





EXIT LAUGHING

on leaving fandom
by BERNIE BUBNIS

"I'm leaving fandom—and that's final!"

My good ol' fan buddy, Ronn Fradkin, jumped to my side. Tears streaked down his cheeks as he pleaded,

"No Bernie, you can't leave it all behind you. The fun, the games, the cutthroat; and especially think of how you'll be missed!"

Ronn and I looked at each other almost instantly and we both mouthed the same question, "Bernie who?"

"Bernie who?" was a good question. I had been in comic fandom since the early issues of Dick Lupoff's *Xero* was featuring "All in Color For A Dime." I printed a number of zines with my own money and distributed them free (Super Hero Calendar in '62, four issues of *American Man*, and eight issues of *Spanglerized*). I also printed a number of zines with other people's money and distributed them at very high prices (*Comic Heroes Revisited* numbers one and two and *Outside* numbers one through four). I got up a few bucks from interested fans in '64, coughed up mucho bucks of my own and threw together the first N.Y. Comicon.

Fradkin tried to comfort me,

"Look, pal, we've had a lot of really great fun in fandom. We've fought the battle of the Jerry Bails Empire trying to control N.Y. fandom, and won. We've stuck by our beliefs; we've walked together through the terrors and pitfalls of youth; we've laughed in the face of danger; we've... by the way, Bubs, since you're leaving fandom I'll take all those comics off your hands."

So much for my close friendship with Ronn Fradkin.

I was a boy/man in turmoil. Where could I turn? I needed answers to my questions, "Why fandom?" There was only one person to turn to at a crucial time such as this—the infamous Artie Tripp.

Artie Tripp is the same wheeler dealer who printed his own Mickey Mouse watch faces, placed them into cheap Swiss cases, and sold them to dealers for one hundred dollars a piece. The same Artie Tripp who always bought a dealers table at the early Comicons. During the Con he would raise a big fuss that someone had robbed his complete set of *All Stars*. During the ensuing commotion, Tripp would lift choice comics off other dealer's tables as they were busy trying to help find his *All Stars*. Yes, Art Tripp, a great fan in the Rogofsky/John Dillinger tradition.

My head was held low as I trudged into the Tripp residence. Artie would definitely know what to do. Good ol' Artie. "I'm glad you're leaving fandom, Bubnis, you're the only person I know who's a bigger crook than I am. Wanna buy some Polaroid shots of Supergirl?"

Good ol' Artie. I left Artie's house knowing I had nowhere to turn.

Walking towards my car, I noticed another great N.Y. fan popping the hubcaps off my Chevy—good ol' Len Wein.

Len was the very same fellow Ronn and I banned from the first comicon. We mistakenly believed him to be a crook. He showed up anyway to distributed dittoed sheets telling his side of the story—and he also stole a few comics.

"Len, I'm thinking of leaving fandom and I want your advice. I know we've had differences in the past, but please forget them and help me find an answer to this dilemma."

Len, sporting his usual frown and ruffled brows, shook his head slowly as if to say "I'll help," and proceeded to shove his jack handle into my mouth and out the back of my neck.

Two weeks later I woke up in Good Samaritan Hospital, Bayshore. I watched as a doctor walked to the foot of my bed. He looked at me and gave me a reassuring grin. His hand propped up the medical chart hanging from the end rail of my bed. His eyes opened wide, his face squeezed up a little, and he said,

"Bernie who?"

I not only left fandom that day—Blue Cross cancelled my policy also.



PREFACE

The words 'con man' seem to be reserved for a special breed of deviate. The fellow who works the carnies and circuses across the country, the fellow who sells you your next used car, even the fellow who lives in the White House. They all are 'con men' of a sort and each dangerous in his own element.

The "Mr. X" of the following article is a 'con man' by profession. He started his career years ago when we were both kids on the lower East Side of New York. We used to pull Murphys (a Murphy is selling some rube a whore and then disappearing with the sucker's money and not delivering the hooker). My parents escaped from the neighborhood and opened by mind to new outlets of 'growing up'. He lived there till he was twenty.

Today Mr. X makes his living from crooked deals and shady liv-

ing; but he is a fan. He collects comics, reads fanzines and even contributes an LoC or two. He has been a fan ever since I invited him to the first Comic Convention in 1964. He returns to the cons regularly (recently he has also attended cons in other states) and fleeces 'em clean of whatever he light-fingers.

The following article is Part 1 of a series from Mr. X. It is also a challenge from a man I consider very sick. He has asked me to make sure these articles see print so everyone will know how to recognize him. Or in other words, Mr. X challenges you to catch him!

I've accepted his offer to help him get these articles published for my own reasons. To WARN you to be on the lookout at fan gatherings. You work hard for whatever treasures you bring with you—make sure people like Mr. X don't fleece you. It's important we all realize nuts like X do exist—measure his words well and catch him—for his and your sakes.

□ Bernie Bubnis

GUERRILLA WARFARE AT COMIC CONVENTIONS BY 'MR. X'



Guerilla Warfare? Comic Conventions? Did you read that right?

Sure you did, and I'm here to explain the best way to attend your next comic convention.

I never pay any entrance fee at conventions and this year's NY Comicon was no different. As I turned the corner before the admissions table I flashed a wallet high in the air. I let it slip open to reveal a shiny metal badge. As I neared the table I flipped it closed and talked quickly. "Do you have a Hugo Gernsback registered here?"

The young girl flipped cards, shuffled papers, looked through manila envelopes and generally lost her cool. I hoped Hugo wasn't registered. This famous inventor and first editor of *Amazing Stories* had unfortunately passed on. She said he wasn't registered but I could talk with a convention official if I wished. I twitched my lip, tucked my Lone Ranger badge (honest) back into my jacket and said, "I'll just see for myself. If Lieutenant Ames arrives, tell him I'm inside."

This stunt only works if you wear a jacket and plan to use the gag only on that day. I'm only there to steal—so in my case I only needed one day, but more about this in a later paragraph.

The next goof is an easy one to pull off, but you need a friend to work with you. I've pulled this off on a number of occasions and the results are always rewarding. Your friend should be carrying a portable tape recorder and keep referring to you as "Mr. Manning" (or whatever absent pro you know will not show up). We picked Russ Manning because he lives in California and not too many folks know what Russ looks like. It's easier in other

states where less pros are present—a full beard and you could assume anyone's identity. Once a few fans realize that Russ Manning is standing near them the autograph hunters come out of the woodwork. They don't care if you're the Boston Strangler—they just want your autograph. The barrage of fans usually leads to a dinner invitation and a good meal in the hotel restaurant.

Thievery is a gas. The only warning here is don't steal comic books. Everyone and his brother—in-law is keeping an eye on the oldies in this category. I'm partial to large tag items like comic character watches. Dealers of this merchandise love to talk shop and if you are working with a friend you can grab at least three watches at a sitting. They are big tag items (many costing over thirty dollars) so the dealer wants you to see his wares and not hassle you so you leave before a purchase. Also, watch collectors are not considered thieves and a little studying of watch history will help to cover your tracks. The dealer thinks you know your beans and real collectors don't steal—they trade. Talk trade while your friend cops choicer items than the ones you are focusing attention on.

There are lots of kids at these cons and that gives me a chance to do a little flim-flamming. I buy a load of girlie mags at a used book store and then bring them to the con with me. I lay them on a dealer's table while I look through some of his wares. Almost immediately the top sexy cover has caught a young 'un's eye and then I get a cut of all that extra convention money he

saved all year. I don't ask any identification of age and I make a good buck on the mark-up. You can pull this money maker all day if you work quickly and keep your prices fair enough so no one raises a stink.

Aside from a huster: The NY Comicon has gotten so large that this year's event had a couple of guest stars. Hookers (N.Y. ladies of pleasure — yours) frequent all conventions of sizable attendance in town. They are tipped by hotel personnel, but some bell boy pulled a hummer this year. Three that I spotted were strolling around by the admissions table outside the dealers' rooms. The hard

looks on their paste faces didn't loosen a bit when they saw what kind of convention they had walked into.

Two fans met by the entrance to trade stalls. One of the girls kneeled next to a pudgy thirties-type fellow and admired his choice of stills.

