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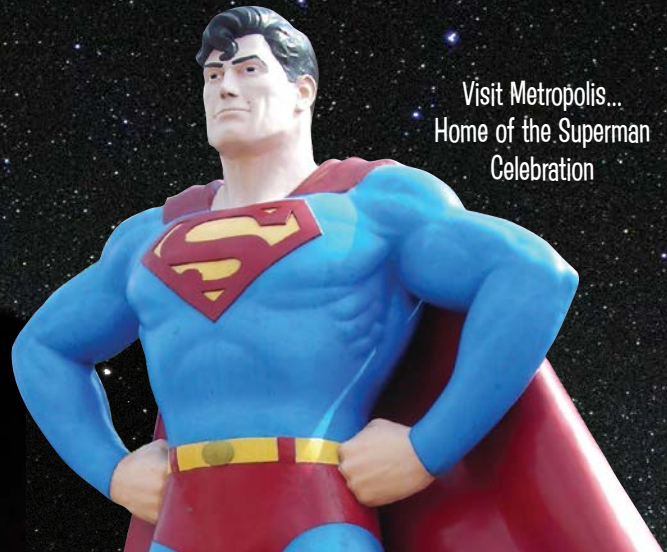
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He Made Us Believe A Man Can Fly!
EXCLUSIVE Interview with
SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE
Director **RICHARD DONNER**

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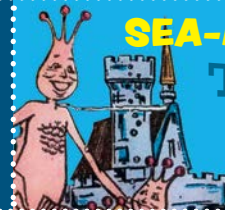


IRWIN ALLEN

VOYAGE
TO THE BOTTOM OF...
THE BARREL??



Aquaman in
Animation

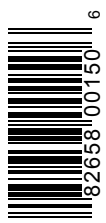


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Fantastic Fanzines! Funny Face Collectibles!

Featuring **Ernest Farino • Andy Mangels • Scott Saavedra** and the *Oddball World* of **Scott Shaw!**





THE CRAZY COOL CULTURE WE GREW UP WITH

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RetroFan fantasy cover by
Scott Saavedra



Richard Donner

The Man Who Made Superman Fly



Richard Donner (center) and crew members in 1977 on location in Manhattan, doubling as Metropolis, during the filming of *Superman*. This photo appeared in DC Comics' *All-New Collectors' Edition #C-62 (Superman: The Movie)*. © Warner Bros. Superman TM & © DC Comics.

Conducted by Glenn Greenberg

Remove *Superman: The Movie* (1978) from Richard Donner's filmography and he would still be the man who directed *The Omen* (1976), *The Goonies* (1985), and all four *Lethal Weapon* films (1987–1998). An impressive list, to be sure.

But with *Superman*, Donner became the father of the modern comic-book superhero movie, through his vision of taking the subject matter seriously—though not without a healthy dose of fun and humor—and giving it a real-world aesthetic, a grandeur, and a respect that the genre never really had before.

On a film where so many things could have gone wrong, Donner got so much right, from bringing in his friend, screenwriter Tom Mankiewicz, to rework the screenplay (which had gone through drafts by Mario Puzo, David and Leslie Newman, and Robert Benton), to hiring composer John Williams to create what just may be his greatest movie score ever, to casting Christopher Reeve in the title role—and, just as importantly, Margot Kidder as Lois Lane. Any one of those elements could have made *Superman* a decent film. All of them combined made it a bona fide classic, the



Superman: The Movie lobby card signed by star Christopher Reeve. © Warner Bros. Superman TM & © DC Comics. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions (www.ha.com).

shadow of which looms over everything that has come in its wake.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of *Superman: The Movie's* original theatrical release, Richard Donner agreed to a phone interview on November 6, 2017, to discuss the film and its enduring legacy.

RetroFan: It's really an honor to speak to you.

Richard Donner: My pleasure, kid. What are we talking about?

RF: We are talking about the 40th anniversary of *Superman: The Movie*, which is coming up fast and furiously.

RD: The 40th anniversary?

RF: Yeah! Believe it or not.

Christopher Reeve in his Clark Kent suit and Donner on the *Superman* set. From *All-New Collectors' Edition #C-62*. © Warner Bros. Superman TM & © DC Comics.

RD: Holy s***! Okay.

RF: [laughter] My first question is going to take you way back. I understand that you used to read Superman comics as a kid.

RD: Sure.

RF: What did you like about them? What was the appeal to you?



RD: At that age?

RF: Yeah.

RD: It was just escapism. I mean, we were kids, we'd come home from school after playing in the yard or somewhere on the school grounds, and our reading material would be whatever the newest comic book was that came out. I don't know if it's going on today—today it's TV instead. But it was a comic book and every page was a phenomenal one to turn, and you lived the fantasies, between Superman and—now you're gonna make me think of the others and I can't—I mean, hundreds of them. Dick Tracy, Shazam!—what was that, Captain Marvel?

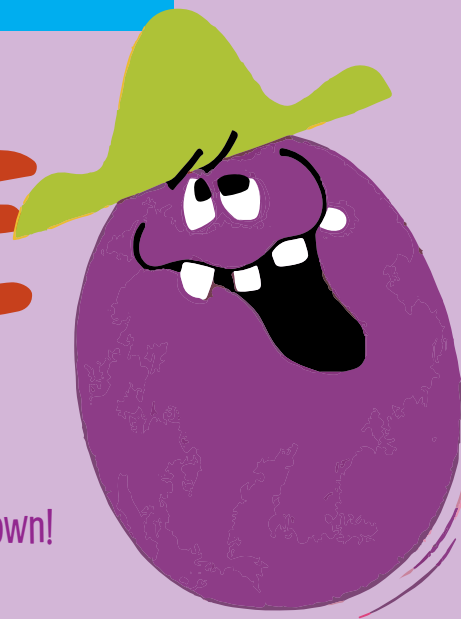
RF: Yep!

RD: And Superman was one that stuck with me, but no more than any of the others. Until, of course, he came into my life again many, many years later.

RF: Right. Now when he did come into your life again many, many years later, in your view, going into this project, who was Superman, to you? Who is Superman? What qualities did you feel needed to be there to really capture the character well?

RD: Well, the qualities were really our heritage, because the interesting thing is—I had no eyes to do a movie called *Superman*. But when it was sent to me, with a ridiculous offer, I took it upon myself to read it and was very disappointed. Because they were making a parody

The FUNNY FACE Saga



OR Move Over, Kool-Aid Man, There's Some New Fruit in Town!

By John Schwirian



*Funny Face is fun to drink,
The one to drink when you're having fun!
Funny Face is fun to drink,
Fun to drink for everyone!*

That's how the jingle went in the early television commercials—and it was true. Kids really found Funny Face fun to drink! Of course, zany characters and great mail-away premiums didn't hurt any, either.

In the early Sixties, Kool-Aid was the undisputed powdered-drink-mix king. However, consumers were unhappy over the amount of sugar used in the preparation of a pitcher of Kool-Aid. In an effort to combat this dissatisfaction, companies were searching for a substitute for sugar, an alternate that arrived in the form of an artificial sweetener named sodium cyclamate. Pillsbury processed sodium cyclamate into the product Sweet*10 in 1962, which allowed them to create foods that could be advertised as “sugar free” and “artificially sweetened.” With sugar eliminated, moms approved and sales rose on these products.

A Funny Face for Every Taste

Encouraged by the promise of Sweet*10, Pillsbury decided to challenge Kool-Aid with its own powdered drink mix. In 1963, Pillsbury hired Campbell Mithun Advertising to design a face for its product. Inspired by his daughter, Creative Director Hal Silverman dreamed up the Funny Face characters. “I

actually created them for my daughter, Jill, who was about four years old at the time,” Silverman wrote in a post on the *Retroland* website in 2013. “My nickname for her was Freckle Face—and from that beginning, all the characters just fell into place. Needless to say, my daughter—and all her friends—had a wonderful time playing with the names, and pretending to be the characters.” While Silverman sketched out the initial designs for the characters, the final art used on the packages was drawn by Lowell Herrera (1921–2015).

