

Vol. 3, No. 198/March 2026

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FCA [Fawcett Collectors Of America] #256 71
P.C. Hamerlinck spotlights Jim Holden's sales study of Fawcett vs. DC, et al.

On Our Cover: *Once in a while in the Golden Age, a finished story or cover simply fell through the cracks and, for some unknown reason, never got published in the comicbook for which it had been intended. Such was this issue's cover drawing by H.G. Peter, the man who illustrated all but a handful of "Wonder Woman" stories from 1941 till the turn of 1958 — and who drew every Wonder Woman cover through mid-1949. This minor gem was first published in an issue of the company's self-produced 1970s fanzine The Amazing World of DC Comics. Why wasn't it used in the '40s? You tell us! [TM & © DC Comics.]*

Above: *In addition to the Amazon princess, H.G. Peter was also the original artist of two male super-heroes written by Eastern Color Publishing's editor, Steven A. Douglas: Man o' Metal (who premiered in Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics #7, July 1941) and Fearless Flint (who was launched in Famous Funnies #89, Dec. 1941 — the same month Princess Diana made her debut in All-Star Comics #8). Harry drew them both on this 1941 Christmas card for his boss & collaborator. Thanks to George Hagenauer. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]*

This issue is dedicated to the memory of
**Alfredo Castelli,
Jackson Guice,
& Jim Shooter**



Alter Ego™ issue 198, March 2026 (ISSN 1932-6890) is published bi-monthly by TwoMorrows Publishing, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Alter Ego, c/o TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614.

Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. Alter Ego Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@ntinet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices. Six-issue subscriptions: \$73 US, \$111 Elsewhere, \$29 Digital Only. All characters are © their respective companies. All material © their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. Alter Ego is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. FIRST PRINTING.

Paradise [Island] Lost

F the time I started perusing comics in the early mid-'40s, well before age five, I had my favorites artists, no matter when I learned their names: Joe Kubert on "Hawkman"... Alex Toth and Irwin Hasen on both "Green Lantern" and "Justice Society of America"... Simon & Kirby on anything... others I'd later find out were named Mort Meskin, Jack Cole, et al. H.G. Peter, artist of "Wonder Woman" wasn't quite one of *those... except...*

...except I *did* love the dramatic poses he drew of the Amazon in action. He was great at showing Diana leaping not-so-tall buildings at a single bound, and fending off bullets with her clunky-looking metal "bracelets"... or tossing the bad-guys around. Even if I was less wild about his depiction of Etta Candy and the Holliday Girls, or Steve Trevor, or most of her foes.

Still, the guy (HGP) could *draw*, in his own odd, archaic style... anybody could see that. Poring over Art Cloos' article on the pages that follow reminded me that I've long believed that no less a talent than Sheldon Mayer, editor of several of my favorite Golden Age titles (*All-Star Comics*, *Flash Comics*, *Green Lantern*) was downright mistaken in believing Harry Peter lacking in "storytelling" ability. At least by the time I was following WW's exploits in 1946 and after, he was every bit as good at both storytelling and action as most of the artists over whose work Shelly presided.

Okay, so those are my not-so-humble opinions... very roughly formed as a moppet, and solidified as I grew older. And here's another one, about which I feel even more strongly:

H.G. Peter is the co-creator of Wonder Woman.

I would never deny that Dr. William M. Marston clearly had the original idea and masterminded (if that's the word) the offbeat philosophy behind the Amazon. Maybe he even had a vague idea

of what she *looked* like.

But it was Harry Peter who brought that vision to life, first in the oft-reproduced concept illo seen on p. 18 (to which he added notes to Marston), then as he and Marston refined that look over the first few months in *Sensation Comics*.

The denial of co-creator status to HGP is, as most aficionados know, simply a function of a contract drawn up in 1941... a legal fiction no more correct factually than the "official" viewpoint for decades that Bob Kane was the sole creator of Batman and who was this Bill Finger guy anyway?

I never concurred in my mentor Stan Lee's sometimes-expressed view that Steve Ditko wasn't the co-creator of Spider-Man. Or in C.C. Beck's stated opinion that writer Bill Parker was the creator of Captain Marvel and Beck himself "merely" the guy who designed and drew him.

At the very least, along the lines of the only-half-satisfactory current Kane-Finger byline, I feel the "Wonder Woman" credits should read: "Created by William M. Marston with H.G. Peter."

I'm proud to present Art Cloos' fact-and-statistics-filled biography of Harry G. Peter, augmented by images of rare art and artifacts in his possession, and in the collection of his wife Alice, herself clearly one of the major Wonder Woman fans of our era.

And I hope that, one of these days, DC Comics will get around to updating and, yes, *correcting* the byline that accompanies each "Wonder Woman" story.

The spirit of H.G. Peter—and *we*—and Wonder Woman herself—all deserve no less.

Bestest,

Roy

COMING IN APRIL

#199

THE 1970S SHAZAMIC BATTLE BETWEEN C.C. BECK & JULIUS SCHWARTZ!

- Cover by C.C. BECK—intended for 1974's *Shazam!* #8, but unused after the artist's (ahem!) abrupt departure!!
- Special double-size *Fawcett Collectors of America*, showcasing "THE WAR BETWEEN BECK & SCHWARTZ!"—artist & editor duking it out, as revealed in C.C.'s white-hot correspondence—plus a spotlight on **BILL PARKER**, writer/co-creator of the original *Captain Marvel*—including, for the first time ever, his complete 1944 & '48 testimonies in the DC.-vs.-Fawcett lawsuit!
- A *Fabulous First!* A behind-the-scenes look at *World Color Press*—the Sparta, Illinois, company that printed nearly every comicbook you read from the 1960s through the 1990s! **RICHARD ARNDT** interviews **PAM LOWRY**, 24-year World Color veteran, for a virtual guided tour! Some real *secrets behind the comics!*
- Also—**MICHAEL T. GILBERT** talks about his favorite *DC comics* of all time—& MORE!!



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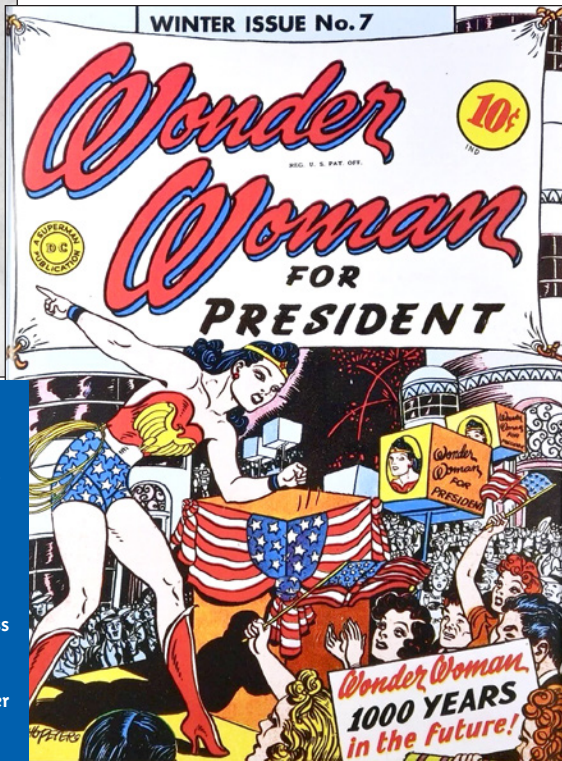
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H.G. Peter

(which is how the artist almost invariably signed his work) juxtaposed beside his iconic and oft-reproduced cover for *Wonder Woman* #7 (Winter 1943). Of course, since not only had Princess Diana not been born in the United States but she was also royalty of another country (the Amazons' Paradise Island), she was doubly ineligible to succeed Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—but it's a great image just the same! Cover art courtesy of the Grand Comics Database; photo from the inside front cover of *Wonder Woman* #2 (Fall 1942), enhanced by and courtesy of John Morrow. [TM & © DC Comics.]



The life and career of Harry George Peter and his family have long been a mystery. This is an attempt to shed some light on that mystery. The story of Harry's life follows him through three of the major events of the first half of the 20th century, each of which would change the course of his life. In researching this biographical article, I found facts and dates from different sources that contradict each other even

on official documents (which should surprise no one, of course), and I have had to make decisions on where to go with what I found. I allowed the leads about the people in his life to take me where they would go, and those same leads would take me in some cases to dead ends, creating new questions that remain unanswered for the time being.

I want to thank Kim Munson, Todd Klein, Ken Quattro, Gary Wright, and Alex Jay for their kind help in the writing of this article. Alex's work on Harry especially was an eye-opener and a huge help, and this work would be much poorer without it. I cannot overstate how much assistance Jim Thompson's proofreading was, and I thank him a lot for taking time out of his busy schedule to do it. I especially want to thank the Wonder Woman collector in my wife: Alice/Allie Cloos, who took my Wonder Woman comics from my collection as a present and turned them into an obsession for both her and for this Batman collector.

I think it was destiny, I really do. Destiny is defined according to the *Oxford Language Dictionary* as the events that will necessarily happen to a particular person or thing in the future. I think Harry George Peter was destined to help create an icon whose worldwide impact would not only go beyond the attractions of pop culture but would become a symbol for what women can be and what the world of comics could teach. But it would take a long and sometimes hard road for destiny to lead Harry to his purpose.

Heroes & Villains: The HARRY G. PETER Story

by Art Close

It begins in San Rafael in Marin County, which is located north of San Francisco, California. It was first settled by the Miwok Native Americans, and then by Spanish Mission fathers who found it well suited for their medical needs of caring for the sick indigenous people in

their care. It is named after the Archangel Raphael, the patron saint of healing. The city grew quickly, becoming the first Marin city to incorporate, build a railroad and a luxury hotel. It went from a dusty village to a city of schools, churches, and libraries.

It was here that Harry Peter was born on Monday, March 8, 1880, with the given name of Henry, though for most of his life he went by the name Harry. He was the youngest of three children. The oldest, his brother Louis Joseph Peter, was born on Thursday, January 25, 1872; the middle child was his sister Mary Francis Peter, who was born on Friday, March 8, 1878. Jill Lepore in *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* speculates Harry was named after the San Francisco newspaper editor and reformer Henry George but gives no proof of this being true. She also states, "If Henry George Peter was named after Henry George, his parents were radicals." But again, there is no definitive or even circumstantial proof given for this assumption, and I personally think this is too much of a stretch to make without more evidence when you look at his parents' background.

His father Louis was born in the province of Alsace in France in 1841; his mother, whose maiden name was Louise Piedumont, was born in France in 1843. He stayed in Alsace until he was an adult; there he learned the tailor trade, which he worked at in Paris and other parts of France before coming to America in 1868. After arriving in Philadelphia, he stayed there for a year before moving to California, where Harry's parents were married in 1870 at the Old St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco. After working on business ventures in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, he established in 1875 a tailoring business in San Rafael, where he lived for the rest of his life. It was an ideal location for a young man to establish a business, as the town needed all types of services because of its rapid growth in the late 19th century.

He would go on to acquire the two pieces of property upon which the Peter Building at Fourth and C Streets stands today. In 1885, after buying the first of the two parcels, he erected a building and moved his shop there, and a year later put in a line of men's furnishings. The Peter Building was constructed in 1894 with Louis



The Peter Building

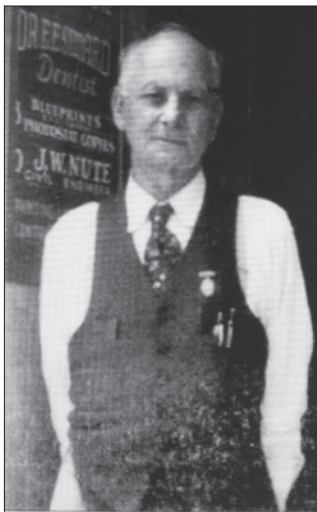
(Above:) The Peter Building in San Rafael, California—built by Harry's father Louis Peter. Photo courtesy of Art Cloos.

(Right:) Numerous images of the West appeared decades later in HGP's art—such as his cover for *Wonder Woman* #27 (Jan.-Feb. 1943). Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



moving the building already there to another location. It became one of the first and finest large business structures to be built in San Rafael. He would then further enlarge his stock to include dry goods and women's apparel in addition to his regular lines. It is not known when he discontinued the business, but when he did the store was leased to Albert's, Inc. According to Ken Quattro, Harry's dad was a respected town leader, though not one of the insiders there; still, he did become a member of the Marin Lodge I.O.O.F.

As he was growing up, it is reasonable to assume that Harry might well have worked in his dad's shop as his brother did, perhaps even doing clothes design, given his budding artistic talent. But ultimately Harry took a different path from his brother, who became a tailor working in his dad's business because the town did not yet have a public high school for him to attend. His sister became a milliner, according to the 1900 Census, most likely also working in the family business, although there was a millinery shop on 4th Street... but the latter already had a lady named Pauline Murray working there.



Louis Peter

Harry's older brother, in a 1936 photo. Harry was eight years younger. Courtesy of Art Cloos.

By the age of twenty, Harry was drawing newspaper illustrations for the *San Francisco Examiner* under the name "H.G. Peter." He was already answering to the nicknames "Harry" or "Pete" and was attending the Mark Hopkins Art Institute. Harry worked for several different publications while in California. In 1901 the San Francisco California City Directory reported him working for the newspaper *The Bulletin* and would continue to report this each year through at least 1905 and probably into 1906 as well. *Camera Craft*, a magazine devoted to photography and founded in 1900, reported in November 1903 on a newspaper artists' exhibition that had pieces submitted by Harry Peter, which they showed in their report of the show on page 232. Adonica Fulton,

who also worked for the *Bulletin* and who later would become his wife, was also represented in the show. From 1907 to 1908 the San Francisco California City Directory lists him as working for the *Chronicle* newspaper. There are no records for 1909, but in 1910 Harry contributed to a late 19th and early 20th century American magazine covering a variety of sporting activities, named *The Outing*.

Ken Quattro in his *The Comic Detective* column of Sunday, February 13, 2011, tells a fascinating story that bears repeating here. It is a tale that began in 1905 when Harry received a letter from a young Edgar S. Wheelan, the son of Fairfax Henry Wheelan, who was a native San Franciscan. Fairfax

was Harvard-educated, a vice-president of the Southern Pacific Milling Company, the head of several charitable organizations, and a leader against the political corruption that was prevalent in the city. After the earthquake of April 18, 1906, he was one of the Committee of Fifty that led the city's relief efforts. To top it all, he was a former classmate and close friend of President Theodore Roosevelt. Edgar wanted to be an artist, and he was hoping to get a drawing from Harry as he had from many other artists of the time. Did Harry respond? Well, there is no way to know, though Quattro says it would be quite the surprise to find out he did not.

Edgar, graduating from Cornell University in 1911, found employment at the *San Francisco Examiner*, later moving on to the *New York American*, where he drew an eight-column comic strip about sports. For William Randolph Hearst, he created the strip *Midget Movies* in 1918, but he left in 1920 after a dispute with Hearst.

(Ed Wheelan continued to mock (and homage) movies in his *Minute Movies* for the George Matthew Adams Service. He drew the two-tiered *Minute Movies* from the early 1920s until 1935. In the early 1940s, DC Comics brought back "Minute Movies" as a feature in 58 issues of *Flash Comics*, and he seemed to be a favorite of publisher M.C. Gaines. Wheelan produced a number of features, including the "Foney Fairy Tales" back-up strip that ran in *Wonder Woman*, *Comic Cavalcade*, and *Sensation Comics*. In 1944, Charlie Gaines published *The Edgar Wheelan Joke Book* with Wheelan's Fat and Slat characters, who returned in their own title, *Fat and Slat*, which ran for four EC quarterly issues in 1947 and 1948. That magazine also featured Wheelan's "'Comics' McCormick, the World's #1 Comic Book Fan." After leaving comics, Wheelan created paintings of clowns. He died in 1966. Wheelan is called by Ken Quattro a particular favorite of *All-American's* young editor Sheldon Mayer. Did Mayer and Gaines' admiration of Wheelan and a possible personal connection between Harry and Ed help get Harry the job of drawing "Wonder Woman"? Perhaps destiny was at work here, bringing all three of them together at this time, as it brought Harry closer to the prize that was waiting for him? As with so much of Harry's life, there is no way to know, but it certainly is a possibility.)

It was when he switched to working for the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Harry met Adonica Fulton, a staff artist for the *San Francisco Bulletin* who had also studied at the Mark Hopkins



Ed Wheelan
in a photo taken in December of 1944—and an early specimen of his *Minute Movies* strips (circa 1919), which were designed to resemble miniature movies, with a rotating cast playing different characters in different “films.” [© the respective copyright holders.]



Institute of Art. The 1880 Federal Census shows that her mother, Mary J. Fulton, was born in Ireland in August 1843, and the 1900 U.S. Census says she arrived in the U.S. in 1850 and in that Census was listed as a widow. She had five children, named John

who's who of the leading artists of the Bay Area, with some names familiar to the comic world of today. They were V. Nahl, H.A. Igoe, J.M. Kelly, A.L. Houchin, Dan Sweeney, C.W. Rohrhand, S.E. Armstrong, R.F. Thompson, W. Francis, Frank A. Todhunter, Fred J. Behrie, R.W. Borough, Atlee F. Hunt, M. Del Mue, L. Maynard Dixon, Theo Langguth, H.G. Peter, W.R. de Lappe, L.R. Foss, H.C. ["Bud"] Fisher, Joseph A. Marion, R.M. Stagg, Sylvan Schul, Rube Goldberg, William Stevens, H.R. Chapin, Laura E. Foster, Adonica Fulton, J.V.S. Sternberg, H.G. Roth, and J.W. Cantrell.

Harry and Herb Roth did illustrations of Adonica. She was drawn by them as a tall, slim beauty who wore the wide-brimmed hats popular at the time. The images of her in photos seem to back this up. They show a tall, attractive woman who knew how to dress in the stylish fashion of the age. Quattro notes that Adonica was well known in the art circles of San Francisco and that she was personal friends with Goldberg and Roth. There is an undated postcard in Allie's collection (it's in poor condition and as such it's hard to read—see p. 6) from Roth stating that R.L.G. (Goldberg) and he could not make a Friday night appointment with Adonica and wished to switch the meeting to Sunday night. Rube Goldberg, who was born in 1883 and died in 1970, was a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist best known for his zany-invention cartoons. He was born in San Francisco on the 4th of July. His first job at the *San Francisco Chronicle* led to early success, but it wasn't until he moved to New York City and began working for Hearst publications that he became a household name. It's estimated that he did 50,000 cartoons in his lifetime.

V. Fulton, Walter E. Fulton, Eva J. Fulton, Rodwan Fulton, and Adonica. She lived in San Francisco on Illinois Street, and in the 1900 Federal Census is listed as a landlady, meaning she probably owned the building she lived in. If the Census records are accurate, she had her first child at age sixteen, with Adonica being born when her mother was thirty-eight in February 1880. However, I am finding that Census records from this era cannot always be trusted as to accuracy, partly because the original 1890 Federal Census special schedules for mortality, crime, pauperism, benevolence, special classes (e.g., deaf, dumb, blind, insane), and portions of the transportation and insurance schedules, were badly damaged by fire and eventually destroyed by a Department of the Interior order. In 1900 Adonica is reported living in San Francisco with her mother and a Dan Thompson, who is described as a lodger and a streetcar conductor, at 234 Capp Street.

Harry and Adonica were members of the Newspaper Artists' League, not the last artist association that Harry would belong to—a group limited to the leading women and men who worked for the local newspapers and magazines. They both exhibited in San Francisco at a newspaper artists exhibition where Adonica's twenty pieces were singled out as among the most distinguished. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported the following on December 12, 1906 in an article titled "Newspaper Artists Make Annual Exhibit": "The annual exhibition work of the newspaper artists of San Francisco opened yesterday with a good attendance and much interest, in Calvary Church, at Fillmore and Jackson streets, and will continue until Saturday. This is the third annual exhibit of the Newspaper Artists' League. There are 267 subjects in the exhibition of sketches and drawings, and the first day's sale was satisfactory. The exhibit is open both afternoon and evening." It must be noted that this was only seven months after the earthquake that had caused so much death and destruction in the city.



Adonica
This exquisite undated sketch of Adonica Fulton, later Adonica Peter, is believed by Art & Allie Cloos to be most likely the artwork of Harry Peter. From the H.G. Peter estate, and from the collection of Alice Cloos. [© the respective copyright holders.]

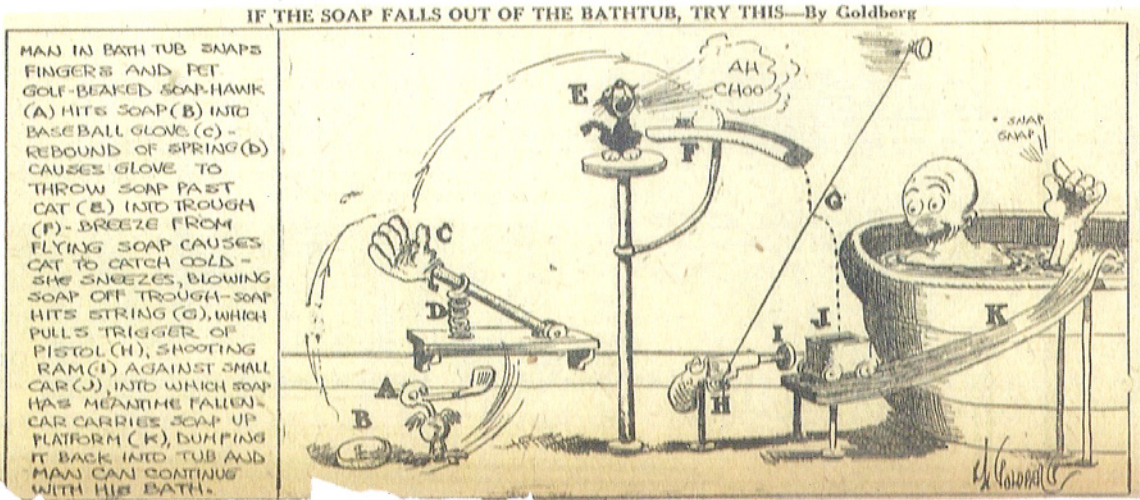
As for Roth, he was born in San Francisco in 1887. He studied art at Polytechnic High School, and upon graduation went to work for the *San Francisco Bulletin*. After a trip to Europe in 1910, he settled in New York City, where he was a cartoonist for the *New York World* and later the *New York Herald Tribune*. He died in New York on Tuesday, October 27, 1953. It's clear that Harry and Adonica were traveling in impressive circles in San Francisco.

Lepore has Harry and Adonica moving to New York City in 1907, but the 1907 and 1908 San Francisco, California, City Directories report him still living in San Francisco, at 1132 Buchanan Street. Today the place he lived in no longer exists, it seems,

The list of contributors to this exhibit was a



Rube Goldberg
(née Reuben Lucas Goldberg) in a 1929 photo. The eventually famous cartoonist was a colleague and friend to Harry & Adonica Peter and their circle. Seen at right is a 1921 cartoon by Goldberg providing a device for retrieving the soap when it falls out of the bathtub; collected in the 2013 Abrams ComicArts volume *The Art of Rube Goldberg*.



as a Google search returns a modern-style condo/apartment-style house. It is more likely the couple moved East sometime between mid-1909 and mid-1910 after that Census had been conducted, as the 1910 Federal Census does not list him.

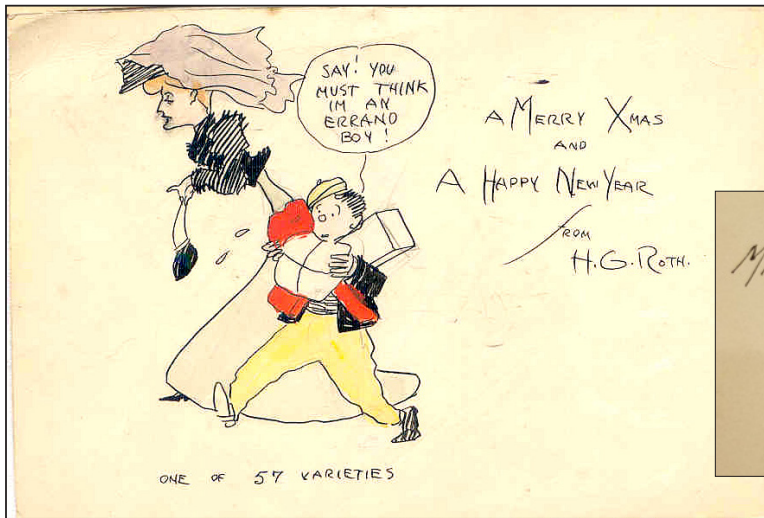
The 1906 San Francisco earthquake struck the coast of Northern California at 5:12 a.m. on April 18 with an estimated magnitude of 7.8. The San Franciscans called it the "Big Quake,"

After what appears to be a five-year courtship, they were married in Manhattan on Friday, January 12, 1912. Adonica's wedding dress, shown in her wedding pictures that she modeled for, was a beautiful design that fit her perfectly. The question has to be asked: Given the many images drawn by the both of them that showed her in stylish attire, could it have been possible that one or both together designed her wedding dress? There is no way to know, but given their ability to draw her in very stylish outfits and the possibility that Harry did drawing work for his father's store, it has to be considered that Harry and Adonica both at least contributed to the design. It is reasonable to assume, given the

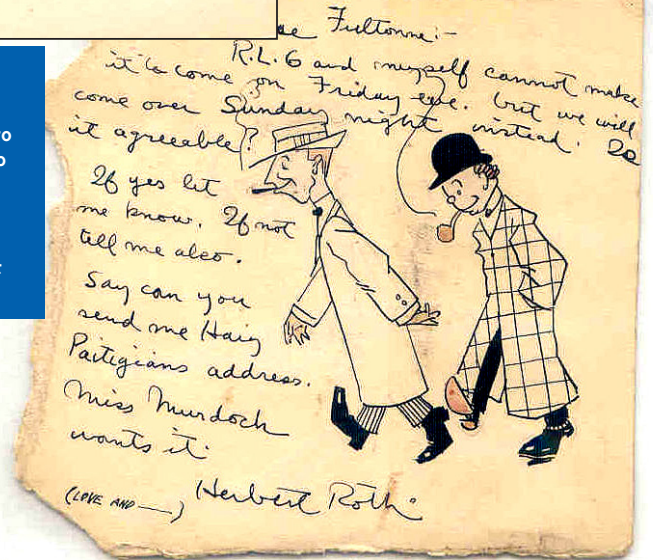
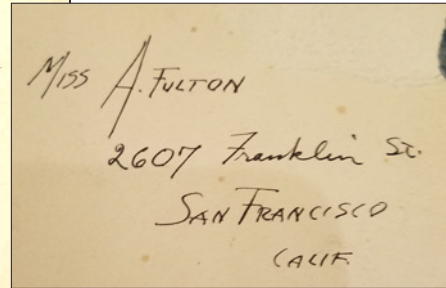
3000-mile distance between New York City and San Raphael, that Harry's dad Louis did not make the dress for Adonica and that it was made in New York City. There were two witnesses as

which resulted in massive death and destruction. The frequently quoted number of 700 deaths caused by the earthquake and fire is now believed to underestimate the total loss of life by a factor of 3 or 4, according to the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program. Most of the fatalities occurred in San Francisco, and 189 were reported elsewhere. Because of this, it is not surprising that the first of the three significant events that would help shape his life would have Harry and Adonica deciding to move to New York together, as many San Franciscans left the city permanently after the quake. Oakland's population alone doubled to 150,000 between 1900 and 1910. So, spurred by the earthquake, he moved to the city that would provide him with his "destined" big break some 31 years later.

Despite the rapid refinement of San Raphael, it had to be a bit of an adjustment for them to live in what was becoming the cosmopolitan center of the U.S. Once there, their pen-and-ink-style illustrations, which were influenced by Charles Dana Gibson, earned them editorial work from publications like the *New York American* and *Judge*.



Season's Greetings
(Above & right:) The front and back of an undated Christmas card from newspaper cartoonist H.G. Roth to the as-yet-unwed Adonica Fulton. Sadly, we found no photographs of Roth.
(Bottom right:) An excusatory note to Adonica, with cartoon, from the same Herbert Roth. All from the collection of Alice Cloos. [© the respective copyright holders.]





Wedding Day

(Above:) Wedding day photos of Adonica & Harry G. Peter, and their wedding certificate, all from the couple's wedding album. From the collection of Allie Cloos

(Below right:) This photo of Adonica, which seems quite likely to have been taken on the same day (based on the dress) was sent to Roy Thomas some time back by Alex Johnson. Harry's closest approximate of such a dress, perhaps, was on his cover (below left) for *Wonder Woman* #38 (Nov.-Dec. 1949), for a story titled "The Girl from Yesterday."

[TM & © DC Comics.]





In Memoriam

The gravesite of Harry's parents, Louis and Marie Peter, and their daughter Mary (whose name is inscribed there as "Marie.") Photo courtesy of Art Cloos.

required by law at the wedding; these were identified as Sarah G. Holloway and Mr. A. Lenhimu on the marriage certificate. The service was conducted by E.S. Holloway, who was also identified on that certificate. Sarah was the wife of the reverend and was forty-seven. It would seem that, since she acted as a witness, she and her husband might well have known the couple. Edward S Holloway was fifty and is listed in the New York Charities Directory as being affiliated with the Congregational Church that was located on 327 West 33rd Street, and he seems to be given a home address on West 119th Street. Holloway also has listings of working with Violet Oakly as an illustrator in two books—*With Feet to the Earth*, published in 1888, and *Do-Nothing Days*, published in 1899. If this is the same person,

perhaps there was an artistic connection between the Reverend and/or Sarah to Harry or Adonica or both? More research needs to be done to determine if there is any validity to this.

On Monday, December 3, 1914, Harry's mom Louise Peter died. She was buried in Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery located at 270 Los Ranchitos Road, San Rafael, CA. His father died on Saturday, December 10, 1932, at night at his home at 1016 C Street, after an illness of four years. His funeral was held at St. Raphael's Church located at 1104 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, California, and he too was buried in Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery, with his wife. It's pretty safe to say that, with parents having come from France, a Catholic country, and since his father's funeral at least was in a Catholic Church with burials in a Catholic cemetery, Harry was raised Catholic... but how strongly he carried that with him in his life is simply not known. Adonica's mom apparently died on December 11, 1916, in Monterey, California, at the age of seventy-four. Since she came from another heavily Catholic country, Ireland, it is also reasonable to assume the same for Mary.

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and officially entered World War I. Six weeks later, on May 18, 1917, the Selective Service Act was passed, which authorized the federal government to raise a national army for the American entry into the "Great War." The Act would wind down with the end of the war in November 1918. There were three registrations for the draft. The third was held on September 12, 1918, for men age eighteen through forty-five. Harry was thirty-eight at the time, and he registered on September 12, 1918. His draft card shows that he was working for the *New York American* as a newspaper artist, and he listed as his nearest relative one Antonia F. Peter. (Note a different spelling for Adonica's first name here.) That draft card listed Harry's (and of course Adonica's) address at 526 West 122 Street in Manhattan, New York.

In 1920 the United States Federal Census shows Harry (or Henry, as listed there) as living at 71 Central Avenue in Staten Island in Richmond County, New York. He was thirty-nine, and as per his draft card his occupation was listed as a newspaper artist. Jill Lepore reports that Harry and Adonica had bought a house in Staten Island and were known to be living in it by 1925, but the 1921 New York City Board of Elections voter list shows they

were living there earlier than that—in 1921. The house, located at 63 Portland Place in Staten Island, New York, was a two-story building with a Dutch-style slanted roof and a basement with four windows that faced the street below the first-floor windows. There was an attached garage, but there is no way to know if the garage was added to the house later. Lepore states that it does not seem as though the couple ever had any children. The 1930 Federal Census lists only Harry and Adonica at their address, so I tend to agree that the couple probably never had any children, as by 1930 Adonica would be fifty, when her age would have mitigated against her having children.

William Marston, with whom Harry Peter would later work on "Wonder Woman," was an early supporter of women's rights, and it seems so were Harry and Adonica. Both often drew editorial cartoons in supportive magazines such as *Judge*, a weekly satirical magazine published in the United States from 1881 to 1947, which reached a circulation of 100,000 by 1912 and which featured from 1912 to 1917 "The Modern Woman" page, to which Harry contributed. Peter also drew for the magazine *Puck* while working for the *New York American*.

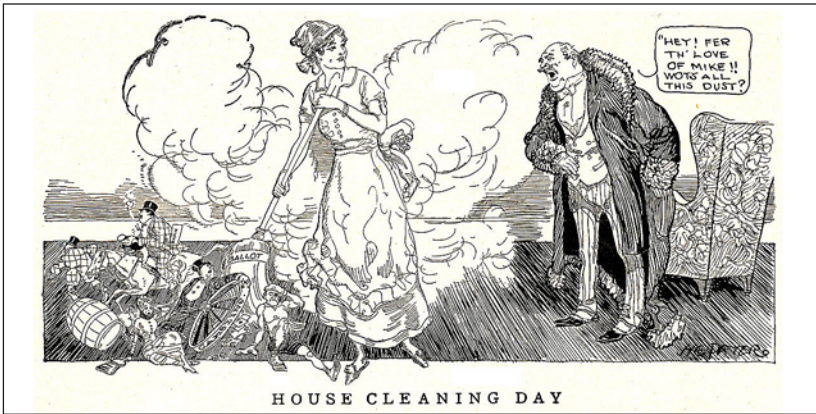
In looking at the Board of Elections of The City of New York voter list from December 31, 1921, Adonica is registered as a Socialist. What does that suggest as to her political leanings? Well, from 1900 to the 1918 elections the Progressive wing of the Theodore Roosevelt Republicans was in charge. But by 1920 they had been replaced by the pro-business, limited-government factions of the Republican Party. So even if Lepore was right about Harry's family's political leanings, there is no evidence that he necessarily followed them. As for Adonica, the Socialist Party by 1920 was on the defensive in New York and indeed across the U.S. In the first decades of the 20th century, it drew significant support from many different groups, including trade unionists, progressive social reformers, populist farmers, and immigrants. Its party platforms regularly included the reform interests of these groups, as well as the long-term goal of eradicating capitalism. But, with five Socialist Party members having in 1920 won seats in the New York State Assembly that were being denied them repeatedly by the Republican leadership in control, it took a certain amount of bravery for her to be a Socialist in 1921 New York, so perhaps *she* is where one should look for "radicalism" in Harry's life?

There are three known photo images of Harry and three artist sketches, of which two are self-portraits.



Their Island Home

The house at 63 Portland Place on Staten Island, NY, that once belonged to Harry & Adonica Peter. This photo was probably taken in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Both scans courtesy of Art Cloos.



HOUSE CLEANING DAY

Judge—And Ye Shall Be Judged

(Left:) An “H.G. Peter” “house-cleaning” cartoon from *Judge* magazine, circa 1915. Courtesy of Art Cloos. [© the respective copyright holders.]

