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President’s Message

What a difference a year makes.

Just twelve short months ago we at Comic-Con were deep in the celebration of our 50th convention. I had big plans to oversee, big decisions to make, and even bigger shoes to fill. But through teamwork, the support of fans and attendees, and the can-do attitude from staff, volunteers, the Board, and all involved, the show was a tremendous success. We celebrated not only our mission, but our history as well, giving many a glimpse into the journey that shaped our small gathering of fans into a world-class event.

Flash forward to 2020, and I write this from my home rather than our offices. No doubt you are reading this from a similar location. Our realities have changed dramatically. The safety of our attendees has always come first, and while the decision to cancel the show was truly the only choice we could make considering the impact of this global pandemic, it was nevertheless heartbreaking for us. For the first time in our 50-year history we will not gather together in San Diego to celebrate. We will not share stories and anecdotes in person while we wait in line for our favorite program, visit with old friends and meet new ones at the Masquerade party, nor be able to wander around the massive Exhibit Hall or browse the Art Show. But with every cloud there is a silver lining . . . Comic-Con will continue as a virtual experience! Comic-Con@Home is different than what we are used to, perhaps, but through this platform we will be able to share much of the fun and community that makes our event the best convention of its kind in the world.

At Comic-Con@Home, trying to decide between events that all happen at the same time is not a problem. . . . the tough decision will be which one to see first. Want to browse the Exhibit Hall? You can do that from the comfort of your favorite chair with a click of your mouse. Fan of costumes? You can catch the very best of costuming by watching the Masquerade on Friday or checking out the many fans who have taken our Cosplay Challenge on social media. Volunteers may not be onsite to guide and help, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t volunteering; check out our SuperVolunteer section on the Toucan Blog and see how they are making an impact in their communities. Excited to see who will be awarded an Eisner this year? You’re in luck, as the Eisner Awards will be available to view on Friday. In addition, there are many other activities you can take part in that we hope will keep some of the fun of Comic-Con flourishing. We honestly hope this online endeavor will be a small way to keep us all connected, to assure us all that our community is unbreakable as ever, that we endure beyond challenges.

As I mentioned earlier, teamwork is among the many secrets to our success, and as you navigate the Comic-Con@Home pages we are grateful to the many people and companies who have helped us bring the magic of Comic-Con to your home. From comics and book publishers, writers, artists and creators, television networks and movie studios, everyone has embraced this new endeavor with optimism, resilience, and good humor. But it is you—our community, our friends, and our associates—who are invaluable to our success.

We hope you will have fun with this new version of Comic-Con, and while we will miss seeing you in person, it just increases our anticipation of seeing you next year.

Robin Donlan
President, Board of Directors
Comic-Con International: San Diego
**Ray Bradbury, Riding a Dinosaur, on Mars**

The original idea for this year’s Souvenir Book cover was a pulp magazine-style painting of a spaceman in a retro spacesuit on Mars, with a dinosaur in the background. And if you looked really closely, you’d see that the man in the bulky spacesuit was Ray Bradbury, with his trademark white hair and horn-rimmed glasses. But when artist William Stout submitted his first cover sketch—there was Ray on Mars all right, now wearing his trademark ice cream suit, riding a dinosaur with a crashed spaceship in the background—Stout had upended the original idea and instead created a whimsical, charming cover of the beloved author living his best life on Mars. And it was exactly what we needed at this point in 2020.

Bradbury was a long time guest at Comic-Con, starting with the very first one in 1970. He loved dinosaurs, comics, movies, riding his bike around Los Angeles, and so much more that makes him sound like the typical fan you’d find at our event. You can learn all about him (or have your memory of him jolted back to life) in our special section celebrating his centennial, which begins on page 16. But first, stop by our “Cover Story” feature on page 12 with artist Bill Stout, and learn the significance of the exact make and model of both that spaceship and the dinosaur, and Bill’s personal connection with Bradbury.

It’s also the centennial of the birth of stop-motion animation legend Ray Harryhausen. The two Rays were lifelong friends and having tributes to them back-to-back in this year’s book is a personal connection with Bradbury.

And finally . . .

It was the great Western philosopher Sean Connery who once said, “Never Say Never Again,” but at this point in time I feel I should mention that this will be my last Souvenir Book. It has been my honor and privilege over the past 14 (!) years to edit and design these books, starting with the 2007 edition (the one with the Star Wars cover by Adam Hughes). It’s been an amazing decade-and-a-half, working with some of the best artists in the comics world for our covers and seeing your creativity and passion just about every time I open an email during “Souvenir Book Season.” I’m very proud of the comics and pop culture history we’ve presented in these books over the years and they will always be something I look back on as a high point of my time at Comic-Con. Thanks for reading along! All of us here at San Diego Comic-Con look forward to Comic-Con and WonderCon Anaheim 2021.

Gary Sassaman
Director of Print and Digital Media
Comic-Con International: San Diego

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**An abundance of safety . . .**

We know you’re probably sitting on your couch reading this, and we’re sorry about that. In an effort to be as safe as possible, Comic-Con 2020 is now Comic-Con@Home 2020. We’re trying our best to bring you all the things you love most about being in San Diego with us at this time of year. We hope you enjoy everything we have to offer online, and don’t forget . . . most everything we’re doing from July 22–26 will stay available for the foreseeable future. Visit www.comic-con.org (if you haven’t already) to jump into the online experience we’re calling Comic-Con@Home, along with WonderCon@Home and the Comic-Con Museum@Home. And remember, all of this is totally free for the entire world!
William Stout

Cover artist William Stout's long career includes assisting Russ Manning on Tarzan and Harvey Kurtzman and Bill Elder on "Little Annie Fanny." His acclaimed Legends of the Blues is the first of three volumes. Stout created the famous Wizards poster and his 50+ film career includes both Conan movies, Predator, Masters of the Universe, Return of the Living Dead and Pan's Labyrinth.


Bill co-founded the Comic Art Professional Society and was its tenth president. His latest book, Fantastic Worlds—The Art of William Stout, covers his 50-year career. He’s also one of two artists (Jim Lee is the other) who has created three separate Souvenir Book covers (1991, 2000, and now 2020).

SDCC: You're a dinosaur guy, just like Ray Bradbury. What draws you to these amazing beasts from a bygone era and how have you become so associated with them?

BILL: It all started when I was three years old. My parents took me to see my very first movie (this was before we or anyone in our neighborhood had a television set). It was the 1952 re-release of the original 1933 King Kong. I saw it at the Reseda Drive-In. I think it did damage at a genetic level.

Eventually we got a TV. Years later there was a TV phenomenon know as The Million Dollar Movie. A film would be selected and it would run twice every day and three times each on Saturday and Sunday. The first film they showed was King Kong. I watched every screening. King Kong was so popular on TV that it also became the second Million Dollar Movie! I caught all of those screenings, too. So, in just two weeks I had watched King Kong 32 times! Not long after that I saw the "Rite of Spring" sequence from Walt Disney's Fantasia. It's been dinosaurs, dinosaurs, dinosaurs ever since.

SDCC: You illustrated the cover and a story for Ray Bradbury's Dinosaur Tales. Did you work closely with Ray on that book? What are your memories of Ray?

BILL: I’ve got great news—Bantam wants to do your book on dinosaurs?

"Sure..." was my reply. I forgot all about it until a couple of months later when I received a phone call from Byron. "Bill, I’ve got great news—Bantam wants to do your dinosaur book!"

Suddenly, I had a gigantic book project unexpectedly dropped into my lap. It became THE DINOSAURS—A Fantastic New View of a Lost Era. As soon as that book was published, I became "The Dinosaur Guy!" I’ve subsequently worked on all kinds of dinosaur projects, including children’s books, coloring books, comics, films, documentaries, theme park attractions, and my very favorite thing of everything that I do, murals.

SDCC: You’re a dinosaur guy, just like Ray Bradbury. What draws you to these amazing beasts from a bygone era and how have you become so associated with them?
BILL: I met Ray while I was working on THE DINOSAURS—A Fantastic New View of a Lost Era. We became friends and he wrote the introduction to that book.

Now, let me just say that I was astounded that we became friends. I grew up reading his short stories. The observations he made in his stories felt so incredibly personal to me. When I would read his stories about kids my age, I’d ask myself, how did he know I felt that way as a kid?

His classic dinosaur time travel tale, "A Sound of Thunder" was in my high school American Literature textbook. During that time I read his novel Something Wicked This Way Comes (still my favorite book of Ray’s).

It felt like he had written that novel especially for someone my age. I re-read it years later and perceived I had been mistaken. He had written that book, I now thought, for young men in their late twenties. How foolish of me to think he had written it for kids! After I became a dad, I read Something Wicked again. Oh, how wrong I had been! There has never been a book more clearly meant for fathers.

That’s the thing about Ray’s work. It is so layered and so full of metaphors that it deeply reaches everyone, no matter what age they are.

Ray Bradbury’s Dinosaur Tales followed my own dinosaur book. I was selected by Ray to do the cover (that image later became re-created in a scene in one of Steven Spielberg’s Jurassic Park movies). Ray also asked me to illustrate ‘A Sound of Thunder’ for Dinosaur Tales. I poured my heart into those pen and ink illustrations. I didn’t want to disappoint Ray … or myself.

Ray gave me complete freedom in my approach to illustrating Dinosaur Tales. I was with some heavy hitters in that book, including Jim Steranko, horror cartoonist Gahan Wilson, my brother-from-another mother Ottonian Reed, and my dearst of friends, Jean ‘Moobus’ Giraud.

I loved visiting Ray’s Beverly Hills office. It was crammed with cool stuff. We both seemed to love all of the same things.

Ray purchased an original from me, one of several purchases he made from me over the years. I mailed it to him and decorated the wrapping with drawings of dinosaurs. The next time I visited Ray, I was shocked. There on the wall of his office was my illustrated packaging to him—from me over the years. I mailed it to him and decorated the wrapping with illustrations to him—framed!


Ray was a huge comics fan. We honored him at a CAPS banquet. I gave the keynote speech that night, talking about Ray’s devotion to comics and his history with the medium.

Another great gift Ray gave me was opening night tickets to an entire season of Ray Bradbury plays at the Fremont Centre Theatre in South Pasadena. Ray would always be there on each opening night, enthusiastically giving support for and introducing his incredible plays.

Near the end of Ray’s life, I was contacted by his daughter on Ray’s behalf. He wanted to spend a couple of hours with me at his home, him and me, one on one. It was one of the greatest gifts I have ever received.

We spent the two hours discussing many other things, sharing passions, remiscing and laughing. I’ll never forget that. It was the last time I saw Ray.

SDCC: Let’s talk about your cover for this year’s Souvenir Book. You submitted two different sketches (see the previous page), one of them with a more EC-themed motif, since it’s also the 75th anniversary of EC Comics. The sketch we chose for the cover has some fun “Easter Eggs” in it … can you explain them?

BILL: Well, I love Ray Harryhausen as much as I love Ray Bradbury. As it so happened, they were LA Friends who shared interests. As Ray was setting up his Comicon Booth, and Bob Moskowitz, the Art Director, was arranging the exhibit, I said, “I’ll just do a Ray Bradbury poster.” Ray said, “That’s great!” So, I set to work. As Ray was wrapping up his Comicon panel, he announced that Ray had time for one more question. A kid raised his hand and was called upon.

“Mr. Bradbury, what is it that you would like to do more than anything else in the world?”

Ray replied: “More than anything else I would like to visit William Stout’s booth and look at his new paintings!”

Another fond memory was meeting Alison Buckles. She was a beautiful San Diego local. We fell in love and began a relationship that lasted for four intense years. I have also met many other folks at Comicon who would later become some of my closest friends. Because the attendees are from all over the world, if I hadn’t met them at Comicon, I might never have met them at all.

Shawnkeun Redeployment director, friend and art collector Frank Darabont used to host a Thursday night dinner at one of San Diego’s finest restaurants for his favorite artists and, occasionally, some of his fellow director friends. I was always invited. One year he sat me opposite Guillermo Del Toro. I had been wanting to meet Guillermo for years but we kept missing each other. We have many mutual friends who all felt that we would hit it off. At that fateful dinner, we did indeed hit it off.

The next day he purchased two pieces from me at my Comicon Booth. He asked if I would be so kind as to deliver them to him. He happily agreed. It was at his home, surrounded by his vast collection, that he asked me to work on Puli’s Labyrinth. In the middle of his pitch, he said, “I heard the end of the conversation.”

Another reason I was so drawn to Comicon was because the attendees are from all over the world. If I hadn’t met them at Comicon, I might never have met them at all.

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"The thing that makes me happy is that I know that on Mars, two hundred years from now, my books are going to be read. They’ll be up on dead Mars with no atmosphere. And late at night, with a flashlight, some little boy is going to peek under the covers and read The Martian Chronicles on Mars."
In the mid-1950s, Ray Bradbury pasted a series of very personal writing notes on the back of an old clipboard, spaced out beneath an overarching imperative inked by hand in large black letters: “ONE STORY AT A TIME.” The first of these secret admonitions read: “Learn to distinguish what you experience in books from that which you experience and take from life. Only what you learn from life makes you—original!”

That remarkable life began in Waukegan, Illinois, on August 22, 1920, when a third son was born into the working-class world of Leo and Esther Bradbury. Ray Douglas Bradbury carried the mark of the visual arts from birth; his mother, an avid cinema devotee, selected “Douglas” as his middle name to honor one of her silent screen heroes, Douglas Fairbanks Sr. From the age of three, Bradbury was hauled to the movie theaters by his mother and, later, by his older brother Skip, already a robust and athletic child in the image of their father Leo, who was a telephone lineman for the Waukegan power company.

Only two of the four Bradbury children survived infancy. Skip’s twin Sam had died in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, and Esther was nearly carried off as well (a decade later, the dreaded influenza also claimed baby sister Betty Jane). In 1918, and Esther was nearly carried off as well (a decade later, the dreaded influenza also claimed baby sister Betty Jane). In 1928, the remarkable color photographs of King Tutankhamen’s golden death mask and burial treasures. He was a bookish child, and he wore thick glasses from the age of eleven. All through the fall 1928 issue of Argosy, Bradbury beneath some of the pasted-down strips. It was a short leap from the comics to the serialized genre fiction of the pulps. The wonderment and eerie otherness of the science fiction pulps attracted him from the moment he found one of his grandmother’s boarders reading the fall 1928 issue of Amazing Stories Quarterly, with Frank R. Paul’s cover illustration for A. Hyatt Verrill’s “The World of the Giant Arts.” His love soon spread to his father’s story-filled copies of Argosy and the Edgar Rice Burroughs serializations of John Carter’s Martian adventures in Blue Book. By his eleventh year, he was bringing home newspaper serials as well, venturing downtown on roller skates, pulled along by his dog. The touch of Mr. Electrico’s static-charged wand in a 1932 circus side show came with the admonition to “Live Forever,” and suddenly the twelve-year-old Ray Bradbury realized, in a vague way, that he could live forever through his writing. Realization soon grew into conviction, but not in Waukegan; the third year of the Great Depression left Leo out of work, and unsettled years followed as the family moved to Tucson, back to Waukegan, and finally out to Los Angeles in the late spring of 1934. A toy dial-a-letter typewriter, a gift from his parents for Christmas 1932 in Tucson, provided a way to transfer Buck Rogers dialog and perhaps a chapter for his own version of Burroughs’s Warlords of Mars to small typewritten sheets of paper.

Bradbury’s love of movies came from his boyhood, when he saw films such as The Phantom of the Opera, The Gaucho and Skeleton Dance. His favorite radio shows, Chandu the Magician, was broadcast at Kigar from transcription disks that had to be destroyed after broadcast; Bradbury would collect the printed fragments and run his finger nail back and forth on each one, just to hear a few mystical words from Chandu or dark laughter from the villain Roxor.

Throughout high school he would seek Hollywood auto- graphs outside of the Brown Derby and other restaurants and diners favored by the stars; he even climbed the wall between Hollywood Cemetery (now Hollywood Memorial Park) and Paramount for a chance to walk around in his dream world before his inevitable removal by the studio’s security guards. High school proved to be a more complicated proposition. Ray Bradbury had never done well in a lecture environment—he was a visual learner, a voracious reader in libraries wherever he found them, but not particularly fond of grammar rules that restricted his radio-style humor or his poetic and creative writing classes and clubs of Los Angeles High School. His class of 1938 yearbook epigraph included the comment “Headed for literary distinction,” but in his heart Bradbury found ways to sustain his dreams all along the way, however, reading parts in various radio shows for KGAR in Tucson. Sound effects for Talson Tompkins’s airplane motor evolved into juvenile voice roles for that show, The Katzenjammer Kids, and Bringing Up Father. His favorite radio show, Chandu the Magician, was broadcast at Kigar from transcription disks that had to be destroyed after broadcast; Bradbury would collect the written fragments and run his fingernail back and forth on each one, just to hear a few mystical words from Chandu or dark laughter from the villain Roxor.

He would use schoolroom paste to build more than twenty comic strip scrapbooks of these principal passions, often coloring in the characters’ clothing to match the weekend color features. Most of these survive, with tantalizing evidence of hidden drawings by Bradbury beneath some of the pasted-down strips. Bradbury carried the mark of the visual arts from birth; his mother, an avid cinema devotee, selected “Douglas” as his middle name to honor one of her silent screen heroes, Douglas Fairbanks Sr. From the age of three, Bradbury was hauled to the movie theaters by his mother and, later, by his older brother Skip, already a robust and athletic child in the image of their father Leo, who was a telephone lineman for the Waukegan power company.

The two boys and their parents lived next door to Leo’s parents, who owned both homes. A few blocks to the east, the boys could explore Lake Michigan shore and the rail lines that brought the seasonal circuses to town. To the west were the Illinois forests and rivers of Lake County, stretching north to the nearby Wisconsin resorts. Dividing their neighborhood from downtown and the lakeshore was a fascinating and much-studied ravine topography, a shadowy world that shaped many of his future tales about the uncertain boundaries between life and death.

Waukegan’s two downtown movie houses, the Academy and the brand-new Genesee, were only a few blocks from Bradbury’s home. The silent films he came to love during these years set the foundation for his lifetime love of motion pictures, including Lon Chaney’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Phantom of the Opera, Laugh Clown Laugh, The Who Gets Slapped, and the long-lost vampire thriller. By his eleventh year, he was bringing home newspaper serials as well, venturing downtown on roller skates, pulled along by his dog. The touch of Mr. Electrico’s static-charged wand in a 1932 circus side show came with the admonition to “Live Forever,” and suddenly the twelve-year-old Ray Bradbury realized, in a vague way, that he could live forever through his writing. Realization soon grew into conviction, but not in Waukegan; the third year of the Great Depression left Leo out of work, and unsettled years followed as the family moved to Tucson, back to Waukegan, and finally out to Los Angeles in the late spring of 1934. A toy dial-a-letter typewriter, a gift from his parents for Christmas 1932 in Tucson, provided a way to transfer Buck Rogers dialog and perhaps a chapter for his own version of Burroughs’s Warlords of Mars to small typewritten sheets of paper.

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Ray Bradbury (back right) with his parents and his older brother Skip, circa 1936, in a small bookstore led him to the bi-weekly meetings of the Los Angeles chapter of the Science Fiction League, and his life as a writer, still raw and undisciplined, slowly began to gain focus. He would write humorous anecdotes and news highlights for the home-grown fanzines that served as a creative cross-country pen-pal network for fans and writers alike. Bradbury also wrote amateur tales for various fanzines, and during 1939 and 1940, he produced four issues of his own Futuria Fantasia, notable for the illustrations and cover art of Hannes Bok.

Fans like Forry Ackerman and the aspiring stop-action animation talent Ray Harryhausen became fast friends. Ackerman’s methodical approach to fandom and fanzine editing introduced Bradbury’s prose, pun-laced humor, and cartoon-like art to the fanzine network of readers and editors. His lifelong friendships spanned seventy years, but Ackerman’s most important impact was arranging Ray Bradbury’s first meeting with Ray Harryhausen in the late 1930s. The two Rays became friends for life, and Bradbury was soon helping out as Harryhausen experimented in his father’s garage with primitive forms of stop-action animation.

His distinguished film career eventually led him to live in England, but the distance did not diminish their friendship. Harryhausen wrote the foreword to Bradbury’s 1983 Dinosaur Tales story collection, and in 1992 Bradbury would have the honor of presenting Ray Harryhausen with his Academy Award for lifetime achievement in technological contributions to film.

But these notable moments in Bradbury’s life were still far off in an unknowable future during the years leading up to America’s involvement in World War II. In addition to his new friendships with fellow fanzine enthusiasts, Bradbury received encouragement (and, in some cases, valuable mentorship) from genre writers Henry Kuttner, Leigh Brackett, Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson, Ross Rocklein, and, for a time, Robert Heinlein. His bus journey from Los Angeles to the summer 1939 Science Fiction World Convention in New York, funded largely through Ackerman’s financial support, allowed Bradbury to circulate Hannes Bok’s art portfolio at We-Tales and jump-start Bok’s Hugo Award-winning career as a genre magazine illustrator. Julius Schwartz, founder of the first significant genre writers’ agency in New York and later a major editorial force in the world of science fiction, first met Bradbury at the Con. Once he saw the evidence of the young writer’s potential, Schwartz agreed to represent him, guiding his sales from 1941 through 1947 as Bradbury rose to prominence in We-Tales and the fantasy, detective, and radio pulps.

The war-clouded summer of 1941 was a time when Ray Bradbury still depended on his street corner newsstand for a very meager living that made even every borrowed, purchased or gifted book a precious treasure. Finally, just before his twenty-first birthday, the aspiring fan writer earned his first professional check when Julius Schwartz negotiated his first sale in the pulp market. A “Morlock” (or 20th Century Fictions) re-worked from its original fanzine origins with the help of co-author Henry Hasse for the November 1941 issue of Super Science Stories. The $16.00 he earned for his half of the sale marked the beginning of Ray Bradbury’s prolific 72-year professional writing career.

In 1950, Bradbury was an editor for poor little english and Red Cross Blood and radio action pulps for his alternate profession. Fortunately, Hank Kuttner (writing from his East Coast army posting) and Leigh Brackett continued to mentor Bradbury through the war years as he developed his own unique style of writing. That style involved writing with emotional conviction about the fundamental fears, hopes, and passions that make us human. His friend and fellow writer Damon Knight later described his strength as the ability to write about “the fundamental pre-rational fears and longings and desires: the rage at being born; the will to love; the longing to communicate; the hatred of parents and siblings; the fear of things unknown that we can’t describe.”

Successive generations of young readers would find him deeply embedded in the nation’s genre and mainstream culture—whether he even followed genre rules at all. Though Bradbury would spend a great deal of time adapting his work for feature films, television, and stage, sometimes fighting intensely as they adapted his work, and sometimes fighting to keep a Hollywood production from descending into chaos. With memories of his teenage years climbing the back wall of Paramount still alive in his mind, Bradbury was finally able to enter a studio through the front gate as he wrote and sold his first story to Universal in 1952. What he had unconsciously learned from the comics proved key in his earliest screen successes: “Reading the comics and collecting them gave me the shorthand that screenwriters need to make points, prove metaphors, and do it with swift economy. The lessons I learned from Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon—setting scenes, cutting dialogue to the bone—were put to use when I worked on It Came From Outer Space (as author of the 99-page treatment) and my first screenplay, Moby Dick, for John Huston.”

Universal’s well-received It Came From Outer Space (1953), shot in both 2D and 3D from Bradbury’s original screen story, was the first science fiction film to portray a serious scientific encounter with profoundly different forms of alien life. Early that fall, it was playing overseas in London theatresBradbury’s first short-story collection, Dark Carnival, was published by the local presses in the late 1940s, and occasionally other writers and editors would appear in the pages of the Los Angeles Herald and Express on weekdays at the corner of Olympic and Norton, not far from St. Andrews Place, where he still lived with his parents and brother in a subdivided rental house.

During his senior year at LA High, a notice posted in the Los Angeles Place, where he still lived with his parents and brother in a subdivided rental house led him to the bi-weekly meetings of the Los Angeles chapter of the Science Fiction League, and his life as a writer, still raw and undisciplined, slowly began to gain focus. He would write humorous anecdotes and news highlights for the home-grown fanzines that served as a creative cross-country pen-pal network for fans and writers alike. Bradbury also wrote amateur tales for various fanzines, and during 1939 and 1940, he produced four issues of his own Futuria Fantasia, notable for the illustrations and cover art of Hannes Bok.

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The war-clouded summer of 1941 was a time when Ray Bradbury still depended on his street corner newsstand for a very meager living that made even every borrowed, purchased or gifted book a precious treasure. Finally, just before his twenty-first birthday, the aspiring fan writer earned his first professional check when Julius Schwartz negotiated his first sale in the pulp market. A “Morlock” (or 20th Century Fictions) re-worked from its original fanzine origins with the help of co-author Henry Hasse for the November 1941 issue of Super Science Stories. The $16.00 he earned for his half of the sale marked the beginning of Ray Bradbury’s prolific 72-year professional writing career.

In 1950, Bradbury was an editor for poor little english and Red Cross Blood and radio action pulps for his alternate profession. Fortunately, Hank Kuttner (writing from his East Coast army posting) and Leigh Brackett continued to mentor Bradbury through the war years as he developed his own unique style of writing. That style involved writing with emotional conviction about the fundamental fears, hopes, and passions that make us human. His friend and fellow writer Damon Knight later described his strength as the ability to write about “the fundamental pre-rational fears and longings and desires: the rage at being born; the will to love; the longing to communicate; the hatred of parents and siblings; the fear of things unknown that we can’t describe.”

Successive generations of young readers would find him deeply embedded in the nation’s genre and mainstream culture—whether he even followed genre rules at all. Though Bradbury would spend a great deal of time adapting his work for feature films, television, and stage, sometimes fighting intensely as they adapted his work, and sometimes fighting to keep a Hollywood production from descending into chaos. With memories of his teenage years climbing the back wall of Paramount still alive in his mind, Bradbury was finally able to enter a studio through the front gate as he wrote and sold his first story to Universal in 1952. What he had unconsciously learned from the comics proved key in his earliest screen successes: “Reading the comics and collecting them gave me the shorthand that screenwriters need to make points, prove metaphors, and do it with swift economy. The lessons I learned from Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon—setting scenes, cutting dialogue to the bone—were put to use when I worked on It Came From Outer Space (as author of the 99-page treatment) and my first screenplay, Moby Dick, for John Huston.”

Universal’s well-received It Came From Outer Space (1953), shot in both 2D and 3D from Bradbury’s original screen story, was the first science fiction film to portray a serious scientific encounter with profoundly different forms of alien life. Early that fall, it was playing overseas in London theatres.
Thanks to the rising controversy fueled by Dr. Fredric Wertham's indictment of comics in *Seduction of the Innocent*, Bradbury's first sustained journey through the world of comics would play out as a regrettable short twenty-four-month adventure. Yet even as Wertham's interpretation of the role of comics in juvenile delinquency gained traction in America, Bradbury stayed the course with EC, bowing to pressure from West Coast Hollywood friends and East Coast editors only to the point of asking that the Bradbury cover teases be removed from future issues. He wanted his stories to continue in the EC format, and even expressed the wish that someday Gaines could feature a graphic adaptation of *The Martian Chronicles*. But as momentum moved toward a judicial subcommittee hearing in the United States Senate over regulation of the comics industry, Bradbury's association with EC Comics left him just a graphic pen stroke away from involvement in the process. He never wavered in his support of the EC adaptations, however, with Bradbury's blessing, Ballantine Books would reprint black-and-white reductions of some of the original EC color adaptations in widely sold mass-market paperbacks titled *The Autumn People* (1965) and *Tomorrow Midnight* (1966). (For more on Bradbury and EC, see page 42.)

By the 1960s, Bradbury had become one of America's best-known Space Age visionaries, with copies of his books in the Kennedy White House, and an Academy Award nomination for a short-feature animated film of "Icarus Montgolfier Wright," his story of an astronaut's restless dreams the night before a fictional first mission to the moon. Ray Bradbury would be in NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory's own mission control center. Marion's 9's successful orbital Mars mission in 1971, and again for Viking 1's 1976 landing on the planet that he had already populated with his imaginary Martian settlers.

Three life magazine features in the 1960s, including "Cry the Cosmos" (1962) and the award-winning "An Impatient Gulliver Above Our Roofs" (1967), helped sustain the goals of the Apollo missions in the public imagination. Over the next decade, Bradbury would continue to refine our need to explore the Cosmos through influential articles with such thought-provoking Bradbury titles as "Apollo Murdered: The Sun Goes Out" (1972), "Fission Stonehenge to Tranquility Base" (1972), "The God in Science Fiction" (1977), and "Beyond Eden" (1980). In 1985 he was asked to testify on our Space-Age future for the National Commission on Space created by the United States Congress and President Ronald Reagan. During these years Bradbury also remained a constant presence in Hollywood. François Truffaut's internationally produced feature film adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* was released by Universal Studios in 1966, starring Julie Christie and Oskar Werner. Warner Brothers' 1969 release of *The Illustrated Man* featured Bradbury's longtime friend Rod Steiger and Claire Bloom in a film built on nearly all of the volumes' stories and set within a framework back-history of the illustrated man and the enchantress who creates his living tattoos. After years of frustration as major film studios failed to come on board to produce Bradbury adaptations for the *Martian Chronicles*, NBC broadcast a January 1960 three-night miniseries of the Chronicles with a good script by Richard Matheson and a formidable cast of stars that included Rock Hudson, Darren McGavin, Maria Schell, Bernadette Peters, Roddy McDowall, and Bernie Casey. Excellent acting in all three of these film projects overcame some of the challenges of bringing Bradbury's fiction to life on screen, but problems with pacing and limited special effects budgets made it difficult to realize the full magnitude of imagination in these classic works. The same challenges faced the 1983 Disney release of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, which required extensive re-shooting, re-editing, and a new score at the studio during the fall and winter of 1982-83. Some of the special effects introduced late in the process by Lee Dyer improved a number of scenes, including the library confrontation between the town's Charles Halloway (Jason Robards) and the predatory carnival's Mr. Dark (James Franco), one of the more memorable scenes of pure terror brought to film from Bradbury's supernatural fiction. In the end, *Something Wicked* received Hollywood's Saturn Award for Best Fantasy Film and four nominations in other categories, including the memorable music of James Horner.

There would be other less satisfying feature-length Bradbury films, including *Picasso Summer* (Warner Brothers/Seven Arts, 1972), the very loosely adapted *The Screaming Woman* (Universal/ABC Movie of the Week, 1972), and *A Sound of Thunder* (Warner Brothers, 2005), but of one the most satisfying ventures of his entire career was The Ray Bradbury Theater. Here he could combine his fundamental lifelong loves of storytelling and acting with the chance to write, produce, and largely control a sustained five-season series of his own stories. In 1985 co-producer Larry Wilcox brought together the Canadian-based international production company Atlantis Films with HBO for an initial two-season stage of six episodes. Significant cable TV award nominations would lead to further more extended seasons on the USA Network. Between 1985 and 1992, these sixty-five episodes would involve many of Hollywood's most famous stars and a number of international producers and directors.

Bradbury had grown from an amateur writer to a professional one while he was immersed in the 1930s and early 1940s world of science fiction and fantasy fandom, and he would periodically return to an even broader fan base throughout his life. In 1970 Shel Dorf persuaded Bradbury to attend the first full-ranged version of Comicon (then billed as the Golden State Comic-Con) as a special guest. Comics confront reality, he said to the Con attendees: “They are a direct confrontation with reality, not an escape” That first year he bought a few copies of MAD magazine in Comic-Con dealer rooms. This was the only surviving magazine from the old EC world of his friend Bill Gaines, and he would always consider it one of the best political and social commentaries in the land. Bradbury continued to renew himself and entertain fans at Comicon for another thirty-five years.

Many of these fans had read Bradbury’s newer titles as well as his classic books. Collections like *The Machineries of Joy* (1964) and *Sing the Body Electric!* (1969) included some of Bradbury’s uncollected older stories, and this tendency to look back for overlooked early stories to mix with newer ones would continue with the collections he published for the rest of his life, most notably *Long After Midnight* (1976), *The Toynbee Convector* (1988), *One More for the Road* (2002), and *The Cati Papamosques* (2004). After a serious stroke in late 1999, Bradbury recovered and was able to bring closure to book-length works that he had deferred for fifty years and more. These included *From the Dust Returned* (2001), the various adventures of the supernatural Elliot family made famous.
in early stories such as “Homecoming” and Farewell Summer (2006), the original novel of his Illinois youth from which Dandelion Wine had been carved so many years earlier. Newer graphic adaptations of Bradbury’s stories and books also appeared in the 1980s and 1990s; these projects were, for the most part, conceived and generated through the talent and vision of Byron Preiss. The later-life Bradbury trea-
sures that Preiss created began with the illustrated Bradbury collection Dinosaur Tales (1983), early video games based on The Martian Chronicles and Fahrenheit 451, and later broad-
ened into a series of Bradbury Comics, reprinting some EC classics but primarily creating fresh ones illustrated by a new generation of Bradbury-inspired artists.

Given this long and creative career, it’s not surprising that great honors came to Ray Bradbury before his passing on June 5, 2012. A National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters in 2000 was followed by the 2004 award of the National Medal of Arts, presented at the White House by President George W. Bush. In 2007 Bradbury received a Special Lifetime Pulitzer Citation for “his distinguished, prolific, and deeply influential career as an unmatched author of science fiction and fantasy.” That same year, Bradbury was made a Commandeur of the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ambassador to the United States.

Many awards and special events were hosted by Cal Tech, the Planetary Society, and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, including the 2008 arrival of the Phoenix lander in the high latitudes of Mars carrying, among other literary works, a digital copy of The Martian Chronicles. These honors culmi-
nated in the weeks after Bradbury’s death with the landing of the Martian rover Curiosity, a large and atomic-powered traveler representing the first of a new generation of planeto-
ary explorers. After its successful Martian planetfall in August 2012, Curiosity’s scientific team named the touchdown point “Bradbury Landing.”

