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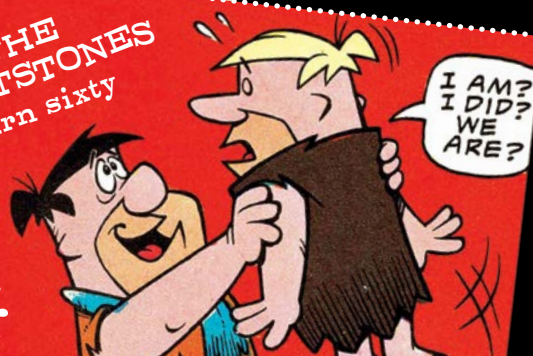
JUNE LOCKHART interview

Earthlings
beware...
MARS
ATTACKS!



ElectraWoman
and DynaGirl

THE
FLINTSTONES
turn sixty



Getting **MAD** in the Seventies • Honey West • Popeye Picnic & more!
Featuring **Ernest Farino • Andy Mangels • Will Murray • Scott Saavedra • Scott Shaw!**



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THE CRAZY COOL CULTURE WE GREW UP WITH

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by Rod Labbe

It's early August, 1968, and mom is driving us to our local shopping center, the Elm Plaza. My younger sister's lost in 16 *Magazine*. "Must be a groovy article," I comment from the front seat. "You're hardly blinking."

She looks up. "I'm reading about the Cowsills. Gonna buy their single today, at Grant's."

"What's a Cowsill? And what single?" I wanted to know, since I'd more than likely be hearing it day in and day out.

"Indian Lake.' They had an outasite record last year, too, called 'The Rain, the Park and Other Things.' Paula played it for us at my slumber party."

"They're some new rock group?"

"Yeah. A family of boys. Their mother, Barbara, and kid sister, Susan, are in the band, too. Ugh. I hate Susan's guts."

Now this intrigued me.

"Really! Why the hate?"

"Because she's my age and gets to sing with all these hunky guys, and that's what I wanna do. How does she rate? I can shake a

tambourine just as good, and my dancin' ain't bad, neither."

"Either. The proper word is *either*."

"Pfft! Leave me alone."

"Welllll," I drawled, playing devil's advocate, "Susan's in 16, so she's already famous, right up there with Bobby Sherman and Davy Jones. You're unknown. As for her brothers..."



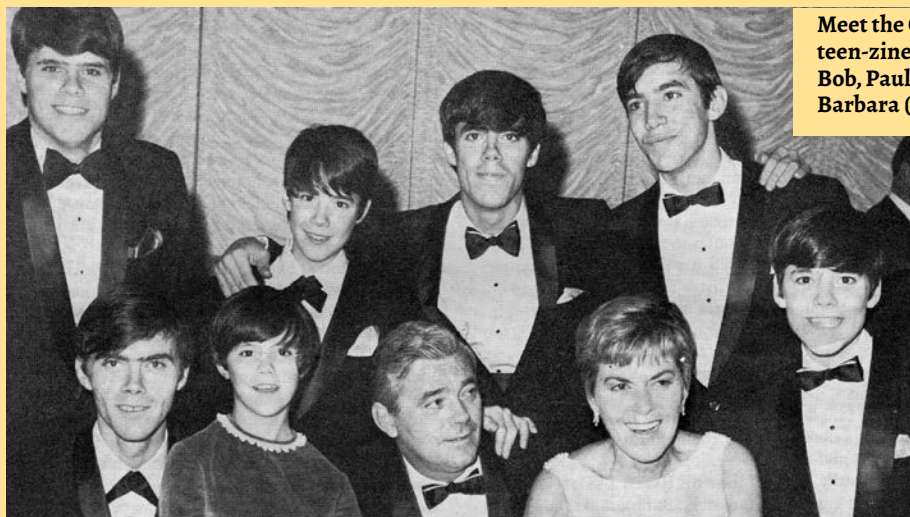
Family Band: THE COWSILLS Story



Talent and charm. Secrets and fear.
a film by Louise Palanker

THINKING BEE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS "THE COWSILLS STORY" FILM BY LOUISE PALANKER. CAST: BOB COWSILL, SUSAN COWSILL, PAUL COWSILL, BOBBY COWSILL, DAVID COWSILL, JAMES COWSILL, BARBARA COWSILL. MUSIC BY THE COWSILLS. EDITOR: BOB COWSILL. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: BOB COWSILL. WRITER: LOUISE PALANKER & BOB COWSILL. CO-PRODUCERS: BOB COWSILL & BOB COWSILL. PRODUCED BY LOUISE PALANKER.

(ABOVE) Paul, Susan, and Bob Cowsill in a 2019 promotional photo. Photo by Danny Clinch. Courtesy of Bob Cowsill. (ABOVE INSET) Louise Palanker's documentary *Family Band*, released in 2011 and originally aired on Showtime, revealed the Cowsills' bright moments and dark secrets. © 2011 Thinking Bee Productions. (LEFT) "You take a bus marked 'Lakewood Drive,' and you keep on riding till you're out of the city"... but the Cowsills' popular single "Indian Lake" could be found in various pressings, with photo sleeves. © MGM.



Meet the Cowsills, in a family pic that made the Sixties teen-zine circuit: (BACK ROW) Richard (Dickie), John, Bob, Paul. (FRONT ROW) Bill (Billy), Susan, Bud (Dad), Barbara (Mom), Barry.

Bob Cowsill



Back in Time, There's a Place I Remember...

RetroFan: Tell us about your early days, Bob, and leave no stone unturned!

Bob Cowsill: [laughs] Okay! In terms of playing music, I started young. Bill was eight, I was seven, and one day, Dad returned home from an overseas Navy trip with two four-string guitars. And they were *not* ukuleles! This was our introduction to playing and creating music. Jack Johnson, a friend of my father's, taught us some chords. Our fingers were little, but we had energy, desire, and enthusiasm, and from the time Dad gave us those guitars, Bill and I just never stopped playing.

During my sixth grade, we did a local TV show called *Spotlight on Talent*, one of the early talent competition programs, with host Gene Carroll. That was in Canton, Ohio, where we were living. Bill and I wore little charcoal suits and sang *Baby Blue*. I told my classmates, "Hey, I'm gonna be on TV," and we got beaten by a magician. Man! Hard to live that one down, especially at age 12.

Besides playing guitar, we became interested in harmonizing. We idolized the Everly Brothers, and our little "girl" voices blended beautifully. Bill could even sing "Where the Boys Are," and he sounded just like Connie Francis [laughs]. That emerged from a great training ground; we were all in a 50-member choir at our church, St. Joseph's, in Newport, Rhode Island. Before Mass began, we'd all march in, accompanied by a huge, majestic pipe organ. It sent chills down my spine.

RF: Weren't you singing as a duo, for gigs?

BC: That we were, like playing at Boys Club dances. My solo was "Traveling Man," made famous by Ricky Nelson. We'd watch *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* [ABC,

"Shut up. Ma, make Ronnie stop buggin' me."

"Ronnie, stop bugging your sister."

"Ooookaaay."

Judy did indeed buy "Indian Lake" by the Cowsills that day, and as predicted, played the thing constantly. I remember dancing to those infectious harmonies in our big living room and even lip-synching, using a paper towel tube as a faux microphone. Suddenly, my sister's bedroom was festooned with pin-ups of the Cowsill boys, with Barry being her favorite. No pix of Susan, natch!

Her Cowsill fervor continued, right into 1969 and beyond.

"Hair," a monster hit for the band and something far removed from "Indian Lake's" pop sheen, scored their best sales yet. I could tell my fan-struck sibling felt a wee bit subversive buying the 45 RPM single, as if she was somehow contributing to America's anti-war movement. "Hair's" layered vocals cemented the Cowsills' place in modern rock history. Their commercial hooks may have been sister Susan and their mini-skirted mom, but what legitimized this singing family from Newport, Rhode Island, was the performing brothers, musically gifted and adept at any instrument, style, or beat.

1969 became 1970, and by year's end, the Cowsills had vanished from the Top 40 landscape. Despite hit records galore and a bright future, they'd simply imploded. Fame is a harsh mistress... and coupled with internal turmoil, the road ahead is oftentimes bleak and treacherous.

Only true warriors navigate it. Ask Bob Cowsill. He knows.

About a year back, I saw a clip in my Facebook feed from Louise Palanker's *Family Band: The Cowsills Story* (2011). What's this? A documentary? I'd read somewhere that the Cowsills had never stopped making music. Three brothers, Bill, Dickie, and Barry (a casualty of Hurricane Katrina), had passed away, and John took off for a different musical horizon as the drummer for the Beach Boys. This might be a good time to reconnect and on a personal level.

One speedy order to Amazon, and the DVD arrived. I popped it into my player and was mesmerized. Bob's evocative intro set an intimate tone. Watching, listening, and learning, I realized we were approximately the same age and grew up together in the same tumultuous time period. Most importantly—and I can't emphasize this enough—we'd survived.

I needed to interview these people. It wouldn't be easy, logistically, but I was a determined lad. Full speed ahead, pedal to the metal, and my goals were met. All three of the performing Cowsills (Bob, Paul, and Sue, currently doing the yearly Happy Together tour) found time to "spill the tea" with yours truly.

