SPRING ISSUE
NO.
5

THE COMIC CRUSADER

35¢

FEATURING
This Issue:
GARDNER F. FOX

TERANKO
SCARP CON 7-6-68
Greetings, my fellow fans. Glad to have you along. This issue of The Comic Crusader marks my second year of publishing my own fanzine. Looking back, over the past year, I owe much to so many fans and pros alike.

JIM STEWART has my undying thanks. For it was his interview, that graced my very first issue and his art, represented on this issue's cover and his full-page Nick Fury drawing, last issue, that helped my publication attain the status that it has today. Jim, you're a true friend. STEVE DITKO too, has helped my publication tremendously. His kinship to the unknown makes me very proud that I know him as Steve - what can I say? JOHN FANTUCCHIO brought his tremendous talents to these pages, giving this zine the extra bit of class it needed. And Steve Fritz. With this issue, Steve becomes a regular staff member. His art ranks with the best. Glad to have you Steve. You'll notice, in this issue, that I have not spotlighted any fan. Because of the abundance of material, I had no room.

However, next issue, you'll meet DONNA L. ASTIN one of the top female fans around. TOM FAGAN is another friend I couldn't do without. His Airboy article and other material he's done for me, makes this zine really fly.

Looking ahead to this year, I'm very pleased to have a fan, that I've admired since I brought my first zine, contribute to Crusader. His name-BEN ROSS. From Hawaii comes another new staff member - DENNIS FUJIMA. His work is some of the best I've seen and it's represented by my back cover. You'll hear more about him and some other fans from Hawaii, next issue. Other fans who have contributed are - Bill Allison, John Lawrence, V. J. V. and the guy I couldn't do an issue without - last, but far from the least, BOB COBBRE.

I'd like to take the remaining space to voice an opinion about two things I've noticed in Fandom of late. First - Recently, I've been asked by some other zines, to offer my opinion on politics and world affairs. I've declined, for the following reason. Fandom is a place where one should enjoy the hobby he is interested in. Reading Comix. Not that fans don't have opinions, but a zine isn't the vehicle to voice them in. If you want to read or comment about politics, and the like, read or send letters to Newsweek or Time. My second beef, is degenerate articles about comic pros. Recently, I read an article entitled, "Slobberin' Stan Lee". Needless to say, the article was anti-Lee. Fandom may dislike a pro, but remember this - These men are in a business. They work at selling a product. No fan has the right to insult them. They deserve the same respect you would give anyone else you do business with. Disagree, yes, but do it with taste. Here's hoping you enjoy this and the coming issues of Comic Crusader.

The Sub-Mariner drawing comes to me through the courtesy of Bill Wilson, editor of THE COLLECTOR.
The Fan In Mind

This column is an irregular one, devoted to the furthering of our hobby, The Reading of Comics. The topic this issue:

selective buying

by

D. L. DILLINGER

I think we recognize that certain titles consistently have good material (Fantastic Four, Thunder Agents, etc.) and therefore they sell at a premium price. There are other titles, however, which may have had good material for just a few issues (like Jack Kirby drawing Green Arrow in ADVENTURE COMICS 250-256). Comics like these can be picked up for 50c-$1.25 each, where-as better known Kirby art in other titles drew a much higher price.

The following is meant to be a guide (by no means complete!) to selective buying in the SECOND ERAS & AGES (like Marvel). There are three major points to look for:

1. These are the issues that will portray the first appearances of characters. The first appearance of a character in comics is usually the most sought after. If you can find a comic featuring the first appearance of a character, it is likely to be worth a lot of money.

2. These are the issues that contain rare or unique artwork. Artwork by famous creators like Kirby, Buscema, or Sinnott is often more valuable than artwork by lesser known creators.

3. These are the issues that contain rare or unique plots. Issues that feature important storylines or events are often more valuable than issues that are just part of the ongoing story.

National Comics

Adventure

Any issue before 208 (1955) except for

207, has Johnny quick, a predecessor to our modern-day Flash. However, 207 has no Kirby art, and Superboy debuted in ADVENTURE 103.

212-225 have some fine Jack Kirby art on Green Arrow, 236 is G.A.'s origin.

Challengers of the Unknown

1-7 Jack Kirby did the first seven issues, Wally Wood teamed up with Kirby on 4-7 for some of the finest art in comics ever. Reprints #64-65 are a great addition to this series.

Mystery in Space

67-91 along with the fine Adam Strange strip, Hawkman appeared in these issues.

Superman

76 A real gem, the first joint appearance of the Superman, Batman team. #106 Superman's origin and life story.

World's Finest

#71 First issue with Batman & Superman in the same story.

#94 Origin of the Superman, Batman teams.

#120-121: THE JLA debut in these issues. #122-123: Final issue of the original JLA.

#5 as well as 1-3, were not super-heroes, and have less of a value.

15-21 are taken up by SPACE HAMMER (15-16), ADAM STRANGE (17-19), and HIP HUNTER (20-21).

Showcase & Brave & Bold command high prices, and are well known. They are included here for the sake of the "unenlightened few''.

Brave & Bold No super-heroes until the JLA in #21-30, and many issues after that were not super-hero material also. Be careful.

Now lets skip to other publishers.

Flash GORDON

#1-4 Had Al Williamson

7 Had Mac Raboy reprints

9, 10 Had Alex Raymond reprints

12 Had Reed Crandall

13 Had Jeff Jones

Also for FLASH GORDON fans, Wally Wood drew a short F.G. feature in PHANTOM #18 and GIL KANE did the last two parts of the series in PHANTOM #19 and #20.

Also, little known is that the PEACEMAKER debuted in Fighting Five #40, and again appeared in #41.

Of over 100 issues of HARVEY HITS published (1957-1966), only eight have any value, they are: 1, 5, 12, 15, 25, 36, 44, 48 all of which have some fine Wilson art, or any Moore art on the PHANTOM. Some of the HARVEY HITS are reprints from the early 40's. THE SPIRIT #1-2 Some beautiful Will Eisner work.

FIGHTING AMERICANS

1 A must for SIMON & KIRBY fans. UN-EARTHLY SPECTACULARS #2, 3, both are 64-pg.

#2 and #3 were done by other artists, and in the opinion of many fans, not worth much.

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It would be wise to get some of the HEBERGER or I.W. reprint comics, especially the PLASTICMAN (11,16,18), and THE SPIRIT (12). Other titles contain lesser known Golden Age super-heroes, and if the price is right, it wouldn't hurt to get a few (Ball Pan, daring Adventures, Danger, etc.)

HAPPY COLLECTING!

D. L. DILLINGER

4205 NOTTER AVE.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. 32206
Airboy was first introduced to aerial combat in November of 1942. The story fairly sparkled with the red, white and blue patriotism Americans, in those days, were unashamed to express openly. Since America, by proclamation, went to war with Japan first in World War II, it was only natural that Airboy's first enemy encounter would be with the Japanese.

