ending, but I guess real life never does. John died of a heart attack at the tragically young age of 52 on September 9, 2024.

I met John when I was an editor at DC Comics, and we became pals who hung out quite a bit for movies and art shows. He was the kind of friend who got excited when *Lawrence of Arabia* was playing in 72 millimeter at the Ziegfeld. I remember going to see it with John and his best friend, John Lucas, and how amazed we were at the famous scene where Lawrence appears as a tiny black dot in the desert, gradually getting bigger. We went out afterward and talked about the movie and comics for hours.

John was also a friend who helped me through some of my worst days, and it wasn't just me. When he was your friend, he was your friend for good, because that's what friends are for. At the Baltimore comic convention, soon after he died, we had a panel to remember him, and we were all crying. Of course, we wept at the tragedy of it all, but we were also crying because he'd been there for us when we needed him.

Someone as talented and, it must be said, handsome as John could have been a conceited ass. He knew he was talented and good looking, but he managed to stay grounded, funny, kind, and thoughtful. He was a rare talent as an artist, but, most importantly, one of a kind as a friend.

I wish I wasn't writing this in memoriam. I wish I was interviewing him about a new project and still telling his story.

Heidi MacDonald is an award-winning editor/journalist who runs the comics industry news blog The Beat.

PETER DAVID (1956–2025)

by Maggie Thompson

Peter David at the 2012 Comic-Con.

The Long Island newspaper *Newsday* headlined its story "Peter David, of Patchogue, chronicler of the Hulk, Spider-Man, Captain America and other comic book legends, dies at 68." Regarding Peter's career, reporter Frank Lovece (also a comics writer) opened with: "While the Hulk smashed, the man who wrote his adventures, Peter David, smashed storytelling conventions." Lovece quoted comics historian Peter Sanderson, "He was a classicist in that he loved the legacy characters, but he was not afraid to move them in entirely new directions."

When she revealed Peter's death on Facebook in May, his wife Kathleen David ended her post, "Peter will be remembered by many people for many things. I will remember my steadfast husband, who was always in my corner and helped me to become a better person. What do you remember about Peter?"

Within two days, there were more than a hundred direct responses, and other online reactions quickly became too numerous to count. The award-winning creator touched so many people in so many different ways that the anecdotes were widely varied, as well as moving.

Some people knew him best for his comics contributions. While the Grand Comics Database has 4,283 stories with a "Script" query response for him, it includes such entries as (at random) the reprint and translation "Ablehnung" in *Im Netz von Spider-Man* from Panini Deutschland. As comics readers know—however they enjoyed those tales—his comics output was varied and important.

Some people knew him best for his short stories and novels. His first published fiction was probably "Alternate Genesis," printed in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* in the November 1980 issue; he was 24.

Some people knew him best for his media work. IMDb lists his trademarks as "Sarcastic sense of humour. Known for references to Pop Culture and Meta jokes. Often reflects real-world issues and his personal life in his writing." It identifies contributions to 14 films or TV shows, some for a single episode. As is true of so much about him, there's more online to explore.

Some people knew him best for his reporting, criticism, and journalism. It was his interview with Carol Kalish for "What Are Direct Sales?" in *Comics Scene* for January 1983 that led directly to his working as her assistant direct sales manager for Marvel.

Some people knew him best for his support of the comics industry. In a 2002 interview with *The Trades*, he said, "I was involved in the distribution of comic books out to comic book shops. At that time, we dealt with about 17 different distributors."

Some people knew him best for his ongoing commentaries on the pop culture world. In 1994, one of the books that carried his byline was *But I Digress*. It was the title of the column he had been providing to *Comics Buyer's Guide* magazine (which my husband Don and I had been co-editing for years). His column began in the July 27, 1990, issue and ran for more than two decades. It was such a terrific draw that we ran it as the last editorial feature to keep readers reading every page to the end of each issue. *CBG* ended with #1699, but *Alter Ego* editor Roy Thomas published a wrap-up of *CBG* with *Alter Ego* #122 (January 2014). Just as *But I Digress* was the last thing in each of our issues, Peter's "The Last Column" was the concluding *CBG* entry in *Alter Ego*'s "final issue" of *CBG*.

Some people were lucky enough to know—and, as a result, admire—Peter personally. A few even had the honor and delight of working directly with him, as I can attest. (Imagine opening a fresh manuscript every week and being the first to enjoy its brilliance.)

Although Peter has left us, certainly, you have not yet savored all the delights he created. He subtitled his peterdavid.net website "Writer of Stuff," and on his biography there, he wrote, "You can also look at Peter's Wikipedia page and see what other people have written about him. A surprising amount of it is true."

That suggestion was—as was the case with so much else he provided—excellent. In this brief tribute, there aren't enough words to convey his bibliography, much less his contributions to many fields. An Internet search will detail his awards, his career, and more. What is certain is that readers still won't know it all, because often going unmentioned is his constant, caring thoughtfulness.

You have your own memories of Peter David and what he meant to you. Share them with others.

Maggie Thompson edited *Comics Buyer's Guide* for three decades, and she sums up her identity these days as being a "celebrity-adjacent, award-winning pop-culture nerd."

BOB FOSTER (1943–2024)

by Michael T. Gilbert

Bob Foster was a remarkably accomplished writer, illustrator, editor, and storyboard artist, but first and foremost, he was a fan. I originally stumbled upon Bob's work in *Fantasy Illustrated* #5 (1966), Bill Spicer's pioneering fanzine. I really took notice of Bob's three-page "Comic Book Fans," a hilarious takedown of comics fandom, bursting with "in-joke" references and illustrated by his pal Vince Davis. One comic book geek proudly states that "Jack Kirby has switched from a G.E. 60-watt to a Sylvania 75-watt bulb in his drawing lamp," while another muses, "Why doesn't Neal Adams draw Thor, Spider-Man, Avengers, Conan, Batman, Sad Sack, and all the covers?" Why, indeed! Bob, the ultimate fanboy, got a real kick out of poking fun at himself and his fellow nerds.

Photo by Jackie Estrada

In fandom circles, Bob's "Myron Moose" really put him on the map. His funny-animal protagonist parodied some of his favorite Golden Age splash pages, including Plastic Man, The Spirit, and Batman, as he deftly replaced the heroes with his dim-bulb, talking moose. Myron had his start in 1971 in the first of two black-and-white, self-published issues of his own comic (with a third from Fantagraphics years later). Later, Bob's "History of Moosekind" became a regular feature in Marvel's *Crazy* magazine.

Bob and I met professionally around 1990, shortly after I was tapped to write *Mickey Mouse Adventures* for Disney Comics. Working on the mouse, I suffered through a great deal of editorial interference. On a lark, I pitched my first Donald Duck story to Bob, now the ducks' story editor. He liked my plot, and weeks later, after looking over the final script, Bob apologetically asked me if I'd mind if he changed something. "Sure," I said, expecting the worst. He then changed … *two words.* After my treatment by other editors, having the work treated with that level of respect was a refreshing change. Personally, while Bob would not suffer fools gladly, he also had a guileless innocence that made him eminently likable.

Shortly after, Bob moved to Denmark, where he began writing and editing comics for Egmont (then known as the Gutenberghus Group). Egmont produced comics featuring the Disney characters (and others) for worldwide distribution.

My wife, Janet, and I followed his lead, providing scripts from our Eugene, Oregon home. In between writing and drawing *Mr. Monster* (my monster-fighting superhero) and other projects, we spent the next 20 years writing the adventures of Mickey, Donald, and the Disney gang for a variety of editors. But working on those early stories for Bob remain some of my favorite Egmont memories.