She said, "How's you like to come over to my sister's place for a while, hey honey?"

He lifted his jowly face and puffed, "Does she have any Republics?" She eased herself back into the night and with her next pickup goes the message of the N.Y. Comicon.

the great atomic aftermath and fresh fruit festival

j. ian schumeister



MEET BUBS

Dear Neal;

Here is the completed interview.

If you wish, I can supply copies of some of my early zines—if you want to illustrate the interview with any of my early work. I can also supply pictures of me and the missus screwing in bed if you wish to show some scenes of my personal life. I can also send you a pair of my first shoes (bronzed) if you'd like to feature a picture of these (I'll work with you 100% on this, Neal.) How about changing the zine's name to Bubnis Comics and feature a full portrait of me on the cover?

If you need any more suggestions, I'll be glad to give 'em.

Thanks—and bestest:

Bubs

David Chamberlain said in Nuff Said Newsletter number 3, "I was going to do a Bernie Bubnis checklist, but then I couldn't remember what Bernie Bubnis ever did, even though he says 'he is a pro.'" Just exactly what have you done professionally? Who the hell is David Chamberlain? It's just this type of thinking that turns me off to many fans. Here this clown hasn't seen my name in a comic book, so he thinks I don't exist. Well, I don't like to reveal my "Professional" background, but I guess I'd better put these rumors to rest. I started as copy boy with the old New York Herald Tribune. My by-line (appearing after Harvey Pike's) was featured in a series of articles on small-time crime in the Tribune. From there, I free-lanced to the men's mags. I wrote any number of stories under various house by-lines. I have written copy for Doyle, Dane, and Bernbach advertising agency. I'm presently working for Time-Life. So who the hell is David Chamberlain?

You told me before that this was the first time you were ever interviewed. You mean to say no one ever approached you about it before?

Well, I've always nursed a secret desire to be interviewed—ever since they kept overlooking me at Gordon Love's Rocket's Blast/Comiccollector. Eh, let me explain that a little better. I was one of the first seven or so young 'uns to write Love in regard to his letter in an early Mystery in Space. With this response, he issued a carbon copied 2 pager called The Rocket's Blast. I think two of my stories appeared in the first issue—he paid me 25 cents apiece. A few issues later, he went to mimeo and the zine began to take shape. I possessed a ditto machine (the in way in those days to reproduce art and script) so I copied the origin of Atom out of the current issue, ran it off on ditto, and it was included in RB as the first artwork supplement. I also ran off an original feature of my own—"Wanted Dead or Alive" which featured my drawings of the popular fans of the day—G.B. Love, Steve Perrin, Rick Weingroff, and a few others. This took two installments. Then came the

"HOW ABOUT CHANGING THE ZINE'S NAME TO BUBNIS COMICS AND FEATURING A PORTRAIT OF ME ON THE COVER?"

"Spotlight on the Pros" series, which contained humorous articles about my visiting pros like Infantino, Ditko, and the whole bunch. I also did a few things called "Professional Ponderings" about local pro-gossip. Another series ran for quite some time in the RB—self-written features on noted fans who worked for the RB. I guess I must have watched at least forty issues go by and Love never requested a feature on me once. This is not to say that I'm still not waiting for a letter from him. I figure there were a few other folks in my way on the RB-CC roster and I expect a request from him shortly. But until then, I'm happy to be interviewed.

What do you think of the pro work of your friends (Wein, Weiss, etc.)?

Len Wein was the editor of a pleasing fanzine called Aurora. He fancied himself as an artist... but his talent was very well hidden. He printed a lot of my artwork in Aurora and I guess neither of us realized we were heading in the other direction. I'm not thrilled with much in comic book writing, so I've no real opinion on the sparse work Wein has done. Weiss did some work for my '64 N.Y. Convention Booklet and the '62 Super Hero Calendar. In those days I classified him as the only fan artist with style. I loved his old work. He is competent today and I expect he will get much better.

What was the first fanzine that printed your work?

Well, I was in science fiction fandom for a while before Xero and Alter Ego came onto the scene. In this fandom, I did some stories, articles, and artwork for Buck Coulson's Yandro and a number of others (Realm of Fantasy, Twilight Zine, et. al.). For comic fandom, I issued my own zine, Comics Heroes Revisited a few months after Alter Ego 1, so there wasn't anyone else to write for in those days. CHR 1 had a good article on the Sub-Mariner/Torch battles and it also reprinted an original Human Torch advertisement from the fifties. I traced this onto the ditto master myself. I also remember the person at Marvel who gave me permission at the time, a gal named Trudy Ross. CHR 2 had a long article on comic history by Rick Weingroff. About this time, I went to interview Jack Kirby. I sent a sample of the completed interview to Biljo White (for publication in the early Comiccollector). I was thinking of writing an article around the interview, but White published it as is in CC 9. There are a bunch of other zines that carried opinion articles and artwork by me but I don't recall any of them.

Can you explain briefly why you left fandom a few years ago, this time the truth (see "Exit Laughing," in this ish)? I grew up in fandom and I was getting tired of it. That was

BUBNIS COMICS



before all the new blood was pumped into it, such as the new areas of photo-offset, the great new artistic talent, and some really dynamic fanzines.

How and why did you get back into fandom?
Gordon Love asked me to contribute some type of article on early fandom. Instead, I wrote a long letter to him about some subjects that might make a good article. He split the letter in half and printed two installments of "Don't Look Back, Honey, Your Slip is Showing." Good of Gordon I owe strikes lightning into my fannish light again! He's one of my favorite people and: wow, do I admire his energy.

While on the subject of fans, who else do you admire in fandom?
I like some of the new fan editors like Groth, Wilson, Light, and of course, Pozner. The art picture has really picked up, but I hate to see it taking such a dominating influence on fandom. I feel we are in store for a reversal of policies and the fan writer will be taking the forefront soon. I don't get too many fanzines, so I really can't comment.

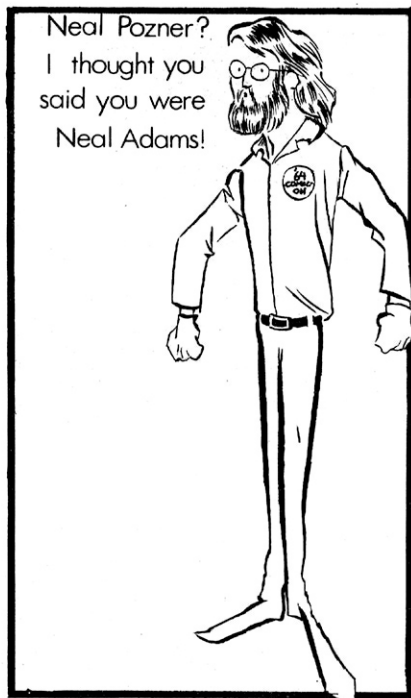
Do you have any interests outside of fandom?
Rape, sodomy, and murder. Outside of these hobbies, I'm like any other normal comic book reader.

How about a little info on the first NY Comic Convention that you organized?

I could go on all day with a subject like the con, but I'll sum it up quickly. There are so many things that went on behind the scenes for the first ever comic convention that I'm trying to write up a long (twenty-thirty handwritten pages of notes so far) article about the whole silly trip. Let it suffice to say my cohort Ronn Fradkin lent a supporting shoulder as did Artie Tripp. Ethan Roberts got us the hall (Workman's Circle, 4th Av., and 14th st.) and about one hundred and fifty folks showed up. Steve Ditko dropped by and Flo Steinberg, Stan Lee's secretary, came by on her own time to enjoy the gathering. Lee sent over a fellow named Dave Twedt to answer questions relating to Marvel. Marvel supported us every inch of the way. DC stuck original art in our ears and told us to get lost. Tom Gill (artist for Lone Ranger) also stopped in to chat and give a speech. It only lasted a couple of hours, but it proved to a (at that time) disbelieving fandom that a convention was possible. The Academy of Comic Book Art and Sciences (Jerry Bails and company) spent the rest of the year trying to discredit our con, since they were planning one for 1965—and everybody knows Bails does every thing first. Some folk at the first con were Phil Seuling, Howard Rogofsky, Bill Thailing, Claude Held, Dick Lupoff Larry Ivie, and a whole bunch of the greatest folks in the world.