The Japs have found out about the mysterious bird-plane. Indeed, many of their own airplanes have been downed by it. And so, Hiroto, "our air ace supreme," is leading a Japanese squadron heading toward California. And it is off the California coastline that Airboy has his first real taste of combat. The dialogue went like this:

"Their Squadron Leader Sees Me! Here He Comes, Bird Plane! We'll Show 'em The Stuff We Americans Are Made Of! How About It?"

Hiroto, likewise, has his own intentions. The reader is told the Jap pilot has 68 planes to his discredit. Viewing Airboy and the bird-plane, Hiroto grins evilly, "Soon It Will Be 69!!"

However, Airboy gives a good accounting of himself. The bird-plane is driven from the skies only by lack of fuel. Airboy lands the plane and even under heavy strafing fire he is able to roll it to safety. As the Japs turn to leave, a note is dropped. Airboy reads it exclaiming, "I'll Be Darned! Hiroto Is The King Of Jap Aces! This Is A Real Challenge!!!"

Hiroto's taunting message reads, "Honorable Fighter... Must Go Now, But Would Like Dogfight With You 30 Days From Now...Same Day--Same Time--Same Place. If Acceptable, Please Fire Gun And Bring Plenty Gas!" It was signed, "Hiroto!"

Naturally, Airboy fired the gun accepting the challenge. And the story's end fairly crackled with excitement promising, "Next Month...The Most Thrilling Air Duel Ever Fought In The Heavens. Is Hiroto On The Level Or Is This A Trap To Snare Davy's Mystery Plane? Watch And See!!!"

Certainly this was a challenge to the reader too. And Air Fighters Comics, Vol.1, No.3, December, 1942, became one of the most eagerly awaited of all issues. Unknown as yet to the reader, Airboy would not only come up against the Jap war powers, he would have his first crack at the Germans too. Airboy was getting into the war fast.

Before continuing with what happened between Airboy and Hiroto a comment or two is needed. Birdie was not known officially as Birdie until the end of the Airboy story. Airboy's first reference to it as a "Bat Plane," lends speculation that not a certain Bat Plane already been coursing through the pages of Detective and Bat Man Comics, published by rivals of Hillman, Birdie might have been named the Bat Plane. Her bat-like wings would have made the name a fitting one.

Comics, particularly before the Comics Code of the '50's, were often accused of hidden symbolism. Little or any of this is to be found in Airboy stories, yet those who choose to ponder such things may have wondered at the author's erotic choice of "69" as the number for Hiroto's next-intended conquest.

In startling yellows, reds and blacks, the cover of the December, 1942 issue of Air Fighters Comics presented itself to the reader. Slipping through a mockup of Page 1 of the "TOKIO NEWS" with its shocking banner headline reading "AIRBOY DEAD and a smaller bank headline, ZERO DOWNS BIRD PLANE IN FLAMES, was Birdie herself—all six machine guns blazing, and Airboy gallantly seated in the cockpit, with a laughing, "See You!" And you just knew you were in for a thrilling treat by the message at the lower right corner, "LIFT THIS COVER-SEE THE GREATEST AIR FIGHT IN HISTORY!"

Hillman, in its early Airboy stories, had a habit of introducing a secondary plot that would reach a conclusion in the next issue to keep a reader at fever pitch of continuing interest. This story was no exception. A vivid splash panel
HEAR OF A HERO YOUNG?

showed Nazi planes in aerial combat over a war-torn city, though nowhere in the main story would this scene unfold.

A circle insert at the upper right of the panel showed Airboy climbing into Birdie and saying, "All right, Hirote, Birdie And I Will Be Coming Up There To Meet You--And Only One Of Us Is Coming Back, Japcy--Only ONE Of Us!!"

Hirote is shown in a circle insert at the lower right. Two Japanese officers are talking to him. Says one, "Honor of Entire Nation Rests On You, Hirote! The Rising Sun Must NOT Be Dimmed By Defeat By White Weaklings!!" Cautions the other officer, "Please, Once Again--Let Us Send Many Pursuit Planes With You For Safety Against Raid, Uncontrollable Accident In Battle!!" Hirote spurns their offer, but the impression is clearly left to a young American reader's mind, Japanese are really never to be trusted.

Considering in actuality the sneak attack of the Japanese on the Pearl Harbor was not yet a year old and was not comic book fiction but real-life, this propaganda whipping up of war hatred against the Japanese is excusable.

Before we get Hirote, the reader is introduced to the secondary storyline. Hubert kritzel is directing a movie starring "the nation's favorite young actress, Deanna Darling. The producers are dissatisfied and criticize kritzel, complimenting, "You've Got Nazi Airmen Looking Like Handsome Heroes instead of Villains, actually many Hollywood movies of the war years depicted Germans, Italians and Japanese either as bumbling, inept, ludicrous buffoons or out and out villains. It wasn't until years had passed and World War II was long over before movies were made by American companies humanizing the enemy."

Kritzel is infuriated. But the producers' criticism is well-founded for the director is a German spy. With an infra-red camera he photographs the interior of the top-secret "Falcon Flying Fortress," sending this valuable information on to the Germans.

But Kritzel has fallen in love with Deanna Darling and kidnap her in a stolen plane. En route to a waiting submarine lying off San Francisco, Kritzel and the unwilling Deanna Darling and Birdie who are winging their way to meet Hirote. As Deanna Darling is fighting off kritzel, their plane dives uncontrollably earthward. Airboy maneuvers Birdie directly over Kritzel's craft--"Her wheels Bend In--"Grapples kritzel's Plane in Vulture-Like Fashion. Both planes level out on a level flying while Kritzel still grasping the other craft. Bent to hand combat in the skies, Kritzel parachutes to earth, where he hears Airboy promise to meet Miss Darling at her home after he keeps an "appointment." Of course the appointed day takes place in San Francisco, not realizing he is being followed by Kritzel, who has commandeered his own craft which thanks to Birdie was also landed safely.

Hirote is waiting. Airboy flies alongside his opponent. There is no gallantry passed between the two fighting aces. Airboy's comment is a sneering: "How Could Anyone With a Face Like That Shoot Us Down, Eh, Birdie?"

"A History-Making Combat Is About To Begin..." relates the story. Zero and Birdie-plane battle it out in the heavens while below the crew of an American destructor watch. Exclaims one officer, "What A Match-Look--The Kid's Right On His Tail!!"

Nonetheless, the "kid" is having his troubles. Hirote has gunned Birdie in the tail section. Airboy man takes his own machine gun, saying grizzly, "This Is A Taste Of What All Your Kids Will Get Some Day!" A trick on the part of Hirote and black smoke jets from the Zero's rear section. Believing his bullets have punctured his enemy's gas tank, Airboy closes in through the blinding smoke only to find Hirote waiting for him with "singing lead..."

New bullets rip into Birdie's tail assembly, tearing it away. Hirote follows confident of victory. A narrow mountain pass looms ahead. Rolling blindly, the bird-plane maneuvers the narrow space between two outcroppings of stone. Unable to pull up, the pursers are turning uncontrollably mountain peaks and as the story relates, "Exit Hirote, Who Was The Pride Of The Rising Sun..."