Cut to some years later. Janet and I were still living in Eugene, about an hour away from Silverton, the home of Oregon Gardens—one of our favorite vacation spots. Turns out, Bob had left Denmark and moved there. Silverton was a small, bucolic town with a bit of a Duckburg feel. Bob fit right in, often volunteering to help Silverton's senior citizens.

When Janet and I visited, we'd get together for dinner. Bob would proudly show us a sketchbook filled with drawings by the most amazing A-list newspaper, comic book, and animation cartoonists. Think Alex Toth, Carl Barks, and the like. Bob's eyes lit up when I'd "ooh" and "ahh" over the art.

After Janet and I moved to Ohio in 2018, Bob and I kept in touch sporadically by email. Bob was now 81, and never in the best of health, so his passing wasn't a complete surprise. After his death, a little online research on Bob's career revealed a remarkable resume. In 1961, he moved from New York to Los Angeles to enroll in the prestigious Chouinard Art School as a film student, eventually earning a BFA in film. In addition to his stint as a Disney comics editor from 1980 to 1990, Bob also wrote the *Donald Duck* syndicated strip—a dream job for him. He also worked in animation as a storyboard artist and was even elected president of the Animation Guild. He was also a charter member of the Comic Art Professional Society.

During his career, he did storyboard work for Warner Bros., Disney, Hanna-Barbera, Nickelodeon, Fox, and Sony on cartoons like *Family Guy, Angry Beavers, Tom and Jerry Tales, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, Hercules, Jumanji,* and *Courage the Cowardly Dog*. Bob also wrote and drew the graphic novel *Roger Rabbit: The Resurrection of Doom* (published by Marvel in 1989).

If I was surprised to learn the full extent of his contributions, it was because Bob wasn't the bragging type. He'd mention some of his old work in passing, but never made a big deal of it. Whenever Janet and I visited, he was more likely to gush about some new lady he fancied.

After his death, I was shocked to discover that Bob had spent his last days in hospice care, having suffered from "a long, dementia-related decline in health." But Janet and I were happy to learn that he'd found a partner, Diane Stone, who cared for him at the end.

Throughout his life, he remained what he always was, a forever fan. And as a fan, if Bob were here with me now, I know exactly what he'd be asking.

"Where's my darn sketchbook?!"

Over the last half-century, Michael T. Gilbert has written, drawn, and edited a wide variety of comics, including those featuring his monster-fighting hero, Mr. Monster.

HY EISMAN (1927- 2025)

By Alonso Nuñez

Hy Eisman is known for his work as a comics creator—he started drawing comic books in 1950, followed by comic strips in 1953—and is perhaps best remembered for his work on *Katzenjammer Kids, Little Lulu,* and *Nancy*, among many, many more. How many more? That's the challenge, right there! Eisman is said to have drawn over a thousand pages of romance comics for Charlton Comics alone. You see, Eisman would ghost (meaning to work uncredited) on these books and strips, and he did it for over seven decades!

Mark Squirek summed it up this way in a 2007 interview with Eisman, "The chances that you have seen the work of Hy Eisman are very, very high. The chances that you knew it was his work (at least during the first 20 years he was a pro) are very, very low." This never seemed to bother him—this anonymity. But as commendable as this fascinating career is, you'll allow me a digression to Hy Eisman's *other* career—the one that I and many others knew—as an arts educator.

Eisman taught at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in Dover, NJ, from 1976 until 2019. I had the pleasure (and pain) of having him as my lettering instructor during the 2005–2006 academic school year. Yes, do not forget that lettering comics is a skill unto itself! And that is something Eisman never let his long-suffering students forget! Having honed his craft on all those many books and comic scripts, he was keen that we all learned and appreciated the traditional craft of lettering. Words and letters that to lay comic fans were, and remain, almost invisible became for us the stuff of nightmares! And now, looking back, also beloved memories. Ames guide! Kerning! Speedball Nibs! San Serif!

I'll never forget the friendship of Hy Eisman and Irwin Hasen. They were both teachers at the Joe Kubert School while I was there. They were both longtime professionals, already in their 70s and 80s (respectively), and yet they seemed like a pair of eager, sometimes mischievous, friends, often with more energy than the students they taught. Hasen would sneak into our class, or Eisman would sneak off to Hasen's, and they'd share some quick inside joke, memory, or other aside. Then they'd head back to their own classroom and resume their lessons. I can remember a classmate once asking Eisman what they had been discussing. He looked up and said to her, and all of us, "When you're my age, you'll need help remembering all your mistakes." Part joke, part truth, all earned wisdom.

At the start of one particular class session, Hy had come in with a weathered artist's portfolio case—you know the type, worn leather and straps, large and cumbersome—filled with examples of his work and other comic strip pages he had collected over the years. He laid them out on the chalkboard ledge, and we students walked back and forth, marveling at them for their art and the history. One student, with the Kentucky twang of his hometown, said, "Man, these are like some antiques, man!" Hy shot him a look and said, "They're not *like* antiques, they *are* antiques!" then, softening and smiling a bit added, "Like me." The student muttered to himself, loud enough that he could be heard, "Weird. I'll be an old artist with stories someday." Hy responded, slyly, "You should be so lucky."

Hy, we should all be so lucky.

Alonso Nuñez is the executive director of Little Fish Comic Book Studio and co-chair of the Will Eisner Hall of Fame judging committee. He still uses his Ames guide.

JULES FEIFFER (1929–2025)

by Karen Green

It began, as so many things in comics do, with Will Eisner.

Jules Feiffer, 16 years old, walked into the studio of Will Eisner, a fellow Jewish Bronx native, with a portfolio of his work, but Eisner was distinctly unimpressed. Feiffer may not have impressed Eisner with his art, but his encyclopedic knowledge of Eisner's work and his passion for *The Spirit* did the trick, and he walked out of the studio as an unpaid assistant for his idol. Eventually, Feiffer's inability to pencil or ink up to Eisner's standards led to a gig writing *Spirit* stories in late 1948. Feiffer truly came into his own in 1949, turning out story after story, including the classic "Ten Minutes." But Eisner also gave Feiffer his own mini-feature, called "Clifford," a sort of *Peanuts* avant-la-lettre, which occupied the final page of the *Spirit* Sunday supplement.

This was the beginning of what would be a stunning career, with accolades and awards such as the Oscar, the Obie, the Pulitzer Prize, and lifetime achievement recognition from the Eisner Awards Hall of Fame, the National Cartoonists Society, the Writers Guild of America, and the Dramatists Guild of America.

Feiffer left Eisner in 1951 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Five years later, he created the "Feiffer" comic strip for the *Village Voice*–once again, at first, unpaid. In an obituary in *The Guardian* (U.K.), Feiffer was described as "the recording angel of postwar America's angst," which is as good a description of Feiffer as anyone might offer. His distinctive fine pen line and often repetitive panels were immediately recognizable and became iconic. He still couldn't draw like his hero Will Eisner, but he found a style and a voice that was distinctly leftist, distinctly intellectual, distinctly New York Jewish, and distinctly Feiffer. Certain motifs became instantly recognizable, most notably his dancers—the woman based on an old girlfriend, and the man on Fred Astaire. In 1986, it garnered him the Pulitzer Prize in Editorial Cartooning.