What you're about to enjoy is the ideal companion piece to *Family Band*, and it's right here, in *RetroFan*.

Years” is an affecting testament to youth told from an older perspective.

BC: “Some Good Years” originally started out as a tribute to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He was retiring, and back then, they’d do an overview of someone’s career on ABC’s *Wide World of Sports*, with an appropriate song playing in the background. And since I’m a fan, I wrote “Some Good Years” for Kareem. As time went by, we didn’t get anything to him. I can’t tell you how many plans go awry [laughs]! Eventually, I turned it inward, changed the lyrics, and made them more applicable to us. A Beach Boys kind of tune. That song and two others—“Is It Any Wonder” and “She Said to Me”—led to *Global*, our then-newest album and the best we’ve ever done, to date. But this is the Cowsills we’re talking about, and if something can go wrong, it will.

RF: *Global* is sublime. What lured you into the studio again?

BC: I was doing a lot of writing, solo and with my wife, and that led to the new album. Things had changed considerably since our heyday. We released *Global* on our own label, when social media was just taking off. It appeared on YouTube and all over the web. Sales are consistent, and they’re still growing. A validation, coming on the heels of *Cocaine Drain*, which was a serious album project and not about

drugs, by the way [laughs]! Since it never got released, we took the bull by his horns and put *Global* out there ourselves.

RF: Which brings me back to *Family Band*, the documentary. All of your hits were covered, the rise, the crest of success and drawbacks of fame. The afterword struck me as sketchy... once your dad’s abuses were revealed, focus veered off and concentrated on him, rather than what made you guys musical pioneers.

BC: Good call. The trick about *Family Band* is this: It was, more or less, an accurate account of what went on in families back then. I had friends whose dads were just as bad as mine. Our parents grew up with the Depression and World War II as backdrops. That meant severe economic challenges, people out of work, homeless and starving. It would do a number on just about anyone. We didn’t need to worry about where the next meal was coming from—we were a Navy family, a military operation, and pulled our weight.

RF: But with the documentary obsessing on Bud, your dad, your story stopped dead in its tracks.

BC: True, it did. In a way, the documentary turned out to be about an almost fictional band, and what we had was an exercise in survival and forgiveness. The music took a back seat, and to me, our story is the music—we weren’t defined by the situation with our father.

RF: What’s most shocking is how quickly your earlier career crumbled. Almost overnight.

BC: With Bill out, the die was cast. You’re on top one minute, and *Pow!* The next, you’re down for the count.

RF: You and Bill were a team since childhood. I’d assume not seeing him was a bitter pill to swallow.

BC: It was, Rod. The separation from Billy ruined some of us. The money dried up, and we owed the IRS a bundle—a real, honest to God mess. Barry was sent spinning into a dismal life—things happened to him that weren’t good. And just when he’d decided to make a change, Hurricane Katrina took him from us. My twin brother, Richard, also went down a challenging and unforgiving road, and we lost Dickie, too. None of us saw Billy for years after that. He’d gotten into drugs, alcohol, you name it. Just terrible.

RF: Yet, you survived. Personally, I mean.

BC: I had children and responsibilities, and that tends to get your attention. Giving in to despair was not an option. I was grounded in my response to all of it and tried not to flounder.

RF: Louise Palanker, a fan from way back, was the driving force behind *Family Band*. How were those dots connected?

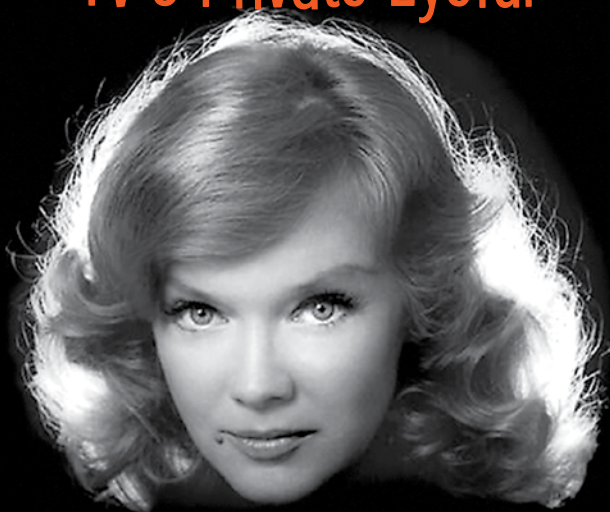
BC: Friday nights for 28 years, I played at a local pub, and one night, a woman in the audience said, “Hi, I’m an old fan of



Veteran *MAD* magazine cartoonist Jack Davis illustrated the family on the front and back album covers of 1969’s *The Best of the Cowsills*. © MGM.

HONEY WEST

TV's Private Eye



by Will Murray

Years ago, a small publisher asked me to revive the famous female private eye, Honey West. As someone who loved the 1965–1966 TV show of that name, I naturally jumped at the opportunity.

One of the first things I did was to watch a bunch of the episodes and for the first time read some of G. G. Fickling's original novels. Although the opportunity soon fizzled, I always cherished it. Honey was a fun character to write.

For this column, I delve into Honey West and how she became one of the most famous TV characters of the Sixties—even though she lasted only one season.

Burke's Law Spin-off

It all started with the husband-and-wife team of Forrest ("Skip") and Gloria Fickling. They knew Richard Prather, whose Shell Scott private-eye novels were selling fabulously in the era of Mike Hammer. Skip wondered why Prather didn't take a stab at a female private eye. Overcommitted, Prather countered with, "Why don't you try it?"

The Ficklings huddled and they came up with sexy L.A. P.I. Honey West, which Skip wrote as "G. G. Fickling" with Gloria pitching in as "sounding board and technical advisor." (G. G. was Gloria's maiden-name initials.)



"I first thought of Marilyn Monroe," Skip explained, "and then I thought of Mike Hammer and decided to put the two together. We thought the most-used name for someone you really like is Honey. And she lives in the West, so there was her name."

In the 1957 debut novel, *This Girl for Hire*, Honey took over her father's investigative practice after he was murdered. It was a solid setup, and *This Girl for Hire* led to several semi-salacious sequels, for busty Honey had

a tendency to lose her clothes at lot. By 1965, Honey fever had cooled, but she was still in print.

Enter Four Star Productions' Aaron Spelling. While visiting Great Britain, he caught an episode of *The Avengers*, which starred Patrick Macnee as British secret agent John Steed and Honor Blackman as his associate, Dr. Cathy Gale. Blackman was adept

(ABOVE) Live and in living black and white, Anne Francis as Sixties sexy sleuth Honey West and images from the show's title sequence. Courtesy of Ernest Farino. Honey West © 2020 Gloria Fickling.



Anne Francis flanked by “G. G. Fickling,” Honey West creators Skip and Gloria Fickling. In 2017, the documentary *Honey West: The Gloria Fickling Story*, produced by Nick Jerge, was screened in Southern California, an event which also honored the then-91-year-old visionary. © Gloria Fickling.

at judo and liked to do her crimefighting dressed in a black leather catsuit.

Spelling thought such a bold character would be a hit with American audiences. Returning to the States, he acquired rights to Honey West. Then he proceeded to reimagine Honey in the vein of Cathy Gale.

“We met with ABC to tell them our idea about this sexy female private detective,” he recalled, “and I had Nolan Miller draw sketches of this slinky, beautiful Honey for them. In one she carried a whip and the other she was sitting with a tiger. ‘And that,’ I said, ‘is the show.’ Like James Bond, it was based on a series of books, and ABC bought it immediately.”

Spelling tried to lure Honor Blackman stateside, but she had gone on to greater glory as Bond girl Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger*. So, he settled for Anne Francis—if you call that settling.

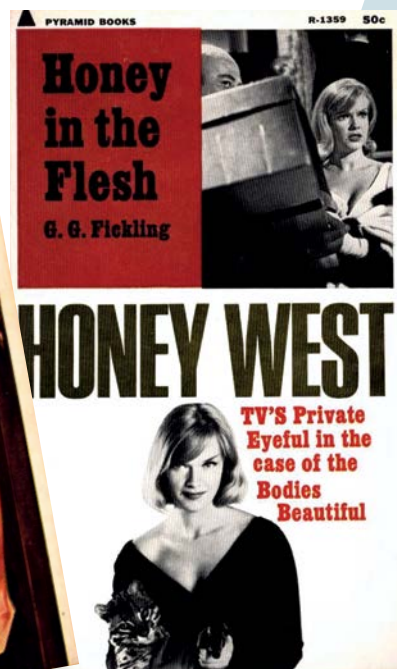
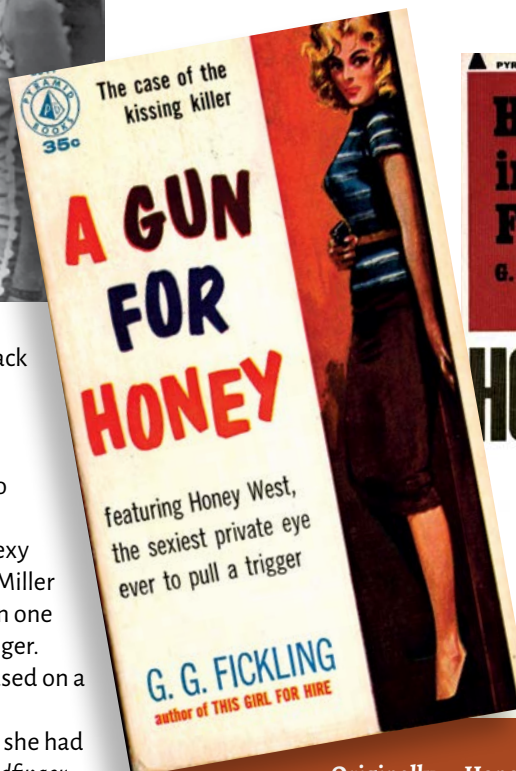
The 34-year-old veteran actress had recently appeared on an episode of *Burke's Law*, which starred Gene Barry as a wealthy playboy police detective. It was smart and stylish, virtually an updating of Barry's turn as Bat Masterson. Playing the killer on an episode was a coveted gig, much the way being a Batman villain would soon become.