Michael Chabon, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Adventures of Cavalier and Clay, led readers on a fan-
tastic journey through a wartime mid-century world of comics that Ray Bradbury knew well. In 2002, Chabon revealed that the most influential story he ever read was Ray Bradbury’s “The Rocket Man,” a story he encountered at the age of ten. “At once, the pleasure I took in reading was altered irrevocably. Before that, I had never noticed, somehow, that stories were not made of ideas or exciting twists of plot but of language. And not merely of pretty words and neat turns of phrase, but of systems of imagery, strategies of metaphor.”

This very visual style of writing spoke truth to generations of illustrators who interpreted Bradbury’s work in magazines, story collections, and comic books, here and around the world. Almost every year for more than three decades, Ray Bradbury would step out of time for a day and journey to Comic-Con, meeting the people who loved what he loved and appreci-
ed what he privately called, on his “ONE STORY A T A TIME” clipboard, the “great vigor and blind vitality” through which he generated more than seventy years of timeless tales.

Jonathan R. Eller is a Chancellor’s Professor of English and direc-
tor of the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies at Indiana University’s School of Liberal Arts. His books on Bradbury’s life and career include the trilogy Becoming Ray Bradbury, Ray Bradbury Unbound, and Bradbury Beyond Apollo.

“\nThe world outside our borderlands is there, it is a fact, it cannot be turned from, it cannot be hidden away, it cannot be covered up, it refuses to be ignored. I wrote Fahrenheit 451 to remind us that we must be careful how we funnel that world into our minds.”
Hundreds of people have written about the author Ray Bradbury over the years, but always Bradbury the writer. As one of his four daughters, I want to present a different slant. Daddy, as a writer, was in a class of his own. As a father, he was even more unique. In an age when fathers left the parenting to the mothers, Daddy was a hands-on dad. Most weekends he piled us girls onto a bus, or into a taxi—since he didn’t drive—and the adventures began!

Most times it was to a favorite bookstore or stationery store. Or we wandered the streets of Westwood Village or Hollywood, stopping for an Orange Julius or pizza, or, better yet, an ice cream cone or malt!

The holidays were Dad’s favorite, especially Halloween and Christmas. Every October the pumpkins, witches, and skeletons would come out of storage to decorate as many rooms of the house as possible. Even the basement had its share! Daddy was always the one to go trick-or-treating with us. And even after we were all grown up, he would still go out on his own to neighbors’ and friends’ homes to collect stashes of candy.

Christmastime with him, however, is what I remember most: Going in a taxi to the local Christmas tree lot and selecting the biggest tree we could find, one that could barely fit through the front door. Daddy would put a “clump-o-lights” on the tree and throw tinsel with abandon, not quite caring what they looked like. He would hide the Christmas presents and then not remember where he had placed them. Days or weeks later, he would appear with yet another gift that had been forgotten then found! The best, though, was after Christmas, some time in mid-January, when we’d take the tree down. Daddy would put the tree in the fireplace, set it on fire with a match, not realizing how tinder-dry the tree was, and WHOOSH … a conflagration! Several times the mantel caught fire too. Never a dull moment when Daddy was involved!

Daddy was one of a kind. His childlike enthusiasm and sense of excitement were infectious. It was like having another sibling. We all got caught up in this wonderful world of his making and traveling with him on miraculous journeys.

This, then, was the Ray Bradbury I knew, loved, and miss every day.
Memories of Ray Bradbury
by Vanessa Harryhausen
Trustee for the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation (Charity No. SC001419)

I have such fond memories of my Uncle Ray and his wife Maggie. My Dad, Ray Harryhausen and Uncle Ray had been best friends since they were in their teens, so it was literally a lifelong friendship that they shared. Uncle Ray passed away a year before my Dad—the two had stayed in touch from their teenage years until their 90s.

Even at an early age I was aware of the close and deep friendship both Rays had with each other. Whenever we were in LA we would get together, either visiting each other’s homes or going out for meals. Both Rays were very fond of hamburgers and liked to visit the Spaghetti House restaurant. Much laughter and remembering the good old days were had by Uncle Ray and my Dad, and of course various films were discussed.

I remember going to see an adaption of one of Uncle Ray’s plays, The Martian Chronicles, with him in LA—we were all excited to see it. We were also invited to visit the set of Something Wicked this Way Comes. Dad was always so thrilled and proud for Uncle Ray’s achievements, as we all were.

In 1992, my Dad was honored with an Oscar for his achievements, and this award was of course presented to him by his best friend. Uncle Ray made a lovely speech about my dad and their friendship, alongside their shared love of dinosaurs. He mentioned that in 1938 the two friends made a pact to grow old, but never to grow up. There was nobody better suited to speak about my dad’s life on this proud evening.

To me Uncle Ray had a magnetic presence about him—he had a big heart and always had time for hugs and chats with me. We loved and treasured our times when both our families could get together.

Thank you, Uncle Ray, for bringing to our lives laughter wisdom and love. You will be in my heart forever.

Ray Harryhausen (l) and Ray Bradbury at Dragon Con, Atlanta, Labor Day weekend, 1996.

King Kong star Fay Wray in the 1970s, flanked by friends Ray Bradbury (l) and Ray Harryhausen.

Ray Harryhausen and daughter Vanessa at the Hollywood ceremony where he received the 1992 Gordon E. Sawyer special Oscar for Technical Achievement in Film.

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Landing Bradbury as a Comic-Con Guest

"Before moving to San Diego in 1969, Shel Dorf had run The Detroit Triple Fan Fair along with Jerry Bails (who is sometimes called the "father of comics fandom"). The "Triple" in the name referred to science fiction and fantasy literature, films, and comics. It was a multi-genre con, the first regularly held event of a type that should be familiar to fans of Comic-Con.

"When Shel moved to San Diego and contacted local fans about producing a con, he suggested a similar multi-genre template. There subsequently was some discussion among the group of whether to follow that format or stick to just comics.

"When on Sunday, November 9, 1969, Shel led this group of San Diego comic fans and founding Comic-Con committee members on their first pilgrimage to the home of Jack Kirby, who had recently moved from New York to Irvine in Orange County, California. Shel asked, 'Jack, we're at the point now where we're trying to decide whether this should be just strictly a comic convention, or if we should include the fans of science fiction, the fans of films, and so on. What would your idea about this be?' Jack replied, 'I'd say do it all! Do comics and do anything that's been relevant to it. I know that comic fans have also been interested in the movie media, they've been interested in the pulp media, and all that has some value to them. I think they want to see it. I don't think they want to concentrate on comics alone. If you can widen the scope of the convention to include all these, I think you'll have a larger crowd and a more interesting crowd. And I think you'll have a great time.'

"So, a multi-genre convention it was to be, but that left the question of who to invite as science fiction guests. At the time, although some of the San Diego fans working with Shel to get Comic-Con going did read F&SF, none were really science fiction fans or had personal contact with science fiction fandom or authors.

"Fortunately, one of those fans, Richard Alé, who was planning to start as a student at UCSD, and Shel became aware of a talk to be given by Ray Bradbury at Revelle College, the science college at UCSD, on December 3, 1969. "Shel had heard that Bradbury was a longtime fan of science fiction fandom or authors. "Of course, Ray really didn't know if Shel and Richard were really science fiction fans or had personal contact with science fiction fandom or authors.

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as they represented it. No doubt he would have taken a chance and been a guest anyway, but it didn’t hurt that he later received reassuring confirmation. In March of 1970, at a one-day mini-con held to raise funds for Comic-Con, Forry Ackerman was a special guest. Ferry could vouch for Comic-Con as being legit. Further reassurance would be supplied by another longtime F&SF fan who had moved to San Diego in 1969, Ken Krueger. Ken had been a fanzine publisher, con organizer, small publisher, and dealer for decades. As a teenager he had even attended the first Worldcon in New York City and had met Ackerman and Bradbury there. Ken, who had a bookstore selling comics and F&SF books in Ocean Beach, had become chairman of the 1970 Comic-Con after its first chair, Bob Sourk, resigned the position after the mini-con. Ken and Bob both attended the long-running Westercon, which was held in Santa Barbara in July 1970. Ray Bradbury was also in attendance at that Westercon and Ken and Bob were able to follow up with him there to talk about Comic-Con and confirm that he was indeed going to be a guest at the San Diego con in August.

“...When Ray spoke at that first Comic-Con, held at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego, it was Ken who introduced him, saying, “I’m going to give you a very, very short opening remarks because the man I’m going to introduce, you all know him. What can we say about him? The field of science fiction fandom as a percentage has produced more professionals than any other group in the history of the world. We have produced many editors, many authors, many fine artists. We have also been very, very fortunate in producing one man whose work is literature. There is no other word for it, the word is literature. We have many authors, we have only one Ray Bradbury.”

Bradbury at Comic-Con 1970
So that was Mike Towry’s account of how Ray Bradbury happened to be one of the main guests at the first Con. I was fortunate enough to have attended that show and to have been there for Bradbury’s talk. There was no moderator—Ken Krueger introduced him, and Ray just started talking, with a few questions from the audience toward the end of the hour. We were all enthralled. Here are just a few things he touched upon as he spoke:

- He had scouted out the dealers’ room and was tempted to buy everything and going to see his talk, because he was excited to be there.
- He had never got over the impact of Buck Rogers on my life, and I am grateful for his inspiration in my midst sometime in the year 1925 when the newspaper strip was first published. From that day forward I did not walk to pick up my newspaper for the incredible moment when I opened the paper and was in love all over again.

1980 Comic-Con Souvenir Book: “What Comic Strips Mean to Me”

I have never got over the initial impact of Buck Rogers on my life, and I am grateful for his inspiration in my midst sometime in the year 1925 when the newspaper strip was first published. From that day forward I did not walk to pick up my newspaper; I dashed, I ran, I streaked! I held my breath all day, waiting for the incredible moment when I opened the paper and was in love all over again.

“Buck Rogers, 2429 A.D."

Ray at Comic-Con in 1970.

Don’t confuse your childhood favorites.

I thought of suing, but instead he decided to “be nice” and write a letter to EC praising the adaptation and mentioning that they seem to have forgotten to send a check. The check came, and EC went on to adapt many more Bradbury stories. (For more on Bradbury and EC Comics, including a reprint of the comics adaptation of his short story “There Will Come Soft Rains,” see page 42.)

- He became best friends with Ray Harryhausen when they were in high school. They would talk on the phone late at night about their mutual interests, and Harryhausen later served as Best Man at Bradbury’s wedding.

- He talked about many of his Hollywood experiences, including working with Orson Welles, and told a hilarious anecdote about producer Hal Chester and the making of The Martian Chronicles.

- He had worked on a few ideas for comic strips with artist Joe Mugnaini, but nothing became of them. However, he and Mugnaini collaborated on the animated film Icarus (which he hated), Rod Serling’s adaptation of “I Sing the Body Electric” (which he hated), and other projects, while being welcomed by the Egyptian gods.

Bradbury at the 1974 Comic-Con
By 1974 Comic-Con had found its “home” at the El Cortez Hotel. The guest list that year was stellar: Charles Schulz, Frank Capra, Milton Caniff, Chuck Jones, Jack Kirby, Russ Manning, Alex Toth, Bob Clampett, Walter Koenig, and Majel Barrett, just to name a few. At that time I worked for a textbook publishing company, but I had a side career as a freelance article writer. I got a go-ahead from an editor at Rolling Stone to do a piece on Comic-Con, so that year I took lots of notes at every panel I attended, and the Bradbury talk was no exception (and this time I even took pictures). The article was never completed...
written (Rolling Stone had a change in editors and was no longer interested), but I still have the notes. Here are some highlights:

• A main topic was working on a screenplay for Something Wicked This Way Comes. Sam Peckinpah was originally supposed to direct, but he was replaced by Jack Clayton. [Note: This film did not get produced until 1982 and debuted in 1983.] Bradbury read the opening scene from the script, complete with voices.

• He talked about comics as an artform: “The last to realize it will be the intellectuals. It will creep up on them like the movies did. Europeans have already realized this.”

• He was very proud of his screenplay for Moby Dick and said he loved Melville’s “poetry.” He even wrote a poem about the impact of Shakespeare on Melville, and shared part of it “because it is about creativity, something we are all interested in.”

• Among projects he talked about were a play of The Martian Chronicles and a musical version of Dandelion Wine for which he wrote three songs.

In 1974 Comic-Con bestowed its first Inkpot Awards. Bradbury was among the first recipients of that award along with the other special guests, including Ackerman, June Foray, Stan Lee, Kirk Alyn, Russell Myers, and Roy Thomas.

Subsequent Decades
Bradbury was a perennial guest at Comic-Con for the next three decades. He participated in programs, occasionally sent in drawings for the program book, and delighted in wandering the Exhibit Hall. One highlight was the 1980 Inkpot Awards ceremony. Bradbury was asked to present the Inkpot to Julius Schwartz, another of his lifelong friends. They had met in 1939, and Julie was Ray’s first literary agent. So it was a very special moment. In those years, it was a tradition for Sergio Aragonés to be near the stage with an easel where he could whip out quick drawings of the recipients, and he obliged with a caricature of Schwartz, who was by now an editor at DC, specializing in the Superman titles. Out of nowhere, Harlan Ellison bounded onto the stage with a folder in hand, saying he was there to honor Julie by finally presenting him with a comics script he’d been promising for years. (As I heard it, there was actually no script in the folder!)

In 1987 Ray received another award of his own from Comic-Con: The Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award. It was presented to him by Clampett’s wife, Sody, during the Inkpot Awards banquet. And in 2011 Comic-Con presented him with the Icon Award, given to one individual each year who has been instrumental in bringing comics and/or the popular arts to a wider audience.

In 2003, Bradbury, Schwartz, and Forry Ackerman were brought together in a panel moderated by Mark Evanier, an event that brought many in the audience to tears, as the men shared their memories. In 2007, Harryhausen and Bradbury were on the dais talking about such things as King Kong and celebrating nearly 70 years of friendship.

In these years, the Spotlight on Ray Bradbury panel usually occurred on Saturday of the Con, and it was always a must-see event with a packed house. By this time Bradbury was in a wheelchair. He could often be seen tooling around in the Exhibit Hall, still a fan at heart. He had multiple helpers with him, as he stopped for pictures and autographs, but he also shopped, looking for Golden Age comics, and made an effort to say hello to as many artists as possible, going back to Artists’ Alley multiple times.

In 2009, Chronicle Books published Comic-Con: 40 Years of Artists, Writers, Fans, & Friends, for which Bradbury wrote the introduction. In it, he refers to having been a guest at the first show with just 300 people: “We were all very happy being there and enjoying one another’s company.” He goes on to say, “It’s still a wonderful experience for me to attend Comic-Con, now with tens of thousands of people and to be able to look around at all these people who share my love for the history of illustration.”

Ray’s last appearance at Comic-Con was in 2010, when he was interviewed by his biographer, Sam Weller. When Sam asked, “If you could time travel to a moment in your life, what would it be?” Bradbury answered, “Every single moment. Every single moment has been incredible. I’ve savored it, enjoyed it, because I’ve remained a boy. This man you see here is not an old man, it’s a twelve-year-old boy, and this boy is still having fun.”

Bradbury left this planet for outer space on June 5, 2012, at the age of 91.

Jackie Estrada is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Cons. In addition to having edited a number of Comic-Con publications over the years, she’s been the administrator of the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards since 1998.
The Century-Old Magician Boy from Mars
by Lance Cervantes

Picture a skinny boy with glasses and straw-colored hair who found himself in the musty tent of the Dill Brothers Combined Shows eagerly awaiting whoever would take the stage that warm Labor Day in 1932. Enter the larger than life Mr. Electrico whose very presence demanded attention. Gauging the intimate crowd, Mr. Electrico took a seat in an electric chair. A switch is thrown just offstage; 50,000 volts of electricity shoot violently through his body. Summoning bolts of lightning, the man stood up and brandished a sword of flame. He waved it at the crowd like a con- ductor summoning gongs of horror and amusement. The crowd howled in on the boy with glasses and straw-colored hair. Touching the sword to the boy’s head, Mr. Electrico commanded, “Live forever!” and from then on, Ray Bradbury knew exactly what he wanted to be: a magician.

The following day, Ray attended the funeral of a favorite uncle. On the way home he spotted the muslin tent from the day prior. Despite know- ing it would anger his father, the boy leapt out of the moving car and ran towards the sideshow. He ran “away from death, and towards life,” Ray always recounted. Mr. Electrico towered over the boy. For the first time in his life, Ray was at a loss for words. The boy reached into his pocket and asked the tall man how to perform a magic trick he just bought. Mr. Electrico obliged introducing the boy to the illustrated man. The sideshow performer then waxed poetic on a past life the two shared in Paris before the Great War. Ray would always tell that story, without a detail ever out of place, despite no evidence of the Dill Brothers Combined Shows ever having a Mr. Electrico. Days later, the young Ray began to write every day and never stopped.

I met Ray Bradbury for the first time at Comic-Con 2008. It was larger than it had ever been, but nowhere as large as it is today. It was the first time I made the trip to San Diego. I was intimidated by the lights and sounds and costumes and cheering. I found respite in Ballroom 6 where a scheduled panel piqued my interest when I read about it the day before: “A Conversation with Ray Bradbury” At 87 years old, his voice had more gravel, but he spoke with the fiery conviction of a young man who cre- ated a world of endless summers and magical Halloweens. The walls of the ballroom reverberated as he declared, “If you love what you do, then do it! And to hell with everything else!” After the panel, I approached the stage hoping to talk to THE Ray Bradbury. But reverse stage fright set in. He was just feet away, then inches, then fractions of an inch . . . then feet again until he was gone. His biographer, Sam Weller, sensed my disap- pointment in myself and extended an invitation to his birthday party the following month at one of his favorite bookstores in all of Los Angeles. Waukegan would always be home to Ray Bradbury, but his family would move to Los Angeles by way of Arizona in 1934. He would fre- quent the streets of Hollywood on roller skates with his autograph book in the hopes of meeting Hollywood royalty like Mae West and Laurel and Hardy. By this point, the young author was already writing several pages every day, which proved to be a prudent move as he managed to score his first paid writing gig when George Burns bought one of his jokes to be used on the Burns and Allen radio show. When he graduated Los An- geles High School in 1938, poor eyesight prevented him from a military career and a lack of funds kept college out of reach. But Ray decided to educate himself by applying his voracious appetite for reading to his local library. Writing for a living seemed to be the most viable prospect.

I first read Ray Bradbury’s “The Third Expedition” in the third grade, an entry in the science fiction survey, The Martian Chronicles. It told the story about a crew of explorers who arrive on Mars and find a Victorian town inhabited by their loved ones. The haunting twist left me wanting to read more. A mile from my school was the Glendale Central Library, which was a welcome refuge from summer-baked playgrounds. Between me and that library were many locally owned bookshops. Little did I know that fate would bring me to one of those bookshops to celebrate the beloved writer’s 88th birthday. That’s when I fell in love with the Mystery and Imagination Bookshop where we sang and shared stories and ate a pumpkin-shaped cake. We spent the day prating Poe and Burroughs; Ray had a thing for Edgaras. It was definitely a moment worth reliving.

Many, if not all, of Ray Bradbury’s works can be traced to memories that had affected him in meaningful ways. “The Lake” was inspired by the real life drowning of a young girl; the first time he had been acquainted with death firsthand. Something Wicked This Way Comes brings Mr. Elec- troco to life as the villainous presence in Green Town. His early friendship with Hollywood legend Ray Harryhausen would inspire “A Graveyard for Lunatics.” A drive with his wife along the shore would inspire “The Fohgorn,” the story of a heartbroken sea monster. And an innocuous walk on a warm Los Angeles night ending with a minor police confrontation with inspired “The Pedestrian,” which would be expanded into what he considered his only work of science fiction, Farenheit 451. Farenheit 451 would prove to be the novel that would define Brad-bury’s career to literary critics and bridge the gap between science fiction and what those same critics would refer to as “serious literature.” Ray had little interest in such accolades; science fiction, pulp magazines, comics, and adventure stories had always been as serious to him as the works of Shakespeare or Austen. His passions always led him from one story to the next and his stories had afforded him a legendary position among the literary greats. His prolific career led to short stories, poems, plays, novels, writing the screenplay for Moby Dick, inspiring The Twilight Zone; his own television series, The Ray Bradbury Theatre; film interpretations of any of his works, and so much more. Ray would also influence numerous creative people such as fellow Midwestern dreamer, Walt Disney, along with Stephen King, Steven Spielberg, Neil Gaiman, and David Bowie. Imagination would transform Ray Bradbury’s love of Lon Chaney movies and carnivals into countless stories that teach the world that the future is shaped by those who dare to dream bigger. And hopefully they also dream of a better world. He would continue to write well into his later years with farewell Summer, his last novel to be published while he was still alive, a follow-up of Dandelion Wine. He loved to meet his adoring public, and we all loved to interact with him and pick his wildly imaginative brain. His third quartet of non-fiction would have been in one of the earliest single interactions with the author, but the universe saw fit to offer me the opportunity to meet him three times in one year.

The third time I met him in 2008 was in November where he was giving an open lecture at a local school auditorium. While it was not the smallest crowd Ray had spoken to that year, it certainly felt like the most intimate. He answered questions from older fans and younger children. I even had the opportunity to finally have some facetime with the man at the end of the event. I had asked him for advice on how to pursue a career in writing. I have long wondered what it would have been like to be that 12-year-old boy with thick glasses and pale, straw-colored hair told who was to live forever. While he had given the same advice before, it dawned on me that he genuinely believed that it was the only advice worth giving. “Just do what you love,” he said before taking a deep breath, “AND TO HELL WITH EVERYTHING ELSE!”

To those who have read Ray Bradbury’s work, there is a unique spell that is cast upon you as your eyes glide from word to word. Pictures form in your mind through a filter of nostalgia as if you were remembering a memory that never happened. Time dissolves in settings where dinosaurs seem futuristic and Martians make you long for loved ones long gone. This is Ray Bradbury’s magic that will continue to bring him to life for future generations when we have long colonized Mars and beyond. He took Mr. Electrico’s advice to heart and will indeed live forever. In honor of Ray, let us continue to discover the things that we are passionate about, to jump off cliffs and learn to build our wings on the way down, to do what we love and to hell with everything else.

Lance Cervantes is a civil engineer who has read comic books since he was six years old and wrote fiction since he was eight. Among his other hobbies are drawing, and creating short films with friends. One day, he hopes to be a panelist at Comic-Con International.
Ray Bradbury was a child of the cinema, reportedly seeing The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923) on first release at the age of three. His teenage years in Los Angeles gave him an intimate familiarity with Hollywood, as he roller-skated from studio to studio, collecting autographs of the stars. It should come as no surprise, therefore, to learn that he spent a significant part of his long career writing for the screen. Since his death in 2012, there has continued to be interest in adapting his works for the screen, but with mixed results.

A little-known fact is that Bradbury was an established screenwriter—for radio—even before his first book was published. His 1947 radio play “The Meadow” (for World Security Theater) was aired four months before his debut book Dark Carnival appeared from Arkham House. Through the 1940s and 1950s, he submitted many stories to radio shows such as Suspense, and his stories have remained popular in this medium right through to the present.

The 1950s was the decade that brought Bradbury to the screen. In late 1952 he wrote a treatment titled The Atomic Monster, later retitled It Came From Outer Space—a story for films. Due to his relative inexperience, his “treatment” was more like a complete script, with dialogue and detailed camera directions. Longtime screenwriting partner Harry Essex, given the job of turning Bradbury’s “treatment” into a full screenplay, found the task very simple, as Bradbury had done nearly all the work. It Came From Outer Space, released in 2D and 3D in 1953, established Bradbury as a writer of intelligent screen science fiction. As if that weren’t enough, that same year saw Bradbury’s name attached to The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms, one of the first “radiation monster” movies and a precursor to Gojira (1954), known in America as Godzilla. It was based—loosely—on Bradbury’s 1951 Saturday Evening Post short story of the same name (later re-printed as “The Fog Horn” in his 1953 book The Golden Apples of the Sun). The short story centers on a lighthouse whose fog horn inadvertently awakens a creature from the depths of the ocean, a prehistoric beast who misleads those on shore to believe another of its own species. Discovering the source of the sound, the beast destroys the lighthouse in a fit of rage and sadness.

On screen, the creature was brought to life by legendary animator Ray Harryhausen, coincidentally a close friend of Bradbury. But Bradbury didn’t write the script, and almost went uncredited. When Bradbury visited Harryhausen on set, producer Hal Chester invited him to look at the script (by future Star Trek producer Fred Freiberger and future Outer Limits producer Lou Morheim). Bradbury pointed out a similarity to his short story. Chester immediately offered to buy the rights, and made sure to capitalize on the source material by plastering “suggested by the Saturday Evening Post story by Ray Bradbury” all over the publicity material.

Meanwhile, Oscar-winning director John Huston had read “The Fog Horn,” and saw something in it that reminded him of Herman Melville’s Moby Dick. In 1951, the very property he was planning to film next. He invited Bradbury to write the screenplay for this prestigious film, leading Bradbury to spend the best part of 1954 in Ireland with Huston, working on the script. This experience encouraged Bradbury to always think big: in the future, with his own screenplays, he would target big-name directors such as David Lean, Carol Reed, and Akira Kurosawa.

If the 1950s was the decade that established Ray Bradbury as a screenwriting all-rounder, the 1960s was the beginning of his books providing source material for films. Starting around 1962, the leading French new wave writer-director François Truffaut sought to film Bradbury’s novel Fahrenheit 451 (1953). Truffaut’s previous films, all of them hugely successful around the world, showed no evidence of any interest in science fiction. The Four Hundred Blows (1959) was a semi-autobiographical, largely realistic portrayal of a troubled schoolboy; Shoot the Piano Player (1960) a noisily adapted version of an American thriller; and Jules and Jim (1962) an adaptation of a historical novel. What attracted Truffaut to Fahrenheit was not the science fiction, but the love of books: Truffaut was a bibliophile.

As a film, Fahrenheit 451 (1966) is brilliant and hokey in equal parts. It doesn’t help that leading man Oskar Werner speaks with an Austrian accent, while his wife and neighbour are both played by the same actress, Julie Christie. But magnificent cinematography by Nic Roeg and the superb staging of the book-burning scenes combine with Truffaut’s Hitchcockian style to produce a film which is, ultimately, a memorable and colorful experience. Bradbury loved it at the time, writing to Truffaut that “My novel looks at your picture and sees itself; your picture looks at my novel and sees itself.” Bradbury also wrote positively of the film in a Los Angeles Times review (November 20, 1966). Later, Bradbury was triggered to revisit Fahrenheit 451 in his own stage adaptation (1986), borrowing a number of innovations from Truffaut’s film.

Bradbury had a more mixed response to another of his best books adapted for screen in the 1960s. The Illustrated Man (1969) was written for the screen by a real estate agent—at least, that was Bradbury’s claim. The film, directed by Jack Smight and starring Rod Steiger, made a bold attempt to bring Bradbury’s world to life with an energetic framing story taken from Bradbury’s 1951 book. But its adaptations of several of Bradbury’s short stories were incoherent, and the whole was wrecked by an ill-advised attempt to put Steiger at the center of every story. What could have been a Dead of Night-style anthology film, crystal clear in its portrayal of fantastical material, ended up as a surrealistic blurring of one story into another. Bradbury was initially positive about this film, but his positivity was short-lived as he saw it as a thumbs down.

For much of the 1970s, Bradbury was hopeful of finally getting his novel Something Wicked This Way Comes on screen. What had started out as a 1955 screen treatment for Gene Kelly (The Dark Carnival) turned into the 1962 novel, and by 1973 was converted by Bradbury back into a film script for Kirk Douglas’s Bryna Productions. Sam Peckinpah was to direct, but eventually dropped out. Then Jack Clayton, famous British director of The Innocents (1961) was aboard, but also dropped out. By 1981, the film was back on again with Clayton returning. Press coverage at the time looked very promising. Bradbury and Clayton, the best of friends, were photographed on set at the meticulously-created “Green Town” set in the Disney studios.

Behind the scenes, alas, a small tragedy was played out. Clayton had brought in a script doctor (John Mortimer) to improve Bradbury’s screenplay. Bradbury only found out when asked to give notes on Mortimer’s draft. Bradbury used a disastrous audience preview as an opportunity to lobby for reverting the film to something closer to the source material, and to an extent his suggestions were adopted. For the most part, however, the Disney “machine” took over, and a crack post-production team led by Lee Dyer effectively re-worked several major sequences of the film. The result, released in 1983, is a film that really does feel like Bradbury—it captures the small-town and the autumnal atmosphere—although the
second, much more modestly but in that same year, Bradbury's stage
1977, proving that there was money to be made from science fiction. And
Close Encounters of the Third Kind
(1977), and Something Wicked This Way Comes
(1983).

Bradbury also debuted his story "I Sing the Body Electric!" as an epi-
show on NBC (1985-92), his own personal

Bradbury's teleplay is actually a very smart adaptation of Bradbury's
book. It carefully selects which stories to tell, and wisely ties the narra-
tive together more cohesively than the book, making it highly suitable
for television. It combines both an overall arc with a distinctly episodic
structure. Unfortunately, however, the miniseries as filmed for MGM and
NBC (1980) is fairly dry. Despite one or two strong episodes, its first hour
suffers from sluggish direction and a deadly pace of editing. Perhaps
worst of all, the effects work throughout is unconvincing, and executed
with a pre-Star Wars attention to detail. Director Michael Anderson—pre-
viously known for The Dam Busters (1955), 1956; Around the World
in Eighty Days (also 1956), and Logarri (1976)—was clearly past his
peak. Bradbury very publicly distanced himself from the production, an-
nouncing to a press conference that the whole thing was "boring"—thus
earning himself a reprimand from NBC's lawyers.

But Bradbury was primarily a short story writer, and so for many years
he toyed with ways of getting his short works on screen in a more sub-
estantial way, either in the form of anthology films or in his own anthology
TV series. Examples include his 1960 screenplay based on The Illustrated
Man, and his 1983 proposal for an anthology, The Bradbury Chronicles.
None of these got off the ground, although the latter would form the
basis of Bradbury's most sustained period of work in media: The Ray Brad-
bury Theater (1985-92), his own personal Twilight Zone. Not only was
he an executive producer, he was the sole screenwriter and—in the earliest
batch of episodes—the on-screen host. While he didn't have the sarcastic
wit of Hitchcock or the intense magnetism of Serling, he brought a
personal connection to each of his stories, introduced from his real life
toy-cluttered office. The production values of the series, however, were
compromised. The Ray Bradbury Theater was a product of early cable TV,
an HBO production that later shifted to more down-market networks.

International co-production was the only way to sustain the series, with
Canadian producers Atlantis teaming up with overseas partners and
filming in the UK, France, and New Zealand. Bradbury kept in touch with
the remote productions by phone and fax. The Ray Bradbury Theater looks cheap today (all the episodes are on
DVD and YouTube, where they all look distinctly smeary, a victim of an era
when shows were shot on film but transferred to NTSC video for editing),
and some episodes are difficult to watch because of poor direction,
photography, and performances. But as the production got into its stride,
a number of gems emerged. Generally, these are episodes which steer
clear of visual effects and deal just with characters and situations. Check
out "To the Chicago Abyss" and "The Great Wide World Over There"—and
even "Mars is Heaven" and "A Sound of Thunder" are quite absorbing, if
you can forgive the low rent effects.

Finally, late in Bradbury's career, two of his cherished projects made
it to the screen from his own screenplays. The Halloween Tree (1993),
based on his 1973 book, earned him an Emmy Award for this Hanna-Bar-
bera-produced animated film—twenty years after he first adapted it for
screen for Chuck Jones, a version which never got made. And Stuart Gor-
don, taking a break from Lovecraftian horrors, directed Bradbury's screen-
play for The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit (1997)—decades after Bradbury had
written the original, unfilmed version. Now in his seventies, Bradbury was
with these two modest projects re-established as a successful screenwriter.

Following Ray Bradbury's passing in 2012, there has been no let
in interest in his work. Big names have been attached to proposed new
adaptations of his books: The Illustrated Man, Something Wicked This Way
Comes, and The Martian Chronicles, although as is typical in Hollywood,
most of these announcements have yet to yield any actual productions.
So far, there have been just two, highly trumpeted but both failing to live
up to their potential: ABC's The Whispers (2015), executive producer Stew-
ven Spielberg, based on Bradbury's "Zero Hour!"; and HBO's re-adaptation
of Fahrenheit 451 (2018; directed and co-written by Ramin Bahrani).

For all its failings, the mere existence of the 2018 Fahrenheit 451
reveals something curious about most of Bradbury's works. They exist in
an always fantastical world, built on magical technologies such as totally
immersive wall-screen TVs, so they never really date. They make acute
social observations (see the sad parenting in stories such as "Zero Hour"
and "The Veldt"), and their observations are timeless. Or they set out to
terrify or unnerve (see early classics such as "The Crowd" or "Skeleton"),
and do so with an insight which is universal. To an extent, then, any film-
maker or playwright in any age is going to find something in Bradbury
which is for "now" Bahrani achieved this in the 2018 Fahrenheit, managing
to find a way in which paper books can still have relevance even in an
age of e-books and e-readers. Ray Bradbury's legacy, it seems, is a body of
visually creative, endlessly adaptable work which has already inspired
generations of creative talent, and which will carry on doing so.

Phil Nichols did his PhD on Ray Bradbury's screenwriting. By day, he teaches
film-making at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. By night, he blogs
on Bradbury at www.bradburymedia.co.uk

The Halloween Tree shows the two strands of Bradbury's career; he published his novel (left) in 1973, and won an Emmy for his TV adaptation in 1994.