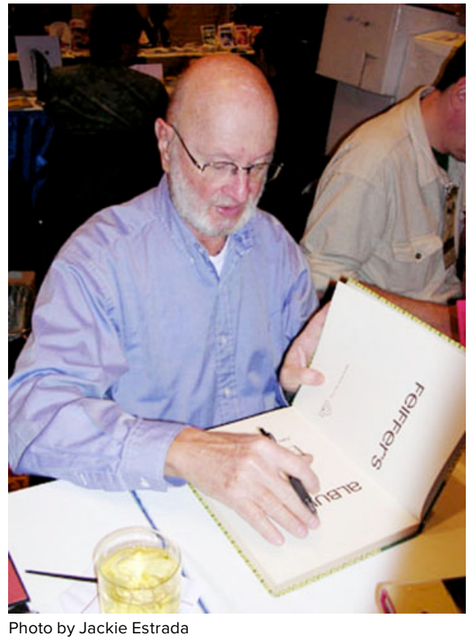


Photo by Jackie Estrada

Feiffer spent over 40 years at the *Village Voice* (getting paid, eventually), and while there, he branched out in a variety of directions, most notably as one of the first comics historians. His seminal 1965 book *The Great Comic Book Heroes* became the definitive guide to forgotten Golden Age creators and helped bring Will Eisner back to broader notice. It was reprinted in 1977 by Dial Press and by Fantagraphics in 2003 and 2014, cementing its status as an essential classic.

Feiffer was also writing and illustrating children's books, such as *Bark, George,* and *The Man in the Ceiling*, which was inspired by his own childhood desire to become a cartoonist; illustrating others' books, perhaps most notably the 1961 allegory *The Phantom Tollbooth*, written by Norton Juster; producing the 1979 graphic novel *Tantrum*, following Eisner's own *A Contract with God* by a year; exploring playwriting with 1967's *Little Murders*, which won the Obie Award for Off-Broadway productions in 1969; and writing screenplays for *Carnal Knowledge* and the film adaptation of *Little Murders* in 1971, although he is perhaps best known as the screenwriter for 1980's *Popeye.* He also branched into teaching at Yale, Northwestern, Columbia, and SUNY/Stony Brook–Southampton.

After he departed the *Village Voice* in 1997, Feiffer

JACK KATZ (1927–2025)

by Andrew Kunka

Jack Katz's career spanned the Golden Age of superhero comics through the rise of the graphic novel in the 1970s and beyond. He continued to create new work well into his 90s. The connections he made throughout his career read like a who's who of comics history. For example, in his late teens, he began a five-year stint as art assistant at King Features Syndicate, where he worked with Hal Foster, Alex Raymond, Joe Musial, and George Wunder. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Jack also worked in the C. C. Beck and Pete Costanza studio, the Jerry Iger shop, the Simon and Kirby studio, and for the publishers Timely, Fiction House, DC, and Skywald.

Though he had some experience with superheroes, like early work on Fawcett's Bulletman, his art mainly graced other genres, including war, romance, Westerns, horror, and crime. Along the way, he developed friendships and working relationships with Matt Baker, Alex Toth, Mort Meskin, Marvin Stein, Alphonso Greene, Joe Maneely, and Pete Morisi.

Jack's initial inspiration to become a comic artist began as a child reading the *Tarzan* comic strips of Hal Foster, Rex Mason, and Burne Hogarth. These artists would have a profound influence on both his drawing style and storytelling.

In 1974, Jack began what would become his major life's work: *The First Kingdom*, a 24-issue, 768-page fantasy/science fiction graphic novel of immense, complex scope. The first six issues were published by Comics & Comix, a chain of stores of which Bud Plant was one of the founders. With issue #7 Plant took over as publisher.

For the next 12 years, Jack was driven to complete this epic story, producing two painstakingly detailed issues a year through considerable financial and personal hardship. From the outset, he described this work as a "graphic novel," as he did in a 1974 correspondence with Will Eisner, making him one of the first to apply the term to a specific comic work.

As Katz described his vision in 1978, "To me, the purest form of the graphic novel is an original concept, an original story, and an art that is uniquely relative to the context of the story. . . . While the graphic novel is now in its infancy, I feel it is potentially an extension into the world of serious literature. Just as *The First Kingdom* is a novel that embodies fantasy and science fiction, other areas of literature would lend themselves to this new dimension in publishing psychological, historical, detective, Western, and other novels, as well as some nonfiction work."

This vision proved incredibly accurate in its prediction for the future of comics publishing.

The First Kingdom was later reprinted in hardcover editions by Titan Comics. In addition to the original 24 issues, Titan also included volumes for the previously unpublished sequels, *The Space Explorers Club* and *Destiny.* Jack continued to work on additional sequels—the 500-page *Beyond the Beyond* and a final 330-page graphic novel—both of which are unpublished. Comics creator Liam Sharp ran a highly successful crowdfunding campaign to publish *The Unseen Jack Katz*, a collection of unpublished stories and artwork by Katz and inked by many of the best artists in the comics industry, including Bill Sienkiewicz, Art Adams, Mike Perkins, Sandra Hope, Michael Cho, and Bryan Hitch.

Katz never sold a page of original art in his lifetime. In March 2025, Katz's ex-wife, Caroline Gold, donated his entire archive to Rice University for inclusion in its Archives of the Impossible. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame in 2023, which was an honor he greatly appreciated. He passed away on April 24, 2025. May his memory be a blessing.

Andrew J. Kunka is Professor of English at the University of South Carolina Sumter, and author of the Eisner Award–nominated *The Life and Comics of Howard Cruse: Taking Risks in the Service of Truth.*

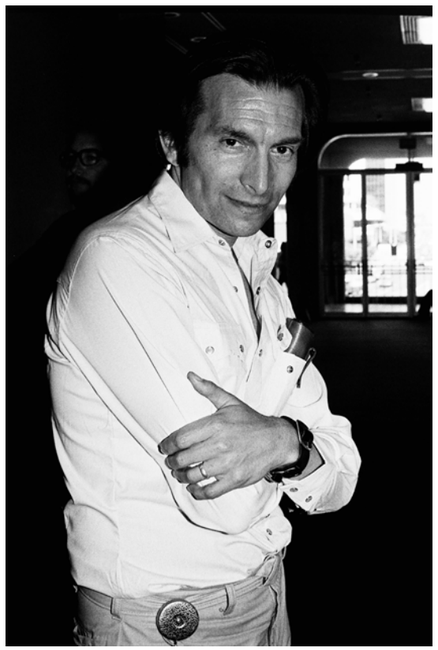


Photo by Jackie Estrada

BERNIE MIREAULT (1961–2024)

By Zach Rabiroff

I want to share with you a comment made by an everyday fan on an everyday internet message board in the hazy days of 1985. Here is what he wrote in an otherwise somewhat ambivalent review for a small-press comic from the wilds of Canada with the unwieldy title *New Triumph Featuring Northguard #2:*

"The unexpected treat for the issue, though, is the back feature. It's somewhat crudely drawn, though the style is interesting. It has touches of Ditko and Giffen's current style, but the artist here, Bernie Mireault, has just taken these touches and turned them into something of his own. And the story is somewhat of a panic, too."

This, in a single paragraph, is everything you need to know about Bernie Mireault.

Bernie was born in France, the child of parents in Canadian military service, but it was out of Quebec that he first emerged onto the comics scene. His earliest work was fan fiction: a hand-stapled *Captain America* story, inked and colored in marker, and meant for no audience except whoever was willing to take a look at it. Already, the hallmarks of the Mireault style are on display: the Kirby-esque bombast; the jittery, wiry nervous energy of Ditko. Above all, however, was the unabashed willingness to just tell a superhero story without irony or apology to anyone.