“I enjoyed the experience,” Francis said at the time. “I suspect there is a wicked streak in all of us. Most actresses lead quiet, normal, humdrum lives. The chance to be a wanton hussy killer in the bargain was something I found impossible to resist.”

In her career, Francis had avoided starring in a TV series. She had done a sitcom pilot called *Claudia*, but realized that comedy wasn't her strength. Also, she had seen too many actresses sink into neuroses under the relentless TV grind.

“I wanted an offbeat role,” Francis reminisced, “something different that I could sink my teeth into, and which would make the risk of becoming a neurotic worthwhile. And then an idea came to me when I saw the Amos Burke [*Burke's Law*] series. Why not have a female counterpart? As much as I liked it, I never mentioned the idea to anyone. Then, Aaron Spelling, who created Burke, called me and told me about the character of Honey, which was exactly what I had in mind. I guess we had both been on the same psychic wavelength. This character Honey West is sophisticated and a swinging-type gal. I like her.”

Spelling decided to test Honey on an episode of *Burke's Law* titled “Who Killed the Jackpot?” [Season 2/Episode 30, original



Originally, Honey West paperbacks featured the same type of gritty, illustrated covers you'd find on other gumshoe novels, but after the TV show's premiere photo covers featuring Anne Francis were common. © Gloria Fickling.

airdate 4-21-65]. When one of Honey's clients is murdered, she runs afoul of Captain Burke, and sparks fly. Throughout, the wary rivals are constantly colliding and trading witty repartee as they pursue their parallel investigations. Honey is supported by Sam Bolt, who works for her agency and operates sophisticated surveillance equipment out of a disguised TV repair van. John Ericson, who had co-starred with Francis in the 1955 film *Bad Day at Black Rock*, played Bolt.

Burke and Honey have a superficially flirtatious but professionally competitive relationship, which perfectly establishes her independent character. Burke is chauffeured around in a Rolls-Royce, while Honey drives a Jaguar convertible.

Both characters reeked of glamour and sophistication—two Aaron Spelling trademarks.

The Girl (with an Ocelot) Next Door

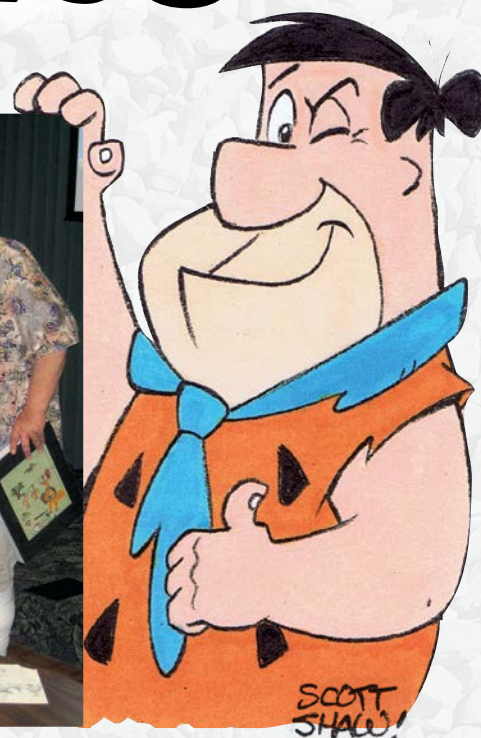
Audience response was positive, but Spelling and ABC proceeded cautiously. *Burke's Law* was an hour show. They shot a half-hour black-and-white *Honey West* pilot. Prior to 1965, no detective drama had ever starred a woman.

The Bedrock Chronicles

by Scott Shaw!

While growing up in the Fifties, I was a kid with five primary interests in life: drawing, paleontology, comic books, animated cartoons, and monster movies. I was considered a “weirdo” by my supposedly normal classmates. (Fortunately, I also had a lot of weirdo pals, a junior support group.) But one day in 1960, a cultural phenomenon came along that changed my life and even gave me legitimacy and even a sliver of hipness with the “normals”... probably because it embraced four of my five favorite things in the world.

Felix the Cat was the first image ever transmitted on commercial television, and as American households began to embrace the tube, it wasn't difficult to have the opportunity to view Terrytoons' “Farmer Alfalfa” cartoons in the morning, Max Fleischer's “Superman” cartoons at lunch, MGM's “Tom and Jerry” and Disney's “Donald Duck” cartoons after school, and UPA's “Gerald McBoing-Boing” in the evening—all in the same day. It offered an entertaining and informative introduction to the history of animation to those of us who were observant, but there came a point where I realized I'd watched every one of them enough times that I was beginning to experience allergic reactions. Despite no access to books on the subject (if there were any at the time), I managed to mentally cobble together a rough history of animated cartoons, primarily from information I pried from my parents and grandmother. But repeated viewings of the surprisingly diverse array of cartoons available on TV and at marathon cartoon matinees had saturated my brain. Fortunately, the cartoon cavalry had arrived in the

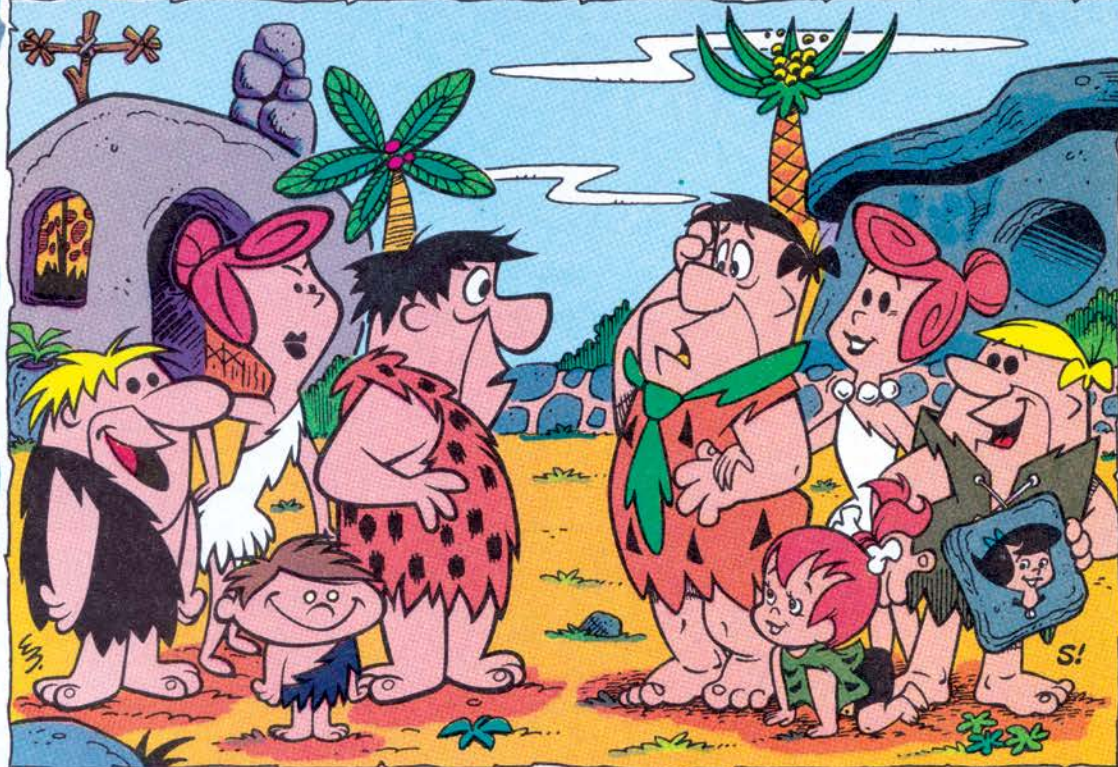


(ABOVE) Fred helps show off our esteemed columnist with a hand-drawn poster he drew in the sixth grade for a school election. “This was the year after *The Flintstones* premiered,” Scott says, “and the show was a big deal, the equivalent of the buzz that *The Simpsons* generated.” The young candidate also handed out shipping tags to his “potential constituency” with a hand-drawn Flintstones character on each and his slogan, “You really ought to vote for Scott!” And they did! Scott won the election. © Hanna-Barbera Productions.

form of Hanna-Barbera Productions and Jay Ward Productions, remnants of MGM and UPA with new, hip, and smart cartoon shows. Upon their first airings, I was an immediate fan of H-B's *Ruff and Reddy* and Jay Ward's *Rocky and His Friends*, both serialized adventures of funny animals.