(Right:) For the splash page of the April 1947 issue (#64) of *Sensation Comics*, Harry would depict Wonder Woman raising quite a storm of dust in another context. Script by Joye Hummel. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]



One is an oft-reproduced photo taken in the offices of All-American Comics (a close affiliate of DC Comics at the time) showing William Marston, Harry, AA editor Sheldon Mayer, and AA publisher M.C. Gaines, when Harry was in his early 60s. Les Daniels identifies the photographer as tennis champion Alice Marble; this photo was first published in *Wonder Woman* #2 (Fall 1942). [EDITOR’S NOTE: See pp. 3 & 19 of this issue.]

A second photo shows Harry as a young man. He is hatless and apparently dressed for his wedding, as the picture came out of his marriage and wedding souvenir book, a copy of which Allie has in her collection... so it can be assumed the image dates from 1912, when he was just turning age thirty-two. Harry looked to be quite the sturdy individual in this picture, and he and Adonica must have made quite the handsome couple that day. Later in 1918 his draft card would describe him as being of medium height and build, with black-colored eyes and hair. [ED. NOTE: See p. 7.]

The third photo (at right) shows a dapper man in his thirties or forties with a hat, suit, and tie, and a pipe. I speculate it is from the 1910s or 1920s, but there is no date on the photo. That pipe or one



like it also appears in that early-1940s editorial office photo mentioned above.

In terms of drawn portraits (see next page), there is one of Harry that appears in *Wonder Woman* #5, cover-dated June/July 1943, in the story titled “Etta Candy and the Holliday Girls.” Then there is a self-portrait done for the summer 1954 edition of the National Cartoonists Society’s publication *The Cartoonist*.

Harry, With Pipe

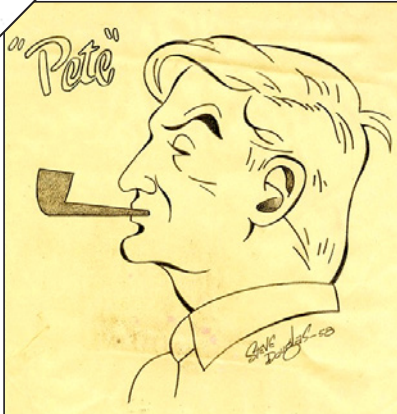
Probably from the 1920s. Courtesy of Art Cloos; photo enhanced by John Morrow.

These are the only two self-portraits of him I have found to date. The last is a black-&-white head portrait of Harry with his pipe in his mouth, done by early comics artist Steve Douglas and signed in 1958, almost certainly done after Harry’s death and very similar to Harry’s self-portrait but done over four years later. Douglas was born in 1907 and died in 1967; pop-culture historian (and science-fiction author) Ron Goulart identified him as Brooklyn-born and doing professional cartoon work before he was twelve. In his late twenties, he went to work as an editor and production manager for *Famous Funnies*. It would seem that Harry and Douglas knew each other and that the portrait was a posthumous tribute to Harry.



“Seeing [Miss] America First”

Another early illustration, which may or may not be from *Judge*, shows that Harry was definitely getting practice in drawing women. Courtesy of Michael T. Gilbert. [© the respective copyright holders.]



Clockwise Caricatures Of H.G. Peter

(From above left): HGP caricatures himself in a splash page (scripted by William M. Marston) from *Wonder Woman* #5 (June-July 1943)... his self-portrait of sorts, from the *National Cartoonists Society 1954 Annual*... and a derivative drawing of him done by pioneering comics editor, writer, Steven Douglas in 1958, shortly after "Pete's" passing. [First art spot © DC Comics; second © Estate of H.G. Peter; third © Estate of Steven Douglas.]

Printers' Ink was an American trade magazine launched in 1888—the first national trade magazine for advertising. It changed its name to *Marketing/Communications* in 1967 and ended publication in 1972. On February 26, 1920, it printed an advertisement from Louis C. Pedlar (born Luis C. Pedler), Inc., Counselors in Art, located at 95 Madison Avenue in Manhattan, announcing a new position for Harry: "Mr. H.G. Peter is now a member of this organization. He has been added to our staff because of his wide experience as a black and white artist, and a colorist of infinite imagination. Mr. Peter is also a specialist in animal and Western subjects, which gives his prowess an added value and wider scope. It is the aim of this organization to thus meet all demands upon it for highest class pictorial co-operation on any subject whatsoever."

Pedlar was born in San Francisco in February 1884. He moved to New York City from San Francisco around 1904/05. He worked as an artist in the newspaper business, but his career there was short-lived, and he got into advertising, working for Calkins & Holden before opening his own firm and then hiring Harry. His California roots, his art background, and his time in the news business indicate a distinctly possible California connection with Harry. In the same *Printers' Ink* issue Pedlar announced that his company was moving on March 27 to 246 5th Avenue on the downtown corner of 28th Street on the 6th floor. His Counselors in Art Company may not have lasted long, though, as, according to the *askART* website, he later started his own firm with Tom Ryan in 1925, named Pedlar & Ryan and located on 250 Park Avenue in NYC. He joined the Army reserve in New York around 1932 and started as a Major. He left New York for Washington, DC, in September 1942, serving on the Veterans Administration during the war. He would die in Maryland in 1953. Pedlar & Ryan



"Counselors in Art"

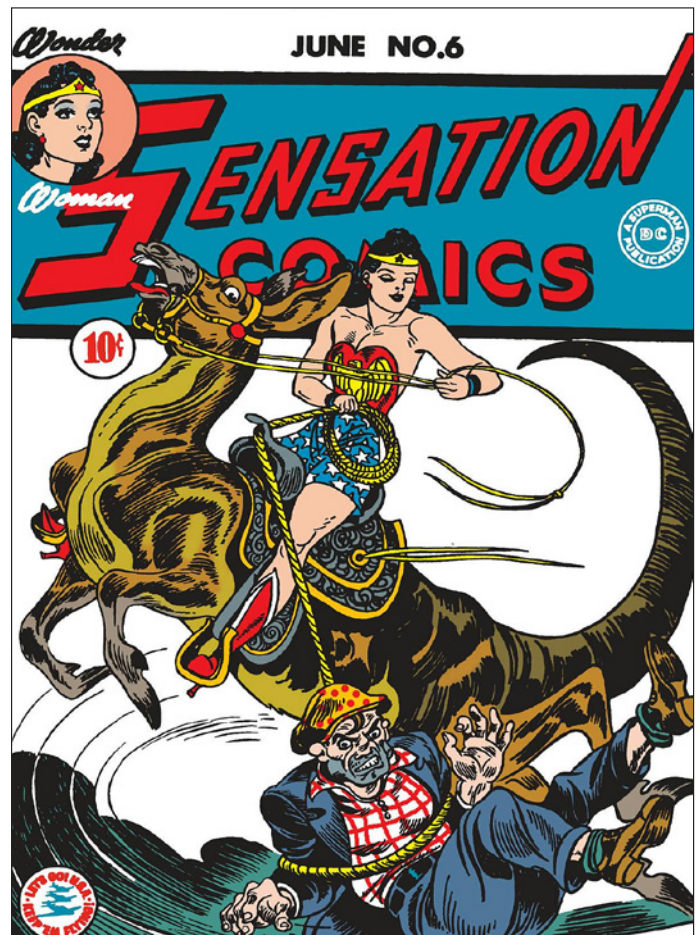
Louis C. Pedlar gave Harry a job in New York City in early 1920, extolling him as an expert artist in "animal and Western subjects." Wonder if Pedlar had any idea that one day the beast that HGP would be best-known for drawing was the half-mythical kanga of Paradise Island. Photo courtesy of Art Cloos; art courtesy of GCD. [Cover TM & © DC Comics.]

would continue on past the end of World War II, by which time Harry would be finding success in the world of comics. How long Harry remained with Pedlar's company or how long the company ultimately remained in business is not known.

The Great Depression began in 1929, with its worst effects felt in the early to mid-1930s. It never really ended until the U.S. entered WWII with the need for war materials effectively ending unemployment in the U.S., and it was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world. Harry was now in his fifties, and opportunities for aging artists to find work must have become far more limited. Lepore states it is not known whether Adonica continued to work as an artist or not, but given the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, it would seem likely that, given her stated talent as an artist, she would have at least tried to continue her drawing, if only to bring in additional income for the couple.

However, according to the 1925 New York State Census, both Harry and Adonica left their occupation blank. He did an illustration for the Dec.-Jan. 1919 issue of *College Life*. In the 1930 and 1940 Federal Census records, Adonica is listed as either being a housewife or "none" in the column for employment, while Harry listed his occupation as artist.

In Harry's estate there is a check he signed on May 3, 1937, addressed to the Sussex Oil Company for \$1.60. On the back of it there is a note saying the amount was "for Federal stamp tax 22 transfer cart no. 22003 to Donna Fulton Peter from Eva I Fulton"—





Will You Take A Check?

The check for \$1.60 (today something like \$36.44) to Adonica from her sister Eva Fulton. From the collection of Alice Cloos.

Adonica’s sister, who, in the 1930 Federal Census, was listed as living in San Francisco at 100 California Street in what was probably a rented apartment. Her occupation was listed as private, but she was also listed as a wage or salary worker, so she apparently had the funds to be able to help her sister out financially. The question has to be asked whether this was a one-time event, or did she provide assistance on more than one occasion? The amount, even for that time, was not a great deal of money, but one has to wonder how difficult it was for the Peters to make ends meet at this time in order to be able to pay a tax of \$1.60, which is the equivalent of \$36.44 in 2025 money.

In the 1940 Federal Census the Peters list the value of their home at \$7,000, the equivalent of \$157,802.50 in 2025. Harry lists his job as a newspaper artist in that Census but entered zero weeks worked in that profession, with no income from it in 1939. Instead, he answers “yes” to the question, did he have income of more than \$50 from sources other than money from wages or salary? So at this point he was earning money from—where?

Well, the Peter family owned numerous real estate properties, and his niece managed them, so it is possible Harry had income from them. Certainly, it was not yet from working in comics, as that would not begin until 1940 as far as is known, and it seems it was not enough, given his sister-in-law’s check. Perhaps he was doing manual labor of some kind? Beyond this, I do not have a full answer to this question at this time.

On September 16, 1940, the United States instituted the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which required all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five to register for the draft. This was the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. In 1941 the act was amended to include men up to the age of sixty-four. Harry was sixty-two and registered for it, signing his card on April 26, 1942, four and a half months after Pearl Harbor. One question on his 1918 card had been to list the name and address of one person who will always know his address. This time, Harry listed his brother Louis, whose address was given as 1244 4th Street, San Rafael, California, instead of Adonica, as he had done on his 1918 draft card. Why Louis, who was 3,000 miles away in California and not Adonica, with whom he lived? Well, Adonica was to die in 1947 and perhaps she was already suffering from what would end her life? Or perhaps there were difficulties in their marriage? At this point it’s only conjecture. On his draft card he listed himself as self-employed and his work address as 130 W 42nd Street, New York City.

One effect of the Depression was its impact on American popular culture. People wanted cheap entertainment in the 1930s

and popular culture gave it to them. Radio became the dominant technological entertainment at home. From *The Jack Benny Show* to *The Green Hornet*, kids and adults sat around their radios at night and listened and laughed at the comedy and thrilled to the drama. Movies offered all-day Saturday matinees for a quarter. Cheap magazines kept their readers informed on the doings of the Hollywood stars they watched each week in the movies. And in the newspapers an entire generation of readers, both adult and child, devoured the daily comic strips. Harry had to have seen this firsthand; maybe he had read some of the comics and he certainly knew many of the artists by name and some personally, such as his friend Rube Goldberg. The artists who did those strips were, for their time, well known by their reading public. And, most importantly, they made money.

So is it such a great surprise that Harry’s first known comics-related work was on a feature that was called “Lulu of the Jungle,” which very much appears like a proposal for a newspaper comic strip? The artwork is in the style of what he did in his magazine work, and he signed it “Harry Peter.” The style is very different from what would become his traditional comicbook look. I believe it never saw print except for the proof pages that



Lulu Of The Jungle

This never-sold sample Sunday strip of H.G. Peter’s from the late ’30s or early ’40s definitely demonstrates why one new employer wrote that he was especially good as drawing animals. Harry was obviously a master of the old school! From the collection of Alice Cloos. [© Estate of H.G. Peter.]

were found in his estate materials, which my wife Allie owns. It shows just how good an artist Harry really was, and it is something that should make comic art scholars reassess their opinion of his work. There is no date on any of the pages, but I am thinking that this might have been in the late 1930s, when he had to have been looking at different areas in which to find work. I wonder, too, if some of his old friends such as Goldberg and Roth suggested he explore the possibilities there.

The second significant event that would help shape Harry's life, the Great Depression, was pushing him closer to his destiny into the field that would win him lasting fame—comicbooks.

Breaking into the newspaper comic strip racket was not easy, but getting into drawing comicbooks was. In 1938 comic publishers were just establishing themselves as a medium, and they were where artists who had difficulty finding work elsewhere went. Harry's earliest comicbook work that I have found was in the sole two issues of *Hyper Mystery Comics*, published in 1940 by Hyper Publications. Other early work by him for comicbooks was through Lloyd Jacquet's comic shop, Funnies, Inc., where he illustrated the biography of General George C. Marshall in *True Comics* #4 (Sept. 1941), published by George J. Hecht.

According to the "Public Domain Super-heroes" website, Harry drew "Man o' Metal," his first super-hero work, in *Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics* #7 (July 1941), published by Western Comics. In the character's origin story, written by cartoonist Steven A. Douglas, foundry worker Pat Dempsey has a fateful accident when a vat of white-hot metal spills on him. Rather than being killed, however, he experiences an unexplainable chemical reaction. His skin becomes like blue metal, and he bursts into flames whenever he is exposed to heat or electricity. He quits the foundry and goes to work as a private investigator, solving crimes for pay and fighting evil for free. In his normal human body, he is as vulnerable as any other person, but while on fire, he can melt bullets and grenades. He can breathe underwater and is bulletproof.

The hero continued to appear in *Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics*, whose title changed to *Heroic Comics* with #15. Harry would do the art for "Man o' Metal" up to #23, being spelled in issue #24 by Seymour Pearlstein. In issue #25 he returned to do the pencils for the strip. He did not do any of the art for the "Man o' Metal" stories in the character's remaining appearances, which ended with #28; the artist of those stories remains unknown as of this writing. I wonder about All-American editor Shelly Mayer's later assertion that Harry knew nothing about how to do continuity drawing for



Getting Hyper

Hyper Mystery Comics #1 (May 1940) contains two 16-page stories that are believed by many to be H.G. Peter's work. The first, "Commodore Ambord," becomes, by issue #2, a flashback account of how the Spanish brought slavery to the New World. The second, "The Diamond Smugglers," is much more obviously Peter's work. Scripters unknown. The series—and apparently the publishing company, Hyper Comics—lasted only two issues. Courtesy of Comic Book Plus website.

[© the respective copyright holders.]



This We Know Is True

Harry Peter penciled the story of General George C. Marshall in *Parents Magazine's True Comics* #4 (Sept. 1941)—but apparently he was given an unsympathetic inker, so that his style is barely recognizable. Scripter unknown, as well. Courtesy of Art Cloos. [© the respective copyright holders.]

comics, given that he had been getting steady work in them since early 1940. Maybe Mayer was right, but if so, Harry learned fast.

The website *Four Color Shadows* reprinted the “Man o’ Metal” story from *Heroic Comics* #21, which begins with the words: “Trouble turns up in the most unexpected places.” The script, reportedly by Douglas, is a typical Golden Age story, one that is not going to win any awards but isn’t as bad as some comments on it suggest. My point here is that, reading the story, I was struck by the composition of Harry’s pages, angles, circles, breaking the gutter. All those things that were considered “breakthroughs” by other artists Harry was using in his comic art, too. One commenter on the website called page six of this story’s art “particularly ugly.”

Karen M. Walowit, in her 1974 book *Wonder Woman: Enigmatic Heroine of American Popular Culture*, wrote, “Harry Peter is one of the most underrated artists in the comics field. He is particularly criticized for his flat, two-dimensional style and for his anatomy drawings. The main problem in not being appreciated, I would suggest, is that he was simply not interested in what might be termed ‘realistic’ drawing or accurate technology, but rather in conveying the imaginative essence and psychological impact of whatever he was depicting.” I think she is spot-on with this assessment.

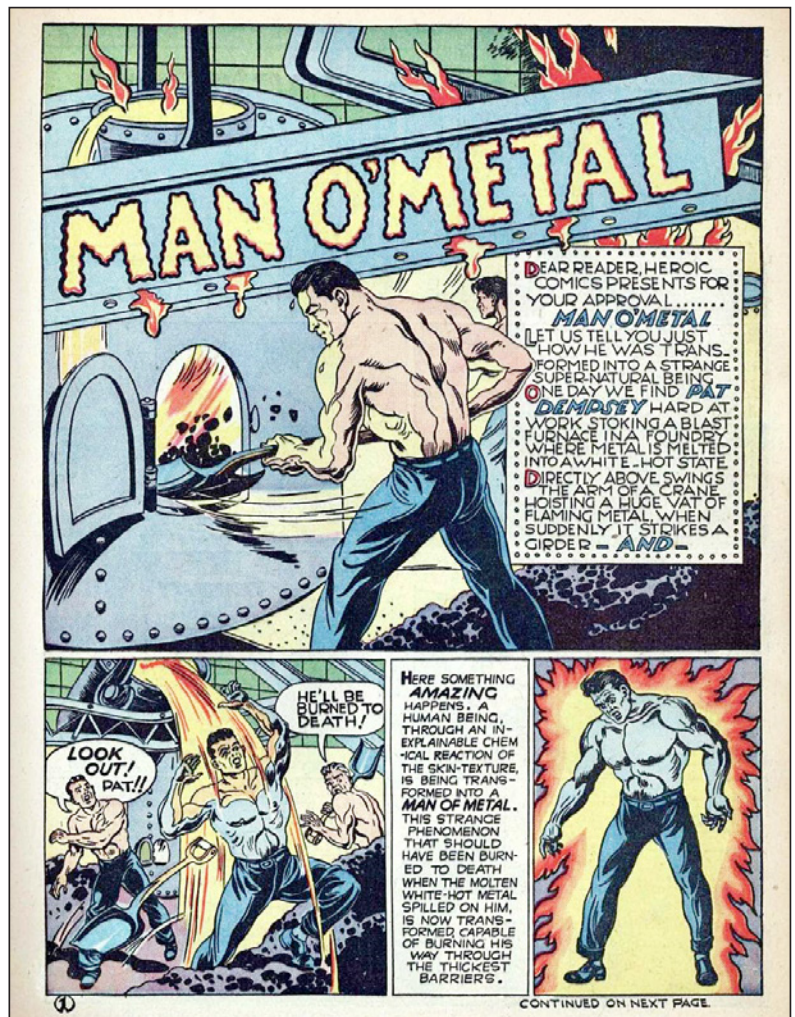
It was at the age of sixty-one that Harry would bring Marston’s Amazonian super-heroine Suprema the Wonder

Woman (a name that his new editors would quickly shorten to just Wonder Woman, according to Lepore) to life on the pages of the three comics she appeared in (not counting *All-Star Comics*, to which Harry contributed for only two issues).

William Moulton Marston was born on May 9, 1893, in Saugus, Massachusetts, the son of Annie Dalton (Moulton) and Frederick William Marston. He was educated at Harvard University, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and receiving his B.A. in 1915, an LL.B. in 1918, and a PhD in Psychology in 1921. He was the creator of the systolic blood pressure test, which became one component of the modern polygraph invented by John Augustus Larson in Berkeley, California. He wore many hats in his life—as psychologist, inventor, self-help author.

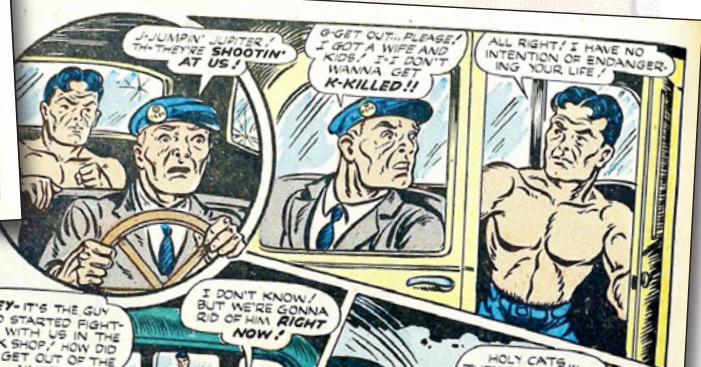
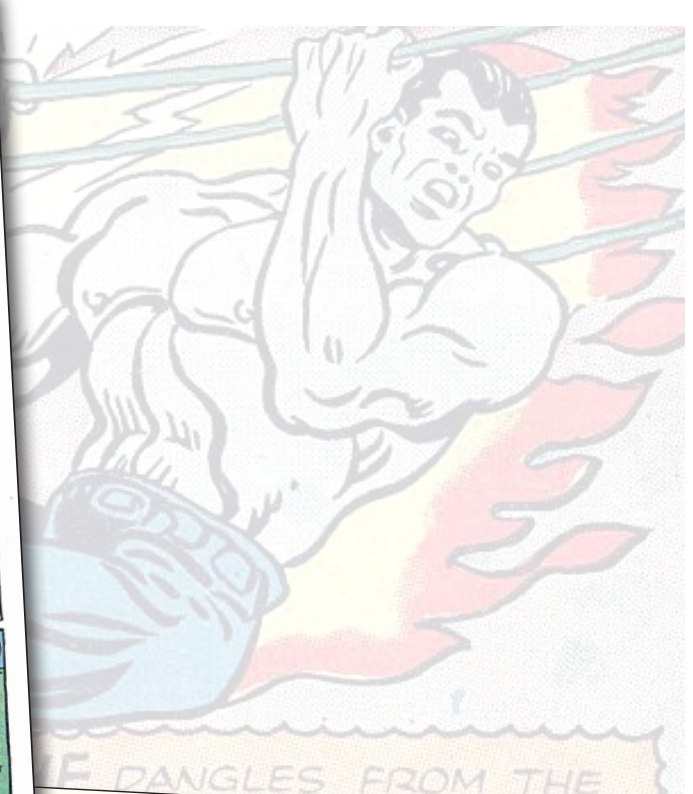
But the hat that would count the most for Harry Peter was the hat Marston wore as a comicbook writer. In 1935 he and his family moved to Rye, New York. A 1940 interview with Marston that was published in *Family Circle*, in which he defended the fledgling comicbook industry, impressed All-American publisher/managing editor M.C. (“Charlie”) Gaines to the point where he offered Marston a job as a consulting psychologist; he would be part of an Editorial Advisory Board to ensure

[continued on p. 17]



Showing His Metal

The first page (with truncated origin) of “Man o’ Metal” in Western’s *Reg’lar Fellers Heroic Comics* #7 (July 1941), nearly half a year before the DC debut of “Wonder Woman.” Script attributed to Stephen A. Douglas. MLJ’s “Steel Sterling” had had a rather similar origin more than a year previously. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

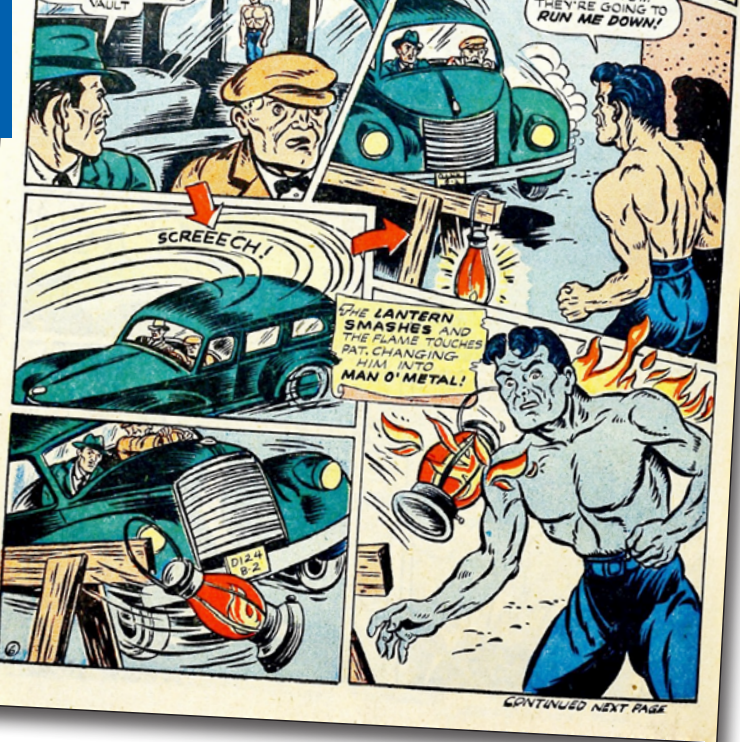


Metal Of Honor

(Top:) Man o' Metal goes into action in *Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics* #8 (Sept. 1941), courtesy of writer Steven Douglas & artist H.G. Peter. Courtesy of CBP.

(Bottom:) In the "Man o' Metal" story in title-shortened *Heroic Comics* #21 (Nov. 1943), Peter used arrows to lead the reader's eye from panel to panel. By this time, he'd been drawing "Wonder Woman" for two years. Script by Douglas. Scan courtesy of Art Cloos. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

THE FLAME TOUCHES PAT, CHANGING HIM INTO MAN O' METAL!





“Fearless Flint”

Around the same time he began drawing “Wonder Woman”—or perhaps a little before—Harry Peter became the co-creating artist of the super-hero feature “Fearless Flint” in *Famous Funnies*. (Clockwise from top left:) Harry Peter’s cover for *Famous Funnies* #89 (Dec. 1941)—and the origin of Fearless Flint in the first two pages of the feature, as conceived and written by the mag’s editor, Steven A. Douglas. Courtesy of the GCD, Art Cloos, and Jim Kealy. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



Steven Douglas
 Cartoonist & editor of *Famous Funnies*... writer/co-creator of Fearless Flint (and Man o’ Metal).





Comics In "Flint" Condition

(Top:) This action page from the "Fearless Flint" installment in *Famous Funnies* #93 (April 1942) is a sterling-steel example of the cliffhanger ending of the series. Script by Stephen A. Douglas, art by H.G. Peter.

(Bottom:) And here's an example of how those cliffhangers resolved, from the first page of Flint's exploits in *Famous Funnies* #106 (May 1943), as GHP neared the end of his time on the feature. Both scans courtesy of CBP. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]





You Do See Her, Don't You?

Even before “Wonder Woman,” Harry was branching out. Here he contributed the cover for Eastern Color Printing’s *Famous Funnies* #87 (Oct. 1941), spotlighting the newspaper comic-strip heroine Invisible Scarlet O’Neil. Courtesy of the GCD. [Invisible Scarlet O’Neil TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

[continued from p. 13]

readers (and their parents) that Gaines’ books would be of high quality and good for kids to read.

Marston would soon pitch the idea of a female super-hero to Gaines, who at first objected. Marston’s wife Elizabeth, in later life, according to author Les Daniels, claimed it was she who suggested the idea to her husband. Marston would imbue his character with his theories about the superiority of women and the ideal notion of a state of submission to loving authority. Gaines soon reversed himself and agreed, saying Marston would have six months to see if his readers would go for her or not.

There are different versions of the details, but it was Marston who picked Harry to draw his new creation. It is said Harry claimed he had worked on the *Mutt and Jeff* newspaper comic strip with Bud Fisher, and Marston was a big fan of the strip (as was much of America). In fact, Gaines also liked that strip so much he was reprinting it in his *All-American Comics* title. This connection certainly would have helped in his consideration for the job, as Harry must have been reaching out to people he knew for a job

opening. Elizabeth Marston said the quality her husband most admired in Harry was his simplicity. It also could not have hurt that Harry had been a regular contributor to that “Modern Woman” feature in *Judge* magazine, which had been a pro-suffrage feature mentioned earlier, and of which I am sure Harry would have made Marston aware, if he did not know it already.



Dr. William Moulton Marston

Harry traditionally has been uncredited in Wonder Woman’s creation, but it is his style sketch that, with suggestions from Marston about the design of her shoes, became the basic look of Wonder Woman for most of her history, starting with her first comicbook appearance in *All-Star Comics* #8, cover-dated Dec. 1941-Jan. 1942. She appeared in an eight-page add-on at the end of the book, which gave the world its first look at Harry Peter’s Wonder Woman.

At around the same time *All-Star* #8 was going on sale—in October 1941—postcards addressed to newspaper editors were sent out from DC. These postcards featured Harry’s Wonder Woman on the front of each of eight different cards. We know it was eight because, on the back of each one, they kept count! To date, of the eight, only three have ever surfaced. The first card featured Wonder Woman running and saying, “I’m coming boys. I’ll soon be with you oh yes. In the eighth of the DC Superman Monthly Comics! Sensation Comics.” Each card featured a new character that would be appearing in the title. With her appearance Harry continued to change his Gibson technique to an Art Nouveau-influenced cartooning style for the new series, something he had begun with his earlier comicbook work. Byrne Marston, son of Dr. Marston’s other life-partner Olive, told Daniels for the latter’s 2001 book *Wonder Woman: The Complete History* that he believed that Harry based the physical look of Wonder Woman on his mother. He said Olive had black hair and blue eyes and was slender. Byrne noted that Olive wore big heavy silver Indian bracelets for many, many years, indicating they were an inspiration for Wonder Woman’s Amazon bracelets.

With World War II raging, America needed patriotic heroes and heroines, and the comics were ready and willing to go to war. From *Uncle Sam* published by Quality Comics to *Captain America* from Timely, America’s super-heroes fought the Axis powers. And so did their artists and writers, who either were drafted or volunteered. Given his age and the unlikely chance he would be drafted, this opened up opportunities for Harry. While his Wonder Woman was not U.S.-born, her costume with the eagle and stars plainly showed where and what she stood for. So the third significant event of the 20th century, which was the Second World War and the U.S. involvement in it, would provide Harry both his big professional break and his final destiny as the artist who created the look of Wonder Woman, which was strongly styled on a U.S. patriotic theme.

In *All-Star* #8, in her first appearance, the war brought the injured American soldier Steve Trevor, who was fighting a spy ring that was obviously German, to Paradise Island. Diana’s mother, the queen, in consultation with the goddesses Aphrodite and Athena about what to do with him, was told he must be brought back to

[continued on p. 20]



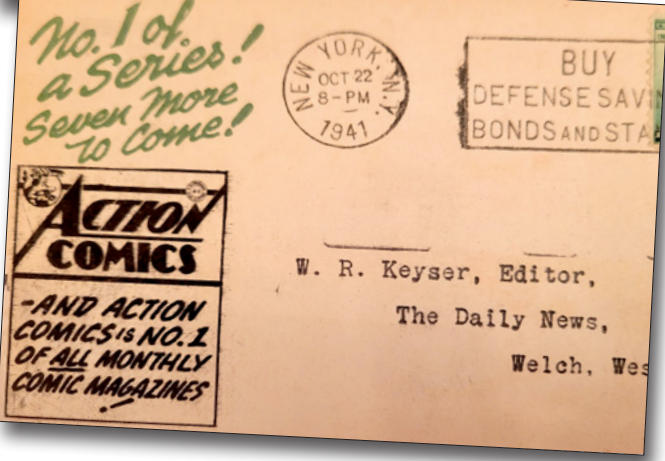
A Bold Bustier & A Star-Spangled Skirt
(Left:) Harry G. Peter's 1941 design (and notes) for Wonder Woman's costume. The original was sold at auction some time back for \$33,000. Courtesy of Art Cloos. [Wonder Woman TM & © DC Comics.]



An All-Star Launch

(Above:) The splash page of the "Wonder Woman" story that was added to *All-Star Comics* #8 (Dec. 1941-Jan. 1942), making that issue an entire printed "signature" (8 pages) longer than the usual 64 interior pages. It cost publisher M.C. Gaines some money—even though he didn't get around to advertising the Amazon's presence on the issue's cover—so he must have had a lot of faith that seeing that origin yarn would make kids run out a few weeks later to pick up a copy of *Sensation Comics* #1 (dated Jan. 1942, but on sale the preceding autumn). This page was photographed from the bound copy in the collection of Roy Thomas.

(Right:) On the other hand, just to be on the safe side, Gaines also sent out in October 1941, a month after *All-Star* #8, a series of eight different postcards spotlighting Wonder Woman, et al., to newspaper editors, who weren't exactly the target audience of *Sensation Comics* #1. Still, he must have believed all that activity would buy him some publicity for his new superheroine. We've printed both the reader's side, and the side with the mailing address. From the collection of Alice Cloos. [TM & © DC Comics.]





Boys and Girls! Here Are the Men Behind "WONDER WOMAN"

FROM left to right they are: — (1) DR. WM. MOULTON MARSTON, well known psychologist and inventor of the lie detector, who conceived "Wonder Woman" and writes it under the pen name of Charles Moulton! (2) H. G. PETER, well-known cartoonist, who directs a staff of four assistants who turn out all the "Wonder Woman" drawings! (3) SHELDON MAYER, creator of "Scribbly" and editor of all the magazines in the All-American Comic Group of the Superman D. C. Publications! (4) M. C. GAINES, originator of the comic magazine, former school principal and Army officer, now president and general manager of All-American Comics Inc., licensors and publishers of "Flash," "All-American" and "Sensation Comics," "All-Star Comics," "All-Flash," "Green Lantern," "Mutt And Jeff," "Wonder Woman" and "Picture Stories from the Bible"!

Here they are in Mr. Gaines' office discussing this second issue of "Wonder Woman" on a warm day in August. But I almost had to get "Wonder Woman" and her magic lasso to get them to pose, for, being all gallant gentlemen, they insisted that I be in the picture, until I explained I wanted to take the picture myself, and couldn't very well be in it, too.