Cut to two years later, and Mireault has run into fellow fan and soon-to-be publisher Marc Shainblum at an Ottawa comic convention, holding in his hands the pages of a comic series of his own. *Mackenzie Queen*, published as a miniseries a year later, is, to put it simply, a hoot. The story of an everyday, down-on-his-luck slacker granted extraordinary magical abilities through the power of his guitar, it turns on a dime from frightening intensity to goofy humor without losing a step.

What's clear on every page is that Mireault is obviously having fun, in a way that's instantly infectious to the audience. "I'll never forget the time Mark opened the trunk of his car and showed a small group of local fans Bernie's pages from the forthcoming issue #1 of *Mackenzie Queen*," cartoonist John O'Neill remembered. "They were laughing so hard it drew a small crowd into the parking lot. Mark turned to me and said, 'I think it's going to be a hit.'"

Well, not quite a hit. But no matter: By the time *Mackenzie Queen* came out, Bernie had already debuted his signature creation, a homebrew superhero who dubbed himself The Jam. Ostensibly a crimefighter, The Jam doesn't have any special powers or secret origins: He's just a schmo like you or me who decides one day he's going to put on a union suit and be something special. It's not a stretch to say that the character was in large part a stand-in for Mireault himself, and indeed he remained so for the next 30 years, growing, ultimately, into the older, mellower, and somewhat sadder protagonist of Mireault's late self-published graphic novel *To Get Her* in 2011. The point is that Bernie Mireault was *us*: his comics, both in their subject and by the nature of their existence, were the ultimate proof that the only thing that separated our icons in comics from ourselves in the comic shops was whether or not we bought ourselves a pencil sharpener and got to work.

You got that sense whenever you met Bernie face to face, too: the totally sincere, unembarrassed love of making art. It could make him sad, especially as the years passed and the rest of his life got darker in a number of ways, to watch that love get overshadowed by so much else in the prosaic world. It could make him a pain sometimes, too. "He would turn down gigs, maybe suspecting they were bad deals, worried he was being taken advantage of, or simply not feeling like he'd get anything out of it," his friend Mike Allred told me. "Kinda Ditko-esque.'"

What matters now is what Bernie was while he was here. "I try to focus on the internal," Mireault once said. "On following my heart, as maudlin as that may sound. I think of comics art as a calling, like a religious person might feel to enter service. I guess what drew me into comics art specifically out of all the arts was that I liked the format so much, but not so much the content. I wanted to use the same tools and conventions, but to have the satisfaction of doing it in my own way, which is just a mishmash of all the stuff over the years that I've seen and liked and either consciously or subconsciously taken from, and to get to see if it 'worked.' Opinions are mixed on that, but it's never stopped entertaining *me*."

We lost Bernie last year, too young, and much, much too soon. We can't unwind the clock and give him greater fame, fortune, and glory than he had. But I'll tell you something you *can* do. Go get a pencil and a sheet of notebook paper from your desk, and draw something that moves you, copy it, and mail it out to 10 or 20 friends. I promise that Bernie Mireault won't be gone for long.

Zach Rabiroff is a writer and reporter on comics, arts, and culture, and a regular contributor to *The Comics Journal*, *HITS* magazine, Polygon.com, and Flaming Hydra.

ART NICHOLS (1961–2025)

by Chuck Patton

Photo by Jackie Estrada

Our industry lost more than just another good comic artist when Art Nichols passed away in early January. He was a gifted illustrator, a generous listener, a dedicated mentor, and a very good friend to all who knew him. But even more, he was my art collaborator for the past few years that most have come to know by his nom de plume, "Inky Fingaz."

James Arthur "Art" Nichols broke into the comic business after joining Neal Adams' Continuity Studios in the early 1980s. While there, he honed his skills as Neal's personal assistant as well as took on pro freelance work from Marvel, DC, and Dark Horse as both a penciller and an inker. He introduced and gave starts to many other young artists at the time—Joe Quesada and Ty Templeton, to name a few.

Art's generosity and willingness to collaborate with others made him the ideal partner to hook up with on a gig. From his time with Adams, he learned to be versatile in style and technique, allowing him to adapt and enrich whoever's art he was working on. His enthusiasm always came through with each task and kept him in high enough demand to eventually leave Continuity for full-time work on his own.

Around this time, Art was supposed to team up with me as my inker when I started penciling on *Justice League of America*. But for some excuse, editorial let that opportunity slip by. We hadn't met face to face yet, just had phone chats of mutual admiration, but we hit it off. Despite our missed chance, we promised to stay in touch. Art got busier elsewhere, working with Mark Verheiden and Chris Warner at Dark Horse to co-create the Eisner-nominated series *The American.*

He carved out a name for himself as both a powerhouse inker and penciler on such books as *Spider-Man, Teen Titans, X-Men, The Punisher, Deathstroke, Night Thrasher, Justice League, Moon Knight, Star Wars, Robocop III,* and many others. It was when he joined Jim Shooter and Bob Layton to start Valiant Comics that his two biggest feats became the revamping of the classic 1960s sci-fi hero *Magnus Robot Fighter* and designing the highly praised Japanese video game comic *F-Zero*. Art also recruited other new artists to Valiant, making the company a major comic book player for a time. How he somehow found the energy to also help his ex-*Night Thrasher* writer Kurt Busiek in developing the location art and map for Busiek's new series, *Astro City,* still astounds the hell out of me.

Art not only loved being busy but also loved to be of service. It was one of his most endearing qualities. He utterly enjoyed being around the company of his peers, traveling around the country to not only meet up with friends at conventions but make new acquaintances as well, even as far as Europe. He once told me of a whirlwind visit he made from London to Paris, then back and forth again, having the time of his life.

As work in the comics market dried up, Art broadened his range by going into advertising, merchandise art, and video games, which led him to work in film and television animation. I had lost contact with him, but heard through mutual friends of his success as a character designer on the movie *Small Soldiers,* which eventually got him into drawing storyboards. His versatility impressed enough to later get him a director's credit on the 3D movie *GI Joe: Ninja Battles* and work on the Oscar-winning animated short film *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr Morris Lessmore* in 2012.

Then the first major medical malady struck him down, plus other unfortunate personal losses caused him to withdraw publicly. We didn't reconnect again until a few years afterward when I was directing animated shows. The times had not been kind to him, and he had moved across the country where it was difficult to find work. I reached out and steered some jobs his way, but that's when his cancer appeared. Over the next couple of years, he desperately and bravely fought to recover past two end-of-life diagnoses and two remissions, all while undertaking dialysis treatments alone.

Despite these challenges, Art continued to produce stellar work. He and I made plans to have regular weekly phone calls to give connection and support. It was from this that we decided to partner up on future art commissions.

Because of his fierce pride, Art insisted on keeping his troubles to himself and away from the public, despising charity but desperately needing to work while in treatment. Another mutual friend and I came up with a solution. Art would take on a pseudonym for future jobs—the only way we knew how to keep his ordeal private, get him paid, and receive credit for the work he'd do. So inspired by his ex-boss Neal Adams' Crusty Bunkers, "Inky Fingaz" was born.

Art had *fun* with that, laying down beautiful inks on our commission art pieces, trying out wild coloring techniques, and pushing his skills to the max. He'd get tickled that clients, fans, and fellow pros couldn't guess who "Inky" was. The work brought him renewed joy, motivation, and satisfaction. It reminded him how much he loved being an artist and rekindled his passion as a master storyteller still in control.