What do you think of the present cons?

They're run very well and I try to get to at least one day of activity each year. The hucksters' tables are filled with goodies and, although I've heard it all a thousand times, the speeches and panels still manage to hold my interest.



Do you ever think you'll become really active in fandom again, maybe even to the point of publishing your own zine?

I'd love to publish a zine about my newest hobby, the original Dead End Kids. I've been dying to get something into print about the Kids for years. As far as comic zines go, someone just wrote me about a special mag devoted to Bob Powell. This intrigues me and it might even force me back into publishing and editing.

Do you still buy comics? Any favorites?

Yes, I still buy 'em up. The Kirby stuff is easy and enjoyable reading. I also dig some of O'Neil's Batman sagas. And, of course, I always get a kick out of a book illored by Neal Adams.

Who has influenced your style?

My writing style is poor, so I won't blame anyone for that, but I've always felt my humorous approach to things is due to Steve Allen. I've always admired his wit and humor, so much so that I've patterned certain traits of my own after his youth. I suppose I retain a few of these up to this day and just don't realize it.

Do you still feel the same way about the end of comics as you did when you wrote "All Hail! The Comic Book is Dead!" which appeared in *The Collector* 21?

Did I write that? You must have confused me with another Bernie Bubnis.

Here's your last chance—your chance to end this interview in your favor and get the last word. Do you have anything to say?

Well, I appreciate the fact that you felt an article on me was worth your justifying the time to put it together. Comic fandom has been a ball for me. I've got a billion great memories and I've enjoyed sharing some of them with your readers.

Thank you.



Art by Bubnis with Pozner 32



GRAPHIC OPINION

Report by Neal Pozner

Graphic Opinion is a political comic strip currently running in the Long Island paper, *Newsday*, every Sunday. It was originally proposed and conceived by Tom Plate, who was editor of the Viewpoints section (Editorials and political opinion) as well as the Sunday "Ideas" section, (*Newsday's* Journal of Opinion) at that time.

Plate came up with this political comic strip idea for the new Sunday *Newsday*. He saw two purposes in it: 1. To attract readers, and 2. to have good art in addition to good articles in the paper. He thought the best way of combining the two was in the comic strip format, with a political or sociological comment.

Plate pointed out, "What can you do graphically in a newspaper? You can have photographs, but *Life* tried that, and it failed because people watch television now. You can have illustrations.

Newsday has a lot of them. Fine, but the illustrations are secondary to the text. How do you make an illustration of primary importance? well, one of the most popular features in any paper is the comics. Take the comics concept, give it a political bent, and put it in your political section (Which supposedly your more issue-aware, politically-minded people are reading)."

"Having a strip like that is good. People can take only so many editorials and signed opinions. You get tired of reading. If you come in with something that expresses opinions dramatically and differently, it has enormous potential for grabbing a reader, because of this very fact."

Tom Plate originally came up with the idea when a friend of his, an editor of *Esquire*, did a feature on the new comics. Plate talked with him about novel features that could be included in the new Sunday *Newsday* that hadn't been done a million times by everyone else. His friend suggested Plate contact the artists, with the view towards a political strip suitable for a middle class audience newspaper.

He wasn't looking for artists of the type that work for underground comix, because Plate felt they would be over the head of most of *Newsday's* Long Island, middle-class families. They were forced to look for very solid concepts, the art of which you would EXPECT to see in a comic strip. For example, Plate said he could have done a strip called "Racist Pig" and have him sitting with his beer belly in front of his color TV in his split-level home. "You can do that," said Plate, "And accept the 50,000 cancellations that come along with it." The comic just HAD to be what suburbanites expected it to be.

Plate chose several artists at Marvel because his friend at *Esquire* had worked with them and said they were very fast, an important consideration for newspapers. An additional factor was the budget, which necessitated hiring young artists who were trying

to make their mark in the industry and would be happy to make a little extra money. His friend also thought they were competent, so he looked at the things in *Esquire*, and thought some of the artists were close enough to what people expect from comics that they could respond to them, as opposed to other more experimental artists.

He called up Herb Trimpe and told him what was wanted: four or five recurring characters in a political, sociological comic strip. Herb then came up with six or seven artists. Some had ideas that Plate didn't respond to, so were never used. Some, like Trimpe's, hit right away. The idea was to get four different artists doing strips that would alternate. They got Trimpe and Steve Englehart—Barry Smith joined the team at the last minute, and the fourth is a staff artist at *Newsday*, Gary Viscupic.

It was hoped there would be two political people (Trimpe and Englehart), one sociological commentary person (Barry Smith), and the fourth a cultural commentator. They have been unable to locate that fourth, and so have been using Viscupic's.

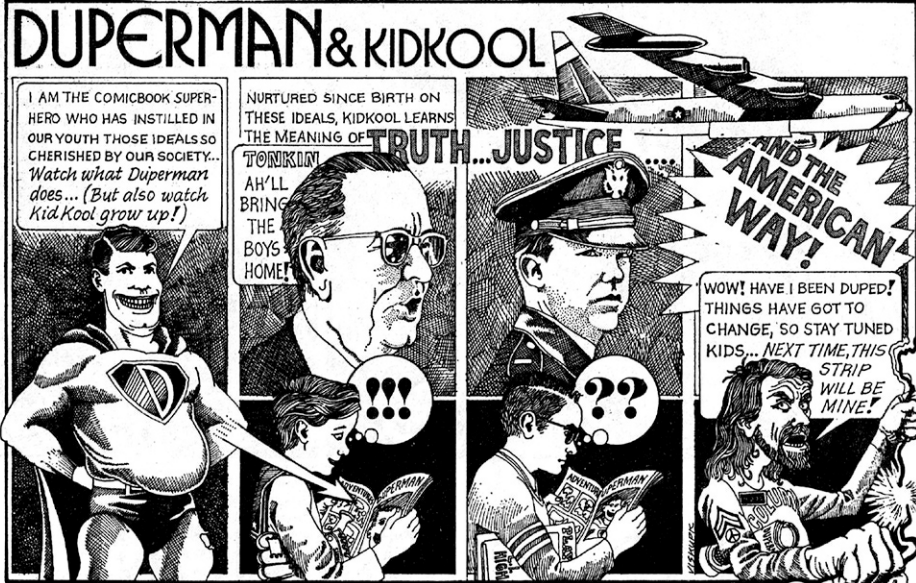
Herb Trimpe is doing a strip called "The Eternal Soldier," which for the most part, comments on the evils of war. Recently he has started branching out and is commenting on other aspects of politics. He is considered by Plate the most "solid" (in terms of looking like a comic) of the artists.

Steve Englehart came up with the idea of "The Phantom of the Third World" ("The man of a thousand faces, who can become any down-trodden type at will, and appear anywhere on the globe."), and was given the story line by Plate for the first few. Englehart currently does the story and the art.

Barry Smith came in at the last minute with his unique, "Love is Strange" strip. There was a lot of resistance to him at first from the people at *Newsday* (and Plate believes that many people at *Newsday* still don't understand a thing he's doing.), but is the most appealing of the artists to Plate and many fans. The strip is very subtle in its abstract views of love.

Gary Viscupic is a staff artist at *Newsday*, from the University of Illinois. Viscupic describes his strip, "Duperman and Kid Kool": "It represents kids growing up, looking at comic books (I had this image of Super-man. . .), and recognizing that it was all a bunch of hogwash. Duperman represents, tongue-in-cheek, the fact that we've been duped by the whole concept of America the Beautiful, apple pie, and the whole thing. Kid Kool is a symbol of kid's awareness in breaking this deception." His art is very illustrative, but Plate feels he hasn't gotten the feel of the medium yet, and has to be worked with.

In addition, *Newsday* is using political cartoonist Ranan Lurie's syndicated comic strip, "Mr. Politician," as a back-up feature, in case



Viscupic's doesn't work out.