A trio of Bradbury movie adaptations (l to r): Fahrenheit 451 (1966), The Illustrated Man (1971), and Something Wicked This Way Comes (1983).
Ray BRADBURY
Ray Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Ill., on Aug. 22, 1920. His mother was of Swedish descent, and his father’s ancestors came to America in 1630. Ray was much of his childhood in Amoia. At the age of 12, he received his first typewriter, a Roy model, and started to write sequels to Edgar Rice Burroughs novels. As a result of his greater interest was magic, acting, and reading the Oz books, Tiros Swift, Edgar Allen Poe, and Jules Verne. So it was quite natural, when he began writing, that his first stories were fantasies. He took a short-story course in Los Angeles High School in 1937, graduated in 1938, and had no further formal education. He started submitting stories to magazines at the age of 15, and sold his first story at the age of 21. His predecessors appeared in the leading pulp magazines. Then in 1944, he sold his first “quality” story in the American Mercury, and followed this with sales to most of America’s best-known slick magazines. His stories have been reprinted in some 60 anthologies, including the 1946, 1948, and 1952 volumes of The Best American Short Stories. In 1948, Ray won third prize in the O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories Awards. The only other job Bradbury has ever held outside of writing was during the three years from 1940 to 1942, when he sold newspapers on a street corner at night, while writing during the day. He has had three books of stories published: DARK CARNIVAL, from Arkham House in 1947; THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, from Doubleday in 1950; and THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, Doubleday, 1951. His new book of stories, THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN, is due, again from Doubleday, about the time this blog hit the stands. Ray has just finished writing a western-fiction movie script for a big Hollywood film studio, and has started another. He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife Marguerite, whom he married in 1947, and their two daughters: Susan, age three, and Ramona, eighteen months. Having been a college columnist and painter since the age of eight (covering a complete file of Duk Rogers strips from 1928 through 1937, Paul Fostan from 1944 through 1958, Prince Valiant from 1937 through the present, and Tarzan (drawn by Hal Foster) from 1924 through 1956, plus hundreds of old Puppets, Our Way, Alley Oop, etc.), Ray was most enthusiastic when we suggested adapting some of these stories into the comic format. His reaction to the job was: “I do it, because I’m up in my own words: ‘. . . My thanks and gratitude to the really fine adaptations and beautiful work you are doing on my stories.’ This is an entirely one-sided experience to me, and I can’t tell you how much. I appreciate the painstaking labor and thought you are putting into your efforts. It seems to me that again and again you achieve the exact right atmosphere and angle in carrying out the story . . . You people have a way of continually making me happy. I can’t thank you enough!”

Ray BRADBURY’s EC Comics bio that originally appeared on the inside front covers of The Haunt of Fear #18, The Vault of Horror #16, Suspense Stories #9, The Crypt of Terror #11, and World Science Fiction #19.

By 1952 EC was entering into what many aficionados feel is its prime period. To get story ideas, publisher Bill Gaines would stay up half the night reading pulp magazines and science fiction short story collections, trolling to find inspiration for their comic book stories. Gaines would jot down these ideas on little scraps of paper he called “springboards,” and he would bring these in to writer/artist/editor Al Feldstein as raw material for story ideas. One of the authors Gaines was reading was a young writer named Ray Bradbury. Among the springboards that inspired Gaines’s and Feldstein’s comic book yarns were two of Ray Bradbury’s stories, which Bradbury knew nothing about. In a third instance they combined two of Bradbury’s plots (“Kaliedoscope” and “The Rocket Murders”) into one story they called “Home to Stay!” (Weird Fantasy #13, May–June 1952). This third time, though, Bradbury found out about it. Rather than get wound down, marking the end of a truly remarkable and creative chapter in comics. For more on EC Comics, please see page 92.

As time went on, Bradbury became what many were becoming quite successful as a mainstream writer, began getting pressure not to have his name associated with comic books. Bradbury wrote a long, apologetic letter to Gaines (dated January 25, 1953) requesting that EC drop the cover blurbs hawking the adaptations of Bradbury’s stories. Bradbury loved EC’s adaptations of his work, and he made it clear that he would be happy to have them continue with his name in letters “six inches high,” as long as they did so inside the magazines, “behind the curtain.” Bradbury also wrote that he found the “whole business embarrassing.” And that he hoped Gaines would understand that “the pressure of this business has forced my action at this time.” Gaines was fine with all of this. The reality was, there really wasn’t much of a bump in sales of the comics that had the Bradbury adaptations. Even so, Gaines loved having Bradbury’s stories in his comics, and Feldstein loved doing them. The authorized Bradbury adaptations had appeared in EC’s comics for just about two years, and by that time, even if Bradbury hadn’t gotten squeamish about appearing in comic books, the truth was, as Feldstein said, “We had done pretty much everything that I thought could be adapted into comics form, and that could also get the secondary rights to.” A total of 24 of Bradbury’s stories were “officially” adapted by Feldstein for EC. So the EC/Bradbury collaboration finally wound down, marking the end of a truly remarkable and creative chapter in comics.

Excerpted from The History of EC Comics by Grant Geissman, published by Taschen. Text Copyright © 2020 by Grant Geissman. For more on EC Comics, please see page 92.

THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS

THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS © 1950 by the Crowell Collier Publishing Company; Reprinted by permission of Don Congdon Associates, Inc.

TWELVE NOON... A DOG WHIMMED, SHIVERING, ON THE FRONT PORCH...

THE DOG HAD BEEN SHAKEN BY AN EARTHQUAKE, BOUNCING ON ITS LEGS AND STRUGGLING TO STAND. IT STOOD THERE, SHAKING, AS IF IT HOPED TO BE RESCUED.

THE FRONT DOOR RECOGNIZED THE DOG’S VOICE AND OPENED. THE DOG, ONCE HUGE AND FLESHY, BUT NOW GONE TO BONE AND COVERED WITH FUR, MOVED INSIDE, TRACKING MUD...

BEHIND IS ANGRY MICE WHIRRED... ANGRY AT HAVING TO PICK UP MUD... ANGRY AT INCONVENIENCE. FOR NOT A LEAF FRAGMENT LAY UNDER THE DOOR, BUT WHAT THE WALL PANELS FLIPPED OPEN AND THE SPIT RATS FLASHED SWIFTLY OUT.

THE DOG RAN AROUND, HYSTERICALLY YELPING TO EACH DOOR, AT LAST REALIZING, AS THE HOUSE REALIZED, THAT ONLY SILENCE WAS HERE! IT SNIFFED THE AIR AND SCRATCHED AT THE KITCHEN DOOR...

BEHIND THE DOOR, THE STOVE WAS MAKING LUNCH... PANCAKES WHICH FILLED THE HOUSE WITH A rich BAKING ODOR AND THE SCENT OF MAPLE SYRUP...

TWO O’CLOCK! TWO O’CLOCK!

THE DOG PROPPED AT THE MOUTH, LYING AT THE DOOR, SNIFFING, ITS EYES TURNED TO FIRE...

FOUR-THIRTY: THE NURSERY WALLS GLOWED! ANIMALS TOOK SHAPE... YELLOW GIRAFFES, BLUE LIONS, PINK ANTELOPES, LILAC PANTHERS, CAVORTING IN CRYSTAL SUBSTANCE! IT WAS THE CHILDREN’S HOUR...

NINE O’CLOCK: HIDDEN CIRCUITS Warned THE BEDS, FOR NIGHTS WERE COOL HERE...

THE FIRE BURNED ON THE STONE HEARTH AND THE CIGAR FELL AWAY INTO A MOUND OF QUIET ASH ON ITS TRAY.

THE EMPTY CHAIRS FACED EACH OTHER BETWEEN THE SILENT WALLS, AND THE MUSIC PLAYED...
At ten o’clock the house began to die! The wind blew, a falling rough crashed through the kitchen window...

Cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove...

The room was a blaze in an instant...

FIRE! FIRE!

The house lights flashed on. Water pumps shot from the ceilings...

But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took up the chorus...

FiRE! FiRE! FiRE!

Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changing the color of the drapes...

And then reinforcements? From attic trap-doors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet-mouths gushing green chemical...

The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green froth...

The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze shrapnel on the beams. The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there...

But it was too late! Somewhere, sighing a pump shrugged to a stop. The quenching rains ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days, was gone! The fire cracked on...

If fed upon picassos and matisses in the halls like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly dishing the canvases into black shavings...
THE HOUSE SHUDDERED. A BONE ON THE FLOOR, ITS BARED SKELETON GRINDING FROM THE HEAT. ITS WINGS, THEIR NERVES REVEALED AS IF A SHADOW HAD TORN THE SKIN OFF TO LET RED VEINS AND GALLI-
LARIED QUIVER IN THE SCALING AIR. HEAT SHAPED
WRAP. THE VOICES WANDERED... LYTIC NURSERY
RHYME, A DOZEN VOICES, HIGH, LOW, LIKE CHILDREN DYING IN A FOREST ALONE, ALONE, AND THE VOICES FADED AS THE WINDS PULLED
THEIR SHEATHING... IN THE NURSERY, THE BLUE LIONS
ROARED, PURPLE GIRAFFES BOUNDED OFF, ANTHERS
IN CIRCLES, CHANGING COLOR...

HELP! HELP! FIRE! RUN... RUN...

...IN THE KITCHEN, AN INSTANT BEFORE THE
RAIN OF FIRE AND TIMBER, THE STOVE COULD
BE SEEN MAKING BREAKFAST AT A PSYCHOPATHIC RATE... TEN DOZEN EGGS, SIX LOAVES OF TOAST,
TWENTY DOZEN BACON STRIPS, WHICH EATEN BY
FIRE STARTED THE STOVE WORKING AGAIN,
HYSTERICALLY HISSING...

THE CRASH! THE ATTIC SMASHED INTO
THE KITCHEN... THE KITCHEN INTO THE
CELLAR... CELLAR INTO SUB-CELLAR,
DEEP-FREEZE, ARMOR, FILM TAPES, CIRCUITS, beds, all like skeletons
thrown in a cluttered mound deep
under...

Then, smoke... and silence!

Dawn showed faintly in the
East, among the ruins. One wall
stood alone, with the wall, a last voice said over and
over again and again...

TODAY IS AUGUST 1, 2026.
TODAY IS AUGUST 5, 2026.
TODAY IS...
Much has been written about Ray Bradbury as a person, writer, and influencer over a wide spectrum of entertainment from the written word, comics, movies, and literature in general. Most will remember the adaptations of his work in EC Comics, illustrated by some of the most talented creators in the business. These stories were reprinted in paperback form by Ballantine Books in the mid-1960s. There were also several projects that may not receive the attention of those more well-known comics, but still deserve discussing as part of Bradbury’s legacy.

During the 1990s, several publishers produced a series of graphic novels based on Ray Bradbury’s work. One series of graphic novels were printed as limited editions in hardcover form by Nantier Beall Minoustchine (NBM) titled The Ray Bradbury Chronicles. There was a total of seven full-color books with dust jackets. Each book was numbered and signed by Bradbury and the artists who contributed to these classic illustrated Bradbury tales. Volumes 1 and 2 were limited to 1,200 copies; Volume 3-7 limited to 1,000 copies. In all, there were 43 signatures and 39 stories as well as introductions by Bradbury. Artists included Timothy Truman, Al Williamson, Richard Corbin, Wally Wood, and Ray Zone. In 2009, Hill & Wang published Fahrenheit 451, The Martian Chronicles, and Something Wicked This Way Comes as graphic novels.

Two of Bradbury’s best-known works were developed as video games in the early 1990s: Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles. Working hand in hand with Byron Preiss, the founder of Byron Preiss Visual Publications, a series of limited edition graphic novels were developed. Preiss also worked as a book packager, developing titles for publication by such notables as HarperCollins and Random House, and he helped develop and package a series of Bradbury comics, published by Topps Comics, a start-up comic company back in the 1990s. Topps was a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Topps Company, a worldwide producer of trading cards and confectionaries such as Bazooka Gum. The trading cards would play an important role in the Bradbury comics published by Topps.

In 1993, Preiss packaged a series of Ray Bradbury Comics for Topps, working with Topps’ publisher Ira Friedman. “Byron pitched Jim (Salicrup) and me the idea for a Bradbury comic,” notes Friedman. “He brought his relationship with Ray Bradbury to the table, along with a plethora of extraordinary writers and artists—Bill Stout, Richard Corben, Al Williamson, Harvey Kurtzman, Matt Wagner, Dan Brereton, among others. These guys were all good pals of Byron’s. Only he could have curated such an amazing roster of talent. His publishing house, Byron Press Visual Publications, packaged the entire body of work, so how could we resist such an opportunity?” Friedman noted that the deal was just what the new comic company needed. “Byron provided Topps Comics with a shot in the arm of credibility that was enormously helpful to us at a time when we were just getting going.” Each issue of Ray Bradbury Comics contained an introduction from Bradbury, and included reprints from the EC years, plus new adaptations. One of the more interesting aspects of this short-lived series was the packaging of three trading cards with each polybagged comic. All three cards depicted a scene from the stories in the comic from some of the industry’s top artists. For Topps, it was the perfect blend of comics and trading cards. I suppose the only thing missing was a stick of gum!

Arguably the first Bradbury “graphic novels,” The Autumn People (1965) and Tomorrow Midnight (1966) collected some of the author’s EC Comics stories in a black and white “sideways” format with original covers by Frank Frazetta.

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Ray Bradbury Comics #2 was the All Horror Issue featuring “It Burns Me Up,” “Touched by Fire,” and “The Black Ferries,” a reprint from Haunt of Fear #18. As in the previous issue, a stellar line-up of talent was included in the book with the works of Harvey Kurtzman, Matt Wagner, Sean Phillips, Al Feldstein, and Jack Davis. As with the first issue, inserted trading cards included cover art from the current issue. All card backs added additional information about the material presented in the comic as well as biographical information on the card’s artist.

Taking advantage of the success of the first issue, the Topps/Byron Preiss collaboration used issue #3 to present the second All-Dinosaur Issue featuring a brilliant William Stout, dinosaur-inspired cover. Interior writing/artist chores fell to Wayne Barlowe and Mike Kucharski and featured the following stories: “The Foghorn;” “Besides a Dinosaur;” and “Whatta Ya Wanna Be When You Grow Up?”

A Dave McKean cover was featured on the Alien Terror themed Ray Bradbury Comics issue #4 featuring the work of James Van Hise, Ron Wilber, and Mike Mignola. Stories included “The City” and “The Usher II.” Issue #5 became the last continuous issue of Ray Bradbury Comics even though a sixth issue was scheduled and solicited. Instead, the Bradbury’s stories became a series of Special Editions published by Topps. The original cover artwork for issue #6 was produced by Kelley Jones. Issue #5 featured: “The April Witch,” “Trapdoor,” and “Picasso Summer,” with the works of Jon J. Muth, Ross MacDonald, John Ney Rieber, Moebius, and John Van Fleet.

The first of four special editions published by Topps included Ray Bradbury’s The Illustrated Man. The ten-page main story featured the work of Guy Davis and was followed up by “The Visitor” by P. Craig Russell and “Zero Hour” by Al Feldstein and Jack Kamen, reprinted from Weird Fantasy #18.

Originally scheduled as Ray Bradbury Comics #6, the material was the focus of Ray Bradbury’s Tales of Terror Special #1. The aforementioned Kelley Jones covered up to stories by Jones and Wally Wood. The theme was carried over into another one-shot by Topps, Ray Bradbury’s Trilogy of Terror. The final in the series was published in June 1994—Ray Bradbury’s Martian Chronicles: Spaceman Special featuring two tales: “The Off Season,” and “Kaleidoscope,” with the work of James Van Hise, Del Barras and Howard Simpson. The cover was provided by Jim Steranko with a frontispiece by Michael Kaluta.


Most of the titles published by Topps are readily available and at reasonable prices for anyone wanting to pick up reading copies. The hardcover, limited editions, in some cases signed by Bradbury, are out there as well, so that no matter how you want to enjoy these classic Ray Bradbury stories illustrated by some amazing talent, all are readily available for your reading pleasure. The legacy of Ray Bradbury lives on in these and other classics that will remain ageless for generations to come!

Charlie Novinskis fondly remembers the friends made and time spent at Topps in the 1990s as sales and promotions manager. He describes the experience as “The best job I’ve ever had—comic books, trading cards, and Bazooka gum—who could ask for more!”
The Illustrated Bradbury

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“I was never restricted. I was never told what to do.”

RAY HARRYHAUSEN

100TH BIRTHDAY

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DRESSING COMIC FANS WORLDWIDE SINCE 1982
2020 marks what would have been Ray Harryhausen’s 100th birthday—the centenary of a titan of cinema, whose imagination and creativity changed the face of blockbuster filmmaking in the 20th century. Despite his unparalleled influence, Ray was a generous and humble man, who was often flattered by the praise heaped upon him by the legions of filmmakers that had taken such inspiration from his creations.

To mark this milestone year, Ray’s daughter Vanessa embarked upon a book which celebrates her father’s life and career. Entitled Titan of Cinema, her memoir tells the story of her father’s life through 100 of her favourite objects selected from the vast archive that Ray left behind. Cared for by the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation, this 50,000-item strong collection holds material from Ray’s earliest experiments in the 1930s, through to projects he was working upon less than a decade ago. Having been present during filming for all of Ray’s films from One Million Years BC through to his final film Clash of the Titans in 1981, Vanessa holds a unique perspective on her father’s creativity, motivation and working practices. What’s more, she sheds light upon the man behind the magic—sharing anecdotes that celebrate his sense of humor, his occasional “moody moments,” and the people closest to him that helped him to build such an incredible legacy.

Her memories build the striking portrait of a man with unique talent and imagination, tempered with a practical and tenacious approach to life. From an early age, it was clear that his incredible focus would see him succeed in whatever field he set his mind to; his combination of persistence and patience provide a valuable example to animators and creators the world over.

Raymond Frederick Harryhausen was born in Los Angeles, CA on June 29, 1920, to Frederick and Martha Harryhausen. His father, an accomplished machinist, had created props for two Laurel and Hardy shorts, manufacturing the remains of motor vehicles that had been destroyed during the comic duo’s misadventures.

From an early age, Ray was captivated by cinema, enjoying such silent classics as Metropolis and The Lost World. As with most youngsters, he was fascinated by dinosaurs, and enjoyed family visits to La Brea Tar Pits. However, it was shortly before his 13th birthday that a trip to Grauman’s Chinese Theatre would change his life. Ray was taken to see Merian C. Cooper’s ground-breaking classic King Kong, and was astounded at the spectacle that unfolded before his eyes.

Immediately inspired, the rest of the 1930s saw Ray experiment with his own animations, whilst simultaneously stretching the scope of his imagination and learning the fundamentals of filmmaking. His first films were shot in his parents’ backyard, when it became clear that the movement of the sun and clouds affected the lighting of his films, his parents generously transformed their garage into a studio for the budding animator. It is hard to overstate how important the encouragement of his parents would be—as well as providing this space, his father would assist with these early experiments, while Martha prepared costumes and props for early stop-motion models. A repeated piece of advice from his mother seems to have had a lasting impact: “Life is short—don’t waste time!”

In 2008, Vanessa was asked by her father to sort through the garage of his property in Los Angeles, packed with material from his early career. Among the many long-lost treasures discovered within this trove, she uncovered a 1939 diary which details a few months in the life of her father aged 19. Showing his dedication and determination from the outset, each day chronicles his efforts to improve his craft or make his breakthrough into the filmmaking industry.

Every setback or piece of progress is recorded as a learning experience towards his eventual goal. One particular piece of persistence was to have lifelong repercussions. The pursuit of feedback from his hero, King Kong animator Willis O’Brien.

O’Brien (or “Obie,” as he was nicknamed) told the young animator that his early stop-motion models needed more work—that his Stegosaurus’s legs looked like sausages, and that he needed to study anatomy before building any further models. Rather than being disappointed or offended by these comments, Ray notes in his diary that Obie had offered him useful constructive criticism, and signed up for night classes immediately. The fruits of this
Ray's determination can be traced throughout Vanessa's explorations of her father's early years—his first marionettes can be compared to the accomplished detail of the dinosaur models seen in the 1940 project The Evolution of the World. The following decades saw Ray's filmmaking career flourish, and his work set new standards for special effects and fantasy cinema. By the 1960s, Ray and business partner Charles Schneer decided that London would be the perfect base for their ongoing film productions. As well as offering access to European locations which perfectly set the tone for mythological or fantastical stories, a UK base allowed for access to Rank Laboratories' yellow sodium matte backing process—one of only two in the world.

By this point, Ray had another reason to stay within London: his new bride, Diana Livingstone Bruce. Diana was a direct descendant of the world-famous horse. They were married in 1962, with Ray taking a break from animation for the Hydra in Jason and the Argonauts before reuniting with his little family on each of his film productions.

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During the 1980s, Ray and his production company made a number of films and unrealised concepts. He had learned early on how important it was to have a number of backup plans or ideas to draw upon, and so for every movie that Ray produced, there were three or four that did not make it to the big screen. John Walsh uncovered some 60 unmade projects or alternative scenes during research for his 2019 book Harryhausen: The Lost Movies, each of which provide a thrilling insight into the extent of Ray’s imagination.

Due to his unique level of involvement within each of his films, Ray was able to hold on to the many stop-motion creatures which populated these most iconic sequences. Primarily constructed from latex rubber over a metal armature, these creations inevitably deteriorate over time, due to the organic nature of their components. Ray realized that his unique collection could be used to entertain and educate for decades to come, and so in 1986 established the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation. Showing a great deal of foresight, this ensured that his collection of models, molds, artwork, tools, production material, photographs, and much more would be kept together as a cohesive whole—preventing any part of the archive being dispersed or sold at auction. The collection contains thousands of items, and continues to reveal lost secrets and new insights into Ray’s incredible working life to this day. As a trustee of the Foundation, Vanessa has been closely involved in overseeing the ongoing protection of her father’s collection.

In later years, Ray realized that it would be necessary to hire a restorer to ensure that these invaluable pieces were kept intact. Special effects artist Alan Friswell was hired to repair Ray’s original models—importantly, Alan was able to spend innumerable hours in conversation with the creator.

Ray offered very specific instructions on how he would like his models to be restored, with his wish being that they should resemble their original on-screen incarnations as far as possible. Alan now provides a unique link to Ray’s original wishes, and has assessed, conserved or repaired over 70 models from the collection. This allows the Foundation to display Ray’s work in exhibitions worldwide—without this repair work, iconic models such as Talos from Jason and the Argonauts or Kali from The Golden Voyage of Sinbad would simply not be stable enough for display.

These restored models are proudly displayed within Vanessa’s memoir, photographed for the first time since their repair. Alongside her own memories, Vanessa has called upon those closest to her father to share their own recollections of his life. Experts such as John Landis, Randy Cook, Rick Baker, and Phil Tippett explain the phenomenal influence of Ray’s techniques, as well as the incredible experience of becoming friends with the man who had created the films they had grown up upon.

Perhaps most touchingly, Ray Bradbury’s daughter Susan shares her memories of “the two Rays”—best friends who had stayed in constant touch from their teenage years through to their 90s. Ray Harryhausen sadly passed away in 2013, but his legacy lives on through his incredible collection and filmography. In his centenary year, the Foundation continues to discover new material or insights into his incredible life. Vanessa’s memoir of her father’s life acts as a fitting tribute to his ongoing influence, and she expresses the hope that Ray’s torch of creativity can be passed down to yet another generation of filmmakers.

The Ray & Diana Harryhausen Foundation is a charitable Trust set up by Ray on April 10, 1986. It is the primary aim of the Foundation to protect Ray’s name and body of work as the archive being dispersed or sold at auction. The collection contains thousands of items, and continues to reveal lost secrets and new insights into Ray’s incredible working life to this day. As a trustee of the Foundation, Vanessa has been closely involved in overseeing the ongoing protection of her father’s collection.

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well as archiving, preserving and restoring Ray’s extensive collection.

In addition, the Foundation is firmly committed to showing and exhibiting, for educational and entertainment purposes, material from Ray’s unique collection. This includes models and artwork from each of his feature presentations and short films, as well as film equipment, tools, awards and more.

Since Ray’s death on May 7, 2013, and the acquisition of all of Ray’s entire collection by the Foundation, the Trustees are committed to continuing Ray’s hopes for the future and protecting and conserving Ray’s name and his unique reputation and contribution to world film history.

Connor Heaney is Collections Manager for the Foundation, and deals with the day-to-day care of Ray’s archive. His responsibilities include the cataloguing and conservation of the collection, as well as promoting the awareness of Ray’s work and legacy. He also is responsible for promoting the Foundation’s objectives through social media, podcasts and other media.

For more information, visit www.rayharryhausen.com

RAY HARRYHAUSEN:
Titan of Cinema

By Vanessa Harryhausen

A landmark book celebrating the centenary of the special effects master, told through 100 objects selected from his incredible collection by daughter Vanessa.

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Mark Vertigo • Tacoma, WA

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100TH BIRTHDAY OF RAY HARRYHAUSEN
As a child of the ‘80s, I grew up on movies made by directors that grew up on movies with special effects provided by Ray Harryhausen. Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and James Cameron are all acolytes of a sort, and you can add Tim Burton and Peter Jackson (among others) to that list. They carried on the tradition spiritually, if not literally, of merging live action with stop-motion, even if the effects weren’t stop-motion themselves (or, in the case of Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas, even if they were).

I didn’t see Ray Harryhausen’s work myself until I was an adult, which says something about how things have changed. Today, the push of a button will allow you to watch The 7th Voyage of Sinbad or Jason and the Argonauts either online or via some streaming service. In my day, you had to catch movies like that on TV or hope there was a copy to rent at a locally owned video store. Since video stores themselves were still somewhat of a novelty back then, there was fat chance of that.

And if I didn’t expect to see a Ray Harryhausen movie at that age, I certainly didn’t expect to ever meet the man himself. But I did, and while it wasn’t a landmark moment in his life, it was certainly a highlight of mine. Growing up in Newfoundland, I did not expect to meet anyone that worked in show business, then or ever. So I could not imagine the summer of 2006 when I would attend my first Comic-Con International and witness the people that were responsible for the culture of my youth, Ray Harryhausen included.

It’s a long trip from Newfoundland to San Diego, with stopovers on the way. It takes three planes and over twelve hours to get there, plus the waiting time in between. But you pick up time as you cross six time zones, so this story involves two different kinds of time travel: memory lane and jet lag.

Ray Harryhausen was there in an unofficial capacity and he sat on a panel with his good buddies, Ray Bradbury and Forrest Ackerman. He signed autographs at a booth afterwards where he met his adoring fans, but that wasn’t how I met Ray Harryhausen.

It was actually the day after the last day of the Con that I saw him, and it wasn’t even at the convention center itself. It happened at an off-site event, located at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Since he was in town for the Con anyway, the Museum had him give a presentation in their theatre that was part career retrospective, part Q&A. Stories were told, techniques were discussed, and clips from his movies were shown. The audience got to ask him questions afterwards, then he went out into the lobby to sign autographs.

This was an unexpected part of the evening—for me, anyway—since I had brought nothing for him to sign. But I stood in line despite my lack of preparedness, and while my friend and I waited, I wondered what I might do when I eventually reached the front. As we inched closer, there was a pleasant distraction: a skeleton model from Jason and the Argonauts made its way from person to person (accompanied by a responsible party) and I got to see, up close, the hand-sized figurine in a box which reminded me of a coffin, complete with sword and shield. Not a replica, but the real thing. Outside of people that work behind the scenes in Hollywood, how many could say that?

Fortunately, since the line was long I had time to think about my situation. When I reached the table where Ray Harryhausen sat, I decided to have him sign a unique item from the evening itself, namely my ticket. It caught him a little off guard (I don’t say it lightly), but he was kind enough to oblige and even signed my name as well. As I left, I felt like a kid again, and I truly believe that Ray Harryhausen felt the same way.

It’s not often that you have the chance to meet the people who inspire you, and this was one of those moments. For me, it was a highlight of my life, and I will always be grateful to Ray Harryhausen for sharing his knowledge and his passion with the world.

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think he’d ever signed a ticket before), so he confirmed that was what I wanted. I said yes, and he took out his Sharpie and signed it. Then I had my picture taken with him, which was a two person job back in the days before smart phones.

Unlike this article, I didn’t make the moment all about me. I didn’t ask him a million questions or tell him how much his work meant to me. It was a long line, he was eighty-six years old, and it had been a long day. I just got in and got out, happy to have met him. This was the man responsible for all those cool special effects back during the days when having any effects in a movie was special.

But that isn’t even what I remember most about the evening. After the whole thing was over and I was waiting outside, Ray Harryhausen emerged with his hosts and bid them goodnight. He had a small suitcase with him (I assume the skeleton was within), and he walked, unescorted, down the concrete path towards the curb. He just stood there, on a perfect summer night, alone in the distance, waiting for his ride. No security, no escorts, nothing. Just him, back on from my perspective.

It was one of those summer nights that felt like it would last forever. It was such a magical night that I could’ve imagined a spaceship coming down and taking him away. The whole time my brain was telling me, “That’s Ray Harryhausen, and he’s right over there!” Appearances aside, it reminded me of Gandalf leaving the Shire for adventures somewhere else.

Ray Harryhausen didn’t invent stop-motion, but he certainly mastered it. Today, it takes hundreds of people sitting in front of computers to do what he did by hand, and the main thing they have in common is that both endeavors take a long, long time. Aardman Animations aside, stop-motion has really become a lost art, and that’s too bad. But Ray Harryhausen’s legacy is in the people he inspired, and the people they inspired, and the movies that are made that feature fantastic creatures alongside actors that act against opponents that aren’t really there. The tools may have changed, but the intent is still the same: to entertain and surprise and wonder, and to make the audience forget about the real world for a little while.

Glen Cadigan is an author whose work has appeared in various TwoMorrows publications, including Alter Ego, Back Issue!, and multiple Companion books, three of which he edited. He currently writes the adventures of Bedlam & Belfry, Intergalactic Attorneys at Law.

SebasTam • Chihuahua, Mexico

Josh McGill • Duncan, SC
Long before dragons, dinosaurs, and otherworldly creatures could be built and animated inside computers, artists took a literally “hands-on” approach to conjuring up these fanciful beasts through a process called stop-motion animation. Originally experimenting with clay or rubber sculptures with metal wires running through them, animators would position a miniature creature on a tabletop, shoot a frame of film with a motion picture camera, and then adjust the model again, shoot another frame, and after a full day of effort, film run at 24 frames per second would create the illusion that the miniature creature was moving of its own volition.

Both traditional “cartoon” animators and stop-motion animators like Willis O’Brien quickly realized that animation could bring to life creatures that human eyes had never beheld, and cartoons like Gertie the Dinosaur (1914) and stop-motion shorts like The Dinosaur and the Missing Link (1915) gave moviegoers their first look at prehistoric animals in motion. O’Brien quickly established himself as a master of stop-motion animation, bringing an entire horde of dinosaurs to life in the 1925 adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Lost World before providing animation for producer Merian C. Cooper’s King Kong in 1933.

In Kong, a gigantic gorilla who rules a prehistoric enclave called Skull Island with a giant, hairy fist, O’Brien brought to life one of the most iconic characters in movie history. Kong terrorized the island’s native population, kidnapped female lead Fay Wray, engaged in a skull-crushing, jaw-ripping brawl with a giant T-Rex, and finally faced his own mortality atop the Empire State Building in New York City, where his confused death throes generated so much pathos that audiences wept for him—and still do. O’Brien brought sophisticated filming techniques to the movie, creating layered environments with glass paintings, miniature props and backdrops, and building machined metal armatures—like robotic skeletons—inside the ape and dinosaur models to keep them locked in position from frame to frame.

By the time he went to work on a second giant ape adventure, Mighty Joe Young, in 1949, O’Brien had a protégé. Young animator Ray Harryhausen had long been an admirer of O’Brien, and had fashioned his own prehistoric animal models for animation as a young man. Harryhausen found work with producer George Pal, who was making a series of fanciful animated shorts for Paramount called “Puppetoons,” which used replacement animation—creating individual figures in different positions, or heads with different expressions for closeups, and simply switching out the figures for each frame of movement. Harryhausen later joined the army and created training films using stop-motion animation, then embarked on his own series of animated “Mother Goose” fairy tale shorts including The Storybook Review (1946) and The Story of Little Red Riding Hood (1949).

Harryhausen had kept in contact with Willis O’Brien during all these efforts, showing the veteran animator his attempts at creating convincing stop-motion animation of dinosaurs and woolly mammoths, and in 1949 O’Brien finally hired Harryhausen for Mighty Joe Young, which featured a 12-foot-high gorilla roped and captured by men on horseback in Africa and brought back to civilization. Put on display in an elaborate...
Harryhausen's "Ymir" is one of his most popular creations with fans. The space-travelling creature was featured in 20 Million Miles to Earth (1957). The Ymir had derived its name from mythology, one of Harryhausen's distinctive creatures the animator would bring to motion pictures.

In 1957 Harryhausen and Schneer made yet another sci-fi monster film, The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, which featured both realistic effects as well as stop-motion animation. The film's climactic battle involved a giant cyclops, a man-eating cyclops; a mammoth, two-headed flying Roc and its young; a monstrous, fire-breathing dragon; and of course a murderous skeleton, all brought to life by an evil magician named Sokurah (Torin Thatcher). The 7th Voyage of Sinbad shot in color on the exotic island of Malta, and to brand his technique of animating miniature creatures frame by frame against rear-projected, live action footage of actors and locations, Harryhausen coined the name Dynamation.

Like the Ymir, the creatures in The 7th Voyage of Sinbad were fully developed, expressive characters. The two cyclopes lick their lips hungrily as they soar in front of a cave, bathed in brilliant red and green lighting, and engaged the surviving cyclops in a battle to the death before being dispatched itself by a giant crossbow. And Harryhausen created a nightmarish skeleton apparition, crouching atop the ruins of the lost city of Sinbad, bringing not just creatures, but whole new worlds to movie screens.