Ward's cartoons were funnier, but Hanna-Barbera's cartoon series—which soon included *Huckleberry Hound*, *Yogi Bear*, and *Quick Draw McGraw*—had better production values and were more plentiful. I loved 'em all, but none would hold a firefly to what was about to come.

H-B's publicists promised *TV Guide* and other publications that their new cartoon series would appear at night, partially because it was supposedly aimed at adults—and that it was a prehistoric version of *The Honeymooners* starring Jackie Gleason and Art Carney, a very popular live-action television series. My eight-year-old self was ecstatic. I already loved a prehistoric story arc of H-B's *Ruff and Reddy* that introduced a lost world inhabited by dinosaurs and the elusive Chickasaurus. And being a fat kid, I dug Jackie Gleason a lot, too. Plus, Hanna-Barbera Productions was my favorite cartoon studio. So this new animated primetime show was sounding better by the minute. But a half-hour-long



THE BEDROCK CHRONICLES

--THE EVOLUTION OF *THE FLINTSTONES*--

A VISUAL HISTORY OF HANNA-BARBERA'S MOST ENDURING CHARACTERS
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT SHAW!

THE TEAM OF **WILLIAM HANNA** AND **JOSEPH BARBERA** HAS BEEN MAKING ANIMATED CARTOONS FOR HALF A CENTURY; THEY CREATED THE **OSCAR-WINNING** *TOM AND JERRY* SHORTS FOR **MGM**, THEN WENT ON TO OPEN THEIR OWN ANIMATION STUDIO IN 1957. THEY VIRTUALLY PIONEERED THE FIELD OF LIMITED ANIMATION ESPECIALLY FOR TELEVISION, AND SUPERVISED THE CREATION OF A LITERAL LEGION OF CARTOON STARS. BUT NONE OF THEIR VAST RANKS OF CHARACTERS CAN CLAIM ANY GREATER SUCCESS OR DURABILITY THAN THAT "MODERN STONE-AGE FAMILY," **THE FLINTSTONES**.

ACTUALLY, THE FLINTSTONES' BIRTH WAS A SOMEWHAT ROCKY ONE. BY THE LATE 1950'S, HANNA-BARBERA ALREADY HAD A STRING OF SUCCESSSES WITH THEIR SYNDICATED CARTOON SHOWS, SUCH AS **RUFF AND REDDY**, **YOGI BEAR** AND THE **EMMY AWARD-WINNING** *HUCKLEBERRY HOUND*. AT THE URGING OF **SCREEN GEMS**, AS WELL AS THEIR OWN INSTINCTS FOR INNOVATION, HANNA AND BARBERA SET OUT TO CREATE THE **FIRST** ANIMATED SERIES FOR PRIME TIME T.V. →



ABOVE: THE ORIGINALLY-PROPOSED CAST (INCLUDING "FRED JUNIOR") MEET THEIR CURRENT INCARNATIONS. THE 1959 VERSION WAS DRAWN BY FORMER **MGM** DESIGNER **ED BENEDICT**.

LEFT: THE FLINTSTONE FAMILY PETS: **DINO** THE SNORKASAURUS AND **BABY PUSS**, A SABRE-TOOTHED TIGER.

RIGHT: BENEDICT'S SECOND VERSION OF FRED (1960), SEEN BRIEFLY IN KEY SCENES OF THE SHOW'S PILOT EPISODE, "THE POOL PARTY."



June Lockhart

An Interview with One of TV's Most Beloved Moms

by Shaun Clancy



Gene (1891–1951) and Kathleen (1894–1978) Lockhart were a famous Hollywood couple back in the Thirties and Forties who met in 1923 while performing together on a Thomas Edison-sponsored cross-country train that promoted inventions. They married a year later and continued their acting careers in plays, movies, and radio.

Their daughter June Lockhart was born June 25, 1925, and the whole family up and moved to California to work at MGM. June's first-ever acting performance was at the age of nine in the play *Peter Ibbetson*. Her first movie role was at the age of 13 with her parents in the 1938 classic *A Christmas Carol*. Other films she worked on early in her career were *Sgt. York*, *All This and Heaven Too*, and *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

An often-overlooked area of the Lockhart family's career is their extensive amount of radio appearances in the Thirties and Forties. Radio during those times was treated the way we treat TV today. Every home had a radio, around which the entire family would sit and

June Lockhart as *Lassie's* Ruth Martin, and the show's canine star. Autographed to the author's mother, Sandy. Lassie © Classic Media. Unless otherwise noted, all photos accompanying this article are courtesy of Shaun Clancy.



listen to popular shows like *Suspense*, *Gunsmoke*, *Dragnet*, and *Jack Benny*. June Lockhart's first radio show was on the *Lux Radio Theater* program. This attracted the attention of MGM, who wanted to put June under contract, but her father insisted that she finish school before committing. She took her dad's advice and graduated from the Westlake School for Girls in Hollywood in 1943. The school was full of Hollywood children including Shirley Temple, who was a year behind June.

Among the first films June acted in after graduating was *Son of Lassie* (1945), a property which she would later work on for TV for six years (1958–1964). Her role on TV's *Lassie* was followed by *Lost in Space*, where she co-starred as galaxy-traveling matriarch Maureen Robinson for the series' three seasons (1965–1968).

As with a majority of fans, my first exposure to June Lockhart's career was on those two TV shows, which are among her favorite memories. June has remained active all these years with plenty of TV walk-on appearances and movie cameos. She's even done several media conventions with other cast members, and the Lockhart acting bug has been handed down to June's daughter, Anne Lockhart, who played Sheba on the 1978 TV show *Battlestar Galactica* [which we'll cover in a future issue of *RetroFan*].

RetroFan: Were you aware that there was a *Lassie* radio show that started in 1947? It ran about three years.

June Lockhart: No, I wasn't, and I had nothing to do with it.

RF: Rudd Weatherwax, who owned and trained *Lassie*, was involved with that program, but it was nothing like the TV show. Did you see him on the set of *Son of Lassie*, and if so, how much involvement did he have with the dog?

JL: I had worked with Rudd on *Son of Lassie* (1945) and we worked very well together, he and his assistant trainer, whose name I have forgotten, but he was the man who later went on to own the dear dog on *Petticoat Junction*. [Editor's note: Higgins, trained by Frank Inn, was *Petticoat Junction*'s dog. Higgins went on to play the original Benji.] Anyway, I liked Rudd and the trainer and got on with the dog very well.



June Lockhart



June Lockhart's senior yearbook photo, from 1943. Courtesy of Ms. Lockhart, via Shaun Clancy.

Years later, when it came time for me to then assume the role of the mother in the *Lassie* series, Rudd said, "Oh, yes, get June because she knows how to work with the dog." It is different, you know, because they cue the dog while you're acting. So you have to hold your dialogue while they say, "Lassie, Lassie!" to get the dog to turn around and look at the trainer, who is holding up a piece of meat to get the dog to look alert. And you hold your face and hold your dialogue until they've got the look they want from the dog, then you go ahead and speak your line. The sound is all cut out in the editing room.

RF: Was it just the one dog during the movie?

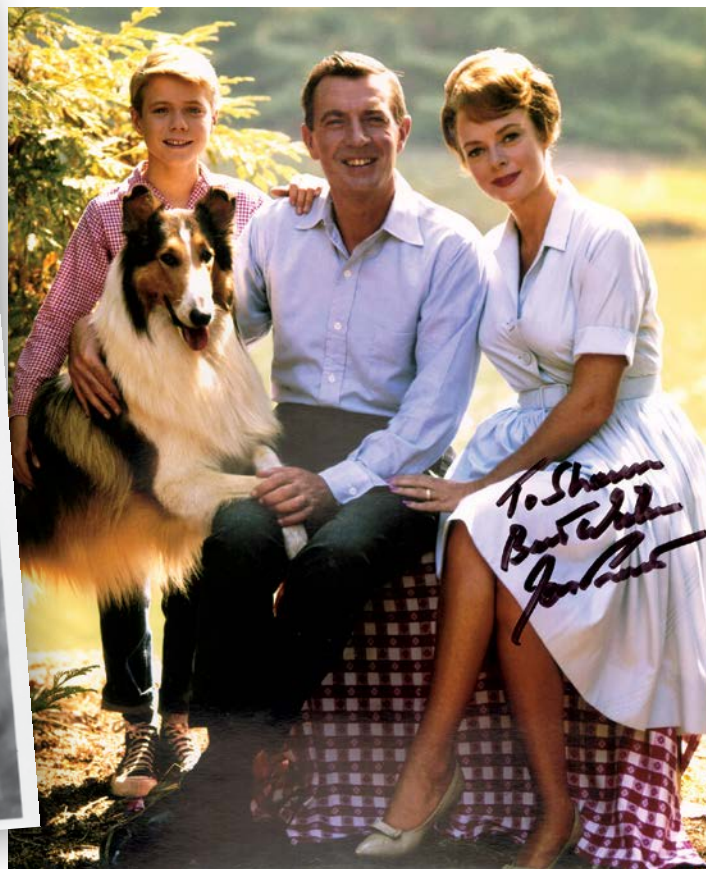
JL: No. There were always three or four dogs and when we did the series, there were always about four dogs. One for the running, one who does the pretend fighting, which was actually two dogs having a romp and then they laid in the soundtrack, which was the damndest dog fight you've ever heard. These two dogs have been raised since birth to romp and play and roll over. We would all gather around to watch the so-called "fight" scenes because it was such fun to see the dogs having themselves such a jolly time! When the director had enough of what he wanted, he'd yell "Cut!" and the dogs would sit down and "pant, pant, pant," waiting for their treats, because they'd done their job.