Both Plate and John Walsh, current editor of the Ideas section, (Plate is now an editor at *New York* magazine) believe this format has tremendous potential and is vastly different from the political cartoon idea. "One particular departure," says Plate, "is that there is a recurring character. It's more complicated than a political cartoon, too. The cartoon is dependant on the caption. The art rarely carries it. With the strip, you have a few more dimensions to play around with." John Walsh says, "This is a self-contained vehicle. I think you can say more with it than in a political cartoon. Perhaps you don't get the impact you would with a Tom Darcy or a Olphant, but it offers a more sophisticated way of making a commentary on a political situation. There are so many things you can bring in. The bigger space is an important consideration."

Walsh says it has brought mixed reaction from the staff. "A lot of people don't like it because the section is heavy enough with opinion and cerebral matter, and we don't think we should impose a cerebral comic strip on somebody."

The feature is a success now, Plate thinks, since it is accepted. "I had a difficult time selling it at *Newsday*, and met a lot of opposition from the editors. I had to fight for it. It's difficult to start something new, where there is no precedent to follow. It doesn't cost *Newsday* much money, it gets people to look at the section, and it develops a lot of possibilities that haven't been explored."

The possibilities Plate mentioned include more room, perhaps even a full page, color (inserting the strip in the new rotogravure section of the paper), and possible syndication.

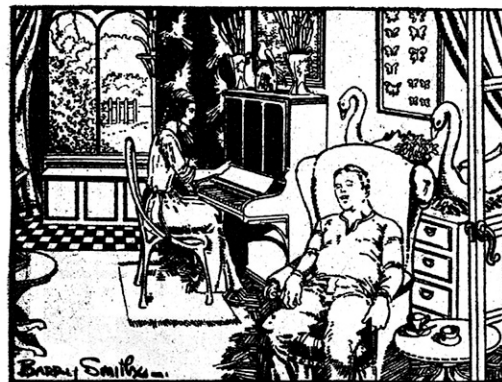
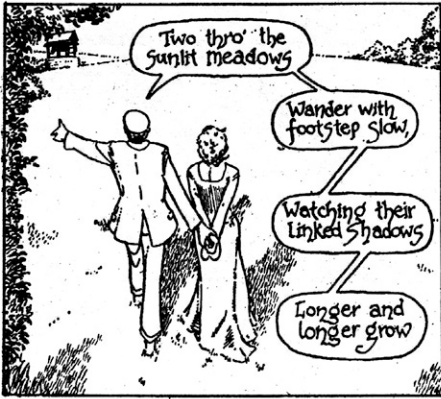
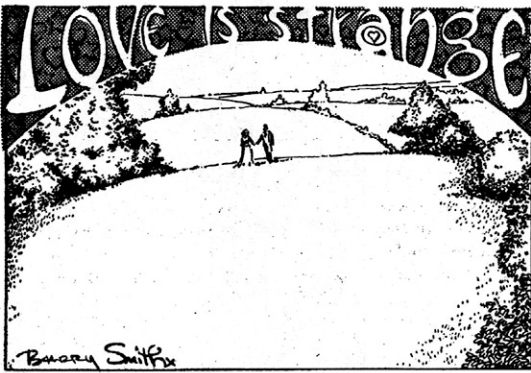
Plate says, "The whole concept of the political strip needs to be refined, but I think the newspapers can exploit it. *Newsday* is probably the only Establishment paper in the country that has ventured in this field. It's important that Graphic Opinion succeeds, because if it does, it can even be syndicated. The potential of the medium is enormous."

"The Eternal Soldier," "Duperman and Kidkool," and "Love is Strange" are copyrighted 1972 by *Newsday*, Inc. "The Phantom of the Third World" is copyrighted 1972 by Steve Englehart.

LOVE IS STRANGE

Barry Smitz





The Phandom Stranger

IN



JANSON-9-71

'AN AUTOGRAPHED PAPER DRINKING CUP (autographed &

used by F. Fra-
zetta)\$15.00'
-PRICELIST OF H. ROGOFSKY, 4/71



"THE PHANDOM STRANGER!! WHY?"

The man sat at a large, well-made desk, and added figures on a calculating machine, cackling to himself as he did so. As the list of sums grew, sweat beaded upon his greasy brow, and the laughter took on a higher, tenser tone. The man's eyes bulged slightly from amidst the mounds of fat that was his face, and he grew more and more intent upon the tape that curled from the machine. That tape represented his earnings for that week, four figures already, and he viewed the list with a feeling that bordered on physical lust.

His droolings were abruptly halted by the sound of heavy footsteps sounding behind him. He whirled in the padded swivel chair, and paled as he saw the intruder. "The Phandom Stranger! Why have you come here? How did you get . . . I mean . . ."

"Yes, I know what you mean. You've spent thousands to make this penthouse airtight, and you want to know how I managed to gain entrance. Sorry, pal, that's my secret. An ace in reserve."

The man in the chair looked into the face of the Stranger, and felt his old confidence again. He had been shaken when the Stranger made known his presence, but now he felt in control of the situation. After all, wasn't he the greatest comic book dealer of all? Weren't there servants, or at least the faithful old Igor, waiting outside the study door, waiting only for his call to rush in? What had he to worry about?

"Look Stranger, why're you here? You know I've always been a straight dealer. I've always treated my customers right, given them everything that I promised them. So why're you here?"

"You're right, fat man, legally you're in the clear. You've managed to stay on the right side of the line, though you've come awfully close to crossing it. But now, legal or not, you've gone too far." The Stranger's face contorted into a fearsome visage, rage personified. "This latest advertisement of yours is too much." The Stranger threw a copy of the dealer's price list into the fat, sallow face.

Text by JEFF ANDERSON
Art by KLAUS JANSON



The dealer picked up the booklet, and quickly paged through it. "Why, everything in here's on the up and up. I see nothing that could be called, from any angle, illegal."

"Look on the third page, rat. Read it out loud."

"Third page? Why, it's only an ordinary ad, just like any other in the book. I see nothing . . ."

The Stranger snatched the sale list from the dealer's pudgy hands. "Okay, then, I'll read it to you. Listen—NEW! Original, one of a kind statues and figurines done by all your favorite comic book artists! These range from two and a half to six inches in length, and vary in circumference. They are of a plain, unpainted color, and each one is different! The material used varies in color and consistency, and is of a soft, pliable nature. These figurines took up to three days to make, and are sure to be the pride of your collection! Only fifteen dollars for each of these individualized figurines! These are in the modern art vein, and you can spend hours looking at the piece from all angles, forever finding new and different forms! *Sorry, we are unable to give you choice of artist, but we can guarantee that each is the product of a staff member of either Marvel, DC, or Warren."

When he had finished reading, the Stranger's face was darker than ever, and his entire body seemed to radiate anger and menace. The fat little dealer, on the other hand, was still confident and sure of himself.

"Sure," he said, "that's my ad. What of it? Fifteen dollars seems to me to be a small price for such one of a kind items by the pros. The fans, I'm sure, will be happy to pay that much, and I'll be happy to sell the items. So what's wrong with that?"

"You fat Polish pig! The words came from deep in the Stranger's throat, and his lips did not move as he spoke, "You greasy bastard! You're willing to sell such things to unsuspecting fans... you're willing to sell them such shit!?" He spat the words out.

At the final phrase, the dealer's face went white, and his pudgy body shook. "What?" he quiveringly asked, "What did you say?"

"You were willing to sell that... that shit to your buyers", the Stranger continued, "and then you would have hidden behind a technicality! Yes, you would've been protected by the law; you've done nothing illegal. But you didn't reckon on me becoming involved in the case. And that was a serious mistake indeed!"

"But — how did you know? The list was just released today, and I haven't sent any of the figurines to anyone!"

"Your eyes. You can put on all the disguises you want, but the greed in your eyes always shines out like a beacon. You see, I saw you coming out of the National Periodical Publications building late one night. I was patrolling to protect the offices against artwork thieves, and I happened to see you leaving. I first saw you from above, and that fat waddle-walk of yours attracted my attention. I didn't think it was you until I saw the greed shining in your eyes. I thought maybe you had gold bullion in the bag you were carrying! You see," said the Stranger, "greed has been your downfall in more ways than one!"

"That night I followed you, and was able to get good look at the bag and its contents. For a long

time I was puzzled about your plans. I could think of no reason why you would want such things. I never dreamed you capable of such inhuman deception."

The Stranger made a move for the greasy dealer. "And I intend to prevent it..."