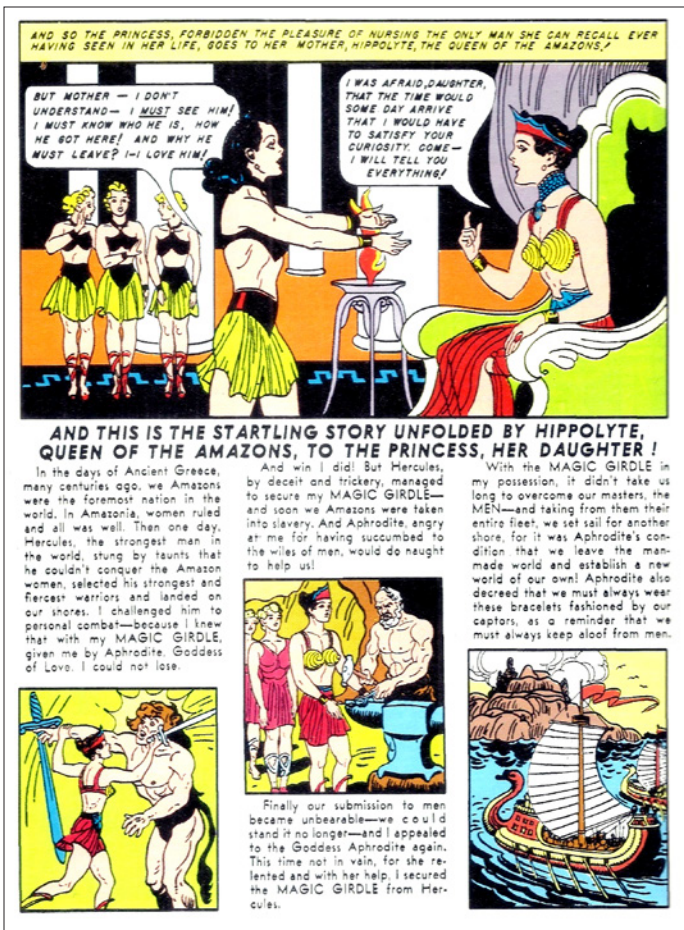
And so they agreed to let me publish it here, on condition that I tell you that they want you to enjoy reading "Wonder Woman" as much as they enjoy writing, drawing and editing it! But I know you do, for the first issue was a complete sell-out and we all want to thank you for giving "Wonder Woman" such a swell reception!

Alice Marble
(Associate Editor)

WONDER WOMAN No. 2, Fall, 1942 issue. Published quarterly by Wonder Woman Publishing Company, Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York, N. Y. M. C. Gaines, President; Sheldon Mayer, Editor; Alice Marble, Associate Editor. Application for second-class mailing at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Yearly subscription in the U. S. \$3.00 including postage. Extra contents copyrighted 1942 by Wonder Woman Publishing Company, Inc. U. S. Patent Office trademark No. 287,29 under the art of February 29, 1941. For advertising rates address: Wonder Woman Publishing Company, Inc., 225 East 60th St., New York City. Western Office: Harley L. Ward, Inc., 260 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. Except those who have authorized use of their names, the stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this periodical are entirely imaginary and fictitious, and no identification with actual persons, living or dead, is intended or should be inferred. Printed in U. S. A.

The Team Supreme

The inside front cover of *Wonder Woman* #2 (Fall 1942) was given over to this photo of the four men responsible for the amazing Amazon, as per the text that was printed below it. However, probably because of Marston's proprietary interest in being considered the only real creator of the heroine, the reference to H.G. Peter is almost defamatory... referring to him as a "well-known cartoonist, who directs a staff of four assistants who turn out all the 'Wonder Woman' drawings!" The phrasing seems consciously designed to *not* treat Peter as even the primary WW artist, let alone as anything more. Photo attributed to Alice Marble. Repro'd from *Golden Age Wonder Woman Archives*, Vol. 2. [TM & © DC Comics.]



13 Into 8 Won't Go!

Here's a Golden Age mystery for you: All the earliest "Wonder Woman" scripts for *Sensation Comics* that we know of were written at the then-standard length of 13 pages. But her origin was squeezed in a mere eight pages of *All-Star #8*—two of which were a mix of H.G. Peter's art and typeset text (as per above) telling the story of the founding of Paradise Island, while the final two pages contained four rows of panels each instead of the usual three. It's long been a pet theory of *Alter Ego's* editor (who wrote *Wonder Woman* briefly in the 1980s) that Dr. Marston wrote a 13-page origin script intended for *Sensation Comics #1*—which publisher Gaines decided to shoehorn into a single "signature" (8 pages) added to *All-Star #8*—and that the story published in *Sensation #1* is actually the tale originally intended for #2. If that's true, then one has to wonder: Were quite a few panels from several pages of Diana's premiere *never drawn*—or were they illustrated and then discarded in favor of the truncated text that fills pages 3 & 4, and perhaps re-pasted on pp. 7 & 8? Repro'd from *The Golden Age Wonder Woman Archives, Vol. 1*. [TM & © DC Comics.]

[continued from p. 17]

the U.S. to fight against oppression and hate, and that American democracy and the rights of women must be protected. A contest to find the mightiest Amazon was held, and it was Diana who won and who would both care for him and take him back to America. Her costume would symbolize her commitment to America and its fight for democracy and freedom. As she fought the Axis powers, she spoke out for the equality of women and garnered readership approaching that of Superman and Batman. Harry took full advantage of that popularity—because, as its very rapid increase occurred, so apparently did his as "the" Wonder Woman artist. It is also apparent that he did not shy away from the character he brought to life each month in the pages of her comics, as some comic artists of the time did.

Besides Harry's design for the look of Wonder Woman, the "Lambiek Comiclopedia" website has this to say about his role in Wonder Woman's creation: "Peter furthermore designed Wonder Woman's mother Queen Hippolyte (1941) and Wonder Woman's best friends Mala (1941), Etta Candy (1942), and romantic interest Steve Trevor (1941). He also co-created recurring villains like the Nazi baroness Paula von Gunther (1942), the god of war Ares (1942), the misogynist Doctor Psycho (1943), jealous philanthropist Cheetah (1943), and the teleportation expert Angle Man (1953), co-created with Robert Kanigher."

Yet despite all that Harry would bring to Wonder Woman, according to Les Daniels, Sheldon Mayer, the editor of the new character, did not want Harry as Wonder Woman's artist in the beginning, saying, "It was one of the compromises I made. There were a lot of things that Peter did that almost verged on the grotesque." Mayer was much younger than Harry, having been born on April 1, 1917, and living until December 21, 1992. He was thirty-five when he began working with Marston, and both he and Harry would go on to long careers in comics, working almost exclusively for DC. Mayer would be inducted into both the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1992 and the Will Eisner Comic Award Hall of Fame in 2000. However, Mayer would work on refining Harry's art, and after a while it began to grow on the editorial staff. Mayer said, "He began to catch on to what Marston wanted but



"Villainy Incorporated!"

Harry Peter visually designed all eight female felons who faced the Amazon in the full-length tale in *Wonder Woman #28* (March-April 1948). Shown on the above splash are Dr. Poison, The Cheetah, and "Queen Clea of sunken Atlantis"—but several others lurked inside. Courtesy of Jim Ludwig.

[TM & © DC Comics.]

AS THE TESTS OF STRENGTH AND AGILITY GO ON THROUGHOUT THE DAY, MORE AND MORE CONTESTANTS DROP OUT WEARILY, UNTIL NUMBER 7, THE MASKED MAIDEN, AND MALA - NUMBER 12 - KEEP WINNING EVENT AFTER EVENT... UNTIL EACH HAS WON TEN OF THE BRUJELLING CONTESTS!

AND NOW A DEADLY HUSH BLANKETS THE AUDIENCE. THE QUEEN HAS RISEN...



H.G. Peter Presents...

Several major characters whom Harry designed and drew for the "Wonder Woman" feature included (clockwise from top left): Diana's mother Queen Hippolyte and fellow Amazon Mala in *All-Star Comics* #8... Etta Candy and Steve Trevor (seen but not introduced in *Wonder Woman* #11, Winter 1945)... Paula von Gunther, German spy and later valued scientist for the Amazons, from *Sensation Comics* #4 (April 1942)... and Dr. Psycho, seen here in *Wonder Woman* #18 (July-Aug. 1946). And that's just for starters! Scripts by W.M. Marston or Joyce Hummel. [TM & © DC Comics.]



at the same time to make the compromises that I wanted. He was the one thing that brought Marston and me together. He had no real understanding of storytelling, but he had great skill at creating the effect that the script demanded."

In *Sensation Comics* #5 there was an ad for an offer of a free *Sensation* pinback button if the reader answered a survey. These pins are rare and expensive today. It was Harry who did the art for both the pin and the ad. In *Sensation Comics* #15 an offer was made to readers who sent in a dime to *Sensation* for the March of Dimes campaign to eradicate polio; whoever did so received a postcard with Wonder Woman on it. Again, a rare and expensive item to find today, and again Harry did the art for both card and ad. His art and Wonder Woman became linked. *All-Star Comics* #24 included a one-page strip



Join The Club!

(Right:) By this announcement in *Sensation Comics* #5 (May 1942), the editors were asking the readers if one of the feature characters in the new title should become a member of the Justice Society of America in *All-Star Comics*. The then-current membership of eight included two male heroes each from the titles *Flash Comics*, *All-American Comics*, *More Fun Comics*, and *Adventure Comics*. Naturally, Wonder Woman won hands down! Courtesy of Art Cloos.

(Above:) JSA membership or no, *Sensation* #5 also promoted a Wonder Woman "pinback button," as noted in the text. From the collection of Alice Cloos. [TM & © DC Comics.]

DO YOU WANT US TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA AND TAKE PART IN THEIR EPISODES IN ALL-STAR COMICS?

FREE!
1000 COPIES OF THE JULY ISSUE OF **SENSATION COMICS** ABSOLUTELY FREE!

To a thousand readers whose entries reach us, we will send a free copy of the July issue of *SENSATION COMICS*. We have only 1000 copies to give away, so be sure to fill out your entry and send it now, so as to get your copy while they last! We will mail out the thousand free copies as the entries come in until our supply is exhausted.

It is not necessary to enclose this coupon in an envelope or mail it airmail or special delivery. We suggest that you paste this coupon on the back of a regular government penny post card and mail it immediately to the Editorial Department, *Sensation Comics*, 225 Lafayette St., N.Y.C.

WE have received hundreds of letters from our readers, requesting that some of the features in *SENSATION COMICS* be included in *ALL-STAR COMICS*. And so we decided to ask all the readers of *SENSATION COMICS* to give us their opinion.

If you believe some of the characters from *SENSATION COMICS* should be represented in the Justice Society of America and take part in their episodes in *ALL-STAR COMICS*, fill in the coupon below and mail immediately.

Editor.. *Sensation Comics*, 225 Lafayette St., N. Y. C.

Yes, I believe that some of the features in *SENSATION COMICS* should be represented in the JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA in *ALL-STAR COMICS*. I am listing below the features in *SENSATION COMICS* in the order in which I like them:

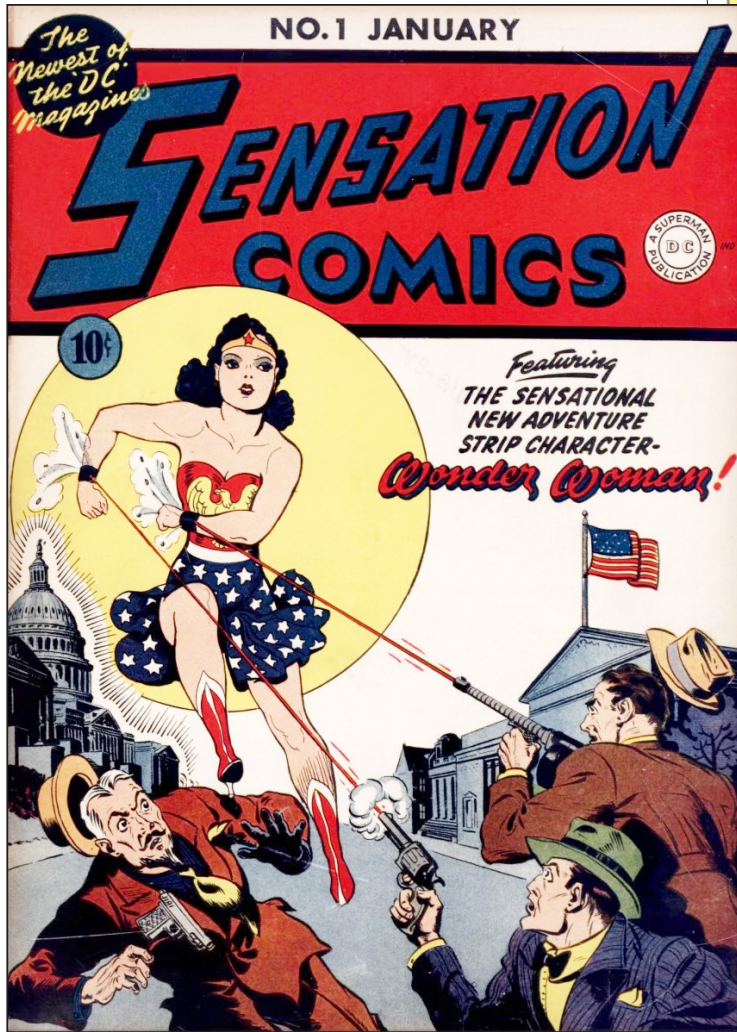
1..... 4.....
2..... 5.....
3..... 6.....

MY NAME IS..... AGE.....
ST. ADDRESS..... CITY & STATE.....
(Please print name and address clearly and legibly)

Free!

In addition to a thousand free copies of the July issue of *SENSATION COMICS*, EVERYONE who sends this coupon will receive absolutely free a WONDER WOMAN button, like the one above, in five brilliant colors!

You do not have to vote for WONDER WOMAN as first choice in order to get this button. You get this WONDER WOMAN button free of charge regardless of whether WONDER WOMAN is your first choice or your sixth choice. It will be mailed to you as soon as your entry is received.



Causing A Sensation

The cover of *Sensation Comics* #1 (Jan. 1942)—plus pages 1 & 4 of that first adventure as scripted by Dr. William M. Marston and drawn by H.G. Peter. On the cover, it has been determined that Peter drew only the Wonder Woman figure (originally for the splash page of the story in *All-Star* #8), while the remainder of the cover art is the work of Jon Blummer, best known as the artist of the “Hop Harrigan” aviation feature in *All-American Comics*. Scans of pp. 1 & 4 courtesy of Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

titled “Wonder Woman Teaches Us about Waste Paper Salvage,” and Harry did the art for it. Readers of the time knew who was doing the art, as he signed almost all the covers and stories with his byline “H.G. Peter.” When the *Wonder Woman* newspaper comic strip was being solicited, a full-page ad for it appeared on the inside front cover of *Editor and Publisher*, cover-dated May 6, 1944. It was Harry’s art that was used in the ad.

When Marston wrote his article about the comics and Wonder Woman for the winter 1943-44 issue of *The American Scholar*, the quarterly literary magazine of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, it used Harry’s art for the Wonder Woman images. His version of Wonder Woman was used on the certificate for a “Charter Member of The Junior Justice Society of America” as the fan-organization’s secretary. Very quickly he was becoming known as “the Wonder Woman artist.”

Harry’s outside work would virtually cease as his Wonder





Woman work increased rapidly from 1942 to 1945. Wonder Woman's appearances would grow to three regularly appearing comicbooks in that time: *Sensation Comics* starting in January 1942, with her own title named of course *Wonder Woman* following in the summer of 1942, and *Comic Cavalcade* following in late 1942. Diana became one of National/DC's big three, alongside Superman and Batman, and he was doing the art for all three of her books. The one exception was *All-Star Comics*, as Harry did not do much of the art for (very) brief appearances in the early "Justice Society of America" stories except for her origin story in *All-Star Comics* #8 and her solo-chapter appearances in issues #11 and #13. He drew Wonder Woman's head in the splash page of issue #24 and the earlier-mentioned Wonder Woman one-page public service announcement re waste paper salvage in that same issue. In issues #31 and #32 the Wonder Woman head and torso on the cover appear to be traced or Photostatted from artwork by Harry, and issue #32 is the last appearance of his art in that title.

The *Wonder Woman* newspaper comic strip debuted on May 8, 1944, and ended on December 1, 1945; once again Harry did the art for it. The strip was distributed by King Features Syndicate, but wartime paper restrictions and a glut of comic strips in newspaper

Wonder Woman Fights For Public Health
 (Above:) The H.G. Peter-drawn strip promoting the March of Dimes, then an organization dedicated to fighting infantile paralysis, a.k.a. polio, appeared in *All-Star Comics* #24 (Soring 1943).
 (Right:) Another such page appeared, among other places, in *All-American Comics* #64 (March 1945). Scripters of both features unidentified. From the personal collection of Roy Thomas. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Join the fight against INFANTILE PARALYSIS !!

FIGHT INFANTILE PARALYSIS

FIGHT INFANTILE PARALYSIS

FIGHT INFANTILE PARALYSIS

AMERICANS EVERYWHERE ARE CELEBRATING PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S BIRTHDAY BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE MARCH OF DIMES. THIS YEAR, AS IN THE PAST, YOUR DIMES WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL!

IF YOU SEND 15¢ THIS YEAR TO WONDER WOMAN, YOU WILL RECEIVE ABSOLUTELY FREE A MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE AND YOUR 15¢ WILL BE FORWARDED TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO DO ITS PART IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INFANTILE PARALYSIS! USE THE COUPON BELOW OR MAKE A COPY OF IT.

SPECIAL OFFER
 TO MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA:

IF YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA, THAT DOESN'T PREVENT YOU FROM DOING YOUR PART. IF YOU SEND YOUR 10¢ TO WONDER WOMAN, FOR FORWARDING TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, YOU WILL RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE OF WONDER WOMAN SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.

"THANKS FOR YOUR HELP" SINCERELY
Diana Prince
 (WONDER WOMAN)

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA, AND AT THE SAME TIME CONTRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY CELEBRATION

WONDER WOMAN, Secretary,
 THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA
 225 LAFAYETTE ST., NEW YORK 12, N. Y. C.

(THIS FREE OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 1, 1945.)

I enclose 15 cents in coins as a contribution to the March of Dimes, to help fight infantile Paralysis. Please enroll me, FREE, as a Charter Member of THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA and send me the Complete Membership Kit at once.

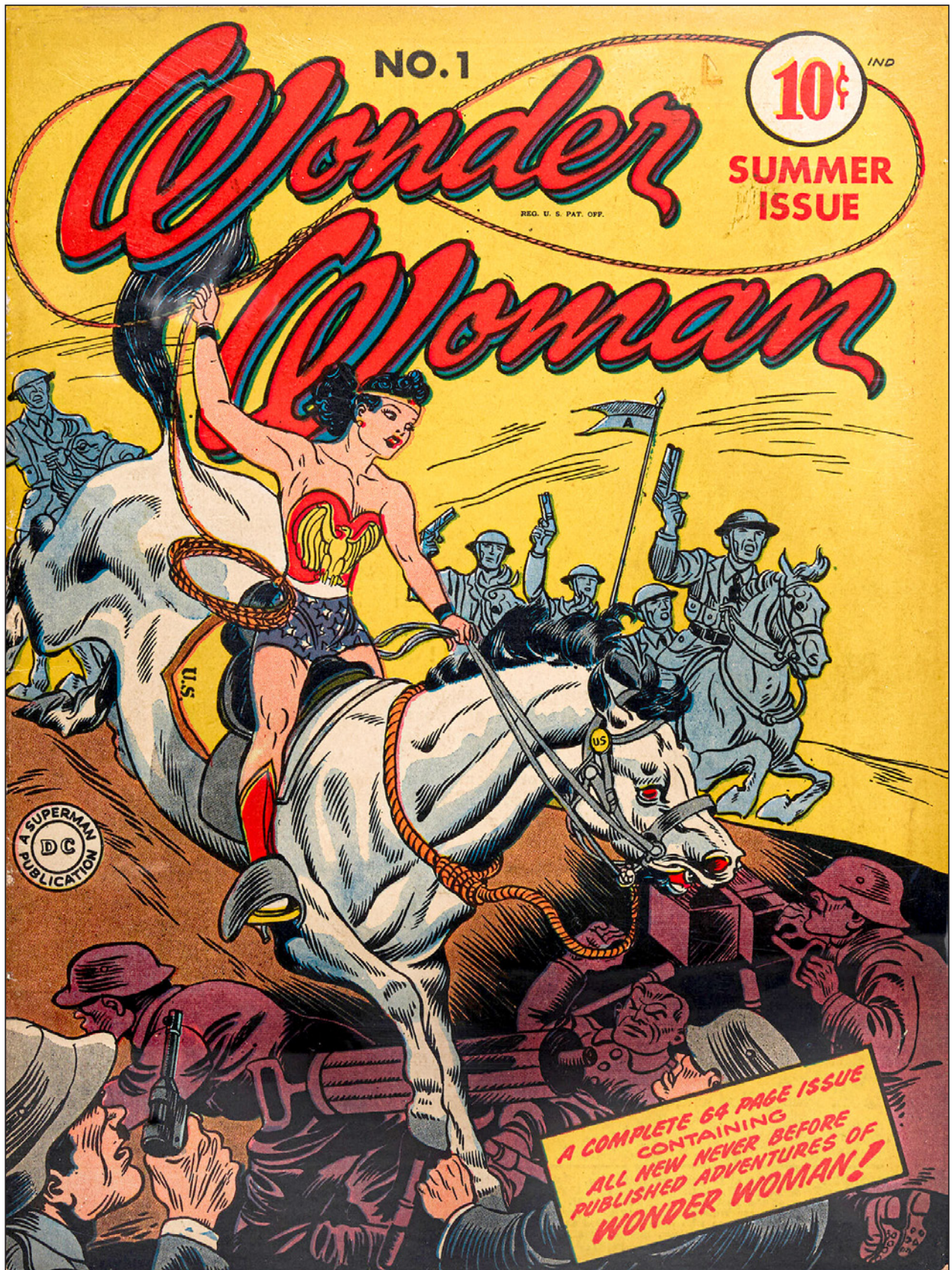
Name _____ Age _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____

POSTAL ZONE OR ZIP _____

BE SURE TO CHECK HERE IF YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER AND ARE SENDING 10¢ FOR PICTURE ONLY!



Out Of The Gate

H.G. Peter's cover for *Wonder Woman* #1 (Fall 1942)—which went on sale in the summer of that year, only six months after her lead-feature debut in *Sensation Comics* #1. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]

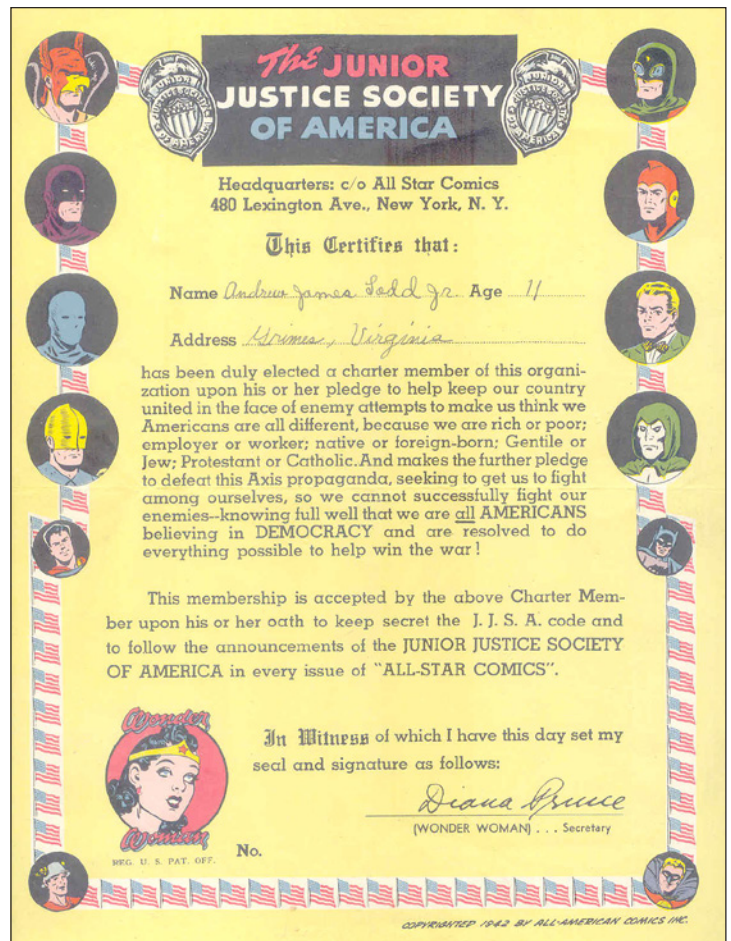


Wonder Woman Strips
 (Above:) The inside front cover of *Editor and Publisher* magazine for May 6, 1944—framed on the Cloos wall—sports one of H.G. Peter's most-often-reproduced figures. From the collection of Alice Cloos.
 (Top right:) When Dr. Marston wrote an article for the Winter 1943-44 issue of *The American Scholar*, it was accompanied by this HGP-illustrated plug for the upcoming *Wonder Woman* newspaper comic strip. Courtesy of Art Lortie. [TM & © DC Comics.]

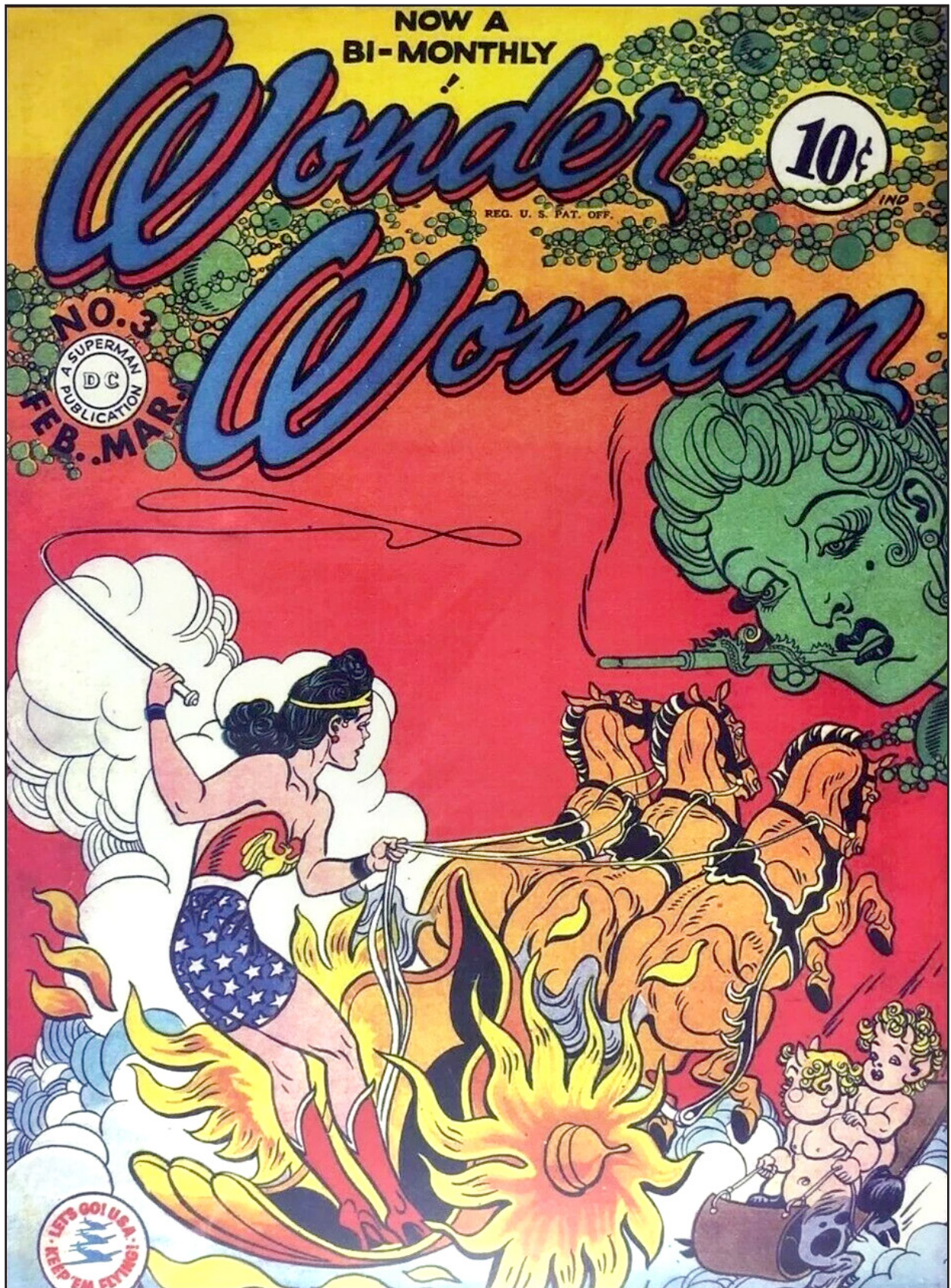
comic sections would limit the strip's life to only a little over a year.

In November 1944, *The Big All-American Comic Book* was published. It was a one-shot magazine containing 132 pages, including a "Wonder Woman" story that led off the book. According to Julius Schwartz in his autobiography *Man of Two Worlds*, every staff employee contributed to it, including Schwartz. Harry drew the "Wonder Woman" adventure in it, of course. Schwartz says that each staff employee received \$250 for what they turned in. This would be equal to \$4,512.37 in 2025. Overall, with all this work pouring in every week in addition to the outside work he would continue doing through the summer of 1943, I think it safe to say that any income issues Harry had been having were being put to rest.

To handle all this work, help was going to be needed. Les Daniels stated that, in April 1942, Harry opened his own studio at 130 West 42nd Street in Manhattan, which is confirmed by the New York City Directory and his draft card. According to Daniels, in March 1944, the success of the "Wonder Woman" comics and newspaper strip led to the opening of the Marston Art Studio at 331 Madison Avenue at 43rd Street. However, Harry is reported working there a year earlier, in 1943, by that same New York City Directory. In a September 8, 2011, *Potrzenie* blog entry, there is an interview with Margaret Wroten, who speaks about her and her husband Jim's "Wroten Lettering," when they worked out of Marston's office at this time. Margret Wroten is quoted as saying Harry's studio was on the 13th floor and they worked out of Marston's office on the 12th floor. The 14th floor was where office executive Marjorie Wilkes Huntley, who also contributed some inking and lettering, worked.

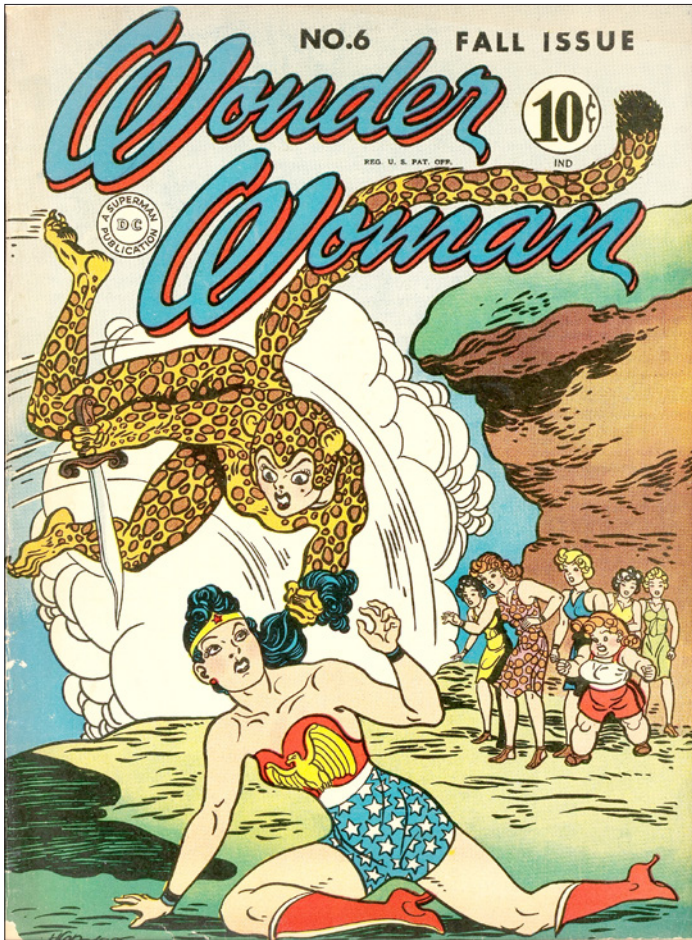


Join The Club – Part 2
 Naturally, a Wonder Woman head by Harry was used on the Junior Justice Society of America membership certificate first offered by mail in 1942—and on the subsequent incarnations of the JISA in 1945 and 1948. This one has wound its way into the collection of Alice Cloos. [TM & © DC Comics.]



In Record Time

Another stunning HGP cover: *Wonder Woman* #3 (Feb.-March 1943). Yes, by the third issue, the Amazon's own title had already gone from quarterly to bimonthly—and would have remained so if not for wartime paper restrictions. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Don't Be A Cheetah!

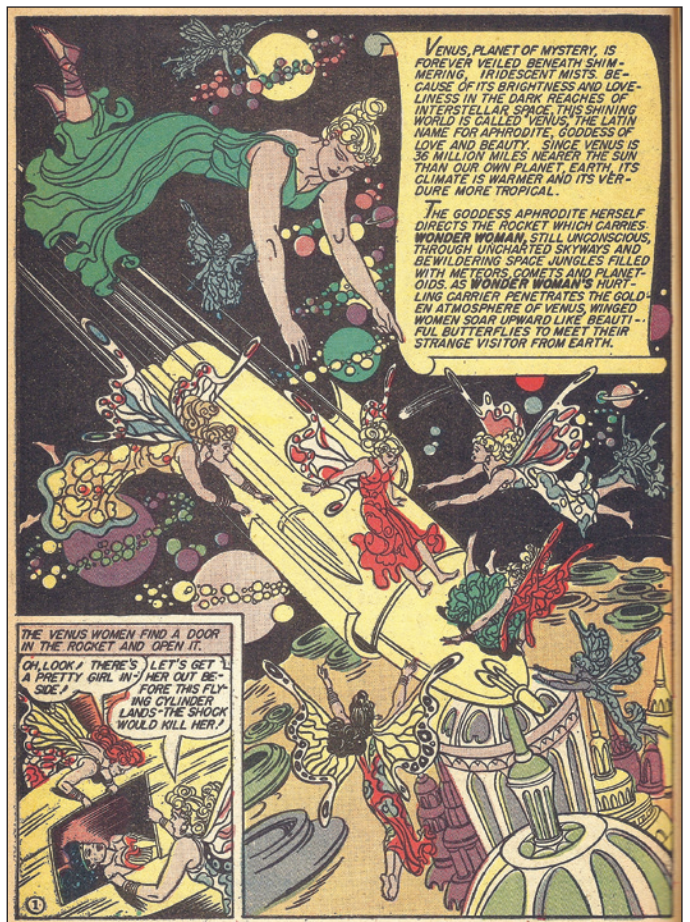
(Left:) *Wonder Woman* #1, introduced as a quarterly, followed only half a year after *Sensation Comics* #1—something of a record for a hero getting his/her own solo title. That cover was seen back on p. 24. Seen here is Harry's cover for *Wonder Woman* #6 (May 1943), which introduced the villainous Cheetah. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Joye Hummel Murchison Kelly, who was married twice, was born in 1924 and was nineteen years old (and named simply Joye Hummel) when

she sat down to take a psychology exam final at the Katharine Gibbs School in Manhattan, New York City. She had no idea her answers would forever change her life. Hummel's professor was Dr. William Moulton Marston, who among the many hats he wore was a psychologist. Marston was stunned by her exam responses, awarding her with the highest grade. He believed that she had the writing ability to portray his heroine, Wonder Woman, and incorporate his theories into stories. Hummel was interviewed about becoming his co-writer for "Wonder Woman"; and, after graduating in March of 1944, she accepted the position. She went to work for him, fleshing out "Wonder Woman" story ideas that he gave her. She would go on to write full scripts for the comics after he came down with polio in August 1944. She would take on more and more of the writing until, in effect, she was the actual writer

Writers Of The Purple Prose

(Below:) Peter's splash pages from the only two "Wonder Woman" full chapters he (or anyone else) ever drew for a 'JSA' adventure in *All-Star Comics*. (Left:) Gardner Fox scripted the first one, in *All-Star* #11 (June-July 1942). (Right:) Fox also penned the original script for the episode in *All-Star* #13 (Oct.-Nov. 1942), but Doc Marston persuaded editor Shelly Mayer that he (Marston) should be allowed to rewrite it. The scripts for both men's versions still exist. See *Alter Ego* #23.