The original six characters (and flavors) hit the stores in 1964, consisting of Freckle Face Strawberry, Goofy Grape, Loud-Mouth Lime, Rootin' Tootin' Raspberry, Chinese Cherry, and Injun Orange. Don't remember the last two? That's because they were replaced the next year by Choo Choo Cherry and Jolly Olly Orange. Reports are mixed as to whether there were complaints from the public or if it was strictly an internal decision, but Chinese Cherry and

Injun Orange were deemed inappropriate and offensive. “At the time,” Silverman explained, “I was naive enough not to realize that the names Chinese Cherry and Injun Orange could be hurtful to Chinese and Native Americans. My sincere apologies, at this late date, to anyone I offended.”

Pillsbury employed an aggressive marketing strategy to launch the new drink mix. While the Kool-Aid Man had to represent every flavor of Kool-Aid, Pillsbury provided different cartoon characters for each flavor, making it easy for children to spot their

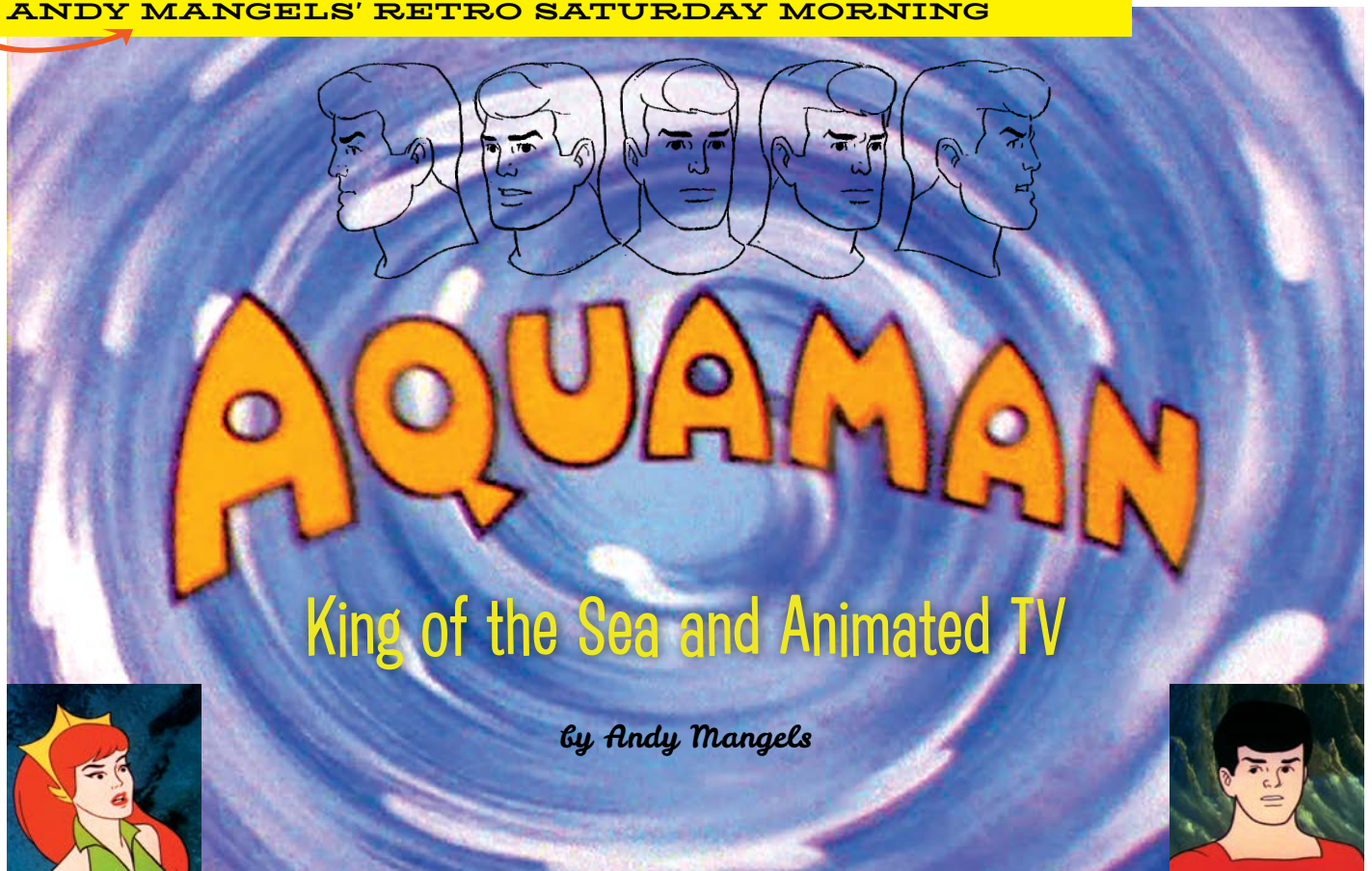


Look at the mugs on these mugs! From the collection of John Schwirian, Funny Face mugs. (FRONT ROW) Goofy Grape, Freckle Face Strawberry, Lefty Lemon. (CENTER ROW) Choo Choo Cherry, Jolly Olly Orange, Loud-Mouth Punch. (BACK ROW) Chug-a-Lug Chocolate, Rudy Tutti Frutti, With-It Watermelon. © Brady Enterprises.



Funny Face store signs and displays from the Sixties and Seventies, from the collection of Jim Rash. To view more of Jim's Funny Face collection, or to contact him if you have Funny Face items to sell, visit www.funnyfacedrinkmix.com. Funny Face © Brady Enterprises. Pillsbury © General Mills.





Welcome back to *Andy Mangels' Retro Saturday Morning*. Since 1989, I have been writing columns for magazines in the U.S. and foreign countries, all examining the intersection of comic books and Hollywood, whether animation or live-action. *Andy Mangels Backstage*, *Andy Mangels' Reel Marvel*, *Andy Mangels' Hollywood Heroes*, *Andy Mangels Behind the Camera*... nearly three decades of reporting on animation and live-action—in addition to writing many books and producing around 40 DVD sets—and I'm still enthusiastic. In this new *RetroFan* column, I will examine shows that thrilled us from yesteryear, exciting our imaginations and capturing our memories. Grab some milk and cereal, sit cross-legged leaning against the couch, and dig in to *Retro Saturday Morning*!

"Aquaman, swift and powerful monarch of the ocean! With ability to summon and command all creatures of the deep! Aquaman, who with his teenage ally, Aqualad, guards and defends all that lives in the sea against the forces of evil! Aquaman, King of the Seven Seas!" So blared the announced on September 9, 1967 when Aquaman made his television debut. Readers had already been reading his adventures for 26 years,

and the underwater monarch has become an animation regular—and butt of a thousand repetitive punchlines in the 50-plus years since. But how did the King of Atlantis begin his reign on Saturday mornings and beyond? Let's dive in...

The First Splash

Only five DC Comics characters have been published non-stop since 1941: Superman, Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman, and Aquaman. Created by artist Paul Norris (with writer Mort Weisinger) for *More Fun Comics* #73 (Nov. 1941), the Golden Age Aquaman was originally just a water-breathing, fish-talking hero partial to an orange shirt and green pants, plus boots, trunks, and gloves, while under the sea's surface. In *Adventure Comics* #260 (May 1959), the Silver Age Aquaman's origin was told, recasting the hero as half-human and half-Atlantean whose human name was Arthur Curry. In *Adventure Comics* #269 (Feb. 1960), he acquired a sidekick youth named Aqualad, and in the following month, he became a founding member of the Justice League of America, from their first appearance in *The Brave and the Bold* #28 (Feb.–Mar. 1960). Aquaman became the king of Atlantis in *Aquaman*



(TOP) The water-logged Aquaman logo, model sheets, and screen captures of Mera and Aqualad. (BOTTOM) A licensed "promotional cel" sold by Filmation. Aquaman TM& © DC Comics.