Yet new hair faces Airboy. Kritzel has been waiting and watching. His plane closes in "Pinned For The Hill." "With Birdie body-wrecked and "Clean Out Of Ammunition," Airboy makes the only decision possible—he alights the bird-plane head-on directly at Kritzel. "Closer, Closer—Then The Two Hornets Of The Heavens—No Lead Dips Open The Belly Of Airboy's Plane—Someone Must Give Ground—BUT WHO?!!" Thinks Airboy, "One Chance In A Thousand I'll Come Out Of This...so long, Birdie, we Had Fun!" Neither pilot gives ground. Both planes meet in a head-on blaze of light and destruction. Two parachutes drift slowly to earth. A man and a boy face one another. The man has a knife; the boy a wounded leg. And:

Next Month...You Will See AIRBOY's Grie, Dramatic Battle For Life On A Mountain Slope...You Will See Love, Hate And Sudden Death Sweep Through These Pages. Watch For AIRBOY #3. And Airboy #3 came on equally strong in excitement as the story unfolded in the pages of Air Fighter Comics, Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1943, beginning on a remote California mountain top but promising "DEATH For The Allied Invaders! That's The Message AIRBOY, The Monarch Of The Skies, Brings To Our Back-Stepping German Foe—Relentless Warfare Until Victory Is Won!"

But before Airboy could deliver this message, he first had to contend with a knife-wielding Kritzel, who is vowing, "But I'll live to See AMERICA Conquered—And You Won't!" Hearts beat faster as Airboy dodged kritzel's knife. And the tenesness was almost unbearable as the villainous kritzel moved forward menacing, "I'm Coming AIRBOY, And I'll Crush Every One In Your Little Body For Humiliating An Agent Of The Heh!!" A rumbling landslide! Airboy leaps to safety on an opposite ledge. Kritzel is not so fortunate and is buried beneath tons of cascading rock. Airboy comment? "Gone! And I Guess It Was A Good End For The Get! Hope Birdie Isn't Too Hurtful!!" Birdie wasn't and Airboy was able to glide her to safer ground.
Birdie was such an integral part of the Airboy series, she is deserving of detailed mention. Humanization of a machine is not unusual. Throughout history ships have been referred to as she. A favorite car takes on the aspect of a companion to its owner. A favored device in the writing of fiction is simply having someone for the hero to "talk to." In the case of Airboy "Something" was a substitute for "some one.

Airboy had no need for a human aerial sidekick. His companion was Birdie, and he spoke to her as they flew through the skies on battle missions as if she were a real person. And alone in the heavens as they coursed, boy and plane became confident and confident to one another. Those who read and thrilled to the Airboy saga do not recall Airboy without the same instant recalling Birdie. The two were inseparable. Birdie, to Airboy, as a warrior steed was to knights of centuries past.

Mention has been made how Birdie could hover in the air, remain hidden in cloud banks and take off almost straight up if need called for it. She could also be controlled by a tiny electrical unit which in later stories was secreted under Airboy's jacket lapel. In theorizing about Birdie, Ephraim Eble of Ticonderoga, N.Y., a modern-day authority on war and weaponry, opinions:

"My guess would be that 'Birdie' weighs in at 10,000 pounds. And then there is about what the 'British Hurricanes' weighed. My guess is that the two planes were about the same size. To my eye 'Birdie' resembles Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Bat-Glider' design, rather than any aircraft current in the late '30's and early '40's. The wings are suggestive of Da Vinci's design while the fuselage looks like a .50 caliber bullet much enlarged. Of course, wing similarity can be found in comparing 'Birdie' with the German 'Dumper' of World War I, as well as the French 'Spied' or that name.

In later Airboy stories, Blood points out: "Yes, 'Birdie' was definitely jet-powered; the wings no longer flapped. Jet air intake were fashioned in the wing roots and an exhaust outlet at the rear of the fuselage beneath the tail. There were also extra fuel tanks paired into the wings at the point where they hinged.

Birdie's "secrets" were also told within the stories themselves. In the December, 1942 issue of Air Fighters, Airboy explained the workings of the pre-jet Birdie thusly: "Instead of opening a throttle, I just press this button—the harder I push, the faster the wings flap, and the higher I go! The tail and wings are built to let me stop in an instant and turn about! Birdie's really a Mechanical Bird—there's hardly any difference at all!!" In Air Fighters, January-1943, Airboy told: "Birdie has a rubberized covering—and that periscope on the windshield enables me to see an enemy plane without turning my head—and shoot it down with my tail gun!"

Evidently the "periscope" was soon found to be an unnecessary piece of equipment for it was in this one particular issue alone that it was used or shown as part of the planes fighting devices. Birdie was heavily armed. Besides the aforementioned Tail Gun, fire power was bolstered by twin machine guns on each wing, and heavier machine guns, one mounted on each side of the cockpit so that the pilot had merely to reach out an arm to operate either one. All told the early Bird-plane boasted cannon power of seven guns. A diagram drawing of the bird-plane, shown in the January tale, read in part:

"The 'Bird-Covering Is A Rubberized Canvas—This Enables The Wing To Telescope For To Off, Giving It Slower Or Faster Landing Speed As Desired." And as Airboy, himself said, "As you know my wings Fold Up and I Can Stop Birdie In Midair."

In a demonstration of Birdie's amazing aerial acrobatics, Airboy dove the bird-plane toward a waiting figure on a rooftop. Swooping in gracefully, Birdie "picked up" the man with her wheels, carried him into the sky and then like a winged feather swooped down again releasing the man safely upon the ground.

Just as in "exteriors where the top gun fighter is always the target of another anxious to make his own reputation, Airboy was likewise, the ultimate target of enemy aerial ace. Hiroto had failed to down him. Kritzel was no luckier, and it was inevitable there would always be others trying to seize the crown of the sky-ways.

The most formidable of all Airboy's opponents was strangely enough—a woman! Summing up her personality can best be done by quoting a childish rhyme:

"When she was good, she was very, very good. But when she was bad, she was horrid."

Once again it is my honor to present Mr. A by......

STEVE DITKO

This drawing heralds the big news about next issue. Next issue The Defender strip will be replaced by the beginning of a 2-part Mr. A strip by Steve Ditko. This strip is really something different, so don't miss it.
This was VALKYRIE! A woman alarmingly beautiful,
taught in the ways of wickedness by the Germans, but
born of an inner softness that in a moment could change
to hard unyielding vengeance.

That Airboy and Valkyrie were attracted to one
another is true. But in Valkyrie’s shifting personality
the seeds of love could and would change radically to
stream of hatred. In some stories it was she who
saved Airboy’s life, in others she did her best to bring
about his death.

The unforgettable first meeting of the boy and the
woman took place in Air Fighters Comics, Vol. 2, No.2,
November, 1943. The cover of this comic alone promised
memorable adventures. “LATEST WAR THRILLER: JOHNNY
screamed a secondary logo. And for all the world to see
Airboy lay stretched on a dimly lighted dungeon floor.
His arms are manacled with heavy chains. His red jacket
has been shredded and torn. Across his bare chest and
back are the ugly, violent scars of the whip. Above
him, one hand clenched toward the sky and the other
brandishing a deadly locking automatic is VALKYRIE.
Her face is triumphant and wild as she sneers, “It’s
VALKYRIE, AIRBOY—And The AIRMAIDENS Are With Me!! Not
Even SKYMOB, The Iron Ace, Black Angel Or Flying
Butcherman Can Save You Now!”