KFS KING FEATURES SYNDICATE KFS

Wonder Woman

By Charles Moulton



Six Days A Week—But Never On Sunday
 The King Features Syndicate daily proofs for the *Wonder Woman* comic strip, June 5-10, 1944. Script by William M. Moulton; art by H.G. Peter. Courtesy of Art Cloos. The entire year-and-a-half run of the *WW* strip was reprinted in the hardcover *Wonder Woman: The Complete Dailies 1944-45*. [TM & © DC Comics.]

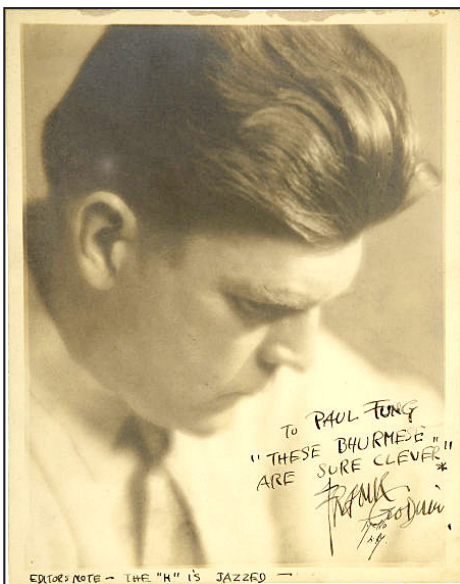
of the series despite Marston's name (or at least his pseudonym "Charles Moulton," a mixture of Gaines' and Marston's middle names) still appearing on every splash page. Marston would die of skin cancer in 1947. According to Mrs. Kelly: "Our scripts had to be very comprehensive, written like a play. The characters, setting, action, background, and size of panels had to be described in great detail to make sure our chief artist, Harry G. Peter, understood what we wanted depicted."

After Marston's death, Harry would continue to pencil the stories, covers, and strips and ink the main figures. He was assisted by a series of female commercial artists who did background inking. The staff also included Helen Schepens as colorist, and Jim and Margaret Wroten did the majority of the lettering, with some additional work done by Marston's daughter-in-law, Louise Marston.

Alter Ego #157 has an extensive interview with Joye Kelly. In it she talks about Harry, describing him as easy to work with and a marvelous artist. During her time working with him, she states, Harry had two women assistants, and together they did all the page artwork. One of them, the younger one, was named Arlene (Kelly did not remember her last name or the name of the older one), whom Kelly describes as a very good artist in her own right and who was Harry's chief assistant. Both women helped Harry with the art, but he was the one who always did the finishing. In talking about his art, Kelly did not

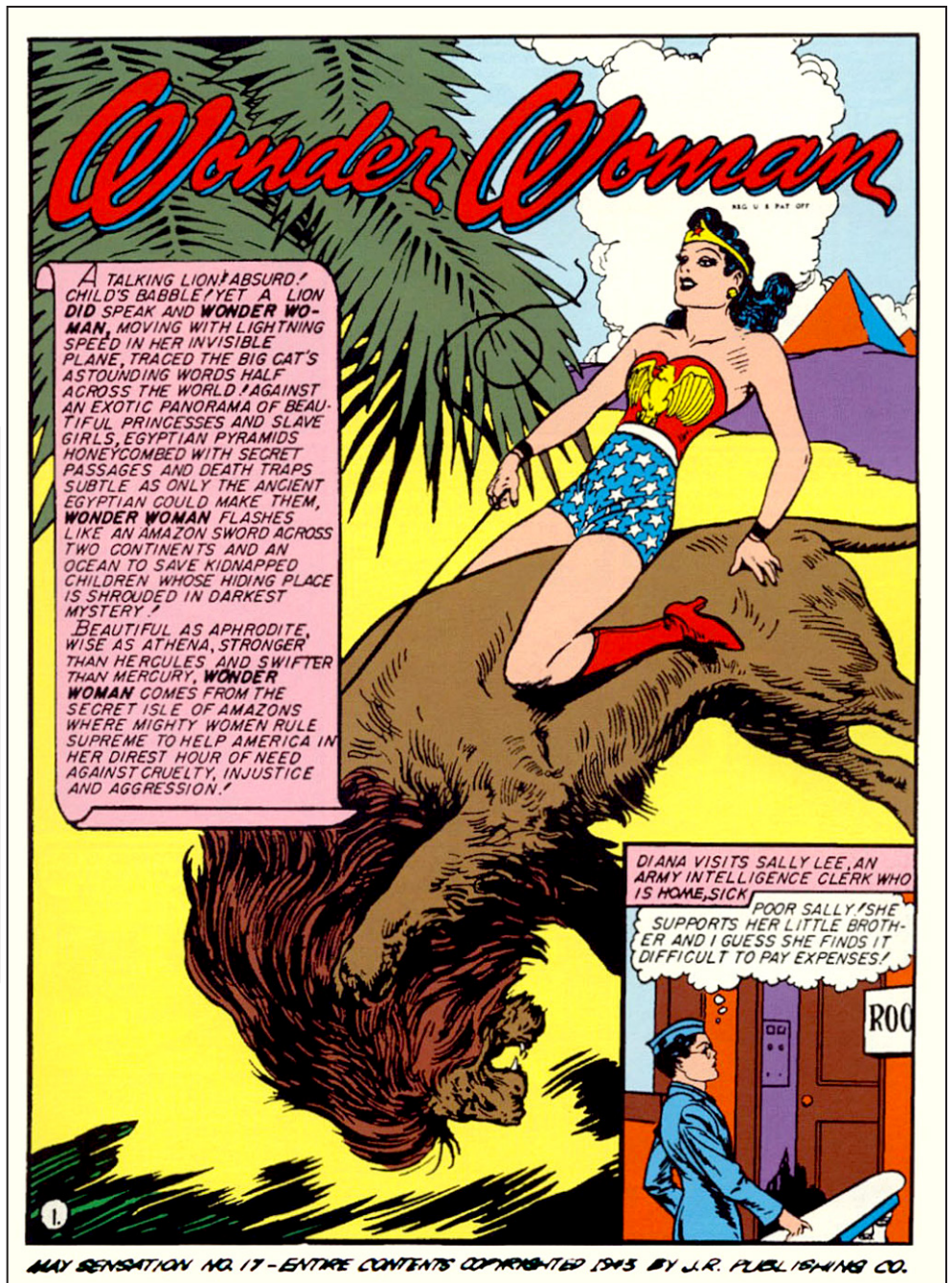
remember his using a pencil but described him as "a very strong artist. The lines were very clear." The preliminary work must have been done with some kind of art pencil, though, because the art sometimes had to be changed. "Harry did the cover art during this time, but who did the written copy is not known."

Kelly talks about how, in her time working in New York City, people dressed up to go work, men wore suits and ties—but apparently not Harry. She describes him as, "coming super-casually to work. He dressed how Harry G. Peter wanted to dress." She also tells the story of Harry going off to lunch one day and not returning, with her wondering why. Then she answered a phone call from a hospital saying that it had him there in its indigent ward. Harry had choked on a chicken bone and been rushed to the emergency room. Kelly was asked if she knew a Harry Peter, and when she said she did, they asked her to come pick him up as they had removed the bone. Because of the way he dressed, they had judged him as being



Frank Godwin

The artist of the comic strip *Connie* happened to have a style of drawing that was somewhat similar to Harry's, so he was sought out to draw a handful of "Wonder Woman" stories when the demand got too much for HGP to handle. This splash panel is from *Sensation Comics* #17 (May 1943). Oddly, it lacks even the pseudonymous "Charles Moulton" byline. Courtesy of Art Cloos. [TM & © DC Comics.]





Joye Hummel
 in 1943, and (clockwise) splash pages she wrote for *Wonder Woman* #12 (Spring 1945)—*WW* #25 (July-Aug. 1947)—and *WW* #29 (March-April 1948)—all with art, of course, by H.G. Peter. For much more about Joye's career as a "Wonder Woman" writer, and her interactions with Harry, et al., grab hold of a copy of *Alter Ego* #157 (March 2019). Art scans courtesy of Jim Ludwig. [TM & © DC Comics.]

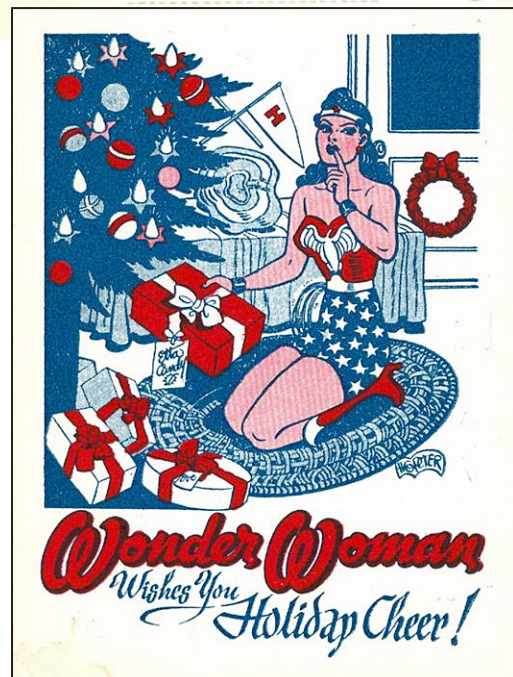


a charity case and had put him in a charity ward. Kelly (then Hummel, of course) went to the hospital and brought him back.

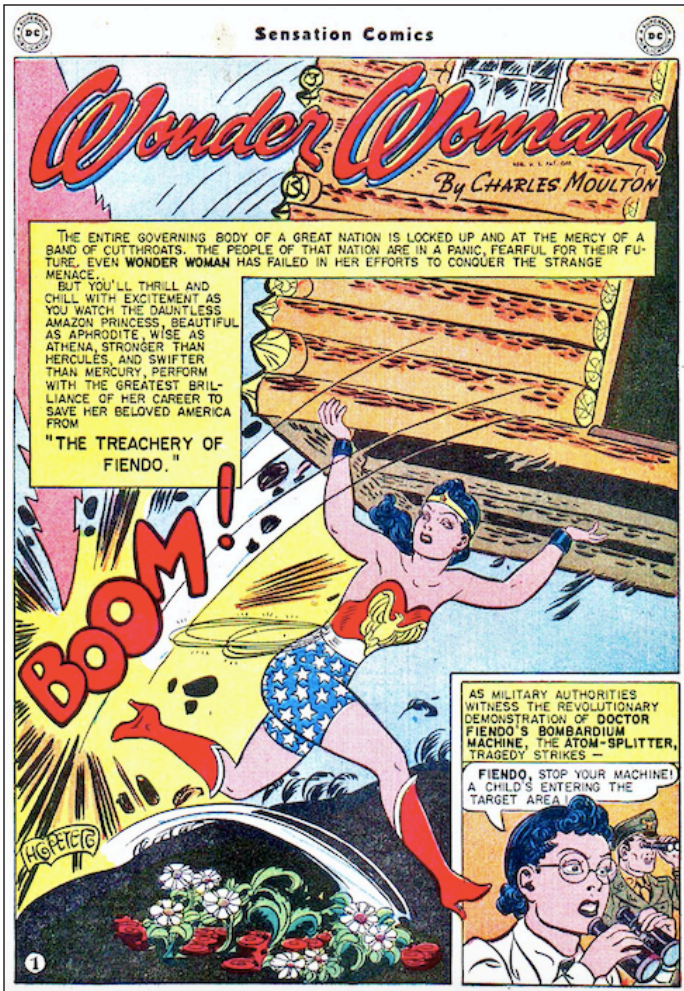
For what appears to be a three-year period, Harry produced Wonder Woman-themed Christmas cards. Of the three different versions known to exist, only one has a date (apparently handwritten) on it; that one is from 1943. It is not currently known if that was the first year he produced a card, but most likely it was. What years' Christmas seasons the other two cards were done for cannot be determined unless someone out there has copies of either or both of them that have a date on them. Harry would draw full-color pieces to give out as gifts, some a reworking of the same theme but some quite different. For example, there is a colored drawing of Wonder Woman dancing in a Hawaiian sarong surrounded by a group of Hawaiian musician/singers, which is signed to James

[continued on p. 34]





How'd You Like To Spend Christmas—On Paradise Island?
 With that emendation of the title line of a once-famous Yuletide song: three of Harry Peter's 1940s Christmas cards featuring Wonder Woman, as described by Art Cloos in the text, all from the collection of Alice Cloos—and, done for a somewhat wider audience, HGP's cover for *Sensation Comics* #38 (Feb. 1945). [TM & © DC Comics.]



You're Sensation-all!
 A trio of "Wonder Woman" splashes pages by Joye Hummel (writer) & H.G. Peter (artist), all from issues of *Sensation Comics*. Clockwise from top left: #54 (June 1946)... #57 (Sept. '46)... and #72 (Dec. '47). Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]



HGPETER



Uncovered!
 (Left:) *Sensation Comics* #79 (July 1948) featured the last definite HGP cover in a row.
 (Below:) It's a point of contention among researchers whether the cover of *Sensation* #80 (Aug. '48) is really by Harry, or by someone closely imitating his style. Both scans courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Riding To Glory
 (Left:) A drawing—signed, in this rare instance, "Harry G. Peter."—done in conjunction with an event hosted in the 1950s by prominent popular musician Fred Waring, from the collection of Penn State U. Thanks to Paul Karasik. [Wonder Woman TM & © DC Comics.]

[continued from p. 30]

and Skippy Wroten, Skippy almost certainly being Margaret.

But one illustration in particular stands out, reflecting his early advocacy for women's rights. It featured a bar scene in McSorley's Pub in which Wonder Woman is standing in front of the bar asking for a pint of the pub's famous ale. The bartender blurts out, "No dames served here," but then, with Wonder Woman's lasso twirled around him, states, "Ulp! Something compels me!!" McSorley's was the oldest "Irish" tavern in New York City, though there is some controversy regarding the exact date of its opening—probably in 1858, but there is much dispute about that. Located at 15 East 7th Street in the East Village neighborhood of Manhattan, it was one of the last of the "Men Only" pubs, only admitting women after legally being forced to do so in 1970, long after Harry's passing. It seems that Harry was not above making a point about women's rights as regards the ale house's policies (which were still common in the 1940s city-wide), even at the height of his tenure as "The" Wonder Woman artist. I have to pause here to say that there is very little doubt in my mind that this was one of the happiest periods of his professional life.

The people who work for the tavern are known for having a historian's knowledge of the history of the place. With that in mind, I visited McSorley's in October 2017 to ask about that piece of art Harry did. After explaining I was doing research on Harry Peter and showing the bartender on duty a scan of it on my cell, she (yes, the place now has female bartenders, which I found very cool, as I am sure Harry would have) looked at me with surprise and told me that I was the third person to ask about it in the last month. Apparently one of those people has the actual piece of original art and wanted to sell it to the bar. I asked if there was interest and she said she did not know. I gave her my contact information and asked her to let me know what happens. To date I have not heard any more about this.

The National Cartoonists Society traces its roots to the volunteer chalk talks that a number of cartoonists did during World War II for the America Theater Wing. It was formally organized at a specially convened dinner in New York in March, 1946, that saw Harry's old friend Rube Goldberg elected president, Russell Patterson as vice president, C.D. Russell as secretary, and Terry

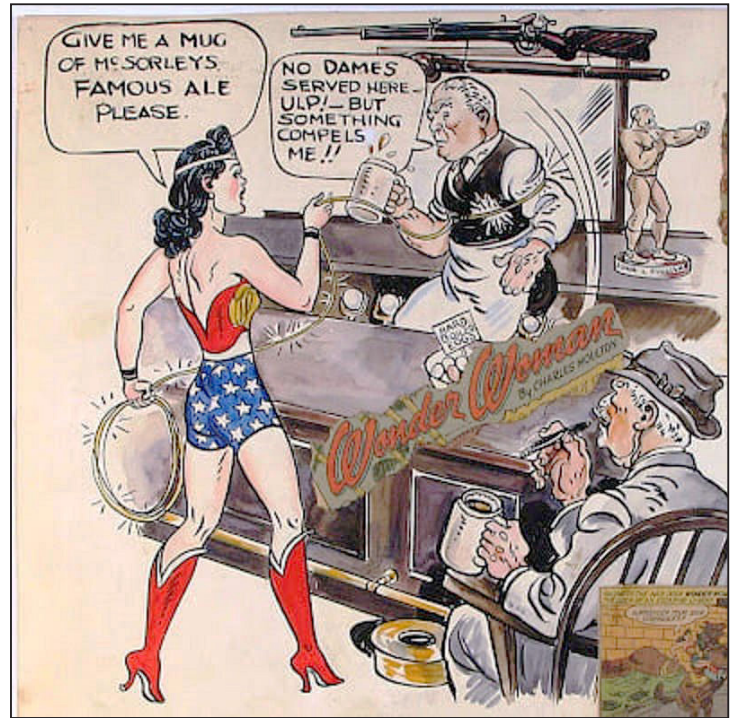


What Do You Have To Do To Get A Drink Around Here?

An exterior shot of the famous McSorley's Pub—and H.G. Peter's take on what might well have gone on inside it one day in the 1940s, if he'd had his way. Also seen is a slightly different, roughly penciled version of the cartoon from its backside. Courtesy of Art Cloos. [Wonder Woman TM & © DC Comics.]

and the Pirates creator Milton Caniff as treasurer. A second vice president, Otto Soglow (of *Little King* fame), was subsequently added. There was a 1946 NCS newsletter that Allie found in her estate materials from Harry, so he was aware of it from its creation, possibly alerted to it by Goldberg. Harry Peter became a member of the Society by the beginning of November 1949, his second artistic society membership.

In Harry's estate materials there is a letter dated November 11,



1949, to a woman named Adelaide from John Pierotti, the Society treasurer, listing Harry as a new dues-paying member. In the same letter Joe Shuster, part of the Siegel & Shuster team that had created Superman, is listed as being dropped for nonpayment of dues. The NCS Membership Roster dated January 15, 1950, lists Harry under the heading "Features Strips and Panels." Harry penciled brackets around his name on his copy of the list. I think this was a proud moment for him, a validation of his worth as an artist at a time when his "Wonder Woman" work was being cut back by a new editor, Robert Kanigher, after Mayer left his editorial position in 1948 to work full-time as a cartoonist.



Kanigher, it is said, did not like either the stories that Bill Marston had been writing or the art that Harry was producing for it. Kanigher started as editor with *Sensation Comics* #80 (Aug. 1948), although Whitney Ellsworth as National/DC's managing editor is the only person credited as editor in the indicia; Kanigher, however, was doing the actual editorial work. Marston had died on May 2, 1947, and Joye Hummel would then write stories for some eleven issues of *Sensation* and six for *Wonder Woman* before she left to get married and raise a family, with a few other authors also turning in scripts before Kanigher took over virtually all the scripting himself.

After Marston's death Harry continued with *Wonder Woman* until the end of his life, and his run would last some seventeen years in total. Super-hero comics were on the decline, however, by that time. *Wonder Woman's* last appearance in *Sensation Comics* would be #106, cover-dated Nov.-Dec. 1951. She would continue to appear in *All-Star Comics* through its last issue, #57, cover-dated Feb.-March 1951. Her final appearance in *Comic Cavalcade* would be in #29 (Oct.-Nov. 1948), after which that title would switch to funny-animal contents... but she would continue in her own comic all through the 1950s and far beyond.

For his part, Harry would return part-time to Eastern Publishing to do stories in *Heroic Comics*, beginning with four stories (from two to five pages in length) that appeared in issue #52, cover-dated January 1949. The titles were "Men against the Lake," "Ingenuity Cheats the Flames," "A Miracle on the River," and "Rescue at Dawn." He provided both the pencils and inks for all four. His last work to appear in the re-titled *New Heroic Comics* was a story in issue #94 (Dec. 1954), titled "It Happened This Way." *New Heroic Comics* would end with issue #97, cover-dated June 1955. With the end of *Sensation Comics* and with editor Robert Kanigher using other artists to do the covers for the *Wonder Woman* title, it may well be that Harry went to Eastern to earn money to replace his reduced output for DC. Regardless, though, between this "outside" work and his continued art for *Wonder Woman*, it is clear that Harry kept working right up to the end of his life.

Adonica died at the reported age of 64 on Saturday, September 20, 1947, on Staten Island in New York City. The cause of death is listed as a combination of breast cancer and heart disease. She was cremated by the Rosehill Crematory in Linden, New Jersey. It should be noted, however, that the age for Adonica is approximate, as looking at the 1925 New York State Census and the 1930 and 1940 Federal Census. they all show age numbers that just don't add up for Adonica being 64 at the time of her passing. If she was born in February 1880, as reported in the 1880 Federal Census, she and Harry would be the same age and she would be 67 at the time of her death, and that's what I am going by. This is based on a simple count of the years, indicating perhaps that someone, likely Harry, was not sure of Adonica's age when filling out the forms.



Robert Kanigher
 scribed a few "Wonder Woman" yarns even while Marston and Hummel were still at it—and became the character's longtime writer/editor after Marston's 1947 death and Hummel's departure soon afterward. Among the many "WW" tales Kanigher scripted is probably the now-celebrated but never-published "Nuclear, the Magnetic Menace," whose sequel "Nuclear Returns!" was printed in *Wonder Woman* #43 (Sept.-Oct. 1950). The original art to the unpublished splash is in the collection of Michael Finn and was seen in *A/E* #157; Mort Todd colored it for an online site, and Michael T. Gilbert kindly sent us a scan of that rendition for this issue. Roy Thomas wrote his own version of that prequel, with a somewhat larger cast of characters, for *All-Star Squadron* #16 (Dec. 1982). [Wonder Woman page TM & © DC Comics.]

There is not much currently known about Harry's activities during the last decade of his life. Social Security records show that he filed for benefits on December 14, 1954, and was given number 124093728 when he was 74 years old. This was nine years older than the normal retirement age of 65. Perhaps, at this point, with his art assignments slowing down, he felt it was time to supplement his income; or, he might have wanted to cut down his outside work and use his Social Security to replace it. But this also shows that money had not been such a problem for him, thanks to his *Wonder Woman* work.

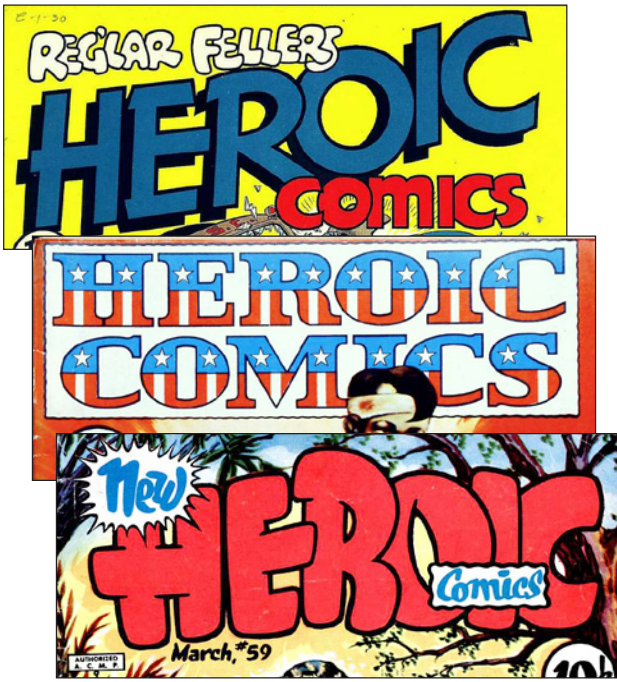
We know he continued to draw, both for Eastern Publishing until 1955 and DC up until the end of 1957. In the June 1957 *National Cartoonists Society Newsletter*, he is mentioned as attending one of their regular gatherings at The Lambs Club, which is referenced in more than one of the newsletters in Allie's possession. The Lambs must certainly refer to a building built by

[continued on p. 38]



A Heroic Return
To fill the holes in his dance card left by the lack of need for "Wonder Woman" material in *Comic Cavalcade* and *Sensation Comics*, beginning in the late 1940s, Harry returned to doing work for Eastern Color, beginning with four stories in *Heroic Comics* #52 (Jan. 1949). There is some speculation that the two-pager "A Miracle on the River" is not by HGP, but to Art Cloos and *A.E.*'s editor it looks like his work—though perhaps his assistants did more on it than usual. Scripters unknown. Courtesy of CBP. [© the respective copyright holders.]

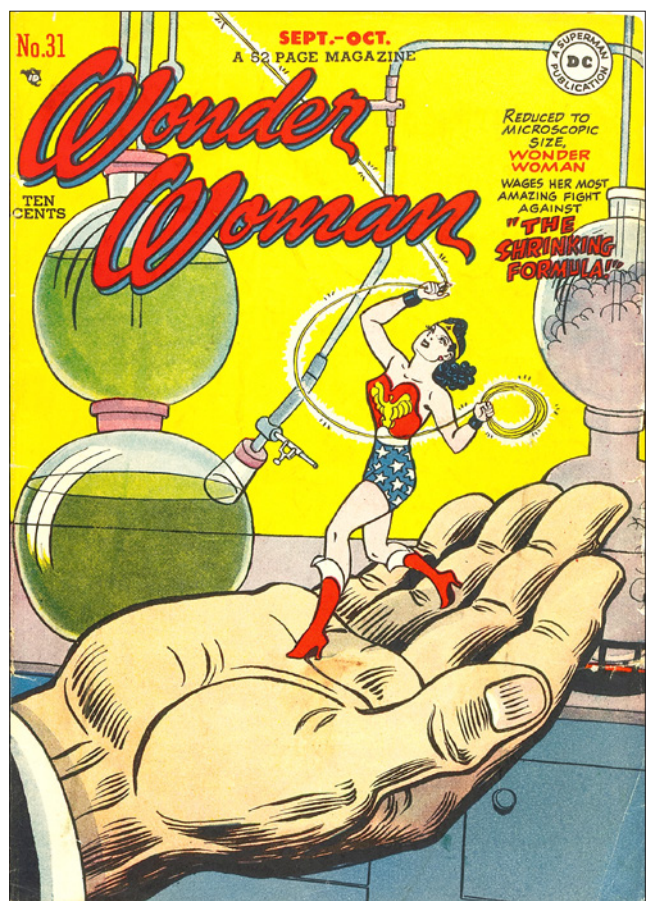




Herois Is As Heroic Does
 (Above:) Eastern Color's *Heroic* title went through three distinct phases and name changes between 1941 & 1954. Harry Peter drew stories for two of them. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



A Heroic Effort
 (Left:) Peter's final appearance for Eastern Color came in its again-retitled *New Heroic Comics* #94 (Dec. 1954). Scripter uncertain. Courtesy of CBP. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

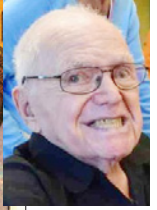


"...In All The '48!"
 1948 was still a good year for H.G. Peter artwork on *Wonder Woman*, including these covers for #28 (March-April) and #31 (Sept.-Oct.). Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



Alvin Schwartz

Writers In The Sky
 At a time when Kanigher was taking over the writing of virtually all "Wonder Woman" stories, there was still room for "Superman" and "Batman" veteran Alvin Schwartz to script at least the tale at far left for *Wonder Woman* #27 (Jan.-Feb. 1948)—and for Lee Goldsmith to do one for *WW* #40 (March-April 1950). Page scans courtesy of Jim Ludwig. [Pages TM & © DC Comics.]



Lee Goldsmith

[continued from p. 35]

a professional theatre group, "The Lambs," that once occupied what is now The Lambs Club Restaurant and Bar is still active and serving customers today. Located at 132 W. 44th Street in New York City, the building was designed by Stanford White, a partner at the prominent architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. Later, a virtual carbon-copy addition was added; and in 1974, the building was designated a landmark by the New York City Landmarks and Preservation Commission. It would not be a stretch to suggest that Harry might have been a regular attendee at NCS activities and The Lambs luncheons and dinners. A program found in his estate from the April 23, 1957, National Cartoonist Society Dinner held at the Grand Ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel suggests he attended that event, and I am sure others as well.

Harry is listed on the April 1957 map of the NCS to show where its members lived in the U.S. It also is quite possible that he socialized with old friends such as Rube Goldberg, who played an important role in NCS activities during the 1950s and, given that one had to be nominated to become a member of the NCS, was probably the one to nominate Harry for membership. Harry's niece Marie was living in California, and cross-country travel still was not all that easy in terms of the time and expense it would take. For example, traveling by train was a multi-day trip each way. There was no jet travel available across the U.S. until 1959. Flying by prop planes across the U.S. was still an adventure and not as safe as it is today, so he probably did not get to see what was left of his immediate family much, though I would think some trips might have been made. Certainly, his age would also have been a factor. Beyond

Better Late Than Ever
 When the Junior JSA was revived in 1948, a detailed HGP full figure of Wonder Woman appeared in the ad, alongside heads of the other six members. Strangely, however, even after *All-Star Comics* was canceled and there were no more "Justice Society" stories, an ad for the JSA appeared in *Wonder Woman* #47 (May-June 1951)—but displaying only the Amazon's figure and none of the defunct six. Collector John Firehammer owns the original boards for that ad page and shared it with us. [TM & © DC Comics.]

WONDER WOMAN # 47 May June 1951

BOYS AND GIRLS!--- THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA IS BACK IN OPERATION!!



HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THIS ORGANIZATION WHICH IS DEVOTED TO FAIR PLAY AND JUSTICE IN ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES!

ALL NEW MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE:

1. AN OFFICIAL, ALL METAL, JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP BADGE (WHICH YOU CAN PIN TO YOUR BLOUSE OR JACKET).
2. A MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE, SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.
3. A SECRET CODE CHART THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO READ J. J. S. A. MESSAGES.



TO JOIN THIS GREAT ORGANIZATION , JUST FILL OUT

THIS COUPON

If you are already a member and have lost your credentials, you may wish to receive new ones . . . here is your chance to do so

WONDER WOMAN, Secretary
 THE JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA
 1480 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

Please enroll me as a member of the JUNIOR JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA. I promise to uphold the principles of right and justice. I enclose 10 cents in coins to cover cost of Complete Membership Outfit.

Check Box which corresponds to your standing:
 New Member Old Member

Name (Please PRINT Plainly) _____ Age _____

Street or Box No. _____ City _____ Zone _____ State _____



The '49ers

The above 1949 covers for *Sensation Comics* #90 (June) and #91 (July), perhaps, are not Peter's best work. In fact, some have doubts whether the latter is actually HGP's work at all—or at least wonder if perhaps it had a new and inferior inker. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]

that, there is not much to say at this time about his life in the 1950s.

Harry would die at the age of 77 on Thursday, January 2, 1958, most likely in his home on Staten Island, of a heart attack. His will was filed on January 9, 1958, seven days after his death. It stated that his niece Marie would be the executor of his estate. His art was not what it had been at the end, possibly due to failing eyesight or arthritis. There is no way currently to know for sure if health issues affected his art, however.

Funeral services were held on January 7, a Tuesday, in Staten Island. In his will he directed that he be cremated and that Marie would receive all of his estate after all estate expenses were paid out. His last *Wonder Woman* work was in issue #97, cover-dated April 1958, so that edition would have been in production around the time of his death. As always, he did

Keeping It In The Family

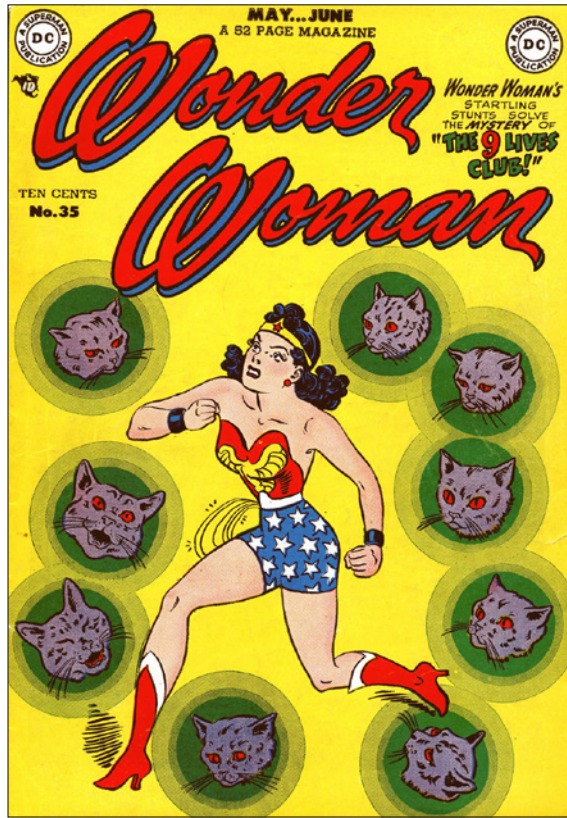
According to the inscription, Harry Peter drew this color Wonder Woman illustration for his grand-niece, whose name was Suzy. When it was sold online by Heritage Art Auctions a few years back, collector Dominic Bongo saved a scan for us. [Wonder Woman TM & © DC Comics.]

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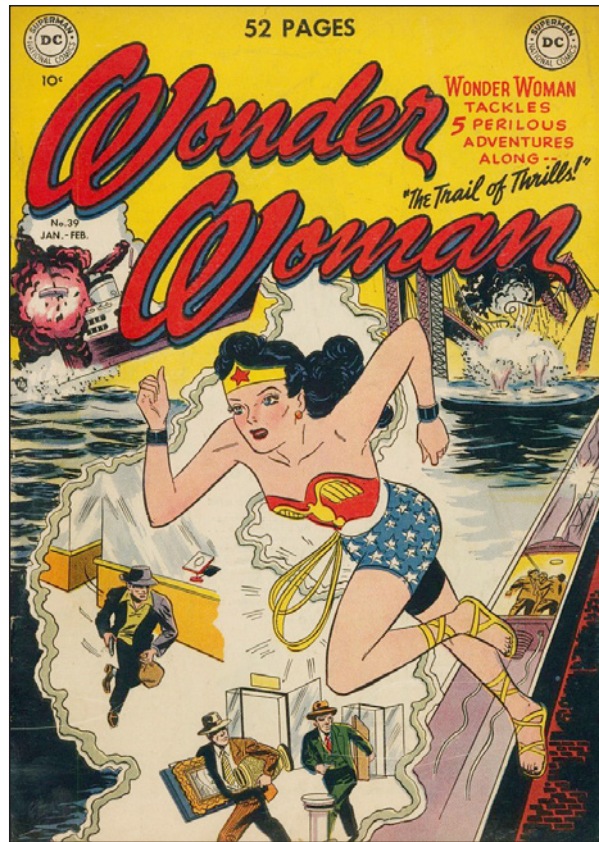




Irwin Hasen
Former artist of "Green Lantern," future longtime artist of the Dondi newspaper strip. Courtesy of Dan Makara.