The introduction of Mera in *Aquaman* #11 and a rare inside cover ad for *The Superman/Aquaman Hour of Adventure* from *Adventure Comics* #362. TM & © DC Comics.



Prescott talked about Filimation developing Green Lantern and Green Arrow, and announced the title of the new series as *Superman Hour of Adventure*. The *Times* published the first public image of the animated Aquaman and Aqualad astride their seahorses.

When it debuted in September, the new show was finally called *The Superman/Aquaman Hour of Adventure*. The show included its own opening credits with all of the heroes, as well as secret code segments in between episodes. Each hour included six seven-minute adventures: two *Superman*, two *Aquaman*, one *Superboy*, and one “guest hero.” For that last

segment, although DC heroes such as Green Arrow, the Doom Patrol, B'wana Beast, Plastic Man, Metamorpho, the Blackhawks, the Metal Men, the Challengers of the Unknown, and Wonder Woman were all considered and designed for animation (by Wes Herschensohn or Jack Ozark), only a quintet of concepts made it into production for three shorts apiece: *The Flash*, *Green Lantern*, *Hawkman*, *The Atom*, *Teen Titans* (including Aqualad), and *Justice League of America* (consisting of the just-mentioned adult heroes and Superman).

Making Waves

The *Aquaman* shorts were broken down to 36 episodes, each very faithful to the comics of the time. This largely had to do with the scripts coming from National/DC. Allen “Duke” Duconvy executive produced the series, and also served as National's press agent. “National really wanted to provide the writers because they felt



Rare production art by Filimation showing Aquaman watching the Blackhawks fight aliens, used in development of never-produced Blackhawks adventures. TM & © DC Comics.

#11 (Sept.–Oct. 1963); in the same issue, he met and married a gorgeous redhead named Mera, an underwater queen from an alternate dimension!

In the fall of 1965, Filimation, a relatively new animation company, swung a deal to create *The New Adventures of Superman* cartoons. The studio was founded by animators Lou Scheimer and Hal Sutherland, and disc-jockey-turned-producer Norm Prescott. Filimation was a scrappy young company, and they got the *Superman* job by tricking National Periodical Publications (the Sixties’ name for DC Comics) editors Mort Weisinger and Whitney Ellsworth into thinking they were far bigger a company than they were. *The New Adventures of Superman* premiered on CBS on September 10, 1966, running two *Superman* shorts and one *Superboy* short each 30-minute installment. The show was an immediate hit, and helped change the emerging Saturday morning television culture by being both an adventure show and featuring licensed characters.

In December 1965, with *Superman* a hit, Filimation made a deal with National to develop even more of their heroes for animation. “DC actually asked us to do *Aquaman*, but I wasn’t convinced the network would buy it without seeing a pilot,” said Scheimer in my interviews with him for the 2012 *TwoMorrrows* book, *Lou Scheimer: Creating the Filimation Generation*. “He wasn’t as famous as Superman or Batman. So we did a beautiful looking pilot titled ‘The Great Sea Robbery,’ which I think we retitled and used when the show was played. Nothing like it had been on the air. The undersea stuff really looked interesting, and it was visually fascinating.” The pilot got the notice of CBS executive Fred Silverman, and in early January, CBS and Filimation announced that *Aquaman* would begin in Fall 1967! In March 1967, *The New York Times* did a piece on Saturday morning animation; in it, Norm

Irwin Allen

VOYAGE

TO THE BOTTOM OF...

the Barrel??

By Michael Eury

Do you recycle? Irwin Allen sure did! Not empty mustard jars and dog-eared magazines, but film footage, props, costumes, sets, music, sound effects... and ideas.

In Allen's world, cutaways of imperiled ships such as the *Seaview* nuclear sub or the *Jupiter 2* spacecraft might be seen again and again in later episodes. A furry creature that once elicited a "Danger!" warning from a vigilant Robot might later double as an abominable snowman terrorizing seamen. A viewer watching *Land of the Giants* might experience déjà vu once spying a *Lost in Space* set he remembered from a couple of seasons ago. A fuzzy headdress that looks like Fred Flintstone's Water Buffalo Lodge hat might be cannibalized to transform a chimpanzee into an alien pet. A classic children's novel—*Swiss Family Robinson*—might be reimagined as a futuristic clan cast adrift in the cosmos. Bill Mummy, the prolific child actor of the Sixties who became famous as *Lost in Space*'s boy genius Will Robinson, told me that Irwin Allen's mantra was "Time is money." According to Mummy, "Irwin was impressive. Part Barnum and Bailey, part Cecil B. DeMille. He came on the set everyday. Tapped his watch," policing his budgets by keeping the trains running on time... and by reusing resources.

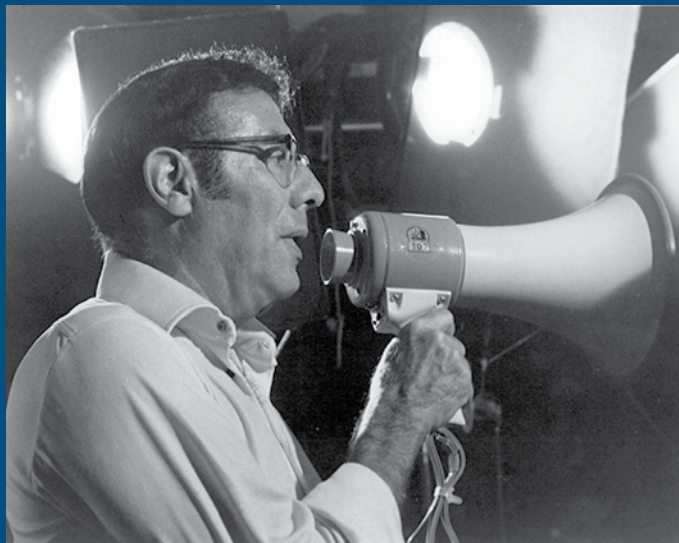
Some might accuse Allen of voyaging not to the depths of the ocean, but to the bottom of the barrel with his chronic salvaging. But kids of the Sixties were utterly fascinated by the four

fantastic television programs he created and produced: *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Lost in Space*, *The Time Tunnel*, and *Land of the Giants*. We weren't very discerning back then, and most of us didn't notice that the gillman from *Voyage* later returned as an extraterrestrial in *LIS*. Those of who did notice didn't care. We were swept away by the razzle-dazzle of it all. And no one could razzle-dazzle quite like Irwin Allen.

Voyage from the Big Screen to the Boob Tube

Irwin Allen (1916–1991), a college dropout, built a career as a Hollywood magazine editor, radio producer, and gossip columnist before turning to film production. In 1953 he directed his first film, *The Sea Around Us*, which he also wrote and produced. This Technicolor documentary relied heavily upon stock footage (in this case, of maritime expeditions), a cost-cutting measure

that would become an Allen hallmark. Allen adapted the idea from another source, an acclaimed novel by marine biologist Rachel Carson. As stated on Carson's website (rachelcarson.org), "*The Sea Around Us* became an overnight



Irwin Allen—the Sixties' TV sci-fi visionary—calling the shots on the set of the disaster flick *The Towering Inferno*. *Towering Inferno* © 1974 20th Century Fox Film Corporation. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions (www.ha.com).

being locked inside that dangerous, claustrophobic prop. He memorized and delivered all the Robot's dialogue, even though it was re-recorded by Dick Tufeld in post-production. He discovered ways to give the Robot more personality through movements."

The Robinsons and their extended family encountered a revolving door of guest stars throughout the series' run, among them Warren Oates as a space cowboy, Michael Rennie as a space collector, Albert Salmi as a space pirate, Strother Martin as a space miner, Wally Cox as a space hermit, Hans Conried as a space knight, and Al "Grandpa Munster" Lewis as a space magician. And let's not forget the show's catchy theme song, which I can't get out of my head as I write this, composed by Johnny Williams, before he became perhaps the Numero Uno composer of film scores, John Williams. (Williams also composed the themes to Allen's subsequent TV shows, *The Time Tunnel* and *Land of the Giants*.)