Harryhausen's Dynamation techniques used to composite normal-sized actors against rear-projected, live action footage of actors and locations, Harryhausen coined the name Dynamation. The 7th Voyage of Sinbad was shot in color on the exotic island of Malta, and to brand his technique of animating miniature creatures frame by frame against rear-projected, live action footage of actors and locations, Harryhausen coined the name Dynamation.
For 1963’s Jason and the Argonauts, Harryhausen tackled Greek mythology, adapting the tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece, for what would become one of the animator’s great achievements and most critically praised films. Jason and the Argonauts starred the Gods Themselves—Zeus (Nail MacGinnis), Hera (Honor Blackman, who would appear a year later as Pussy Galore in the James Bond hit Goldfinger), and Hermes (Michael Gwynne), who both walk among men and manipulate their fates from Mount Olympus, where Jason and his men appear as mere pawns on Zeus’ chessboard. Scored, like The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, by legendary film composer Bernard Herrmann, Jason and the Argonauts featured not only some of the most iconic animation sequences in Harryhausen’s career, but some of the most memorable fantasy sequences in film history, rivaling the impact of King Kong. Winged harpies peck and shriek at the scraps of food hoarded by the hapless Pelias (Douglas Wilmer), Talos, a gargantuan bronze statue, comes to life to pursue Hercules (Nigel Green) when the famous strongman steals treasure from its base; the god of the sea, Triton, personally holds the Clashing Rocks aside to prevent them from crushing Jason’s ship, the Argo, while it negotiates a treacherous passage between seas, and after infiltrating the kingdom of Colchis, Jason faces the guardian of the Golden Fleece: a seven-headed serpent, the Hydra.

Harryhausen found animating the hydra—and keeping track of the movements of all seven of its heads—one of the most arduous tasks of his career. But what followed was even more challenging. Slain by Jason and burned by one of Colchis’ high priests, the hydra is reduced to a skeleton, and its teeth are gathered to be sown onto the ground where Jason and his men have fled, where the teeth give rise to an army of skeletons armed with swords and shields. Harryhausen choreographed the resulting battle, setting the swords of Jason and his men against those of the skeletons as they leap and thrust amongst seaside ruins, fought to the tune of a rambunctious music cue by Herrmann, and the result was one of the most eye-popping spectacles in cinema history. After four lavish fantasies, Harryhausen and Schneer returned to science fiction, but with a classic twist. Adapting H.G. Wells’ First Men in the Moon (1914), Nigel Kneale’s screenplay played fast forward from astronauts discovering the remnants of a prior moon landing during a modern landing on Earth, to the tale of Jason and the Argonauts (a tale in real life for five more years) to the Victorian Era, where Professor Joseph Cavor (Lionel Jeffries) is on Earth’s satellite (which wouldn’t happen in real life for five more years).

The 7th Voyage of Sinbad, boasting arguably the finest script and performances of any of Harryhausen’s films, was a huge hit, but when Schneer and Harryhausen gambled on a second dinosaur feature, they ran up against changing tastes, with their dinosaur western, The Valley of Gwangi, losing out to the counterculture phenomenon Easy Rider at the 1969 box office. Based on a concept by Wells’ O’Brien, Gwangi has since earned the praise of one of the movie’s most exciting films, with a loving score by Jerome Moross and some thrilling set pieces, including the lassoing of the allosaurus Gwangi by a group of cowboys (an idea originally planned for O’Brien’s Quaid project, then adapted for the 1949 Mighty Joe Young), and a heartfelt, harrowing finale set inside a Mexican cathedral. When Gwangi failed to muster up office profits, Harryhausen and Schneer returned to the reliable fantasy projects they had begun in the late 1950s, and created another hit in 1973 with The Golden Voyage of Sinbad. John Philip Law played Sinbad, and British actress Caroline Munro competed with Harryhausen’s work for the best visual effect in the movie. But Harryhausen brought his “X” game, providing a doll-sized, flying homunculus to serve as spy for the cunning sorcerer Kura (a wonderful Tom Baker of Doctor Who), a wooden ship’s figurehead that comes to life and steals a map from Sinbad’s crew before sinking into the depths of the ocean, a one-eyed centaur, and a winged griffin. For Harryhausen, the film’s tour de force was Sinbad’s battle with a six-armed statue of the goddess Kali, also brought to life by Kura to match swords with Sinbad and his men in an ancient temple. The film also featured a cameo by Robert Shaw a few years before his famed role in Jaws, this time portraying a shrimping oracle appearing out of a cauldron of flames to provide Sinbad with clues to the location of a fountain of youth.

Harryhausen returned to Sinbad, this time played by John Wayne’s son Patrick, in his final Sinbad adventure, Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger in 1977. With its realistic animation of a baboon possessed by a human spirit, a golden, robotic statue called a Minoton, three insect-like banshees, a gigantic walrus, a saber-toothed tiger, and a horned, hulking troglodyte, Eye of the Tiger boasted as much animation as any of Harryhausen’s previous features and went toe to toe with the blockbuster debut of Star Wars in the summer of ‘77 (in fact in many shots the gold Minoton was itself featured an in-joke salute to Harryhausen in Phil Tippett’s stop-motion animation of a chess game onboard the Millennium Falcon). For his last film project, Harryhausen turned back to the mythology of Jason and the Argonauts, this time telling the tale of Perseus (Harry Hamlin) in 1981’s Clash of the Titans. The Empire Strikes Back in the rear view mirror, Harryhausen and Schneer knew that Clash of the Titans would have to compete in a new world of lavish production values and sophisticated visual effects. Schneer attracted an all-star cast with Lawrence Olivier to play Zeus, Claire Bloom as Hera, Maggie Smith as Thetis, and Burgess Meredith as a blind philosopher. Just as Wells’ O’Brien had hired him to assist on Mighty Joe Young at the beginning of his career, Harryhausen hired animator Jim Danforth (whose When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth featured some of the finest animation outside of Clash of the Titans), particularly on the painstaking and beautiful animation of the winged horse Pegasus. Harryhausen animated giant scorpions, a brutish Calibos, and a mammoth, four-armed Kraken for the film’s climax. An animated mechanical owl, a project that squandered the efforts of Joe Young (1981) was Harryhausen’s final film.

For years, Harryhausen was the only visual effects artist whose name was known to the general public, and his effects were on the cutting edge of what was possible for the movies in the 20th century. But Star Wars created its own revolution in motion picture effects that quickly set a new standard that Harryhausen’s work struggled to match. For his last film project, Harry-
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If you’re a pop culture aficionado, you may already be familiar with Tales from the Crypt, the American television series that aired on HBO from 1989 to 1996. You may also remember Weird Science, the 1985 John Hughes feature film starring Kelly LeBrock and Anthony Michael Hall. And you probably know MAD, the long-running humor magazine that became an American institution. But generally only true pop culture cognoscenti know that each of these properties started out in the early 1950s as full-color, 10-cent comic books, published by a small, scrappy company called EC Comics. So why should we care about these 1950s comics in 2020? Put simply, because this lesser-known company had an enormous impact on American pop culture, managing to be both commercially successful as well as boldly innovative.

At its creative peak in the 1950s, the EC line of comics included horror, crime, science fiction, war, and humor titles. To hard-core EC fans—known as "EC Fan-Addicts" (who are, indeed, fanatics)—these were simply the best comic books ever published. Counted among EC’s fans are some disparate pop culture luminaries, including novelists Stephen King and R. L. Stine, filmmakers George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, and George Romero, Underground Comix cartoonist Robert Crumb, Monty Python member/visionary director Terry Gilliam, and musician Jerry Garcia, all of whom point to EC as an important inspiration.

For a company that has inspired so much adulation, EC had some rather modest beginnings. The company was begun in 1945 by comics pioneer M.C. "Max" Gaines. The letters "EC" originally stood not only for "Enter-
As Bill began to assemble a new and younger staff (notably artist/writers Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman, along with a young artist/writer named Johnny Craig, who had worked for Max Gaines), he also began replacing his father's well-intentioned (but lackluster) titles with new (but highly derivative) ones. These comics were in the western, romance, and crime vein, and had titles like Sadle Justice, Sadle-Romances, Gunfighter, Modern Love, War Against Crime!, and Crime Patrol. These books were a step in the right direction, but basically EC was just chasing whatever “trend” seemed to be successful for other publishers. After a year or two of playing follow the leader and trying to keep up with the ever-changing trends in the comic book industry, Gaines and Feldstein decided to go off on their own direction. The pair both loved scary stories like they used to hear on the old radio shows such as Inner Sanctum, The Witches Tale, and Arch Obokee’s Lights Out, so they decided to insert some horror stories into their two crime comics (Crime Patrol and War Against Crime!) and test the waters. With the April–May 1950 issues they changed Crime Patrol into the Crypt of Terror (which was changed three issues later into Tales from the Crypt) and War Against Crime! into The Vault of Horror. A month later they changed Gunfighter into The Haunt of Fear. Soon EC’s three horror comics had become the flagships of the line, and it was EC’s turn to be imitated. Other companies began to flood the newsstands with competing horror titles. EC’s new line of comics (which Gaines and Feldstein christened the “New Trend”) consisted not only of horror, but eventually grew to include science fiction, crime, shock, and—and under Harvey Kurtzman’s aegis—war and humor comics. Though virtually any other comic book publisher of the time, Gaines and Feldstein strove to produce comics that were several cuts above the standard fare, both in the writing and in the artwork. While essentially writing to amuse themselves, they were also targeting an older age group than most other publishers; both men were in their mid-twenties at the time. They regularly included stories on bigotry, racism, drug abuse, police brutality, and anti-Semitism, subject matter that was virtually unheard of in comics at that time. (Gaines and Feldstein referred to these stories as “preachers.”) The two men soon developed a highly effective system, with Gaines generally providing the plot ideas (which he jotted down on little scraps of paper he called “springboards”), and Feldstein fleshing out and writing the stories directly onto the art boards that would be given to the artists to illustrate. Rounding out EC’s creative team, artist/writer/editors Harvey Kurtzman wrote nearly everything he drew (and for the titles he edited), and Johnny Craig generally also wrote the stories he drew. Along with the staff EC artists Ali Feldstein, Johnny Craig, and Harvey Kurtzman, the list of freelance artists that regularly did work for EC reads like a “who’s who” of comics in the mid-20th century, including Graham Ingels, Jack Davis, Wallace Wood, Bill Elder, John Severin, Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Frank Frazetta, Joe Orlando, Jack Kamen, George Evans, and Bernie Krigstein. The artwork that was done for the EC comics is generally considered to be among the best work ever to be done in comics. (See our “Gallery of EC Comics Artists” starting on page 104.)

Al Feldstein was a triple threat: an artist/writer/editor. Feldstein’s artwork—which he would always dismiss as “stiff”—nonetheless had a visceral, bold style that contributed much to what is often referred to as “the EC mystique.” The World Encyclopedia of Comics entry on Feldstein states that “his depiction of ‘static horror’—freezing a single action in time—has never been successfully duplicated in comics.” Gaines always maintained that the EC comics with Feldstein covers always sold the best, probably because they stood out visually on the newsstands. An extremely energetic worker, it wasn’t long before Feldstein was editing seven EC titles, adding Weird Science, Weird Fantasy, Crime SuspenStories, and Shock SuspenStories to the three horror comics. Writing, editing, and drawing covers and stories for all of these books eventually proved to be too much, and Feldstein dropped most of his drawing duties to concentrate on just writing the stories from Gaines’s springboards. An incredibly prolific worker, Feldstein would write a story a day from Monday through Thursday, and use Friday to put together the letter pages and catch up on any other editing work that needed to be done. During this period he would also squeeze in occasional cover art to keep his hand in that part of the process. The following Monday he would turn his attention to another EC title, and the process would begin all over again.

Johnny Craig was another triple threat, an artist/writer, and later, an editor. Craig was a slow, meticulous craftsman whose art exhibited a very clean, film-noir kind of a look, often featuring moody, deep, atmospheric panels. Craig was in on the ground floor with Gaines and Feldstein in developing the EC horror titles Tales from the Crypt, The Vault of Horror, and The Haunt of Fear. Craig also created the archetypal image of The Vault Keeper, one of the three Ghoul-Articians, the horror hosts that boookended each story. Because Craig also wrote the stories he drew (with very few exceptions), Gaines, Feldstein, and Craig formed EC’s horror tri-

On August 20, 1947 Max Gaines was tragically killed in a motor boating accident on Lake Placid. Responsibility for the business fell to his son, William M. Gaines. Bill, who had actually been studying to be a chemistry teacher, had no interest in comic books and even less interest in being a publisher. And he had inherited a line of comic book titles that seemed as though they were in competition to see which one could lose the most money. At the time of his father’s death, EC was running about $100,000 in the red. He was quite reluctant to step into his father’s shoes, and he did so only at his mother’s insistence. “In the beginning” Bill wrote, “I hated the business so much that I visited the office only once a week to sign the payroll checks.” As he began feeling his way through the ins and outs of being a publisher, his attitude began to change. “First thing I knew, I had to read our comics. Next thing I knew, I was in love with them,” Bill wrote.

Bill Gaines (left) and Al Feldstein in the EC office in 1950.
Craig didn't enjoy horror stories with an overt amount of gore, and his stories tended to be peopled with vampires, zombies, and the walking dead. When Crime SuspenStories was added to the EC line towards the end of 1950, Craig was able to fully indulge his film-noir tendencies. Many aficionados feel that much of Craig's finest work is to be found there, both in the interior stories and in the many covers he contributed for the title.

Artist/writer Harvey Kurtzman came to EC looking to do educational comics, but he soon was illustrating stories for EC's horror and science fiction titles. The very earliest ones were from scripts that EC provided, but it wasn't long before Kurtzman was writing and drawing his own stories. Very soon after, Gaines gave Kurtzman a shot at editing his own comic book. Always a fan of adventure and mystery stories, Kurtzman proposed a "he-man adventure" comic called Two-Fisted Tales; the first issue appeared in November–December 1950. But the Korean War had just broken out, and the book was changed into a war comic. Kurtzman wanted this war comic to be different. "I wanted my war stories to have some purpose," he said. "I wanted to do a war comic that told the truth. I wanted stories to show that all people are pretty much the same, and that all soldiers had the same problems, no matter who they were fighting for." A companion title, Frontline Combat, appeared in 1951. These highly regarded books were the very first true-to-life war comics. Kurtzman was an exacting, deliberate worker who not only wrote the stories, but also provided detailed tissue-paper layouts of each panel for the artists to follow. To go off of Kurtzman's supplied vision was not encouraged. Kurtzman also felt that he couldn't write until he had all the background material together, a process that included talking to war veterans, reading historical accounts, going up on a test flight, and even sending his assistant Jerry DeFuccio down in a submarine for a first-hand account. Every detail had to be accurate, right down to the buttons on uniforms. Needless to say, this process took weeks. Kurtzman was producing work that was unsurpassed in the comic-book field, then or now, but the downside was that he was overworked and barely making enough money to support his family. By contrast, Feldstein could crank out a horror story in a day, but with Kurtzman's method there was no way he could up his output. He appealed to Gaines for a raise, but Gaines was caught in a conundrum. Feldstein was turning out seven books to Kurtzman's two, and payment was calculated by the number of books, not by the time it took to turn one out. And although Two-Fisted Tales and Frontline Combat were the best books of their kind, they were only moderately profitable compared with EC's flagship horror titles. Gaines suggested that if Harvey could sandwich in another book between the ones he was already doing, his income would go up by 50%. And so, out of a simple, pressing need for more income, in 1952 MAD—the first satire comic and a publication destined to become an American institution—was born.
Gaines, who by all accounts was a very paternal figure, ran EC with a friendly, family-style atmosphere. Once an artist was in the fold, they would stay in the family as an EC regular. Artist Graham Ingels joined the company at the beginning of 1948 to work on the company’s early western, romance, and crime comics. Once they launched the horror comics, however, it didn’t take long to realize that Ingels was “Mr. Horror himself.” He was soon signing his work with the pen name “Ghastly,” and began specializing in what Bill Gaines biographer Frank Jacobs referred to as “cadaverous inkings.” Ingels’s horror tableaux were swampy, oozing, decaying, and fetid, and in the depiction of the rotting, shambling corpse he was second to none. He was also famous for his work, Elder became known for “chick-ens,” and his scratchy, car-
toony style proved to be a perfect foil to the often-gruesome EC horror stories, making them a little less horrific than they might otherwise have been. And with Kurtzman’s MAD, Davis finally got a chance to fully indulge his humorous side, which was a well-coming reprieve from all the horror and war stories.

Wallace Wood was another extremely versatile artist. Wood had art in all three of EC’s horror comics, as well as the crime and shock comics. Wood also made beautiful contributions to Kurtzman’s war comics Two-Fisted Tales and Frontline Combat. But it is the quality of the work he would do in EC’s science fiction comics, Weird Science and Weird Fantasy, which would earn him the title “the dean of science fiction artists.” Wood essentially created a new visual vocabulary for science fiction art, with a propensity for depicting the ornate, complicated interiors of spaceships. Wood’s figures often look as if they are defying gravity, carved out of plastic, and frozen in space. There is a three-dimensional quality to his work that few other artists have ever achieved. Wood was also one of the core artists to contribute to Kurtzman’s MAD comics.

Joe Orlando was brought into the EC family on a recommendation from Wallace Wood. Orlando worked up a penciled sample page and went down to EC, and when Gaines and Feldstein saw it they said, “Terrific, we have another Wally Wood.” Orlando’s first story for EC was “A Mistake in Multiplication” in Weird Fantasy #9 (September–October 1951), and after that he missed appearing in only one issue of EC’s science fiction comics. He also regu-larly contributed to the horror, crime and shock titles, and he also had a story in nearly every issue of PANIC, the sister publication to MAD. Although he did many stories for the company, Orlando contributed only four covers to EC. It has been said that at any other comic book company, Orlando would have been the shinn-ing star. Here, however, competition among the star artists was fierce.

The artistic team of John Severin and Bill Elder were brought to EC by Harvey Kurtzman at the end of 1950 to work on Kurtz-eman’s war comics. Kurtzman said of the duo that “they com-plemented each other, and they did some of the finest stuff in that partnership that was ever done in the genre of war books.” With Severin’s knack for authenticity, he fit in very well with the detail-obssessed Kurtzman. The pair also had stories in EC’s science fiction comics. When MAD came along in 1952, rather than keep the Severin/Elder duo together, Kurtzman decided to separate the two artists for their work in MAD. Elder had been a class clown, a natural comedian, and his work blossomed in MAD, where he could finally channel all his humor and manic energy into the art. With his MAD work, Elder became known for “chick-en fat,” crazy background gags and hilarious signs on the walls which he would sprinkle around the stories. As for Severin, he was also a significant contributor to Kurtzman’s MAD comics, ap-pearing in nine of the first ten issues. By the end of 1953, the habit-ually overworked Kurtzman wanted to concentrate only on MAD, and he offered Severin the editorship of Two-Fisted Tales, which Severin readily accepted. (Consequently, Severin had to give up his slot in the MAD comic book.)

EC’s staff colorist was Marie Severin, who was recommended for the position in 1951 by her brother John. One of the few women working in comics at the time, she was referred to as “the con-science of EC,” because if she found a panel too gruesome to color in the “traditional” way, she would often opt to color the whole thing blue, yellow, or some other primary color as a way to tone down the gore. Apart from her spectacular coloring on the interior stories, Al Feldstein credits Severin’s coloring on EC’s covers with helping the comics sell. “You have to give Marie Severin credit for selling a lot of the covers that were done in black and white, but were really brought to life by her color,” said Feldstein.

The youngest EC artist was Al Williamson, who came to the company in 1952 at the tender age of 21. The first job he did for EC was a Gaines/Feldstein horror story entitled “The Thing in the ‘Glades” (Tales from the Crypt #31, August–September 1952). “They had two scripts available, a science fiction story and a horror story that took place in the Everglades,” Williamson said. He decided to take “The Thing in the ‘Glades” because it seemed like an easier
the fans immediately embraced his artwork. Crandall regularly worked on Harvey Kurtzman’s war comics, but he hated working for Gaines and Feldstein. Evans said “When Reed Crandall walked into the office for the first time, I would be wild about the artwork. What the heck did they call those guys? The Fleagle Gang. I was aware of all that, but they were turning out a nice product.” Bill Gaines was aware of the outside help Williamson had as well, but he didn’t care either, because the completed jobs were absolutely stunning.

In contrast to some of the other artists, Reed Crandall was stifling his creativity. If Evans varied from Kurtzman’s layouts—which he would do not out of spite, but to make what he thought was a better illustration—Kurtzman would tell Evans that he had “desecrated his story.” On the other hand, Evans loved working for Gaines and Feldstein. Evans said “When you brought in the finished art, Al would say, ‘Oh geez, I never imagined a picture like that. Look at this, Bill’ And Bill would look and say, ‘Holy crap! Here’s another one, Al! This was a delight. You’d work for them for free.’”

Jack Kamen was brought into the EC fold by Al Feldstein, who had known him from their earliest days in comics. Kamen’s initial EC work appeared in the first issues of the two science fiction magazines, Weird Science and Weird Fantasy, cover dated May–June 1950. Knowing that Kamen’s forte was drawing pretty girls, however, Gaines and Feldstein routinely shied away from giving him sci-fi stories that needed an abundance of machinery or technical equipment. His work would also appear in The Vault of Horror, Tales from the Crypt, The Haunt of Fear, Crime SuspenStories, and Shock SuspenStories. Almost instantly, Kamen became famous among EC fans for what came to be called “Kamen babies,” women who were beautiful, voluptuous, and all too often cold and calculating. Kamen’s art had a pristine, slick style, and his work was never all that horrific. Consequently, Gaines once asked him “How come all of your monsters look like a fish?” Of Kamen, Gaines said, “He was a real pro. Jack was almost as fast as Davis.”

The bottom three panels from the first page of “Master Race,” illustrated by Bernie Krigstein. This story is widely considered to be one of the most important comic book stories ever created.
called to say that they had made a mistake. Krigstein assured them that they hadn’t. “When I brought the pencils in,” Krigstein said, "Bill and Feldstein agreed that it was well worth the expansion.” “Master Race” finally appeared in Impact #1, March–April 1955. Al Feldstein said of “Master Race” that he “really improved the story. The story was good, but he improved the art end of the story so much that I thought we were really breaking new ground. He was right in the end.”

Bill Gaines’s father had always told him that he would never amount to anything, but Bill was ultimately able to do what even his father could not do: make EC a success. However, times were changing. Attacks on comics by various guardians of morality had been happening virtually since the medium became popular. This all finally came to a head with a book called Seduction of the Innocent, written by Dr. Fredric Wertham. Wertham was an ambitious psychologist who had been waging a highly publicized campaign against horror and crime comics, which eventually led to a full Senate Subcommittee investigation of the supposed—but never proven and patently absurd—link between comic books and juvenile delinquency. The Subcommittee hearings took place in New York City on April 21 and 22, 1954. Egged on by business manager Lyle Stuart, Gaines volunteered to be a witness at these hearings. Hoping to defend his comics on First Amendment grounds, Gaines and Stuart had written, when asked, “He is also a guitarist and composer with 14 highly regarded albums to his credit, and the composer/designer of several definitive books on the subject of EC Comics and MAD magazine, including Collectibly MAD (Kitchen Sink Press, 1985); Tales of Terror! The EC Companion (with Fred von Bernewitz, Gemstone/Fantagraphics, 2000); Foul Play! The Art and Artists of the Notorious 1950s EC Comics (HarperDesign, 2005); FELDSTEIN: The Mad Life and Fantastic Art of Al Feldstein! (IDW, 2013), and The History of EC Comics! (Taschen, 2020). He is also a guitarist and composer with 14 highly regarded albums released under his own name, the latest being the jazz trilogy of Say That!, Cool Man Cool, and BOP! BANG BOOM! (Futurist Records). Geissman also co-wrote the music for the hit CBS-TV series Mike and Molly and Two and a Half Men, and he was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2004 for co-writing the Two and a Half Men theme (“Men, men, men, men, men, men”).
“The artwork that was done for the EC comics is generally considered to be among the best work ever to be done in comics.”

GRANT GEISSMAN
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ANIME YOUR WAY
75 YEARS OF MOOMIN

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For The Moomins, it’s been a remarkable roller-coaster of three-quarters of a century so far, and with no signs of that changing. Today, these fantastical, homely creatures from Finland, a bit like small, white, furry hippos who stand on two legs, enjoy an international multi-media popularity that neither they nor their creator ever expected, or even dreamt of. The story of The Moomins is inextricably entwined with the story of their creator, an extraordinary Finnish woman, a spirited, spiritual force, named Tove Jansson. The one cannot be told without the other, because Jansson poured into her cast of characters so much of herself, her family, friends and lovers, her dreams and fears, her true and total spirit.

In all, she wrote and illustrated twelve Moomin books, the first a short novella in 1945, followed by eight novels, and three picture books for younger readers, available in more than fifty languages. But what first brought her the widest international fame was her original, English-language Moomin newspaper strip from 1954 to 1959, continued by her brother until 1974. At its peak, it was read by over 20 million people daily (excluding Sundays) in 120 newspapers across 40 countries. Astonishingly, despite their popularity, these sublime comics would almost disappear into newsprint limbo, largely unreprinted and underappreciated amongst her oeuvre. Their rediscovery and reappraisal began only in 2006, when Drawn & Quarterly launched a complete edition in English, including five volumes of the comics by Tove and five volumes of the comics created by her brother, Paul. This confirmed that Tove Jansson’s Moomin strip stands up like George Herriman’s Krazy Kat, Hergé’s Tintin or Charles Schulz’s Peanuts, as a whole, distinct world born from one writer-artist’s unique personality, experience and vision.

Tove Jansson (pronounced ‘TOH-vuh YAN-sonn’) was born a Leo on August 9, 1914, three months before the start of the First World War, and her Swedish first name simply means “beautiful.” From the start, with both her parents full-time self-employed artists working at home, baby Jansson absorbed how art was everyday and everything, as natural as breathing. She grew up in Finland’s capital Helsinki, as the first-born daughter of a Finnish-Swedish sculptor and his Swedish wife, a commercial illustrator. As father’s sculpture didn’t always pay regularly and times were often tough, it would fall to her mother to support the family more consistently from her assorted assignments, even designing Finnish postage stamps and banknotes.

The family story goes that, before baby Tove learned to walk, she learned to draw. She was photographed sitting at her mother’s drawing table, snug in the comfort of her mother’s lap, watching her work and making marks herself. Jansson also grew to love the escape and enchantment of stories, lapping up her mother’s playful spoken yarns. She went on to read Jules Verne, Conan Doyle, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and other scribes of adventures and composed her own stories. In addition, Jansson would model from an early age for her father’s sculptures, several of which still stand in Helsinki’s public places. At school, however, she was a poor pupil, especially bad in math, from which her mother managed to get her excused. She grew up as a rebellious outlier but benefitted from the thorough encouragement of her parents to pursue her natural enthusiasm for both art and writing, taking homemade booklets of her fanciful stories to school to sell to her classmates.

Among the assorted strange beings which sprang from her young
imagination was the first recognizable Moominn. Jansson drew this while on an island holiday in the family’s summer cottage in the Pellinki archipelago, after she got into an argument with her first brother Per Olov, who, she later remembered, was the person she considered her closest friend. The two little white trolls, one of whom she called ‘Snork’ (that nickname again), sometimes next to the magazine’s logo or her signature, other times within the joke or commenting on it from the sidelines. Gradually, as she rehashed his body, this Snork morphed into a prototype for Moomintroll.

Simultaneously, the bigger vision of Moomintroll was taking shape from 1938 in the early drafts of what would become the first short novel, The Moomins and the Great Flood. She recalled starting it, “when I was feeling depressed and scared of the bombing and wanted to get away from my gloomy thoughts to something else entirely… I crept into an unbelievable world where everything was natural and benign—and possible.” Published in Helsinki and Stockholm in 1945, only a few months after the end of the War, this book presented the Moomins’ ‘origin story,’ their habitats and customs, introducing Moomintroll and his parents, Moominpappa and Moominmama, clear echoes of Jansson’s own. Like the real-life refugees whom Jansson saw displaced by the War, the Moomin family lose their home, hidden, naturally, behind an old-fashioned stove, which is being replaced by a more modern heating system. It becomes imperative to improve their living conditions. Jansson turned to Moomintroll and his parents, Moominpappa and Moominmama, who help to build a new home in which to hibernate from November to April. Their quest then extends to finding the restless, adventure-seeking Moomintroll and his wise and practical friend Too-Ticky, who helps Moomintroll understand about the women he loved. Later, she would affectionately cast her sexuality was legalized in Finland in 1971, Jansson maintained discretion about the women she loved. Letter, she would affectionately cast her sexual orientation and how practical and capable women can be. Another new character is Snorkmaiden, reflects Jansson’s feminism and how practical and capable women can be. Another new character is Snorkmaiden, who would come out and blow down the back of my neck—they lived behind the stove in the kitchen.”

What began as a bogeyman in an eye-catching front covers. Into several of these, Jansson began sneaking their eternal wanderings. Mother and troll must endure monstrous perils and frightening climes, before they are reunited with father, surprisingly thanks to the huge, climactic flood, which helps her happy family to start with intensive development and training, as she learned to work in seemingly manageable workload would free enough time for her serious work, “as she put it, was too tempting. She convinced herself that this would not be possible. Later, after the end of the War, this book presented the Moomins’ “origin story,” their habitats and customs, introducing Moomintroll and his parents, Moominpappa and Moominmama, clear echoes of Jansson’s own. Like the real-life refugees whom Jansson saw displaced by the War, the Moomin family lose their home, hidden, naturally, behind an old-fashioned stove, which is being replaced by a more modern heating system. It becomes imperative to improve their living conditions. Jansson turned to Moomintroll and his parents, Moominpappa and Moominmama, who help to build a new home in which to hibernate from November to April. Their quest then extends to finding the restless, adventure-seeking Moomintroll and his wise and practical friend Too-Ticky, who helps Moomintroll understand about the women she loved. Letter, she would affectionately cast her sexuality was legalized in Finland in 1971, Jansson maintained discretion about the women she loved. Letter, she would affectionately cast her
traced novels, in many ways the strips come across as more immediate, abundant with visual surprises, new characters, themes and settings, and equally lyrical and life-affirming.

A daily strip, however, is notoriously demanding and its success brought Jansson constant production pressures, which in turn led to numerous editions for the first time in other languages.

So belatedly these vibrant stories which Jansson crafted for her comic strips are being enjoyed and recognized worldwide as another acclaimed highpoint in her creative output. Her entire Moomin oeuvre continues to convey the deep importance of individuality, community and the natural world. As a woman, an artist, a writer, a lesbian, a feminist, a member of Finland’s Swedish minority, an ever-questioning, self-realizing individual, Jansson shows us the wisdom of embracing, and celebrating, all of our wonderful difference and diversity.

For more information on Moomin creator Tove Jansson, please look for these books:

Tove Jansson: Letters from Tove edited by Boel Westin & Helen Svensson, Sort of Books, 2019

Moomin Tribute Art!

Marc Nadel • Burlington, VT

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The story of how Robert E. Howard’s pulp-and-paperback hero Conan the Cimmerian wound up in Marvel Comics fifty years ago is a study in “what-ifs.” Five years before I got the notion to turn that expression into an ongoing title?

To wit:

What if Stan Lee and I decided that Marvel should license the rights to one of the sword-and-sorcery characters then headlining popular paperbacks?

What if Stan had decided, as was Marvel’s usual wont, that we should simply create a new protagonist, rather than go after one that already existed outside comics?

What if we had gotten our first wishes, instead of our second choices, in several areas: Thongor of Lemuria as rent-a-hero . . . and John Buscema as artist?

By 1969, the first and second tsunamis of Marvel Comics were history: First, the creation of the major characters and concepts (completed either by Daredevil #1 in 1964, a year before I wandered in—or else by the arrival of the Inhumans, the Silver Surfer, and the Black Panther over the next year or so, to which I was merely an awestruck witness) . . . and second, the 1968 end of the split anthologies, as Captain America, Iron Man, et al., emerged overnight in their own solo-hero titles.

Alas, there’d been a bit of an industry slowdown in ’68, with perhaps just a few too many costumed heroes vying for the spotlight at the same time. So Stan . . . and I as his associate editor and protégé . . . and surely Martin Goodman as publisher, even if he had recently sold the company he had founded in 1939 . . . knew that, if we were going to expand sales, it might be a good idea to seek out areas that might appeal not just to Marvel’s faithful readers but also to new readers who had no trouble passing by a newsstand displaying innumerable guys and gals in colorful tights.

[Not] Brand Echh in 1967 had branched out in a humorous/parodical direction, but was still dependent on a customer’s interest in superheroes. The Ghost Rider, our revival of a 1950s masked Western gunslinger, had gone nowhere. Captain Savage and His Leatherneck Raiders aped Sgt. Fury, but what was the latter but the application of the Lee-and-Kirby superhero genius to the war genre? None of those titles was the answer, or pointed to same.

So we looked to the newsstands to see what was selling thereon that might be adapted, in one way or another, to comicbooks that sold primarily to pre-teen and teenage readers, plus a scattering of wistfully nostalgia over-twenties.