It was an appreciation that we shared and encouraged in each other—that we got to make up for the time we were denied in the past, which became a blessing in the present. It brought him back the respect he thought he had lost.

Inevitably, Art's cancer grew worse, and pneumonia set in. His final months were extremely rough, and he deteriorated quickly. But he continued to draw and paint right up to the end. I know he did not want to give up. He had so much he wanted to do, so many unfinished ideas and stories to show and tell.

I will deeply miss him, our long weekly, late-night phone calls chewing the bone over any and everything under the sun, from Star Trek to current politics. Many a time, we'd deeply reminisce over our crazy careers and marvel at how, though we came from different places, we shared tremendous similarities. We weren't brothers by blood, but were brothers from life's experiences. I'll miss his twisted sense of humor, too.

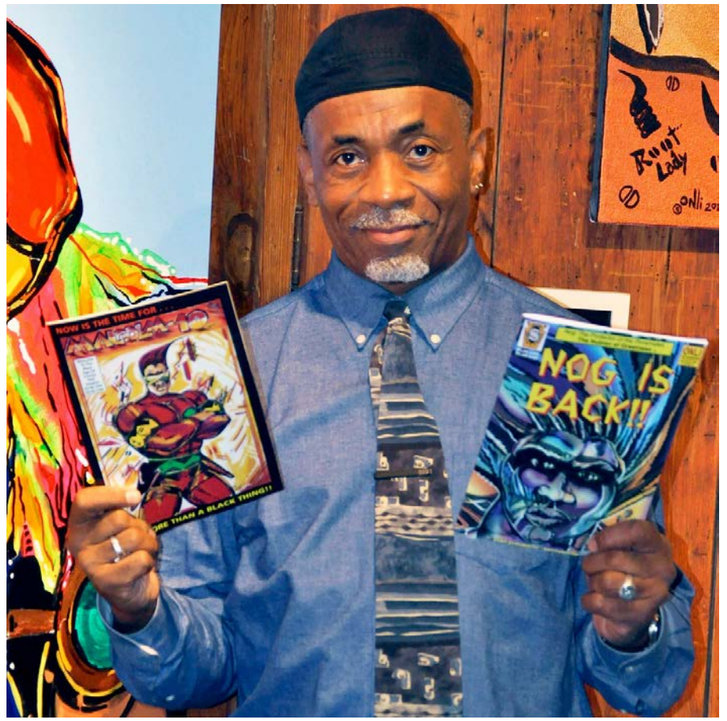
Mostly, I'll mourn losing this tremendously kind and wonderful soul who gave so much without regrets. He deserved so much better. I wholeheartedly hope that he is finally at peace.

Rest well, Artie. Love ya, man.

Chuck Patton is an Emmy award-winning animation producer/director, art director, storyboard artist, and veteran DC comic book artist.

TURTEL ONLI: FATHER OF THE BLACK AGE OF COMICS (1952–2025)

by John Jennings



Turtel Onli—artist, educator, and visionary—was a pioneering force in independent comics. Known as the "Father of the Black Age of Comics," he championed Black voices in visual storytelling and shaped a movement that challenged the mainstream industry.

Born Alvin Phillips in Chicago's Hyde Park, Onli was raised by his grandparents. His grandfather, Reverend Samuel D. Phillips, a Pentecostal minister, painted biblical scenes on oilcloths—a practice that deeply influenced Onli's early fascination with art and narrative. At age 18, he founded the Black Artists Guild (BAG), a collective that published 'zines, mounted exhibitions, and laid the foundation for future artistic careers.

Turtel studied at Olive-Harvey Community College before earning both a BFA and an MA in art therapy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He also studied at the Sorbonne and Centre Pompidou in Paris, which broadened his artistic perspective.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Onli worked as a freelance illustrator for *Playboy*, *Chicago Magazine*, *Ebony*, and *Avant Garde*. He created album covers for jazz artists like Joseph Jarman and Anthony Braxton. One of his designs for the Rolling Stones' *Some Girls* album was reportedly rejected for being too provocative—a fitting example of Onli's bold, unflinching style.

His most lasting impact came through comics. Facing skepticism from mainstream publishers who questioned the marketability of Black characters, Onli decided to chart his own course. In 1979, he introduced *NOG: Nubian of Greatness*, a superhero who protected futuristic pyramids on a distant planet. The character debuted in the *Chicago Defender* and later appeared in self-published comics.

This creation marked the emergence of Onli's distinctive artistic philosophy, which he called Rhythmism. It fused Afrocentric themes, ancient aesthetics, and futuristic concepts—a style he also described as "future-primitif." In 1992, he launched *Malcolm-10*, a hero whose DNA was synthesized from ten Black historical figures, including Malcolm X and Harriet Tubman.

Frustrated by a lack of inclusion in the comics industry, Onli founded the Black Age of Comics movement. In 1993, he organized the first Black Age of Comics convention at Chicago's South Side Community Art Center. The event spotlighted independent Black creators and helped launch a national network of similar gatherings, including the East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention (ECBACC) in Philadelphia.

Onli believed that the Black Age was not a genre, but a cultural shift—a new age of comics centered on Black creators and narratives. "You can't trademark jazz—or the Black Age," he often said. His movement became a powerful force for representation and creative freedom.

He co-created comics such as *Sustah-Girl* and *Grammar Patrol* with Cassandra Washington and launched his own publishing imprint, Onli Studios. Titles like *The Origins of Team Blanga*, *Sasa*, and *Let's Go Green in Da City* further showcased his commitment to storytelling that uplifted and empowered. In addition to his work as an artist and publisher, Onli was a passionate educator. He taught art in Chicago Public Schools and held positions at Columbia College, Harold Washington College, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. His impact on students was as enduring as his creative legacy.

Onli's work was widely exhibited. He was featured in the Museum of Contemporary Art's 2021 "Chicago Comics: 1960 to Now" exhibition, and in 2024 the Logan Center for the Arts hosted a major retrospective titled "Turtel Onli: The Black Age of Comics." In 2006, he received the Glyph Comics Pioneer Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the field.

Turtel Onli's influence endures in every self-published comic, every Black convention panel, and every character that reflects a proudly Afrocentric worldview. His commitment to independence, cultural pride, and artistic excellence remains a guiding light for generations of creators. Through his art, his teaching, and the movement he helped spark, Turtel Onli didn't just make comics—he made history.

John Jennings is a professor of Media and Cultural Studies at UC Riverside and a bestselling, award-winning comics creator.

ELENA SALCEDO (1975–2025)

by Matt Hawkins and Marc Silvestri

In 2008, Elena Salcedo volunteered to work at the Top Cow booth at the New York Comic Convention. She did such a masterful job that she was told that if she ever made it to Los Angeles, she should look us up "for a possible job." Flash forward a few months, and Elena was at the Top Cow offices, unannounced, asking for this "job." What we did not know was that she had quit a lucrative aerospace job and moved across the country with her desire to be in the comics industry.

We hired her, and she became one of the best hires of all time at Top Cow. She loved *The Darkness* and had lots of her own ideas about what to do about it. Her premature death was a tragedy, as she had creative ideas and wanted to venture into the creative, and we did not get to experience that.

Elena started as an assistant editor and moved her way up to VP of Editorial in a decade. She was determined to advance and become a decision maker in comics. She was that and so much more. She routinely asked what else she could learn and/or do. She was a consummate networker and knew everyone in the industry.