After Season Three wrapped, the cast assumed they would be returning for a fourth, but CBS cancelled the series, leaving the Robinsons and company forever lost in space (but its episodes found in perpetual reruns). Like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Lost in Space* was a "monster of the week" show, sometimes swapping monsters with its sister show. Also like *Voyage*, *Lost in Space* featured a universe of outlandish villains, aliens, creatures, and spacecraft (the *Jupiter 2*, which doubled as the family's space condo; the *Chariot*, an all-terrain RV; and the *Space Pod*).

Chronal Chaos and Big Trouble

Irwin Allen's third series, the hour-long *The Time Tunnel*, may have been inspired in part by science-fiction novels and movies, but once it premiered on ABC on September 9, 1966, it was television's



Each of Irwin Allen's four sci-fi TV shows had a spin-off comic book, including *The Time Tunnel*. Cover to issue #1 (Feb. 1967). Time Tunnel TM & © Irwin Allen Properties, LLC/20th Century Fox.

first entry in a long line of dramas about time-trekkers, paving the way for *Doctor Who*, *Quantum Leap*, DC's *Legends of Tomorrow*, and so many others to follow. (Two days after *Time Tunnel*'s premiere, another TV show about time travel, *It's About Time*, a short-lived CBS sitcom about astronauts detouring into the Stone Age, made its debut. Maybe we'll do a *RetroFan* article about that one. Or we won't, if you beg us not to.)

The Time Tunnel's premise: two handsome,



Watch your step! Tony Newman (James Darren) and Doug Phillips (Robert Colbert) trip out in this publicity pic for *The Time Tunnel*. Time Tunnel TM & © Irwin Allen Properties, LLC/20th Century Fox.

young scientists, both cute enough to appear on the cover of *Tiger Beat* magazine—Dr. Tony Newman (James Darren) and Dr. Doug Phillips (Robert Colbert)—are dropped into significant moments in history, starting with a *Titanic* cruise in the series' opener, "Rendezvous with Yesterday," directed by Irwin Allen himself. Their chronal portal, the concentrically circled, pseudo-psychedelic tunnel into which they would run and leap for a cheesy special effect, was part of a U.S. government program called Project Tic-Toc, existing in the then-not-too-distant year of 1968. Tony and Doug were monitored from the Time Tunnel's underground mission control, observed on time-viewing monitors by binge-watching doctors in labcoats, including Dr. Ann MacGregor, played by Lee Meriwether, which no doubt confused young viewers who had recently seen her as Miss Kitka/Catwoman in the 1966 *Batman* movie. Whit Bissell co-starred as Lt. General Heywood Kirk, who co-developed the Time Tunnel with Newman and Phillips.

Except for two futuristic episodes, Tony and Doug arrived on the eves of such significant past events such as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Custer's Last Stand, Marie Antoinette's execution, the arrival of Halley's Comet, and the Battle of the Alamo, allowing each episode's guest stars to participate in costume galas while



YOU'RE THE "MAN OF STEEL"!

You're in your office at the DAILY PLANET.* Suddenly you get a tip that LEX LUTHOR,* your arch enemy, is about to blow up the Metropolis Memorial Bridge. Only seconds to go! You jump into a phone booth and throw on your cape. Then it's up, up and away as you fly high over the city. And use your X-Ray vision to find the hideout of LEX LUTHOR* and put the gang behind bars.



Superman* Game Program™

*Indicates Trademark of DC Comics, Inc.
Used with permission.
©DC Comics Inc., 1979.

But watch out for the deadly KRYPTONITE* satellites. If one of them gets you, the only way to bring back your super powers is to find LOIS LANE.*



The Secret Origin of Atari's 1979 Superman!

By Robert V. Conte

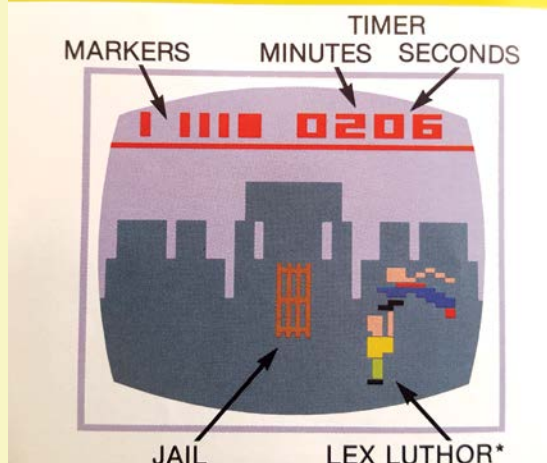
And so read Atari's solicitation describing the forthcoming release of the first official video game featuring a superhero—*Superman*!

As you're probably aware, Superman was the inaugural superhero, gracing the pages of the debut issue of *Action Comics* in 1938. The blue-and-red costumed crimefighter from a doomed alien planet, wearing a stylized "S" inside a yellow crest emblazoned on his chest, broke ground in various media. Since the Forties, this "costumed action hero" starred in radio dramas voiced by Bud Collyer, animated cartoons produced by Paramount and Fleischer (later Famous) Studios, a live-action television show starring George Reeves, and thousands of licensed merchandise items. True to form, the time would come for Kal-El, the Last Son of Krypton, to take his place in the world of a brand-new entertainment medium...

Coin-operated game giant Atari, known throughout the Seventies for its pinball machines and blockbuster video games like *Breakout*, *Pong*, and *Tank*, revolutionized the home-entertainment industry when its Video Computer System (VCS) appeared in 1977. Although not the premier video-game console to feature an interchangeable cartridge system (Fairchild's Channel F, Magnavox's Odyssey 2 and Bally's Professional Arcade aka *Astrocade* were also available), Americans of all ages were already familiar with Atari



HOW TO PLAY SUPERMAN*



(LEFT) Original 1977 Atari Video Computer System (VCS), later renamed (and redesigned) as the Atari 2600. (RIGHT) Simulated screenshot of Superman, 1979. Both courtesy of Robert V. Conte.

games including *Indy 500*, *Outlaw*, and *Star Ship* via their local amusement park or arcade. Instead of paying 25 cents per play in a public setting, now gamers could purchase their own “Game Programs” for use in comfort of their homes. This, combined with Atari’s financial, marketing, and promotional support from its then-parent company, Warner Communications, Inc. (WCI), helped propel sales of the VCS to unprecedented success by the early Eighties!

Meanwhile, DC Comics and Warner Bros. Pictures (both owned by the same conglomerate that controlled Atari, as well) were busy preparing for Superman’s 40th anniversary. The Man of Steel was being adapted into a full-length feature film starring Christopher Reeve as Clark Kent/Superman, Margot Kidder as Lois Lane, and Gene Hackman as megalomaniac Lex Luthor. In December 1978, *Superman: The Movie*, directed by Richard Donner, was the second-ever theatrical feature film featuring a DC character (the first was 1966’s *Batman* starring Adam West and Burt Ward) and was met with unprecedented commercial success for the comics genre.

Additionally, *The Adventures of Superman* Fifties television show and the subsequent *New Adventures of Superman* Sixties cartoons by Filmation Associates were in heavy weekday afternoon syndication on network television, while the Forties Paramount cartoons were being shown on paid subscriber television. The Son of Krypton had incredible worldwide recognition, in one incarnation or another, and there was certainly more milestones for the character to “leap in a single bound”!

In 1978, Atari CEO Ray Kassar, DC Comics President Sol Harrison and Publisher Jenette Kahn reached an agreement, approved by WCI exes, to create a *Superman* pinball machine and video game. Early on, it was decided to make the latter a cartridge for the VCS instead of an arcade game. Both would feature the iconic comic-book version of the character instead of his movie counterpart. The pinball game was released in March 1979 and was met with critical acclaim. This assured Atari that moving

forward with the VCS game was a safe risk. And so, one of Atari’s original software designers, John Dunn, accepted the challenge and pressure to create and develop *Superman* under a strict time schedule.