Cover Stories
(Above:) For the cover of *Wonder Woman* #35 (May-June 1949), editor Kanigher had penciler Irwin Hasen & inker Bernard Sachs closely imitate HGP's style—which they did again for *WW* #36 (July-Aug. '49). Harry returned for #37 (Sept.-Oct. '49), and again on #38 (see p. 7), but that was the last of Harry's covers. With #39 (Jan.-Feb. 1950), Hasen & Sachs returned for a lengthy streak, in a style less imitative of Peter's. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



12 PAGES SCHEDULE

TRAIL OF THE LOST HOOPS REC AUG 31st
 SER 26 "The Horn of Paris" SER 27
 DEL. INKS. OCT. 17th
 DEL. 4th W.P. Twins del. PENCILS OCT. 17th
 OCT 17 "100 YEAR OVEL" Pencil Nov 8
 Nov 8 "Indian Telen" Rec Received 11
 Nov 21 Revised script "WORLD BELOW NORTHERN"
 Dec 28 "The Ridge from Mars"
 Dec 27th "WW vs ROBOT WOMAN"
 " " "end of Paradise Salams"
 Jan 31st "Treat of the Robot Slave"
 FEB 1st "Tidecome of Capt. Storm"
 FEB 28 RETURN OF PHANTOM EMPIRE
 FEB 28, GIANT PLANET
 FEB 28, MYSTERY MAGIC TIME WRITER
 LITTLE MISS WW
 May 2 "The City of WW's Lasso"
 "Manned of the master copy"
 "Knights of Tarned"
 "WW's strong superman Substitutes"
 WW's Hottel/Writer
 "Battle for Fairy Land"
 Her Majesty Queen Wonder Woman
 WW DEFENSE-ATTY
 "Cameo meet of WW"
 WW NOBODY KNOWS
 FEB 28 "GHOST TRAIN" WW'S TRIPLE THREAT "The Chairman of Doom" "Damsel of Distress"
 "COSE papers, and WITNESSES"

1954

FEB - 10 - SCRIPT - POINTS OF DEATH
 FEB - 26 - PENCILS " " "
 MAR - 9 - INKS
 FEB - 28 - SCHEDULE DOWNGRILL
 MAR 12 - PENCILS -
 - INKS -

SEEDS OF PRIDE	MAR 30	THE LAST SIGHT	APRIL 2
THE ISLAND THAT WW BUILT	MAR 30		
DEATH IS X TIME	APRIL 10	POWER	APRIL 29
THE LAMING AMATOR	APRIL 30	WW	MAY 13
THE MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY	MAY 14		
ANDY GALLA PAID FRONT	JUNE 18		
BRIDE TO NOWHERE	JUN 28		
SOS RETURN	AUG 11		
ORIGIN OF THE AMAZON PLAN	AUG 25		
DREAM DOOMS	SEPT 25		

1954

FEB 26 - INKS - CONFESSIONS OF A SNAKE
 "THE TARGET" SCRIPT MAR 12 -
 PENCILS - INKS -

SECRET WALL OF FAME	APRIL 22		
SECRET OF MAN'S SAVAGE	APR 11	PLANS	FULL
TWO PAGES OF WONDER WOMAN	SEP 18	NOV 19	DEC 21
THE SAVIORS VILLAINS	NOV. 19	NOV. 19	DEC 21
ONE WOMAN ROODEE	DEC 9	DEC 21	
THE GAMMAL OF PAPER	DEC 21		
1,000,000 SECRET STAFF	JAN 10	PLANS	MAR 18
MCH-HIGH HEROES	JAN 19		
WOMAN	FEB 16		FEB 16
WOMAN	FEB 16		FEB 16
WOMAN	FEB 16		FEB 16
WOMAN	FEB 16		FEB 16



From Script To Splash
 (Above & below:) An H.G. Peter splash page from *Wonder Woman* #63 (Jan. 1954), with script by Robert Kanigher—in fact, the script itself still exists in the collection of Alice Cloos, who also sent the scan of the printed page. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Keeping Track
 (Above:) One of the work schedules HGP wrote for himself, in the mid-1950s. From the collection of Alice Cloos.



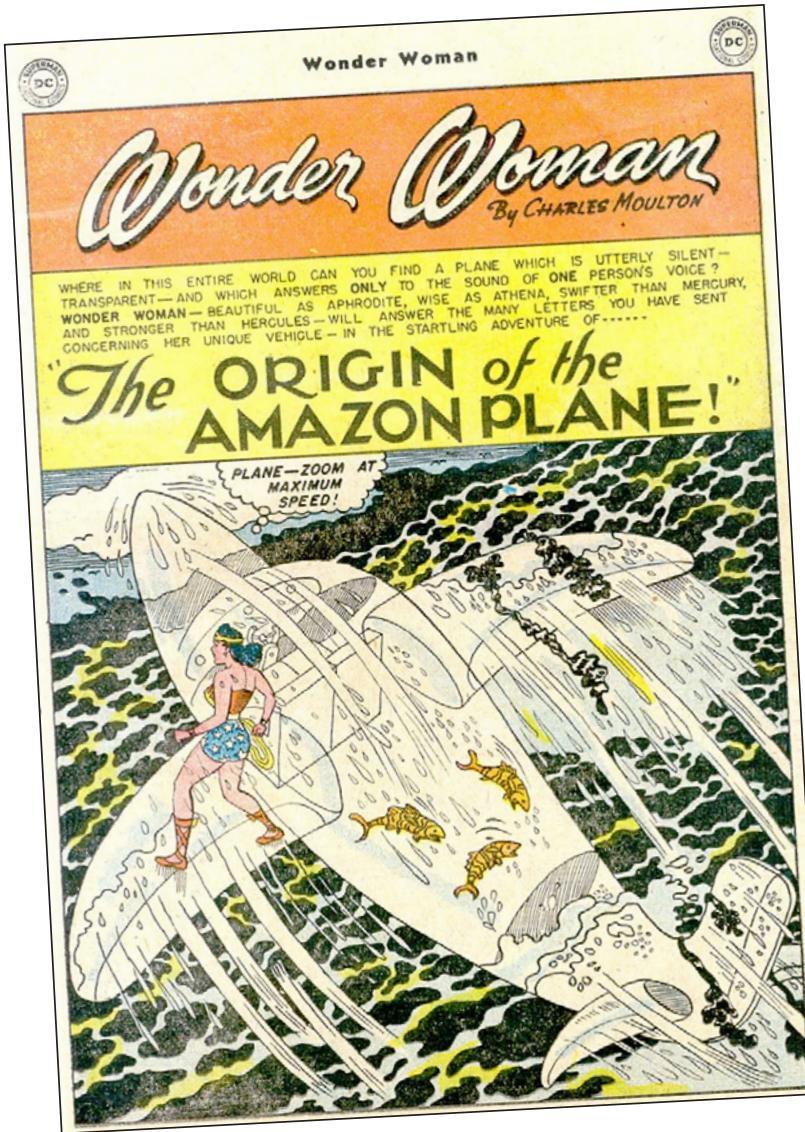
WONDER WOMAN and THE HUMAN TANK!

7/23

SPLASH: The Human Tank, the villain described within, is standing, giant-size, laughing, as planes buzz around him, firing at him. Bullets bounce off him as if he really were a human tank. He is standing on a cloud, as this is a symbolical shot. WW is standing on the wing of her plane as it zooms toward him, she is startled.

WW: Great Hera! Bullets bounce off The Human Tank's skin like rain drops!

LEGEND: Wonder Woman--beautiful as Aphrodite, wise as Athena, and swifter than Mercury, stronger than Hercules--has ~~now~~ battled against many strange villains in her adventure walking men



The Days Dwindle Down...
(Clockwise from top left:) Pages from some of Harry's later Wonder Woman entries: the splash from #80 (Feb. 1956)... and the three splash pages from #97 (April '58), which would turn out to be the artist's last work. Scripts by Robert Kanigher... who may or may not have fired HGP. Courtesy of Art Cloos & Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]



[continued from p. 39]

all the interior work in it. There are those who say he had been fired by this time, but there is no evidence that that is true and that it was not his passing that ended his run with the character he helped create. We may never have an answer to that question, but I lean to the latter conclusion.

Harry's passing was reported by Kenneth Irwin of San Rafael, who was the husband of his niece Marie, who managed the Peter real estate properties. In 1909 his brother Louis Peter had married Omo Spring, who at the time was 20 years old, having been born on July 10, 1889. They had a daughter, Harry's niece Marie Frances Peter, born in 1910. They also had a son, Louis L. Peter (George), born in 1912, but he lived only one year, dying in 1913. The Peters divorced and Omo would go on to be married two more times and have three more children. Her last marriage was to Walter Spring, her cousin, with whom she is buried. Harry's brother had died on Sunday, July 3, 1949, in San Rafael, at the age of 78 and is buried in Mount Tamalpais Cemetery. He was one year older than Omo; Louis is reported as having only the two children he had with her. His daughter, a graduate of San Francisco State College, would die after a brief illness on Friday, May 7, 1976, at the age of 66. She made her home virtually all her life at 1000 C Street, first in the old house behind the Peter Building, which she owned, and later in a modern building that housed apartments and shops. Harry's sister



In The Footsteps Of H.G. Peter

The first splash page drawn by Harry's successors—for *Wonder Woman* #98 (June 1958), by Ross Andru & Mike Esposito, an already-established artistic team who would draw the Amazon's adventures for a number of years. Script by Kanigher. Courtesy of Art Lortie. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Mary F. Peter has no record of ever being married. She was living with the Irwins in the Peter Building at the time of Harry's death. She would die in 1977 and is buried with her parents, though her tombstone has her first name as Marie. To date, I have not found any evidence of any of Adonica's siblings having any descendants.

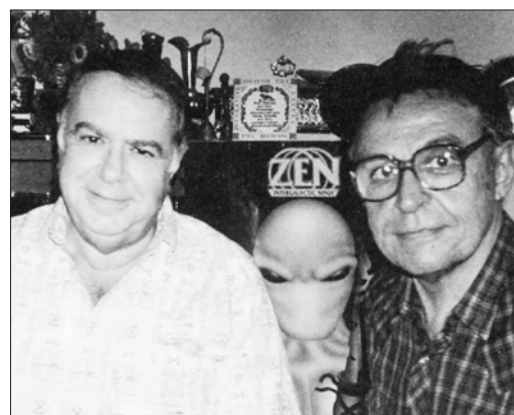
If such a thing as destiny does exist, then it certainly was determined that Harry and Wonder Woman would meet. It took 40 years, an earthquake resulting in a 3,000-mile cross-country move, a worldwide Depression along with the Second World War to get him to her. He was the perfect artist for the formative years of her story, and his imaginative renderings of her adventures still captivate and enthrall readers today. Comics historians are coming to appreciate his style, and he is my personal favorite Wonder Woman artist.

It is time, I think, to consider him as a true co-creator of Wonder Woman and to give him the due he deserves.

There is still much to discover about Harry and his family, as well as about Adonica and hers. Karen M. Walowit reports that Marjorie Wilkes described Harry as a "quiet, thoughtful and sensitive man who never talked about himself," and perhaps his reticence is one reason so little information about his personal life has been discovered so far. In 2015 a man walked into the store of a well-known comics dealer claiming to be a relative of Harry. However, no contact information was exchanged, and it is unknown if the man was telling the truth about his relationship to the Peters, but he called Harry his uncle. If he was telling the truth, this person could possibly unlock a few mysteries if he could somehow be located.

Harry's influence has continued long after his death:

- In an effort to take advantage of the growing interest in Golden Age comics and to increase sales for *Wonder Woman's* title in late 1965, DC briefly returned *Wonder Woman's* stories and art to the style of her Golden Age comics. Artists Ross Andru and Mike Esposito drew stories emulating Harry Peter's artistic style.
- In 1972 *It Ain't Me Babe Comix*, a one-shot underground comic book, was published. It is the first comicbook produced entirely by women. The cover, done by Trina Robbins, depicts Wonder Woman drawn in the style of Harry, as well as several other prominent comics heroines.
- In 1972 Gloria Steinem compiled a hardcover collection for Holt Rinehart Winston reprinting Golden Age *Wonder Woman*

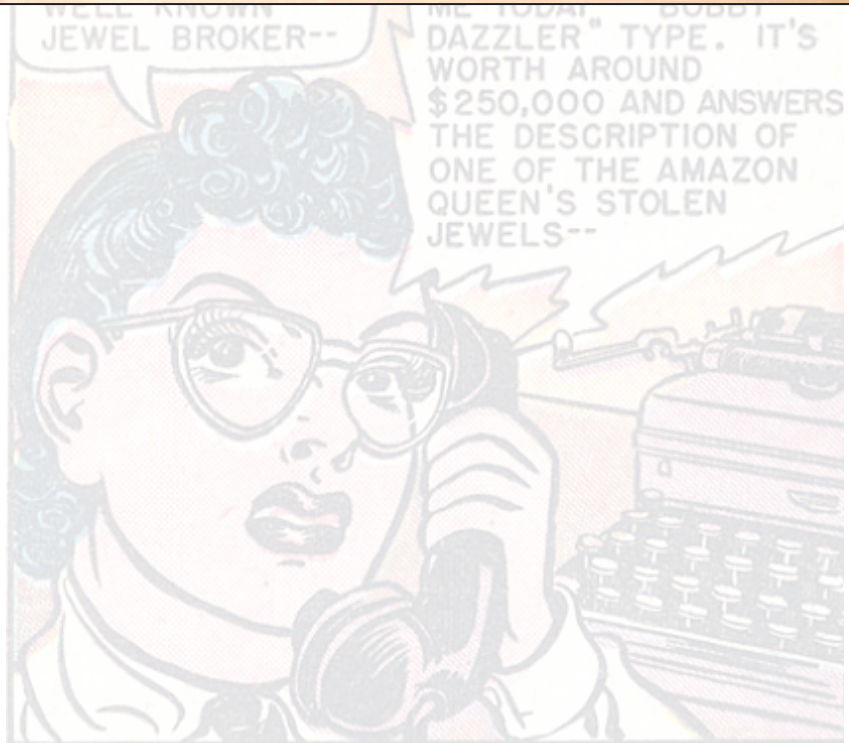


Andru & Esposito

Penciler Ross Andru (on right) and inker Mike Esposito, from *Comic Book Marketplace* #78.



Paging Wonder Woman!
 The original art to a page from the Hummel/Peter collaboration "Villainy, Incorporated!" in *Wonder Woman* #28 (March-April 1948), from the collection of Alice Cloos--and the color page as printed. [TM & © DC Comics.]





...Where Credit Is Due

(Above:) The end credits for the film *Wonder Woman 1984* related Harry G. Peter to the alphabetical “cattle call” at the end of the movie—while William Moulton Marston had a separate creative credit. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

(Right:) Comics historian Glen Cadigan (who wrote the study of Edmond Hamilton that appeared in *Alter Ego* #187) created this meme in the course of proposing that H.G. Peter be counted as being what this magazine also considers he is: the co-creator of Wonder Woman. No one is denying the Amazon was Marston’s concept, but there is also no denying that Peter designed the character’s all-important look, as well as drawing virtually all of her solo adventures for the first 17 years. “H.G. Peter,” *A/E* editor Roy Thomas maintains, “is the Bill Finger of Golden Age artists.”

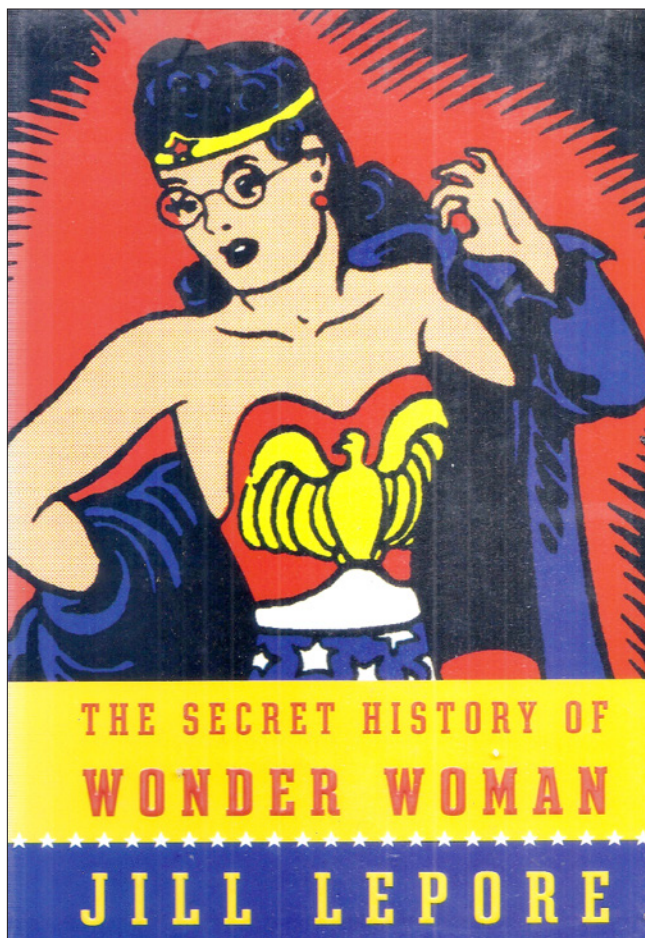
stories, with Peter’s art on the cover.

- While not in the form of a Harry Peter drawing, Wonder Woman was also on the premier issue cover of *Ms. Magazine* for January 1972, with the blurb “Wonder Woman for President”—a direct reference to Peter’s cover for *Wonder Woman* #7 in 1942.
- In 1975 The Creative Music Workshop presented a musical based on Wonder Woman that was funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities and was apparently copyrighted and approved by National Periodical Publications. All the art for the program was based on scans from Peter’s work.
- The 1975 TV series *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman* directly based its animated opening credits on panels from Peter’s work.
- Artist Trina Robbins became the first woman to officially draw a full *Wonder Woman* comic with her 1986 mini-series *The Legend of Wonder Woman*; she based its visual style on a direct homage to Harry. See *A/E* #192. [However, artist Jan Duursema had drawn a chapter of the extra-length *Wonder Woman* #300 in 1983.]
- The DC Comics 2000 *Wonder Woman: The Complete History* by Les Daniels and Chip Kidd from Chronicle Books featured Peter’s Wonder Woman on the cover.
- The cover to *Wonder Woman* #184 (Vol. 2, Oct. 2002) by Adam Hughes depicts his modern Wonder Woman meeting the H.G. Peter Wonder Woman of the 1940s.
- The book *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (Knopf, 2014), in which Harvard historian Professor Jill Lepore revealed new research on Marston’s close connections with the early birth control and feminist movements, featured a panel of Wonder Woman by Harry on its cover.
- In 2015 The New York Historical Society held an exhibition titled “Super-heroes in Gotham” on the evolution of the modern American comicbook, beginning in October. Six super-heroes were selected: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, Captain America, and Iron Man. One of Harry’s concept design sketches for Wonder Woman was used on the



The Golden Age Of Imitation

For a brief time in the mid-1960s, at a time of a nostalgic revival, Andru and Esposito were forced by editor Kanigher to imitate H.G. Peter’s Golden Age style. While the attempt was not 100% successful artistically, it was even less successful from a commercial viewpoint and was soon abandoned, to the artists’ relief. Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]



The Amazon Across The Ages
 (Above left:) Adam Hughes' cover for *Wonder Woman* [Vol. 2] #184 (Oct. 2002) contrasted his own version of Princess Diana with that drawn by H.G. Peter, more than half a century before. Courtesy of the GCD.
 (Above right:) The HGP cover of Jill Lepore's 2015 study *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. [Art TM & © DC Comics.]

flier handout for the exhibit. Also was on display was my wife's copy of *Sensation Comics* #1 with its Harry Peter Wonder Woman cover.

- At the New York Comic Con in October 2016 the United States Post Office, in a special ceremony with the granddaughter of William Marston in attendance, unveiled a four-stamp commemorative series of Wonder Woman 75th-anniversary stamps by four Wonder Woman artists covering the four Ages of comics in which she has appeared, with Harry's *Sensation Comics* #1 cover image of Wonder Woman representing the Golden Age.



“Stamp Me And Mail Me!”
 The four 2016 commemorative Wonder Woman stamps utilized, from top to bottom, the artwork of Cliff Chiang, José Luis García-Lopez, Irv Novick, and H.G. Peter—but, no doubt using officially obtained information, the Wikipedia text that accompanies the depictions names only Dr. William Moulton Marston in conjunction with the HGP art. How long, O Lord....? [Art TM & © DC Comics.]

- In 2017, at the San Diego Comic-Con, Harry was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Awards Hall of Fame. Trina Robbins told the audience, "There would be no Wonder Woman as we know her without him."

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One Singular Sensation

A playful Wonder Woman cover by H.G. Peter for *Sensation Comics* #66 (June 1947). Courtesy of the GCD. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Author Bio(s)

The first comicbook that **Art Cloos** can remember is a Superman comic that his grandmother bought for him. He was too young to be able to read it, but it would be comics that helped him to learn to read. It was Detective Comics #327, bought for him by his uncle, that made him both a lifetime comicbook and Batman fan. When he grew up, he became a high school teacher, teaching history for 28 years, which includes A.P. U.S. history and A.P. U.S government classes and being an editor on a 4th-grade New York State history textbook, all the while reading and collecting comicbooks and the vintage toys and original art associated with them. When he retired, he turned to writing about the comics, especially Batman and the toys and original art of the Dark Knight. He has multiple columns at Gemstone Publishing's Scoop On Line and has conducted over a hundred interviews with members of comics fandom. With his wife Allie, he has reviewed many comic, toy, and original art conventions, as well as appearing in various Gemstone publications. His collection has appeared in multiple museums and books. He has appeared on both American and British television. Art created and runs a vintage Facebook Batman group.

It was at a graduate class at St. John's University, in a Learning Styles class, that **Alice Kan** (now **Allie Coos**) and Art Cloos first met. Before long they were a couple and were married after she graduated to become a special-ed teacher. Allie had never read a comicbook until she met Art, but collecting was in her blood. It was when he took her to one of the comic art conventions run by Phil Seuling that she got hooked. She experimented with a lot of different titles, but it was the Wonder Woman ones that she began to focus on. Seeing that, Art gave her his Wonder Woman comics from his collection, and from that point there



Art & Alice (Allie) Cloos

was no stopping her. Today she has one of the most complete collections of Wonder Woman comics and has added vintage Wonder Woman toys and original art to it as well. Her collection has appeared in multiple museum exhibitions and books, and she has appeared on British television. Today she is a photo-journalist who, working with Art, reviews fandom conventions of all types. She has created and runs a Facebook vintage Wonder Woman group. It was her eBay buy of estate materials from the estate of Harry G. Peter that started Art on his efforts to put together the story of the artist's life.



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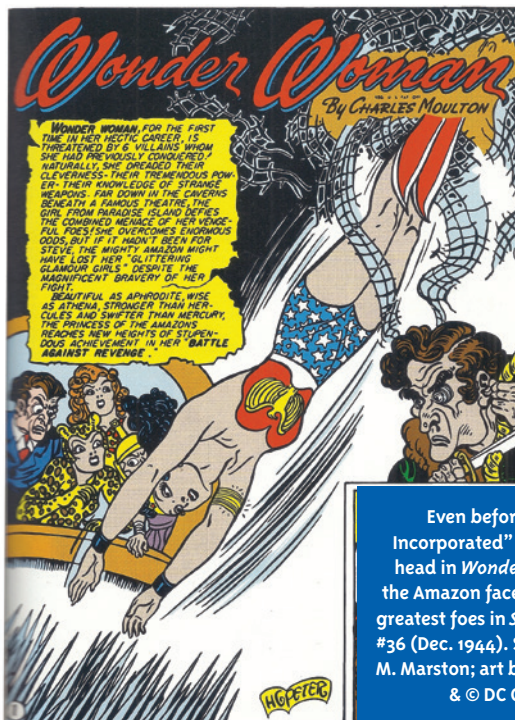


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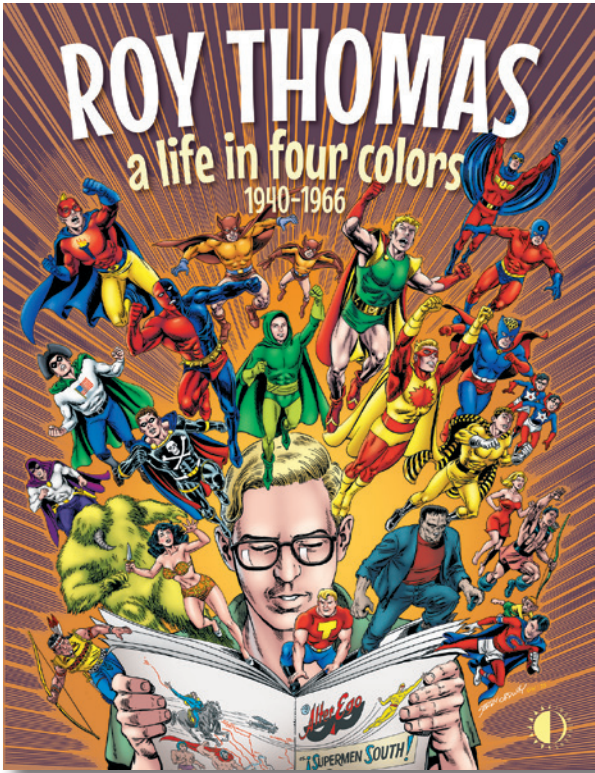
Even before "Villainy Incorporated" reared its ugly head in *Wonder Woman* #28, the Amazon faced several of her greatest foes in *Sensation Comics* #36 (Dec. 1944). Script by William M. Marston; art by H.G. Peter. [TM & © DC Comics.]

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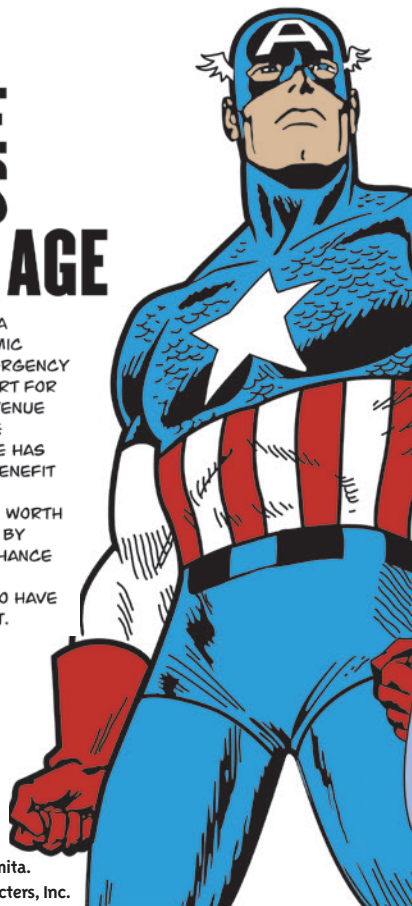
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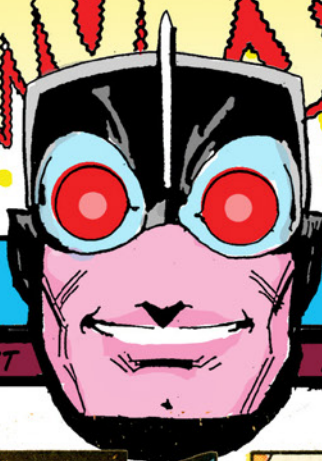
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MR. MONSTER'S

COMIC CRYPT!

BY MICHAEL T. GILBERT

MR. MONSTER © AND © 2025



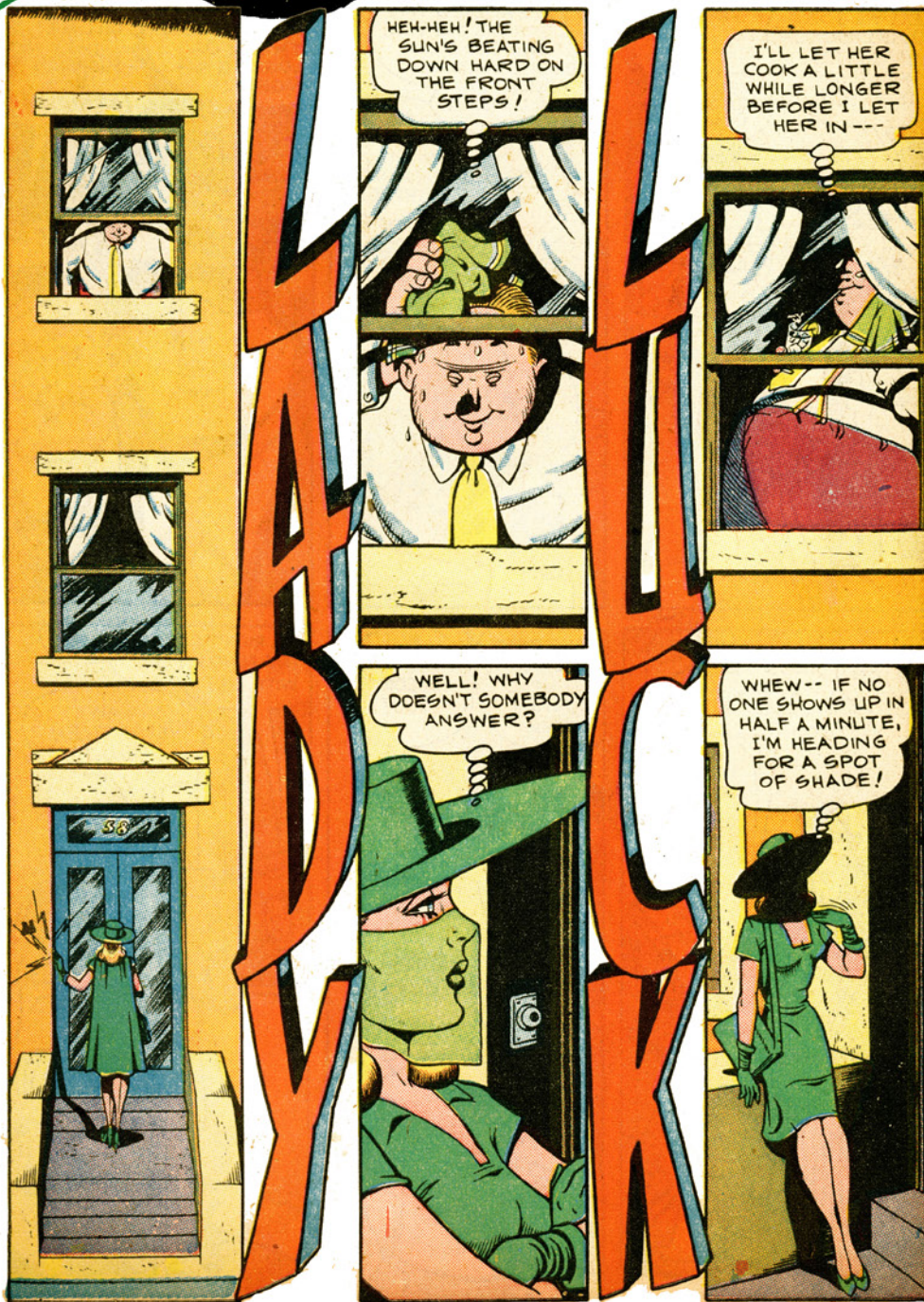
LAST ISSUE WE PUBLISHED A LOVELY SELECTION OF LOGOS BY KLAUS NORDLING, WHO WROTE, DREW AND LETTERED THE "LADY LUCK" STRIP IN THE SPIRIT SECTION - A FREE 16-PAGE COMICBOOK INSERTED INTO SELECT NEWSPAPERS IN THE 1940S.

ON THE RIGHT IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW NORDLING INTEGRATED VERTICAL LETTERING INTO THE SPLASH PAGE. ALL THIS AND MORE IN PART 2 OF...

LADY LUCK'S LUCKY LOGOS!



(Right:) Nordling's beautifully designed page from Spirit Section #267 (July 8, 1945), in the Chicago Sun. [© Eisner Estate]

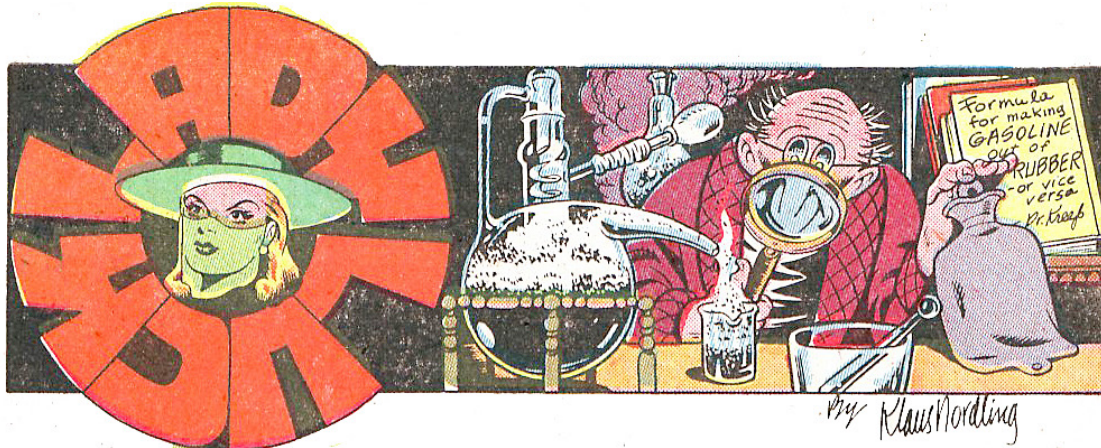


HEH-HEH! THE SUN'S BEATING DOWN HARD ON THE FRONT STEPS!

I'LL LET HER COOK A LITTLE WHILE LONGER BEFORE I LET HER IN---

WELL! WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY ANSWER?

WHEW-- IF NO ONE SHOWS UP IN HALF A MINUTE, I'M HEADING FOR A SPOT OF SHADE!



She's In The Winner's Circle!