Inside more of the same and Valkyrie wearing the
costume that is to become familiar to a decade of read-
ers. A soft pale green, form-fitting, blouse of satin,
equally-tight slacks of pale red, descending into flying
boots. A cape with furred collar completes the dress.

Bitty Kida is the artist. His skill in drawing the
strip adds new heights. The stage is set. The beginning
story line goes like this...

“For This Fugitive Is Not Gay—It Is BEAUTIFUL—As
Beautiful As A Girl Who Calls Herself VALKYRIE! She Is
Not Human—Her Heart Is As Black As The Devil’s...And
Under Her Spell, AIRBOY Faces The Most Terrifying
Adventures Of His Career!!!”

Immediately action! Nazi ships knifing through
the darkness of English skies. An intercepting squadron out to
rescue John Hard! All For Der Fuehrer!!! The
Germans are fury. Victorious Nazis returning to their air base.
The pilot—women, let by Valkyrie. A German official chortling.
“Vonbeaum! Der My AIRMAIDEN! She is A Squirrel And Shall Show Der
World The Type Of Girlhood Germany Has!”

Valkyrie vowing, “I, Valkyrie, Shall Be The Great
Mistress Of The Air And Air Boy! The Dream Of
German Youth!—We Shall See How Invincible He Is—Him.Her Nazi loyalty? Unquestionable—“My Life Belongs To
The Fuehrer! He Is Our Sun!”

Above the bird-plane! Airboy has followed. A sky
battle with Airboy winning only to lose. “I can’t bring
myself down to shooting a girl”—a code that proves un-
doing and Airboy a prisoner.

Valkyrie still means to prove her superiority over
Airboy. “I Shall Fly The Bird-Plane Against Airboy.”

A loan at the same Valkyrie, but Airboy refuses to
tell her the secrets of Birdie.

It is doubtful that readers were conscious of
flagellation in the whipping scenes that continued for
a number of panels. Reports of German atrocities and
111 treatment of prisoners was common knowledge then
even to the very young. The reader accepted it as fact.
Similar scenes have been enacted in American movies and
reported in news media.

So the reader continued with the story not bothered
by any conscious Freudian overtones. Three Airmaidens,
saved by Airboy’s bravery, release him from his cell and
hide him. For their disloyalty, a public lashing is ordered.

Valkyrie finds Airboy and tells him what has happened.
With a kiss she seals her promise that given the secrets
of Airboy she will see to it the Airmaidens are freed without
punishment. Airboy agrees.

Now Valkyrie holds the upper hand. In her mind she
planned all along to betray Airboy, set his plane for herself,
and secure the release of the three Airmaidens all at the same
time. But she is to find the German high officer equally as treacher-
ous.

Given Airboy’s hiding place, Herr Oberst declares, “They
Shall Be Whipped In Front Of The Rest Of The Girls As An
Exemplary Must Have Discipline At All Costs! And Airboy Shall
Be Shot As An EXTRA Attraction!”

An angered Valkyrie, one who with blazing eyes and
firmed set mouth, avows, “So! This Is The Master Who Trained Me To Be
A Good Nazi! Now I Can See The Evil Of My Tricky Ways! Well,
while I Can Still Change, I Will!”

A feminine finger squeezes the trigger of a luger. A Nazi
officer slumping in death, his hand clutching at a swastika
flag hung on the wall. “Death To You! And The Other Nazi Ways
Of Life!” is Valkyrie’s snarl.

And now a new pilot at the control of the wonderful bird-
plane. Below the execution courtyard where stands a defiant
boy. Tied to separate posts, the three Airmaidens, about to be
flogged. A German officer with hand upraised, thunders, “When
I Drop My Hand, Commence! Ten Lashes Each For Der Girls!
DEATH For Airboy! Ready!”

The signal never comes. It is lost in the blazing white
head of a bullet from a bat-winged craft. Valkyrie’s war
song of “Die Bucher!” Airmaidens escaping to their planes
rallying to Valkyrie’s, “We’ve Been On The Wrong Side! You Saw
what They Were Going To Do To Some Of Us—-

Airboy in Birdie without Airboy. Tailoring planes machine-
gunning German soldiers trying to stop the escape. In the sky
new battle, “With Nazi Brother Against Sister, The Fight Is
All Mixed Up Bitter...But Airboy And The Airmaidens Steadily
Grind Their Enemy Out Of The Sky...”

Airboy next met Valkyrie in the April-1944, Vol. 2, No.7,
edition of Air Fighters Comics and this time Valkyrie and her
Airmaidens were on the side of the Allies, with the
Germans plotting to bring about her death. But first a secret
weapon must be brought into use against RAF bombing missions.

The weapon—“The Most Powerful Light Beam Ever Made By Man!”
And it’s first use brings about the death of one of Airboy’s
closest friends and his entire bombing mission. Airboy, alone,
takes off in Birdie along the same route taken by the bombing
mission.

Blinding light and Airboy is forced to land. Taken captive
he is held prisoner with the survivors of the ill-fated bombing
run. Valkyrie as the Airmaidens and out to aid Airboy.

Their is a daylight raid to thwart the powerful light beam.
Airfighters Comics recorded the takeoff as, “This Time AGAINST
THE NAZIS!”

The mission of course was successful. Airboy and the other
prisoners are rescued and the German forces defeated in a breath-
taking contest to conclude the story. Admiring British
pilots comment:

“What A Knock-Out She Is—and She Fights As No One Don’t Do...And: ‘It’ll Be A Lucky Bloke That Wins Valkyrie, Says
It’.” The favored ‘lucky bloke’ of the moment is none other than

AIRBOY!

NEXT ISSUE:

Learn of Misery...A villain that rivals

even the Red Skull.

Thrill, as Tom Fagan relates the most

frightening Airboy story of all...

THE INVASION OF THE RATS!
When one thinks of the Golden Age of Comics, it brings to mind many fabulous characters, as well as a host of famous artists—Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, Reed Crandall, Jess Bobo, Joe Simon, Otto Binder, perhaps Bill Finger and Jerry Seigal, but the one name that most fans would remember best is that of Gardner Fox—a man who has worked in the field for thirty-two odd years.

Although Fox thought he was going to be a lawyer, and even went to law school, fate knew otherwise. Even in his high-school days, Fox did dialogue and captions for a schoolmate with cartoonist ambitions. Fox's first published story came about as an accident—while sick in bed with the flu, he wrote to pass the time, only to find that his work was published by Gold Medal. From there it was a short jump into comics. Fox, under the editorship of Vincent Alston, the company destined to become famous as Superman-DC. His early works included such crime-adventure tales as Speed Saunders (an ace detective) and the Three Ace Detective Squad. Cotton Carver (a Jungle Jim type character), an occasional Batman, and his first bit trite. You know. Good is better than Evil because it’s mine. However, one must remember, shooting in the streets and crime were front page stories in those days. It was quite often that the papers carried stories of someone being taken for a ride, or a daring bank robbery, so it was only natural for the comics to create crime busting heroes like Malone.