To accomplish his task, Dunn wanted to utilize twice the ROM (Read Only Memory) used to create all Atari VCS games developed up to that point. Initially, Atari was strongly opposed to the idea of increasing its development cost on *Superman*. However, the company acquiesced and permitted the expense to ensure this title would be designed and manufactured as planned. As such, Dunn was able to build upon initial code created by his colleague Warren Robinett, who was simultaneously developing *Adventure*—one of the most historically relevant video games ever created; it features the first known “Easter egg,” the designer’s signature on a hidden screen in the game!

“YOU’RE THE MAN OF STEEL!” proudly proclaimed Atari’s advertisements for *Superman*. The company’s bold tag line did not disappoint. Where *Superman: The Movie* led us to believe a man could fly, Dunn’s brilliant development of *Superman* was historic; this game was the first where a player actually controlled the movements and actions of an iconic fictional character. You are Clark Kent with the ability to change into Superman inside a phone booth. Using your Kryptonian powers of flight, super-strength, and X-ray vision, you must retrieve three broken pieces of the Metropolis Bridge scattered throughout the multiple-screen city. You must also capture Lex Luthor and his five henchmen, then take them all to jail. If you touch the kryptonite Luthor unleashed around the city, you lose your powers until you find and kiss Lois Lane. Once the bridge is repaired, you end the game by flying back into the phone booth, changing back to Clark Kent, and entering the *Daily Planet* to report the story!

With the actual video game engineered and approved, Atari’s next step was to create the box packaging. By that point, the VCS had over two-dozen cartridges available. Art was rendered



The
**Amazing
 Sea-
 Monkeys®**

Then & Now

By Scott Saavedra

Humbug is a funny little word. Perhaps most associate it with the character Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. To the British, it is also a hard candy. To knowledgeable comic-book fans, it is the name of the magazine Harvey Kurtzman founded after leaving his signature creation, *MAD*.

But for those of us who love the convergence of history and popular culture, humbug brings to mind P. T. Barnum, the great showman. Humbug is all about deception. In Barnum's mind, humbug in the service of entertainment was a virtue, not a vice. Now, if you're wondering what humbug has to do with Sea-Monkeys, the immensely popular, 60-year-old novelty originally sold through comic-book ads, then step right up, my friends... I have a story for you.

Phineas Taylor Barnum lived and breathed humbug, never meeting a fact he couldn't paper over with something more interesting and colorful so long as it brought in (paying) customers to his various museums and exhibitions. When Barnum

promoted his Fejee (Fiji) Mermaid, a sea-creature that wasn't actually a sea-creature, he used questionable advertisements to excite the public. The beautiful, half-naked mermaid illustrated in his advertisements showed something quite different from the hideous, dried-up, half-fish-tail, half-death-grimaced monkey actually on display. The exhibition was a huge success. It's not that Barnum absolutely had to employ humbug—the true story of how this creation of an anonymous Japanese fisherman made its way to Barnum wasn't boring, it just wasn't enough to bring in the crowds. It would be a lesson not lost on entrepreneurs in the decades that followed. Especially those, it seems, who created and sold novelties via comic-book ads.

Harold von Braunhut, a former Merchant Marine, possessed an entrepreneurial spirit and a flair for humbug. And while his name may not be on the tip of everyone's tongue in the manner of P. T. Barnum's, they likely know his most enduring creation... wait for it...

Nuclear Subs” (oh, I wanted that so bad), six-foot Frankensteins, or Sea-Monkeys for me. I did eventually acquire X-Ray Spex as an “adult kid” purchase. I didn’t expect to really see through flesh and clothing, so I wasn’t disappointed when none of that happened. But I was surprised to learn that X-Ray Spex were also a creation of von Braunhut. Another classic! Of course, the ads for X-Ray Spex were mostly humbug—X-ray vision was suggested but never explicitly promised. On the plus side, they look great and coordinate well with most outfits.

Von Braunhut tried other products that are less well known: Crazy Crabs (hermit crabs), Amazing Hair-Raising Monsters (an image of a bald monster that grows mineral crystals), and Live Squirrel Monkeys (uh, yep). None of these notions had the success of the Sea-Monkeys or X-Ray Spex, but the Live Squirrel Monkeys certainly generated interesting memories. Jorge Khoury’s “Comic Book Squirrel Monkeys” article at *CBR.com* shares a few such stories, but be prepared to read a tale with the phrase “twenty-eight stitches” mentioned not in a good way. And that’s a story with a happy ending. Sort of.



MONSTER FANS : SEE LIVING SKELETONS WITH THESE MYSTERY "X-RAY" GLASSES

Wear these ASTOUNDING glasses and see the SPOOKIEST, KOOKIEST "X-RAY" ILLUSIONS EVER IMAGINED!

STRANGE "X-RAY" GLASSES make you feel as though you have SUPERHUMAN VISION! SUDDENLY... people, animals and objects appear to become eerily TRANSPARENT or seem to MELT AWAY under the IRRESISTIBLE POWER of your magic "X-RAY" EYES! TRY SOME OF these terrifying EXPERIMENTS— IF YOU DARE!

- HOLD UP YOUR HAND, AND APPARENTLY SEE THE GRISLY MOVING "SKELETON" BONES RIGHT THROUGH THE SKIN AND FLESH! Try the same test with a DOG or CATS PAW IT'S INCREDIBLE!
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- NOW— IF YOU HAVE THE NERVE, look at a friend's HEAD and you'll swear you can see his own THROBBING BRAIN within his SKULL!

only \$1.00

YOU'LL THINK OF THOUSANDS OF OTHER EXPERIMENTS TO TRY... SO SEND FOR YOUR MYSTERY "X-RAY" GLASSES TODAY!

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Box 502 Niagara Falls, N.Y.
Gentlemen:
Please send me my "X-Ray Vision" Glasses at once. I understand that if I am not 100% delighted after my 10 day FREE TRIAL I may return them for full refund of the purchase price. I enclose \$1.00 and 25c shipping charges in cash, cheque or money order.
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

(ABOVE) Not your typical X-Ray Spex ad—certainly, it’s more lurid. (RIGHT) Several years ago the author and his wife attempted to create mail order novelty-themed treats as Christmas gifts for family. The X-Ray Spex cookies were a real challenge to make. The Fake Dog Poop brownies and Fake Barf candy were much easier to construct. Sadly, the recipients were not mail order novelty enthusiasts and a bit lukewarm to the entire enterprise (the Fake Barf, while tasty, was especially off-putting). Photo courtesy of the author.



JOE ORLANDO: AMAZING VISUALIZER OF SEA-MONKEYS



Joe Orlando was already an experienced comic-book artist when he was selected to visualize the fictional version of brine shrimp. Why he was specifically chosen or what the process was for the now-iconic look of the Sea-Monkeys has eluded my Google magic. He certainly was a fine choice.

Joseph “Joe” Orlando (1927–1998) emigrated from Italy with his family to America in 1929. He served in the U.S. Army in Europe during the late Forties as part of the occupation forces. Following his service, he made his way to the comic-book business, creating art for legendary publisher EC (home of *Tales from the Crypt* and *MAD*), Warren Publishing, and DC. At DC Orlando moved on from illustrating comics to editing them, helming three of my top-ten childhood favorites: *House of Mystery*, *Plop!*, and *Swamp Thing*. Sometime after the death of *MAD*’s original publisher, William Gaines, he was named associate publisher of the humor magazine. He retired in 1996. Unfortunately, a short bio like this doesn’t do the man justice. Seeking out, say, his early *MAD* magazine work or reading some issues of *Plop!* would be worth your time.

Oddball Comics

The Amazing Spider-Man & the Incredible Hulk Toilet Paper



By Scott Shaw!