(Left:) From *Spirit Section* #204 (April 23, 1944).
Incidentally, a photo of Klaus Nordling was seen last issue.
[TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

Lady Luck's Lucky Logos (Part 2)

by Michael T. Gilbert

If there was an award for "Most Under-appreciated Cartoonist," Klaus Nordling would certainly be in the running. If he's sadly forgotten today, those in the know count Nordling as one of the Golden Age's brightest lights.

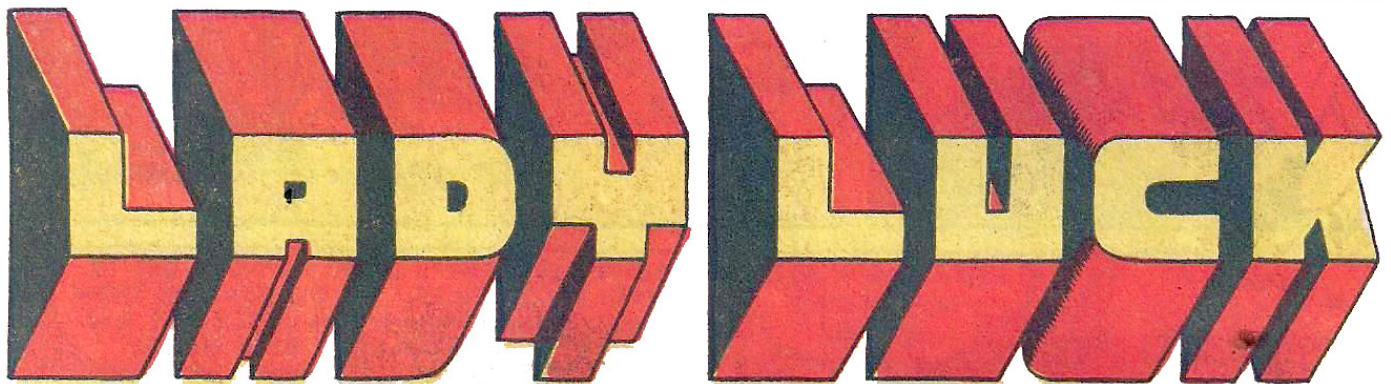
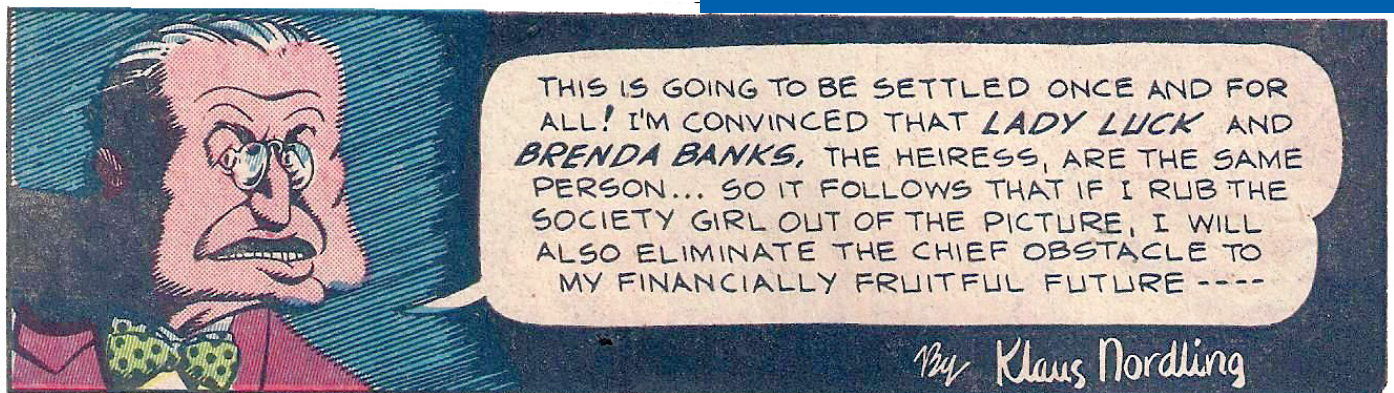
Klaus was born in Finland on May 29, 1910, moving to the US in 1912. He worked as a gag cartoonist for *Americana* magazine in the '30s, then wrote and drew the *Baron Munchausen* comic strip from 1935 to 1937 under the pen name Fred Nordley. Early on, Nordling's pen names also included F. Klaus, Ed Norris, and Clyde North.

Nordling began his comicbook career in 1939, after joining the Eisner & Iger studio. Though often unsigned, his tentative credits include script and art on "Spark Stevens" in Fox's *Wonderworld Comics* #3 and #4 (July-Aug. 1939). The untitled six-page story starring "Lt. Drake of Naval Intelligence" was his first credited story (as F. Klaus), appearing in *Mystery Men Comics* #1 (Aug. 1939). Nordling was in good company, appearing alongside Will Eisner, Bob Powell, Dick Briefer, George Tuska, and others.

He drew for a variety of companies. "Strut Warren" for Fiction House's *Fight Comics*, and "Shorty Shortcake" for Fox's *Wonderworld Comics* were some of his earlier efforts. He also produced "The Three Aces" for Harvey's *Speed Comics* #1 (Oct. 1939), and a weird girth-challenged super-hero, "Thin Man" for Timely/Marvel. The latter was introduced in their *Mystic Comics* #4 (July 1940), and made nary a splash in his only appearance. (Still, Roy Thomas thought enough of him that the Thin Man became a charter member of the Liberty Legion in Marvel's *The Invaders*.)

Cubism, Anyone?

(Below:) From *Spirit Section* #234 (Nov. 19, 1944), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



And Then Came Quality!

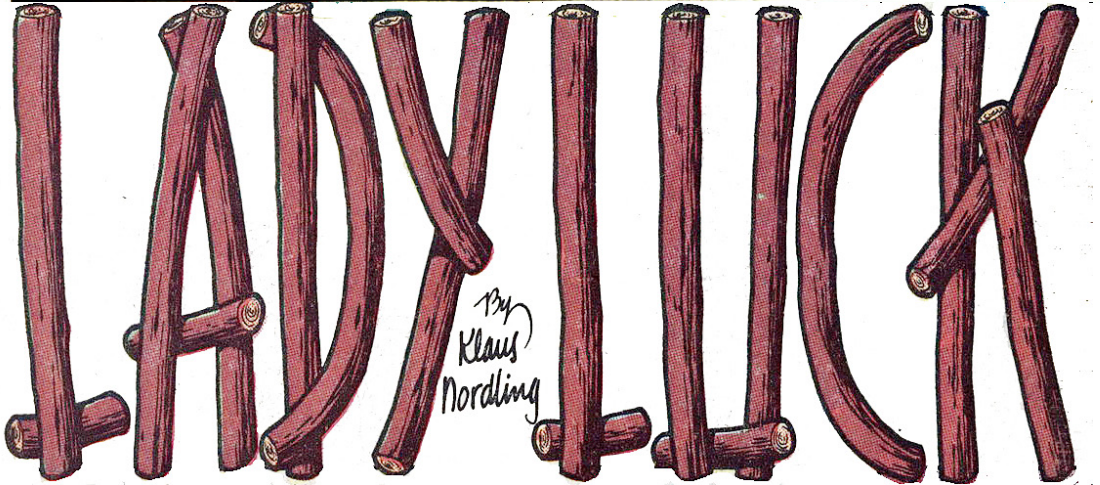
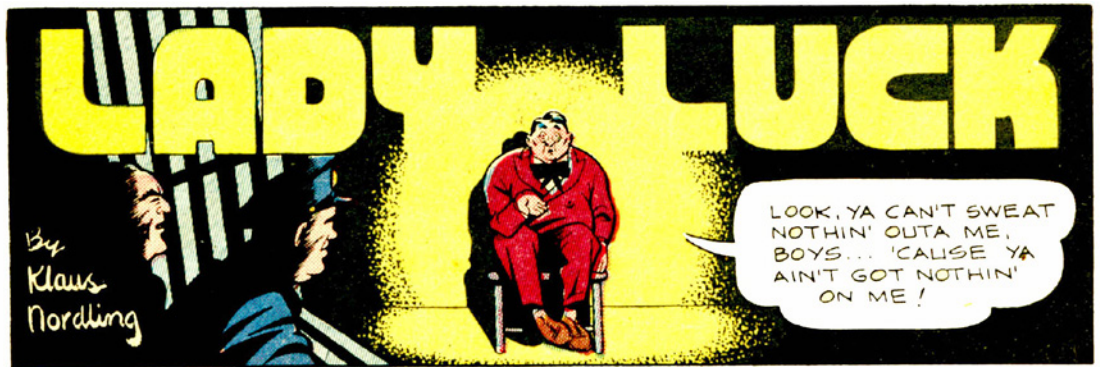
Nordling was well-represented at Quality with "Bob and Swab" for *Hit Comics*, "Shot and Shell" for *Military Comics*, and "The Barker" for *National Comics*. And let us not forget Quality's delightful ink-slinging detective, "Pen Miller." The "famous comic magazine cartoonist" appeared in Quality's *National Comics* beginning with issue #1 (July 1940).

The first episode features young, handsome Pen at his drawing board, desperately searching for an idea. Finally, he gets one, a story about "a corpse found in a famous detective's bedroom. The detective himself is suspected, and arrested."

Niki, Pen's loyal Chinese manservant, is not impressed. Talking in the typical pigeon English of the times, he replies "Velly Solly... is not original!" Pen, taken aback, asks why.

Niki shrugs and says, "It has already happened. Honorable corpse lies in your bedroom at present!" And so on.

Cringe-worthy racial stereotyping notwithstanding, it's a really fun strip, which Nordling wrote and drew. Pen continued



Going Down?

(From top to bottom:) *Spirit Section* #202 (April 9, 1944), from the *Chicago Sun*.

Spirit Section #274 (Aug. 26, 1945), from the *Philadelphia Record*.

Spirit Section #301 (April 3, 1946), from the *Philadelphia Record*.

Spirit Section #280 (Oct. 7, 1945), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

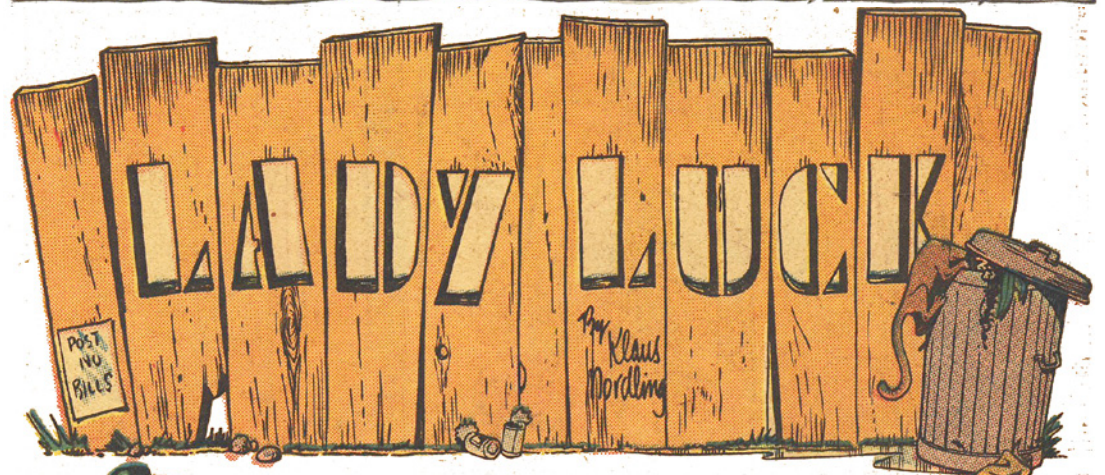
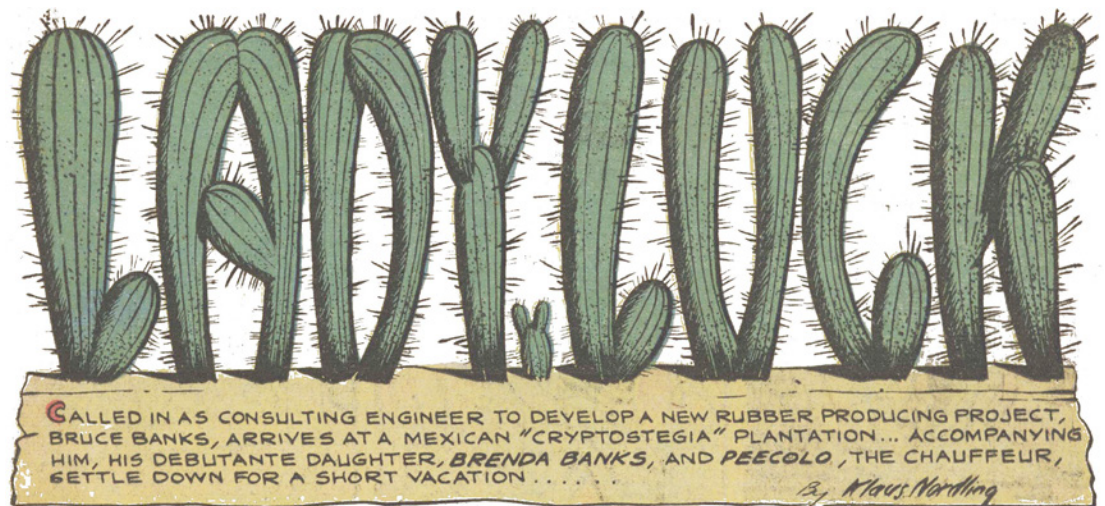
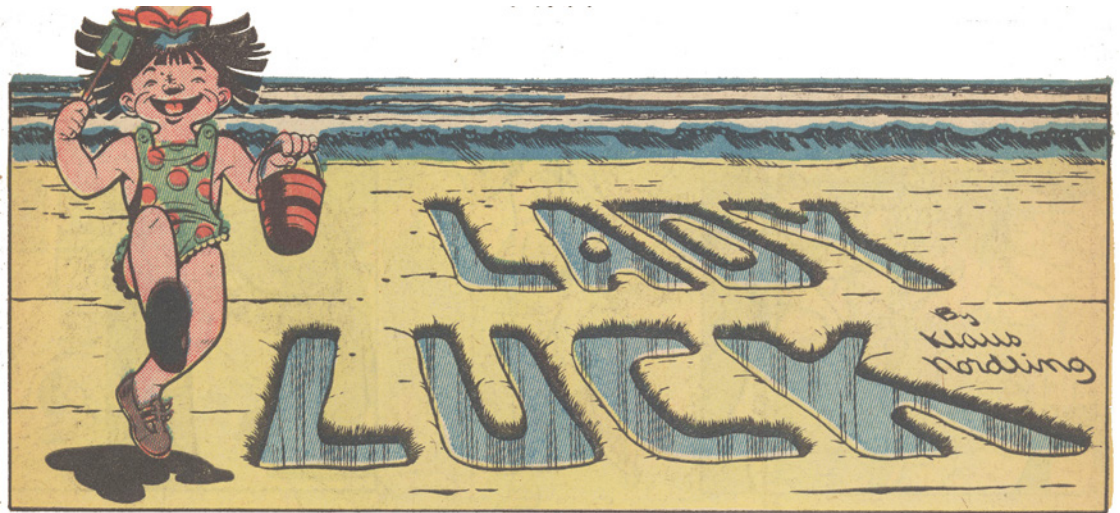
solving crimes (and meeting deadlines!) in *National Comics* through issue #22, before moving on to *Crack Comics* #23 (March, 1943). He stayed there until finally putting down his pen and brush with *Crack Comics* #59 (March, 1949). And that was it for Nordling's "Cartoonist Detective." It was great practice for what followed.

Lady Luck!

"Pen Miller" wasn't Klaus Nordling's most famous strip. That honor was reserved for "Lady Luck." That strip debuted in the first issue of Will Eisner's *Spirit Section* on June 2, 1940. "Lady Luck" was credited to Ford Davis, but was actually written by Will Eisner and illustrated by Chuck Mazoujian. Dick French soon took over the writing.

The roster changed again when Nick Cardy (then known as Nicholas Viscardi) took over the feature, beginning with the strip from April 13, 1941, and ending on Feb. 22, 1942.

Nordling succeeded him, helming the series from March 1, 1942, to March 3, 1946. There was one final change. After Nordling's last strip, "Lady Luck" was canceled, replaced by Bob Jenny's "Wendy the Waitress." However, "Lady Luck" was reinstated a year later, this time drawn by cartoonist Fred Schwab. Fred drew it from May 5, 1946, to Nov. 3, 1946, after which the strip ended for good.



Down & Dirty

(From top to bottom:) *Spirit Section* #166 (Aug. 1, 1943), from the *Philadelphia Record*.

Spirit Section #133 (Dec. 13, 1942), from the *Philadelphia Record*.

Spirit Section #120 (Sept. 13, 1942), from the *Chicago Sun*.

Spirit Section #270 (July 29, 1945), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

Each cartoonist did superb work, but Nordling—a triple-threat creator, writing, drawing, and lettering the strip—soon became known as the definitive “Lady Luck” artist. And, as seen by the examples shown here and in our previous issue, few could surpass his whimsically inventive comicbook display lettering.

A Quality Lady!

Lady Luck also joined the Quality Comics roster, when her stories began being reprinted in *Smash Comics* from #42 to 85 (April 1943 to Aug. 1950). But was that the end of her adventures? Hardly!

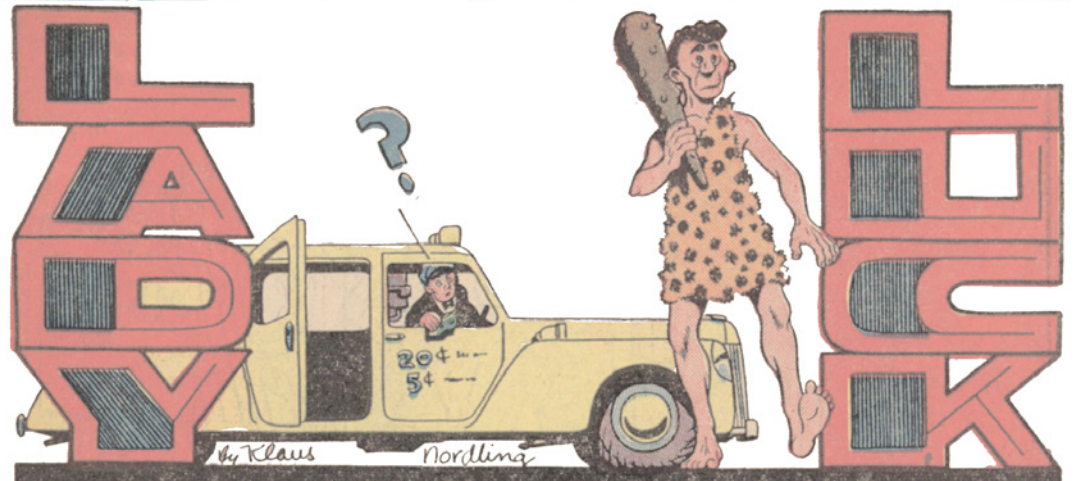
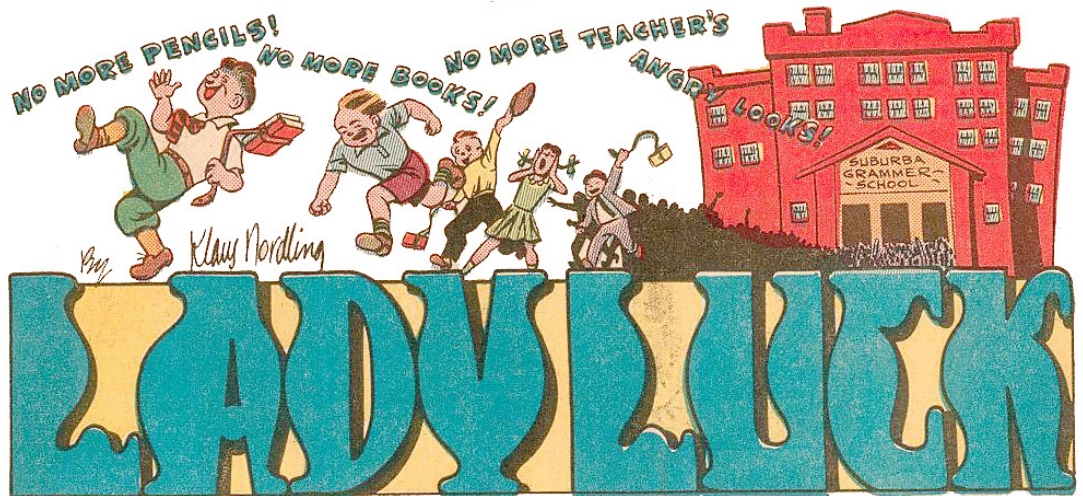
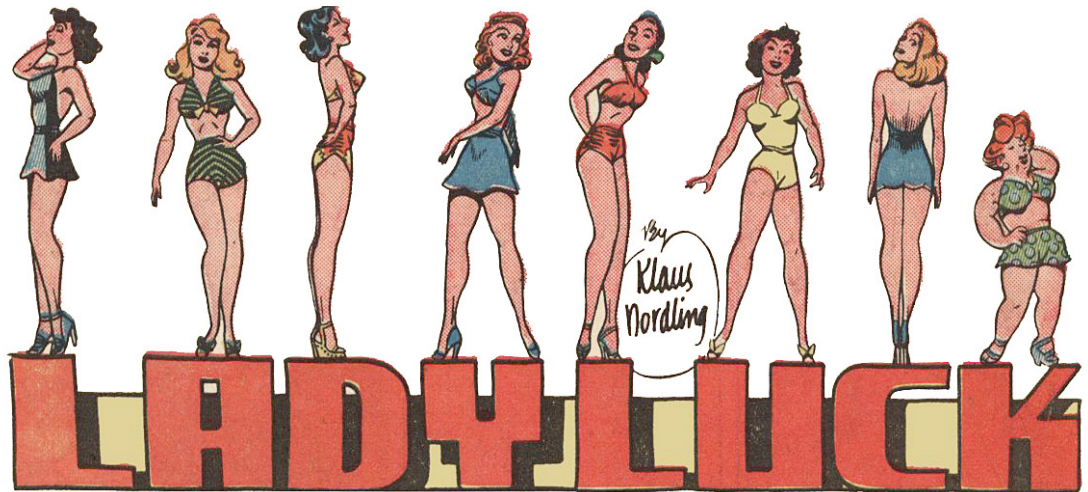
With issue #86, *Smash Comics* became *Lady Luck Comics*, with Klaus providing new stories—ones longer than the four pages allotted to him in Eisner’s *Spirit Section*. Over at Timely, female heroes were the fad of the hour, with comics featuring Golden Girl, Venus, Namora, Sun Girl, and Blonde Phantom given the spotlight. It’s possible that Quality publisher “Busy” Arnold was keeping an eye on the competition and thought giving our lady her own book might goose sales. If so, he was panning fool’s gold.

The lady in green appeared in the rechristened *Lady Luck Comics* #86 to #90, from December 1949 to August 1950. After five issues, *Lady Luck Comics* (like most featuring the Timely heroines) was canceled.

In addition to “Lady Luck,” Nordling also did some ghosting on Eisner’s “Spirit” from 1948 to 1951. After Will cancelled *The Spirit Section* in 1952, Klaus began working for Eisner’s American Visuals Corporation. He continued to do so through the 1970s, helping design instructional materials for various clients. He also contributed to

“Joe Dope” in *PS*, the *Preventive Maintenance Monthly*, for the U.S. Army. Nordling and Eisner wrote and drew *The Job Scene*, a comic designed to teach lower-income job-seekers helpful skills. Nordling also drew a promotional comic for Borden’s, and also ghosted Guy Gilchrist’s comic strip *The Rock Channel* for the Register and Tribune Syndicate.

In an article for *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #12 (Jan. 2002), Jim Amash interviewed Gill Fox, Klaus’s editor at Quality Comics. Fox remembered the cartoonist as “a little guy. Good-looking. And involved in local theatre. He had a very vivid imagination and was a good writer. In later years I’d send some work in his direction. But

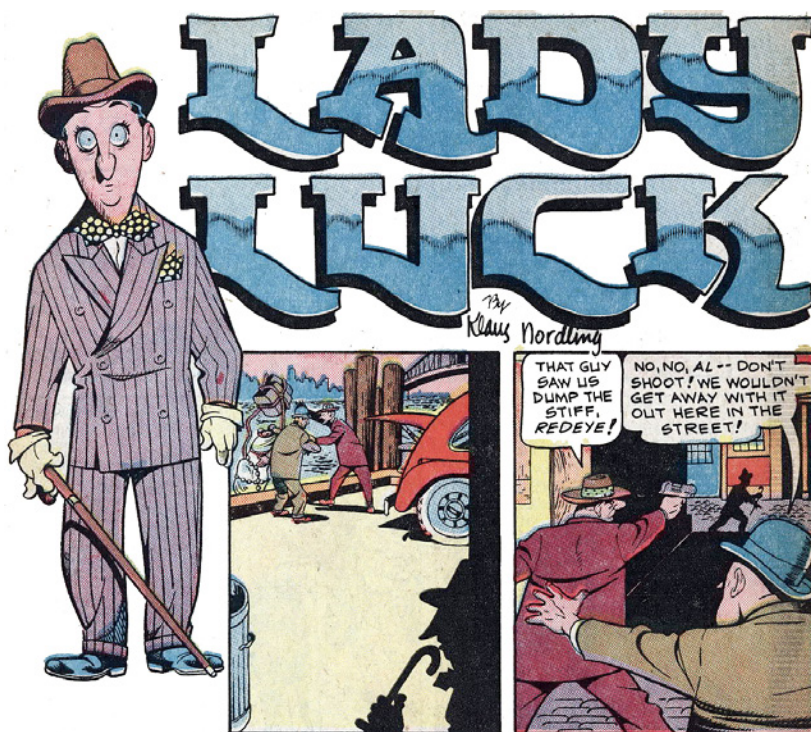


Third Time Lucky

(From top to bottom, yet again:)
Spirit Section #220 (Aug. 13, 1944),
from the *Chicago Star*.

Spirit Section #215 (July 9, 1944),
from the *Philadelphia Record*.

Spirit Section #205 (April 30,
1944), from the *Chicago Sun*. [TM &
© Estate of Will Eisner.]



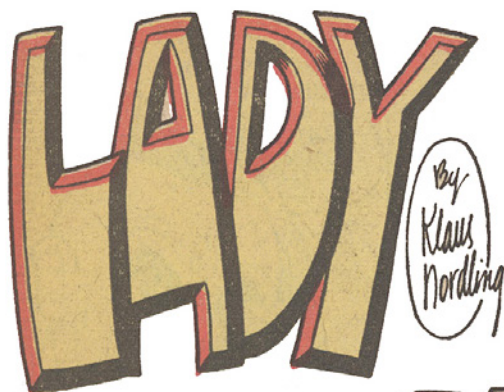
The More Things DeChange...

(Above:) Count DeChange from *Spirit Section* #276 (Sept. 9, 1945), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



Carrion Luggage?

(Above:) *Spirit Section* #248 (Feb. 25, 1945), from the *Philadelphia Record*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]



Lady Luck or Lady LOVE?

(Above:) A romantic logo from *Spirit Section* #143 (Feb. 14, 1943), from *The StarLedge*. [TM and © Estate of Will Eisner].



Simple & Sweet

(Above:) *Spirit Section* #209 (May 28, 1944), from the *Chicago Sun*. [TM & © Estate of Will Eisner.]

if you did something for him, he'd think you wanted something back. We got to know each other socially, but he still mistrusted people. Even me. But I admired his cartooning. And he was a great guy to sit and talk to."

Klaus Nordling died at his home in Ridgefield, Connecticut, on November 19, 1986, at age 76. He was survived by his wife, Tel, and a son and daughter.

Next: Our comicbook lettering tribute ends with a column devoted to Mr. Monster's own ace letterer... Ken Bruzenak!

MICHAEL T. Gilbert

Till next time...



Alfredo Castelli

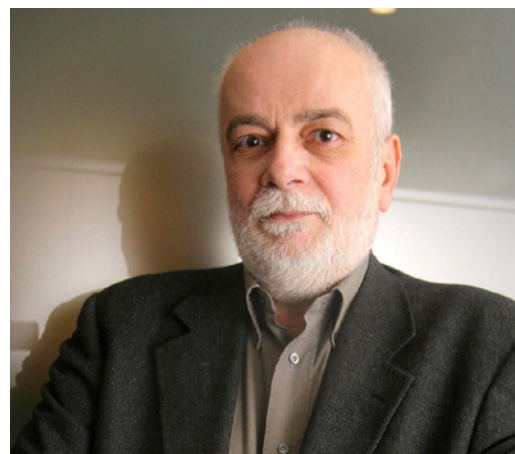
(1947–2024)

“Writer, Scholar, And Occasional Artist”

by Jean-Marc Lofficier

Alfredo Castelli, an Italian writer, scholar, and occasional artist, was born in Milan on June 26, 1947, and passed away in the same city on February 7, 2024, at the age of 76.

He began his career in comics in 1965 as writer / artist of a humorous feature, “Scheletrino” (“Little Skeleton”), in *Diabolik*, and by contributing scripts to *Kolosso* magazine that year and the next. A year later, he founded the fanzine *Comics Club 104*. In the following years, he wrote numerous scripts for various comics series such as *Rocky Rider*, *Pedrito el Dritto*, *Piccola Eva*, *Tiramolla*, and even *Topolino*, the Italian version of Mickey Mouse. In 1969, he co-founded the humor magazine *Tilt*. He also wrote a version of *Dracula* drawn by Antonio Sciotti. In December 1969, he created the magazine *Horror* with Pier Carpi, in which he published the *Zio Boris* series.



Alfredo Castelli

Photo courtesy of Alberto Becattini. Also depicted is the cover of a Castelli-written *Martin Mystère* album (graphic novel). Art by Giancarlo Alessandrini. Courtesy of Jean-Marc Lofficier. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

From 1972 to 1976 he joined the *Corriere dei Ragazzi* as writer / editor. There he created *L’Ombra*, *Gli Aristocratici*, *Otto Kruntz*, and *L’Omino Bufo*, a humorous strip that he drew himself! For *Il Giornalino*, he wrote *Mister Charade*. The same year, he also wrote *Gli Astrotoppisti* and *Chico & Blasco*. In 1973, he created *Mike Merlin* for the German periodical *Zack*. In 1976, he wrote *Eva Kant*, a *Diabolik* spin-off.

In 1978, he joined publisher Sergio Bonelli, where he began writing scripts for *Zagor*, *Mister No*, and *Dylan Dog*. He also wrote *L’Uomo delle Nevi* drawn by Milo Manara and *L’uomo di Chicago* for Giancarlo Alessandrini. In 1982, he created his most successful character, *Martin Mystère*, which became an international success and was adapted into an animated series.

In 1992, he launched the series *Zona X*, and in 2003, two spin-offs of *Martin Mystère*, *Doctor Mystère*. In 2004, he played himself in a documentary about H.P. Lovecraft, and the following year had a role in the Italian film *Il mistero di Lovecraft*. In 2006, he wrote a major scholarly work on early American comic strips from 1895 to 1919.

On a personal note, Alfredo and I had collaborated on a *Martin Mystère* story entitled *The Shadow of Fantomas*, drawn by Dante Spada and published in 2012.

Our apologies. The above tribute was originally published in a somewhat different form in *Alter Ego* #195, but comics historian Alberto Becattini pointed out that both article and caption contained a few errors. Worse still, we (that means Roy) had somehow used the photo of a different A. Castelli. While we are running Mr. B.’s notes on the matter in this issue’s “re.” section, we decided we wanted to re-run the tribute to Alfredo Castelli in corrected form.

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(Photo taken at CCXP23 in São Paulo, Brazil, Dec. 2023)

Jackson Guice

(1961-2025)

“Greatest Sheer Out-And-Out Fun
A Person Can Have”

By Bryan D. Stroud

A talented artist left us too soon when Jackson N. “Butch” Guice, Jr., passed away on May 1, 2025, at the age of 63.

Born in Tennessee on June 27, 1961, Guice, like so many, was inspired by the comics of his youth, be they books or adventure strips, and was especially enamored of the cinematic efforts of Ray Harryhausen, cited as a direct influence on Jackson’s *Olympus* graphic novel.

Getting a foothold into the art world by illustrating fanzines, Guice gained notice with his work on Marvel’s *Rom Annual #1* and *Micronauts*. Springboarding from those successes, he went on to work on multiple well-known properties for Marvel, including *X-Men*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *New Mutants*, and *Doctor Strange, Sorcerer Supreme*. (He and Walt Simonson co-created the character known as Ahab in the pages of *Fantastic Four Annual #23*.)



Jackson “Butch” Guice

seen with one of his most famous covers, that of *Action Comics #700* (June 1994), a climactic moment in the “Death of Superman” storyline—and his cover for *Doctor Strange, Sorcerer Supreme #5* (July 1989). Courtesy of the Grand Comics Database. [TM & © DC Comics & Marvel Characters, Inc., respectively.]

Expanding his portfolio, he collaborated with writer Mike Baron on *Badger*, *Nexus*, and *The Chronicles of Corum* for First Comics. Further work with Baron included a jump to DC Comics and the *Flash* title in the late ‘80s... and in the ‘90s on Superman in *Action Comics* and the groundbreaking *Death of Superman* storyline.



Guice’s talents remained in demand through the latter part of his 40-plus years in the industry, as he lent his abilities to Acclaim, CrossGen, Dark Horse, Valiant, and Humanoids. He was the recipient of an Inkpot Award in 2015.

Reflecting on his breaking into the industry, he commented in a 2000 interview that “[I]t has been a non-stop glorious thrill ride ever since. Despite the occasional bump in the road, this industry is probably the greatest sheer out-and-out fun a person can have while earning a living.”

**TwoMorrows
Full Page Ad #1**

Jim Shooter

(1951-2025)

“If You Have A Really Solid Foundation In Storytelling...”

by Bryan D. Stroud



Jim Shooter

above the splash page of his first “Legion” story, for DC’s *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966), with layouts by JS himself & finished art by Sheldon Moldoff—and the Mike Zeck/John Beatty cover for *Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars* #1 (May 1984), the smash-hit series of which he was both writer and editor-in-chief. [Art TM & © DC Comics & Marvel Characters, Inc., respectively.]

James C. “Jim” Shooter passed away on June 30, 2025, at age 73. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on September 27, 1951, he began successfully selling scripts to National/DC at an improbably early age. He described his methodology in a 2008 interview conducted by this writer: “I literally spent a year studying... all the Marvel comics I could... trying to take them apart and figure out things like, ‘Well, usually by page 6 the bad guy shows up,’ and that’s when I wrote that first one and sent it off to Mort Weisinger at DC Comics... in the summer of ‘65 when I was 13. I got back a nice letter saying, ‘Send us another one,’ and that’s what started it all.”