RF: Where was the *Lassie* television show filmed?

JL: What is now Paramount... anyway, it was RKO... Gower Street Studios, Melrose and Gower.

RF: And the on-location shoots?

JL: Oh, anywhere out in the valley. My God, we worked in all places. Chatsworth, San Fernando Valley, out in the heat, sometimes down in a bean field in Orange County. One time we were shooting and it was early Monday morning we got down there and were out in a bean field shooting a scene. All of a sudden, two jet planes flew over us at about 200, 300 feet over our heads, and the producer Bob Golden, who had been down there Sunday, selected the spot and went off to play golf, not realizing the spot he had chosen was at the end of the runway down of the naval air base. Well, of course, the dog freaked!



The *Lassie* cast at two stages of the show's history: June Lockhart as Ruth Martin, Hugh Reilly as Paul Martin, Jon Provost as Timmy Martin, and, of course, Lassie. Both signed by Jon Provost. Lassie © Classic Media.

I hit the ground. I mean... the noise of those jets! So we had to time the scenes in between take-offs for the rest of the day! It really shocked the hell out of us, let me tell you. The poor dog! My Lord!

RF: Do you recall why Cloris Leachman left the series? [Editor's note: Cloris

Leachman played the role of Ruth Martin on *Lassie* for the 28 episodes of the 1957–1958 season. June Lockhart replaced her in the role beginning the next season, her tenure eventually totaling 207 episodes.]

JL: Well, Cloris had never liked the part very much and they weren't very pleased with Cloris.

RF: So it was mutual.

JL: Oh, yeah. They had offered it to me before Cloris went into the part, but I was living in New York, had two children, and was married to a doctor. In the meantime, during the time she played it, the marriage had dissolved and I had come back home with the two children and was in the middle of a divorce, so when I was offered the job again by Bob Golden and Bonita Granville... whom [laughs] I ran into at a

red light on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills. They pulled up beside me and we greeted each other. I had known both of them since I was about 12 years old. Bob was the producer. And so, I said, "Well, I'm living back here now. I moved back out." We were talking from one car to another at a red light! He said, "We wish you would do the mother in the *Lassie* series for us." I said, Well, I'll be home, I thought, "What am I being so damn grand about?" I knew Cloris was leaving and knew the part was available. There it is. It's a nice, dignified role, it's fully sponsored, it's on the air and it's with CBS; this just might be heaven-sent. They've offered this to me now three times, so I called my agent and said, "Find out what they are offering," because during that time, I was flying back every couple of weeks to New York to do things like *Studio One*, *Climax*, and all those other live TV shows and a lot of game shows and by this time, I'd done years and years of a current-event news show with the White House press called *Who Said That?* with Merriman Smith and Bill Lawrence and H. V. Kaltenborn, and John Daly was the moderator.

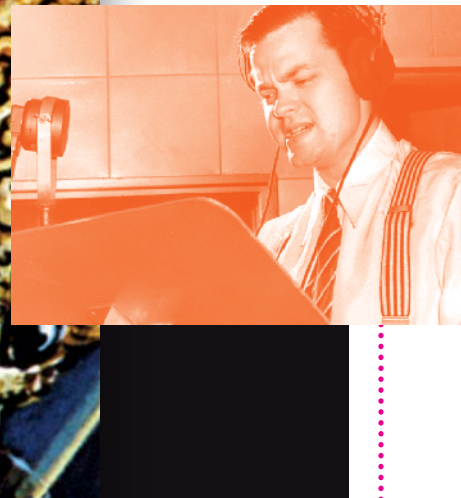
RF: You were definitely busy.

JL: Oh, yes. I worked all the time during all those years.

RF: Was some of the issue because it was an exclusive contract with *Lassie* and you wouldn't be able to work on other things?

JL: No, I was able to work on other things when we were shut down. We shot nine months and had three months off; however, the contract was specific about what roles I could and couldn't play. I couldn't play a drunk... but I played all those before I went into the contract with *Lassie*. I couldn't play a *wanton woman*, you know. They said in my personal life, I was "never to behave in any manner that was not in keeping with the image and concept of the mother in the *Lassie* series." This was such an extraordinary thing to have in a contract that I carried it with me, and with every interview that I did, I showed it to the interviewer [laughs].

RF: [laughs] Did you have to do promotional tours, personal appearances? Do any of those stand out? Were you surprised by any of the



Mars Attacks

or...

**Martian Mayhem on Mankind
Creates Catastrophic Chaos!
(at 5¢ a pop...)**

by Ernest Farino

"The end of our existence represents the likeliest outcome of an extraterrestrial encounter. In short, if they're out there, we better hope they never find us."

— Rick Yancey, American author of suspense and science fiction

According to the U.S. government, UFOs don't exist.

According to Ray Bradbury, Ed Wood, and Ray Harryhausen, they do.

Who you gonna believe...?

Don't Believe Everything You Read...

In 1897, *Pearson's* magazine in the U.K. paid English author H. G. Wells £200 (about \$6,500 today) to serialize his science-fiction novel *The War of the Worlds*. *Cosmopolitan* magazine serialized the novel in the U.S. and it was later published in hardcover by William Heinemann of London (and has been in print ever since). Written from 1895 and 1897, the battle with an extraterrestrial race commences when southern England is invaded by Martians.

The novel established several concepts that have become staples of science fiction: Mars (or any other planet) is an ancient world nearing the end of its life inhabited by superior beings capable possessing advanced science and engineering who are keen to conquer the Earth. The term "Martian" has also entered into the lexicon as a generic term for alien life.

Ripe for dramatization, future Hollywood wunderkind Orson Welles adapted the story as a radio play in 1938 and, formatted as a "live" newscast that interrupted regular programming, the vivid descriptions of invading Martians laying waste to New

Jersey frightened naïve listeners, some of whom fled their homes in panic. Probably the first example of what we know today as "fake news."

Ray Harryhausen, who would later create visual effects for the science fiction-themed films *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, *20 Million Miles to Earth* (an alien creature coming to Earth from Venus this time), and H. G. Wells' own *First Men "In" the Moon*, was drawn to Wells' Martian story soon after he finished work on *Mighty Joe Young* in 1949. In 1994, he told author Mike Hankin, "I always thought that *War of the Worlds* had great potential. I made several drawings and some continuity sketches based on the Wells book. I did a step outline, keeping it in the Victorian period, because once you bring it into the present you run into the problem of the atomic bomb and other modern weapons, which had started to become cliché. I wanted to keep Wells' vision, with the huge walking machines and the cylinder that opened to reveal the octopus-like creature. I shot a brief test in 16mm color, which I had blown up to 35mm."

Ray told Mike Hankin and animator Steve Archer in 1985 that he had taken the package to various studios: "Jessie Lasky, Sr. became very interested in it, but he was working on another film at the time. I also showed it to George Pal and several other people, but no one else seemed interested. One reason, I believe, was the cost of mounting a period picture. The need for costumes



(TOP LEFT) Author H. G. Wells. (TOP RIGHT) Orson Welles performing his radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds*, 1938. (ABOVE) *War of the Worlds* (1938), in pulp magazine-like format.

Fiction, illustrating such authors as Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick, Jack Finney, C. M. Kornbluth, Frederik Pohl, Robert Silverberg, Robert Sheckley, Clifford D. Simak, and Jack Vance. He painted six covers for *Galaxy Science Fiction* and his gag cartoons appeared in the men's magazines *Dude*, *Gent*, and *Nugget*, as well as comic strips and covers for various Warren publications, including *Spacemen* and *Monster World*.

Sadly, Wood suffered from chronic headaches, kidney failure, and a stroke that caused a loss of vision in one eye. All of these problems, plus Wood's embitterment about declining income, took their toll and the artist died by suicide by gunshot in Los Angeles on November 2, 1981. EC editor Harvey Kurtzman, who worked closely with Wood during the Fifties, said, "Wally had a tension in him, an intensity that he locked away in an internal steam boiler. I think it ate away his insides, and the work really used him up. I think he delivered some of the finest work that was ever drawn, and I think it's to his credit that he put so much intensity into his work at great sacrifice to himself."

Norman Saunders

After contributing to *Captain Billy's Whiz Bang* from 1928 to 1934, Norman Saunders left Fawcett Publications to go freelance. Known for his fast-action scenes, his beautiful women, and his ability to meet a deadline, Saunders worked in Westerns, weird menace, detective, sports, and the saucy pulps. He was able to paint very quickly and produced 100 paintings a year (two a week from 1935 through 1942).