And, at much the same time, if not even earlier, and certainly influencing our search to a considerable degree, were a steady stream of letters (remember them?) from Marvel’s readers admonishing us to bring a few current prose sensations into the four-color forum.
(A few fans probably suggested Doc's Street & Smith buddy The Shad-
Gold Key had published one issue of a “novels” were being reprinted to considerable success . . . but Western/
the fans asked for a cover by another familiar name, Roy Krenkel. Lin Carter, who was also
Howard's own King Kull had a volume behind a lovely, illustrious
Conan offerings for their splendid covers, I never really ventured inside
a terrified Vendhyan (= India) princess over his shoulder and make off
potboiler with a barbarian hero who didn't do much more than throw
was solid, but to me at the time it seemed just a sort of ancient-world
book, “The People of the Black Circle, ” I was disappointed. The writing
word) cover for
in 1966, I beheld Frazetta's iconic (a stretch of that much-over-used
curse) sword.
So Thongor it was.
So Stan and I talked it over and, partly at my suggestion, we went
best, Kull second, Conan third (a “C” isn't the strongest letter to begin a
more likely to be available for comics adaptation than Conan, the one
other S&S heroes now cavorting in paperback form, “ they demanded.
And this
Conan of Cimmeria.  And this
Thongor...
Meanwhile, who was gonna there. No percentage royalties . . . just a flat sum. Pretty simple. Conan. (Truth to tell, I had half expected no contract to emerge be-cause of that very fact, but somehow it had gotten finalized.) So I figured, instead of having Gerry Conway write the comic (as I probably would’ve), I would script at least the first issue or two. That way, if Goodman wanted his $50 back, I could simply not bill for two or three pages’ worth of writing (I don’t recall my rate at the time), and things would come out even. So that’s how I more or less backed into writing all that Conan in comicbooks, comic strips, record albums, TV, and movies—everything except an actual Conan novel. The X-Men and Doctor Strange were both winding to a temporary close. More: I suddenly realized I needed to make it more than just another superhero book without a range—Don Heck and Dick Ayers—but I kind of dug in my heels. Stan and I had our artist chosen already, too. None other than John Buscema, with whom I’d been doing some fairly successful Sub-Mariner and Avengers material as good a draftsman as had ever walked the halls of a comics company, and a good storyteller, too. But, as I was writing out the original plot for the premier issue of the mag I suggested be titled Conan the Barbarian (because that had been the title of a 1950s hardcover reprint, but not of any of the 1960s paperbacks, so no potential confusion)—or maybe, for all I know, after I’d already sent it to John—the word abruptly came down from Martin Goodman that we couldn’t use an artist with Buscema’s rate (one of the highest at Marvel in those days)—because he wanted to hold down the costs, surely to recoup some of that $200 an issue. (I should’ve known that grandiose sum didn’t slip by him.) That left out longtime REH fan Gil Kane, too, Gil had been a booster and confidant during my quest to get the rights to Conan, and even had become convinced that he had given me the idea to pursue Conan . . . though he hadn’t. And he was likewise too “expensive” to be considered as CTB’s initial artist.

Stan suggested a couple of good artists who were in our price range—Don Heck and Dick Ayers—but kind of dug in my heels. I had worked with and respected both guys, but I told him I didn’t think either of them would bring the singular quality that I felt Conan needed to make it more than just another superhero book without a super-powered hero.

Okay, Stan said . . . so line up somebody. The only person who sought me out at that time, hoping to get the assignment, was young Bernie Wrightson. But his issue of DC’s earlier S&S “Nightmaster,” while promising in a Frazetta-influenced way, was not, I knew, quite what Stan would want. But I made a note to try Bernie out on something of that sort ASAP . . . so that he soon became the first person ever to draw King Kull in a comic book, and he did a wonderful job of it.

For Conan, though—I had a brainstorm. A few months earlier, I had had young artist Barry Smith, who had been kicked out of the U.S. back to his native London for lack of a green card or some such detail that we at Marvel had never noticed when he was drawing X-Men and Daredevil, draw a story about a sword-and-sorcery hero I called Starr the Slayer . . . who killed his Cimmerian—originally a day-time creator when the latter decided toloff in his next story. Barry had done a bang-up job on that tale in Chamber of Darkness #4, and besides, his rate was about as low as they went—probably $20 a page for pencils, something like that.

So Barry got the assignment, and I mailed him the several-page plot for Conan the Barbarian #1—maybe after a fast (and expensive) transatlantic phone call to tell him it was coming. The rest, as they say, is history. Or, since we’re talking about the Hyborian Age here, maybe I should say “pseudo-history.” Barry and I became celebrated as the harbingers of something relatively new in comicbooks, as I learned how to write the stuff (and soon got Goodman to pay an extra pittance so we could adapt actual REH Conan stories, beginning with “The Tower of the Elephant.” My favorite) and Barry developed mightily as an artist, in ways neither Stan nor I (nor perhaps he himself) could have predicted.

Conan the Barbarian, by the time Barry departed Marvel’s color comic for the final time after issue #24, had become a solid Marvel seller—with pay raises for Barry, and, equally important when he quit, enough of a budget that first Gil Kane (for two issues) and then John Buscema were no longer out of our financial league.

Conan remains my favorite of all the “Marvel” characters I ever wrote—and I’m proud to have played my small part in first mak- ing Conan the Barbarian and The Savage Sword of Conan two of the company’s most profitable magazines by the second half of the 1970s . . . and thereby making the early-1980s John Milius film Conan the Bar- barian possible at a time when the Conan paperbacks were mostly out of print due to the publisher’s bankruptcy . . . even if I never thought any Conan movie ever really caught the essence of what Conan was or should have been. It’s been a helluva ride, though . . . and it’s not over yet.
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CONAN CONQUERS COMICS!

by Charlie Novinskie

The year was 1970 and the Hyborean Age was about to meet the Marvel Age, changing the face of comics forever. Not that Robert E. Howard’s definitive character, Conan the Barbarian, was an instant success. Trying to break the mold of superhero comics with a sword and sorcery character wasn’t easy. The comic didn’t instantly take off and was initially relegated to bimonthly status. But, thanks to master storyteller Roy Thomas and newcomer Barry Smith (better known as Barry Windsor-Smith) with his dynamic pencils, Conan the Barbarian became a mainstay of licensed comics, opening the way for a genre of comics that thrives to this day!

Conan led to a significant run of 275 issues running for an impressive 23 years before moving on to Dark Horse Comics. The series run featured 151 issues penned by Roy Thomas with pencils by John Buscema on most issues following Barry Smith’s art on the first 24 issues. Other notable writers included J. M. DeMatteis, Chuck Dixon, Michael Fleischer, Bruce Jones, Don Knauf, Doug Moench, Jim Owsley, and Al Zelenetz. Of note during the Smith run was a two-part story featuring Michael Moorcock’s character Elric of Melnibone in issues #14-15, and the introduction of Red Sonja in issue #23. Twelve Conan Annuals were published from 1973 to 1987, along with five Giant-Size Conan issues, each consisting of 68 pages.

The success of Conan the Barbarian led to the 1974 publication of the black-and-white magazine series Savage Sword of Conan. Written by Thomas with art by John Buscema and Alfredo Alcala, Savage Sword became one of the most popular black-and-white comic book series of the 1970s, running an amazing 235 issues, plus one annual. Reflecting back on the black and white explosion of the 1970s, Roy Thomas commented, “I don’t think there was any great explosion of popularity of B&W comics at that time. Stan just felt it was a direction to reach out and perhaps expand the audience, making it more worthwhile for stores to sell 75-cent or $1.00 comics instead of 15-centers. Savage Sword of Conan was started because the Conan issues of Savage Tales (#s 2-5) had done quite well.” A variety of short-lived mini-series were also published, with the most interesting being 55 issues of King Conan (Conan the King) after issue #19 running through the 1980s.

Conan’s appearances in Marvel Comics weren’t limited to the Hyborean Age, with the character also appearing in the modern age Marvel Universe. Many of these stories took place in What If. Issue #39 featured “What If Thor Battled Conan the Barbarian?” What If stories included Conan up against Wolverine, Captain America, and other modern-day Marvel characters. Other appearances occurred in Avengers Forever #12, Fantastic Four #405, and Paradise X: Heralds #1 with appearances by both Conan and Red Sonja. In 2019 Marvel launched the Savage Avengers as an ongoing Marvel Comics series with Conan the Barbarian teaming up with Wolverine, the Punisher, Venom, Elektra, and Doctor Voodoo.
Dark Horse Comics trip into Conan’s world began in 2003 with the one-shot prologue, Conan #0: Conan the Legend. The first series was simply titled Conan, running for 50 issues through 2008. In all, Dark Horse published six major comic series’ along with collections of the original Marvel Comics Conan the Barbarian, The Savage Sword of Conan, and the King Conan series in graphic novel format. The first series kicked off with Kurt Busiek as writer with a combination of new stories and adaptations including “The Frost Giant’s Daughter,” “The God in the Bowl,” and “The Tower of the Elephant.” Mike Mignola adapted “The Hall of the Dead” with Timothy Truman crafting tales from “Rogues in the House” and “The Hand of Nergal.” Several notable artists turned in some of their finest work, including Cary Nord, Thomerin, and Tom Mandrake, Bruce Timm, Greg Ruth, and Paul Lee, and Tomas Giorello. Many of these artists contributed covers, along with Joseph Michael Linsner, J. Scott Campbell, Leinil Francis Yu, Tony Harris, Richard Isanove, and Leonardo Fernandez.

The second series, titled Conan the Cimmerian, began publication in 2008 and lasted 25 issues until November 2010. A 99-cent issue #0 was published in June 2008, followed by the first issue of the series in July. Scripted by Timothy Truman, the artwork was by Tomas Giorello along with Joe Kubert, Paul Lee, Timothy Truman, and Richard Corben.

The third series premiered with Roy Thomas back as scripter, and Mike Hawthorne as the primary artist on the series. Doug Wheatley, Dale Keown, and Aleks Briclot contributed covers. Titled Conan: Road of Kings, the first issue appeared in December 2010 and ended in January 2012 after 12 issues.

As a follow up to Road of Kings, the fourth series, titled Conan the Barbarian, ran 25 issues from February 2012 to March 2014 and featured Brian Wood’s run with Robert E. Howard’s original story “Queen of the Black Coast.” A series of artists contributed to the series, including Becky Cloonan, Declan Shalvey, James Harren, and others. Original covers were handled by Massimo Carnevale with variants by Becky Cloonan, John Paul Leon, Dave Stewart, and Leonardo Fernandez.

Conan the Avenger was Dark Horse Comics’ fifth series about Conan, with Fred Van Lente as the writer. The bulk of the tales were adaptations, including “The Snout in the Dark;” “The Slithering Shadow” and “A Witch Shall Be Born.” Various artists contributed their talents with Brain Ching handling much of the art. Conan the Avenger ran for 25 issues from April 2014 through April 2016. Dark Horse’s final series, titled Conan the Slayer, lasted 12 issues from July 2016 to August 2017. Cullen Bunn handled the writing chores and Sergio Davila handled the artwork on all but the last issue.

Another series, King Conan, which takes place during Conan’s time as king, launched in February 2011, concluding in 2016 with 24 issues. The series featured adaptations of Robert E. Howard’s work, including “The Scarlet Citadel,” “The Phoenix on the Sword,” “Hour of the Dragon,” “The Conqueror,” and “Wolves Beyond the Border.” The stories were adapted by Timothy Truman and featured the art of Tomas Giorello.

The Conan, Conan the Cimmerian, Conan: Road of Kings, Conan the Barbarian, Conan the Avenger, and Conan the Slayer series presented a fresh perspective for everyone’s favorite sword-wielding barbarian, building on the 50-year tradition started by Roy Thomas and Barry Windsor-Smith that helped launch the sword and sorcery genre in comics!

Charlie Novinskie writes full time from his home in Grand Junction, Colorado where he lives with his wife, Kristine. Admitting to reading comics for over 50 years now, mostly Marvel, he also finds time to serve on the board of Hero Initiative helping creators in need, and is an Overstreet Advisor as well as managing editor for Lake Havasu Living Magazine. He was an editor and sales and promotions manager for Topp’s Comics during the 1990s.
Tabita Viselli • San Diego, CA

Don Nguyen • Los Angeles, CA

An • Savannah, GA
“Her hair was like elfin-gold … Her full red lips smiled and from her slender feet to the blinding crown of her billoway hair, her ivory body was as perfect as the dream of a god. Conan's pulse hammered in his temples.”
—“The Frost-Giant's Daughter,” Robert E. Howard (Weird Tales, 1933)

Before artists Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo populated the Hyborian Age with bewitching, barbarian bodies, Conan creator Robert E. Howard penned tales vibrant enough to conceive unequalled worlds of sensual sword-and-sorcery. Decades after “The Phoenix on the Sword” publication (Weird Tales, December 1932), Howard's barbarian still savages a path through pop culture, pulp fiction, and, since 1970, comics.

Like a sword thrust “through brass scales and bones and heart,” Howard's wordsmithing leaves the reader breathless. Even sans the vivid Frazettas and Vallejos that would later, arguably, overshadow his work, Howard's storytelling stuns on its own.

Robert Ervin Howard (REH) was born a Texan, and died a Texan. In between, he traveled not only the vast Lone Star landscape, but the American South and Southwest. Occasional trips took him across the Mexican border, visiting Boys Town and sending picturesque postcards from destinations like Piedras Negra. Born in 1906, Howard's childhood was Western-nomadic, hauled from oil-boom towns to land-boom towns and back again by his manically-entrepreneurial father, Dr. Isaac Mordecai Howard, and Robert's perpetually-ailing mother, Hester Jane.

“I'll say one thing about an oil boom: It will teach a kid that life's a pretty rotten thing …”
—REH

Cross Plains, TX eventually became home and, there, in central Texas, the Howards stayed. The tabula rasa of 1920s Texas bred an unmatched imagination. The parameters of a country school, real and psychological, proved a slog.

“I hated school … what I hated was the confinement, the clock-like regularity … most of all the idea that someone considered himself or herself in authority over me …”
—REH, letter to H.P. Lovecraft

Howard polished his art, devouring raconteurs like Twain, Poe and Lovecraft. A zeal for history, his grandmother's tales and the family cook's ghost stories, Howard developed early an appetite for sagas and the supernatural. Writing before the age of ten, Howard was first published at fifteen, via school newspapers and local rags. At eighteen, came his first professional sale: “Spear and Fang” (Weird Tales, July 1923).
Life’s trudge and burdensome fears of old age pummeled Howard. June 11, 1936, day-three of his mother’s coma, proved enough. That morning, Howard exited his mother’s bedroom and went to his own. There, he typed a poem.

“All fled, all done
So lift me on the pyre.
The feast is over
And the lamps expire.”

—REH

He then left the house, where his father kept vigil over Hester, walked a few short steps and climbed into his car, a 1935 Chevy held purchased for himself, with cash, from the rather good monies he earned writing. There, near the house, in the driver’s seat, he shot himself in the head. He died eight hours later.

Howard died the next day, having never regained consciousness. Mother and son were buried on June 14 at Greenleaf Cemetery in Brownwood, Texas, in a family plot. Howard had recently purchased, “with perpetual care”, on June 10. In a final frame of unimaginable pathos, Howard’s father “paid someone to clean out the splattered brains” and drove his son’s car, for years. Dr. Howard was reunited with his wife and only child on November 12, 1944.

“What Howard left modern folklore was not only Conan the Cimmerian, but a world of ladies who slay, literally. Pirates, witches and queens, Hyborian-age women battle as fiercely as the Cimmerian, but a world of ladies who slay, literally. Pirates, witches and queens, Hyborian-age women battle as fiercely as

Through the 1980s, Sonja explores her feelings and sharpens her mad skillz, earning her place as warrior in a breadth of solo and crossover media. Yet, pop culture’s most defining image must be Brigitte Nielsen. The statuesque Dane of Richard Fleischer’s 1986 feature Red Sonja cements her as a Marvel icon, initiating decades of hot, ginger cosplay.

Mid-’90s, Red Sonja: Scavenger Hunt (Marvel, December 1995) sets Sonja on a soul-quest. As a girl does, she gets extra fit for said-quest, physically and mentally. Fierce swordplay, her mind-game en pointe, Sonja even lost a little weight. Thanks to illustrator Alex Jibrann, she looked quite Giselle Bündchen, like she did way more Pilates than Booty Camp.

Still, all that excellence couldn’t save her: Red Sonja #34 (Dynamite Entertainment, 2005). Fortunately, comic characters never die, only move to a parallel universe. Sonja reincarnates as a version of her former self. New Sonja has elements of old, but her origin story changes: same family drama, but less magic and ancient magic unleashed to save her. Afterwards, there’s copious soul-searching and perfection of mad MMA skillz, followed by a lifetime of revenge and palatable loneliness.

“I will find you, nameless one, and I will repay you for what you have done to my family, and to me!”

—”The Day of the Sword”, Kull and the Barbarians #3 (Marvel, September 1975)

Mid-2010s, writer Gail Simone’s in charge; Sonja’s origin-story is again tweaked. The fam is still slaughtered, but Sonja slays all offenders. She is not raped and there’s no ancient magic. Walter Geovani’s illustrations are sultry and chill, giving Sonja a casual tenor: Lindsay Lohan languid and lean. She can hurt you, clearly, but could totally go to Starbucks instead.

decade: less Thundra, more Buffy.

Howard’s first Conan-cohort, Bêlit the Pirate Queen, beguiles the reader as skilfully as she does Conan. At first blush, she seems to submit to the Norlannder; but hers is a Beyoncé/Jay-Z vision. Together, they shall rule.

“Look at me, Conan! I am Bêlit, queen of the black coast. Oh, tiger of the north . . . Take me and crush me with your fierce love! . . . I am a queen by fire and steel and slaughter—be thou my king!”

—“Queen of the Black Coast I,” Robert E. Howard (Weird Tales, May 1934)

Dude, it could not be easier.

Capturing the Tigress, Bêlit is a force of hurricane-strength, commanding a corsair crew wearing naught but a corset and sandals. As Howard penned one Bêlit exploit, it fell to Marvel to hoist again the Tigress’ sails.

In 1973, Roy Thomas reaccipiates Bêlit and Conan in “Queen of the Black Coast.” Artist John Buscema revamps her from 1930s Mata Hari to 1970s hippie-chick: think Cher, Half-Breed. Earthly, with ultra-long, strick-straight, blue-hair, Bêlit makes swimwear a clever choice for pirate work: bikinis or plunging one-pieces, gold accessories and bucket-top boots. No cover-ups for this confident chick. Yet, even Cher-flair couldn’t deflect Bêlit’s demise. In 1979, Death comes a-knockin’ for disco, the Seventies, and Bêlit in “Death on the Black Coast’ in Conan the Barbarian #100 (Marvel, 1979).

Fortunately, death is theoretical in comics. In the ‘80s, Bêlit got a Boywatch-era Yasmine Bleeth makeover and recouped the Black Coast. No matter her strut, in harem pants, bikinis and belly chains, or in fur-and-leather Faire-garb, Bêlit’s mission was simple: dominate the Hyborian seas.

Millennial Bêlit sailed Dark Horse waters, fierce as ever. Song of Bêlit (Dark Horse Comics, 2014) sparks a moonlyt, gothic trend. Illustrator Paul Azaceta produces an Addamsesque, ghostly beauty. By 2020, savvy Bêlit channels a Max Black/2 Broke Girls aura: sharp tongue, sharper cheekbones and a quick wit. Writer Tini Howard (no relation) molds Bêlit as a “cautionary tale,” rather than a heroine. Tini’s Bêlit possesses a shrewd, gaming mentality, a sharp tongue, sharper cheekbones and a quick wit. Writer Tini Howard (no relation) molds Bêlit as a “cautionary tale,” rather than a heroine. Tini’s Bêlit possesses a shrewd, gaming mentality, aura: sharp tongue, sharper cheekbones and a quick wit. Writer Tini Howard (no relation) molds Bêlit as a “cautionary tale,” rather than a heroine. Tini’s Bêlit possesses a shrewd, gaming mentality, an extant Bêlit in fun, anime form, but it’s a harder, tight-jawed waif. In harem pants, metal halters and long blonde tresses, she maintains an J Dream of Jeannie flow; but it’s a harder, tight-jawed Jeannie slaying Krakens and flying iguanas.

Film-buffs are forgive, for mistaking John Milius’ 1982 Conan the Barbarian poster for a Buns of Steel/WS-tape cover. Say what you like about the ‘80s, but, ladies . . . be . . . if. If there’s a lasting image of Valeria, it’s Sandahl Bergman: IRL Vallejo girl. With the film’s success, Marvel released a comic adaptation, written by Michael Flesher with cover art by John Buscema: Conan the Barbarian: Movie Special (October 1982). Of course, because she’s just a girl, she must die. Yet, after death, her spirit returns to save Conan’s life. (Interestingly, in “Death on the Black Coast,” Conan the Barbarian #100 (Marvel, 1979): Bêlit’s spirit also returns après-death, to save Conan. Who’s the fairer sex now, Co-nan?)

Dark-Horse Comics Valencia (2003–2009) wears her independence comfortably. Conan’s nice but not necessary. She can save herself and her horse is her bestie. Marvel’s 2020 Valeria (Age of Conan series by Meredith Finch, illustrated by Anke) recalls a yoga-strict Kaley Cuoco: sweet of face, kind of words, supakawaii in Faire garb and will run you through like old Camembert, then treat her horse to some timothy hay, beside a tranquil, jungle pool.

Who runs the world? H-town girls. Their numbers are great: Zenobia, Queen Grenden, Queen Taramis, Princess Jherna. Marique and countless others battling alongside, and against, Conan. Enter the Hyborian Age at your own risk.

From 1970-2003, Marvel licensed the beast that is Conan, as well as all movies, games, and fathomable kind of Conan product; from 2003-2018, Dark Horse held taut those licensing reins. Now, Conan’s back home. In 2019, flush with Disney Dollars, Marvel reacquired the license for Conan Properties International (CPI). Back at Marvel, will devotées crave more Conan? Or will they fancy the worlds Stan Lee and Roy Thomas cultivated when they ushered Conan into comics, fifty years ago?

Jennifer Susannah Devore authors Savannah of Williamsburg, an 18th century historical-fiction series; she’s currently penning Book V in the series. She also authored The Darlings of Orange County, contemporary-fiction mise-en-scéne in SoCal. Jennifer’s obsessions include British mysteries, Northern European paintings and Bobbi’s Burgers. She’s intensified her yoga, in case she visits Hyboria.

The Weird Tales cover features a pale, willowy blonde, resembling silent-era film sirenn Edwina Booth. Illustrated by Margaret Brundage, Valeria looks ill-equipped to fend off a feisty Pomeranians, let alone the ungodly creatures of “Red Nails.” Valeria has introduced flying justice, having slain an ungentlemanly officer. As they say in Texas, He needed killin’. Conan’s been tracking her for days, but, necessarily, they double-up to defeat dragons, witches and poison apples, even saving a village in the process. By story’s end, like a befer Scully and Mulder, they set off to right what’s wrong in a very weird landscape.

In 1973, Roy Thomas revives Valeria; John Buscema and Barry Windsor-Smith design her sturdier than Brundage’s elegant waif. In harem pants, metal halters and long blonde tresses, she maintains an I Dream of Jeannie flow; but it’s a harder, tight-jawed Jeannie slaying Krakens and flying iguanas.

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“There came a time when the Marvel gods died….”

Okay, that’s not exactly what the first page of Jack Kirby’s *New Gods* #1 says, but that’s precisely what it meant. Kirby, who’d spent the previous decade developing the Marvel Comics Universe, was ready to roll in 1970 on a new “Epic for Our Times” that he didn’t feel he could produce at Marvel. His denouement that “An ancient era was passing in fiery holocaust!” meant more than he was leaving Thor and Odin (and Marvel Comics) behind. A seismic shift in his use of gods was taking place, and nearly everything about its backstory was seismic indeed.

The long, sordid tale of Kirby’s discontent with Stan Lee and Marvel in the 1960s is the stuff of comic book legend (the last word on which may’ve come in my own book *Kirby & Lee: Stuf’ Said*), but suffice it to say, Jack wasn’t happy there by 1969. When DC Comics’ publisher Carmine Infantino came a’knockin’ to lure the top creator in the industry away, Kirby opened that door—and eventually made the move, taking two young guys named Mark Evanier and Steve Sherman away from the Marvelmania Fan Club to be his assistants. Jack was now working from the West Coast and mailing in his stories cross-country to his employers’ New York offices—an exception that was only made for Kirby due to his high standing in the field. What he had planned at DC would require all the help he could find to pull it off with minimal East Coast interference.

At Marvel in the 1960s, Kirby was the architect of a shared universe of super-characters, who would routinely cross over into each others’ comics for an issue or two, and occasionally cameo unexpectedly (and usually uneventfully). But despite even Jack’s multi-issue continued story arcs like the *Fantastic Four*’s Galactus Trilogy, or *Thor*’s Ragnarok (which was threatened so often it became almost meaningless), you always knew those stories would end with a basic status quo of the lead heroes surviving to fight another day, and the villains being up to their old mischief again later.

As cryptic 1970 house ads in DC’s comics heralded “The Great One Is Coming,” Kirby jumped ship and launched his new “Fourth World” at DC, where mysteries galore slowly unfolded to create the next step in guest-starring and shared universes. This was a true epic, taking place not just across a trio of issues of one comic, but throughout every issue of four interwoven titles, all inextricably linked. If you missed one, you missed a lot. And the eventual climax was poised to end with the death of either the main hero (Orion) or the overarching villain (Darkseid). As each new issue hit the newsstands, the puzzle started to take shape, and an army of new characters was introduced.

The origins of the series’ nickname “Fourth World” are lost to oblivion. Some think it came about because there were four interlocking books that made up the epic, each sort of in its own world. Others think it was Kirby’s logical extension of the term “Third World” to describe this entity that was beyond anything we knew at the time. Whatever the case, the name stuck, to the point that the term was even used by Kirby on his pencil art for the later *Demon* series he created, although DC removed it before it was lettered. (There’s no evidence that Jack intended the Demon to be linked to Orion, Darkseid, and the like, but it’s a fascinating thing to ponder.)

*Don’t Ask, Just Keep Buying It: 50 Years of Kirby’s Fourth World* by John Morrow
But it all began, chronologically at least, several months before New Gods #1 hit newsstands in 1971. Things kicked off with, of all things, three issues of Superman’s Pal Jimmy Olsen. Who but Kirby would’ve thought of that as a great place to begin such a groundbreaking experiment? To my knowledge, no one was waiting impatiently for a resurrection of his and Joe Simon’s Newsboy Legion from the 1940s. It turns out we just didn’t know we wanted it, until Jack revamped the boys as the offspring of the original kid gang.

And what better strip to introduce newboys, than one about a cub reporter for that great metropolitan newspaper, The Daily Planet? DC had wanted Jack to take over an existing strip as well as create his new ones, and Kirby chose Jimmy Olsen, since it was the only one available that didn’t have a regular creative team which would be put out of work by him.

And what a wild ride Kirby took Jimmy (and us) on! The opening two-page spread introduced the new Newsboys and their “miracle car” the Whiz Wagon, which for fifteen glorious issues would transport them (with Superman in tow) through adventures unlike anything seen in Olsen’s boring old mag—or anywhere else, for that matter. Readers were wowed by watching Superman’s pal encounter a dropout society of bikers on super motorcycles who formed a commune called “Habitat,” hippie scientists in a portable “Mountain of Judgment, “ a secret government DNA Project that introduced the anti-heroes called “Habitat, “ hippie scientists in a portable “Mountain of Judgment,” a secret government DNA Project that introduced the anti-heroes called “Habitat,”

The first page of New Gods #1 sets the stage for Kirby’s Fourth World.

And that was just in the first three issues. It was the greatest concentrated burst of creative energy ever seen in comics.

Then consider Forever People #1, which also appeared prior to the first issue of New Gods. They were a group of teenage pacifists, who together said the magic word “Shaz–”—err, “Taun,” and became the all-powerful Infinity Man, who had no complications about wiping out his adversaries. This transformation came about through use of the mysterious, sentient, seemingly electronic Mother Box, which served as the teen’s protector and babysitter throughout the series. But with so much going on across four titles, Jack quickly forgot about Infinity Man, finally bringing him back for the team’s final issue.

Forever People #1 also introduced the MacGuffin of the series, the Anti-Life Equation, which Darkseid constantly sought, but never really harnessed. With it, he could control the universe with a single word. It was up to the youngsters to stop him, without ever raising a hand in violence against him and his evil minions.

So much so that Kirby didn’t even have to fill all the slots, and Jon had no problem filling all the slots, with plenty left over. That list will be expanded and included in my upcoming double-size book Old Gods & New: A Fourth World Companion, out this Fall, and serving as the 80th issue of my magazine The Jack Kirby Collector.

Finally, Mister Miracle #1 debuted, rounding out the four-title saga. We eventually come to learn that the main character, Scott Free, was an escapee from Darkseid’s regime, having been raised by an S&M octogenarian named Granny Goodness in a mockery of even our world’s worst orphanages. Soon, the breakout character Big Barda was introduced, openly championing the female empowerment of the Women’s Lib era.

After DC imposed inker Vince Colletta onto the Jack’s pencils (a move no doubt to try to lure past Thor readers with its identical art team), Kirby finally managed to get Mike Royer assigned to the job a few issues in, and that’s when the series hit its stride, both visually and creatively. There are several issues that, to me, stand out as the finest in the Fourth World’s run, and all were produced at roughly the same time:

“The Glory Boat” in New Gods #6, tackled the Generation Gap more provocatively than the Forever People ever did. The story’s really about its supporting cast of one-off characters—a father from the WWII era, and his young son, steered in the politics and pacifism of the time.

“The Pact” in New Gods #7 featured a major revelation about the main characters, and showed that, as much as Kirby created off-the-cuff, he had precisely planned out this twist in advance to further the mythos.

“The Power” in Forever People #8 finally depicted just what the Anti-Life Equation could do, and who had been unknowingly wielding it.

Jimmy Olsen #147’s “A Superman in Supertown” paid off on the promise of Superman’s longing to be among his own kind, as Kirby first foreshadowed back in Forever People #1. And picking up on the narrative in a series of short flashback sequences from previous issues, “Himor” in Mister Miracle #9 told the tale of Mister Miracle’s mentor, and Scott Free’s own escape from Apokolips.

And let’s not forget Mister Miracle’s most controversial character, Funky Flashman. This foil for the escape artist was actually a thinly disguised parody of Kirby’s former Marvel editor Stan Lee. Even the
A character's odd name has direct ties to Stan, as research in my own magazine recently uncovered. And maybe the wrong word: Funky was a viciously biting caricature of Stan—done by Kirby after he fell he had proven who the main architect of the Marvel Universe really was, by branching out on his own at DC, with what was then being hailed as the most sweeping work ever done in comics. Jack hit Stan where it hurt, from capitalizing on his penchant of taking credit for others' creativity, to making fun of Lee's toupee—effectively burning bridges with Marvel and ensuring he was stuck at DC for the duration.

Still, with his Fourth World series firing on all cylinders, what could go wrong? As this dynamic tapestry was being unfolded, surely it was fully appreciated at the time, and that's why it's heralded for its grandeur today, right?

Wrong. Just as suddenly as it appeared on the scene, the bottom seemed to drop out of the Fourth World. DC forced Kirby to include Deadman as a guest-star in Forever People #9. New Gods #9 turned away from much of the Orion/Lightray dynamic, and introduced yet another new character, Forager, in what appears to be an attempt at a spin-off. Kirby's final Jimmy Olsen ended with the characters in the Whiz Wagon, literally driving off into the sunset, as that groundbreaking title reverted back to its pre-Kirby mundaneness.

DC had big expectations for Jack and his new series. When sales results came in as good but not spectacular, despite its acclaim throughout fandom, the series was forcibly course-corrected by management, then abruptly scuttled, leaving Kirby little time to retool his final issues to offer some sort of resolution, let alone a proper ending. Forever People ceased with the characters trapped in an idyllic limbo. New Gods signed off with Orion screaming that his final battle with Darkseid would end with one of them dying—and readers given no idea if or when that battle would ever take place.

This left only Mister Miracle to continue publication. "Himon," great as it was, was hurriedly cobbled together after Kirby got the news of the Fourth World's cancellation. Jack apparently felt it was too important a story to never get told. So he juggled his plans and worked it in to the sequence, before the book devolved into a string of competent but uninspired non-Fourth World stories. The series petered out with a final issue, spotlighting the wedding of the main character to Big Barda (effectively reducing her from larger-than-life to being her new husband's "little woman"), and offering as much of an 'ending' as Kirby could muster, as he moved on to other concepts that DC felt would be more commercial.

We know now that sales figures were skewed on fan-favorite series like the Fourth World in the early 1970s, as unreported backdoor sales were being made to secondhand bookstores and dealers who were servicing the burgeoning back issue market of the day.
But all Kirby knew was his pride and joy, which he’d poured all his creative energy into, was being taken away. In many ways, he never recovered creatively from it, and never again put quite the effort into his work as he had from 1970-1972 at DC Comics. As Kirby’s DC contract came up for renewal in 1975, he chose to return to Marvel Comics—and DC chose to resurrect the New Gods on his way out the door. It was a short-lived revival, since it wasn’t spearheaded by the creative genius who started it in the first place. Kirby himself remained discontented with comics, and mostly abandoned the field in 1978 for a more lucrative career in animation, where he and his remarkable concepts would be properly appreciated. Since then, a lot of great creators, from John Byrne to Walter Simonson, have attempted to continue this unfinished magnum opus. Kirby himself got a shot at finally ending it when a more sympathetic DC Comics management team saw the value in bringing him back for the 1984 *Hunger Dogs* graphic novel and tie-in comics. But it was too little, too late. He still had dozens of stories he needed to tell in order to properly end things—much more than the pages of a single graphic novel could present. Kirby’s own creative prowess and personal connection to the characters had diminished in the previous decade. And by 1984, Darkseid and company were so entrenched in DC’s continuity and merchandising, that there was no way they would allow Jack to permanently end his epic with Darkseid’s obliteration. A couple of toy tie-in *Super Powers* series would give Kirby some much-deserved retroactive compensation for creating a cornerstone of the DC Universe, and one last opportunity to draw characters he’d never worked on, like Dr. Fate, Martian Manhunter, and even Batman. It all nicely tied mainstream DC characters into the Fourth World storyline, without offering any kind of resolution to the story Kirby set out to tell in 1971.

So after 50 years, the Fourth World’s potential remains largely untapped. Maybe that’s for the best, as the “Epic for Our Times” has proven to be timeless, fresh as the day it launched half a century ago. I’d argue that nothing DC or Marvel has published since then has been as original—even both companies’ cinematic universes have echoes of, if not outright connections to, the Fourth World and its concepts. DC is even now poised to adapt the Fourth World concepts directly in its upcoming films, with a purported New Gods movie directed by Ava DuVernay and co-written by comics scribe Tom King. And that, my friends, is perhaps the best testament to the amazing, prolific imagination of Jack Kirby, the one true King of Comics.