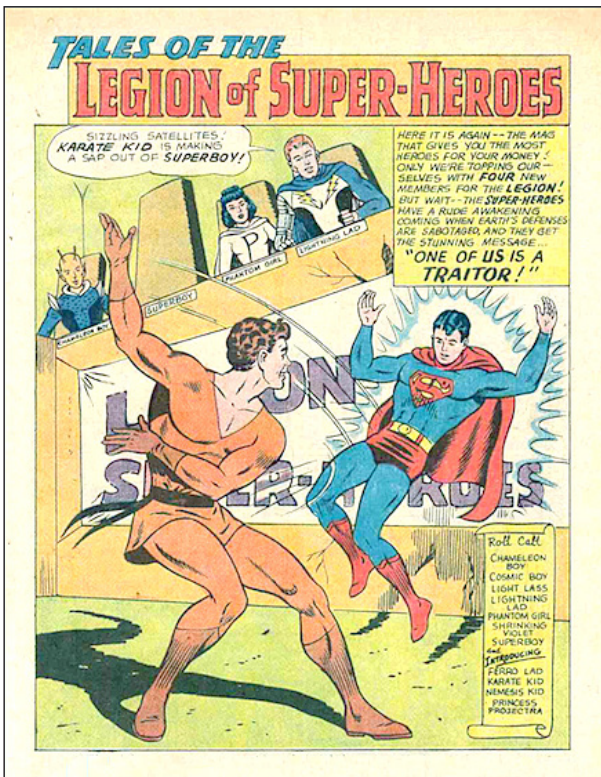
Shooter’s run on “The Legion of Super-Heroes” in *Adventure Comics* commenced in 1966, and he was soon also writing for other titles, including DC’s flagship *Superman*, introducing The Parasite: “I thought, really, this guy [Superman] hadn’t had a new villain in forever. So, I was in 9th grade and in Biology class we’re studying parasites and I said, ‘Hey!’”

Jim also became the initial writer of DC’s licensed *Captain Action* series, but was chagrined to find its main concepts and characters had already been thought up and even named. “I thought, ‘Oh, there’s not a lot left for me to create.’” Weisinger had

just arranged for him to script an episode of the *Batman* TV series—“when they canceled the show. [laughs] So, I never got to do that.”

After a falling out with Weisinger at age 18, Jim worked briefly for Marvel in 1969, but personal economics forced him to quit after three weeks. He then worked in advertising, and also wrote children’s books, animation and toy developments, et al.

In 1975 Jim returned to Marvel and eventually became the editor-in-chief for nine years, presiding over a key period in the company’s life



Following his time at Marvel, Jim went on to found Valiant Comics, in 1989; Defiant Comics in 1993; and Broadway Comics in 1995. Later work included a return to the Legion of Super-Heroes in 2007 and work for Dark Horse Comics in 2009.

After a long and varied career, encompassing 60 years and many highs and lows, Jim Shooter summed up things with this observation: “If you have a really good solid foundation in storytelling, then you can go a lot of places with it.”



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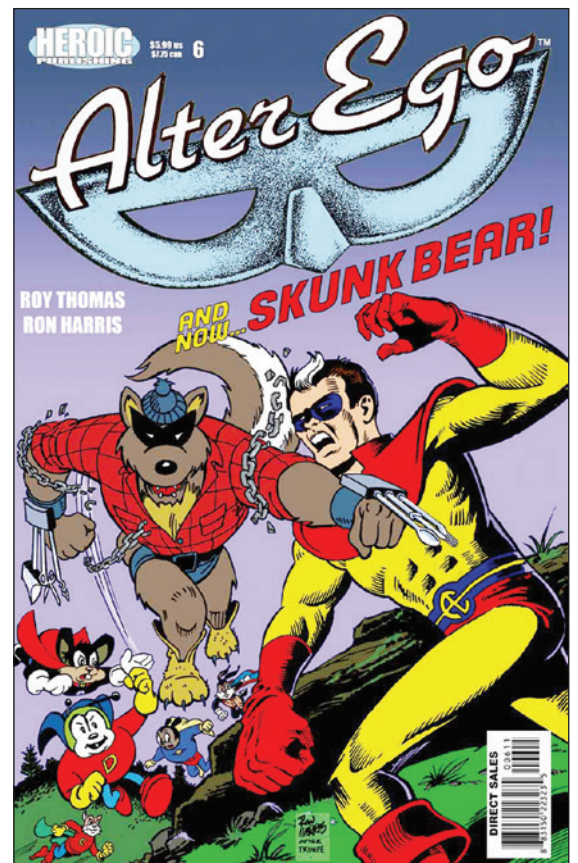
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SK¹²⁴
after
H.G. PETER
1945
(Sensation 38)

“Maskot” artist-in-residence (residing in Australia, that is) **Shane Foley** elected to adapt (and color) an H.G. Peter drawing of Wonder Woman at Christmastime for this issue’s letters section, putting her in the Captain Ego costume designed in 1964 by creating artist Biljo White—and she’s bringing twice the usual goodies this time, since we’re doubling up on the previous issues covered this time... beginning with **Alter Ego #189**, which was a joyous celebration of the late great John Romita... and with a cyberspace missive from Yancy Street Ganger **Nick Caputo**:

Hi Roy,

John Romita... such a talented, knowledgeable, and pleasant guy. I still recall how he took a call from me out of the blue when I was writing articles on Werner Roth, Paul Reinman, and Don Heck. He was effusive in his praise of fellow professionals. Several years later I had occasion to speak to him at a New York con and thank him for his time. I also got him to sign a comic, but being me, I didn’t go for the obvious: Spidey, DD, Cap—no, I brought him an Atlas comic. I believe it was *Jungle Tales*, with the character Jungle Boy. That threw him for a loop!

I wonder what Romita would have brought to Daredevil if he had stayed on that character for a long run, comparable to Colan’s, instead of Spider-Man. Or even Captain America, to which he returned for a short run in the early 1970s.

On page 3 the caption has two errors. The illo is drawn by Jack

Kirby, although inked by Romita, and is from the cover of the 1977 Marvel Comics Memory Album calendar, probably on sale in late 1976, not 1975.

Nick Caputo

Yeah, I (Roy) spotted that mistake of mine just barely too late to replace that art with the cover of the very first Marvel calendar, for the year 1975, which had been both penciled and inked by John Romita.

As for how John R. might’ve fared at Marvel if he’d stuck to Daredevil or Captain America—well, considering how swiftly the sales of the former rose as soon as he took over the art chores, we suspect he’d have done rather well. But then, who would have helped poor Stan raise Amazing Spider-Man to even greater heights? Maybe he’d have kept Big John Buscema at it—but J.B.’s antipathy toward the web-spinner as a character was well-known from the start, and I can’t think of anyone else who was around at the turn of 1966 (when originating artist Steve Ditko departed) that would’ve filled the bill as well as those two guys did.

*Next up—for the first of two letters-section appearances this time around, is **Bernie Bubnis**, who’s been a publishing comics fan since at least 1964, when he was one of those who organized the very first comics convention ever....*

Hi Roy,

On the contents page is a John Romita panel from *Young Men* #26 featuring Captain America, Human Torch, and Sub-Mariner all in the same panel. Attached is one of my early ads (no idea of which issue of *RBCC* it’s from) offering this page [of original art] and others from #26. A gift from Mike Sekowsky in ’63 or ’64. This ad had to be from at least 4 to 6 years later. No idea who purchased anything on that page.

Bernie Bubnis

We couldn’t reprint your late-’60s ad, Bernie, because I had warped it already with my tears. Even back then, I’d probably have gone into hock for that page—or any one of several others from Jazzy Johnny’s year-long mid-’50s stint on “Captain America,” which, as you know well, is my favorite run of any of his distinguished art.

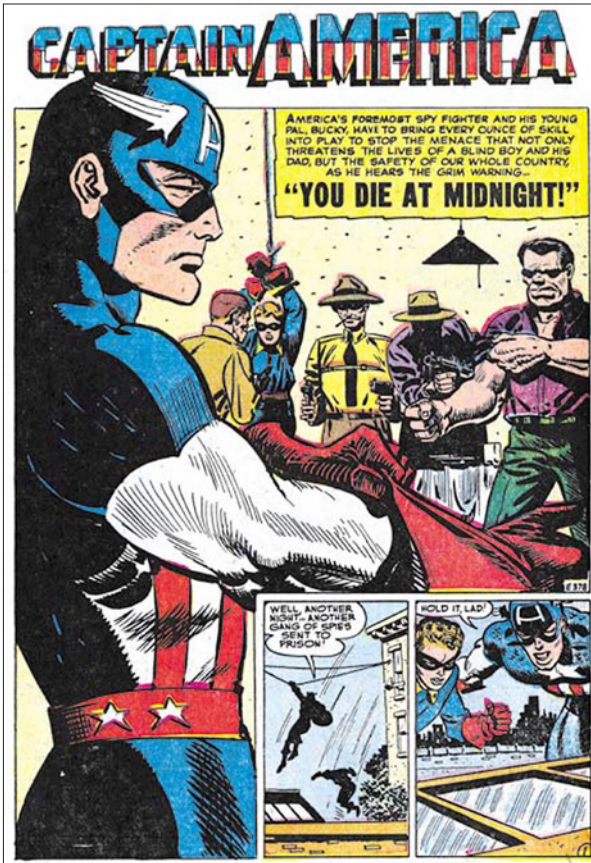
*Another double-dipper this issue is regular e-writer **Joe Frank**, who naturally has his own ideas about what was Romita Senior’s best work. Me, I was glad to hear it—’cause that means that, if and when a great page of his 1953-54 “Captain America” comes up for grabs, he won’t be competing with me for it!*

Dear Roy,

Everyone will likely have their own opinion as to what someone’s “best” might be. Really, it comes down to individual taste and favorites. For John, I loved his inking of Jack’s iconic figures on the covers of *Daredevil* #13 and the Hulk on *Tales to Astonish* #77. His covers to *Spider-Man* #43 and 46, with great motion and distinctive anatomy. And, though uncredited, perhaps the Spider-Man figures in *Fantastic Four* #73? Plus, his beautiful paintings on the covers of *Spectacular Spider-Man* #1 and 2

What gets me about John’s career at Marvel is that he was pulled in different directions concurrently. Trying to make deadlines on a monthly book while doing art corrections, designing covers, and interacting with other office staffers. Later, being the art director and doing the newspaper strip. How could he do all that and be pleasant, rather than frazzled, is a talent in itself.

I didn’t care for the dismissive putdown of Ditko (on page 23), that *his* work couldn’t be used for marketing material. Is the guy forgetting the T-shirt design, the six-foot poster, the plastic pillow, the trading cards and stickers? Even his actual drawings were used in the ’66 *Hulk* cartoons. The big difference is that Steve wasn’t, to my knowledge, asked or compensated. He wasn’t named



Read, White, & Blue

A couple of Romita Captain America drawings done nearly two decades apart: a splash page (scripted by Don Rico) for issue #77 (July 1954), and a hasty but powerful color sketch he dashed off onstage the night of the Stan Lee/Marvel Carnegie Hall standing-room-only show in January 1972. The former courtesy of Bob Bailey & Dr. Michael J. Vassallo; the latter from the Big Glee website.

in the cartoon credits. Would treatment like that make someone eager to contribute even more?

Joe Frank

Yeah, Joe, we in the Marvel offices were always amazed at John's ability to leap from artist to art director to production correctionist and back again. Doubtless it caused more wear and tear on him than he ever let show, but that was an arena in which he was incomparable.

Still, with regard to the "marketing materials" you mention, we concur with your view that Steve Ditko's Spider-Man art was adaptable to any commercial purpose to which Marvel's various licensees could have desired. But few illustrators could have proved as adept as John Romita was at drawing virtually any Marvel character.

Next up, a newcomer to these pages—**J.C. Preas**—posits a more philosophical question, one that has been known to raise the hackles of the Perpetually & Terminally Outraged.

Dear Roy,

Alter Ego #189 and David Armstrong's 2001 interview were interesting, especially John Romita's comments on the Marvel Method. I've recently read how many Marvel Silver Age artists (or their heirs) felt they were taken advantage of by the process, that they had to plot and draw the book, and that they weren't given enough creative credit. John Morrow's excellent *Kirby & Lee: Stuff Said* expands on this idea. Was too much credit given to (or taken by) Stan Lee?

Were the artists really the creative genius behind Marvel's Silver Age with the editor and writers (Stan and you, Roy) simply along for the ride? Not according to John Romita, who calls the Marvel method an "accidental procedure," given that Stan was the sole editor and primary writer at the time, and "could not supply everybody with scripts." According to John, "Stan found a whole new dimension in writing.... It was like the discovery of the wheel in the history of comics." John doesn't sound like an artist who feels

like he did all the work while Stan took all the credit.

My earliest exposure to Stan Lee's writing was an issue of *Monster Madness* that was passed around my elementary school classroom in 1972. Stan's word balloons placed over photos of old movie monsters were the source of much laughter for my 5th grade classmates and me. Stan breathed new life into these old pictures. Which got me to thinking: In addition to the general plots, isn't what Stan did when he wrote dialogue using the Marvel method? We call it "characterization" now, but even at the early age of 11 I knew that Stan had a gift for breathing life into pictures. While I understand the process that created Marvel is complicated, I firmly believe it was a collaboration of so many extremely talented people, especially Lee, Kirby, Heck, Lieber, Romita, Colan, and Thomas. How did you perceive the Marvel method, Roy? Any further insight or articles you'd like to share on this topic would be greatly appreciated!

J.C. Preas

Perhaps, if Stan (or even Stan and Jack) had been thinking clearly about the future of Marvel and their co-creations back in the early 1960s, J.C., Stan would have found a way to credit Jack as more than "merely" the "artist" (or "penciler") in those dawn-of-the-Marvel-Age classics. Remember, though—at the time, Timely/Marvel was just emerging from a very bad time in the late '50s, when the company had nearly gone out of business due to no fault of theirs. Stan, Jack, and the rest of the surviving crew were just glad, at least for the first half of the '60s, to be receiving regular paychecks—which were gradually growing in size. Jack probably didn't want to rock the boat with Stan and/or publisher Martin Goodman... and Stan surely wasn't feeling too secure himself, at least for the first few years.

During those days, Stan and Jack often treated themselves as partners on the printed page (even if Stan was always in charge, being the editor)... and, in retrospect, maybe it's a shame that situation didn't get formalized in the real world, since that might've kept Jack at Marvel during the first years of the 1970s, and would have made Stan's job all the easier. But Jack was who he was—and Stan was who he was—and they let that opportunity slip by, with ensuing bitterness and dislocation.

As for the so-called "Marvel method" (we almost invariably referred to it just as "Marvel style" back then): Well, as you know, that process evolved mostly by accident and necessity, without Stan, Jack, or anybody else thinking too much about it for several years, until it came time to start squabbling over credit and blame... a situation which seems to come, almost inevitably, to all partnerships sooner or later. And from the early '60s all the way through my days there the first time around (they ended in 1980), and for some period afterward, the Marvel Method/Style clearly produced some of the best-conceived, best-written, and best-drawn super-hero stories in comics history. As I see it, that wasn't all Stan's doing—and it wasn't all Jack's, either, since Stan was able to sell lots of Marvel comics working with Steve Ditko, Don Heck, Dick Ayers, and eventually several other artists. And, eventually, a few others of us writers were able to contribute via that method as well.

So don't let the trouble-stirrers bother you too much. Whatever they say, they really have no idea what would have happened if things had gone a bit differently in this or that area—any more than you or I do. History

happens—and then the historians (and, far more loudly, the pseudo-historians) come along and make a narrative out of what happened... or what they think happened.

Now, a slight correction, courtesy of Chris Green:

Hi Roy,

Just a quick correction regarding the photo on the first page of the excellent John Romita Memorial Tribute Panel discussion in *A/E* #189. The photo in question, which is dated 1970, could not be any earlier than 1974, as the cover of *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction* #1 can be seen in the background.

Chris Green

Thanks for noticing, Chris. That photo scan was labeled "1970" when I obtained it, and I didn't bother to check the background. But you're right—I should have just said "the 1970s."

*Although John Romita, who had only recently passed away, was the primary subject of *A/E* #189, there were other things covered in the issue, including a certain obscure TV animated series that was mentioned in the letters section, drawing the attention of Art Lortie:*

Roy,

I saw Jerry Beck's note on the *Chris Welkin, Planeteer* TV series. From my "Chris Welkin FAQ" dated 2011:

"On June 19, 1954, Billboard magazine solicited two syndicated cartoon series: Paddy the Penguin and Chris Welkin, Planeteer. Welkin was planned to consist of 130 12-minute episodes, of which at least five had been completed. It was produced and distributed by Medallion Productions...."

"The July 3 Billboard had a story out of New York dated June 26: 'Medallion Productions this week opened its local offices to pitch its new animated film property, Chris Welkin, Planeteer. The quarter-hour strip can be bought at a price which starts at \$100 and

goes to \$250. It is based on a comic strip currently carried in 200 newspapers. Heading the office here will be Alfred Ettinger, father of John Ettinger, who is president of the firm."

It's not known if the cartoons still exist....

Art Lortie

Thanks, Art. As you know, Chris Welkin, Planeteer (the comic strip, anyway) has been a pet topic of mine since its two-year run as a daily comic strip in the early 1950s.

The second issue up for comment this time is Alter Ego #190, which spotlighted Mitch Maglio's study of jungle comics of the Golden and Silver Ages. Truth to tell, we received a bit less mail (of both "snail" and "e-" variety) on that ish, perhaps because the super-hero-oriented readers of this magazine aren't (and never were) really into the "Tarzanic triumphs" I referred to on #190's cover. Or maybe some had a fear of being called "racist" or "colonizer" if they simply confessed to liking "Sheena" or "Kaïnga," even though there were plenty of other aspects to those comics that could have been discussed. Things are never as simple as the name-callers want to assume.

*Be that as it may, sales of #190 were neither better nor worse than those of most *A/E* issues, and we did garner a few cogent comments, starting with this from the afore-commenting Bernie Bubnis....*

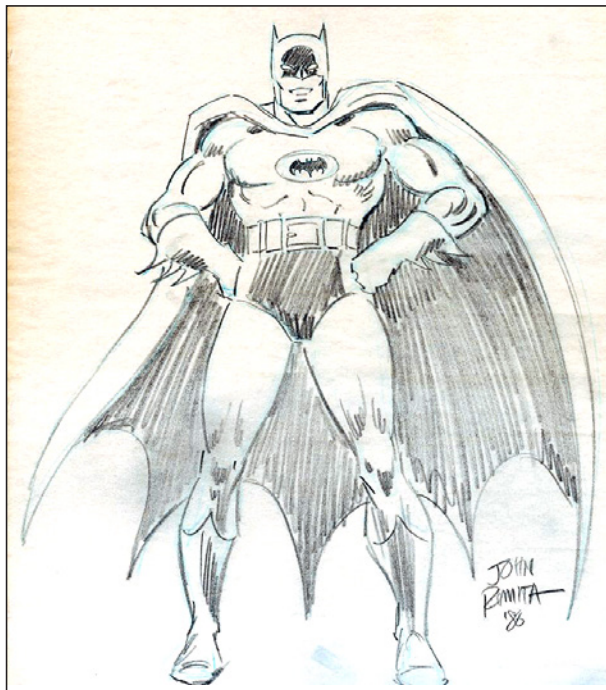
Hi Roy,

A/E #190's cover was a great choice. It had to catch plenty of eyes when displayed properly in a comicshop. I would extend a guess that that lion, weighing in at at least 400 pounds, will make the most of the young lady before the 200-pound muscle-boy can intercede. I hope they didn't have any wedding plans.

*The cover is equally matched with a tremendous array of other jungle art featured inside. Wow! The *A/E* Production Staff outdid themselves this time. Let me put myself in the proper context*

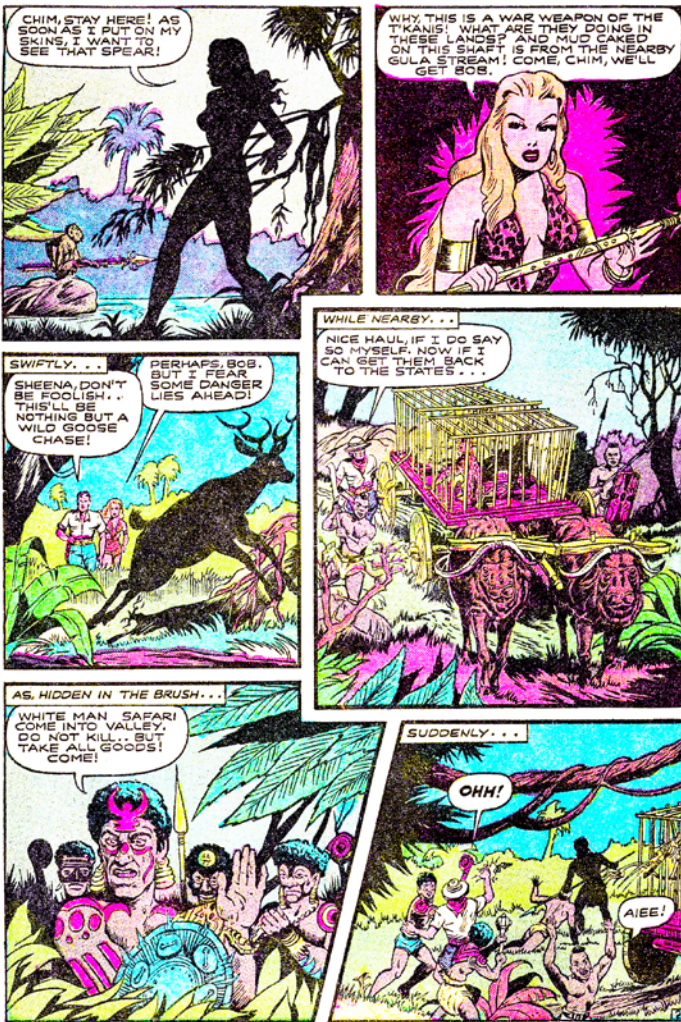
for the issue. I know almost nothing about this genre. Born in 1948, my first "date" with a jungle girl was the black-&-white Sheena TV show in 1956. Irish McCalla was my first love, and I yearned to be the "Chim" (listed in the credits as portrayed by "Neal") and grow up in the Mexican backlot where they both spent 26 TV episodes. When I started to collect comics, I was content to just spend my money on super-hero books. That alone makes this article by Mitch Maglio a fantastic trip through a comicbook world I never realized that my first love, Sheena, helped to establish. (Honestly, even at eight, I knew she was a special woman. Chim was just a lucky chimp.)

I have to give Mitch credit, because, with so many characters and side stories, this piece could have been a real bore. Thankfully, it was just the opposite. He tempered his facts with a bit of humor and very good storytelling. He handled



Spiders & Bats

Jazzy Johnny drew the illo at left of Stan Lee and Spider-Man at some undisclosed date—and ditto for his quick sketch of Batman, which shows what DC Comics lost when they let Romita slip away to Marvel after years of drawing nothing but romance mags. Both courtesy of dealer Mike "RomitaMan" Burkey. [Spider-Man TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.; Batman TM & © DC Comics; other art © Estate of John Romita.]



Wasn't "Chim-Chim-Cherrie" A Song Title?

The very next panel of the yarn whose splash page we printed in *A/E* #190—from *Jumbo Comics* #71 (Jan. 1945)—not #81, as we typo'd in *A/E* #190, p. 12—showed the nude Sheena wading out of the river where she'd been bathing—but artist Robert Webb and his associates somehow accidentally blacked her figure in. Anyway, this gave us an excuse to show Sheena with Chim—including Irish McCalla with "Neal" on the mid-1950s TV series. Thanks to Mitch Maglio for the art scan. [Sheena is a registered trademark of Galaxy Publishing, Inc., & Val D'Oro Entertainment, or successors in interest.]

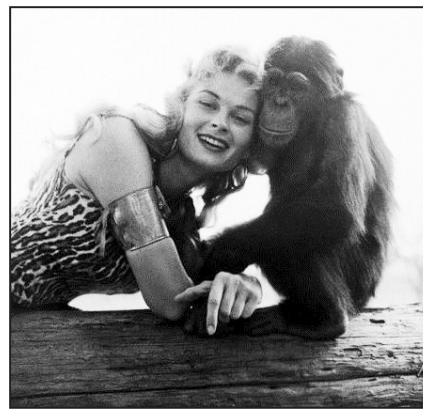
so many characters' origins and their historical context with ease. I had to keep reading and not just enjoy the graphics.

Someone had to be working overtime assembling all the great graphics for this piece. At 77, it is the first time I ever saw the original 3-D *Sheena* cover.

Hey, easy *best line* in the issue: "Chim! Stop jabbering and hopping about! Chim, what strange thing have you found?" Voiced by a naked Sheena to her chimp, who responds, "CHEE CHEE" (translation in *A/E* underground edition).

Michael Gilbert sees a guy (maybe) mailing at the Command P.O. and he looks him up in the phone book. Isn't this the same Michael Gilbert who donated a wackily painted car to the Museum of Modern Art in NYC? Michael Gilbert is a reason to buy *Alter Ego* even if all the other pages are blank. (With respect, Roy.)

FOUND ANOTHER GLARING MISTAKE IN THIS MG ARTICLE!!!! Republic Aviation was in East Farmingdale, Long Island. This was the start of Suffolk County, and many other important historical figures were raised in this area of cracker-house



cheap homes: Abraham Lincoln, Richard Nixon, Lee Harvey Oswald, and... Bernie Bubnis (to name a few).

Nothing harder than putting some memories on a page that honors the passing of a good friend. John G. Pierce sounds like a good man. Sorry for the loss. P.C. Hamerlinck did him well.

I learned a lot in this issue. The full story of Martin and Osa Johnson is amazing. The jungle-stuff memories that I related to is *Ripley's Believe It or Not* newsreels and newspaper strips. These jungles hold a lot of intrigue. It is why I accepted an invitation to the first Uganda Comic Con coming up soon. I'll be on a panel with Chim's grandson.

Bernie Bubnis

One odd thing I've long wondered about the great Lou Fine's cover for Jungle Comics #1 which was utilized on that of A/E #190, Bernie, is: Why did somebody decide to totally black out the leaping lion's left foreleg, which (I would bet money) was almost certainly drawn with more detail back in 1939? Maybe because that extended limb and its talons would have made it even more likely that the big cat would beat Kaïnga to the cowering lady?

You're right about all the work entailed with regard to A/E #190's feature article. Mitch Maglio, who's written and edited a couple of hardcover books about jungle-comics genres, provided a huge amount of info and even artwork to go with it—but then I decided as editor that I wanted to try to include the name and a picture of every jungle hero or heroine I could, so I spent a few extra hours searching through my old dog-eared comics and the digital files of the indispensable Comic Book Plus website, a rich repository of public-domain comics images. Added to that were a number of images from non-p.d. sources such as DC and Marvel that were submitted by our ever-alert army of research-ready readers, without whom Alter Ego, Volume 3, would never have been the encyclopediac, Eisner-winning mag that it is. As somebody once said: "It takes a village" ... especially in the jungle!

We were pleased to get a rather long e-offering from another super-regular on these pages, Joe Frank. Sounds to us like A/E #190 and its theme kind of snuck up on him....

Dear Roy,

The jungle theme made me wonder why, for decades, such books, movies, and comics were so popular. Could it be a desire to escape modern civilization? To indulge in fantasies of being a hero or heroine at every turn? Or just to look at cheesecake drawings of the human form?

Another mystery: After so long, why did the genre eventually die out?

I was never into it. A visit to the zoo was fine. Much preferred a controlled environment and a thick partition of glass or bars between the beasts and me. No way would I like to deal, up close and personal, with quicksand, malaria, mosquitoes, and waking up to a jaguar attack or a python squeeze.

Yet, to my pleasant surprise, *Alter Ego* #190 was a very entertaining read. Oh, I knew I'd learn things (definitely *not* my *Jeopardy* category), but it was able to hold my attention throughout. An achievement in a category I rarely explored on the spinner rack

or back-issue bins.

A bigger shock was that I was unexpectedly familiar with so many of the contributors to the genre.

Or that the concept of a super-heroine came from the earlier appearances of jungle queens. News to me.

The issue worked well for me in that it had so many interesting tangents: notable comics personnel; hilarious character names and quirks; and no end of intriguing art.

Couldn't believe that I didn't recognize Wally Wood's early work on some jungle stories. How is *that* possible? He's a favorite. Yet, I was clueless here. Amazing how polished and professional he'd be, a mere year or two later, at EC.

(Also enjoyed the mention that, at Marvel, Wally was considered to launch the "Sub-Mariner" strip in *Tales to Astonish*. In a sense, was *DD* #7, in the same period, a tryout? Do you know why it didn't come to pass? Or, because it happened before you arrived, a few months later, is it all conjecture?)

Some of the names and gimmicks had me laughing aloud.

"Jungle Lil"? Sounds like a cross between a heroine and a saloon girl.

"Jungle Jo"? Alliterative and perhaps easily confused with Jungle Jim?

"Jun-Gal" and "Ty-Gor"? Using bad puns to keep others at a distance.

I was surprised at how few jungle lords and ladies wore shoes. Even the otherwise horrendous costume of B'wana Beast had

sensible boots.

I smiled at Atlas' Leopard Girl, one of the few heroines who didn't wear a skimpy bathing suit into battle.

Tabu was the most bizarre jungle lord, with a cape to accompany his swim trunks or loincloth. That's the one thing you wouldn't need in the jungle, unless you were invited to a formal head-shrinking.

Lots of other funny nonsense:

Astron water-skiing on two crocodiles.

Jo-Jo, Congo King, facing off against an armored elephant.

Cat Man's costume reminds me of two separate heroes. Would National or ERB sue him first?

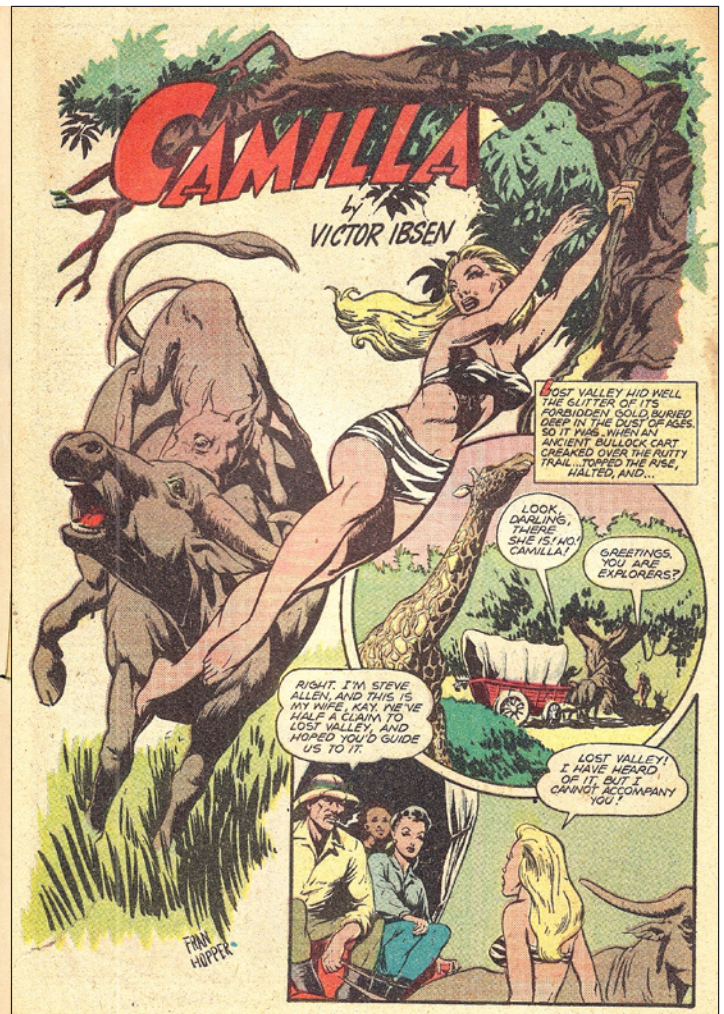
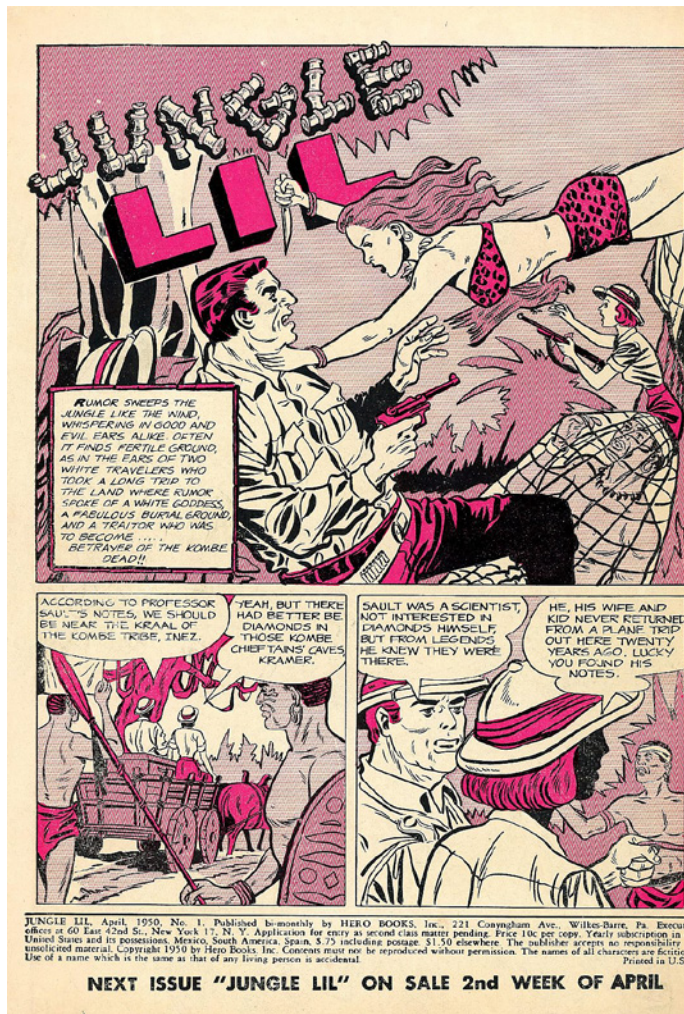
The cover of *Jumbo Comics* #9 was puzzling. If attacked by a giant, would someone really use their rifle as a baseball bat?

Likewise, the penciled cover to *Jumbo* #40. If someone's dangling a hostage by a fishing line over seven crocodiles, would

More "Jun-Gals"

(Left:) Since Joe Frank got such a kick out of jungle queens called "Jun-Gal" and *Jungle Lil*, we thought we'd toss in the lead splash page from issue #1 (April 1950) of the latter's Fox title, written & drawn by—well, frankly, nobody has the slightest idea!