In 1958, Saunders began with Topps in 1958 painting over photographs of baseball players who had been traded, so that they would appear to be wearing the jersey of their new team.



(LEFT) Artist Wallace "Wally" Wood in his apartment. (BOTTOM LEFT) Artist Norm Saunders poses for a reference photo.



Saunders also created artwork for many other cards, including *Batman* in 1966, *Ugly Stickers*, *Nutty Initials*, *Make Your Own Name Stickers*, and *Civil War News*.

Remarkably, Saunders' original paintings for the *Mars Attacks* cards are very small, averaging 3-3/4 inches by 5-1/4 inches, not much larger than the cards themselves.

The Invasion Begins

Card #1:

The Martian leaders voted and decided that Mars would have to attack the Earth. Life on the 4th planet would not be able to continue much longer. Martian scientists had reported to their government that atomic pressures had been building up beneath the surface of Mars for many years. A mammoth atomic explosion was weeks away, perhaps only days. The explosion would destroy all life on Mars, turning the planet into a barren wasteland. To protect the survival of their civilization, the Martian officials plotted the conquest of Earth. The fearless Martian warriors were prepared for their journey through space, confident that their weapons would soon conquer earth.

Next: Card #2: "Martians Approaching"

And so it goes. With cards titled "Washington in Flames," "Death in the Cockpit," "Destroying a Dog," and "Crushing the Martians," this series was one of the highlights of 1962, right up there with the Aurora monster model kits (the first monster kit, *Frankenstein*, was a huge success in early 1962, and *Dracula* and the *Wolf Man* were in stores in time for Christmas 1962). *Famous Monsters* magazine and others were going strong, *Shock Theater* packaged Universal horror movies for TV syndication, reaching a whole new generation, and TV series like *Thriller* kept us enthralled within the dark recesses of *The Twilight Zone* (*The Munsters*, and other horror and sci-fi-themed series would soon follow).



Card #1, "The Invasion Begins" (front). "The idea to start on Mars was Woody's," says co-creator Len Brown, referring to Topps creative director Woody Gelman, who developed the series with him. "We worked fairly sequentially, as I recall, so this was the first card Norm Saunders painted." © The Topps Company, Inc.

Shocking... Positively Shocking...

— James Bond (Sean Connery) *Goldfinger* (1964)

While the "Control Voice" of *The Outer Limits* would assure us the following year that "there is nothing wrong with your television set," those pesky grownups just couldn't leave well enough alone. Complaints started coming in from concerned parents, and "Destroying a Dog" (card #36) was singled out as particularly offensive. We kids ate it all up, of course, and somehow, for the most part I imagine, grew up to be reasonably decent people. But the graphic violence and implied sexuality had parents and teachers in a tizzy.

SCOTT SAAVEDRA'S SECRET SANCTUM DEPARTMENT

A SECRET SANCTUM Look At Getting MAD in the Seventies

by Scott Saavedra

"Friends, roaming paperbacks...
Lend MAD your jeers!
It comes to bury humor...
Not to raise it!"

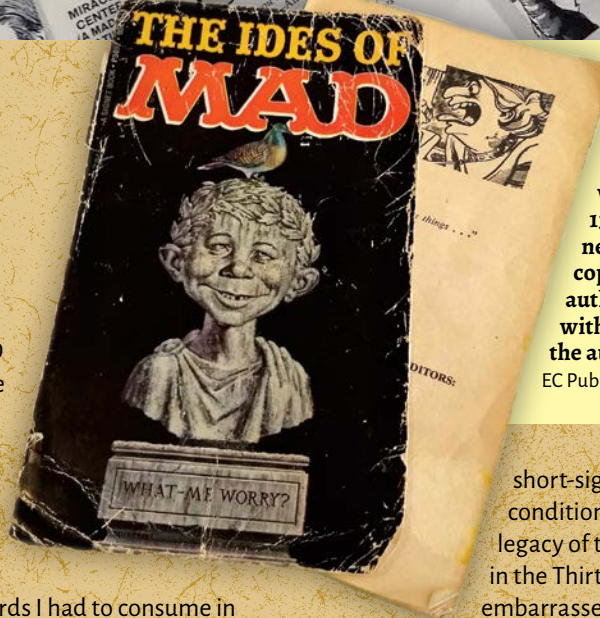
Such was the typically self-deprecating promise on the back cover of *The Ides of MAD*, a mass-market paperback reprinting material from Fifties-era MAD magazines. Included was a parody of one of Shakespeare's most famous scenes, Marc Antony's funeral oration. Not that I made the connection when I first read the back cover. My idea of literature then—I was around ten—was limited pretty much to a burgeoning interest in comic books and whatever printed words I had to consume in school.

Ides was my first MAD purchase—a gift from my dad—made at a newsstand one night in Los Angeles. I got it because I had looked over a friend's copy and had my mind boggled by the thing. Dad and I had just come from seeing Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey—more boggling of the mind—and the MAD paperback was an extra treat. That was one of my more formative nights to be sure.

As I read, re-read, examined every letter, absorbed every line, and simply stared at my beautiful copy of *Ides of MAD* for long periods of time, I found that I had so many questions. Mainly, what I wanted to know was... what... is... this... thing?

Son of Harvey

I suspected that MAD wasn't always a magazine when I came across paperback reprints of comic-book style material making fun of comic characters I had never read (or heard of). And it's true, MAD began life as a ten-cent comic book in 1952. These modest but colorful publications were at the bottom of the popular-culture pile at the time, a position nurtured by cheap,



(LEFT) The author's introduction to a world he didn't know existed appeared in the pages of *Ides of MAD*. The first few years of MAD paperbacks were reprinted multiple times; this is the 13th printing, ca. 1969. It has been read nearly into oblivion (not to worry, a backup copy is on hand). (ABOVE) The covers to the author's earliest copies of MAD could not withstand multiple re-readings. Photos by the author unless otherwise indicated. TM & © EC Publications, Inc.

short-sighted decisions regarding pay, working conditions, and quality of the product, a sad legacy of the earliest days of the medium's debut in the Thirties. Many people in the business were embarrassed to toil in that field. Harvey Kurtzman was one such man. Unfortunately for him, he had an uncommon knack for the work. Not only was he a gifted visual storyteller, but despite his meticulous, difficult reputation as an editor, his charismatic skills became legendary. He swept up into his circle some of the finest cartoonists then working in the field, people like the versatile Wally Wood, the animated Jack Davis, and my forever favorite, the Lon Chaney, Sr. of comics, Will Elder (he could mimic anyone's style).

MAD has one of those origins that is somewhat tainted by the quirks of memory, time, and bad water under the publishing bridge. I think that it's fair to say this: Kurtzman worked for William M. Gaines, the eccentric son of a pioneering comic-book figure and publisher, who intended to be a teacher until his



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Harvey by Harvey, a self-caricature from *The Illustrated Harvey Kurtzman Index* (Glenn Bray, 1976). Al Feldstein and William Gaines, as drawn by Angelo Torres (MAD #143, June 1971). Kurtzman © Harvey Kurtzman estate. MAD art TM & © EC Publications, Inc.

father died an untimely death. Gaines reluctantly took over the family business and was encouraged by an artist he hired ahead of Kurtzman, Al Feldstein, to publish the kinds of comic books he himself would like to read. Gaines' company, originally Educational Comics, became Entertaining Comics or, more commonly, just EC. Feldstein was a powerhouse, editing and writing almost the entirety of EC's most profitable comics, horror-themed series like *Tales from the Crypt*. He even found time to draw the occasional cover or story. Meanwhile, Kurtzman, who heavily researched EC's two modern and historical adventure/war comics, felt his efforts deserved more compensation.

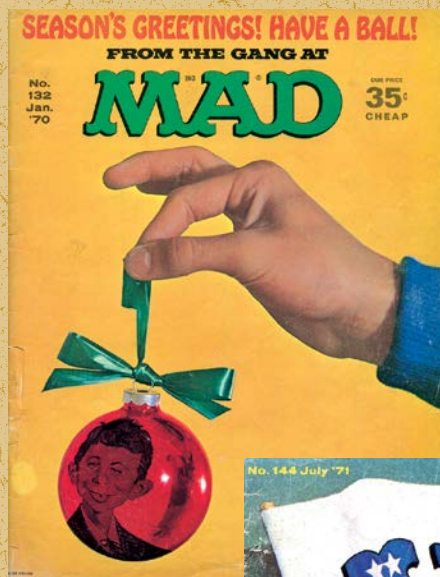
Well, yes, but that was not how the comic-book business worked. Gaines suggested that Kurtzman create a humor comic because he knew Harvey could do funny and since it wouldn't require as much effort he would quickly improve his income (a pipe dream, really, because for Kurtzman there were no shortcuts). The comic book *MAD* was not an immediate success, but soon racked up sales and imitators (*Eh!*, *Flip*, *Get Lost*, etc.) followed. Kurtzman began to dream of greener pastures outside of comic books and, in order to keep him on board, *MAD* was turned into a so-called "slick" magazine (though it was printed in black and white on cheap paper). Public outrage in the mid-Fifties over comic-book excesses both real and imagined eventually left Gaines with only one publication, *MAD*. It wasn't long before a dispute over creative control of the magazine led Gaines to part ways with Kurtzman and bring Feldstein in as his replacement. Al Feldstein would go on to be *MAD*'s most successful editor and was at the helm for 29 years, including the entirety of the Seventies. Gaines sold *MAD* in 1961 (after which it was sold and resold to ever larger business entities), but it remained under his control until his death.