She wanted to be a "visiblewoman" as part of that online movement. She was that and more. Our condolences to her family, friends, and partner Dan Petersen.

Matt Hawkins has been president/COO of Top Cow since 1998. Marc Silvestri is the founder and CEO of Top Cow Productions.

JIM SILKE (1931-2025)

by Kelvin Mao

As a teenager in Los Angeles in the 1940s, Jim Silke aspired to write for the pulps. Failing in that attempt, he plotted to make a living as an artist. He loved comics and longed to draw like Milton Caniff in *Terry and the Pirates*. Even more so, draw beautiful girls: half-clothed or nude.

Starting at age 20 in the summer of 1951, Jim worked as an NBC-TV studio page while attending Hollywood Art Center. His first foray into the world of make-believe was guarding the Artists' entrance of the El Capitan theater as stars like Errol Flynn, Marilyn Monroe, Red Skelton, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Kirk Douglas, and Hedy Lamarr passed through.

Jim became head page and pitched his first TV show, *It Happened Today,* at the ripe age of 22. Back at art school, he came to realize he just wasn't good enough, so he dropped out and was promptly drafted into the army.

His romance with showbiz might have ended there, but what Jim called "the gods of chance and accident" had other plans. After two years of military service during which he was accepted into the Famous Artists Advanced Program and studied under the instruction of American illustrators like Robert Fawcett, Austin Briggs, and Norman Rockwell, Jim put his design skills to work freelancing for Los Angeles advertising agencies.

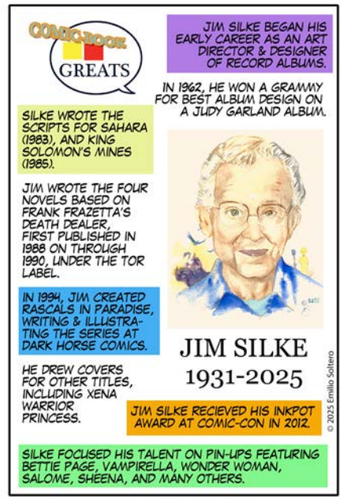
This led to the job that would bring him back to Hollywood: art director at Capitol Records. During his three-year stint at Capitol, Jim directed album covers for such artists as Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Edith Piaf, and The Beach Boys, racking up four Grammy award nominations, including one win. He also discovered photography and began shooting album covers himself. A publicist saw his work and had Jim photograph each new actress he signed. Over the years, Jim's subjects included Yvonne Craig, Victoria Vetri, Jackie Lane, Lola Albright, Ahna Capri, and Sharon Tate. This talent would serve him well for the rest of his life.

Despite a full-time job at Capitol, in 1962 Jim created *Cinema*, a magazine devoted to filmmaking focused on its lead storyteller: the director. This sucked up nights and weekends for the next three years. From this endeavor, he befriended and interviewed Hollywood storytelling legends Alfred Hitchcock, George Stevens, Howard Hawks, Sam Peckinpah, John Ford, Jean Renoir, Akira Kurosawa, Sam Fuller, Robert Aldrich, Federico Fellini . . . the list goes on.

Two of those friendships would shape his life: George Stevens, the most feared man in Hollywood at the time, as mentor, and Sam Peckinpah as creative partner-in-crime. Jim wrote first drafts for many of Sam's films and designed costumes for *Major Dundee*, *The Wild Bunch*, *The Getaway*, and *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*. They remained the closest of friends until Sam's untimely death in 1984.

Jim continued screenwriting solo, turning in 30 scripts for Cannon Films through the 1980s, including *Sahara* starring Brooke Shields, *King Solomon's Mines* with Richard Chamberlain and a young Sharon Stone, and cult classics *Revenge of the Ninja* and *Ninja 3: The Domination*.

In 1965, at the behest of George Stevens, Jim became involved with the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts when he produced the film portion of the first White House Festival of the Arts under the Lyndon Johnson presidency with aid from his pal, actor Charlton Heston. This led to the founding of the American Film Institute (AFI), where Jim served as West Coast director and then chairman of film studies. In 1968, he was appointed to the California Art Commission by then-governor Ronald Reagan and served as chairman in 1971. That same year, Jim co-produced the documentary, *Directed by John Ford,* written and directed by his friend Peter Bogdanovich, who did some of his earliest writing for *Cinema*.



In 1977, Jim's first book was published: *Here's Looking at You, Kid,* a coffee-table tome chronicling 50 years of Warner Bros. Studio. In the 1980s, he wrote four novels based on close friend Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer paintings.

I was first properly introduced to James R. Silke by our mutual friend, artist Dave Stevens. Jim and Dave had a semi-regular lunch date that I was occasionally invited to join. After Dave passed away in 2008, Jim asked if I wanted to continue the tradition. From then on, we rarely went a month without sharing lunch.

Jim credited Dave Stevens and *The Rocketeer* as the inspiration to retire from screenwriting in 1991 and embark, at age 60, on his next chapter as comic book artist and illustrator, taking him full circle to fulfill his childhood dreams. For the next three decades, Jim wrote and illustrated graphic novels, including *Rascals in Paradise*, *Bettie Page Comics: Spicy Adventure*, and *Bettie Page: Queen of the Nile*, as well as books on the popular arts: *Jungle Girls*, *Bettie Page: Queen of Hearts,* and *Pin-up: The Illegitimate Art*. In 2018, Jim published the illustrated novel *Mata Hari Escapes*.

There was nothing Jim loved more than telling stories about his celebrated friends, and nothing he liked less than talking about himself. He taught me a great deal about the integrity of writing. Despite his accomplishments, what I admired most was the way he approached each day with a healthy dose of curiosity and respect for all people. Jim was a consummate gentleman. His one vice, as far as I could tell, was coffee—mixed with what seemed like equal parts sugar.

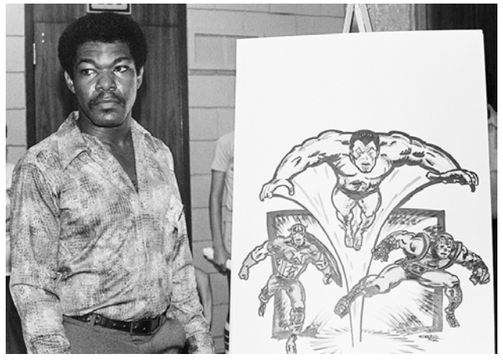
Jim Silke continued telling stories right up until his ended. The last thing we did together a few days before was watch *The Maltese Falcon* from his bedside. It's a film we'd talked about a hundred times, but our first time watching together. I thought about the sheer expanse of his life and how lucky I was to have landed a part in the final reel. I'll miss him greatly.

Kelvin Mao is the director/producer of the documentary *Dave Stevens: Drawn to Perfection,* screenwriter of the Bruce Willis *crime thriller 10 Minutes Gone,* and, for comics, writer of *Seven Sons* with Robert Windom and art books for IDW Publishing.

CARL TAYLOR (1954–2024)

by David Phillips

Carl Taylor was born in New Orleans. His extraordinary talent began to shine at an early age, so much so that he turned the front porch of his family's home into a makeshift studio. The neighborhood children loved to receive a copy of his drawings. Carl's talent led him to work as a cartoonist for KNBC-Channel 4 in Los Angeles. Such talent also afforded him the pleasure of contributing to a variety of fanzines, including *The Creature* (a cover inked by the late Dave Stevens), *The Extraordinary Five,* and *Journey into Comics*. His Kirby/Kane style was heavily sought after for short stories, illustrations, and San Diego Comic-Con ads.