On or about April 1, 1938, Gardner Fox began writing a story about a magician. A magician that would set the pace for many others of his kind to follow. This magician was known as Zatara.

The first Zatara story Gardner Fox wrote was called, "The Haunted Farm." This story appeared on Action Comics #2—1938. Zatara was billed as "The Master Magician" and to work his magic he used a gismo that was imitation by many others of his kind. When he used magic, he spoke what he wanted done—backwards.

Zatara was one of the longer running super heroes. He appeared in Action Comics from issue #1 to #32 and in two issues after that—136 and 138. He was revived by Fox in issue #14 of Hawkman Comics, when his daughter Zettanna began to search for him.

From mysteries to mystery, Gardner Fox, on April 17, 1939, wrote "Theft at the World’s Fair" and launched the career of Sandman.

Sandman

The early Sandman wore no costume. He was a man of mystery. Clad in cloak and helmet, gas gun gripped in his strong right hand, he fought crime by knocking his foes unconscious with gas. The Sandman was wanted by the police, even though he never committed a crime. This was perhaps due to the gas-mask he wore to protect himself from his gas gun's fumes. His alter ego was Wesley Dodds, a rich playboy. However, when crime was committed, he became the dreaded Sandman.

Apparition in Adventure Comics #60 thru 102, but with issue #69 his costume was changed to a tight-fitting super hero one. Gone were the gas-mask and the gas gun and also his aura of mystery.

Besides using his gas gun, in issue #61 a weapon called the wirepon gun was introduced. This gun fired a barbed shaft, with a line attached, and enabled Sandman to swing around and swing like Superman. Though the early Sandman had been replaced by Simon & Kirby's other hero, when Fox revived Sandman in issue #46 of the Joe League of America, it was the Sandman with his gas-mask he brought back. Only this time, for a weapon, he used a strange gun that turned molecules of sand, that he would toss into anything that is derived from sand. (Such as glass, cement, etc.) So the revived version of Sandman actually used sand to fit his needs.

One of Fox's lesser known heroes was a character called Captain X of the R.A.F.

Captain X was in reality Buck Dare, an American reporter in London, England. He fought along side England's R.A.F. during World War II. At a sheltered hillside near Goyden Airport, Captain X's hidden underground chamber was located. Here, his plastic airplane, Jenny, was kept in order by his joke telling assistant—Stuffy. Captain X's plane was equipped with eight machine guns and a vibrating ray, which allowed the craft to hover.

Captain X appeared in only a few issues of Star Spangled Comics (1 thru 7) so is not as well known as many early DC heroes.

From the time Gardner Fox began writing, many of his stories were based on the events of the day. In the case of the above mentioned Captain X, Fox had his fighting the Nazis before America got into the war. You might call Captain X an English costumed hero. Fox worked with many artists, in his early days. Craig Flessel, Mort Walker, Sheldon Moldoff, Everett Hibbard, and Joe Kubert, just to name a few. Some of these artists conveyed Fox's stories with brilliance, others did not.

A fall of Gardner's time was devoted to writing. He had a few hobbies too. He makes and collects miniature soldiers, (an old hobby of M.G.L.'s too, by the way,) specializing in ancient and medieval figures. He's also made a study of old weapons and all phases of history and archeology. Of course, aids him in his writing.

As the popularity of costumed heroes increased, Gardner Fox worked on more super powered heroes. Heroes such as the star helper hero Starman.
1940 was a great year for super heroes. Fox, teamed with the artistic talents of Everett Hibbard, created one of the most popular heroes of the day - The Flash. The Flash appeared in a comic bearing his own name "Flash Comics", but it could just as easily have been titled Fox Comics, for Gardner Fox wrote most of the magazine's stories. Besides the Flash, Fox wrote King Stanwood, a hero in a top hat, mask and tux, who was a master of disguise. Cliff Cormwell and fan favorite, for many years - Hawkman. Fox's creation proved so popular that the Flash received his own magazine "All Flash" in the summer of 1941.

The Flash obtained his super speed when as Jole Garrick, a college student, he knocked over some retorts filled with hard water. The gas from the smashed retorts overcame him and he passed out. He was discovered the next morning and rushed to a hospital where he lay between life and death for weeks. However, his young, healthy body fought its way back to life and after he was discharged from the hospital, he found the gas had given him the power to run faster than the speed of light. Only his lab aide and girl friend, Joan Williams, knew of his dual identity. The Flash lasted 104 issues of "Flash Comics". During this time many artists worked on the strip. Some of them drew him so crudely and unimaginatively that Fox's fabulous hero lost many readers. However, the art did get better. Joe Kubert illustrated an occasional story, as well as Carmine Infantino and Alex Toth. Fox's genius created some memorable Flash villains too. The Turtle, Ragdoll, The Thorn, and The Fiddler, just to name a few. It is a shame the art didn't always match the story.

As far as fandom is concerned, such favorites as The Flash and Green Lantern might be okay, but their real hero was Hawkman. It was Hawkman that had the older fans screaming "REVIVAL" -Hawkman that they chased and adored over after his appearance in Brave and Bold. Hawkman they fought for until, through the goodness of DC editor Julie Schwartz, he was granted his own magazine. Why? What charm did this character possess?

Hawkman, or simply the Hawk, as he was called in the forties, possessed a certain natural charm. Who wouldn't want to be able to soar thru the air like an eagle? And wasn't it a bit more believable to fly with your own strength than to float thru the sky, Superman like, in blatant defiance of the laws of gravity? Not only that, but Fox was blessed with a certain uniqueness. Sure, he was Carter.
May of 1940 saw Gardner Fox, under the editorship of Vincent Sullivan and teamed with the artistic talents of Ogden Whitney, turn out the leading character in the Columbia Comics line...Skyman.

Skyman, Fox, under the pen name of Paul Dean, was Superman's first writer. He wrote 24 stories and helped develop the character. Skyman was Allen Turner, whose parents were killed in an airplane accident in his early teens. Allen was taken in by his uncle, Peter Turner, a great scientist, who explained his parents' death was caused by faulty material used in his father's plane. Year after year, Allen worked with America's greatest brain, until he too became great. It was at this point Allen decided to become a scientist-police officer and use his genius to overcome evil. He had been left to look after his uncle and after graduating from Harvard College, where he had been an all-around athlete, he assumed a Bruce Wayne type of identity.

Skyman's greatest invention was The Wing, a huge red, white, and blue aircraft. It was shaped like a boomerang. The wing utilized the power of the north and south pole magnetic fields. These fields kept The Wing stationary whenever Skyman wanted to leave the place. The craft was equipped with a type of crossbar device that the Ditko Blue Beetle used to play his bug craft. Skyman was finally discontinued in issue #102, but while he flew high his stories were presented in an adult style.