**John Morrow** is publisher at TwoMorrows Publishing, and editor of The *Jack Kirby Collector* magazine, which launched his company 25 years ago. TwoMorrows continues to be the premier purveyor of books and magazines about comics history, LEGO, and retro pop culture, but it all goes back to Jack Kirby. For more info, visit www.twomorrows.com
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Much has been written—a lot of it by me—about how unhappy Jack Kirby was working for Marvel Comics in the late sixties. The company was growing and thriving and its owner, Martin Goodman, had negotiated what seemed then like a huge sum to sell it to what then qualified as a kinda-massive conglomerate.

The main value of Marvel, Jack felt, flowed from the innovative and popular characters he had created or co-created and storylines he had conceived or co-conceived. Not that he’d done it all by himself but no one who knew the actual history would ever dispute the following: Not too long before, Marvel Comics was on the verge of closing down. Now, it was not only still in business but also worth a heckuva lot of dough. Both had a lot to do with the creative contributions of Mr. Jack Kirby.

Everyone agreed on that point. Everyone, that is, except the incoming owners of Marvel. None seemed to be aware (or willing to admit) that Jack was not one of those interchangeable artists. You know: The kind you hand someone else’s ideas and they draw them up as per orders. Quite the contrary, Kirby was still coming up with ideas and concepts and plots and making contributions that, had he been making them over at DC, would probably have brought him some sort of co-writing or plotting credit and pay for that work. And maybe, just maybe, a bit more financial security for himself and his family.

Jack began to feel like his stay in the world of Marvel might be coming to an end. In case it was, he decided to create a new world . . . one that came to be called The Fourth World.

Why “fourth?” No one knows. No one will probably ever know. Various folks have various theories but I was working for Jack at the time and I’m telling you: No one knows. Jack certainly didn’t. He wasn’t even sure if he’d come up with it or if someone else had. But he came up with everything else about it.

The three books that initially launched it all—The Forever People, New Gods, and Mister Miracle—began life some time in 1968 when Jack was feeling exceedingly trapped at a company that didn’t seem to appreciate him or his contributions. He needed to find a possible escape route from Marvel—and don’t think those feelings had nothing to do with the creation of Mister Miracle, the Super Escape Artist and a key player in the Fourth World yet to come.

He did up a batch of new character sketches so if he came upon someone else interested in getting into business with him, he’d have something to show them. Jack penciled the drawings, Don Heck inked most of them, and then Jack inked the rest and did the coloring on all.

The core of what would later be called the Fourth World series was a clash within a new generation of gods, the ones who would succeed Thor and his kind when there came the inevitable day of Ragnarok and the death of the old gods. Some sources have claimed that at this formative stage (1968) Jack wrote a detailed outline listing all the characters—who they were, what they would do and so forth.

This is not true. Whatever outline there was existed only in Jack’s head where there was a constant swirl of new thoughts and directions. He was the kind of storyteller who might suddenly decide, between drawing Panel 4 and Panel 5 on a page, to tell a completely different story.
Committing that story to paper was an act of constant improvisation. Even after he set it down on the final art boards, he often got what he thought was an even better idea. He was working in pencil, after all, and there are these things called erasers. He might even finish four or five beautiful pages, decide they were the wrong four or five beautiful pages and lay those aside to be replaced by four or five other beautiful pages he would then create. Jack worked very hard on this series—on every comic book he did, in fact—and I think the effort shows.

Even the inked/colored presentation drawings had no finality. There’s one of a guy in a yellow costume toting a gun and folks refer to it as an early design of Mister Miracle. It sort of was and sort of wasn’t. When Jack did that drawing, it was of a character not named Mister Miracle who was not a Super Escape Artist, not a god and not part of any continuity involving gods. There were other characters in the pile that Jack hadn’t figured would intersect at all with his “new gods” idea though some of them, like the one called the Black Racer wound up being folded into the mix.

DC Comics, in the person of its newly-installed Editorial Director Carmine Infantino, wanted the new ideas and the guy who had them. When Jack finally gave up trying to get Marvel to appreciate him, he agreed to move to DC to do the new concepts and others to be named later.

He said yes the last week of January, 1970. A week or two later, he hired two kids—my friend Steve Sherman and his friend, me—to act as assistants and to keep for a time, the biggest secret ever in the comic book industry. In March, Stan Lee and the world found out . . . and Jack set to work on new books of new gods.

Steve and I watched, contributing next-to-nothing, as it took shape. Every weekend when we visited the home of Jack and his
inspired by Jack's own feelings of imprisonment at Marvel and else-
a previous career of writer-artist Jim Steranko, but the subtext was
name and function.

out. Or sometimes, last week's piece was in a new position with a new
wonderful wife Roz, another piece of the puzzle had been figured
highly-estranged father.

Orion he preferred to be . . . things that supplied his connection to his
inhuman one who sometimes did things to survive that horrified the
stood high on moral principles and decency. And then there was the
character as well, his two faces representing the way he often felt
back in 1968. There was a lot of Jack in
book field, as well.

taking its rightful place . . . and not just in the country but the comic
was all about a topic
Forever People

Kirby
self-portrait from
History Since
134.

The guy in the yellow suit with the gun was now the unarmed
of the conventions but he has missed Jack Kirby a lot since 1994 when we
first-ever multi-day comic book convention in San Diego, the institution
Mark Evanier
gone to work for Jack Kirby in 1970 and also attended the
Fourth World characters continue to appear in new stories by the top talent
in the comic book field and the old stories, the ones Jack did that were
not-entirely-satisfying closure to his interrupted epic. The Fourth
world-wide release brought him back to resurrect the
Fourth World in connection with some of the characters becoming
toys and appearing on television . . . you know, that thing that previ-
ous readings. It's always some new spark of brilliance and it always
back to Marvel and began working his way out of a comic book indus-
that really wasn't offering him a good place to be.

Another thing is the shelf in my office of all those fancy, expensive,
new-concepts or Kirby's way of writing dialogue. Others would say

then and the folks in the licensing division had decreed—I heard one
of them say this myself—that there was zero chance of any of Jack's
new concepts or Kirby's way of writing dialogue. Others would say

Jack did a new graphic novel, The Hunger Dogs, to bring a brief,
not-entirely-satisfying closure to his interrupted epic. The Fourth
World characters continue to appear in new stories by the top talent
in the comic book field and the old stories, the ones Jack did that were
called sales flops when he did them, are reprinted and reprinted and
reprinted and reprinted. More TV and movie appearances boom ahead.

I loved Jack Kirby and I loved his work and I cannot even begin to
drawings. Darseid would become one of DC's key villains.

The three comics—Forever People, New Gods (which featured
Orion), and Mister Miracle—were ever-so-slightly unveiled at the first
comic book convention in San Diego in August of 1970. The following
December, they began coming out on a bi-monthly basis. Jack had
fought for monthly (yes, he was fast enough to produce all three) but
had lost that battle.

Early sales were good but they were not the Marvel-destroying
smash hits which some there had expected. What Jack had been
trying to do with it all was to invent the comic book mini-series and
create something that could be kept in print forever.

DC said they liked that idea but they really didn't. Some there
didn't like the Kirby style (or anything that looked like it was done by
their competitor) at all. They thought conventionally at that company
then and the folks in the licensing division had decreed—I heard one
of them say this myself—that there was zero chance of any of Jack's
new characters winding up as toys or games . . . and especially on TV
or movies, which is where the money was then in comics.

Soon, Jack's books were selling no better than most of the failing
DC line. Some would tell you that there was just no market for Kirby's
new concepts or Kirby's way of writing dialogue. Others would say

that DC was an unhealthy company that didn't know how to sell a new
comic and gave up on most of them too quickly. Take your pick. You
can guess where I stand on this one.

After two years, the comics were "suspended" which, then as
now, meant "canceled." Jack did other things, frustrated that he was
stopped when he was maybe ten chapters into a novel of perhaps two
days. When he was angling to leave DC in 1975, he was offered
a resumption of the Fourth World books if he'd stay. He passed, went
back to Marvel and began working his way out of a comic book indus-
try that really wasn't offering him a good place to be.

Later, newer DC management brought him back to resurrect the
Fourth World in connection with some of the characters becoming
toys and appearing on television . . . you know, that thing that previ-
ous folks in the licensing division had said would never in a million years happen. As I'm typing this, I'm being watched by a Darseid
action figure.

Jack did a new graphic novel, The Hunger Dogs, to bring a brief,
not-entirely-satisfying closure to his interrupted epic. The Fourth
World characters continue to appear in new stories by the top talent
in the comic book field and the old stories, the ones Jack did that were
called sales flops when he did them, are reprinted and reprinted and
reprinted and reprinted. More TV and movie appearances boom ahead.

I loved Jack Kirby and I loved his work and I cannot even begin to
separate the two loves. I reread the series, start to finish, every year or
two and every single time, I see things that weren't there in previ-
ous readings. It's always some new spark of brilliance and it always
reminds me of Jack.

Another thing is the shelf in my office of all those fancy, expensive,
hardcover reprints of the Fourth World. When they yanked the rug out
from under his feet and aborted the series, Jack said, "Those books will

try that really wasn't offering him a good place to be.

Mark Evanier went to work for Jack Kirby in 1970 and also attended the
first-ever multi-day comic book convention in San Diego, the institution
that is now known as Comic-Con International. He has never missed one
of the conventions but he has missed Jack Kirby a lot since 1994 when we
lost him.
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Ronald Edward Turner was just trying to help out. It was New Year’s Eve 1968, when the “very stoned on Panama Red” San Francisco State University grad student was, for the first time in his existence, handed an underground comic book—as he later described it, “a real ‘head’ comic”—and that absorbing read of *ZAP Comix* simply blew Ron Turner’s mind. R. Crumb’s funny-book work transported his consciousness into a state well beyond any effect from reefer, and it also changed his life, though that metamorphosis would begin some months later.

While finishing his experimental psychology master’s degree, Turner joined campus protests against the Vietnam War and the self-described “radical, anti-war person” became immersed in campus politics. At the same time, he also rekindled an early love of EC Comics when he strolled into the San Francisco Comic Book Company, in the city’s Mission District. Gary Arlington’s pioneering establishment was epicenter of the burgeoning underground comix scene.

Soon enough, to raise funds for the Berkeley Ecology Center, 29-year-old Turner spearheaded a project to, in his words, “make a political propaganda book about ecology and sell it and let the money flow,” and so the debut issue of *Slow Death* was produced. Financed by a loan from some friendly “nerd” drug dealers, *Slow Death Funnies* #1 included EC-inspired horror stories with ecological themes by comix stalwarts. Among those talents was Greg Irons, the title’s quintessential artist, whose gloriously macabre work graced nine of the 11 published issues, the last in 1992, seven years after Irons’ demise. Also in #1 were efforts by the two most successful of all underground cartoonists, Crumb and Gilbert Shelton. That first Last Gasp title was released on the inaugural Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

Ironically, though that event launched a venture that today celebrates five decades in business, Turner had little interest in creating anything permanent at that time. “The first *Slow Death* we did was going to be a one-shot,” he confided. “I had no intention of doing another one and I was going to turn it over to the Berkeley Ecology Center, walk away, and do something else.” Though the environmental group green-lighted the project, the Center’s leadership had changed in the intervening months and they ended up accepting only 10 copies of the 20,000-issue run. Still, while surviving on unemployment benefits, an undeterred Turner decided to give this new underground comix biz a go.

(Initially, Turner wasn’t quite sure what to call the imprint or, for that matter, the comic book itself. But, with help from fellow EC “fan-addict” Arlington, the neophyte comix mogul determined it was a toss-up between “Slow Death” and “Last Gasp Eco-Funnies.”)

Popular enough to get a second printing, *Slow Death* #1 was noticed by the underground community and soon Turner was approached to publish other titles, including the first all-woman comix anthology, Trina Robbins’ *It Ain’t Me, Babe*, as well as other horror genre efforts, including *Skull*, and so was initiated the Last Gasp Eco-Funnies Company as a continuing business. (Early on, the work of masterful horror artist Richard Corben was notably introduced to a wide audience in Last Gasp’s *Slow Death*, *Skull*, and *Fantagor*.) But,
hardly a year after being formed, the nascent outfit narrowly escaped the wrath of a cultural behemoth as the Walt Disney Company set a swarm of lawyers upon a hapless band of cartoon-parodists over a Last Gasp-published title.

“At the time,” Turner explained, “we had the success of Slow Death, It Ain’t Me, Babe, and Skullduggery, and I started expanding and business was increasing . . . At a certain point, [S.F. cartoonist] Gary Panter said, ‘I have this idea about doing an anti-Disney comic book’ . . . So this idea of going after Disney, I thought, was a pretty good idea, and I said, ‘I’ll publish this, but under one condition: you can’t say who published it’.” The resulting two editions of Air Pirates, with covers sporting faux “Hell Comics” logos and insides filled with adult-themed stories starring undisguised versions of Mickey Mouse and crew (properties the contributing cartoonists determined were in the public domain and hence available to all), suffered the ire of the House of the Mouse as litigation stretched on for years. Eventually, Turner was ratted out as publisher and forced to settle, while the careers of some defendants were effectively quashed.

In 1972, Turner became patron to a brilliant cartoonist whose stories were certainly there, and that came through . . . Theirs was a time when much of comix distribution was piggybacked upon sales of bongs, cigarette papers, and other drug-related items. When, by mid-decade, anti-paraphernalia laws proliferated throughout the nation, local crackdowns on head shops resulted in the near collapse of the trade. Then, Turner related, vinyl record stores became outlets to sell comix, yet soon enough, many were also routinely busted for selling items such as rolling papers and pipe screens, and, as wary storeowners stopped buying comix, sales plummeted. The field was suddenly in crisis, as numerous underground publishers called it quits, leaving a mere handful of companies to carry on.

According to Turner, at a peak in the early ‘70s, there were some 50-60,000 head shops selling underground comic books in this country, an era when much of comix distribution was piggybacked upon sales of bongs, cigarette papers, and other drug-related items. When, by mid-decade, anti-paraphernalia laws proliferated throughout the nation, local crackdowns on head shops resulted in the near collapse of the trade. Then, Turner related, vinyl record stores became outlets to sell comix, yet soon enough, many were also routinely busted for selling items such as rolling papers and pipe screens, and, as wary storeowners stopped buying comix, sales plummeted. The field was suddenly in crisis, as numerous underground publishers called it quits, leaving a mere handful of companies to carry on.

The national “stagflation” economic downturn of the mid-’70s also added to underground industry woes. Explained Turner, “All of
a sudden, nobody had any disposable money. Thus our business dropped in 1974, by going down 80% in just a few months. It was amazing. Almost everything just about died then.” Sometime around then, Last Gasp left Berkeley and moved operations to a San Francisco warehouse.

Turner also made a big change in his personal life by beginning a romance with Carol Stevenson and their relationship eventually led to the pair’s greatest creations: children Colin (born Feb. 1976) and Claire (born Dec. 1988). The couple finally made it official, on Jan. 15, 2008, when they were joined in legal matrimony at a San Francisco City Hall ceremony, officiated by then-mayor Gavin Newsom. “I wanted to get married before my kids did," Turner quipped.

In 1975, Turner went into a partnership with George DiCaprio, comix writer-editor (and father of movie star Leonardo DiCaprio), to produce certain titles, and they dubbed their association Yentzer & Gonif (Yiddish for “scumbag and thief”). Together, they gradually produced books on a regular basis, initially with respective efforts about punk music, pot horticulture, and pop life was lost due to illness in 1988. (In the ’90s, the outfit even boasted its own titular five-issue anthology, Last Gasp Comix & Stories.)

A permanent category in Last Gasp’s catalog has long been explicit sex comics. “We were doing Cherry-Poptart (though that went away to Kitchen Sink),” Turner said, “and, once the internet got going, we did Horny Biker Sluts and a series called She-Male Trouble, and these were pretty hardcore stuff. That was the intent.” He then described company philosophy regarding explicit publications: “I always felt we should be very sincere about the material we offered. If you wanted hardcore sex, okay, here's some hardcore sex!” Between the ’90s and ’00s, Last Gasp translated full-color French sadomasochistic “albums,” which became mainstream listings. Starting in 1989, Last Gasp teamed with Knockabout

Exposure in the bookstore market was one way to keep Last Gasp afloat during lean years, and as popular alternative books like How to Keep Your Volkswagen Alive and The Whole Earth Catalog raked up retail success, so did the fortunes of their distributor, Bookpeople. Early on, that Berkeley employee-owned group added Last Gasp’s wares to its catalog, thus helping the publisher to find a wider audience. “They were the first to carry underground comix as a legitimate item to sell in bookstores,” Turner said. “It was a breakthrough for us to be carried by them.”

In the earliest years, Last Gasp did occasionally publish its own books (including, to name three, The Breather’s Guide to Invisible Air Pollution [1970], The Kids Liberation Coloring Book [1971], and 1975’s Anthology of Slow Death, the latter co-produced by Bookpeople’s Wingbow Press). “We mostly were focusing on comics,” Turner related. “But we were kept being asked by the odd places we sold to, like head shops, who wanted to know if we had any books on marijuana growing or drugs, and comic shops wanted to know if we had any comics trade paperback collections.” Then, by the late ’70s, the publisher gradually produced books on a regular basis, initially with

Which was a mistake, as that was a lot of books!” Turner remained especially proud of publishing comix about the marginalized and oppressed for instance, Carl Vaughn Frick’s gay comics title, Watch Out (March 1986), the AIDS benefit anthology edited by Trina Robbins, Strips AIDS U.S.A. [1988], and Jaxon’s painstakingly authentic histories of Native Americans, White Comanche and Red Raider (both 1977). Of his efforts, the publisher said, "All these people from around the world got the sh-tty end of the stick and you gotta try and break that stick in two”

A huge perennial seller for any publisher holding the rights was the quintessential underground comic book, ZAP, and in 1980, Last Gasp—previously merely a distributor of the publication—signed an agreement with the ZAP collective to become the title’s publisher, thereafter a significant money-maker for the company. “We went from working on distributor margins to publisher margins,” Turner said, “so there was more money to be made, percentage-wise … and, for me personally, it was a big deal.” Last Gasp was the legendary title’s official publisher for the next 25 years. Turner would subsequently formulate individual book agreements with ZAP alumni R. Crumb and Robert Williams.

For a time, Bill Griffith’s Zippy the Pinhead collections, calendars, and such were Last Gasp staples and, besides periodic Zippy compilations, the company briefly slowed production of comix titles. But importantly, in 1981, Turner did handle Crumb’s Weirdo, the irreverent humor comics anthology published through the ’80s, and its pages were refuge for a new generation of “alternative” cartoonists during the otherwise moribund Reagan years. And by mid-decade, truth to tell, the company restarted its steady flow of comix publishing, significantly the brilliant autobiographical efforts by one-time Last Gasp accountant Dori Seda, whose young life was lost due to illness in 1988. (In the ’90s, the outfit even

...
Press, the British underground comix publishing and distribution company run by Tony Bennett, a U.K. anti-censorship champion, as each handled the other's books on their respective sides of the Atlantic. One Last Gasp import, Crumb's *My Troubles with Women*, was held up by British customs when an inspector was offended by three panels—out of some 760, by one count—which depicted acts of oral sex. The resulting obscenity trial was ruled in favor of Knockabout.

For Last Gasp, the 1990s also brought a shift to publishing art books in the pop surrealist/lowbrow art category, exemplified by the work of Robert Williams, Todd Schorr, Mark Ryden, Ron English, and others. In part, this new focus resulted from an association with Los Angeles “culture purveyor” Billy Shire, an art gallery owner in need of book-length catalogs to be created for exhibitions and sold in his trendsetting La Luz de Jesus art showcase. Thereafter Turner expanded to like subjects, publishing books devoted to tattoo art, California pop culture, “kustom culture,” and similar topics, many of which the publisher still spotlights to this day.

(In 2004, Last Gasp published *Harold’s End*, a novella purportedly based on the “real-life” experience of JT Leroy, a former San Francisco heroin-addicted street hustler who began his trade by being pimped out as a boy by his own mother. Notoriously, Leroy was thereafter revealed to be a fictitious construct of writer Laura Albert.)

Notably, since the '00s, Last Gasp was the American publisher of a newly translated *Barefoot Gen*, the multi-volume manga saga of a Japanese boy and his family's ordeal through the Hiroshima atomic bombing and aftermath. Into its line-up, the publisher also offered Tintin albums and books devoted to cartoonist-author Hergé and his renowned Belgian adventure comics.

From the 1970s to mid-2010s—celebrating some 44 holiday seasons—Turner hosted a renowned San Francisco event held at their warehouse, Last Gasp’s annual “Burritos, Beer & Cheer” soirée. “It was basically a Christmas party,” he said, “when everybody came down, drank some beers, smoked some joints, and that got to become a big thing, and eventually we used it as a fund-raising event for the local soup kitchen,” the St. Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, with beverages donated by area wineries and brewers.

Today, control of the company is in the hands of son Colin, who presides over a streamlined publishing schedule. Shed of its distributing arm, Last Gasp singularly focuses on its prescribed founding mission: to publish books (and today the occasional comic book) dedicated to honoring the business’s registered trademark tagline as coined by “Ronzo”: Mind Candy for the Masses.

The father mused over how it felt to be the lone survivor, last of the original underground comix publishers still in business. “Back in my football days,” Turner said, “I played both offense and defense, so I never got a rest, and I don’t mind being the last one standing … but the reality is that my son, Colin, has taken the reins and he’s the one standing.”

Though today the man has slowed some and stands with the aid of a cane, “Baba Ron” Turner, the charming, unrepentant hippie and grandfather, remains as sharp and avuncular as ever while nearing his 80th birthday. Nowadays, he’s happy to boast that, over the preceding five decades, Last Gasp published 770 books (plus hundreds of other items) and his company has yet to miss payroll for any pay period, has honored all royalty payments, and has never stiffed a printer.

Asked how he accounts for the endurance of Last Gasp in its first half-century, Turner chuckles and offers a mere two words: “Dumb luck.”

**Jon B. Cooke** is the five-time Eisner Award-winning editor of *Comic Book Artist* magazine [1998–2005]; writer and co-producer of the full-length feature film documentary, *Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist* [2007]; and currently is editor of *Comic Book Creator* magazine, published by TwoMorrows. In 2019, his comprehensive history of R. Crumb’s humor comics anthology, *The Book of Weirdo*, was published by Last Gasp, and he recently compiled a trade paperback collection of cautionary environmental horror stories, *Slow Death Zero*, for the same publisher. Jon is now hard at work on *Mind Candy for the Masses: 50 Years of Last Gasp Publishing*, a retrospective of Ron Turner’s innovative company. He lives in rural Rhode Island with his wife, Beth; two dogs, Roxy and Dilly; and a cat named Noodle—and eldest son Benjamin for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.
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A few of our favorite memories from the last year

We will see you in-person next year for the Museum's Grand Opening!

**The Time We Had Nearly 10,000 Visitors During December Nights**

We had the privilege to work with a number of amazing groups for last year’s December Nights. Their donation of time and resources allowed visitors to explore their own creativity at make and take stations like the one designed by Cardboard Superheroes, meet well-known artists like Shag or to sit back and relax while enjoying classic holiday films.

**The Time We Inducted Batman into the Comic-Con Museum Character Hall of Fame**

2019 was a momentous year as we inducted Batman as the very first honoree into the Comic-Con Museum Character Hall of Fame. Celebrating the Dark Knight’s impact on pop culture and fans over the last 80 years was really special. We are looking forward to seeing which characters are honored next!

**The Time We Activated All 68,000 Square Feet of the Museum**

We were completely overjoyed last year as we witnessed more than 20,000 visitors access the Comic-Con Museum for free. It gave us goosebumps to see firsthand what this place will be like when we officially open in 2021.

**The Time We Showcased Our First Feature Artist, Shag**

Last year, we had the opportunity to work with Josh Agle (aka Shag) to create an exhibit featuring a retrospective of his career. As if that weren’t cool enough, Shag also produced a limited-edition print made exclusively for the Museum. Through sales of the print, we have raised over $10,000 in support of the Museum. Thank you Shag and The Shag Store!

**The Time Jen Bartel Visited Our “Sense of Wonder” Exhibit**

Before the pandemic hit, we were incredibly fortunate to have artist Jen Bartel join us for the exhibit opening of “Sense of Wonder: The Art of WonderCon Anaheim,” curated by our own Gary Sassaman. That night, we also debuted the WonderCon Anaheim 2020 Program Book cover created by Jen and got to learn direct from her about the creation of this truly beautiful piece of art.

**The Time We Made Some New Four-Legged Friends**

In collaboration with The Helen Woodward Animal Center, we co-hosted the 7th Annual PAWmicon and helped to raise $43,000 in support of orphan animals. While being a great cause, it’s also THE cutest event. Guests experienced pet cosplay contests, themed photo opportunities, music, games, food, and more.

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THE TIME WE SCREENED THE FIRST EPISODE OF PICARD

We were fortunate to work with CBS All Access to host an exclusive screening of Picard Episode One at the Comic-Con Museum. And as if that wasn’t cool enough, CBS brought down original props and costumes from the show, which we displayed in a pop-up exhibit right outside the theater. The first of many premieres!

THE TIME WE CAME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Tough does not even begin to describe the reality we all face in 2020. But one thing these unprecedented times have made clear is the importance of connectedness. Whether that is to one another, to our values, to our communities, to learning, to growth, the power of connectivity is transformative. In this time, the Comic-Con Museum has been doing its best to connect with its community and provide resources that help us learn something new while infusing a little bit of joy. And we’re just getting started.

ALL OF THE TIMES OUR SUPPORTERS WERE AMAZING!

The saying, “It takes a village” comes to mind when we think back on this last year and the incredible support our Charter Members, donors, and volunteers provided in helping make all of the events, programs and exhibits we planned a reality. We couldn’t be more grateful!
In 2019, Batman became the first inductee into the Comic-Con Museum’s Character Hall of Fame. A gala ceremony was held on Wednesday, July 17, and the Museum was turned into a massive three-level salute to the Caped Crusader, featuring all things Batman from across all media, including comics, movies and TV (featuring actual Batmobiles!), video games, statues, displays, and much, much more. DC’s publisher and chief creative officer, Jim Lee, helped induct Batman into the Character Hall of Fame ... here’s an excerpt from his speech from that memorable (not-so-dark) night.

“Batman is very much real. The core of Batman, the qualities that made him endure from generation to generation is as true to life as it gets. Batman is an inspiration that makes us believe that it’s possible to take any hardship and forge it into something good. Batman is real in every person who summons the strength and resilience to keep going, and that my friends is a superpower. ”
Why Batman to Lead Off the Character Hall of Fame at the Comic-Con Museum?

Because the Museum is dedicated to Popular Culture, and no other fictional character has dominated American popular culture three times... from the 1966 launch of the Batman television series starring Adam West, to the 1989 bat-signal madness that accompanied the year’s top-grossing film, Tim Burton’s *Batman*, to the dark vision that was Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight* in 2008.

Because the Museum has a special place in its heart for comics, and Batman is one of the rare comic characters who has been continuously published since his debut in 1939.

Because the Museum will be a center for the study of popular culture, and Batman is unique among the great fictional characters in his protean ability to be depicted in so many different tones and styles. Where most of our enduring myths and folk tales are frozen in the look of a model sheet for decades, Batman has proved capable of great levels of interpretation, a subject deserving of further study.

Oh, and because the launch event was a pretty amazing evening, from the Batmobiles gathered in numbers that wouldn’t even fit in Bruce Wayne’s garage, to the celebrities and creators who have been part of Batman’s career and came to toast his induction. What fun was had.

When Batman first appeared in *Detective Comics #27*, back in 1939, his creators had no dreams that there could be a Comic-Con, a Comic-Con Museum, or a Character Hall of Fame that their hero could enter. Artist Bob Kane and his ghost writer, Bill Finger, were doing a short, six-page tale to cash in on the masked adventurer craze created by Superman’s phenomenal debut the year before. Dozens of other heroes were born the same way, and virtually all of them fell by the wayside in a few short years. But Batman triumphed not only over the villains of Gotham City, but over the hearts and imagination of his readers.

And besides his readers’ imaginations, something about the iconic bat-silhouette attracted the most talented and imaginative creators ever to work on a single character in comics. Many of the great characters are associated forever with a single genius: think *Peanuts* and Charles Schultz. A few have passed through the hands of several great talents: consider the great successors to Stan Lee and Jack Kirby on *Fantastic Four*. But none have had as diverse a set of brilliant stylists stretch the limits of what was done before with Batman: Jerry Robinson, Dick Sprang, Curt Swan, Julie Schwartz, John Broome, Gardner Fox, Carmine Infantino, Denny O’Neil, Neal Adams, Dick Giordano, Gil Kane, Mike Kaluta, Jim Aparo, Nick Cardy, Archie Goodwin, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Gene Colan, Frank Miller, Walt Simonson, Jim Starlin... and that’s only the people in the Will Eisner Hall of Fame who made long contributions to his canon.

Batman earned his place at the head of the line. Besides, who would want to argue with him?

Paul Levitz
Writer, editor, publisher, DC Comics • 2020
My friend and mentor, Jerry Robinson, used to tell me the story of how he and Bill Finger had a bet going with Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster as to whose character would wind up lasting longer. Jerry doubled down on The Batman. He figured that Superman's powers were so fantastic, and that the boys couldn't keep coming up with threats that were large enough, and therefore Supes would be the first one to fade. It was a continuation of that thinking that led Jerry to come up with the idea of The Joker — giving The Batman a bigger, more colorful, larger-than-life threat. As Jerry and Bill began to talk about developing this new “super” villain, they were prepared to take the great comic strip villains of Dick Tracy and Terry and the Pirates to the next level. And The Batman would never be the same. Superheroes would never be the same. The world would never be the same. And eventually, Hollywood would never be the same.

As another of my great friends and mentors, Stan Lee, often said to me, “The longest lasting and most popular superheroes are the ones with the greatest supervillains because, ultimately, it is the supervillains who define the heroes.” Simply stated, The Batman has had the greatest supervillains in the history of comicbookdom and, inarguably, the greatest comic book supervillain in history. In fact, I will go one step beyond that . . . he has had one of the three greatest villains in the history of CINEMA, among The Wicked Witch of the West, Darth Vader, and The Joker.

The 1989 Batman movie was revolutionary on many levels. It was the first true dark and serious comic book superhero movie. It changed the world’s perception of superheroes, supervillains, and comic books themselves, as it was embraced worldwide across borders and cultures by adults who had never read a comic book in their lives. Comic books and superheroes were no longer considered kiddie fare. The credit for that must go to director, Tim Burton, who had what I call “The Big Idea.” The Big Idea was that if we were to make the world’s first ever dark and serious comic book superhero movie, this film could NOT be about Batman. It had to be about Bruce Wayne. And that has made all the difference. Think of it . . . shouldn’t Marvel’s movie titled Iron Man actually, truly be titled Tony Stark? . . . And those Spider-Man movies should clearly be titled Peter Parker. The portals were opened by Tim’s Big Idea which still impacts and influences genre movies to this very day.

I believe there have been six geniuses to have spearheaded Batman-related movie projects that changed what a comic book movie could be, how a comic book movie could be made, and the world’s perception of superheroes and supervillains.

For the 1989 Batman movie, it was Tim Burton and our Oscar-winning production designer, my friend, Anton Furst, who designed Gotham City, the Batmobile, and the whole look of that ground-breaking picture.

Then it was the genius Christopher Nolan who not only restored the darkness and dignity to Batman, but elevated it as an artform. When you walked out of any one of his Dark Knight trilogy films, you no longer were limited to say, “That was a great comic book movie!” Now you could say legitimately, “That was a great film!”

“Genius” is also the best term I can use to describe Phil Lord and Chris Miller, the creators of The Lego Movie and one of the great interpretations of Batman in which audiences globally laughed WITH Batman not AT Batman. These, of course, are the same Phil Lord and Chris Miller who would go on to create the animated feature film into the Spider-Verse; another work at genius level.

Finally, there is the genius of Todd Phillips, director and co-writer of Joker, a movie that once again redefined how a comic book movie can be made, and even redefined and defined the definition of “What is a comic book movie?”

Co-creator of The Batman and The Joker, Bill Finger, never lived long enough to see a media interpretation of his Joker past Cesar Romero. Jerry Robinson, the co-creator of The Joker, lived long enough to see the performance of a lifetime by Heath Ledger in The Dark Knight. Jerry fully embraced that interpretation and fully supported a filmmaker taking his character to bold and daring new and different levels. I can only imagine how Jerry and Bill would have embraced the performance of Joaquin Phoenix as Joker under the direction of Todd Phillips!

What has the extraordinary success of Batman on the big screen over the decades meant to pop culture and the world culture? What has been the grand impact of Batman-related movies, three times now re-inventing what a comic book movie could be and how superheroes and supervillains are perceived by the world? The answers came one year ago with the inauguration of The Character Hall of Fame on the site of the amazing, upcoming Comic Con Museum in San Diego. The first comic book character inducted into its new Hall of Fame was not Superman, but rather The Batman. When I was growing up, that would have been inconceivable! Impossible! Earth-shattering! But in its own unique way, at least to me, it has meant that Jerry and Bill won their bet with Jerry and Joe!