Carl Taylor at the 1980 San Diego Comic-Con. Photo by Jackie Estrada.

As a regular attendee of early San Diego Comic-Cons, he consorted with many Marvel and DC writers and artists—Jack Kirby, Mike Royer, Gil Kane, and Neal Adams, just to name a few.

Carl did not seek a full-time position as a comic book artist, as he felt he would not be able to keep up with the tremendous deadlines (or perhaps he just didn't want to). That being the case, he chose to work with the City of Los Angeles as a librarian and mail room clerk at the Department of Water and Power. Carl was known for his ability to make the staff laugh by doing voice impressions at the annual Christmas parties.

For the last two or three years, he had posted an exponentially improving series of doodle sketches almost daily, which came to an abrupt halt on December 12, 2024. After a few days of inactivity on Facebook, I became concerned, and by Christmas, I'd begun to fear the worst. Carl's passing from complications of several illnesses was confirmed on New Year's Day by our mutual friend Larry Houston.

Carl wasn't just a casual friend. I considered him a brother who had mentored me since I was 13 years old. The irony is that we met because I criticized his art painted on a comic book storefront window, claiming to my mother, "I could do better." Nick, the owner of the store, passed my number to Carl Taylor, who traveled across town on the bus in Los Angeles to show me one of the most amazing portfolios of art I had ever laid my eyes upon, even to this day.

I was immediately humbled, and my young Jedi apprenticeship began.

Carl always left me with sketches on anatomy, perspectives on buildings and horizons, Kirby flash lines, coloring and inking tips, and a host of other things. This led me to draw digest-sized comics. My latest series of books, *Agents of S.O.U.L.,* were inked from Japanese fountain pens and ink given to me by Carl.

Carl made it possible for me to sit poolside one night for hours in the early days of Comic-Con and chat it up with Jack Kirby at the El Cortez Hotel. On the phone, he would tell me about his conversations with Mike Royer, Gil Kane, and Dave Stevens. He told me how he had recommended an animation opportunity to Larry Houston. Larry went on to a hugely successful animation career, most notably producing and directing the *X-Men* series.

I felt I was Carl's biggest fan, constantly nudging him to get a table at Comic-Con events and expose his talent to the world on Instagram. It was clear that he had only scratched the surface of what he was capable of unleashing upon the world.

I will miss Carl dearly and will cherish the experiences and time I was able to spend with him.

David Phillips is the creator of the self-published comics series *Agents of S.O.U.L.*

LARRY TODD (1946–2024)

by David Scroggy

Larry Todd was one of the underground comix and science fiction genre's distinctive voices. He started as the result of a fortuitous meeting with the late Vaughn Bode in their college days. They collaborated often, creating some memorable covers for *Galaxy* magazine and various Warren publications. Larry later collaborated with Mark Bode on *Cobalt 60,* taking one of Vaughn's concepts forward as graphic stories. Larry also famously collaborated with the late Harlan Ellison, rendering Ellison's work *Chocolate Alphabet* in comic book format. The project was inspired by one of Todd's illustrations.

Todd had a long association with the Proto-Pipe company, providing the artwork, design, and concept for a mainstay tool of the cannabis industry. He was a fountain of ideas and was able to converse on any number of advanced theories or science fiction concepts with insight and originality.

Larry was also one of 13 contributors to the sought-after limited-edition *Portfolio of Underground Art* published by Schanes & Schanes in 1980.

But it is probably Dr. Atomic for which Larry is best known. This rascally mad scientist came forward after Larry's move to San Francisco in the 1970s. Dr. Atomic had one stoned adventure after another, powered by a variety of inventions and constructs conjured up by Larry's fertile imagination.

I was able to observe a real-life example at one of my first San Diego Comic-Cons at the El Cortez Hotel. I was program director that year. Besides the main program room, there were a few smaller break-out rooms upstairs, with more specialized programs for smaller audiences. I put Larry in one of these,

Photo by Jackie Estrada

where his program topic was re-creating one of Dr. Atomic's inventions. This drew a very small audience—maybe a dozen underground fans showed up. Undaunted, Larry launched into his demonstration. Not too surprisingly, this turned out to be the construction of an elaborate pot pipe. It was one helluva device, which Larry assembled out of toilet paper, paper towel roll cardboard tubes, and other bells and whistles. It had pumps and baffles and God knows what-all. As Larry assembled this crazy device, he gave a running commentary about the science behind the technology, shared anecdotes about himself and Dr. Atomic, and offered opinions on various topics of the day. It was fascinating.

After about half an hour, as the program was winding down, Larry surveyed the group, who had all moved their chairs closer in a kind of semi-circle, and what could certainly never occur nowadays, winked and said "Well . . . I guess there's nobody here but us." He then pulled a large baggie stuffed with green leafy organic material from his pocket, stuffed the (very) large bowl of his newly made pipe full, and lit the sucker up. As he passed it to the audience, everybody got what could truly be called a "hands-on" demonstration. As the "official" presence, I was a tad worried, but the El Cortez remained none the wiser.

Larry spent the last several years painting facades and interiors for carnival fun houses and rides for Duncan Designs in Santa Rosa, as well as continuing his personal paintings and assorted illustration assignments. So, along with his comix, he will continue to provide thrills for a long time to come.

David Scroggy's long career in comics included executive positions at Pacific Comics and Dark Horse.

MARK ZINGARELLI (1952–2025)

by Rick Geary

I first became aware of Mark Zingarelli sometime in 1982, when I noticed that a new illustrator was appearing in the pages of *The Reader,* San Diego's alternative weekly, to which I had been a contributor for about seven years. Mark's style was immediately recognizable, with its bold, clean linework that harkened back to an earlier style of "realistic" illustration in both comics and advertising. We finally met later that year, under the auspices of a local couple who were interviewing and photographing San Diego cartoonists and illustrators.

Mark and Rick in 1982.

Mark and I bonded over many things, the most important being our love of the pen-and-ink illustrators of the early 20th century. We found ourselves visiting the same art directors as we showed our work around town. We also discovered a mutual affinity for pulp authors, noir movies, and true crime cases. His home was packed with books and art reflecting these and many other interests. For a while, we worked along the same track in the graphic stories we submitted to various anthology publications, seeking out and celebrating the oddball corners of American life.

After a few years in San Diego, Mark moved to Seattle, where he became a familiar presence in *The Rocket* and many other local publications. My wife and I visited him there in 1987, and he gave us a tour of his favorite hangouts.

Over the ensuing years, Mark and I kept in touch through Facebook and email, as he returned to his childhood home outside Pittsburgh and I moved to the wilds of New Mexico. Also during that time, he rose to the top of his craft. His stories in *Weirdo, Real Stuff,* and *American Splendor* put him in the exalted company of Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Peter Bagge, and Harvey Pekar. His illustrations appeared in national publications too numerous to completely list: *Rolling Stone, The Washington Post, Esquire,* and *The Wall Street Journal.* The pinnacle, of course, was *The New Yorker*, the gold standard for any artist's work. My jaw dropped when I saw in 2000 he had illustrated an entire issue of that magazine—a feat, so far as I know, unequaled by any artist before or since. In 2016, I visited Pittsburgh, where Mark and his wife, Kate, were kind enough to attend a presentation I gave at the downtown Toonseum. There, he and I caught up on our lives and relived the *Reader* days.