Fox also worked on some western characters...Tim Holt and Straight Arrow. These characters were put out by a company called ME (the same people who published the original Ghost Rider). Six years after Skyman was discontinued, Gardner Fox created a hero copied after him...The Avenger!

THE AVENGER

The Avenger came into being when Colonel Ralph Wright and his wife were kidnapped and forced to go to East Berlin. There, forced the Colonel to write his brother, Roger, and tell the plans for a new airplane to them in East Berlin. When the colonel reached the millionaire, he dons a costume of red and white and makes his way through an underground tunnel to the lab that is the cause of his brothers kidnapping...The Star Jet! The Star Jet is a plane 50 years ahead of its time. Equipped with an atomic motor, it is capable of flying around the world at super fast speeds and is able to take off and land vertically. The Avenger flies to East Berlin, only to find that the lab is gone and his wife have already been murdered. He follows the red leaders attempt to get the plans for the Star Jet which causes the red leader to be killed by his superiors. His brother avenged, Ralph Wright vows to prevent crime and oppression as The Avenger!

From time to time Fox would try his hand at a weird tale or science-fiction story for pulp magazines. He found that this change of pace kept his stories from getting stale. In the early 1950's he did his first hardback book, a historical novel called "The Borgia Blade." Fox has had forty-three novels published, some under his own name (like "Warrior of Larn"), some under his six pen names.

While Fox worked for ME he wrote nearly every story they published. This was primarily because his life long friend Vincent Sullivan was ME's editor.

After the "black friday" of the comic book, when the super-hero seemed gone for good, the comics switched to horror, and, after the code came in, science fiction. Fox did some nice work in this period, but DC plots, hampered by the code, too often revolved around some sort of gimmick,
and in NO case came thru with the sock ending and moral of the EC comics. Likewise with Batman by Kieth, the most hopelessly outclassed by EC's pre-code work. Throughout this time Fox was writing more hack jobs, even as he does today.

The same holds true of them, thou they are more enjoyable than the comic work - good adventure and excitement, not profound meaning.

Ironically, this s-f trend led, in 1958, to the creation of the s-f hero, Adam Strange, who travelled from Earth to the planet Kandor to fight the threats to this adopted planet. At first by Mike Sekowsky, and soon by Carmine Infantino, Strange became the s-f hero the comic book. In this respect Strange's adventures revealed a whole new kind of adventure, the comic book. Strange, the story of Strange's adventures was superbly illustrated, although not quite as well. Strange enjoyed the inks of Murphy Anderson, unquestionably the best inker DC enjoyed, and the possible exception of Wally Wood, and the writing of the best inker in the comic books.

By the time Strange faded into limbo, super-heroes and Marvel Comics were in, and Fox was churning out fine stories for many of them. Twelve with Batman by Kieth, the story was another rehashed revival, by Gil Kane, the Justice League, by Sekowsky, and an occasional Green Lantern, also by the talented Gil Kane. Most of all however, there was The Flash, respected by fans and competitors as one of the finest magazines on the stands. John Broome wrote many tales, but the ones Fox wrote were among the finest speedsters' very best. One Alley Award Winner was entitled "Flash of Two Worlds." This story told of how the Flash accidentally vibed himself through a dimensional barrier into the world of the Golden Age Flash. This event was explained thusly: "The two ages of time and space, the Flash was attracted to the age of his time and space, the Flash was the same age and time if they vibrate at different speeds. Obviously, both worlds developed similar customs and heroes." The present day Flash learned of the other one because he had read of him, as a fictional character, and as a magazine called "Flash Comics." It was explained that Gardner Fox had written about the Golden Age Flash after his adventures had come to him in his dreams, when Fox went to sleep, his mind became "tuned in" on the vibrotype earth. This Earth 1 and Earth 2 idea, as it was called, was a stroke of genius on Fox's part, for it left the door open for future Golden Age - present day adventures between super-heroes.

To wind up this Gardner Fox feature, no two magazines are more worthy of discussion than All Star Comics - Justice Society of America and today's Justice League of America.

J.S.A. - J.L.A.

While the enthusiastic majority might have acclaimed Hawkman king, in the Golden Age, many favored other Fox creations: The Flash-Starman--Dr. Fate--The Sandman. What matter? One could find all his favorites in All Star Comics, where the world's most colorful heroes had banded together to fight crime and injustice as...THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA! The Justice Society, the very same struck terror into the hearts of criminals, for at one time or another, Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Specter, Atom, Sandman, Dr. Fate, Hourman, Starman, Dr. Mid-Nite, Wonder Woman, Wildcat, Mr. Terrific, Red Tornado, Johnny Thunder and the beautiful Black Canary battled their way across the pages of All Star. No less impressive were the artists that grazed their pages, Booto, Infantino, Kirby, All Star had them all, and far too many lesser lights as well.

The idea of the Justice Society of America was conceived and developed in 1947 by three men--M. C. Gaines, publisher and managing editor; Sheldon Mayer, editor; and Gardner F. Fox, writer. Fox wrote the first Justice Society story in All Star Comics #3 and every story following up until issue #38. His basic pattern in the JSA was that each member was truthfully featured in different chapters, coming together as a team only in the introduction and conclusion. In most cases, each chapter was drawn by a different artist. In issue #38 Fox introduced a more flexible format. The members were now featured in two or three man teams and only occasionally soloed.

In the March, 1960 issue of Brave and the Bold (#28), Fox and his cohorts attempted to recapture the bygone glory of the JSA. In some cases, he was successful. The early Brave and Bold stories, some of the first JLA epics in their own magazine, and a few of the JSA tales, were possible by the introduction of "Earth Two" in the Flash series, ranked as examples of Fox at his best. But Sekowsky's early fine art was beginning a rapid decline, even with the third JLA story, The Case of the Stolen Super-Powers. Hampered by lack of space and an ever-increasing mob of super-heroes, Fox seemed to go stale. Some of the stories rank as the poorst put out by DC in the era. The fault was most certainly not Fox's, but it is true nonetheless.

In the beginning with issue #35 of the Justice League of America, the powers-to-be at DC realized the JLA was too overcrowded to write good stories for and began featuring fewer members. Fox, once again, began turning out great material. To what heights this fine author will soar in the future are uncertain, but you can be sure of one thing: As long as fandom exists, the name Gardner Fox will be spoken of with respect and admiration.
Empress of Mongo

For a short time, in the reign of Ming the Merciless, he had an Empress rule at his side. Ming and a party of his elite guards were burying a contender to his throne on Mongo's island of Toros. As Ming and his guards returned to the royal barge, they were attacked by Flash Gordon and his freemen, who were taking refuge on the island. After a fierce battle Flash overcame Ming and took him prisoner. Now, at last, Mongo had its first Empress. Sonja was put in a cell, while Flash met with his generals to make terms for freeing Mongo.