Okay, it's time for full disclosure. When I was a kid, I did much of my funnybook reading while perched on a toilet seat.

Too much information? Very possibly. In the comic-book industry, there's a rumor that the noted science-fiction agent and comic-book editor Julius Schwartz once said, "Reading a comic book should take about the same amount of time as taking a good dump." If I get the point of that proclamation, I seriously doubt that I was the only kid around who used the family bathroom as

a library. I even knew lunatics who read comic books *while taking a bath*—but to an obsessive kid like me, that sort of behavior seemed vastly more taboo than reading *Uncle Scrooge* while pooping. *What if you dropped your funnybook in the tub?* Disaster was waaay too possible there. But reading funnybooks on a porcelain throne with no one there to interrupt you? Pure nirvana... until Mom or Dad threatened to pry off the locked bathroom door's hinges to gain access.

Box front for *The Amazing Spider-Man & The Incredible Hulk Toilet Paper*. All product photos and toilet paper scans accompanying this article courtesy of Scott Shaw! Spider-Man and the Hulk TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.

Age Magazine. Jim also wrote scripts for *Transformers*, *Sledge Hammer*, *The A-Team*, *Spidey Super Stories*, and a special *Spider-Man* giveaway comic book about child abuse, among others. He followed his work at Marvel by becoming editor-in-chief and associate publisher of Topps Comics, which produced such titles as *The X-Files*, *Jurassic Park*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Mars Attacks!*, *Ray Bradbury Comics*, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto*, *Lady Rawhide*, and *Zorro*, as well as a line of comics based on concepts created by the late Jack Kirby. Next, Stan Lee offered Jim the position of senior writer/editor at his new (and unfortunately short-lived) online company, Stan Lee Media, where Jim also performed the voice of "Stan Lee's Evil Clone." Jim currently lives and works in New York City as the publisher and editor-in-chief at Papercutz, publishers of new graphic novels starring *Nancy Drew*, *The Hardy Boys*, *The Smurfs*, *Barbie*, *Gumby*, *Geronimo Stilton*, and many more. Jim is also a trustee at the Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art (or MoCCA).

Writer/editor Michael "Mike" Higgins first entered the comic-book industry in 1978, where he created, penciled, inked, and internationally syndicated *Topaz* and *Moonbird* for Canada's Orb Productions. Michael also drew work for Fantagraphics Books and Harrier Comics... and then came Marvel. There, he wrote a variety of titles such as *Avengers*, *Conan*, *Moon Knight*, *Power Pack*, *Silver Surfer*, *Thor*, *Wolverine*, and *Wonder Man*, as well as a number of comics based on Hasbro toys. Mike phased into an assistant editor role at Marvel during the 1990s, but he seems to have left the funnybook field by the end of that decade.

Cartoonist Marie Severin was born on August 21, 1929, in Oceanside, New York. Growing up in an artistic household—Marie's WWI-vet father was a fashion designer and her older brother John also became a cartoonist—it was probably inevitable that she would also follow a similar career path; she had even secretly aspired to be a stained glass artist. Marie was essentially home-trained. "My father taught me," she said. "He was a really good artist. He'd trained at Pratt Institute... but my mother could draw, too." As a teenager, Marie took "a couple of months" of cartooning and illustration classes at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School, and attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, "for one day and said, 'This is a college,' and I wanted to draw and make money." While she was working on Wall Street, her brother John—who was freelancing for EC Comics—convinced Marie to work for the publisher as a colorist. Her first gig in comics was to color EC Comics' *A Moon... A Girl... Romance* #9 (Oct. 1949), but by 1951 she was working on staff at EC, coloring and doing



Jim Salicrup and Marie Severin in the late Seventies. © Marvel.

production work on most of their titles. (Exercising her own good taste in service to the controversial publisher, Marie was known for toning down any particularly gory or violent panel by coloring the entire image a deep blue!) On her stint at EC, Marie said, "I worked closely with Harvey Kurtzman and my brother. For a long time, I was really Kurtzman's girl Friday... I picked up his pacing of humor." After EC ceased publication of their line of color comics in 1954, Marie briefly worked as a colorist for Atlas Comics, edited by Stan Lee. But in 1957, after a slump in the comic-book business, Marie took a staff job with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, for which she "did a little bit of everything for them—I did television graphics on economics [and] I did a lot of drawing. I did a[n educational] comic book [*The Story of Checks*] that my brother did the finished art on... about checks."

In 1959, in addition to coloring two years' worth of Columbia Features' *Bat Masterson* syndicated Sunday newspaper comic strips, Marie returned to work for editor Stan Lee at what was now called Marvel Comics. Originally hired for her skills at coloring and production, nearly a decade later, a freelance illustration gig for *Esquire* magazine impressed her boss so much that she was assigned to draw the Steve Ditko-created "Doctor Strange" feature in *Strange Tales*. This led to penciling and inking other Marvel series. Initially, these included "The Incredible Hulk" and "Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner" in *Tales to Astonish*, but it was Marvel's parody

comic, *Not Brand Echh*, on which she quickly established herself as one of the finest humor artists ever to work in the funnybook field. Another impressive job from Marie was *King Kull*, a.k.a. *Kull* (first appearing as the lead feature of Marvel's *Creatures on the Loose*), a barbarian hero created by *Conan the Barbarian*'s Robert E. Howard; her brother, John Severin, exquisitely inked his little sister's pencils on this series, one of the few instances in which they worked together as an art team.

Marie's prodigious body of work—which featured hundreds of cover designs—for Marvel included *The Adventures of Kool-Aid Man*; *The A-Team*; *Alf*; *Apache Kid*; "The Beast" in *Amazing Adventures*; *Bill and Ted's Excellent Comic Book*; *Captain America*; *Captain Britain*; *The Cat*; *Conan the Barbarian*; *Crystar* (Marvel Books); *Damage Control*; *Daredevil*; *Doom 2099*; *Droids*; *Ewoks*; *Fallen Angels*; *Fantastic Four*; *Fraggle Rock*; *Francis, Brother of the Universe*; *G.I. Joe*; *Giant-Size Chillers*; *Howard the Duck*; *Iron Man*; *Jim Henson's Muppet Babies*; *Ka-Zar*; *Luke Cage and Iron Fist*; *Luke Cage*; *Power Man*; *Marvel Team-Up* (notably on an issue that teamed Spider-Man with *Saturday Night Live*'s original Not Ready For Prime Time Players); *Marvel Two-in-One* (teaming the

I Think It Would Be **Fun** to Publish a Fanzine...

By Ernest Farino

Citizen Kane © 1941 RKO Radio Pictures/Warner Home Video.

To paraphrase Mr. Thatcher reading a memo from Charles Foster Kane (above): “I think it would be *fun* to publish a fanzine!”

Of course, *Citizen Kane* himself had far greater ambitions than publishing a fanzine, but the spirit is the same. And “fun”? That’s the idea, anyway. The reality can sometimes be quite different.

Fanzines—a *fan magazine*—have a long history and span many genres.

Professional Fan Magazines

The movie fan magazine goes back to the beginning of the movie industry itself, and in its heyday in the Forties and Fifties crowded the newsstand racks with hundreds of titles primarily covering gossip surrounding movie stars (i.e., more than film production itself).

Some magazines bridged and blended the worlds of fandom and mainstream press, and in the sci-fi/horror field there were occasional issues like *Mystery* magazine with its “novelization” of *King Kong* by Edgar Wallace back in 1933. Even producer Merian C. Cooper and leading lady Fay Wray seemed to enjoy the advance publicity.

Some titles, like the notorious *Confidential* and *Uncensored* magazines, delved into often salacious celebrity gossip, a calling nowadays taken over by reality television and online blogs. My favorite of all of these gossip magazine

articles was back in the early Eighties (I think): Screaming at the unsuspecting customer from across the top of the front cover was the banner headline *Read About the Man Who Drove Ann-Margret From Hollywood!* Fond of Ann-Margret, I pulled the magazine down from the newsstand rack and thumbed through it, only to find that it was literally an article about... wait for it... her *chauffeur*. But, as the saying goes, they got me to look!