(Right:) In addition, because we consider it one of the best-drawn Golden Age series featuring a "Tarzaness," here is female artist Fran Hopper's "Camilla" splash from Fiction House's *Jungle Comics* #88 (April 1947), courtesy of Mitch Maglio. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



shooting his tormenter with an arrow somehow help his situation?

Several standouts in artistry on display:

Infantino's *Bomba* #1 [cover] was terrific. Closeup action, wrestling with the crocodile, with two additional menaces lurking nearby.

Steranko's *Shanna* #1 was also a terrific work. Lots of tension and excitement, perfectly poised. A standout.

Dave Stevens' *Sheena 3-D* was amazing. No danger shown, but just such lush jungle detail and a beautiful rendering of the lead character.

So, quite an issue, especially for one I wasn't sure I'd enjoy. And there's more to come next issue. Maybe you'll feature Joe Kubert's *Tor*? Or John Severin's *Melvin of the Apes*?

Joe Frank

As you've doubtless seen since, Joe, we stuck to more standard jungle material in "Part II" of "It's a Jungle Comic Out There!" in A/E #191. Kubert's *Tor*, some of his best work as writer and artist, could certainly have been shoehorned in... as well as the Severin-drawn (and Harvey Kurtzman-written-and-laid-out) "*Melvin of the Apes*" from two early-'50s issues of the color *Mad*. But we had plenty of material without going that far afield.

Good thing we had covered *Tarzan* himself in comic strips and comicbooks in an earlier issue (in #129)—otherwise we'd have had to turn that issue into a whole book!

Our final commenter on #190, Henry Mietkiewicz, was intrigued less by all the fur-clad jungle lord and ladies themselves than a particular term which reared its head in *Mitch's* article, as it does in so many places:

Hello Roy,

In reading Mitch Maglio's excellent article on jungle comics in #190, I came across a term that has been bugging me for years: Good Girl Art. I've seen it many hundreds of times since the early 1970s, and I believe it has been—and continues to be—widely misused.

When I first noticed the term decades ago, my understanding was that it referred to "Good Art depicting Girls," not "Art depicting Good Girls." In other words, "Good Girl-Art," not "Good-Girl Art." I think my interpretation is logical, because in the early days of fandom (and even today), readers were eager to track down Girl-Art that was just Good (by artists like Matt Baker), while ignoring Girl-Art that was merely mediocre. For similar reasons, early fans dubbed Carl Barks "the Good Duck Artist."

Yet, Mr. Maglio persists in using the term in a way that I've always felt was incorrect. For example, he notes (on page 6): "After 1954, artists were forced to make 'Good Girls' so good that no one looked at them anymore." In point of fact, many of the so-called Good Girls of the pre-Code era were actually extremely well-drawn Bad Girls, which was a large part of their appeal. The same holds true today. Why would anyone refer to them as Good Girls, when it's the less savory qualities of those well-drawn characters that attract readers?

As a veteran of comics fandom and a seasoned professional, can you offer an opinion? Do you think the term refers to Good Art or Good Girls?

Henry Mietkiewicz

However much he may have stretched the term, Henry, I think *Mitch* mostly meant the term "Good Girl Art" the way you and I perceive it—as relating to the ability of comics artists, whether male or female, to render fetching renditions of the female face and form. Even if a woman in a comic is "bad," she can still be "good" when it comes to the art, right?

One final matter, which ordinarily wouldn't come up in a "re:" section until several issues from now—but we didn't feel we should wait that long, in this case. First, we'll let Italian comics historian **Alberto Becattini** explain why he contacted us as soon as *Alter Ego* #195 arrived in his mailbox:

Dear Roy,

I just received *Alter Ego* #195, and am going to read the Neal



It's The Jungle, Boy!

And, since we got some of the "Good Girl" art out of the way on the previous page, we thought we'd close out with a page by John Romita from *Jungle Action* #5 (June 1955); script by Don Rico... since Nick Caputo mentioned back on p. 63 that the Jazzy One once signed a "Jungle Boy" splash page for him at a comics con! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Adams articles with great attention and I'm sure I'll enjoy them all.

Yet, as I had a look at the contents page, I read: "Tributes to Alberto Castelli..." *Alberto Castelli?* Who is that?

I then went to page 55 and found an article by Jean-Marc Lofficier about my late friend *Alfredo Castelli*. While he is correctly named in the title, the photo and caption are wrong. The guy in the photo is, indeed, Alberto Castelli, who has/had nothing to do with Alfredo. Apparently, he is involved with sports in Varese and is—lo and behold!—alive and kicking. Differently, alas, from my dear friend Alfredo, who died last year after a hopeless battle with cancer. An immense loss it was for all of us involved in comics here in Italy.

I used to tell him that he had shown me the way. Because, besides being a great comics writer (and sometime artist), he had literally started [Italian] comics fandom in 1966 with his fanzine *Comics Club 104*. He was the first, ever, who wondered who had done what, especially as regards U.S. comic strips and comicbooks. And, as I said, I followed in his footsteps. (He was eight years older than me, but much younger inside than many people I've known.)

Going back to the article, I'm sorry to say that I spotted a few mistakes in it as well. Here we go:

Alfredo *did* start his comics career in 1965, but as a writer/artist on a humorous feature, "Scheletrina" ("Little Skeleton"), that appeared as a back-up feature in *Diabolik*. It is true that he contributed scripts to *Kolosso* in 1965-66.

Horror magazine actually started in December 1969, not in 1970.

Corriere dei Ragazzi is, in fact, *Corriere dei Ragazzi*.

Gil Aristocrati is in fact *Gil Aristocratici*.

Zona is in fact *Zona X*.

The cover depicted at bottom left belongs to the 2012 *Almanacco del Mistero*. This is not a graphic novel, but an annual supplement to *Martin Mystère*.

Roy, believe me, I don't want to be fussy, but I loved Alfredo and would like his profile to be as accurate as possible. I am also including a picture of (the real) Alfredo.

Alberto Becattini

Thanks, Alberto. For some combination of reasons, it does seem that an inordinate number of errors wormed their way into Alfredo Castelli's obit/tribute in A/E #195. The photo and first-name goofs in particular—which were both my fault—made me decide to bite the metaphorical bullet and reprint the entire tribute in (hopefully) fully corrected form, as can be seen on p. 57 of this issue. Our apologies to any and all—and our eternal gratitude to you for pointing things out to us.

Finally, this note from **Jerry Beck**:

Roy—

It never fails. You devote an issue (#190) to something I'm only marginally interested in (in this case, jungle comics) and it becomes one of the most fascinating reads of the month. This issue is a real "reference book" on the subject.

One addendum of interest: Conrad Froelich's fantastic overview of Martin and Osa Johnson made mention of artist Glenn Cravath (and even reprinted an example of his *Diana Daring* (in *Jungle Depths*) comic strip on page 54. It should be noted that Cravath not only painted the poster for *Congo Bill* [movie serial] that you printed on p. 55, but also the one-sheets for Columbia's *Jungle Jim* features... the Thun'da serial (*King of the Congo*)... as well as numerous Sam Katzman B-Westerns and serials—including *Superman* (1948), *Batman and Robin* (1949), and *Captain Video* (1951).

On the last one, he snuck in his name on the bottom right.

I don't really know that much about Cravath (I believe he also painted the iconic *King Kong* movie posters for RKO in 1933), but he might be worthy of an *Alter Ego* overview in some future issue.

Jerry Beck
Burbank, CA

Could well be, Jerry—especially if we learn he did more comics work, which is A/E's main stomping-ground. Meanwhile, thanks for the additional info!

On the off-chance that we made at least one or two mistakes somewhere in this issue—or maybe because we did something right you'd like to tell us about—please send any comments on this issue of Alter Ego to:

Roy Thomas e-mail: roydann@ntinet.com
32 Bluebird Trail
St. Matthews, SC 29135

*And, if you just happen to be a comics-convention organizer or a comics shop owner who'd like to investigate the possibility of my doing a guest appearance in your venue of business, please contact **John Cimino** at johnstretch@live.com. John, who is also in charge of the Roy Thomas Appreciation Board on Facebook, as noted on p. 58. He's a busy guy!*



When She Was Good...

Thought we'd close out with some nice "Good Girl" art—Maurice Whitman's Tiger Girl cover for Fiction House's *Fight Comics* #80 (July 1952). Courtesy of Mitch Maglio. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

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IN THIS ISSUE: **BY THE NUMBERS: FAWCETT'S NEWSSTAND BATTLES**

Alter Ego Full Page Ad

By The Numbers: Fawcett Publications' Newsstand Battles

by Jim Holden

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

One benefit of the Internet is that information formerly buried in dusty vaults is now available to armchair researchers. This includes circulation data submitted by American comicbook publishers to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (the "ABC").

The ABC was founded in 1914 to collect information about periodicals. The primary purpose was to obtain circulation figures—certified by publishers and subject to audit—that could be used by advertisers to guide ad placement decisions. The ABC still exists and now is known as the Alliance for Audited Media.

Summaries of publishers' ABC statements are maintained by the Circulating American Magazines Project at James Madison University. Copies of the actual statements are held in a handful of locations, including the Library of Congress, but no one institution has a complete set of statements. The Project notes that publishers' statements "contain a wealth of data including issue-by-issue circulation figures, as well as demographic and geographic data for a representative issue from each reporting period ... [U]nlike the averages and estimates that have been available in summary form and have served as touchstones for most periodical history until now, the data submitted to the A.B.C. is the most reliable and granular circulation data available to periodical scholars."

The Project photographed thousands of reports and hand-entered circulation figures into an electronic database, a labor-intensive project carried out by the Project's directors and students at James Madison University, the University of California at Berkeley, and Duke University. (The data is freely and publicly



The World's Mightiest Men Of Tomorrow

The first solo comics starring the two top newsstand adversaries: *Superman* #1 (June 1939) and *Captain Marvel Adventures* #1 (March 1941). DC made note of Captain Marvel's fortunes, and in September of 1941 filed a lawsuit against Fawcett, claiming copyright infringement. *Superman* #1 cover art by Joe Shuster & Leo O'Melia; *Captain Marvel Adventures* #1 cover art by C. C. Beck. [Superman cover & Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

available at <https://sites.lib.jmu.edu/circulating/about-this-project/about-the-abc-data>.)

The statistics maintained by the Project open a door to researchers seeking hard data on comicbook circulation from the late 1930s to 1972. The database includes summaries of ABC statements certified by National (DC), Timely (Marvel), Fawcett, Archie, Harvey, and smaller publishers such as Lev Gleason, Standard, Street & Smith, and American Comics Group. Statements after 1972 are not included.

The circulation data for comicbook publishers almost always encompasses a publisher's entire slate of titles rather than individual titles. Detective Comics, Inc., as the Detective Comics Group, first submitted ABC statements in January 1939. By the time the first issue of *Whiz Comics* appeared in December 1939,



Marvels On The Menu

(Above:) Fawcett Publications' circulation manager Roscoe K. Fawcett and his wife Marie Ann rustle up some breakfast in 1935. By 1939, Roscoe had cooked up the idea to his father Wilford "Captain Billy" Fawcett and his three brothers for the publishing company to enter the burgeoning comicbook field.

(Right:) In the mid-'40s Fawcett was still soaring with the World's Mightiest Mortal. *Captain Marvel Adventures* #47 (July 1945). Artwork by C.C. Beck & Pete Costanza. [Shazam hero & Shazam TM & © DC Comics.]



the Detective Comics Group (DC) was selling about 1.5 million comics per month.

All American Publications, loosely affiliated with Detective, first submitted statements as the All American Comics Group in January 1941, the same month that *Captain Marvel Adventures* debuted on newsstands. That month the combined sales of Detective and All American were about 2.5 million copies. Over the next few years Detective outsold All American by at least two to one, and sometimes three to one.

Fawcett wasn't filing ABC statements at this point, but by all accounts Captain Marvel was Superman's biggest rival on newsstands. Detective took notice and in September 1941 filed a lawsuit against Fawcett, claiming copyright infringement.

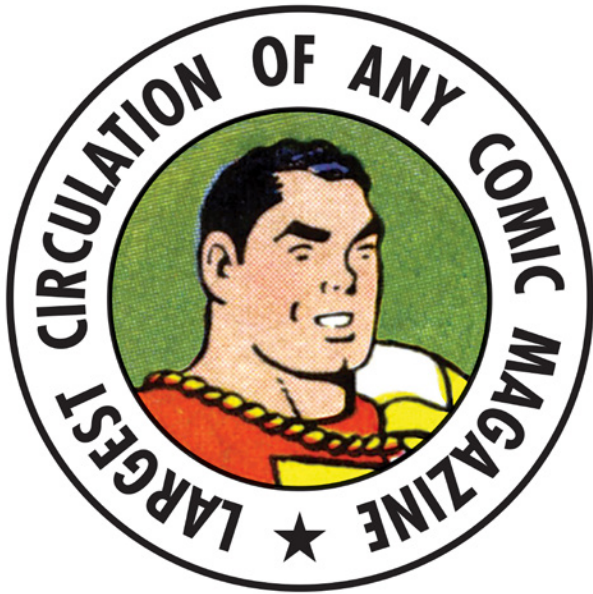
Fawcett Publications, as the Fawcett Comics Group, filed its first ABC statement in January 1943. At that point Detective and All American were selling a combined 3.3 million copies per month, while Fawcett's sales were about 2.9 million. Over the next year or two, Fawcett vied with DC/AA for top spot in the comicbook industry. Fawcett's sales occasionally exceeded the combined sales of Detective and All American, which together began filing statements as the National Comics Group in 1944.

For a few years National and Fawcett filed separate ABC statements for their three marquee characters. Fawcett filed separate statements for *Captain Marvel Adventures* from January

1944 to December 1946, while National filed separate statements for *Superman* and *Batman* from July 1945 to June 1947. It's not clear why National and Fawcett did this, but perhaps they were charging higher ad rates for those titles than the rates charged for other titles in their respective lines.

Since time immemorial, one burning question has been: Who sold more comics in the 1940s, Superman or Captain Marvel? The ABC statements don't tell the complete story, because separate statements for those characters only overlap from July 1945 to December 1946. However, during that 18-month period, we have hard data for the sales of *Superman* and *Captain Marvel Adventures*, as well as for *Batman*.

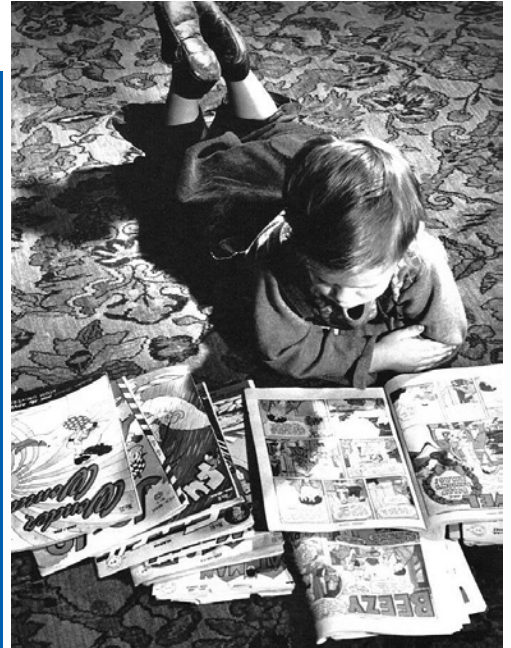
In July 1945 *Superman* sold around 1.5 million copies while *Captain Marvel Adventures* sold around 1.3 million copies, not too far apart. Surprisingly, *Batman's* sales were neck and neck with *Superman* during this period, with both titles ahead of *Captain Marvel Adventures*. It is important to note, however, that at this time *Captain Marvel Adventures* was a monthly title, while *Superman* and



Heyday For A Hero

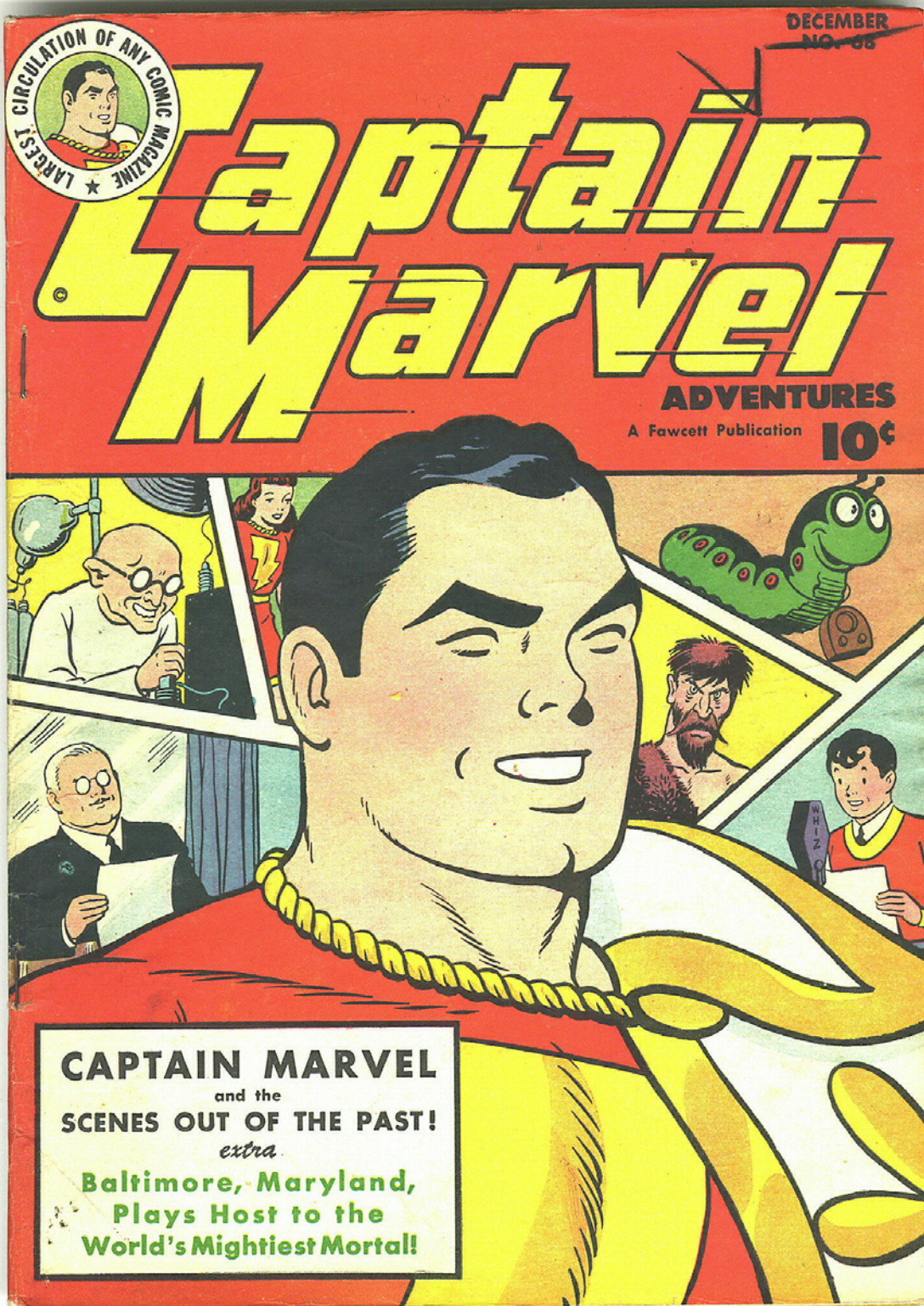
(Left:) The logo that Fawcett's circulation manager Roscoe Fawcett had ordered to be placed in the upper-left-hand of *Captain Marvel Adventures* covers. Was its bold statement accurate, semi-accurate, or pure hyperbole? -Shazam hero & Shazam TM & © DC Comics.]

(Right:) As circulation data confirms, American comicbook readers couldn't get enough of the four-color magazines, including this youngster—in a photo circa 1946-47—enjoying "Billy Batson's Xmas" from *Captain Marvel Adventures* #69. Also seen in his stack of comics are issues of *The Marvel Family*, *Batman*, *Flash Comics*, and *Wonder Woman*.



...And Batman Makes Three!

(Above:) Jack Burnley and George Roussos' cover for *Superman* #38 (Jan.-Feb. '46), which hit newsstands in Oct. '45... and Dick Sprang's cover for *Batman* #30 (Aug.-Sept. '45), on sale June '45. In the mid-'40s *Superman* sold approximately 1.5 million copies per issue, with *Captain Marvel Adventures* coming in at roughly 1.3 million copies. During this particular era the sales of *Batman* were practically tied with *Superman*—and from time to time the Caped Crusader even outsold the Man of Steel—as both DC books held a steady per-issue lead over the World's Mightiest Mortal. [TM & © DC Comics.]



A Great Cast Of Characters

C.C. Beck's cover for *Captain Marvel Adventures* #68 (Dec. 1946). By the end of that year the title had suffered a significant sales dip. [Shazam heroes, Billy Batson, Dr. Sivana, & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics.]

stopped filing separate statements for *Captain Marvel Adventures*. There was a smaller dip for *Superman* and *Batman*, from around 1.8 million copies to around 1.4 million, perhaps due to an industry slump or paper shortages.

In any event, by the end of 1946 *Captain Marvel Adventures* was selling only around 60% as many copies as *Superman* and *Batman* on a per-issue basis. Looking at the entire lines, in 1946 National was selling around 5 million copies per month, about 1.5 million ahead of Fawcett. By January 1948 National sales were in excess of 8 million per month while Fawcett sales were around 5 million. National had opened up a lead over its nearest competitor.

Incidentally, how were other comicbook publishers doing in January 1948? Timely (the future Marvel) was in third place, with monthly sales of around 4.3 million. Standard was in fourth place with sales of around 2.7 million. Harvey was in fifth place with sales of around 2.1 million. Archie was in sixth place with around 2 million, and Lev Gleason was seventh with around 1.1 million. Dell/Western must have had higher sales than many (and perhaps all) of these publishers, but Dell didn't

file ABC statements. Several other publishers, such as Fox and Quality, published enough titles to be ranked but are not listed by the Circulating American Magazines Project.

Even though the rest of the ABC statements filed by National and Fawcett don't provide data on individual titles, it's possible to develop a sense of how the companies were doing by correlating monthly sales figures with the number of titles published during the corresponding month. For that information, I relied on another

Batman were bi-monthlies. Total sales of *Captain Marvel Adventures* thus greatly exceeded *Superman* during the 18-month period, due to the greater frequency; but *Superman* and *Batman* had higher per-issue sales, and sometimes *Batman* outsold *Superman*.

Something happened to sales of *Captain Marvel Adventures* in 1946. In January sales were about 1.4 million, after staying within a range of 1.2 million to 1.4 million during the previous two years. But in February sales dipped below 1 million and mostly stayed around 800,000 for the rest of the year, at which point Fawcett

website, www.milkesamazingworld.com, and its indispensable "Newsstand" feature to learn which comics were being sold on newsstands during specific time periods.

In January 1941 all comics publishers combined had 65 titles on the newsstands. Detective and All American together sold about 2.4 million comics and had 8 titles on the newsstands, for an average circulation of around 300,000 copies per title. *Superman* presumably had a circulation much higher than 300,000, so to maintain the average some titles must have been quite a bit lower than 300,000.

Jump ahead to January 1945. Despite wartime paper allotments, the number of releases by all comics publishers had increased to 82. National had sales of about 5.1 million copies split among 10 titles on the newsstands, for an average of 510,000 per issue. Fawcett had sales of about 4.2 million split among six titles, for an average of 700,000 copies per issue (around that time Fawcett often had eight titles, so the per-issue average for January may be a bit unrepresentative). National's sales were higher than in January 1941, both with respect to total sales and average sales per issue. Fawcett didn't file an ABC statement in January 1941, so it's not possible to make the same comparison, but Fawcett's sales in 1945 were strong and business was very good.

Now jump ahead another six years. The number of releases by all comics publishers in January 1951 had soared to 211, glutting the newsstands. National's sales increased from 5.1 million in January 1945 to more than 8 million copies in January 1951. National doubled the number of its releases from 10 in January 1945 to 20 in January 1951, but even so sales per issue averaged 400,000 that month, still a healthy number. Fawcett, however, was struggling. Its monthly sales in January 1951 totaled around 3.6 million and the company released 28 titles that month, for a per issue average of only 130,000 copies.

Early on in the Golden Age, there wasn't that much competition on newsstands. A hit comic such as *Captain Marvel Adventures* could easily hit 1,000,000 copies per issue. By January 1951 there were far too many titles on the newsstands to maintain sales per issue at that level. National and Fawcett were selling fewer copies per issue and trying to make up for it

by publishing more titles. This is a strategy that has been tried many times in the comicbook industry, with mixed results. Looking at the per-issue averages in 1951, the strategy seems to have been working reasonably well for National, but not so well for Fawcett.

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As Seen On TV

By early 1951 Fawcett had flooded the market with 28 titles, with one of the new books being *Pinhead and Foodini*. By that time both National (DC) and Fawcett were selling fewer comics per issue and tried to make up for it by adding more titles to their line-ups. The game plan worked out okay for DC, but not so much for the battered Fawcett, which, in addition, later on that year, had settled the long-drawn-out lawsuit with DC and would soon leave the comicbook biz entirely. [Pinhead and Foodini TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

Those Wedding Bells Are Breaking Up That Old Gang Of Mine

You knew that, if female-shy Captain Marvel had seemingly tied the knot, the end of his walk of life must be near... and it was. The final issue of *Captain Marvel Adventures* (#150, Nov. 1953); art by C. C. Beck. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

In August 1951 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in an opinion by the noted jurist Learned Hand, held that Fawcett was infringing on National's Superman copyright. Fawcett's sales that month were around 3.3 million, about 40% of National's sales of 8.3 million. Fawcett's per-issue average was around 127,000 copies, while National's average was around 307,000. If we assume that the Marvel Family titles were the best-selling comics in Fawcett's line, the non-Marvel Family titles would be averaging less than 127,000 copies, perhaps far less.

Once the Court held that Fawcett had infringed on National's copyright, National was entitled to compensation for any damages caused by the infringement, as well as injunctive relief to prevent further infringement. Rather than litigate damages, Fawcett settled with National by paying an agreed-upon amount of \$400,000 and agreed to cease publication of all Marvel Family-related titles. National apparently agreed to allow Fawcett to continue publishing *Captain Marvel Adventures* and all other Marvel Family-related comics for a limited period of time, since those books continued to appear until September 1953.

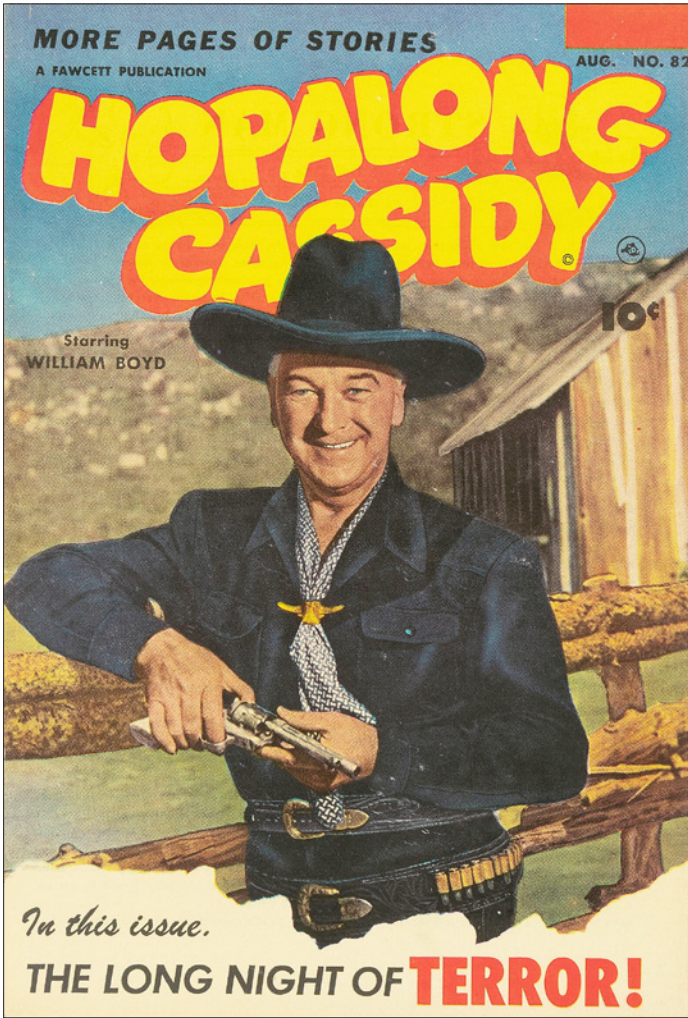
Of course, with the loss of Captain Marvel and family, Fawcett could have continued on with their other comics—*Hopalong Cassidy*, *Lash LaRue*, and the rest—but their average sales per title were quite low. Thus, without the flagship character who anchored its line, it made little sense to carry on under those circumstances. Fawcett thus discontinued its entire comics line, not just the titles featuring The Marvel Family.

National has a long history of acquiring intellectual property from defunct publishers. In negotiating the end of the copyright



infringement litigation in 1951, National perhaps should have suggested that Fawcett keep its money and instead simply assign ownership of the Marvel Family to National. Had that occurred, comics history would have followed an entirely different path.

Although National missed a big opportunity, it still received a substantial benefit from the Fawcett settlement. In 1951 Captain Marvel was the main super-hero in the industry not published by National. Once Fawcett stopped publishing comics, National



The End Of The Trail
 (Left:) After the settlement with National (DC), which involved the termination of Captain Marvel and family, Fawcett certainly could have pressed on with their surviving comicbook titles—including the well-liked series *Hopalong Cassidy*—but the publisher's average sales per comic title at this stage had greatly diminished... and without Cap leading the line, they called it a day with the comics. Roscoe K. Fawcett told P.C. Hamerlinck in an October 1997 interview: "Losing Captain Marvel kind of took the heart out of the whole thing." [Hopalong Cassidy TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

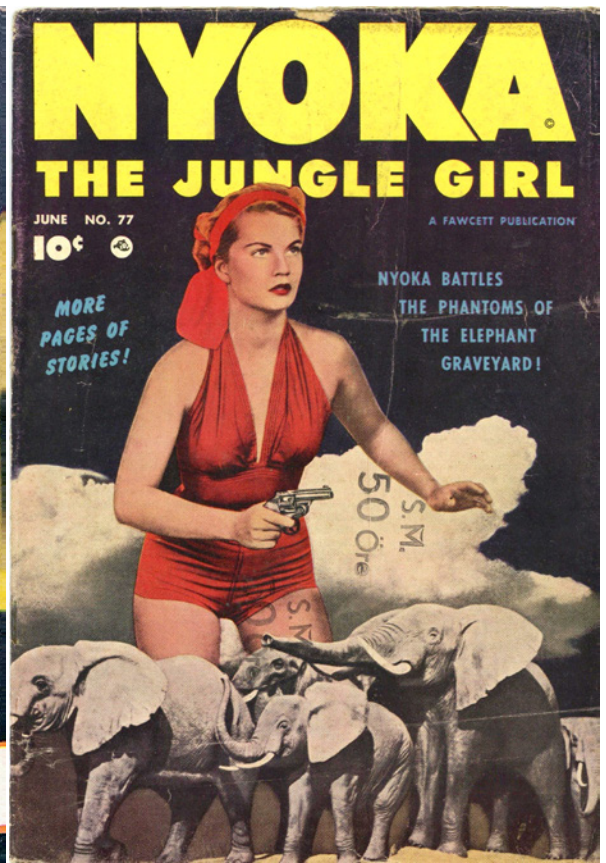
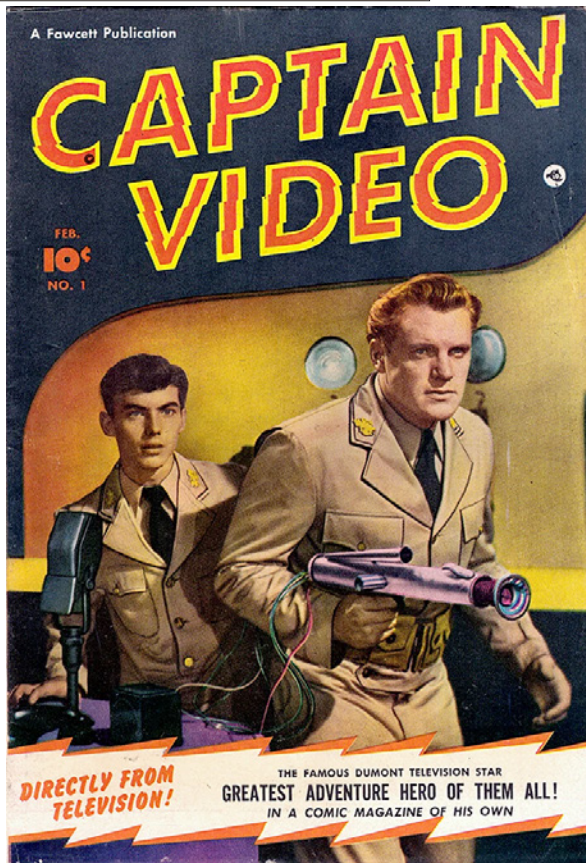
dominated the super-hero market with virtually no competition until the rise of the Marvel Comics Group in the 1960s. The sales of National and Marvel during that period can be traced on the Circulating American Magazines Project at James Madison University—

But that's another story.



Jim Holden is a retired lawyer living in Denver, Colorado. This is his first article for *Alter Ego*, but you can expect more from him on Golden Age sales figures—going into details about various companies and their titles—in the near future.

And, Also On Sale...
 (Right:) Among other Fawcett titles were the licensed, short-run *Captain Video* (seen is the cover of #1, Feb. 1951), and the long-lived *Nyoka the Jungle Girl* (as exemplified by #77, June 1953), each with photo covers. [Captain Video TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders; Nyoka is a trademark of Bill Black.]





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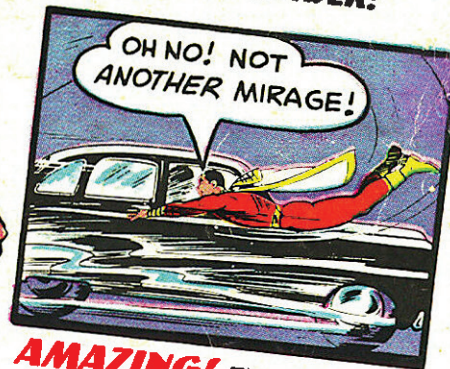
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Notice Anything Different?

Just for a lark, at Jim Holden's suggestion, here's a peek at the cover of *Captain Marvel Adventures* #146 (July 1953) as it might have appeared if DC and Fawcett had settled their lawsuit in that year with the former buying the World's Mightiest Mortal instead of being content merely to have Fawcett agree that they would never again publish his exploits. (In addition, the 1960s would probably have seen the dawn of the *Atlas* Age of Comics!) Art by C.C. Beck & Jack Bowler. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