The dealer's face twisted in fear, and he shrieked toward the door of his study, "Igor! Igor, come here! I need you!"

"No need to bother, punk. I took care of him on my way here." His strong arm pinioned the dealer's arms behind his back, and held them deep into the rings of fat that covered his middle. He shrieked again, this time a formless sound that conveyed no other message than pure fear.

"I think it's time I gave you a taste of what you had planned for fandom. And remember," he said, "this is only the start of what will happen to you if you insist on carrying out this scheme." And then the Phandom Stranger was gone.

Three hours later, Igor awakened, feeling stiff and sore, and still a bit groggy. But he hurried into his master's study, attracted by the muffled sobs and curses that emanated from the room. And there in the dark he almost tripped over his master, a bloated figure hamstringed on the floor, its face thrust into a large plastic sack that smelled sickeningly of feces.

And in the weeks that followed, every order for the figurines was returned to the sender, with a free Golden Age comic thrown in for good measure. Another dastardly deed prevented, and fandom would never know it had to thank . . . THE PHANDOM STRANGER





Not THAT Billy Graham!



(C) 1970 Warren Publications, Inc.

How did you first become interested in art?

I used to trace comic books. That's how I learned. I used to get comic books and cut out every single panel in a comic and paste them on a milk carton. The bottom of the milk carton was like a frame. I put them all on my wall. It was covered.

How did you first become interested in comics?

A cousin of mine used to read a lot of comics. When I'd go to his house, I'd steal his.

What did he say about that?

He said, "Bring them back." Yeah, I'd bring them back . . . all cut up.

Did you read the pulps or the comic strips?

Just the strips. My favorite then was Moon Mullins.

What's your favorite now?

Moon Mullins. One of my favorite ones now is Prince Valiant. I liked it better when it was done by Hal Foster.

Who would you say influenced you back then?

This is going to sound weird, but one of the guys who influenced my work then I'm finally working with now . . . George Tuska.

Who influenced your stuff as your style was developing?

Al Williamson and Frank Frazetta. I used to work at EC. I handled the books in the mailroom, making sure the books came out, taking care of the kids who came up to buy them. From time to time, the artists themselves used to come in. I'd show them what I did. Al Williamson used to help me a lot. So did Johnny Craig, Marie Severin, and Bill Gaines.

Were you a fan of their stuff?

I bugged them for a job for about a year. I went down every week and bought anything and everything. So they finally said, "We'll keep you here and give you a job."

Did you go to any art schools?

The High School of Music and Art and then the School of Visual Art.

Hogarth taught there, didn't he?

Yeah, he's retired now, but he was a great influence on my work. I took anatomy under him and he told me to go into comics. I used to see some of the Tarzan originals he did. They were beautiful. I

have a book by him, Dynamic Anatomy, that's like a bible to me.

Do you still use it for reference?

Sure. That and Bridgeman's books.

Do you think it's better to learn the ropes of the field through art school or as someone's assistant?

As an assistant for an already-established artist. He can show you techniques; how to hold a brush, how to hold a pen. When you're working they can be there right alongside of you, whereas in school, an instructor can only tell you what to do. He has to move from student to student and can't spend four or five hours with one student. So if someone wants to become a cartoonist, he should study under the artist he admires most and try to become his assistant.

When I went to Visual Arts, I didn't take anything in the way of cartooning. I took anatomy, fine illustrations, book jackets.

Did you know then that you wanted to go into comics?

No, I didn't know. I just took a general course to become a commercial artist. It happened by accident that I got into comics. I went up to Warren and I threw work at him. I said, "Here, use it," and left. He called me later on and said he would like me to do something. I finally went to work for him.

How about a brief history of your career?

I first started in the commercial field, with my work printed in magazines. To me it was bleach. So I learned from the work I saw printed. I tried to get my hands on as many black and white drawings by different artists, so I could study them, and I developed a certain style.

What was the first thing you were paid for?

That was in elementary school. I won a contest on "Keep Your City Clean."

It didn't work.

The City gave me twenty five dollars. I was eleven years old. It was printed in Junior Scholastic. That was the first time I'd been paid for art . . . and I've been getting twenty five dollars ever since.

Do you prefer to ink your own pencils?

Yes and no. When you have to lay out a story and pencil it, it has to be approved. The pencils are rough at first, and then you tighten them up. Then when they are approved, you have to go over them

with ink and be certain that the same quality comes out when it's inked. That's a lot of work. It's very creative and you feel awfully proud of the end result, but it's a lot of work. When someone else does all that work and all you have to do is to ink it, that's a gas. There's nothing to do. It's not creative, but it's easy.

Have you seen Wally Wood's inks? He changes the entire pencils around to his style and does some creative things with them.

You know why? Because he's Wally Wood!

How do you think Steranko felt when he was doing Shield? He wrote, pencilled, inked and colored them.

Steranko came out with some pretty weird innovations in the comic art form. The man is a genius. He worked hard and he got to where he is today by hard work.

Steranko used movie effects to a great extent; slow motion, pan back.

Like I said, the man is fantastic. In one page, he can get 14 pencils to show the gradual transition of events. I tried it once in a story entitled "Rhapsody in Red." A page called for 6 panels but I wanted to show this approach that this countess had, coming down stairs and approaching two people, and leave one balloon, in the first panel, for her dialogue. And there were five panels where there were only supposed to be one.

What do you think of Barry Smith?

He has greatly improved as every artist should, with time. But I think he was being overworked. As for his Conan, let me say this about that, and let me

make it perfectly clear: Every artist who saw Conan number 1, said, "I wish they had given it to me." Barry Smith was very fortunate to get that assignment. The thing is, Smith has developed his whole world of Conan.

Right.

And now that's all he can do.

I hope I don't fall into that bag. Because once you do a certain character, everything else begins to look like that character.

Your work seems to be very malleable. It can fit almost any setting. And then, you used to put the stars in your stories.

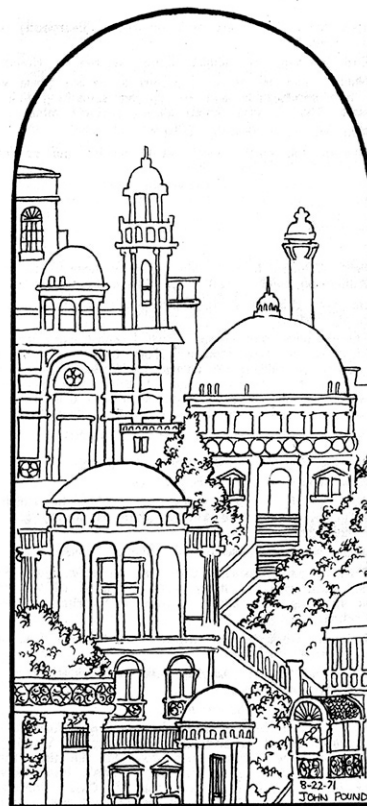
Yeah. I cut that out though. I got into trouble once. I got a cable from overseas from an actor who wanted rights, or something like that. I won't mention any names.

Why did you do it?

It came about when I did a story called "Scaly Death." It reminded me so much of "One Million B.C." with Victor Mature. So when I used him in the story, I decided to do it with the rest.

That story had a Frazetta cover. Was it based on the story or vice versa?

Frazetta saw the pencil roughs for the story and chose one panel that he would like to paint. He changed it in his painting a little. Since I hadn't inked it yet, when I saw the painting, I geared my inking in the same direction as the painting. It went hand in hand. We didn't discuss it; it just came about.



Did he comment on the finished story?

He commented on every panel, every page. He went wild about it. Incidentally, that story had to be done twice, the first time all in pencil. The pencils were too detailed. The drawings looked like photographs. I spent about an hour on each panel.

Many of the Spanish artists are doing almost photographic work.

Yeah, Warren's using it now, but then he didn't want it. He wanted very simple work.

What type of comic book do you enjoy doing the most?

Sword and Sorcery. I think it's a throwback to Foster's Prince Valiant. I have just about an entire collection of his original Sunday strips, from the Journal-American and other papers. I guard them very well.

The thing is, Prince Valiant was so restrained, and yours is so wild.