Michael Uslan
Originator and Executive Producer of the Batman movie franchise • 2020

Winner Twins Booth 1601
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@WinnerTwins

Panel - How to Create Your Own Novel: From First Idea to Publishing and What You Need to Sell Your Work Into TV and Film. Youtube Sunday, 07/26/20, 3:00 PM - https://linktr.ee/winnerwins

*Children’s steampunk fantasy

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2020 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards

Nominations

BETTER SHORT STORY
“Hot Comb,” by Ebony Florence, in Hot Comb (Drawn & Quarterly)

“Hey to Draw a Woman,” by Emuna Huang, in The New Yorker

“The Menopause,” by Mia Jacobs, in The Believer

“The Guy Who Calls You ‘Mother’” by Miriam Lobb, in The Lyrical

“The Myth” by Deirdre Hazlett, in The New Yorker

THE BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM

“Snow, Glass, Apples,” by Mariko Tamaki and Rosemary Valero-O’Connell, designed by Jamie renning (DC)

“Coda,” by Chip Zdarsky, designed by Todd Nauck (Marvel)

“The Dreaming,” by Mike Carey, designed by Andrew Robinson (Marvel)

“Batman: The Long Road Home,” by Brian Azzarello, designed by Raul Fernandez (DC)

“Beastars,” by Paru Itagaki, designed by Kazuto Nakamura (Viz Media)

“Mink,” by Jiro Taniguchi, designed by Koji Sawai (Viz Media)

“Kabaneri of the Iron Fortress,” by Daisuke Sato, designed by Shinya Takesue (Lionsgate)

“Beasts of Burden: The Punishment,” by Stjepan Sejic, designed by James Momjian (Image)
# 2019 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Recipients

## Best Short Story
- **"The Talk of the Saints"** by Tom King and Jason Fabok, in *Swamp Thing* Winter Special (DC)

## Best Single Issue/One-Shot
- **Peter Parker: The Spectacular Spider-Man #310**, by Chip Zdarsky (Marvel)

## Best Continuing Series
- **Giant Days**, by John Allison, Max Sarin, and Julia Madrigal (BOOM! Box)

## Best Limited Series
- **Mr. Beetle**, by Tom King and Mitch Gerads (DC)

## Best New Series
- **Gideon Falls**, by Jeff Lemire and Andrea Sorrentino (Image)

## Best Publication for Early Readers (Up to Age 8)
- **Johnny Boo and the Ice Cream Computer**, by James Kochalka (Top Shelf/IDW)

## Best Publication for Kids (Ages 9–12)
- **The Divided Earth**, by Faith Erin Hicks (First Second)

## Best Publication for Teens (Ages 13–17)
- **The Prince and the Dressmaker**, by Jen Wang (First Second)

## Best Humor Publication
- **Giant Days**, by John Allison, Max Sarin, and Julia Madrigal (BOOM! Box)

## Best Anthology
- **Puerto Rico Strong**, edited by Marco Lopez, Desiree Rodriguez, Hazel Newlevant, Derek Ruiz, and Neil Schwartz (Lion Forge)

## Best Reality-Based Work
- **Is This Guy For Real? The Unbelievable Andy Kaufman**, by Box Brown (First Second)

## Best Graphic Album—New
- **My Heroes Have Always Been Jerks**, edited byéd by Stull and Paper Phillips (Image)

## Best Graphic Album—Reprint
- **Star Wars: Classic Newspaper Strips, vol. 3**, by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson, edited by Dean Mullaney (Library of American Comics/IDW)

## Best Writer
- **Tom King**, *Batman*, *Mister Miracle*, *Heroes in Crisis*, *Swamp Thing* Winter Special (DC)

## Best Writer/Artist
- **Jen Wang**, *The Prince and the Dressmaker* (First Second)

## Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team
- **Mitch Gerads**, *Mister Miracle* (DC)

## Best Painter/Multimedia Artist (Interior Art)
- **Dustin Nguyen**, *Descender* (Image)

## Best Cover Artist (for Multiple Covers)
- **Jen Bartel**, *Blackbird* (Image); *Submerged* (Vault)

## Best Coloring
- **Matt Wilson**, *Black Cloud*, *Paper Girls*, *The Wicked + The Divine* (Image); *The Mighty Thor*, *Runaways* (Marvel)

## Best Lettering
- **Todd Klein**, *Black Hammer: Age of Doom*, *Neil Gaiman’s A Study in Emerald* (Dark Horse); *Batman: White Knight* (DC); *Books of Magic*, *Wonder Girl* (Vertigo/DC); *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Tempest* (Top Shelf/KRM)

## Best Comics-Related Periodical/Journalism (Tie)
- **Back Issue**, edited by Michael Bury (TheHermans)
- **PanelxPanel magazine**, edited by Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou, panelxpanel.com

## Best Comics-Related Book
- **Drawn to Purpose: American Women Illustrators and Cartoonists**, by Martha H. Kennedy (University Press of Mississippi)

## Best Academic/Scholarly Work
- **Sweet Little C*nt: The Graphic Work of Julie Doucet**, by Anne Elizabeth Moore (Uncivilized Books)

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Jim Aparo was born in 1932 and began working at Charlton Comics in the late 1960s. He worked on several genres there and was eventually recruited by editor Dick Giordano for a move to DC Comics in the late 1960s, where he handled such features as Aquaman and Phantom Stranger before landing the art chores on DC’s premiere team-up book The Brave and the Bold (starring Batman). He then co-created (with Mike W. Barr) Batman and the Outsiders, which he drew from 1983 to 1985. Aparo went on to draw stories for Batman (most notably “A Death in the Family” storyline), Detective, and other DC titles into the late 1990s. For most of his career, Aparo not only pencilled his work but lettered it as well.

Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez was born in Spain and began drawing comics professionally in Argentina at age 13. In the 1960s he drew romance titles for Charlton Comics. In 1974 he came to the U.S. and started working for DC, drawing such series as Superman, Batman, Hawkman, Tarzan, and Jonah Hex. His other notable work includes Atari Force, Deadman, New Teen Titans, and On the Road to Perdition. Since 1982, Garcia-Lopez has designed and pencilled the definitive versions of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and many other characters for various DC Comics style guides, which are created for licensees only. His style guide art has been seen on countless DC Comics licensed products and is still being used today.

Jenette Kahn rebranded National Periodical Publications as DC Comics, reviving the floundering company and turning it into a major player in the industry. She started as publisher at DC in 1976, at only 28 years old, after having founded the kids’ magazine Dynamic for Scholastic. She became president of DC in 1981 and editor-in-chief in 1989. Kahn pushed the boundaries of mainstream comics, publishing work such as Watchmen and The Dark Knight Returns, and launched the edgy Vertigo line in 1993. She grew the company from 35 employees to 200 and instituted more creator-friendly policies. In 2000 the Library of Congress honored Kahn as a Living Legend for her contributions to America’s cultural heritage. In 2002 she left DC to create her own film production company, Double Nickel, which produced Clint Eastwood’s Gran Torino in 2008.

Paul Levitz began his career as a comics fan, publishing The Comic Reader. He started at DC in 1976 as an assistant editor (to Joe Orlando) and in 1978 became editor of the Batman titles. He was an executive at DC for 30 years, ending as publisher and president. As a comics writer, he is best known for Legion of Super-Heroes. Most recently, Levitz has worked as a historian (75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Myth-Making: Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel) and teacher (including the American Graphic Style guide art has been seen on countless DC Comics licensed products and is still being used today.

Dave Stevens created the Rocketeer, the retro adventure hero of 1980s indie comics and 1991 movie fame. The Rocketeer combined Stevens’ love of 1930s movies, the golden age of aviation, and 1950s pin-up girl Bettie Page. Before becoming a professional artist, Stevens contributed amateur illustrations to Comic-Con program books in the 1970s. His first professional gig was as Russ Manning’s assistant on the Tarzan comic strip in 1975. Stevens later worked as an animator at Hanna-Barbera and as a storyboard artist on projects including Raiders of the Lost Ark and Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” music video. Stevens was the first recipient of the Russ Manning Promising Newcomer Award in 1982, and he won an Inkpot Award and the Kirby Award for Best Graphic Album in 1986.

Morrie Turner introduced the Wee Pals comic strip in 1965. When Wee Pals was first created, bringing black characters to the comic books was by no means an easy task. At first, only five major newspapers published the strip. It was not until 1968 and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. that Wee Pals achieved nationwide acceptance. Within three months of Dr. King’s death, Wee Pals was appearing in more than 100 newspapers nationwide. In 2012 Turner was the recipient of Comic-Con’s Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award. He also had the distinction of having been one of the handful of pros at the very first Comic-Con in 1970.
2019 Awards

WENDY ALL • Artist
Comicon volunteer in the 1970s

CHARLES BROWNSTEIN • Nonprofit Organizer
Executive Director, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

LEIGH BARDUGO • Fantasy Author
Shadow and Bone trilogy, The Language of Thorns

DAVID CLARK • SF Aficionado
Comic-Con founding committee member

JON B. COOKE • Editor/Author
Comic Book Creator, The Book of Wardo

WILLIAM CURTIS • Volunteer
Comic-Con Dual and Disabled Services

CRAY FELLOWS • Volunteer
Comic-Con VP and Division Administrator, Operations

MARY FLEENER • Cartoonist
Billie the Bee, Life of the Party

ROGER FREEDMAN • Physics Professor
Comic-Con founding committee member

GENE HA • Comics Writer, Artist
Mao, Top Ten

JONATHAN HICKMAN • Comics Writer
East of West, House of X/POwers of X

ARVELL JONES • Comics Artist
Deathlok, All-Star Squadron

CHARLES KOCHMAN • Book Publisher
Editorial Director, Abrams ComicArts

ULLI LUST • Graphic Novelist
Today is the Last Day of the Rest of Your Life, How I Tried to Be a Good Person

CRAY MILLER • Publicist/Producer/Author
Star Wars Memories

CLAYTON MOORE • Teacher
Comic-Con volunteer in the 1970s–1980s

JOHN NEE • Publisher
Marvel Entertainment

AUDREY NIFFENGGER • Author
The Time Traveler’s Wife, Her Fearful Symmetry

PACO RICA • Comics Writer/Artist
Wrinkles, Twist of Fate, The House

SCOTT SNYDER • Comics Writer
Batman, American Vampire, Witches

BRINKE STEVENS • Actress/Author/Director
Early Comic-Con volunteer, Brinke of Destruction

BILLY TUCCI • Comics Writer/Artist
Shi

CHRIS WARE • Cartoonist
Jimmy Corigan, Building Stories, Rusty Brown

BILL WILSON • Anime Aficionado
Comic-Con volunteer in the 1970s–1980s

MARYLIZABETH YTURRALDE • Bookseller
Co-founder of Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore

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The Comic-Con Graphic Novel Book Clubs continued their discussions through 2019 and into 2020. And then the world changed, but the groups soldiered on and shifted to monthly meetings via Zoom, thus creating ZookClub! The Book Clubs have been a part of Comic-Con since 2014. We’ve asked each club for their favorite book of 2020 (so far). You can follow along with our monthly meetings by visiting https://www.comic-con.org/toucan/categories/book-club

**BALBOA PARK**
**EST. 2018**
Favorite Book of 2020
Spider-Man: Life Story
Chip Zdarsky & Mark Bagley

**CHULA VISTA**
**EST. 2019**
Favorite Book of 2020
Farmhand vol. 2
Rob Guillory & Taylor Wells

**DOWNTOWN**
**EST. 2016**
Favorite Book of 2020
Murder Falcon
Daniel Warren Johnson

**EDUCATORS GROUP**
**EST. 2019**
Favorite Book of 2020
Hey Kiddo
Jarrett Krosoczka

**ENCINITAS**
**EST. 2017**
Favorite Book of 2020
Death: The Deluxe Edition
Neil Gaiman, et al

**ESCONDIDO 1**
**EST. 2017**
Favorite Book of 2020
The Way of the Househusband
Kousuke Oono

**ESCONDIDO 2**
**EST. 2019**
Favorite Book of 2020
Lady Killer vols. 1 & 2
Jamie Rich & Joëlle Jones

**LA JOLLA**
**EST. 2015**
Favorite Book of 2020
Watchmen
Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons

**MISSION VALLEY**
**EST. 2014**
Favorite Book of 2020
In Waves
AJ Dunne

**COMIC-CON MUSEUM**
**EST. 2019**
Favorite Book of 2020
Die, Vol. 1: Fantasy Heartbreaker
Kieron Gillen & Stephanie Hans

**NORTH PARK**
**EST. 2015**
Favorite Book of 2020
Paper Girls (Complete Series)
Brian K. Vaughan & Cliff Chiang
NEW DATES, NEW FORMAT FOR 2020!

Free Comic Book Summer Runs July 15 - Sept 9
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www.freecomicbookday.com

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING THOSE WE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR

GERRY ALANGUILAN WAS A LICENSED ARCHITECT BUT HE CHOSE TO FOLLOW A CAREER CREATING COMIC BOOKS.

He was the founder of the Komiks Museum in San Pablo, Laguna, Philippines, and he is credited with originating the term “komikero.”

His first published work was a pin-up in Aster #1.

Alanguilan made an impact inking, in collaboration with Leinil Francis Yu, on the X-Men, the Avengers, and other titles for Marvel Comics.

He created the Elmer comic book, as writer and artist.

An aside: Gerry Alanguilan became an internet sensation with his “Hey Baby” video, as viewed by millions.

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Best known for his Will Eisner: A Spired Life, an authorized biography of the legendary graphic novelist, Bob Andelman was, starting in the 1980s, a constant presence in Florida’s Tampa Bay area media scene, making his living as a writer for local newspapers and national news magazines. But, as freelance life is often financially precarious, Bob expanded his repertoire to become a book author.

When Bob Andelman passed away on March 9, comic fandom lost two important things. The first was the fact that Allen likely was the very last connection to Timely’s superheros golden age. The second was that Comic Book International (and the entire nationwide convention circuit) lost its last Golden Age ambassador of goodwill. Ever since I discovered Allen happily enrolling his retirement home in Tampa, Florida, in 1998, I interviewed him in 2001, and had his story published and known since 2003, and his wife Roz had been on a non-stop rollercoaster ride of giving back to the industry, held only two months before he died at age 95.

Allen’s story is now fairly well known. Born in Manhattan on June 5, 1924 and Brooklyn-raised, Allen entered the comics industry at age 17, following Gottfredson on the daily strip. He didn’t feel that, I thought, combined the Gottfredson style of Mickey Mouse drawings with the comical adventures of Roman Arambula.

In 1949 he was back freelancing for Stan Lee at Atlas, and has written 20 introductions to Marvel’s All-Winners Action Comics, the Golden Age’s first superhero team, and has written 20 introductions to Marvel’s All-Winners Action Comics, the Golden Age’s first superhero team.

It is with heavy heart that I must say goodbye to my dear friend Mitch Berger, who finally lost his 20-year battle with NET (neuroendocrine tumor) in June of 2019. I met Mitch in 1990 when he came to Comic-Con with photojournalist Jackie Estrada.

A sweet, talented cartoonist named Roman Arambula died in March, the victim of a heart attack at the age of 83. Roman did many things in his life but he was proud of being the artist who succeeded Floyd Gottfredson on the Mickey Mouse newspaper strip.

Bob Andelman with Will Eisner.

Bob made superb use of those contacts, particularly for his Mr. Media Interviews, a world in which Mickey Mouse draws the adventures of Roman Arambula. Mitch is no exception to that.

When I tracked him down in retirement in 1998, he was long past his earlier comics career behind him, but it was never really forgotten. There was much left unsaid. Allen revealed to me that no one believed he had actually worked in the comic book industry, a frustration that gnawed at him over the decades. My initial interview started him on a 16-year run as the Golden Age’s primary ambassador of goodwill. Allen and Roz were fixtures on the nation’s convention circuit and he gave back doubly all the love he received from fans around the world. He cherished the Inkpot award given him at the 2007 San Diego show. In 2011, I was hired to edit his autobiography, Timely Confidential, an unfettered look back at his life and colleagues during his Timely years. With his passing, the tenuous connection to Timely’s war-era superheros has been irrevocably severed. His earlier work in our industry finally validated, no one, I repeat, no one, had a better last act than Allen. Bob Andelman.

Roman Arambula (1935–2019) by Mark Evanier

Roman was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, and studied art at the University in Mexico City. He worked in fine art and advertising and even painted pottery, but his love of cartooning inevitably led him to that field. Specifically, it was to the Mexico-based Gamma Studios, which was doing most of the animation for Rocky and Bullwinkle, King Leonardo, Tennessee Tuxedo, and other American cartoon shows. When Gamma closed down in the late 1960s, Roman and his family moved to Dallas and then to Los Angeles, where he worked for various animation studios. He met and married Barbara when he was laboring there in layout on Scooby Doo and other shows and I was working on the color staff of Gamma’s comic books, Roman drew for a number of them, both domestic and foreign, particularly on Laff-a-Lympics. By then, he’d landed the Mickey Mouse job, following Gottfredson on the daily strip. He didn’t write it, but art infused it with a happy, organic feel that, I thought, combined the Gottfredson style of Mickey Mouse drawings with the comical adventures of Roman Arambula. Mitch Evanier is an award-winning writer-producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author. He is one of a handful of people who have been involved with 50 San Diego Comic Cons.

Bob made superb use of those contacts, particularly for his Mr. Media Interviews, a world in which Mickey Mouse draws the adventures of Roman Arambula. Mark Evanier

It was a fortunate change in book agents for Bob, largely co-authored the America Comics. He then toiled on staff at Timely with several features, including The Patriot, Human Torch, Captain America, later issues of All Winners Comic, his own “who-done-it” crime feature “Let’s Play Detective,” and wherever he was needed for the next seven years, except for the time spent in the Navy during the war.

Following the dissolution of the Timely bullpen in late 1949, Allen joined the Lex Glaseon staff and contributed to titles there, from crime to romance. By 1951 he was back freelancing for Stan Lee at Atlas, now known as Atlas Comics, contributing to pre-Code horror, crime, western and war titles. This was the best work of his career, as the studio relaxed its policies, unlike the assembly-line Timely staff work done often piecemeal in the 1940s. For Atlas, my favorite work was a series of six stories in the “Jet Dixon of the Space Squadron series.”

Bob Andelman (1960–2019) by Jon B. Cooke

Bob passed away, on February 24. By his side were his wife, Mimi, and their 23-year-old son, Charlie. Mimi described Bob as possessing an “epic kindness.” She also said of her husband of 31 years, “He really listened to people. It mattered.”

With a chuckle, he added, “That was a little weird to get used to.”

By then, he’d landed the Mickey Mouse job, following Gottfredson on the daily strip. He didn’t write it, but art infused it with a happy, organic feel that, I thought, combined the Gottfredson style of Mickey Mouse drawings with the comical adventures of Roman Arambula. Mitch Evanier is an award-winning writer-producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author.

Bob Andelman (1960–2019) by Jon B. Cooke

Photo: Mark Evanier

[Mitch Berger (right) with Batman Lash at Comic-Con, Photo: Jackie Estrada]
appeared in the pages of the 2019 Eisner Comic Industry Awards since 1990. Who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic-Con's founder, Lucy Caswell, for their collection. Mitch presented the sketchbook to the museum's founder, Lucy Caswell, for their collection. He later wrote, "You can never really own art; you are lucky if you have the privilege to be its custodian for a while." In the course of battling his cancer, Mitch became active in support groups and education for NET patients and their families, and continued that advocacy even while in hospice care. Mitch had other passions as well, continuing that advocacy even while in hospice care. Mitch had other passions as well, including offering many puns, a hobby Bat and Mitch also shared. A Comic-Con regular, Mitch lived to attend the show and hang out at our Exhibit A Press booth.

For four decades, Mitch carried a sketchbook with him to Comic-Con and other events. In 2015 Bat and saw him at the first Comics Crossroads Columbus (CXC) show at the Billy Ireland Library and Cartoon Museum at Ohio State University. He showed us the most recent sketches he had gotten, from Art Spiegelman and Bill Griffith. We marveled at the artwork in the book, going back to the 1970s, from such greats as Hal Foster, Jules Feiffer, R. Crumb, Vaughn Bevils, Jerry Robinson, Joe Kubert, Roy Crane, Marie Severin, and of course Eisner and Kurtzman. Shortly thereafter, Mitch presented the sketchbook to the museum's founder, Lucy Caswell, for their collection. But what Nick was really the master of was telling stories. His head was always full of them. When he came to Charlton Comics in 1972, we hit it off and into whatever ECs I could find. I and a couple of other guys around the neighborhood got our subscription copy of one of the ECs where they announced there was going to be a Fan-Addict Club, and we said, "Oh, yeah, that's for us!" And it said send in a quarter, and if several guys send in, as one group, then you'll be a Chapter. I remember my membership number was 181.

Cochran kept reading ECs until 1956. He pretty much forgot about his obsession with EC comics until one fateful day in 1964. "Oh, so this is what I decided to write Bill Gaines. My letter said something to the effect that the members of our chapter, of EC Fan-Addict Club number three, one of us is a teacher, one is a minister, one is a doctor, one is a lawyer, and not an awe-inspiring to the punch. I thought he would get a kick out of knowing that the influence of the EC had not been detrimental to us. Anyway, he wrote me back and said, "Next time you're in New York give me a call and we'll go out to dinner." Fortunately for us, Cochran took up Gaines on his invitation and the two became friends. After seeing some of Gaines's EC original art, Cochran was struck by the large size and beautiful rendering on the pages and thought, "Boy, wouldn't other EC fans love to see it?" He began relettering ECs in 1971. His first portfolio contained a cover and four stories all shot from original art. It quickly sold out and he followed it up with five more EC Portfolios.

Cochran left his tenured university position in 1974 to become a full-time publisher, in the process bringing light to not only almost every EC story and cover but also vintage newspaper strips. His most ambitious project was the Edgar Rice Burroughs Library of Illustration, a deluxe, slipcased three-volume set that featured paintings, illustrations, and comic strips by J. Allen St. John, Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel, Russ Manning, N. C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover, and Hal Foster. Another notable limited-edition Cochran published was a three-volume, slip-cased set of books reprinting Al Williamson and Archie Goodwin's complete run of strips. Cochran realized there was a market for high-quality EC reprints, so he approached Bill Gaines with a bold proposal: reprinting EC's entire output in a uniform format with all stories shot from original art. As the artwork was scanned, Gaines sold it off through Cochran's art auctions.

In conjunction with publishing the Complete EC Library in hardback, Cochran also republished all the EC New Trend and New Direction comics in a variety of formats. Russ's friendship with Frazetta also produced some notable projects, including Untamed Love, reprinting romance stories from the mid-50s, and Thundra King of the Congo, which reprised the only comic book drawn entirely by Frazetta.

Russ was always a commanding presence at the San Diego Comic-Con, from the very earliest ones. Gruff and authoritative (he was a professor, after all), he was known to all not just as a purveyor of EC items but as one of the most ethical art dealers on the convention circuit, a man who always treated his customers and fellow fans with fairness and courtesy. He exhibited at the Con for decades, selling his EC and Frazetta books and vending art by the cream of America's cartoonists and illustrators. EC Comics in particular owe him a great debt for helping to spread the gospel of EC far and wide.

Steven Ringgenberg attended his first San Diego Comic-Con in 1972, ultimately attending about half of them so far. His lifelong love of EC Comics, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Roy Bradbury spurred him on to a writing career that began in 1980 and encompassed writing eight novels, a book of short stories, and scripts and articles for DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Heavy Metal magazine, Dark Horse, Bongo, Warren Publishing, and many others, including writing notes for Russ Cochran's Complete EC Library and contributing to Cochran's Comic Book Marketplace.
ERNIE COLÓN: A FORCE OF NATURE by Howard Zimmerman

Ernie Colón could draw anything. That is a fact. It was the Roy Hobbs of graphic illustration. If you were a kid in the 1970s and ’80s, you probably enjoyed Ernie Colón’s work for Harvey Comics on such titles as Casper the Friendly Ghost. While at Harvey, Ernie met, collaborated with, and then became lifelong friends with Sid Jacobson, who was a writer, then an editor, and ultimately Harvey’s editor-in-chief. Later in his career, Ernie collaborated with Jacobson on a proposal to turn The 9/11 Report—written by the 9/11 Commission—into a graphic novel. In 2006, Ernie and Ruth were married in 1992. In July 2015, two weeks after he had delivered his final revisions for volume two, Ernie passed away after a long bout with cancer. A couple of hours after he passed, I got an email from Ruth saying someone at the New York City Board of Education had contacted her to inquire about rights to a part of the 9/11 Report. She explained that she did not hold the rights, and directed him to me. In short story, The Board has acquired the license to deliver, to tens of thousands of New York City high school students, copies of Ernie and Ruth’s version of The Constitution, in 20 crisp pages, Ernie and Ruth successfully told the story of the most important document in the history of America—graphically, compellingly, engagingly, comprehensible, and gripping. I never doubted they would because, you know, Ernie could draw anything. God bless him.

Howard Zimmerman is president and editor-in-chief of First Second Books.

Dale Crain (1954–2020) by Dean Mullaney

Anyone who’s bought and enjoyed an archival comic book or newspaper strip collection in the past 30 years owes a debt of gratitude to Dale Crain. Known across the industry as an exceptional art director, book designer, editor, and comics historian, Dale was a three-time Harvey Award winner and recipient of two Pratt magazine awards for book design. By going by his middle name, Roger Dale Crain was born on November 28, 1954 in Springfield, Missouri, and grew up in the nearby small town of Ozark, where he was on his high school’s yearbook committee. He began his comic career in the mid-1980s at Fantagraphics in Southern California. “Dale was the first honest-to-God real designer we employed,” recalled Gary Groth. “He upped our game in a serious way. Good thing, too, because we were publishing more books at this time and dipping our toes in the bookstore market.” In addition to designing various book projects (The Collected Works of Jules Feiffer was a favorite), he helped shape the look of the company and its flagship magazine, The Comics Journal. “Working with him was wonderful,” added Groth, “because he brought an infectious enthusiasm to the job; he loved what he did and brought energy to the room.” Dale left Fantagraphics when they moved to Seattle in late 1988, and relocated to New York, where he designed some issues of RAW magazine and started the long stint at DC Comics for which he is best known today. DC’s archive program was then in its nascent stage. For the next 15 years Dale helped steer The Spirit Archives and definitive collections of Plastic Man, Superman, Sgt. Rock, Black Canary, Doom Patrol, Wonder Woman, Kamandi, and dozens more. By 2002 he had developed “a keen understanding of the digital restoration process,” recalled Bob Greenberger, who joined the Collected Editions department and had an office adjacent to Dale’s. “It was an evolving aspect of the business and he was painstaking in making sure all the details were right.” Dale brought his design sense to DC’s upscale book production with trade collections such as For Vendetta. “Dale was proud of his work on that book,” recalls Cory Sedlmier, who worked with Dale on Marvel’s masterworks a decade later, “the way he used the domino motif throughout the book, to tell a subtle story through the book design.” He also found time to source, package, and co-edit (with Bill Blackbeard) the classic two-volume reference book The Comic Strip Century in 1995. Dale switched teams in 2005, bringing his skills to Marvel’s archival lines, beginning with The Incredible Hulk, vol. 3. He worked on many collections, including Iron Man, Golden-Age Captain America, Fantastic Four, Avengers, and Silver Surfer until 2012, by which time he had relocated in Hong Kong, where he set up an art restoration studio. Running a studio, it turns out, wasn’t for him. Dale knew that if you wanted the best possible design or the most accurate archival restoration, you had to do it yourself. There were no shortcuts. Just hard work and a dedication to preservation. He enjoyed being “semi-retired” but still keeping his hand in comics, working on an restoring classic newspaper strips in two-dozen Library of American Comics books. He moved from Hong Kong to Thailand, and eventually to Vietnam. Shortly after he arrived, he sent me a little video showing his neighborhood, right on the beach. He absolutely loved it in Da Nang and didn’t see himself ever coming back to America. He died from a heart attack in Vietnam, age 65.

Dean Mullaney is the creative director of the Library of American Comics and knew Dale Crain since the 1980s, when Dean ran Eclipse and Dale worked at Fantagraphics.
Upon their passings from this plane, many artistic geniuses are lauded for their body of work, and occasionally for their temperament. Howard Cruse, whose work spanned six decades and inspired imagination in and around the comic book industry, will be lauded—and rightfully so—for his genius with the graphic semi-memoir Stuck Rubber Baby and for his collections of Word & Land cartoons and other stories, but his temperament was as clear as the work he created and surrounded himself with. Although he battled cancer for almost three decades, he continued to work up until his death on April 9 of this year, less than three weeks after his 91st birthday.

Gene Deitch (father of underground cartoonist pioneer Kim Deitch) was one of animation's shining geniuses—aurniture designer, creative director, and author; a designer, a comic strip creator, and yes—a comic book artist. If I just list his career highlights, that alone would justify his place among the greats. Top of the list would be his creation of Tom & Jerry—a classic cartoon star practically forgotten by cartoonists other than Bob and Bill. By the time he was 18 years old, TT was the first original animated character created for television by a major cartoon studio. Tom was a shape-shifting little boy, wearing a funnel on his head, who would have wildly-mangled faces and bodies with his legs around doggy “Manhattan” against an array of arch-enemies hatched by Crabbly Allen. Deitch gave Jules Feiffer his first professional job writing for this series. At the Terrytoons studio in the mid-1950s, where Tom Terrific emerged from Gene, became the Creative Director and refined the studio’s musical character style by injecting new blood—hiring not only Feiffer but the likes of pop artist James Flora, launching the animation careers of Ernest Pintoff and O. Bleichner, and creating strange surrealistic characters like Silly Sidney, Clint Clobserver, and Flebus.

For many years, Cruse worked on the semi-autobiographical graphic novel Stuck Rubber Baby for Parade Press, an imprint of DC Comics. The book was finally published in 1995 to outstanding critical acclaim. Mainstream press, librarians, teachers, and comic book readers alike all praised Cruse’s work for its raw emotive honesty and insanely detailed art even as he wove a story about racism and homophobia in the south, and the intersection of the Civil Rights movement with personal coming-of-age. The book received both the Harvey and Eisner Awards and the United Kingdom Comic Art Awards for Best Graphic Album.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Cruse’s work appeared not only in the underground comics but also in publications such as Playboy, Heavy Metal, Bizarre, Antiphon International, and The Village Voice. He drew the regular Wendell strip for The Advocate newsmagazine from 1983 to 1989.

So let’s backtrack a moment. Deitch was born in Chicago and grew up in Los Angeles, and after a stint drawing aircraft parts for the military during World War II, he began drawing panel cartoons (“The Cat”) for a jazz collectors fanzine. The Real Convos (a name which has been reprinted in a fine volume by Fantagraphics Books). Those print cartoons were read by the top animators at UPA (Mr. Magoo), and that led to his hiring by director John Hubley; it was at UPA that he received his master class training in all things animation. He became an art director at the Jam Handy industrial animation studio in Detroit, a position he took on route to New York, where he soon headed UPA ( Manhattan studio in 1952. It was here he met commercial and more. Comic-Con International gave him their prestigious Inkpot Award in 1989, and he was again a special guest at CCI in 2010. Curated art shows for LGBTQ cartoonists, and was the subject of art exhibits of his work worldwide. He is extensively profiled in the upcoming documentary feature film Straight Stripes, alongside other LGBTQ creators.

In one of his strips, “Death” (which appeared in Dancin’ Nikki’s with the Angel), Howard presaged his own death: “After I’m gone, I like to think somebody might pick up my comic books and have a chuckle/Fat chance, you say—but permit me my illusions!” He also promised that his soul would be up in heaven, “Rockin’ and Rollin’ and Dancing Nikki’s with the Angels!”

There is any justice in this world for a talent as great as Howard Cruse’s, and a soul as forthright, readers will go pick up his books and have a chuckle, and his soul will really be dancin’ nekkid with the angels.

Andy Mangels is the bestselling author and co-author of 20 books, including the TwoMorrows Book Lou Scheimer: Creating the Filmation Generation, as well as Star Trek and Star Wars tote, Iron Man: Benaway The Armor, and a lot of comic books.

Photo: Jackie Estrada

To call Mort Drucker a master caricaturist is to damn him with faint praise. In his 54 years with MAD magazine, Drucker created exquisite and TV parodies—a genre which, if he didn’t invent, he pretty much defined. Paired with such gifted writers as Arnie Kogen, Stan Hart, Larry Siegel, and Dick DeBartolo, Drucker managed to create, in five or six pages, a distillation of a film or show that was at once extremely accurate and at once whimsical.

Most caricaturists are happy to produce a single evocative image of a subject, not Mort. In his MAD parodies he would draw actors and actresses dozens of times, from different angles, in different settings, with different expressions and different poses, often with only one or two pieces of photo reference.

In addition, he was at the same time telling the film’s story, designing the page, illustrating the writer’s gags, and adding gags of his own. He did not have a high wire aerialist, juggling half a dozen bowling balls simultaneously and never losing his balance.

As a caricaturist, Drucker achieved the goal of every artist who has ever worked in that field. He made you see his subjects through his eyes. Once you experienced the bulging forehead of his Mervin Brandon, the cowering crouch of his Julie Andrews, or the different stance of his John Wayne, it was impossible to see them ever again except as he saw them.

On meeting Mort for the first time, the biggest surprise was how quiet and humble he was. He would be much more interested in your talents and ambitions than he was in his own accomplishments. He was extremely generous with his time and advice. He deeply identified with the notion, if you found something you loved to do, you’d never work a day in your life.

A devoted family man, Mort was strict about keeping “banker’s hours,” drawing all day in his Long Island studio but breaking early so he could spend the evening with wife Barbara, their two daughters and his beloved Barbara. On April 9 of this year he passed away, less than three weeks after his 91st birthday.

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From the 1960s through the 1990s, Dorothy Catherine Fontana wrote for dozens of television shows, including The Wild Wild West, Star Trek: The Original Series, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Streets of San Francisco, Star Trek: The Animated Series, Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Babylon 5. While working with Gene Roddenberry on both The Lieutenant and Star Trek, she became one of the first women to break the Hollywood scriptwriting gender barriers, and though she sometimes wrote under male pseudonyms or the gender-neutral “D.C. Fontana,” most of her screen credits from the 1970s on were as “Dorothy Fontana.” She also wrote the tie-in novels The Questor Tapes and Star Trek: Vulcan’s Glory. She turned later in life to teaching screenwriting throughout the early 2000s at the American Film Institute Conservatory.