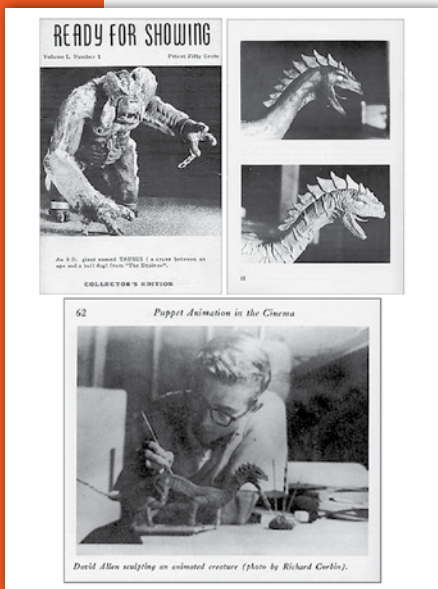
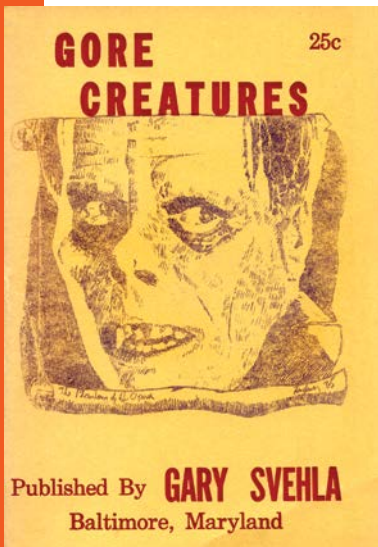
Of course, whenever a celebrity—especially the sexy actresses—hit the big time, the magazines pounced, both responding to and feeding the frenzy. It’s hard for some of us to relate to today, but the big news in the late Fifties and early Sixties was the scandal involving singer Eddie Fisher, who divorced wife Debbie Reynolds (after they had their daughter Carrie Fisher) as

a result of his having an affair with Elizabeth Taylor, which spilled over into the tumultuous relationship between Taylor and Richard Burton and—well, the Kardashians have nothing on these folks. *Peyton Place* and *Valley of the Dolls* star Barbara Parkins was quite the cause célèbre during this time, and even former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy rocketed from the pre-Dealey Plaza tranquility of “Camelot” with her elegant televised tours of the White House to lurid “Jackie-O” tabloid tales.

Celebrity fan magazine attention reached a zenith in 1966–1967 when the



King Kong's Fay Wray and Merian C. Cooper, with the 1933 edition of *Mystery* magazine featuring the *Kong* novelization.

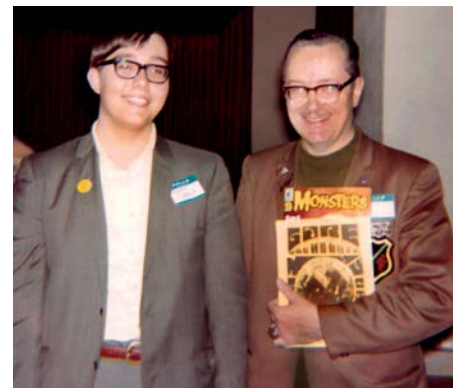


Famous Monsters would occasionally review fanzines, and this intrigued me. I didn't correspond (yet) with other fans and didn't own any fanzines to which I could compare or analyze for guidance or inspiration. Now, of course, it's wonderful to look back on fanzines from those days, from the simplest mimeographed publications like *Horror Screen World* or *Spectre* to the more sophisticated "printed" fanzines like *Horrors of the Screen* and *Ready for Showing*. The latter was especially interesting to me because of its coverage of stop motion animation films, featuring articles and photos by and about David Allen and Paul Davids (Paul had been featured previously in the *Famous Monsters* movie-making contest for his and filmmaking partner Jeff Tinsley's version of *Siegfried Saves Metropolis*). It was enormously frustrating, though, that *Ready for Showing* teased the reader with the planned contents of its second issue, including the *entire* scripts to *20 Million Miles to Earth* and other Harryhausen films—only to *never publish another issue!* I've always wondered whatever happened there.

One of the titans of fanzine publishing was—and is—Gary Svehla who, at 13-years-old, in 1963 launched *Gore Creatures*, a hand-drawn fanzine, with his friend Dave Metzler. "Hand-drawn" is no exaggeration: Gary copied over the first few copies of the entire first issue in pen. Fortunately, the issue wasn't that long. Even so, Gary's father stepped in and suggested carbon copies (remember finger-smudging carbon paper?), which made life a whole lot easier. *Gore Creatures* #1 didn't even have a cover (it was blank), but when Gary and Dave Metzler were working on #2 shortly thereafter, they used the #2 cover art (Dave's Wolf Man) as the cover for the remaining copies of #1 left to mail out.

Typical of fanzines of this (very) pre-internet era, print runs were scant,

(TOP LEFT) *Gore Creatures* (1967).
(MIDDLE LEFT) *Gore Creatures* #18.
(BOTTOM LEFT) *Ready for Showing*, c. 1965, featuring the early stop-motion work of David Allen.



Gary Svehla with *Famous Monsters of Filmland* editor Forrest J Ackerman.

resulting in a scarcity of copies existing today. According to the premier horror/scifi magazine expert Steve Dolnick, the print run of *Gore Creatures* #1 was only around 15 to 20 copies, mostly given to friends (plus one copy to Forry), and today only two or perhaps three copies are known to exist (one of which does not have a cover), including those in Gary's own collection. Issues #2, 3, 4, and 5 had a print run of around 25 to 50 copies, and today only two to four copies each are known to exist of each. By issues #6 and 7, the print run had escalated to 50–100 copies, but today only four to five copies of #6 and five to eight copies of #7 exist. Issues #8–10 increased to 100–150 copies printed, and the print runs continued to climb thereafter.

The original fanzine ran for 25 issues. The name *Gore Creatures* was always mildly controversial, some chiding it as blatantly obvious and immature, but I always found it to be both charming and exhilarating to my 12-year-old MonsterKid mindset. But others felt differently, including über poster collector and dealer Ron V. Borst (author of the horror movie-poster book *Graven Images*), at that time a major contributor to Mark Frank's fanzine *Photon*. By this time a high school English teacher by profession with a side class called "World of Movies," Gary started compiling new title ideas into a folder while he screened movies in his classroom. One of his two title finalists was *Cinemacabre*; when Gary passed on that choice his friend and fellow Baltimore fanzine publisher George Stover picked it up as the title for



Welcome to Metropolis



The Home of Superman

By Michael Eury

The Metropolis of Superman lore is a bustling environment with glistening skyscrapers that pierce the clouds—just like its high-soaring protector from Krypton—and whose streets attract a never-ending barrage of attacks from mad scientists, alien invaders, and vengeful supervillains.

The Metropolis of the real world—nestled at the southeastern corner of Illinois, U.S.A., the last stop in the American South before it gives way to the Heartland—has no skyscrapers. It's a rustic postcard of small shops and modest homes that haven't changed much over the years, populated by the kind of good-natured folks you'd find in a John Cougar Mellencamp song.

But this Metropolis has its own Superman—two, if you count the giant Superman statue in the center of town—and once a year, its streets are overrun with... well, mad scientists, alien invaders, and vengeful supervillains—plus more Supermen than you can shake a red cape at.

Metropolis, Illinois, is a city of 6,500 residents, but during the second weekend of each June it is flooded by a torrent of visitors (and event staffers) in electric blue Superman T-shirts, in town for

the annual Superman Celebration, a unique, extraordinarily fun hybrid of a community festival and a comic-con.