In the years when I was studying Foster's work, I knew how restrained it was. Compare his work to Raymond's Flash Gordon. All his characters were beautiful. They posed beautifully; when a character fell, he fell with grace. When one of Foster's figures fell, you could see dead weight. I wanted to come around and really show it in succession; where he's falling gracefully, and finally he just hits the ground and blood spurts out!

Are your pencils loose or tight?

Very tight. When the inks are applied, it tightens up even more so. I try to get a lot of realism in the pages that I work on.

However, in most cases, you exaggerate the realism. Jack Kirby and Carmine Infantino do this to convey the action. Don't you? For example, there was one picture in Phase of a barbarian and a girl.

Oh, that was done because I wanted to show power. It wasn't meant to be an exaggerated piece of art.

I mean, you wouldn't find somebody who looked like that.

If you did, get out of the way!

How old are you?

Too old. On my next birthday I think I'll be 36. That's too old.

Would you like to go back in time, to when you were younger?

No.

You don't regret anything in your past?

Only one thing... but that's not printable.

Do you have any objections to the comics as a medium?

None whatsoever.

Do you ever find there's an effect you'd like to achieve, but the medium just won't permit it?

Right now the comics medium won't allow what I'd like to do. I'd like to make a radical innovation as far as certain techniques, certain styles, and I think they can be achieved. Right now the comic medium won't allow it. For instance, where Steranko would take a splash page and you could read it up and down or in circles, or whatever, I'd like to take that one step further. Read the first page, then the last page, the second page, the second to last page, and things like that. In color comics now, instead of reading from left to right for a row and then going to the next, I'd like to see it where you would read the first row from left to right. At the end of that line you'd read the panels down to the bottom of the page. Then you'd read a row from right to left and finally go from the bottom to the top.

Doesn't Warren give you freedom to do what you like?

Yes. For instance, that story "Staples" was coupled with actual photographs of staples and hands. He said, "Go to it." See, what he wanted to do was to try to implement the staples in the book into a story. That is how the idea came up.

I remember on that page where you had all the staples flying down, the page within a page, you had a bunch of comic books.

Right. He took one out. I won't tell which one, but he crossed it right out.

Is it still around?

They're not doing too well these days.

Castle of Frankenstein?

No.

Skyward?

Next question.

I didn't say it. I let you say it.

Do you have any problems in making your art subtle, considering the medium and the audience?

Yes. I sometimes tend to over-exaggerate muscular structure. They told me to tone down, become more subtle. I tried, and I got this figure just right. Then I said, "Let me put in this bicep here," and when I put in that one, the other bicep looked a little too weak, so I strengthened that. Then the shoulder had to be a little thicker to balance with the biceps. Then the clavicle really had to burst out, and by then I had a top-heavy broad. So to make it all balance out the derriere had to come out. And I took it back to Warren and he said, "Didn't I tell you subtle?" I tried. Yes, I do have problems.

Do you do any commercial work outside of comics?



Ready for this now? OK. I'm writing a book, I'm writing a screenplay, I write stories, articles for other magazines, other free-lance art in the way of television storyboards, illustrations for the pulps (*Amazing* and *Fantastic*) and other things.

Which do you prefer, writing or drawing?

Making money. Most of the writing is comedy, some serious, and pretty soon I should be doing movie reviews. The first one should be "Shaft." I thought it was a good movie, but not as good as it was made to be. I'm hoping that the next few sequels that come out will be better. Oh, incidentally, I just found out that I may get a part in the next "Shaft" film. Right now I'm involved in an off-broadway production called "The Congressman."

If you didn't have to make money, what would you be doing?

Just relaxing. After that, writing. I enjoy that.

Would you advocate the comics themselves as a profession?

Only if the person who wants to go into comics has the fortitude and the dedication to devote an awful lot of time and work to them. It's not the best paying profession, but it gives a person a sense of reward.

How do you feel about fans coming up to you and saying, "Gee, I love your stuff," or conversely, "Why don't you learn how to draw?"

I don't care what they say, I just love it. I remember the 1970 Con. I looked over and I saw Neal Adams swamped with fans. Neal looked up at me, with a plea in his eyes, and he yelled out just as I was sneaking out, "Hey, Billy! Billy Graham!" Thousands of little voices went "Where? Where? Where?" They then rushed to the door, threw out their arms, lay down in my path, and said, "We got him!" Everybody rushed away from Neal, pulled him over with them, and they swamped me.

I had to go to the men's room. I started to go

right there, but there was no room. Everybody was in the way.

How do you feel about doing sketches at Cons?

What I like to do is get into a certain place where I feel comfortable and sit up on something like a table. Then I just sketch away. I don't mind.

Who are your favorite artists?

One of the most recent artists to hit the comics

field; Esteban Maroto. My all-time favorite is Al Williamson, and I really dig Frank Frazetta.

Do you think that the best comic artists are also good writers?

There's only one comic artist I know who can illustrate his own stories: Tom Sutton. He's a damn good artist. When he writes for himself, you can see the quality. It's top-notch. I think that any man who illustrates a story that he pored over is bound to do a better job than if he was given a script.

Why were the Warren awards instituted?

Because Warren wanted them instituted.

How would you describe Warren?

First of all, he is a man, he is 5'9", he weighs 135-145 pounds, he knows what he wants, goes after it and gets it. Period.

What do you think of underground comics?

They're great, because they let an artist do anything he wants and get away with it. Some of the stuff in there is very crude. I have a favorite: Richard Corben.

Do you work in any other media besides ink, wash or pencil?

Blood and sweat. Acrylics, oils and pastels. But pastels are my favorite.

Do you follow comics now?

Yeah. My favorite was *Green Lantern* before it was discontinued. That and *Phantom Stranger*. *Vampirella* is good. I've followed her story all the time that Archie Goodwin wrote it, but I don't know whether or not I'll follow it now that T. Casey Brennan takes it over. He's a good writer and has a good style, but not the same as Archie Goodwin's. Jose Gonzales is a damn good artist. He works amazingly fast.

Why did you like *Lantern*? It seemed to me that it was quite overdone and sensationalistic.

The reason I followed it was because of the artwork. A good artist can make a poor story better. I read the stories, but I spend more time on the artwork. I think that's because I'm an artist.

Your black and white work is known for its use of wash. Could you explain how you go about applying wash to a picture?

I pencil the page first, naturally, and then I go over it with dirty water. Then I clean it up with clean water and sometimes go over it again with pencil smudges. There's a thing called a stub, used to achieve some of the effects. It's not all wash. I use the Malibu tray of tones sometimes, and I'll even use charcoal.

I understand you did strips for the porno papers. Can you give me some info on that?

No, because the District Attorney was looking for me at one time. He never found me. I took a long vacation. "Who is this guy with the pseudonym of Billy Graham?"

Why do you think so many fans break into the comic medium through Warren?

If they're good, he gives them a chance to have their work done. Warren is an innovator. He gives them a chance.

What is your opinion of nudity in the Warren mags? I like it.

But the audience to which it is directed isn't that old. Would you be in favor of censoring it?

No, I'm not in favor of censorship. If the story calls for nudity, then the artist should follow the script.

What about the stories where the nudity is thrown in as a come-on to the kids and has no bearing on the story?

That I don't approve. When it's not called for, it should not be done.

What did you do as Managing Editor for Warren?

Everything except bookkeeping. I had to learn almost the entire business. When artwork was mailed in, or brought in, it had to be scrutinized and corrected. Stories had to be edited (I did some of that, Archie Goodwin did some), interviewing prospective artists and writers. I could accept and reject material, but Warren had the final say so.

You told me before that you had to change your style to fit into the color comics format.

It took a lot of help from the people at Marvel. I had a tendency to overdraw. What they want is simplicity, leave some room for the colorist.

What did you think of the story of the first *Hero for Hire*?

I liked it.



Do you think they hired you out of tokenism, since they are making such a big fuss over it being a Black character? Now they can say, "Gee, we have a Black man on the book, so everything must be cool."

No one said anything about that. They just said, "Hey, we have a story we'd like you to do." They told me that it was a Black superhero, but that's all I heard.

Do you think it's alright for a White writer to write about Blacks?