While back at Ming's cell a traitorous girl named Sonja had warned his way past Ming's guard to give Ming a proposition. "I hate Flash Gordon!" Sonja told Ming. "If you make me your Empress, I'll help you escape." Ming agreed and seconds later Sonja had knifed Ming's guard and freed him. Ming and Sonja then made good their escape on a launch and returned to Mongo City. Flash Gordon and his men found Ming was missing, quickly left their island hideout. Flash knew it would only be a short time before Ming's army would be sent against them.

Meanwhile true to his word, Ming rewarded Sonja's treachery by marrying her and crowning her Empress of all Mongo. Ming then rose from his throne and gave a command "I've kept my promise to make her Empress. Now take the rebel girl to the dungeons and execute her at once!" And so, such was the reward for the treacherous "Empress of Mongo". The ceremony was over. Ming strode down echoing hallways to his study. The great palace chimes started a mournful tolling. "Hiss, the bells!" A sneer twisted on Ming's lips. "The Empress is dead! Would it were Flash Gordon instead!"

Wildcat and Mr. Terrific

Wildcat, was in reality, Ted Grant, a heavyweight fighter. Wildcat came into being, when Ted Grant was wrongly accused of murdering the heavyweight cheap by means of a needle placed in his glove. Actually the needle had been placed there by his manager. Ted escaped the police when the squad car he was being taken away in was wrecked. Being a fugitive, he adopted a "Wildcat" costume and went after his former manager and soon brought him to justice. Ted then decided to keep his "Wildcat" identity and fight crime and injustice. Wildcat's connection with the Justice Society of America was a minor one. In "All Star Comics" #24 he was an invited guest; helping the JSA prove to a young American (Dick Amber) the warlike ways of Germany. Green Lantern and The Flash became active members in this issue so Wildcat never made it as a permanent member. However, in issue #27 of "All Star Comics", he returned again. This time he took The Atom's place (for this issue only) in the JSA enlisted handicapped youngsters in their fight against crime. In this story, Wildcat enlisted the help of a deaf boy, who could read lips, to find out what a gang of criminals were up to. With the youngsters help, he soon cleaned the gang up. Wildcat never appeared with the JSA again, until issue #46 of The Justice League of America, when the Justice Society teamed up with the Justice League.

Mr. Terrific, in reality, was Terry Sloan a financial wizard. His origin, though a dull one, is as follows. Terry Sloan was quite a remarkable boy. When he was born, it was obviously that he had exceptional talent. His mind and body were advanced far beyond that of the other children of his age. He became a child prodigy at the age of 10. As he grew older, he discovered that there was no art, science, or sport that he wasn't an expert at. He decided to use his talents to fight crime and after designing a costume, became Mr. Terrific. Mr. Terrific's connection with the Justice Society was even less than Wildcat's. He appeared only in "All Star Comics" #24 (the same issue as Wildcat) to prove to Dick Amber Germany's war-like tendencies. He, as well as the rest of the JSA, did this by going back in time - aided by a fairy named Conscience.

Until issue #37 of The Justice League of America, he never appeared with the JSA again. Perhaps the reason for both Wildcat and Mr. Terrific appearing when they did is; at this time many heroes were being dropped and since both of the stories they appeared in were released out of sequence (DC for some reason, released patriotic and moral stories before their due date) perhaps DC was seriously thinking of including them as regular members.

*Ed. Note... Both Wildcat and Mr. Terrific appeared in their own stories, in Sensation Comics.
FANDOM’S FINEST

Art & Article
by BOB COSGROVE

(Featuring - Xal-Kor, the Human Cat)

Personal involvement often means the difference between greatness and mediocrity. Martin Greene and myself are personally involved with our characters, Space Guardian and The Defender. Our own involvement makes us like them more than any other characters. We like to think that our involvement and enjoyment of the final product. In Pinnacle, it is too much reliance on the pro way of doing things and not enough on creativity. It's not knocking professionalism, but simply saying that the most professional job is worth little if it is a simple rewrite of pro efforts. One fan who consistently comes up with a storyline as interesting as any pro comic is Grass Green, writer-artist of Xal-Kor, the Human Cat.

Xal-Kor is a cat-man of superhuman strength and intelligence. The lone emissary of the planet Pelt, the fantastic feline has traveled from the fourth dimension to the third, landing on earth to stave off the Rodentite menace. Although Earth people are alarmed at the sight of him, he has embarked upon the task of trying to find and counter any menacing, retaliatory operations the rat people might contrive in their unending pursuit of total-earth-wide-universal-DOMINATION! For if Earth is enslaved and all the people are forced to fight in the Rodentite AAT, Feli in all the other planets of the universe in which the 3rd dimension would fall prey to the overwhelming odds, as the rat people would have utter complete SURPRISE on their side!

To aid him in this awesome task, our hero has taken the guise (aided and abetted by metamorphic powers) of a little coloured feline, photographer for the Linton Daily News. Unknown to him, his secretary, Ann Rhoden, is in reality his arch-foe, HODA, Queen of the Rodentites. After his origin in SSC #9, the intrapid Xal-Kor took time out to battle one Z.Z. Groshan in SSC #7 with SSC #9, Xal-Kor highlighted a beautifully drawn cover by Richard Green. On the inside of the magazine, he encountered "Operation Big Move," and managed to foil a Rodentite attempt to return in force to Universe VI, as well as to escape from the clutches of Queen Hoda.

In issue #9, Colin's editor, Ed Haimes, chanced across the menace of the Rodentite movement. When Haimes revealed the menace to the skeptical public, he found himself marked for death...till Colin, in his Feline Alter-Ego, came to the rescue.

Irony was the password for "Xal-Kor to the Rescue," SSC #10's Green epic. A group of communists decided to capture the catman and brainwash him into becoming a drugged servant of the reds. Knowing that Colin Chambers had been present at most of the Human Cat's appearances, they eager to directly obtain his for reptile, they procured ANOTHER hostage. One Ann Rhoden. The hold catman and HODA saw plenty of action, each remaining unaware of the others identity.

In the latest Xal-Kor epic, a book-length story, Xan-Griepe, "The Invincible Vole," a rat agent given super-powers with the aid of a stolen invention. Fortunately, the invincible, Ogane Hame, used a duplicate machine on Xal-Kor.

In his battles, Xal-Kor relies on his wits, strength feline abilities, metamorphic powers, and his 5-D belt, which, although limited in power, enables him to fly and walk thru walls.

Throughout his short career, Xal-Kor's stories have emphasized sound plot and characterization, as well as a bit of humor. Although Greene, one of FANDOM'S FINEST artists, still needs work on his ink and perspective, Xal-Kor is none-the-less one of the best drawn strips in fandom. Under the capable brush of Landon Chesney, Greene's pencils in issue number twelve of SSC took on an eerie quality. Truly, Xal-Kor represents a sample of what fandom's finer talents can do when they try.

EDITORS NOTE:
Xal-Kor, the Human Cat, appears in, what this publication would deem, fandom's number one soap-hero zine. This zine is worth any fan's money and we highly recommend that you buy:

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A strange girl appears in a bolt of energy while The Defender is battling a pair of assassins sent by The Ruler to kill him. She says she has a message for The Defender but is shot before she can deliver it. Now, as a storm begins, The Defender flies her to his apartment.