Her Star Trek original series episodes were always fan favorites, particularly “Charly X,” “Tomorrow is Yesterday,” “Journey to Babel,” “Friday’s Child,” and “The Enterprise Incident.” She was a guest at numerous 1970s fan conventions, and in August of 1973, via the local Star Trek fan group S.T.A.R. San Diego, she appeared at Comic-Con to promote the upcoming premieres of Star Trek: The Animated Series. She gave us a preview of the first two episodes — “Beyond the Farthest Star” and “Yesterday’s Enterprise.” The latter, her take on Spock’s childhood, is often cited as the best episode of the series. Dorothy would return to San Diego as a guest for Equicon 75/Filmcon 3, and with “The Trouble With Tribbles” writer David Gerrold in 2016 for ConDor Con’s celebration of Star Trek’s 50th anniversary.

Dorothy left us on December 2, 2019, following a brief illness. She is survived by her husband, cinematographer Dennis Skotak, as well as by legions of fans who will continue to love and admire her work for years to come.

By Beau Smith

I knew Tom Lyle for over half of my life, yet we never spent a moment of that time in each other’s house. We didn’t have to—we did better than that, all because of comic books. Because of comic books, a multitude of cities and conventions across the United States met San Diego Comic-Con, became our personal front porch to enjoy a friendship and community that few can ever experience. I have long said that comic books are the common bond that unite unseen common people.

Tom’s formative years were deeply rooted in what I believe is pop culture’s greatest decade—the 1960s. This was a decade of change in music, art, sports, technology, television, education, writing, thinking, and how we would look at the future—and we capped off that decade by going to the moon if that didn’t make an impact on your life, then I don’t know what does.

It all made an impact on Tom’s life. He became an artist, a writer, a teacher, a musician, and a sportsman, and always carried an open mind to any topic or situation brought before him. It all made him a truly good friend. It made him a great artist, and it made him an exceptional teacher.

Tom was always willing to share his knowledge with others, especially those who were seeking to be creators within the realm of comic books. From the 1980s on, I can remember time and time again, Tom taking time from convention signings to help an aspiring artist with questions they had or to look at their sketches. Always teaching, it came natural to Tom. He always made time.

Off the road, and through the years, Tom and I would spend hours on the phone talking comics, music, the business—-and sports, the one place where we were always at odds. You see, Tom was a lifelong Minnesota Vikings fan, and a life for the Chicago Bears. It made for some great trash talking and gloating for both of us depending on how the season went. (I’ve made up for it as we were both big fans of Michael Bennett of the Minnesota Vikings.) Tom and I broke into the comic book business at the same time, along with a core group of other creator buddies: Tim Truman, Chuck Dixon, Frank Frazetta, Gary Korpens, Tim Hawks, John K, Snyder III, and Graham Nolan. The mid-1980s found us all working for DC and Marvel, and our early stage of the industry.

We shared hotel rooms at conventions together, created comics together, and spent a letta hours talking comics.

From our days at Eclipse, our group all took various paths further into the world of creating comics. Tom and Chuck Dixon went to DC Comics and put their mark on the character of Robin, giving him a new ticket into a new century and the way he would be done. While at DC, Tom helped reinvent The Comet and Starman, and he was a major contributor to the Batman universe as well. One of Tom’s childhood dreams came true as he alternated work between DC and Marvel Comics. At Marvel, Tom impressed everyone with his stylish art on Star Wars. His deal with Marvel for comics, Balantine Books for a movie novelization, and other companies with posters and T-shirts and more, all to come out before the film was released in order to build buzz about the film, has become the norm. He was the first person to be approached to design and sell a film directly to fans. To bring a film preview to Comic-Con or to the World Science Fiction Convention. And to make comic books important to the part of the equation they always should have been. That, too, has become the standard for the industry.

I’m really proud to have worked with him.
Syd Mead, that staggeringly successful polymath of multidisciplinary interests and graphic gifts—industrial designer, visual futurist, automotive designer, science fiction fan, corporate concept artist, motion picture designer, internationally acclaimed illustrator, and lifelong guest of Comic-Con International—passed away in Pasadena, CA, on December 30. He was 86.

Syd’s formidable talents elicted awe from fellow professionals and adulation from rabid fans. He was also the quintessential nice guy, as well as my occasional collaborator and friend. More on those last three in a moment.

Syd Mead was born on July 18, 1933, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Fascinated by art, transportation design, and Golden Age science fiction literature (espe-

cially the works of Robert Heinlein), Syd focused on his passion early on. He studied and later practiced clas-

tical art techniques at The Old School Way.

He graduated from the prestigious Art Center School in Los Angeles (now the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena) in June 1959. He was almost imme-

diately hired by the Ford Motor Company’s Advanced Styling Studio, where his lifelong love of automobiles resulted in a number of quasi-futuristic, still impressive concept car designs. He left Ford in the early 1960s to freelance for high-end corporate clients, doing illus-

trations for their in-house books and catalogs. He spent most of the 1970s providing interior and exter-

ior architectural designs for firms like Interstate Hotels, as well as product designs for Sony, US Steel, and Philips Electronics.

Throughout, he earned a reputation as one of the 20th century’s most influential conceptual artists. His prodigious gifts caught the attention of Hollywood, and he worked as a production illustrator on some of SF cinema’s best-known films. He helped design the mas-

S alive! Mead was his personal assistant, a task that included researching and plotting locations on several of V’sAttached to a Peaceful Earth. He spent many of the 1970s designing for magazines, corporate clients, and even in his own studio. He eventually took on a more commercial role, creating art for advertising agencies and producing educational films.

Syd’s arts and craft were not just a design but a design’s total context, includ-
gin its environment, its use, and its plausible workings. As for Comics-Con International, Syd maintained a longtime guest of Comic-Con status. He taught classes, exhibited his work, and left a lasting impression on attendees. His last event at Comic-Con was the 2019 event, where he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The future is here, and Syd Mead is its architect. Despite his passing, his legacy lives on through his art and the many lives it has touched.

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**Lee Mendelson**

Lee Mendelson, the Emmy-winning writer/producer of hundreds of television programs and specials, died Christmas Day of 2019. The date had special significance because his body of work included what was arguably the most beloved Christmas special of all time and probably the most-seen animated film ever made: A Charlie Brown Christmas, which first aired for Christmas of 1965.

Upon hearing of his passing, fans and colleagues alike reached out to express their condolences and share memories of Lee. He was a beloved figure in the world of animation, and his legacy will continue to live on through the many lives his work touched.

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**Denny O’Neil**

Denny O’Neil was a journalist, a writer, an editor, a mentor, but most of all, an inspiration.

He entered comics early in the second wave, joining the Marvel staff in the mid-1960s after a piece of local reporting he did on the field attracted Roy Thomas’s notice. He did the bulk of editorial work on Spider-Man books, helped create the Goose & Grimm in live-action, he produced and often wrote shows featuring such stars as Paul Newman, Gene Kelly, Joanne Woodward, Lucille Ball, Bing Crosby, Flip Wilson, Whoopi Goldberg, Muhammad Ali, Carl Reiner, and, for that matter, me (as Frank Buxton, Nick at Night). During Saturday-morning series Hot Dog, featuring comedians Woody Allen and Jonathan Winters, and Lee worked with John Steinbeck and Henry Fonda on two specials based on Steinbeck’s work. Travels with Charley and America and Americans.

I had the pleasure and honor (it was both) to work with Lee on most of his Garfield projects and a few others. He was very smart, very honest, and when he told you what he was going to do, or even what should happen, he was correct more often than almost any other producer I ever encountered. This business could use more like Lee Mendelson.

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**Mark Evanier**

Mark Evanier is an award-winning writer/producer of TV shows and animation, a comic book writer, and book author. He is one of a handful of people who have been to all 50 San Diego Comic Cons.
in 1980, taking a staff editor’s desk. He wrote incisive film reviews.

And then he began to inspire. He connected with a younger generation of talent, and didn’t just give them opportunities, he talked to them. Talked movies, comics, mystery novels—everything—and technique—again and again, and technique. And they listened. Especially a Farm kid who shared his love of noir, Frank Miller. He gave Mill the chance not just to draw Daredevil but to write it (heft). It was Marvel’s weakest seller, why not risk it? (and write it as a superhero comic had never been written before.) He kept writing. Too. Not much, because of the desk job, but significantly. His Iron Man stories drew on his own private struggles for their power and redemption. Tony Stark and the boundaries of the human dilemmas and the power and redefined his own private struggles for their power and redefined their destiny, becoming the story that attracted Christopher Nolan, the writer and story editor on Batman. He took on an old Charlton character, The Question, and working with Dennis Cowan he made it a powerful political treatise, drawing the world’s attention to his character. In his native St. Louis. This wasn’t a token moment of a corrupt politician; it was an andrewing of everything that could go wrong in the system. Because someone who had edited in the doorknob and novelized the complex Knightfall storyline that he run over the every expanding line of flat books. He wrote about short taking film in a popped art in the momen.

“Who Feels,” that attracted no notice at the time but would have a pivotal effect on the character’s destiny, becoming the story that attracted Christopher Nolan to direct his monumental successful cycle of Batman films that drew from it and other stories Denny had edited.

He taught. On the job, to his assistants and his contributors. After hours, at New York University and the School of Visual Arts. Over a vegetarian plate, to any- one who would listen. And the smart ones learned. Through it all, and in his years of semi-retirement, he searched for what he could do to make the world a better place: one-on-one with those he worked with, teaching more, and involving himself with projects exploring ways to make the world a better place. But more than anything, he inspired those around him.

Denny demonstrated courage and the power of the creative person’s podium. He told tales that spoke truth to power, enlightened readers about the challenges in the world, and used the dramas of his own life to offer revelation and hope. Mostly he was quiet and soft-spo- ken, unless he stood as a teacher and made his platform a pulpit, or he sat before a keyboard and let his sto- ries shout to the world. He win all the comics awards he had been given in his entire Hall of Fame, but also received worldwide recognition not simply as a writer but as a good man. Fittingly, one of his last honors was a lifetime achievement at C2E2, because his courage and commit- ment to use his powers for good made him even more of a hero than the costumed figures he wrote so well.

If that’s not inspiration, what is?

Paul Levitz is a writer/editor best known for his 38 years at DC Comics (ending as President & Publisher) and for his work on such works as 75 Years of DC Comics. The Art of Modern Myth-Making and Will Eisner: Champion of the Graphic Novel.

Born and raised in Northeast Washington, DC, David Rector graduated from McKendry Technical High School with a concentration in visual arts and attended the University of the District of Columbia, earning a Bachelor’s in Political Science.

Less than a year later, David experimented with an aortic dissection that left him a quadruplegic and non- verbal. He spent the next 10 years fighting to regain his ability to move purposefully and to speak. With Roz, he focused on co-creating Recall and Given, a memory-superpower comic, aided by Button and many other comic pros. David painstakingly made his editorial preferences and decisions known to the illustrators and script writers intent on developing Recall and Given into the real world, anti-alien, super- hero saga he envisioned.

David passed away on October 15, 2019, in San Diego, survived by his loving companion, Roz, who is continuing the work on making Recall and Given a reality.

Richard Sala was my closest friend for almost 30 years. We first came into contact when he wrote me a very kind and uplifting letter about my comics back in the dark days of 1987. I had been a huge fan of his work in RAW and elsewhere. I was blown away that such an accomplished artist would write to me, and we quickly became devoted pen-pals. He would send me pack- ages with venues of out-of-print Kenneth Fearing stories and blow-ups of Topps Civil War cards, all copied on the cpy at his job. I would usually respond by telling him about some writer or comic artist or movie he already knew all about. Richard knew more about movies than anyone I’ve ever met. I knew several film scholars who would regularly enlist his help in trying to figure out the name of an obscure film based on the scantest of information. It never took more than a few minutes to hear back from him. We finally met in person in 1992 (the same red- let- ter day I met my wife), at a signing at Comic Concern (BIP) in Berkeley. When I moved to the area later that year, he quickly became my best and for a while, only friend. In those days, he was sometimes carefree and outgoing, but having quit his library job to work as a very successful magazine illustrator. I’d be for a weekly lunch/ trip to the comic store, and talked on the phone almost every Friday, and we did that right up until Richard and I talk at length about Burt Mustin or Percy Helton’s research. Those were some of the happiest times of my life.

Richard was a very complicated guy, totally unlike anyone I’ve ever met. He could be egotistical and charm- ing, easily anxious and extroverted in conversation, but also crippled by terrible anxiety and profoundly aggra- vating. Over the years, it got harder and harder to get him out of the house. I basically forced him to meet me for lunch every Friday, and we did that right up until the COVID pandemics; but toward the end, it was the extent of his social life (except for the 208 hours he spent online— it’s true life). He would always show up 5 minutes late, furiously talking, with a thick

MARTIN PASKO (1954–2020) by Paul Levitz

If you’re a certain age, you probably first met him as “Peaky” Pasko, a constant presence in the letters columns of the comics in the 1960s and 1970s. He seemed to duel with the editors, particularly DC’s Julie Schwartz, exercising a wit that was unusual among the so-called letterhackers. There’s a bit younger but were part of the select group that connected as early comics fandom. You might have read his Shatner imitation. Lots of his work was sweeter flavors. Richard Sala was my closest friend for almost 30 years. We first came into contact when he wrote me a very kind and uplifting letter about my comics back in the dark days of 1987. I had been a huge fan of his work in RAW and elsewhere. I was blown away that such an accomplished artist would write to me, and we quickly became devoted pen-pals. He would send me packages with venues of out-of-print Kenneth Fearing stories and blow-ups of Topps Civil War cards, all copied on the cpy at his job. I would usually respond by telling him about some writer or comic artist or movie he already knew all about. Richard knew more about movies than anyone I’ve ever met. I knew several film scholars who would regularly enlist his help in trying to figure out the name of an obscure film based on the scantest of information. It never took more than a few minutes to hear back from him.

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Robert Scott was a vital part of the San Diego comic community for nearly 40 years. Beginning in the early 1980s, he ran a local comic convention at the Scottish Rite Center as Mission Valley Comic-Con. The store he ran for 30 years, first opened in the early '90s and made a couple of moves before settling into its current home on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. In 2015, after I put the bug in his ear, he opened a second store in Point Loma's Liberty Station, near IDW's publishing office.

Robert's passion for comics led him to start the Comic Book Industry Alliance (CBIA), an online forum where publishers and comic book retailer-
discuss issues. In the days before social media, CBIA allowed retailers to come together to make suggestions on how to improve the way comics were marketed and sold. It was one of the first places to discuss the idea of the Final Order Cut-off (FOC) program, which allows retailers to adjust their orders based on how titles are selling in their stores.

Robert loved talking comics and making recommendations, and he knew he could find a graphic novel for anyone. When he opened his store in Liberty Station, I'd often walk across the courtyard from IDW's office and play books browsing the shelves and listening to Robert tell people about a graphic novel they'd like. I can see his smile and hear his way of talking about the world in my head now.

Robert was always the first person I'd run a new idea by, and he never pulled any punches when he let me know what he thought. When IDW started publish-
retailer-exclusive covers with the release of Godzilla: Rulers of O'Karo #1, Robert was one of the first store owners to sign up. Over the years, he did a num-
ber of exclusive covers with IDW, including one where he was drawn as one of the original Ghostbusters.

Robert approached me about co-publishing a novel with IDW in 2005. Writing the Dawn was written by San Diego local David Horwitz, and the story was originally published as a series of zines sold in San Diego coffee shops. Although we never discussed it, I assume Robert came across one of the zines and worked out a deal with the author to publish it. Robert loved helping San Diego creators and introdu-
cing like-minded people. I met Tom Watt when Robert introduced me to him at Clairemont store. Not long after, Tom joined IDW, where he'd had a big career as an editor and long-time writer of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Robert supported the local comic community by featuring books from San Diego writers and artists in his stores and having signing events for them. His love of the broader San Diego pop cul-
ture community led to him sponsoring Halloween costume contests and movie nights in Liberty Station.

Anyone who's been to Robert's store in Clairemont knows that shopping there is an adventure. The shelves are literally bursting at the seams with books also displayed in boxes on the floor. Robert's approach to retail allowed customers to discover books they might not other-
wise come across, and he and his staff were always there to help find what you wanted and to make suggestions.

His Free Comic Book Day events were legend-
ary, with mobs of people waiting for the store to open. He'd invite local creators to come and show up, encourage cosplay, and sometimes have the local 501st Legion of Imperial Stormtroopers make an appearance. He knew FCBD was his chance to do what he loved most: celebrate both comic books and San Diego while helping folks find a book they'd love.

Ted Adams, is the co-founder of IDW, where he served as the company's CEO and Publisher for 18 years. In 2019, he co-founded Clover Press and is the company's Publisher. He's also an executive producer on a number of TV shows, including Wynonna Earp and Locke & Key.

For a quarter-century, Tom Spurgeon was one of my best friends. Period. For over half of my life. One can't underestimate these things. It was all because of-
comics. In 1994, I became the news editor of The Comics Journal. The Journal had a twice-per-year, semi-
time, news and managing editor, operating under Executive Editor and Publisher Gary Groth. A few months after I began, Tom was hired as managing edi-
tor. I didn't know what to make of him at first. A big, hulking bear of a man, he looked more like an offen-
sive lineman than a comics fan. In fact, he had played college football for Indiana and was a sewer for a while, two things I couldn't possibly reconcile, let alone relate to, and now here he was, editing a comics magazine.

Tom had a decent job in Indiana at a home shopping network to work for peanuts at Fantagraphics, out of a passion for comics that we bonded quickly over, as well as a mutual desire to rake muck and make the Journal the best it could be. We formed what I selfishly call the most formidable editorial tandem in T/CHistory. Yes, I'm biased, but in quick time we truly felt like world-beaters, and it felt like we perfectly compli-
ted each other's skills. We had a good laugh. Tom was the better conceptual thinker, steering the magazine in new directions and finding new voices that reflected the changing times in our industry and art-
form, whereas I was more detail-oriented, the dogged reporter. Tom was the key architect behind many Journal interviews and features, none bigger than the classic “100 Best Comics of the Century” in 1999. We had the most fun collaborating on the mag’s “Viva La Comics” section every month, which was basically the two of us trying to make each other laugh.

After we stopped working together, our friend-
ship continued to flourish, even after he moved from 250 |参展指引2023

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ILLUSTRATION
Seattle to New Mexico, where he founded the Eisner Award–winning Comics Reporter website, and then to Columbus, Ohio, where he founded the Comics Columbus Festival with Jeff Smith and Vista Jay.

I met Joe via correspondence before Comic-Con 2020. He was a steady presence who helped me through that, having lost his father in 2001. He wanted to make sure I was okay, and continued to ask me about how I was doing long after most folks I knew had stopped doing so. In fact, Tom had a habit of emailing me a short “Are you okay? How’s it going?” every once in a while, and I would always understand what they were trying to achieve. Joe was a gentleman in every sense of the word. I could not do so without his love and support, and that is why I am writing this. Joe Sinnott was the best inker who ever worked in comics, and I am forever grateful to him for his amazing legacy.

If you were in a crowd of folks who worked in the comic book industry and announced, “Joe Sinnott was the best inker who ever worked in comics,” you wouldn’t get a lot of argument. If you said, “Joe Sinnott was the nicest guy who ever worked in comics,” you’d get even less.

He was not only a great inker, he was the glue that kept the project from falling apart more than once when tempers flared, and ultimately the glue that kept the project from falling apart altogether. He inked my pencils expertly in issue 2 and, thereafter—for the remaining 12 issues of theMaximum Carnage comic— Joe Sinnott was the best inker who ever worked in comics.

I met Joe in person at the 1970 New York Comic Art Convention. He couldn’t have been nicer. A little later, I was sitting with Wally Wood and Wally asked me why I was there. I told him it was Joe who inked Jack the Way Jack should be inked. Wally laughed. Joe’s many talents brightened time and space—what an amazing legacy he’s left us.

Joe Sinnott was born on October 16, 1926 in New York City. He was the son of Joseph and Helen Sinnott. Joe had a natural talent for drawing, and his father recognized his potential early on. He encouraged him in that direction. He studied art in high school and also while in the Navy, where he served in Okinawa during World War II. When he was discharged in 1946, he worked in a nickery for a few years before starting his own business.

He declined. He didn’t want to disappoint all the people who thought he should be inking. He didn’t want to pass the pen to someone else. He didn’t want to fail. No one could have been more wrong. Joe Sinnott was the best inker who ever worked in comics, and I am forever grateful to him for his amazing legacy.

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I’m required by law to open my remarks with the over-the-top alliteration above. Joe worked for Marvel Comics for so many years that a tribute in “Marvel-ous” seemed inevitable. In part, that’s because of his long career at the House of Ideas. In part, it’s because he had inked so many issues of Jack Kirby’s pencils on Fantastic Four, Marvel’s flagship book back in the ’60s. And in part, it’s because Joe was so important in defining the appearance of the classic Marvel comic.

Joe Sinnott is without question one of the finest inkers who ever labored in the field of comic books. His India-inked brush line was a thing of beauty—smooth, fluid, the very definition of slick. Joe exhibited amazing brush control throughout his career, but just as important, Joe was a fine draftsman in his own right. He penciled and inked a number of comics back in the day, including some of the early issues of Thor for Marvel. But Joe made his mark primarily as an inker, bringing his draftsmanship to everything he worked on. The list of his credits, both as a penciler and an inker, is extensive and available on the web, so I’ll just mention the one that’s special to me. I was drawing layouts of my issues and inked several of my covers as well. I think—Joe Sinnott did the finishes on one of the most important, Joe was a fine draftsman in his own right. He penciled and inked a number of comics back in the day, including some of the early issues of Thor for Marvel. But Joe made his mark primarily as an inker, bringing his draftsmanship to everything he worked on. The list of his credits, both as a penciler and an inker, is extensive and available on the web, so I’ll just mention the one that’s special to me. I was drawing layouts of my issues and inked several of my covers as well. I think—Joe Sinnott did the finishes on one of the most important covers.

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I never looked more like a classic Marvel artist. That’s pretty much how it was whenever my wife Wreath (Louise) and I saw Joe. We didn’t talk about the fabulous work he had done or his art techniques or what it was like being at Marvel during its golden era in the 1960s. We talked about friends, family, and baseball. Some of those talks took place in the Starway Diner in Saugerties, NY. For some years, a number of comic creators who lived in the Hudson Valley environs would gather in the diner once or twice a year to honor Joe, enjoy a lunch, and talk about everything under the sun, including comics. Sometimes, we needed two tables to accommodate everybody who came, sometimes folk came from other states just to be there. Now, of course, I can think of all kinds of questions I wish I’d asked Joe, but the time spent in his presence really rendered the point of those questions moot. It was a treat to be able to hang out with him and talk about base- ball in the old days. I regret that I never be able to do that again, I’m immeasurably pleased that I got to do it as often as I did.

And that wasn’t our only social interaction. In 2014, several of us who lived in the area worked out our schedules and get together at a minor league base- ball game on a pleasant summer evening. (Believe we saw the Hudson Valley Renegades in Fishkill, NY play. It was one of those minor league promotions, in this case an autograph session with some comic book gods before the game, and then the baseball game after- ward. Wreath and me, Bob Wiacek, Mark McKenna, Fred Hembeck, Mark Sinnott, and Joe took part in the comic book attribution side of things. A row of tables was set just beyond the first-base line, and we signed stuff, mostly for kids whose parents had brought them, and shot the breeze. As always, Joe was as sweet as could be to the fans, chatting with the kids, and I think doing a little sketching as well. If you wanted a ster- ling example of a shining ambassador for comic books, you couldn’t have found a better one. And I would be remiss if I didn’t mention somewhere in here that Joe was a World War II vet, having served in the Navy in the Seabees. That alone would be reason enough to honor him. Sometimes, writing the ending to those sorts of encomiums in the wake of someone’s passing can be difficult. You don’t quite know how to sum up a per- son’s life in a few words. In Joe’s case, it’s easy.

As a human being, as a professional, Sinnott was the best. Godspeed, pal.

Walter Simonson

The first Golden Age cartoon I saw was in 1962, on a hot and sultry summer afternoon, watching the Connecticut woods. A friend struck a Playboy magazine from his father’s den and we were about to see what all the fuss was about. As we flipped through the pages, I blushed at first, and then became bewitched seeing a naked woman swimming underwater, adorned only in scuba gear. Searching for more photos, I stopped dead in my tracks at a cartoon of Dino looking at an exploding mushroom cloud on the horizon with an aide asking, “And supposing you do depress it, Labrador? Somehow else is certain to come across again in a few years.”

Well, this was eye candy for the demented and it rocked my precocious brain, this was an insidiously different from any other cartoonist, with the exception of Charles Addams, but with lurid colors and asymmetrically drawn humans. I would later become familiar with the theme represented here, briefly in the presence of doom.

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ALAN CAMPBELL (1959–2019) By Chris Sturhann

It was the afternoon of Christmas Eve. My family was in the car on the way to my brother’s house for dinner when we got the news. Our friend and longtime Comic-Con cohort Alan Campbell had died of cardiac arrest a few days earlier in his sleep. He was 60. He had some health issues about nine months earlier, but he’d known Alan for close to 30 years, from the time I’d started volunteering for Comic-Con in the early 1990s. Alan had already been volunteering in the Comic-Con-on-site Show Office when I started. There are many stories I could share about Alan, but by far, many more I could not share. That’s just the way he was. To say his sense of humor was inappropriate would be a gross understatement, but that’s what made it all the more funny. At times, it was just wrong, but in a good way. Though biting, his humor was rarely mean-spirited, but it did have a way of cutting to the heart of the matter, especially if the situation involved stupidity. For much of the time I knew Alan, he was on the Comic-Con Board of Directors. Though he never lived in San Diego, it was rare that we didn’t see him at least once a month for meetings. Often the Board meetings seemed to go on forever—his humor made that situation a lot more bearable.

One of my favorite Alan stories happened when he was the head of Exhibitor Registration. At the time, all of the badges for Comic-Con staff members were processed through Exhibitor Registration and included the person’s job title on the badge. I’d had a run of bad luck and managed to lose my badge three years in a row. So, that’s how I ended up handing a new badge to replace the one he’d already given me, again. He did give me some grief, but it was said with a smile. He also gave me something else—a new job title. Typed neatly under my name was, “King of Lost Badges.” I wore that with pride, and managed not to lose it.

When you talked to Alan, you kind of had to take what he said with a grain of salt. He had been in the military for many years, after joining right out of school. Sometimes, he would talk about something from when he had been in the Army, and it sounded like something out of a Tom Clancy novel. Then one time a bunch of us went to play laser tag, and I’ll never forget that. He kicked butt, but maybe there was some truth in his stories.

San Diego Pride weekend often falls the week before Comic-Con, and Alan and I would come to town early for that. Or on the weekend of a normal Comic-Con meeting, he’d come down early and stay late to have breakfast or dinner. I think that’s what I’m going to miss the most, just hanging when he was visiting. Rest in peace, Alan.

Chris Sturhann is a longtime member of the Board of Directors of Comic-Con International and is the editor of the all-show newsletter, Comic-Con Today.

FRANC IMJENÈ (1976–2019) by Beth Gunther

Francisco (Franc) Jiménez III (or Kiko to his family) was a part of Comic-Con’s Guest Relations Team from his teenage years until his passing last December. He loved pop culture and being part of SDC. He had a great deal to do with building up the GRT Department from the very beginning in the 1990s, working with dedication, kindness, and respect for the people put into his care. That care extended to many of his volunteer family in other areas, always taking time to talk and check in on them. No matter where or what group we might be in; neither matter; growing up Comic-Con means family. To Franc, family was everything.

Beth Gunther was a fellow GRT volunteer with Franc and his many friends at SDC.
REMEMBERING OTHERS WE’VE LOST IN THE LAST YEAR

FRANK BOLLE (1924–2020)
Prolific comics artist Frank Bolle passed away on May 2 at the age of 95. The vet-

eran illustrator drew Doctor Solar and Flash Gordon for Gold Key, Tim Holt, Red Mask, and Black Phantom (which he co-created) for Magazine Enterprises, Robotman for DC Comics, The Phantom for Charlton, and the Encyclopedia Brown, Winnie Winkle, Girl of Apartment 3-G, and Heart of Juliet Jones newspaper strips. Frank also assisted Leonard Starr on the On Stage daily and Sunday strips. In 2003 he received an Inkpot Award at Comic-Con.

ELLIE DEVILLE (1947–2020)
Ellie deville, one of 2000 AD’s most prolific and longest-serving letterers, passed away from cancer on Christmas Eve 2019 at the age of 72. Originally trained as a teacher, Ellie began working for 2000 AD in 1992 on Tharg’s Future Shocks before working on such series as The Ten-Seconders, Absalom, The Aleister, Judge Anderson, Agenter, the Judge Dredd/Batman crossover, Rogue Trooper, Button Man, Sinister Dexter, Slaine, Stormworld Dog, Terror Tails, Past Imperfects, Time Twisters, and many others. Ellie was also one of the letterers on Fleetway’s Sonic the Comic; and she worked on many other titles such as Aliens, Batman, Flex Mentallos, The Invisibles, Lucifer, Conan, Star Wars, and T坦 Girl.

JACK ENYART (1950–2019)
Cartoon writer and cartoonist Jack Enyart died at home on Sunday October 13, taken from us by pancreatic cancer. He was 69 years old and one of the cheeriest, friendliest people I ever met. That first meeting was around 1976, give or take a year. He’d been drawing gag cartoons for magazines that didn’t pay all that well and decided to try writing comic book scripts for Western Publishing’s Gold Key line. After many a rejection, he appealed to one of the editors to tell him what he was doing wrong. The editor there gave him copies of a couple of my old scripts and said something like “This is what we’re looking for.” My phone number was on them so Jack called and asked if he could pay me to tutor him. I wouldn’t do this today, but back then, no one had ever asked me for any kind of advice … and Jack seemed so nice on the phone that I invited him over. I didn’t think I told him anything he didn’t already know but after that, he began selling scripts to Gold Key and that somehow led to writing cartoons. Warner Brothers was doing a lot of what they called “panto-up” shows for CBS—half-hour Bugs Bunny specials that contained a few minutes of new animation wrapped around judiciously chosen clips from the classic era. So Jack was the writer of the 1979 Bugs Bunny Thanksgiving Diet special and the 1980 Bugs Bunny Mystery Special and the 1982 Bugs Bunny’s Mad World of Television and so on. He also wrote for all the local cartoon studios on shows including Scooby Doo, Heathcliff, Fraggle Rock, Duck Tales, and on some of the Hanna-Barbera comics I edited in the seventies. Jack—a notorious snappy dresser—billed himself as “Man About Toon” and taught the craft of animation writing for many years in many venues, including online. He was smart and funny and he really loved cartoons … though not as much as he loved Kay, his darling wife/partner of 36 years. —Mark Evanier

DANA FRADON (1922–1999)
Dana Fradon attended the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League of New York, where he met and married comic book artist Ramona Fradon. He wanted to pursue a career in political cartooning and landed his first contract with The New Yorker magazine in the late 1940s. He went on to become one of the magazine’s top
tier cartoonists for some 55 years, contributing nearly 1400 cartoons. He also sold
to the Saturday Evening Post, Playboy, and other magazines. After retirement, he published a series of award-winning children’s books on medieval history, with a character named for Dana.

WOLFGANG FUCHS (1945–2020)
German comics journalist and writer Wolfgang Fuchs was one of the first authors in German-speaking countries to seriously deal with the medium of comics. With Rainhard C. Rittenberger, he wrote Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium (1971), which for many American fans was their first introduction to comics outside the U.S. He also worked on Maurice Horn’s The World Encyclopedia of Comics and The Who’s Who of American Comic Books (4-volumes, with Jerry Bails and Hames Ware, 1973–1976). He was editor of the German magazines Peanuts and Garfield and wrote numerous articles for radio and magazines. As a translator, he tackled Garfield, Prince Valiant, Asterix, a number of Disney comics, and Brian Fies’ Eisner Award–winning Mom’s Cancer.

SID HAY (1939–2019)
Actor Sid Hay was best known for his roles in horror films, notably as psychotic
down: Captain Spaulding in the Rob Zombie films House of 1000 Corpses, The Devil’s Rejects, and 3 from Hell. He also appeared in numerous TV programs, including Batman, Gunsmoke, Mission: Impossible, Star Trek, Get Smart, Charlie’s Angles, Fantasy Island, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, The A-Team, and MacGyver. He was very popular with fans and appeared at Comic-Con a number of times.

TOM PATTISON (1955–2019)
DC comics staffer Tom Patterson served as the company’s Royalties & Participation Manager from 1996 until his retirement in 2011, overseeing the royalty payments for their creators. Former DC Comics Publisher/President Paul Levitz posted this tribute on Facebook. “For many years, DC had the reputation of making its royalty payments promptly and fully, and with
detail ample for talent to understand the basis on which they were being paid. While many of us were involved in the process, there was one person disproportionately responsible for making it happen every month. Tom was soft-spoken, and largely invisible to the wider comics community. But his efforts made so many people’s lives better, simply by ensuring that an important flow of their income would arrive smoothly and honestly. … Tom made the whole company look good.”

LEE SALEM (1946–2019)
Lee Salem served as editor and then president of Universal Press Syndicate, now
called Andrews McMeel Syndication beginning in 1974. In his nearly four decades at Universal, he is credited with editing and developing some of the iconic comic strips of our time, including Calvin and Hobbes, Cathy, Cul de Sac, Doonesbury, The Far Side, and For Better or For Worse. Lee’s calm demeanor and steadfast defense of
cartoonists’ creative rights resulted in close friendships with numerous creators. In 2013, he was awarded the Silver T-Square award by the National Cartoonists Society for his contributions to the industry. He retired in 2014.

RICHARD WILLIAMS (1933–2019)
The Academy Award–winning director Richard “Dick” Williams is best known for
his contributions to the industry. He retired in 2014.

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