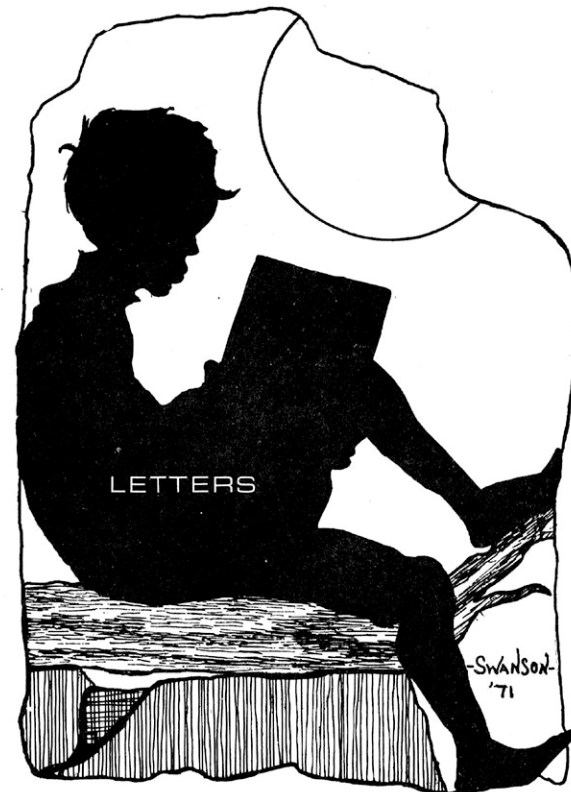
Yeah. If a man's a writer, he should be able to write on any subject; Black, White, Oriental, or what have you.

If he were that good a writer, would he be working in the comics?

Maybe that's what he likes.

As far as I know, you're the first Black artist doing major work in the comics. Have you had any problems getting into the field?

No. Just like any other artist Black or White, I've had to go around from one company to the next showing my work. When a man has talent, and wants to use it, and the company recognizes that talent, then it doesn't matter what race he is.



Letters have been edited to fit into available space. Onward. . .

Jeff Anderson
3700 Beechgrove Rd.
Grove City, Ohio, 43123

Just got, today, **WWoC**. Interesting, but not as good as I had hoped. **George** rated you "7" because of your fannish feeling. I didn't detect a huge amount of that. Many zines done three or four years ago had much more of this atmosphere, and had a more involved readership. But I suppose that now you've got as of this good old fannishness as anyone, excluding Dwight Decker.

Specific comments? Number six was interesting, and, as you say in your "Rebuttal" in that issue, consequently can be considered worthwhile. The only feature that was not to my liking was "Duffy's Tavern."

[Jeff wrote a great deal about the "Tavern" last ish, but Duffy tells me he is using the comments in a "DT" for **Fandom Media**, so why should I repeat them here? As for the other comment, I believe **WWoC** to be one of the most fannish zines around currently that is even slightly popular. Nowadays, it's not economically feasible to be fannish. FANzines just don't sell.]

Paul Chadwick
320 78th Pl. N.E.
Bellevue, Wash., 98004

Penzer's article was extremely well written and fairly interesting, but might have been longer and better researched. Unmentioned were Njord (of "The Valley of The Worm") and "q33auy Howard's far east, sport, and detective stories that appeared in such pulps as

Oriental Stories. One oriental story, "The Purple Eye of Erlic" appeared in **Spicy Adventure** under the pen name Sam Walsher.

All in all, a neat little fanzine that needed more material in it. May I suggest some spot illos, some fiction, both graphic and text, and a try at cramming as much material into the same of space.

[All of your suggestions have been taken into consideration. Glance through this issue.]

Ted Hagen
4108 Treasure Circle
Tampa, Fla., 33616

It was with insipid anticipation that I opened a brown envelope that arrived with today's assortment of junk mail. It contained **WWoC**. More junk mail? Nay!!! Absolutley fantastic is an inadequate expression of my exhilaration. **WWoC** is fandom's delight!

Since I cut my reading teeth with Siegel and Shuster's **Superman**, I must take exception with Duffy Vohland in regard to his conjecture concerning the "more adult" Superman Family. Jerry Siegel rolled Hercules, Robin Hood, Sir Galahad, and Sherlock Holmes into a super space-age identity in 1938 for the young reader. Superman, THE super-hero, is a primer, just as **McGuffey's Reader** was for a hundred years (and still is) a primer for tomorrow's fans. Parents buy **The Three Musketeers** for infantile youngsters, but the kids buys his first **Superman** and **Green Lantern**. **Spider-Man** will soon follow. **Superman** is transitional. I could go on to write a substantial thesis concerning the comic book as a class room reading aid

but this is scarcely the time. It is not that I disagree with Duffy, I merely want to point out a reader-topic-age (maturity) relationship which exists in regard to this one publication.

[I think what Duffy meant about the more mature Superman Family was that he is now much more realistic and interesting to older fans than he was in the past.]

Klaus Janson
396 Burnside
Bridgeport, Conn., 06606

I finally got my copy of WVoC. And... I would like to write an official LoC. Now, the reason I am doing this is not because you asked your readers to do it, but because this issue definitely warrants a comment or two... or three. (Christ, sounds like some of my old letters to Julie Schwartz.)

Anyway, I would like to approach this very systematically. Therefore, I will start with the subject that is closest to my heart: my lungs, er, no. I mean art, of course. The cover was excellent and by no means a let-down from last issue's cover (which I did not think was that sensational, but was good nonetheless). The little illo by Jeff Jones was cute; I liked it. Newton's full-pager was a good figure, full of action, and moved very nicely. But I thought the ink job took away from the penciling. I did not care for Marchesano's illo. Vincent had wonderful use of wash, but cannot draw too well. I will tell him what has been told me many a time: spend more time on drawing and forget technique. Fantucchio is a good example of what happens. He's got a god-envious style but can't draw a strip. Those little illoes by Salicrup literally made page 12 and 13. They were nothing outstanding but were used exceptionally well. I notice that Dave Russell is paying more attention to picture composition than ever before, and it shows.

All around, one of the best zines I've seen in a long while. [Well, we have a Newton-pencilled work this ish. Do you think the inks make that much difference? About Fantucchio's strips, I happened to like them very much. I could see nothing wrong with them.]

Gordon Matthews
8 Perry Street,
Union City, Pa., 16438

I liked Bernie Bubnis' column. But not all fanzines are offset wonders, Thank There are still editors getting purple ditto carbon all over their hands.

I hope you had fun writing your "Rebuttal." It reminded me of Wally Conger's Napalm.

I don't think it's accurate to compare Howard's heroes (if only by association) to Doc Savage, the Spider, etc. They were of very different classes. Doc Savage, etc. all appeared in their own pulp magazines, and were therefore established as an artificial series, much like comic book heroes. The Howard heroes, on the other hand, appeared (mostly) in Weird Tales as weird/adventure stories, and Conan was a series because Howard wanted to write about him; for this reason Conan is more honest than Doc Savage.

Adam Malin
16 E. 2nd St.
Freeport, N.Y., 11520

I've got a few minutes of free time now, so I thought I'd let you know my opinions on WVoC 6. Generally speaking, it was one of the few remaining GREAT fanzines. And these days, that's a rarity.

The high point of the issue was Bernie Bubnis' "Muddy Waters In Thinking Land." I found the writing absolutely brilliant. It is perhaps the best article of it kind I've ever seen in a zine. My hat is off to Bubs.

WVoC was light, easy reading, filled with good fan stuff. I'm more locked onto prozines now, but once in a while it's nice to know that for fifty cents there's still dependable ol' Wonderful World.

Roger Schoolcraft
2015 Eldersville Rd.,
Follansbee, W. Va., 26037

You said in your editorial you were fortunate to get sketches from Adams, Jones, and Wrightson. I disagree. I have had my collective ear filled to the brim with sketches. I'd rather have a fan drawing pencilled and inked than a pro sketch, despite the fact that Neal Adams did it.

Sorry Neal, but I've seen better work from Newton. Check his work in Fantastic Fanzine.

How can one comment on Gordon Matthews' article and your "Rebuttal?" No matter how one looks at it, you were both only stating OPINIONS.