She'll be alright. I've used a tri-oxen healer.

Leaving the girl in the other room, The Defender steps to a window to watch the storm.

As the storm rages, The Defender is momentarily lost in thought. Thoughts of...

No. 1 - President of Earth in the year 3961, who ordered The Defender back in time to defeat The Ruler.

Gen. Westman - U.S. General who believes The Defender to be an alien.

The Ruler - Evil conqueror of 7 planets, whose barbarism is causing a mind regression in 3961.

The strange girl, who says she has a message from the stars.

Space Guardian - Earth superhero who knows The Defender isn't an alien.
The most important thing I must remember, is to let no one know I'm from the future.

For if that be known, people might try to gain foresight into their lives... AND NO MAN SHOULD KNOW HIS FUTURE!

The room is suddenly alive with power!

You are doomed David Manning!

Boy, is this costume ever affective! Everybody knows my identity. Now suppose you....

DROP THAT WEAPON!

With amazing power, the Defender is knocked away.

and I have twice the power of any man of Earth.

The Defender densifies his molecules.

Gee Bronski, I'm sooo glad you told me that.

The girl distracts the Defender long enough for Brawn to retrieve his weapon and fire it.

No, Brawn. Stop!

To Be Continued...
If you are familiar with the world of comics at all, you are probably aware that EC was a comic line noted for its realism and terrific art. But you may not be aware that this line did have one costumed hero book. Moon Girl and the Prince. That's right. Moon Girl was an EC character. Moon Girl, it has been said, was an outright copy of D.C.'s Wonder Woman, but to a certain extent she was. However, I believe she was a better written and more believable character than D.C.'s Amazon ever was. Moon Girl's origin appeared in, of all things, a funny animal book. Animal Fables #7. The story was laid out in such a way that Wonder Woman's was. (A story around spot illos.) The only difference being, her source of power and a slightly altered plot.

The story opened in the mountains of Samarkand. There Princess Moon Girl, known for her superhuman strength, speed and endurance, was confronted by a suitor, Prince Kengu, a true son of Hercules, who was to ask for her hand in marriage. Moon Girl besought her mother, the queen of Samarkand, not to let the marriage take place. The Queen Mother then told her daughter of an ancient contest, carried out during the days of Marco Polo. A tradition that must be satisfied, before a marriage ceremony could take place.

She told of how, during the 13th century, the daughter of the very first Princess of the Moon, not wishing to marry a man weaker than herself, arranged a contest of strength with her suitors. However, the Princess of the Moon was as strong as she was beautiful and no man was her equal. One day, though, a man of princely bearing came and she fell in love with him, but her pride would not permit her to yield to a man less strong than herself. He was stronger than any man she ever met, yet, after a desperate struggle, she defeated him and the young man rode away—bitter with despair. The princess was left sad and lonely. Soon afterward her country was invaded in a series of battles. During one of these battles, the princess slew an evil wizard and took from him a magic moonstone talisman that made her invisible to harm and multiplied her strength tremendously. The princess was still sad, 'til one day she spied her love, in the enemy's army. Rushing forward, she snatched him from his horse and returned with him to her people. The princess of the Moon had found her true love.

After telling Moon Girl this tale, the Queen gave her the moonstone. All she had to do was touch it and tremendous powers would be hers. (It was later told, the stone glowed red when danger was nearby.) From that day on, Moon Girl always wore the moonstone at her throat.

The contest between Moon Girl and Prince Kengu was a mighty one, but in the end Moon Girl was the victor. And like her ancestor, she was saddened when the Prince rode away. Realizing she had made a mistake, Moon Girl decided to find him and win him back. She finally discovered him in America, where under the name of Lionel Manning, he was an athletic coach in a college. They were united at last; but both loving their adopted country, they decided to stay and dedicate themselves to fighting evil.

Moon Girl took the name Clare Lune and became a teacher at the same college as the Prince. Soon after, she looked in battle against Satana, one of her most evil foes. Satana dressed in a green outfit and a hooded cape with horns on it. She was an apt foe for the maid of the moon. With each encounter, it took all of Moon Girl's powers to defeat her.

Moon Girl, as a character, was better done than Wonder Woman. Though similar, she used the magic of her moonstone for powers; and rather than a Steve Trevor, always chasing after her, she had The Prince as an ally. It is too bad today, when even Wonder Woman is no longer super, that Moon Girl couldn't be revived. Comic magazines are sorely in need of a good super heroine, in its second heroic age.
Well, here we are at the close of another issue. And, once again, it's time to relate any comic news I've come across.

Item
Recently, while in a magazine store, I came upon a coloring book. Now hang on there, I haven't gone bye-bye. This book has work by Neal Adams, Milton Caniff, Leonard Starr, and Al Capp, just to name a few. The book is called "Parade of the Comics" and features a parade of America's favorite newspaper comic characters. The art was especially drawn for the book. It's put out by The Gladfield Pub. Co. of New York (address unknown). Keep an eye out for this coloring book. It's a real buy for 29c.

Item
Did you know that in the town of Winthrop, Mass., the man who was the model for the face and physique of Jerry Siegel's work on Superman resides. His name is Kayo J. koan and he operates a health spa. Koan posed as Superman for Savings Bond drives during World War II, and looked amazingly like the early Siegel and Shuster creation.

Item
How many of you regular readers noticed the sneaky way I inserted Jim Steranko's name in last issue's Defender strip? In the lower left panel of the second page, the one where the girl is appearing—check the name on the pipe railing. The Steranko Pipe Co. Let's stay awake out there fans.

Speaking of Jim Steranko - Did you know there is a Dell paperback out called "Bullet Proof" by Frank Kane and that it has a cover a Jim Steranko swipe by Tony Desilva? The swipe is taken from S.H.I.E.L.D. #2 and is the panel where the actress is saying to the male lead, "White God...Monster loose...save village...come quick", and he replies that if her delivery gets any worse, he's going to let the village get stumped. The swipe is an exact one, except the figure positions are reversed and the coloring is different. Jim is also working on the cover design for two new Marvel books. These books are called "Power of Fear" and "The Castle of Fear". These books will be like DC's Witching Hour and will feature 3, seven page stories, with shock endings, per issue.

For the many, many fans who have asked me about Jim Steranko's "Talon"...Jim tells me that it has been set aside for the moment. It's Jim's property and he will have it published at some future date.

I've told that Sal Buscema may be doing The Avengers. S.H.I.E.L.D. may be brought back as a bi-monthly, with Herb Trimpe as the artist.

By this time most of you know that Jack Kirby has moved to California. I include this fact, just in case you didn't.

The Heap is coming to Comic Crusader! The John McGeehan contest, that was presented in issue #3 of this publication, has as yet gone unsolved. I hereby declare the contest void. Perhaps I'll run another one, a little easier, in a future issue.

In closing, if any of you fans come across anything you think might be of interest to other fans, write and let me know. I'll print it here. After all, this is the Fanzine with The Fan in Mind. See you next 'ish......KD.
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NO. 6
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\'69 Issue #6 on sale in May.