What. Me Worry?

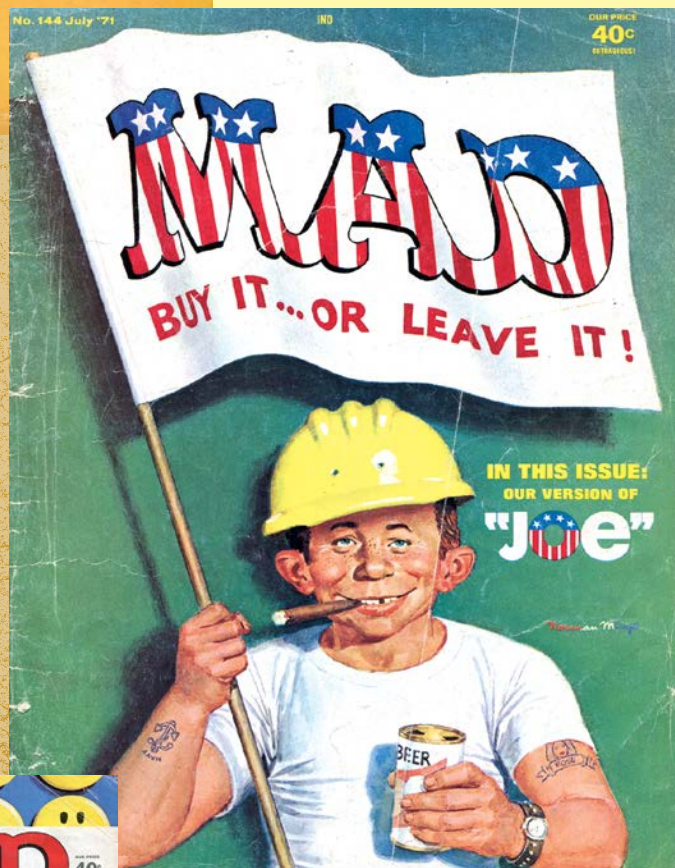
I was just one of many who found their underpinnings a bit shaken by *MAD*. My childhood was a safe, largely happy one, and the worries of the world around me did not generally penetrate this cocoon. But after reading *MAD* I had to wonder, *Just what the heck was going on out there?* *MAD*, with its trust-no-one, disrespectful attitude, was very aware of the times it was in. *MAD* grabbed the Here and Now by the ears and poked at it rudely. That... was very, very interesting to the young don't-make-waves version of me.

I didn't always get everything in *MAD* at first, but that was likely pretty common for young readers (*MAD* rewarded repeated readings over the years). I also didn't get *MAD* regularly until I was 11. Apparently, my timing was perfect.

In 1966, a publication for school children, *READ Magazine*, featured an interview with Feldstein (many thanks to *MADtrash.com* for reprinting the full article) where he shared who he



(LEFT) *MAD* starts the Seventies off on an unusually weak note with the cover to issue #132 (Jan. 1970). (BELOW) My first *MAD* was #144 (July 1971). That issue featured a parody of *JOE*, a Rated R movie I still haven't seen. (BELOW INSET) *MAD* stayed on top of the latest trends and fads like the smiley face (see the Retro Fad page elsewhere this issue) on the cover of issue #150 (Apr. 1972). TM & © EC Publications, Inc.



believed *MAD*'s audience was. "Our readership starts around age 11. About then, kids move out of childhood and start thinking more realistically about themselves and the world. If they have any sensitivity and perception, they begin to realize that life isn't one big fairy tale..."

Uh... yep. What I lacked in perception I made up for with sensitivity. I started sixth grade at a new school in a new town when I was 11. I was shy kid. Early into the school year, one girl didn't want to sit next to me in class so she screamed and scampered over and across our shared tables to get away from me, sending Pee-Chee folders, ditto copies, and wooden pencils everywhere. To be fair, I had face scabs following a week away with chickenpox. Still, I was mortified by her reaction, which everybody else thought was absolutely hilarious. A dramatic move was clearly needed if I was going to make friends, so I

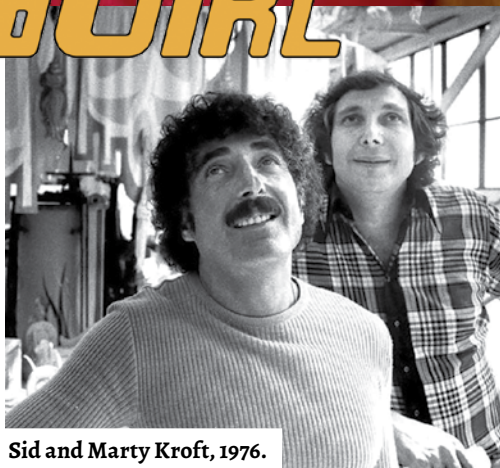


Judy Strangis (LEFT) as DynaGirl and Deidre Hall (RIGHT) as ElectraWoman.
© Sid and Marty Krofft Productions.

by Andy Mangels

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...* 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 *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*!

In 1976, the United States was smack in the middle of its Bicentennial and the Women's Lib movement, and television was awash with super-heroines. Filmmation's *The Secrets of Isis* had led the pack in 1975, followed closely by Lynda Carter in *Wonder Woman*, and Lindsay Wagner in the *Six Million Dollar Man* spin-off, *The Bionic Woman*. Pulling the strings of every Saturday morning puppet on the air were producers Sid and Marty Krofft, and for their fall 1976



Sid and Marty Krofft, 1976.

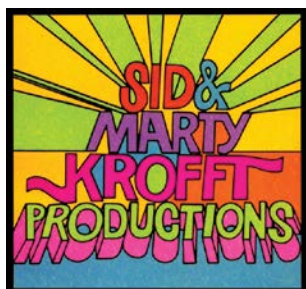
anthology series *The Krofft Supershow* they decided to debut a pair of lovely live-action female crimefighters who put would zap evil-doers with an amazing array of electra-gadgets. *ElectraWoman and DynaGirl* dazzled the airwaves for only one brief season, but its campy, glittery essence has stayed popular for over four decades!

The Rise of the Kroffts

The world of Saturday morning television was in its heyday in the mid-Seventies, and only a few companies ruled the roosts on the three networks: Hanna-Barbera Productions, Filmmation Associates, DePatie-Freleng Enterprises, and Sid and Marty Krofft. Though Filmmation had been dabbling with live-action among its animated offerings, the Kroffts had almost singlehandedly kept live-action on Saturday mornings since the Sixties, first designing *The Banana Splits* for Hanna-Barbera in 1968, then creating their hallucinatory (some would say hallucinogenic) hit *H. R. Pufnstuf* in 1969.

The Montreal-born brothers Sid and Marty Krofft were the sons of a watchmaker, and Sid worked in vaudeville as a puppeteer, eventually being featured in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus shows. His one-man puppet show, "The Unusual Artistry of Sid Krofft," toured the world in 1940, where he worked with his father. Younger brother Marty eventually learned the puppet trade on stage, and began working with Sid. In 1957, they even produced a risqué puppet touring production called *Les Poupées de Paris*.

The Kroffts created the costumes and world of *The Banana Splits* for Hanna-Barbera in 1968, working for the first time with a respectable budget and national audience. They decided to



break off on their own the following year, having simultaneously created *H. R. Pufnstuf*, which they sold to NBC. It was their first opportunity to let their fertile imaginations run wild with oversize puppets interacting with humans, kaleidoscopic colors and production design, and even crude special effects.

Despite the fact that most fans (and publications) insisted *Pufnstuf* and other shows were drug-inspired, the Kroffts have claimed otherwise for years. "You cannot be creative and do a show stoned," Marty Krofft said in a 2016 video interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*. "It just isn't going to work. Sid and myself really never did the drugs. The bottom line is, the audience was probably getting loaded."

H. R. Pufnstuf was a monster-sized hit, and the Kroffts were picked to do further Saturday morning development. They created the insect-themed musical series *The Bugaloos* for NBC (1970–1972), the anthropomorphic hat series *Lidville* for CBS (1971–1973), the humans-adopt-a-cute-sea-creature show *Sigmund and the Sea Monsters* for NBC (1973–1975), the adventures of a family trapped in an alternate world full of dinosaurs and lizard-men Sleestacks known as the *Land of the Lost* for CBS (1974–1976), and androids from the future trapped in the present in ABC's *The Lost Saucer* (1975).



(ABOVE) It's the Dynamite Duo and their ElectraComps! (ABOVE RIGHT) The 1976 ABC Saturday morning line-up included *The Krofft Supershow* with *ElectraWoman* and *DynaGirl* episodes. (RIGHT) Hall as Lori and Strangis as Judy. © Sid and Marty Krofft Productions.