I will say this. Jon Penzer's article on R.E. Howard's "Lesser Heroes" was good, as well as Klaus Janson's accompanying art. How about an in-depth one on Conan himself? I don't mean



Thomas' version, nor Carter's or de Camp's. I mean Howard's. Have an artist of yours read some Conan stories by Howard and allow him to come up with his own version.

I'm glad you published that Aquaman full-pager by Dave Coekrum. It was beautiful. I'm also glad because Aquaman (an old favorite of mine) is seldom seen in fanzines. He'll probably be seen even less now since his comic has been shelved.

Black's woman was good. Is she someone in particular? [I agree with you about those sketches. That's why, as you may have noticed in this issue, I've established a "no sketch" policy. As far as commenting on opinions, the best way to do this is to offer your OWN opinions, as many readers did with "Article" and "Rebuttal."]

I wouldn't want to do a comprehensive article on Howard's Conan or artist's adaptations of the REH stories. Not after such fine jobs on them in MCR 2 and Anomaly 2, respectively. Black's girl was Jann North of the Starmasters, who has appeared in his fine publication, Paragon.]

Ron Sorrells
2592 Victory Ln.,
Medford, Ore., 97501

The only thing I disliked about the zine was the size. With the quality of art and written work you had in issue 6, you really should have been 8 1/2 x 11. If you went to increased size and retained the quality of work you displayed in number 6, you really would have been tops in your class of fanzine. And that includes Fantastic Fanzine, which is currently tops.

There were several reasons why WVoC was so good, the largest being the quality of the written work. There was no half-baked article to be found. Indeed, "Duffy's Tavern" was the least intelligent, and his column is usually the highlight of the zine it appears in. Certainly the highlight of the zine had to be Gordon Matthews' "Article." I have been looking forward to such a column ever since I entered fandom; an article not devoted to just comics, but something a little better. Nowhere was the 25 cent price hike mentioned, or the fact that Stan Lee shaved his beard, or that comics are dying, or other such facts (?) that always take up the fanzine. The only thing that disappointed me was the article's shortness.

The second best feature was "Meet The Fan." I found Dave Russell to be a real refreshing experience. I mean most fans just aren't that personable, or joking, or whatever.

[I'm sure you'll enjoy the interview with Bubs this ish if you liked the Dave Russell piece. Check it out and let me know, OK?]

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Bernie Bubnis generally commented on the issue, knocked Gordon Matthews and Duffy Vohland for their articles, and blasted me for my "Rebuttal," which he called nit-picking and not fair at all. Well, let's put it this way. If I had seen "Article" in another zine,

I would have written an LoC which would have been identical to "Rebuttal," my feelings being so strong. Instead, I used my comments as follow-up article. Is there really that much difference?

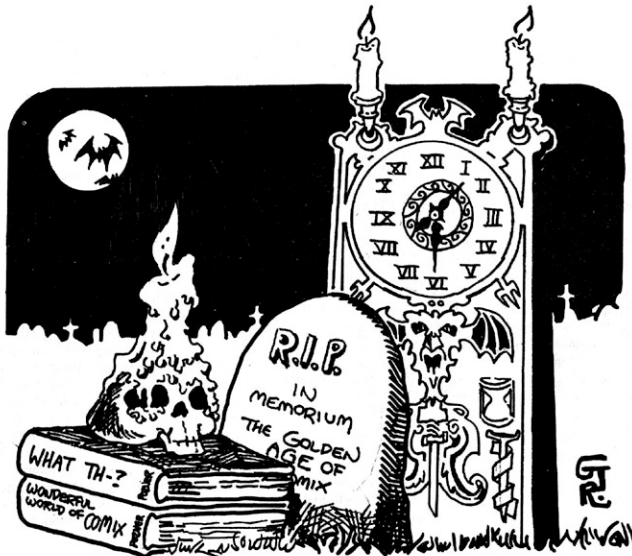
Robert Greenberger sent a short LoC in which he praised last ish. Dave Hartman said "Article" was a bunch of shit and would rather see Mike O'Neal draw the Hulk than Herb Trimpe. I'm forced to disagree here. Trimpe, while not a good illustrator is a more-than-adequate storyteller. I think this is why that issue with Trimpe layouts and Grainger art was such an improvement. Steve Mattingly liked the issue, but thinks Gordon Matthews should be thrown out of fandom with ideas like the ones he expressed in "Article." Talk about freedom of speech! Shesh! Dave Russell accused me of lousy editing and called me a cunuch. Huh???

John Penzer called WVoC one of the best bargains in fandom. Neal Fugate was impressed by the art of Klaus Janson.

Tim Seidler thanked me for hours of entertainment and wished me good luck in the future. Thank you.

My sincerest apologies to all these people as well as those whose letters were edited. I wish I had the room to print all the letters I got. Well, at least I had a lengthy lettercol this time.

B'h'way, just because WVoC won't have another ish in the near future doesn't mean you shouldn't send me LoCs on this. First of all, I'd really like to know what all of you thought of this ish. And secondly, if WVoC ever returns, I'd like a letters section. OK? OK!





Cockrum

MEMO:

TO: *The Publisher* FROM: *The Editor*

Here's this for an editorial?

Short and sweet this time. Instead of the usual fan editorial, let me thank the countless people who made this issue possible. As most of you know, this will be the last issue of *Shazam! The Wonderful World of Comix*. This is due to my belief that fandom in general will no longer support a quality magazine by and for fans.

For those of you who are interested in fan-nishness, I recommend your joining any number of APAs (Amateur Press Alliances) such as CAPA—alpha, NYAPA, and APA—5.

Neal



8-22-1971. JOHN FODOR

MEMO:

TO: *The Editor* FROM: *The Publisher*

I think it stinks!

Here's my Publisher's notes

A young gent bopped over to me, and the following discussion ensued:

"Hey, you're Neal Pozner, the brilliant editor of SHAZAM! man, why are you publishing Neal Pozner's fanzine?"

"For the money. What else?"

"Oh, come on Neal, you can't fool me with that jive, Bro! You're too dedicated to do something merely for the money."

"How right you are! [When we first met, I found out right away that Neal was a very mod modest fellow. He told me so himself.—N. Pozner, editor.] You see, Neal Pozner [A prince of a fellow and a really sweet guy.—N.P.] came to me with quite a pressing problem [Yeah, my iron wasn't working!—N.P.] He had already fully laid out over half of his upcoming issue of *The Wonderful World of Comix* [You've heard of that, haven't you?—N.P.], but he didn't have the personal finances available to publish it himself. [i.e. I was broke!—N.] Quite unfortunate. [That's not what you said to ME the first time I asked you.—N.P.] Realizing it would be a shame if *WWoC* never got off the ground due to these financial problems, I decided to publish it for him. [After I kicked his ass in, that is.—N.P.]

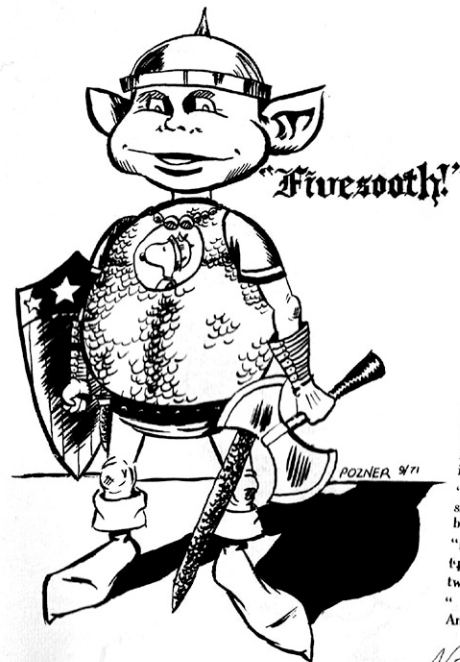
"Wow man, that's really nice of you. [You should hear MY side of the story.—N.P.] Too bad you're such a sucker . . ."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Hey man, don't you know? *WWoC* still has a two thousand dollar deficit from the last issue."

" . . . oh? . . ."

And Neal, don't you know all us fans are schizophrenic?



POZNER, N/P

NEAL BOO!



AH'M
THE RINGO
THING!

BEST WISHES
JACK KIRBY
Mc
Sinnott