There's a lot to see in town during the Superman Celebration, from the Super Museum, statues of Superman and Lois Lane, and a procession of food and street vendors vying for your attention... but it's the legion of Superman masqueraders that catch your eye, as countless fun-seekers rush to the annual event dressed as the Man of Steel (pick your favorite version—from 1938's *Action Comics* #1, to the Henry Cavill movie Superman, to every incarnation in between, they're here). You'll find Supermen in every size, gender, and ethnicity imaginable, from uber-fit fashion models to muffin-topped grandpas to special-needs youth to chain-smoking stringbeans. And joining the many Supermen are cosplayers garbed as Supergirl (in several variations, including the Seventies' hotpants version!), Superboy, Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen, Lex Luthor... plus characters outside of the Superman Family, virtually everyone from Ant-Man to Zatanna.

The Origin of Metropolis

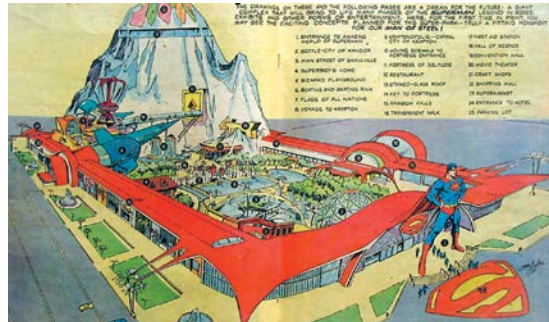
The Metropolis, Illinois, of yesteryear looked not up in the sky for a bird, a plane, or a Superman, but to the riverbanks. Its advantageous position on the majestic Ohio River, just across from Kentucky, attracted French settlers during the mid-1700s, who displaced the region's Native-American population and erected Fort De L'Ascension during the French and Indian War. That fort was destroyed and rebuilt on several occasions, eventually bearing the name Fort Massac in honor of the Marquis de Massac, France's Minister of the Marine. The fort was immortalized in

(TOP LEFT) This colorful sign, repurposing Neal Adams art from the cover of *Superman* #252, greets visitors as they enter Metropolis. (TOP RIGHT) One of the Super Museum's many exhibits spotlights a collection of Superman original and specialty artwork. (BOTTOM) A *Daily Planet* vintage car, parked in front of the museum. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this article are by Michael Eury. Superman TM & © DC Comics.



of today is bolstered by an eager Chamber of Commerce dedicated to new business development. According to Mendy Harris, president of the Metropolis Area Chamber of Commerce, “We depend on local business owners who have a vision and create that vision in our community. We add several locally owned businesses to Metropolis every year, and are proud of how much we have grown. Our Economic Development team is constantly looking for opportunities to bring bigger businesses to Metropolis. We are proud of our small town, all its charm, and true Southern hospitality that you will meet when visiting any of our local businesses.”

Those businesses are appreciative of the city's various tourist attractions, and many, including the Chamber office, sell a variety of Superman apparel and merchandise (you can even toss back a cold “Kal-Ale” at 718BrewCafe). In addition to Metropolis’ Superman-related commerce, a riverfront Harrah’s casino lures a steady stream of visitors, as does the burial site of the infamous Birdman of Alcatraz (Robert F. Stroud), and the city is the home of the lushly forested Fort Massac State Park, Illinois’ very first state park.



(TOP) Superman (Rev. Charles Chandler) is welcomed by Metropolis officials on the original Superman Day in 1972. (BOTTOM LEFT) The original welcome sign. Both photos from *Amazing World of Superman—Official Metropolis Edition*. (BOTTOM RIGHT) Neal Adams’ conceptual art for a planned Superman theme park in Metropolis. TM & © DC Comics.

American history as the site of a Revolutionary War skirmish led by George Rogers Clark and later, as an encampment for Lewis and Clark during their legendary Westward expedition. By the time Metropolis was founded in 1839, “this was a river town and a hopping little place,” says William Nichols, a retired history teacher who operates Metropolis’ Riverview Mansion Bed and Breakfast along with his wife, Lori (see sidebar). “Steamboat traffic could load and unload easily because of its shallow shoreline.” This accessibility inspired the small community’s big name: “They figured this place would take off,” Nichols reveals. “They had big plans, and that’s why it was named ‘Metropolis.’”

While those “big plans” didn’t evolve the community into the megalopolis implied by its ambitious appellation, the Metropolis

Yet it is as “the home of Superman” that Metropolis, Illinois, is most famous. Credit for that designation stretches back to the early Seventies, when Metropolis businessman Bob Westerfield, a respected community leader, realizing that his city shared its name with Superman’s fictional municipality, got the notion to co-opt the Superman “brand” via a partnership with the character’s copyright owner and publisher, DC Comics, at the time known as National Periodical Publications, Inc. DC agreed, eager to construct a planned \$50 million Superman theme park in town. Comics artist extraordinaire Neal Adams, at the time one of the industry’s few superstars, was commissioned to illustrate conceptual drawings for the proposed Superman Land, whose attractions would have included a Voyage to Krypton, Smallville Main Street, Fortress of Solitude, and movie theater.

An exuberant crowd of over 3,000 witnessed Metropolis Mayor J. P. “Pal” Williams’ proclamation of “Superman Day” on Friday, January 21, 1972. “I remember at Washington Park, they were selling kryptonite. It was a brand-new thing,” recalls Metropolis native Cathy Tirey, who today operates Honeysuckle Row antiques in Metropolis. The ceremony was attended by a host of dignitaries including then-DC Comics publisher Carmine Infantino... and Superman himself, played to perfection by Metropolis pastor Charles Chandler (see sidebar), sporting a costume once worn by TV Superman George Reeves. (Many comic-book fans—including yours truly, a teenager growing up in North Carolina at the time—vicariously witnessed this event via the tabloid-sized publication, *Amazing World of Superman—*



Look! Down on the street! Thousands of attendees walked past or over numerous informative decals placed on Main Street that tracked the evolution of Superman’s iconic S emblem. Superman TM & © DC Comics.

Your Two Favorite Heroes in One Collection...

Together!

By Chris Franklin

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RETROFAN #3

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Where did it all start? Was it a chance broadcast of a Sixties' *Batman* rerun? Maybe an old episode of *The Adventures of Superman*? New episodes of the *All-New Super Friends Hour*? It was probably a combination of all of those things that spoke to me for some reason, and made comic-book superheroes such a huge part of my life as both a child and as an adult. From those exposures on TV came the comics, and... the merchandise.

Mego's *World's Greatest Super-Heroes* line of action figures was there from the get-go. I don't really recall when I got my first Megos. Experts say we don't really retain memories before we are three years old. So by the time I was three, I at least had the standard eight-inch figures of Superman, Batman, and Robin. I seem to recall getting the Batcave and Batmobile for Christmas, probably in 1977, right after I had turned three.

Those toys, like most of my early childhood playthings, didn't really survive the years. I have replacements now, and Megos in all scales and sizes have been re-purchased over the course of my collecting career. I've also picked up items I could never find at the time, but longed for from the taunting artwork on the figure card backs.

In the Beginning...
But there were a few pieces from those early, preschool days that *did* survive.

They are the exact same items then, and can hold in my larger... And they wouldn't have survived... mom. She fostered my collection... else who started it.

My older cousin Joe would... to my grandparents' while my...



Cheers! Chris Franklin and some of his wonderful superhero toys. All photos in this article are courtesy of our guest Super Collector. Superman, Batman, and related characters TM & © DC Comics.

sometime... store and... a comic. I... obsessed... comic hal... He usher... collectibl... Now, I... figures as... most con... plaything... more pra...

created for the collector in mind, even if it served another useful purpose?

Collectible glasses were just that, a popular promotional item that restaurant chains fully exploited in the Seventies and Eighties. DC Comics was no stranger to such promotions, having partnered with Pepsi in 1976 and 1978 for two popular series of glasses.

In that later year, Cousin Joe made a trip to Pizza Hut in nearby Lexington, Kentucky, and picked me up the two most