The Mark I knew was a whirligig of energy and enthusiasm, a sweet, genuine guy who supported other artists and enjoyed being part of a creative community. When we met, I knew I had found a kindred spirit. I just wish we were able to spend more time together.

Rick Geary is a cartoonist known for his award-winning nonfiction graphic novels and for creating Comic-Con's Toucan mascot.

Remembering a Member

of the Comic-Con family we've lost

CLYDENE NEE (1958–2024)

by Jackie Estrada

Clydene Nee was an important part of my life for close to 40 years. I first knew her when she was a young volunteer for Comic-Con. I started Artists' Alley for SDCC in 1986, and I passed the baton to her in 1989. She stayed in that stewardship for the rest of her life. What had started as a section of the Exhibit Hall with 30 to 40 artists grew to the current size of 170 or so. She and her staff looked after all the artists during the show, and she knew them all by name.

Clydene was also involved in the Art Auction that Comic-Con held to raise funds back in the day. She helped line up artists to create works on the spot, which were then auctioned off. In recent years, she was also involved with programming, organizing daily creator workshops.

Clydene was delighted when I met cartoonist Batton Lash in 1990, and she supported us in our long-distance Brooklyn–San Diego romance. When he was ready to pop the question and move to San Diego, she helped him find the perfect engagement ring for me (she was an expert on jewelry, among other talents). She adored Bat, and they had many long phone conversations, often about UFOs. And she often gave him "bat"-themed presents.

In 1994, Bat and I established Exhibit A Press to publish his *Wolff & Byrd* comic book series. Clydene and her brother John had one of the first digital coloring production companies for comics, In Color. She colored all of our covers back in the 1990s.

Clydene with Comic-Con president John Rogers in 1991. Photo by Jackie Estrada

She experienced health issues for many years, but always dealt with them in an upbeat, optimistic way, so I was shocked to learn that she hadpassed away only a few days after posting photos on Facebook from a visit to Balboa Park.

Everyone loved Clydene, as can be seen in the sampling of tributes that follow here.

Jackie Estrada is one of five people who've been to every San Diego Comic-Con. She's been administrator of the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards for 35 years.

TRIBUTES TO CLYDENE

Clydene could have made her mark on this earth as a gardener for royalty on the grounds of faraway castles. Instead, she chose to tend to Comic-Con's Artists' Alley year after year.

She had an exquisite eye for talent. She understood how to bring seedlings, full of potential, to her garden. She would nourish us, protect us from the elements, and get us to bloom. Artists' Alley is full of color, vibrancy, and talent, our roots stretching out far and wide in the comics industry and beyond. For many, we started in the Alley but blossomed in our art because of Clydene.

Now we must give flowers to the woman who championed
so many artists. She tended this garden of artists with precision and tenacity. The fruits of her labor are the artists who have tabled in the Alley, past, present, and future. This garden continues to flourish,
and we are grateful that her stewardship has created such a wondrous spectacle.

Every time people visit the Artists' Alley, they are in awe—Clydene Nee's hand and heart will be forever felt.

—Durwin Talon

Known affectionately as "Ms. CLY" among artists and peers alike, Clydene's contributions to San Diego Comic-Con are legendary! To even try to describe the daily responsibilities of executing and operating Artists' Alley is unfathomable. Clydene accommodated the who's who of the world's hottest and greatest illustrators of all time.

She and her team provided theft control, safety, disability-care services, artist check-ins, and hospitality. They also supplied artists with the materials and tools needed to contribute to the world's greatest art auction!

From 1987 to 2014, Ms. CLY allowed me to express and demonstrate my talents alongside the industry's best. I will be eternally grateful for the opportunity and exposure she provided. I am not alone in giving love. respect, and remembrance to a true superhero!

—Earl Martin

TRIBUTES TO CLYDENE

Drawing of Clydene as patron saint

Clydene Nee was an incredible friend and the heart of Comic-Con's Artists' Alley. Working alongside her through DeviantArt sponsorships, I saw firsthand her warmth, passion, and unwavering dedication. I'll never forget the day Dave Elliott introduced me to Clydene. We walked the floor, and she tested me carefully. "This is my garden, and these are my flowers," she said as she extended her arms across the left and right sides of an aisle, where artists were furiously sketching and entertaining their fans. She wanted me to know this was everything. I was struck instantly with a love and admiration for her that lives on forever.

—Angelo Sotiracopoulos

The art of comics never had a greater friend than Clydene Nee. For decades, she had one goal, and that was to present the talent behind the pages so that attendees at Comic-Con could have a personal understanding of what it takes to create the work they enjoy and admire. And she achieved that goal in spectacular fashion year after year. She was comics' best friend, and we all miss her.

—Scott Hampton

I first met Clydene over 20 years ago, when I was just a tagalong attendee to SDCC. I remember having huge group dinners with her and many other amazing artists. It felt special that we'd get to have some time with her, even for one meal. She knew everyone, and everyone knew her. We became Facebook friends, and I always looked forward to seeing her.

I eventually applied to Artists' Alley, encouraged by Clydene. When I was finally accepted, I knew she liked the cute things I love to create, and that she supported me. And I know that my story is not unique—Clydene believed in everyone in the Alley, *her* artists. She was our patron saint, always on our side, and ready to go tobat for us.

I'm so sad that I won't see her smiling face in the Alley anymore. Like any good patron saint, her presence will be felt even in her absence. She touched so many lives, and we are better for it.

—Guin Thompson

Clydene and I were friends for almost 35 years (next year would've been that milestone). She's well known as a friend to pretty much all artists in this business, and that was how we came to know each other.

In 1991, my first SDCC, I knew almost no one, and no one knew me. She didn't know me at all and had no real reason to cut me a break. I was just starting, and she saw something in me—she reminded me of that many times over the years. She ran Artists' Alley and gave me a table on the spot (almost unheard of today, I gather), and that single act of kindness arguably gave me a career.

Look, I know I wasn't the only one she did that for; she probably launched a thousand artists' careers. That was her character the whole time I knew her. It meant the world to me, a skinny nobody from Alabama who could draw some and just needed that chance.

We always stayed in touch. She loved to send me links to things—books, news stories, recommendations that she thought I might like. She especially loved to talk to me about all the crazy in the world, from politics to the paranormal. She had an eye for that, she appreciated crazy—maybe that's why she liked artists so much.

Everyone who knew her knew she had endured a lot of physical hardship for many years, but I never knew her to not handle it like a champ, even recently when she had to lose a leg. She had the most unsinkable attitude of anyone I knew.

I'm sad to see you go, Clydene. You were important to all of us. I was about to say "more than you knew," but I don't know if that's true. I like to think you did know it.

—Cully Hamner

It's rare, more and more, to find someone who is genuine. That seems like a small thing. Hardly even a compliment. But when you meet someone as real as Clydene was, you realize how much better this world could be. So much better if more people meant what they said, and better if they kept their promises. She actually valued people for who they were and not for what they could do for her.

Clydene never let me down, she never told me a lie, and she always had a smile for me even on what seemed her worst days. We only saw each other for one week, once a year, but I always looked forward to seeing her and having dinner together. She never lost her sense of humor or complained how unfair the world was, God knows she had every right to do so.

don't have the right words at a time like this, for the person she was. The loss is epic. My personal loss, the art world's loss, and the loss to the community that knew her best. My sympathy to all who knew her. To her family, her dear friends. I know I don't have the level of courage Clydene possessed. I'm pretty sure most people don't. But I will do my best to be a *genuine* person, and to hope in some small way to honor her memory.

—John Van Fleet

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