With their other series in perpetual reruns by 1976, Krofft made a deal to create something new for ABC's fall schedule: a 90-minute anthology series with different components, hosted by a musical group. Due to FCC regulations on commercials, the networks preferred 60- and 90-minute programs to offer advertisers as a package. Additionally, CBS had live-action hits with Filmation's *The Shazam/Isis Hour* and *Ark II*, while NBC offered *Big John*, *Little John* and *McDuff the Talking Dog*. ABC wanted in on the live-action kid's show market, and the Kroffts were their answer.

The Krofft Supershow, as the new series was dubbed, would contain two-part stories throughout its run, with the first half 12.5 minutes shown one week, leading to a cliffhanger ending that would keep kids tuned to the same channel to view the second half 12.5-minute story the following week. Hosted by a band created just for the series—the disco-riffic and be-glittered Captain Kool and the Kongs—the four components of the series

would be: *Dr. Shrinker*, in which a mad scientist shrinks some teens who escape into the wilds of his island; *Wonderbug*, in which teens attach a magic horn to a car which comes to life and can fly; slightly shortened reruns of *The Lost Saucer*; and a feminine take on the campy Sixties *Batman* series titled... *ElectraWoman* and *DynaGirl*.

"*The Krofft Supershow*, we created some great shows there," Marty Krofft said in a 2000 video interview for the *Emmy TV Legends* website. "They were all in reality and we didn't have to do them in *Lidville* or the *Living Island*. We had a shot at surviving with these shows





A Collection of Bionic Proportion

By Terry Haney

Anything Can Be A Collectible

Collecting is one of the hottest games in town. From pop culture to historical memorabilia—nothing is off limits. Disney collectibles are known as Disneyana, while gas station items are Petroliana. Every collectible has its own moniker and a loyal following. Years ago, I read a collectibles magazine ad requesting firecracker wrappers. At that moment, I realized there's a collector for anything! I'm no exception, so I'd like to share with you one of my hobbies.

Larger Than Life

Growing up in the Seventies and Eighties, I spent a considerable amount of time watching TV. While I had many favorites, I had an affinity for the mystery solvers, crimefighters, and larger-than-life characters—the ones swooping in and saving the day. I must say that after all these years and with the incredible strides that have been made with production and special effects, I'm still a huge fan of these classics. The Seventies offered a veritable smorgasbord of both animated and live-action shows from which to choose—*Wonder Woman*, *Superman*, *Super Friends*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Captain America*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *The Man from Atlantis*, *Shazam!*, *Isis*, and *Batman*, to name a few. Many of these, particularly *Superman* and *Wonder Woman*, are focal points of my collection, but two other classic shows—*The Six Million Dollar Man* (1973–1978) and *The Bionic Woman* (1976–1978)—also caught my attention for several reasons.

The Hottest Shows in Town

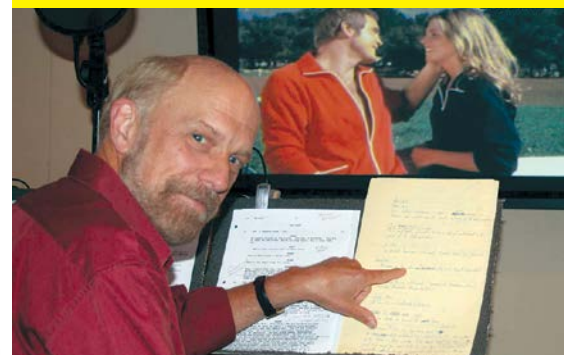
The Six Million Dollar Man, based on the novel *Cyborg* by Martin Caidin, hit the airwaves first and became a hugely successful series for Lee Majors and company. Near the end of Season Two, Lindsay Wagner was introduced as Steve Austin's love interest, Jaime Sommers, who becomes bionic and tragically dies at the end of the classic two-part story. Fans revolted and wrote thousands of letters, insisting that the character be brought back. With the creative genius of writer, Kenneth Johnson (check out the sidebar interview that Kenny graciously granted) and the revolutionary science of cryogenics, Jaime Somers was brought back to life and quickly became the star of *The Bionic Woman*.

Broadcast News

Every week, I would plant myself in front of the TV for the bionic escapades. Because information was not so readily accessible as it is now, I depended heavily on *TV Guide* to

An Interview with Kenneth Johnson

By Terry Haney



Writer, director, and producer—Kenneth Johnson is a triple threat in TV and film.

While he has worked on numerous projects and won multiple awards, readers will likely be most familiar with his work on *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Bionic Woman*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *V*, and *Alien Nation*.

RetroFan: Kenny, please tell *RetroFan* readers how the opportunity came to you to work with *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*.

KENNETH JOHNSON: My classmate and dear pal from the Drama Department at Carnegie-Mellon University, Steven Bochco, had gotten his foot in the door as a writer for Universal TV. After I'd had success in New York as a TV producer-director and Exec Producer of *The Mike Douglas Show*, I came West and Steve introduced me to his Universal pal Steve Cannell, who became a life-long friend. I had always been focused solely on directing and producing. Writing only came about because the Steves badgered me into it. I never had much confidence in my abilities as a writer, but I kept at it. Steve B showed one of my spec features to Harve Bennett, who was producing *Six Million Dollar Man*. Harve liked it and asked me to bring him episode ideas for his show. I suggested *The Bride of Frankenstein*—which became *The Bionic Woman*.

RF: Did you do additional work on the *SMDM* after the *BW* became a spin-off series? If so, in what capacity?



Sweethaven on the Mississippi

Visiting Chester, Illinois, for the Popeye Picnic

by Brian K. Morris

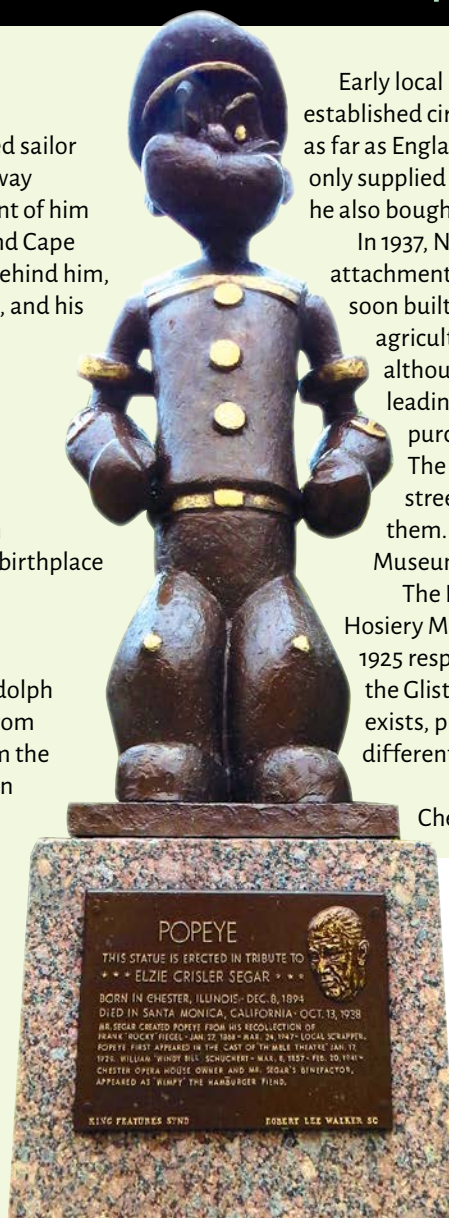
At the water's edge of Sweethaven, a one-eyed sailor studies the passing boats as they make their way north and south along the mighty river. In front of him stretches the only bridge between St. Louis and Cape Girardeau that connects Illinois to Missouri. Behind him, far from the shoreline, his friends, his sweetie, and his enemies are immortalized in stone.

Of course, that isn't a scene from Robert Altman's 1980 film, *Popeye*. In our world, the real-life equivalent rests on the banks of the Mississippi River, a town with its own cast of fascinating characters as well as a celebration of the Sailor Man's life. It's also a town with an important identity of its own. It's literally the birthplace of Popeye the Sailor and his creator.

Grist for the Mills

The town of Chester is the county seat of Randolph County, Illinois. Slightly over an hour's drive from St. Louis, the land was initially purchased from the federal government by Judge John McFerren in 1816 after filing a claim on the 47-acre parcel on September 30th. McFerren would later become one of the first State Senators once the territory became the official State of Illinois in 1818.

Initially, the community was known as Smith's Landing. After establishing the first housing in the summer of 1829, Samuel Smith christened the area "Chester" in honor of his wife Jane's birthplace, Chester, England.



Early local industries included a castor oil press, established circa 1830, whose product found itself delivered as far as England. The only supplied local farm he also bought back so

In 1937, Nathan Co attachment that gro soon built a flour m agriculture in the although it's no leading flour su purchased an The excess en streetlights, d them. That gen Museum in Dear The Internatio Hosiery Mill were m 1925 respectively, the Glister Mary L exists, producing different private l During th Chester's ma

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He yam what he yam—and he yam a sculpture! Erected beside the Visitors Center near the Chester Bridge that connects the town to Missouri, the Popeye Statue is the town's only Popeye Family statue not made of stone. Note its inscription's tribute to Popeye's creator, cartoonist E. C. Segar. Photo by Cookie Morris.